The Sociopolitical Analysis of Turkish Identity as a Civilization-Forming Identity

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Abstract

Key words:

Turkish Identity, Nation-building strategies, Historiography, Otherness, Civilization

Identity is the sense of identification with and attachment to a place, a group or an object in order for a person or a community to feel physically and psychologically secure. Identity is made up of many parameters and changes and transforms over time. Identity is constructed through Otherness. In this respect, when we look at the trajectory of Turkish identity in outline, it is seen that the Turkish identity, which was formed in Central Asia and shaped through Otherness against China, spread to the Caucasus, Balkans, Europe and Anatolia with the 1071 Malazgirt Victory through migrations. The Turkish identity, which came to the forefront with state building, organization and military victories, gained the ability to establish civilization after being honoured with Islam. In this context, in this article we analyse the onstruction of Turkish national identity, and its national building strategies as well as its creative character of civilization throughout the history with broader perspective.

Medeniyet Kurucu Bir Kimlik Olarak Türk Kimliğinin Sosyopolitik Analizi

Özet

Anahtar kelimeler:

Türk Kimliği, Ulus inşası stratejileri, Tarihyazımı, Ötekilik, Medeniyet

Kimlik, bir kişinin veya topluluğun kendini fiziksel ve psikolojik olarak güvende hissetmesi için bir yerle, bir grupla veya bir nesneyle özdeşleşme ve ona bağlanma duygusudur. Kimlik birçok parametreden oluşur ve zaman içinde değişir ve dönüşür. Kimlik, ötekilik üzerinden inşa edilir. Bu bakımdan ana hatlarıyla Türk kimliğinin yörüngesine baktığımızda, Orta Asya'da oluşan ve Çin'e karşı Ötekilik üzerinden şekillenen Türk kimliğinin, göçler yoluyla 1071 Malazgirt Zaferi ile Kafkaslara, Balkanlara, Avrupa'ya ve Anadolu'ya yayıldığı görülmektedir. Devlet kurma, teşkilatlanma ve askeri zaferlerle ön plana çıkan Türk kimliği, İslamiyet ile şereflendikten sonra medeniyet kurma kabiliyeti kazanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu makalede Türk ulusal kimliğinin inşası, ulusal inşa stratejileri ve tarih boyunca medeniyet yaratıcı karakteri daha geniş bir perspektifle analiz edilmektedir.

1. INTRODUCTION: BUILDING OF TURKISH IDENTITY

As the founders of one of the most ancient and permanent civilizations Turks, a rather prominent nation spread out to Asia, Africa and Europe during their approximately 4000 years past were a subject-matter of the historians (Berting, 2011: 27). The ongoing migration movements indicate that the population of the Turks are very crowded. This highly crowded population and active character lead Turks to play very remarkable roles in the world history. In analysing the Turkish identity, it is necessary to regard that Turks have distinctive features from the other nations in the points of time and space (Kafesoğlu 1989: 43). Firstly, the nations whose individuals live together and occupy same places are relatively easy to examine, but Turkish populations cannot be considered as a totally homogeneous entity because they traced very different ways of development and lived in distance places from each other. Secondly; in contrast to other nations who can be overviewed in a given history and limited territory, Turks have constituted their history by seeking new climates, new lands for centuries within the various phases of history.

Therefore, there is no unique Turkish history because many Turkish communities and states ruled in different stages of the past. The nomenclature of Turk and its derivations mean the bearer of a culture including the identity of the religion, language, ritual and tradition in spite of the fact that Turkish communities were ruled by different rulers in the different period of times. As a result of geographical and political division and fragmentation, while one group of the Turks live a step-type life, another group preferred the sedentary life, while losing their political power in one part of the world and gaining a new political initiative in the other parts. Thus, Turkish history was interwoven by those of other old and new nations and this case caused confusion and made the scientific analysis of the Turks difficult.

As Kafesoğlu argues the framework and the conception of "national identity" are formulated by national historiography, which states that its subject-matter the nation whose history it deals with) is "unique" and "homogenous", has a claim of antiquity and authenticity in its territory; that the nation has reached "national consciousness" at very early stages of its history and has realized a civilizing mission (Ibid.: 47). In this context, the national historiography has also to discover an "ethnic identity" which, in its history, is identical with the nation and to demonstrate its continuity as a homogeneous and unique entity since its inception. This process is designed as a "historical research" of the nation from its roots in a long- obliterated past to the present. Turan asserts that the concept of "Turkish nation" is traced back to the pre-historical times, and a homogeneous and harmonious nation displaying a corporatist structure which prevents the class struggles. The leaders of that nation are never considered "despotic" or "hegemonic"; for they were deemed as responsible servants trying to realize the historical mission of their "nation" (Turan 1969: 27).

Since the denomination "Turk" first appears in the Orkhon Inscriptions which date to the 8th century AD; most of the nationalist historiography, albeit vague allusions to a "pre-historical past", take these inscriptions as the literal starting point of "Turkish ness" of "the march of the nation" as a unique and unified entity. However, when sources are examined closely, it can clearly be seen that those Turkic formations pursuing a pastoral-nomadic way of life and politically displaying confederate tribal organizations were defining themselves in relation to their tribal and dynastic ties rather than referring to a unified Turkish entity. Thus, in fact, what was occurring in Central Asia was a struggle for hegemony among these tribes and dynasties, and not a struggle between "Turks" and "non-Turkic others" as is alleged by the nationalist historiography. In fact, it was the Byzantines, Arabs and other Western peoples who denominated the inhabitants of Central Asia as "Turks" (İnaç 2012: 202). Furthermore, that the denomination "Turk" refers to an ethnic identity in the Orkhon Inscriptions is open to discussion. Even if it did so, this denomination is very different form that used in the nationalist and / or pan-Turkist frame of reference. Moreover, in Diwan-al Lugat- it- Turk, the term "Turk" is carefully distinguished from other groups which are now denominated as "Turkic", and Turkish language is mentioned as the sophisticated literary language of the Karakhanids (Timur 1984: 7-22).

The same ambiguous situation continues throughout the Ottoman period. The Ottomans, considered a Turkish Empire by contemporary historians, did not perceive themselves as "Turkish" in their times. One can even come across the denominations "Turk" and "Turcoman" that were used to denote pastoral nomadic and semi-nomadic groups carefully kept isolated from the settled "reaya" (peasant). The use of the denomination "Turk" as the ethno-genesis of the Ottomans and the Turkish-speaking inhabitants of Anatolia and Thrace dates to the second half of the 19th century and originates from the western orientalist literature. The inception of nationalistic

movements among different ethnic groups, particularly the non-Muslim ones in the Ottoman Empire and their gradual detachment from the Empire, strengthened a kind of political consciousness defined in terms of "Turkishness". The Turkish Republic founded as a result of a long nationalizing process, was conceived as a nation-state composed by a homogeneous "Turkish" nation. This ascribed national identity was imposed by the republican nomenclature to the people. However, this national identity based on an imagined/constructed Turkish ethnical entity was not as powerful and influential among the people as other ethnic, cultural and religious identities that provided a basis for social cohesion.

2.THE ETYMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM TURK:

The name Turk had been attributed many meanings by the different scientists and researchers in the past. "Targita" as mentioned among the eastern tribes by Heredot; "Tyrkae" inhabiting in Iskit land, "Togharma", as the grandson of Yasef, in Holy Book Bible; "Trukaha" mentioned in Indian books; "Turukku" seen in the Inscription of ancient proto-Asia; "Troia" in the Chinese resources are all assumed the tribes bearing the name Turk (Kafesoğlu 1989: 42-45; Güvenç 1993: 22). In Orkhun Inscripts the nomenclature of Turk, written as "Turuk", firstly used in history with the meaning of folk or subject which is loyal to its own state and strong nation. In the writings of Kashgarli Mahmud, the name Turk was given by God with the meaning of youthfulness, health and being mature. Ziya Gökalp depicts that the term Turk derives from the 'tore' or 'ture' as meaning loyal to tore (strong national tradition and set of rules) (Gökalp 1973: 27). In some Chinese resources, Turk means the 'helmet' corresponding the Chinese word 'Tu-kue' or 'Toruk' (Güvenç 1993: 22).

The concept of Turk is an enlarged framework whose meaning is extended both synchronically and diachronically during the period of nationalization as a similar situation like the other nationalizing countries. In this chapter, the extension of the meaning of the word Turk, at the deepness of the time and its prolongation towards the frontiers of the nation-state is studied. Inevitably, the term Turk has an ethnic basis and after it had been chosen as a special name for a particular nation, constraints of its attribution for a nation are very unreliable and ambiguous to a great extent. The problematic is closely related with the time when the nation called Turk is emerged. For Timur, the problem is the issue of the phenomenology of being Turkish: "the most important thing is to display the relationship between the concrete social basis to be essential for being Turkish and the consciousness of being Turkish. Unless it does, "the history of Turks" is bound to be written only in respect of ethnic identity (Timur 1984: 22).

Another important problem resulting from the prerogative widening of the meaning of the term is anachronism. There exist two questions requiring to be responded. First; can the content of the term nation be attributed to the "millet" which is a concept belonging to the pre-Republican period and, in this context, can the Ottoman identity be identical with the Turkish one? Second question is in which period of the time did the communities who call themselves "Turk" emerge and to what extent did they spread the scope of their Turkish identities? The necessity behind these questions arises from the perception of the communities of the nation-states the historical evolution of their "national existence", which they assume as fundamental for their legitimacy, as a continuous and holistic process. Thus, the historical adventure of an ethnic group giving its name to the "national existence" gains importance and precedes everything. Timur explains this tendency as below: "In fact, as Eliade approves in his studies, "the aspiration of origin", or even "the obsession of the origin" is a universal tendency of human communities in every level. This tendency emerges as the ambition of dictating a national history in today's world where the nation-states are prevalent. In this context, this desire is suitable to the contemporary conjuncture. The searching of origin in social level reflects as an issue pertaining to the ethnic origin in general level and we try to determine the ethnic origins of the Turks" (Timur 1998: 22-23).

The answer of the first question is very classical in sociological and political terms. As we mentioned in the first chapter, it is a generally accepted idea that the building of nation is a modern phenomenon and depends on the process of the social change expounded at the end of the 18th century and during the whole 19th century (Kohn 1968; Deutch 1966; Gellner 1992; Anderson 1991). Nevertheless, some scientists called this argument "primordialist" object and claim that the term ethnicity is a kind of expansion of the kinship system, a collective tool for survival, and use the similarity of ethnicity and nation. According to the primordialists, nation and nationalism are the continuous and natural phenomena and, thus, always exist within the history. Then, "nation" as a social unit and "nationalism" as feelings and ideals concerned with the nation maintain their impacts and repercussions along with almost all periods of history. According to the second approach which is called

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perennialist argument, collective cultural bonds and feelings are not only "natural" but also "universal" realities. Moreover, these kinds of collective units and sensitivities are the first samples and micro-scale prototypes of the primitive modes of nations and nationalisms together with their antique and medieval forms, according to Smith (Smith 1994: 7-13).

3.BUILDING OF TURKISH IDENTITY IN NATIONALIST HISTORIOGRAPHY:

The nationalist historiographers generally tend to build a primordialist history. In this building, main concern is the myths of a core *ethnie* which achieves to survive today by overwhelming its historical enemies for the deepness of the history. If there isn't a myth of such a kind, then suitable myths are invented. The whole history of this ethnic unit is established anew by means of anachronical attributions. In this establishment, the chief of the *ethnie* may be transformed into a leader pursuing within the "national ideals". The convenient enemies for today's conflicts, religious motives and attitudes are nationalised. The categories which cannot go historically beyond the ethnic or tribal identities, they are corresponded with the invented or imagined counterparts with "national consciousness". In other words, the "national history" is turned writings that are deprived from the so-called "objective" history. The main aim of being far from history is to depend on the reading a literature which does not have a history. When the historical texts are read by attributing to them today's meanings for the included concepts, the result is the reading of a text without history. Turkish nationalist historiography or literature is fledged of such kind of examples.

The Turkish nationalist historiographers (Turk-Islam and Turk-Turan) both share the primordialist approach and concentrate on the "national history" which regard the "nation" as an essence and ultimate aim for all human-beings. In this understanding, the term "nation" is not a historical and constructed entity but a "special gift" granted by God. Those communities who arrive being a nation are "distinguished" entities. According to the Turkish nationalist historiographers Turks are "distinguished" people who achieve to be a nation spontaneously even in the ancient period of the history. Turks have a "divine mission" to rule the earth (Kafesoğlu 1985: 68-69).

Kymlicka argues that the sociology deprived from the history supports the aforementioned idealist historiography and put the category of the nation into the hierarchical and extended position within the forms of communities by breaking its connection with historical context. In this understanding, the nation is identical with the tribe. Nevertheless, the distinctive feature of the nation is being a "perfect community" which requires the cultural bond (Kymlicka 1995: 28) However Kafesoğlu states that the most important component of being a perfect nation is having a "national consciousness" which Turks possess in the ancient times and established the idea of ruling the earth on this basis (Kafesoğlu 1985: 68-69).

Orkhun Inscripts are presented as the first text which the nomenclature of Turkish nation exists, the basic book of Turkish nationality, the work piece which makes the ethnie a nation and a light to enlighten the national destination (Ergin 1989: 7). The word "bodun" in Inscript is generally understood as nation and the Turkish speaking communities in Central Asia, which are scientifically called as 'Turkic peoples', is assumed to establish single unitary state by means of overtaking the power by some Turkish clans and tribes contrary to the argument of that Turks established different states in different times and spaces. According to nationalist literature, Turkish Empire was established by the Huns, later transferred to Avars and be caught by the Kokturks (Ibid.: 7). However, it is claimed that a developing Turkish nationalism can be found out in the early periods since the Orkhun Inscripts were mentioned about (Taneri 1993: 71).

Nevertheless, these claims are fledged of many metaphysical and imaginary speculations. In contemporary literature, the category of "nation" as a social and historical reality had emerged in modern times. Especially in writings of Benedict Anderson, who defines nation as an imagined political community, both nationalism and being a nation is a special kind of cultural construct as a product of the end of 18th century (Anderson 1991: 4-6).

The nomenclature of "Turk" in nationalist historiography emerged in Kok-Turk state and extended for all Central Asian "Turkic" origins and includes an "ethnic unity" for recent times. This argument is supported by the Byzantine, Arabic and Persian literatures. Whereas, the concept "Turk" does not mean an ethnic unity, even an ethnic group in Kok-Turk Period In Orkhon and Tonyukuk Inscripts this nomenclature is used to call a distinctive tribe apart from the other Turkish speaking communities. In this understanding, the ethnic

communities of Tokuz Oghuz, Turgish, Tardush, Tolis, Saka, On-ok, Oghuz, Kırghız, Kurikhan, Tatar, Ediz, Tatbi,etc… are mentioned as separate and different entities from the Turk, although they speak Turkic languages. In Orkhun and Tonyukuk Inscripts the other communities who share the same language category with the Turks are absolutely demarcated from the Turkish ethnie, even Turkish khan (ruler) prides the victories against these communities in these writings (Türkdoğan 199: 61). Nevertheless, the suspicion whether the name of Turk corresponds with an ethnic group is expressed by Tezcan (Tezcan 1991: 359). He claims that this address (Turk) is used in the meanings of "noble people", "all people" or "nobles unified under the rule of Khan" (Ibid.: 358-365).

On the other hand, the nationalist historiography asserts that the name of Turk is not an ethnic name but a political nomenclature," Since the establishment of Kok-Turk State, it promoted a national attribution denominated for all Turkic-origin communities, as a result of a long process being a subject of Kok-Turk rule and called with their distinctive names" (Kafesoğlu 1977: 27). But there does not exist any document to prove this interpretation in the archives of the Kök-Turk period. Moreover, the Kok-Turk political entity owns its existence to overcome the strongest peoples, Avar and Akhun, which are claimed to be unified under one denomination and assumed subdivision of the same body, even by cooperating with the Iranian Sasanids. At the same time, who demolish the West Kok-Turk rule was the Karluks who are supposed to come from the same origin. In the same way, the demolishing power of the East domination was the alliance of the Uyghur, Karluk and Basmıl (Habermas 2001: 94-95).

During almost all period of the Medieval Ages, the tribes in Central Asia had been the rivals of each other and the ethnic consciousness of each tribe is constrained with their own existence. The unifications and the dissolutions of the tribes under certain names prove that the ethnicity is the conjectural or contextual phenomenon. (Eickelman 1989: 207-224). Namely, it is not possible to assert that there is a collection under the title of being "Turkish" whose meaning is very narrow and controversial because that age was deprived of the opportunities that would create the conditions to possess upper-identity.

The name of "Turk" is encountered within the documents of Uygur and Karakhanids in following centuries. After the collapse of Kok-Turk confederation, this word was certainly used as an ethnic name among the Oghuz tribes but this cannot be claimed for Uyghurs. There is no proof to explain that Uygur describe themselves as "Turks". However, only Karahanids use this word in introducing themselves among the non-Oghuz tribes (Tezcan 1991: 368). Kashgarlı Mahmud, who lived in the period of Karahanids and who identified Karahanid himself, always distinguished Turks from Oghuzs and argued that the language of the Uygurs is genuine Turkish, according to his dictionary, Diwan Lugat-at Turk. (DLT, Atalay translation I:31-33). Possibly, in the distinction of Kashgarlı, "Turk" was one or some of the tribes and "Turkish" was the meta-language that represented the similar languages as explained in the context of Uyghur writings. The other confusion is the separation of the Turks from Uyghurs, although "Turk" and its derivative form "Turkoman" are nearly identical with the Oghuz-origin tribes (Tezcan 1991: 368).

In this context, the unique Turkish book which mentions "Turk", of those of Medieval Age-Arabic and Persian literature, is Kutadgu Bilig. In the Central Asian communities of the Late-Middle Ages, there is an intractable ambiguity in respect of identification themselves as "Turks". Nevertheless, it is certain that the neighbouring states, which are of non-Turkic origin, call all the peoples living in Central Asia and resembling each other in the mode of life and language as "Turks". Our main subject is to discuss whether it is possible to bare a historical mission determined with a consciousness emerging by the internalisation of an upper-identity depending on the identification of "Turk". Therefore, the main problematic is to search whether the Middle Ages and respectively Ottoman peoples give themselves this name. In this respect, it is inevitable to accept the necessity to comprehend the dynamics to combine these neighbouring peoples under the identification of "Turk".

The using of the word "Turk" by the Arabic, Byzantine, Armenian, Suryanid and Chinese literatures was initiated during the 6th century BC (For Arabs Ateş, 1966; for Byzantines Runciman, 1943). Before this period, the common names of the peoples extended from the Central Asian steps to Middle East and Europe was "Hun" (Freye and Sayılı 1946: 126-27). Apparently, a political constitution that used the name "Turk" in Central Asia emerged, later by their contact with the political formations in Middle East, and ultimately the name Turk replaced the general identification of "Hun". In fact, the collective identification of alien peoples in Ancient

Times and Middle Ages is a custom to concentrate on a typical "we" and "other" dialectic. "Other" gains an importance when it becomes a threat; this tribe is perceived as so strong and comprehensive that could include its all resembles. For this reason, after the political constitution of Kok-Turk was expanded in Central Asia by neighbouring Iran and China and enlarged its influence, it turned the focus of attraction to the Chinese, Iranian, and Arabic and Byzantine sources. The period when this interest for Kok-Turk appeared, 6 to 8th centuries, was the time interval in which the Islamic religion was spread towards the Central Asia and reached the level of civilization. For this reason, it became so habitual for the Arabs to give the name "Turk" to almost all similar people living in this region.

In the perception of Arabs, "Turks" are all Central Asians who speak certain languages and share a similar nomadic-step culture without considering the constitutional convergence in ethnic and political structure. However, after becoming Moslem this mass lost their distinctive features, both at the level of other Moslems and at the level of their own perception as in the case that being "we" refers to Christianity and the "other" refers to non-Christian in the realms of pre-renaissance and renaissance periods (McGrane 1989: 27). In this period the term Turk meant the non-Moslem and villager Central Asians (Ibid.: 27). For this reason, as a distinctive feature, those who pretended to be a Moslem and lead the pastoral and nomadic lives are called "Turcoman". Because the most important part of this mass consisted of Oghuzs, this name has corresponded to the Oghuzs. Similarly, the Byzantine authors began to call almost all step-communities, even for the Magyars, as Turks since the 6th century. (Runciman 1943: 55) Also Europeans got primary information and the general impressions about the Turks from the Byzantine chronicles (Gürol 1987: 44).

As a result of this kind of tendencies for the generalizations or making uniformities, especially together with the starting of the Crusades, the communities that had been called with the general nomenclature of Turk transformed to 'representatives' and the 'sword of the Islam', as the closest and the most dangerous "other" of the Christian world. Thus, in the European public-opinion, all Near East had started to be mentioned as the "lands of Turks" and "Turkey" as well as the people who belong to Near East was called "Turks" (Delanty 2013: 54). This stereotyping is so widespread that the addresser of the "East" attribution in Renaissance England has always become Turks as that of the 'other' Europeans. The judgements that constitute the general image of "East", Islam and Arabs are always attributed for the Turks (Aksoy, 1990).

Under the influence of the Christian ideology that is characterized by the adoption of the mission to exile these infidels penetrating to the "Christendom", Turks, towards to East or Orient where they are oriented, the symbols belong to Turks and Arabs seem to be confused with each other, especially in the works of the clericals after the 14th century. Eventually, both communities seem to belong to the Moslem East and "other", as identical with each other. Depending on this reality, Turks in Italian literature of 15th century are considered as a generic community symbolising the East and almost all positive and negative images pertaining to the East are attributed to the "Turks" (Gürol, 1987). Since the Enlightenment period, Moslem is synonymous with the "Turk", "Islam" is synonymous with the *Religio Turcica*". In this sense, the prophet Mohammed is identified as Turk. Turk is so identical with the "other" that the unsuitable activities and humiliating attributions that the Christians disapprove are connected with the Turks. In this way, the title of Guldenmunt's illustrations was the "unbelievable Turkish brutality of Spanish people". The brutality which could only be committed by Turks had been performed by the Catholics then (Gellner 1997: 6-11). Depending on this totalising view, although the Anatolia was called "Turkiya" during the 12th century, Anatolian Seljuk, had called themselves as "Rum Seljuk" and the country where they lived was designated as "Rum".

Well, how did the people who had been named as Turks during those centuries have identified themselves and to which elements they had rendered themselves as identical? The first Ottoman chronicles, with the aim of displaying the nobility to provide the legitimisation of the ruling of the Ottoman dynasty, the Ottomans had made connected with the noblest tribe of Oghuz, Kayı. The word Turk is found in these chronicles, and Turks are mentioned as people who participate in the army of both Ottomans and their rivals beside many other ethnic components. The name Turk is also found very frequently at Tarih-i Al-i Osman (The Ottoman History) of Aşıkpaşazade, who is the prominent Ottoman historian (Babinger 1982: 41). Nevertheless, in analysing this chronicle carefully, it can easily be observed that the attribution of Turk was made mostly by the foreigners and non-Muslims. By the lapse of time, the political and emotional connections of Ottomans with the Turcoman were cut and in many chronicles "Turk" and "Turcoman" corresponded to the meaning of illiterate, ignorant, rude, nomad and vulgar people.

Moreover, while the conquest of Yıldırım Bayezid is narrated, it is very natural to say that he captured Malatya or Behisni from Turkomans. This narrative approves that Turcoman past is denied by the Ottomans and they considered themselves identical with the 'other' in many respects. The author of '*Tableau Général*' published in 18th century, D'Ohsson, claims that the meaning of word Turk consists of the idle and stagnant people living in the deserts of Horasan and Turkistan for Ottomans, as a recurrent usage of Arabs, and the subjects of the Empire are being called as 'Ottomans' without any discrimination, and they regarded to be called 'Turk' as humiliation and insult, and, thus, they were not supposed to understand why the Europeans named them as 'Turk' insistently (Timur 1998: 113). In the Ottoman ideology, being Turk and Turcoman are getting used as identical and in a way include the 'otherness' in itself.

As an ideological stereotype, Turk corresponds to being a vulgar, ignorant, rough villager in one hand; it also indicates an economical categorisation on the other. In the classical age of Ottoman Empire, there were Etrakiye and Yörükan classes who expressed the nomadic communities' apart from the ordinary subjects who lived sedentary lives within the taxation category which the people called 'Turk' covers (Türkdoğan 1989: 74). In this understanding, being Turk or Yörük, point out to the same condition, demonstrate an ethnicity that depends upon being different in respect of production and the mode of life and become different from the high society of the Ottomans, and the Moslem and non-Moslem subject as a decisive and concrete category. Doubtlessly, the ethnic fusion and fission were inevitable facts within a multi-ethnic Empire. Nevertheless, one thing to be pointed out is that although Ottoman ruling class and predominant imperial ideology were strictly loyal to the "noble Turcoman" past, as a construction to be created for providing the nobility of the ruler, they did never esteem being Turk and Turcoman. Interestingly, Turk and Turcoman were the identities that were separated from the ordinary and acceptable subjects.

As a parallel trend to the recession of the community kind organisation in social structure, Ottoman administrative structure turned evenly cosmopolitan in character with the contribution of the non-Muslim subjects (Ortaylı 1987: 77). Even, in the 19th century, the proportion of the officials belonging to different religions than the prevalent one was the highest rank in the world (Ibid.: 112). Especially, the foreign affairs and many prominent bureaucratic missions had been managed by the non-Muslim subjects (Findley 1980: 205-209). However, being Ottoman had no longer meant the prestigious position because that became the constitutional right, as an indication of the legal equality to be spread out for all of the citizens within the frontiers of the Empire.

There were Ottoman elites who remember the Turkish connection repeatedly such as Ahmet Vefik Pasha, who studied on the genealogy of Turks, and Ali Suavi, who claimed that Ottomans were people who had the Turkish-origin as those of Uzbeks and Turcomans and their language was Turkish instead of the Ottoman. The basis of being Turk was depending on the ethnic nationalism that transformed to the leitmotiv of the period and caused the emergence of the orientalist literature focusing on the Central-Asian past. Under this influence, there were many books and dictionaries published under the name of Turk and Turkish, as the firstly pronounced word in this period of time (Aydın 1993: 87-92).

All these attempts were aimed to seek the ethnicity which became the core of cohesion for the Ottoman elites in the conjuncture condition of the 19th century and its exploration with the light of the language. Nevertheless, there were no sincere concern of rulers and people for these ethnic explorations except for some certain intellectuals and political and military elites. Although they spoke Turkish, there were public groups who felt themselves ethnically pertaining to being a Turk except the Turcomans living in Rumeli and Anatolia. In any case, following years of the Crimean War, Anatolia witnessed the migration wave of many peoples such as Circassians, Georgians, Tatar, Albanians, Bosnians and Pomaks, as a parallel phenomenon with the recession of the Ottomans from the Rumeli proper. This case constitutes an important obstacle for a potential to single out and emphasise the "Turkish" ethnicity.

4. TURKISH IDENTITY AS AN OTHER OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Identity is the sense of identification with and attachment to a place, a group or an object in order for a person or a community to feel physically and psychologically secure. Identity is made up of many parameters and changes and transforms over time. Identity is constructed through Otherness. When a person

or a community defines itself, it - inevitably - places those who are similar to itself in one cluster and those who are different from itself in a different cluster. What is important here is the nature of the line that marks the difference with the Other. If this line is thick and provocative, coexistence with the Other is not possible. Only if this line is soft and thin is it possible to live side by side and intertwined with different cultures without losing their differences. What is important here is to keep in mind that identity and history is a fiction and that the content of this fiction is shaped by historians as well as great statesmen and politicians.

In this respect, when we look at the trajectory of Turkish identity in outline, it is seen that the Turkish identity, which was formed in Central Asia and shaped through Otherness against China, spread to the Caucasus, Balkans, Europe and Anatolia with the 1071 Malazgirt Victory through migrations. The most advanced period of the Ottoman Empire was the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, when the Mediterranean became a Muslim Turkish lake (İnaç 2022: 203). During this period, Europe left behind the scholastic and patristic thinking of the Middle Ages with the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, rationalism, humanism and Cartesian philosophy, and began to define itself with 'acquired identities' by developing the democratic experience of Ancient Greece. However, these gains have led Europe to a 'Eurocentric' approach. According to this approach, for a society to be 'civilized' it had to follow the steps of cultural evolution followed by the West. On the other hand, this approach developed an 'Orientalist' view of the East. Accordingly, Eastern civilization lacked the mental capacity to utilize the riches it had been given, and policies of imperialism and colonialism were developed to put these resources at the service of the so-called world.

However, if there had not been a strong Turkish empire in the east in the 16th century, the West would not have been able to create a strong European identity by uniting within itself, and would not have been able to establish a European civilization by going further west and universalizing its own national values (İnaç 2018: 309). Therefore, the Ottoman Empire had become a 'constitutive other' that threatened Europe. The late Ottoman period led to the emergence of different socio-political and cultural identities through the process of confrontation with Europe. For the first time in history, a state in a period of stagnation and decline, fearing the threat of a civilization it perceived as a threat, decided to come together with that civilization. In this period, modernization was understood as Westernization (Budak 2019: 76). In order to stand against the nationalism brought by the French Revolution, Ottomanism developed through the idea of 'ittihad-ı anasır' (unification of components), Islamism against the threat of modern values, and Turkism against the threat of extinction of the Turkish element. There was also the emergence of a Westernist identity that thought we were lagging behind because of our tradition and national-spiritual values, and that derived its legitimacy only from its strong contact with the West.

5. RESHAPING OF TURKISH IDENTITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MODERNIZATION

From the late Ottoman period to the present day, Turkish identity has sought to redefine itself through Europe and Westernization. This process manifested itself on three levels (İnaç 2004: 38-41). The first was the dualist modernization of the late Ottoman period, which tried to keep tradition and modernity together, which was based on modernization through the military, and which tried to be a part of the West by promoting the rights of the non-Muslim minority within the empire. The second level is the Kemalist modernization process, which is based on a top-down modernization by breaking with tradition and forcing radical social changes. The third level is the integration process along the European Union axis, which has lasted from the Helsinki Agreement of 1999, when Turkey was officially declared a candidate for the European Union, to the present day. In the early stages of the integration process, the European Union built itself on relatively democratic values, and although it served to democratize Turkey and became an 'external instrument of change' (İnaç 2007: 14)

Based on this historical and theoretical background and drawing the necessary lessons from these processes, Turkey has an obligation to rebuild itself in terms of identity. Because if you do not define yourself, it is certain that others will define you on your behalf and attempt to encompass your culture and identity.

On the other hand, it should be taken into account that Turkey entered a new construction process through the Presidential Government System through the April 16, 2017 referendum. The statement of Mazzini, who led the Italian National Union and founded modern Italy, expresses very clearly the role of the nation-state in nation-building: 'We have created Italy, now it is time to create Italians' (İnaç & Ünal 2013: 225). In reconstructing

our identity, we must first and foremost take into account the past policies and practices that have distanced our identity from being a 'civilization builder'. In this context, we need to emphasize the words of the then British Prime Minister Llyod George in the British parliament; "The only way to defeat the Turks is to take away their holy books and religion and to denigrate their past" (İnaç 2021a: 14). In this respect, reinterpreting the basic parameters of identity, which - as we mentioned at the outset - is fictional, should be our main priority. In doing so, it is necessary not to ignore the fact that our country has not yet fully realized the process of nationhood/nationalization and that there are elements that do not agree on the indivisible integrity of the homeland, the state and the nation. Religion is one of the parameters that need to be reconstructed. Because Turkishness was not capable of building a civilization before it met Islam.

As a matter of fact, since the beginning of the two millennia, world politics has been determined through 'identity politics' (İnaç 2012: 202), and religion, sect, ethnicity and national affiliations have played a primary role in shaping identities. In this context, Islam has suffered the most damage. After the withdrawal of Soviet Russia as a communist threat, NATO perceived Islam as the biggest threat and tried to legitimize its existence through the fight against Islamic terrorism. However, there is a big problem: Islam exists, but Islamic terrorism does not (İnaç & Yaman 2015: 20). It has fallen to NATO and NATO-sponsored think tanks and intelligence agencies to create Islamic terrorism. As a matter of fact, in its Global Trends 2015 report published in 1995, the CIA openly declared that by 2015, 85 percent of the world's underground and above-ground resources will be in the hands of countries with Muslim populations and that measures should be taken now. This report has become a beacon for the global policies to be pursued.

Within the framework of this understanding, Turkey's north was targeted through Ukraine and Georgia in 2004-2005 (İnaç 2014: 38), Turkey's south through the Arab Spring in 2010 and Turkey's heartland on July 15, 2016. As a matter of fact, the internal actors used in the July 15 invasion attempt were robots and manikins that came to life through a distorted perception of religion with Messianic and Messianic understandings. Namely, al-Qaeda and the Taliban, which emerged after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Boko Haram, which ravaged Africa, sectarian conflicts caused by the American invasion of Iraq, and DAESH, which was shaped by the instability created by the Arab Spring, all define themselves through Islam. The West, with its information and media power, markets the distorted mentality that produces terror as true Islam (İnaç 2005: 67). Social media and different communication channels can also make the youth of our country dress up aggressive and radical attitudes as religious legitimacy through the inferiority complex brought about by Westernization.

6. CONCLUSION: TURKISH IDENTITY AS A RESPONSE TO EUROPEAN CONFRONTATION

In this context, we need to fortify some elements in the construction of a new identity. One of them is the formal and non-formal education system. Almost all nations have based their nation-building on raising citizens through the education system. In this context, the basic criteria for being a citizen of this country should be redefined in terms of nationality and localism and the curriculum should be redesigned around this understanding. Another important factor in the construction of identity is the nationalization and indigenization of capital. It has always been the middle classes that have driven the ideological and sociological transformation of a country. Ensuring free and fair social stratification through democracy, human rights and education will enable national and indigenous elements to take part in governance and play a leading role in social transformation. In a functioning market economy, therefore, every individual who uses democratic opportunities should have strong prospects for promotion and advancement. This can only be possible with an economy that has reduced its dependence on foreigners, built its own capital, and nationalized its defence and security. In this respect, we need to focus on our domestic resources, taking into account that the biggest problem of our rapidly industrializing country is foreign dependence on energy.

Last but not least, the most important transformation in identity construction is the redefinition of the state in terms of identity. As is well known, the most important document defining the state is the Constitution. The constitution establishes the citizen-state relationship through the country's self-definition. Nationality, citizenship and nationality are defined through certain frames of reference. In this respect, we can say that every state has an identity, and states identify their friends, enemies, threats, targets, tactics and strategies based on the definition of their identity. Unfortunately, as far as our country is concerned, the negative effects of not yet having a democratic and civilian constitution also manifest themselves in the context of identity. Although our Constitution has been amended many times, especially the amendments that changed

our form of government, our nation, which has been experiencing identity problems caused by the Westernization for two hundred years, needs a more concrete state-nation embrace.

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