

**TURKISH IDENTITY:  
National vs. State Identity in Turkey and Implications for U.S.-Turkey  
Relations**

**A Master's Thesis**

**by**

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BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA, TURKEY**

**June 2007**



*To Merissa,  
who allowed her big sister to be on the  
other side of the world for two years*

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Relations**

**The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
Bilkent University**

**By**

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MASTERS OF ARTS**

**In**

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BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA, TURKEY**

**June 2007**

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Lessons in Turkish Identity: National vs. State Identity in Turkey and Implications for U.S.-Turkey Relations**

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May 2007

There is an abundance of oversimplified labels about Turkey, and this thesis attempts, with a strong angle toward history and patterns, to look deeper into Turkish identity. It will be argued that Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, packaged for the Turks an identity to which they could subscribe. The various components of this initial identity will be distinguished.

The nation and state of Turkey overlapped nearly perfectly in the republic's early years, and the goal was for them to stay so, with Turkey being a pure nation-state in the true sense of the word, but a detachment has developed. This is Turkey's identity crisis, more than any political or social polarizations in the country today.

American ignorance of Turkey's identity has encouraged Turkish anti-Americanism. The two countries are supposedly 'faithful allies' on the political level, but what is understood (or rather misunderstood) on the public level does much relational harm. Mutual ignorance of each must be overcome between these two countries. The Kurdish problem will be discussed as an example of mutual misunderstanding.

**Keywords: Turkish identity, anti-Americanism, critical security studies, U.S.-Turkey relationship, geopolitics, strategy**

## ÖZET

### **Türk Kimliğine Bakış: Türkiye'deki Ulus ve Devlet Kimliği ve A.B.D- Türkiye İlişkilerine Etkisi**

Eide, Karalyn

Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Türkiye hakkında fazla basitleştirilmiş bir çok etiket vardır. Bu tez tarih ve kalıplara bakarak Türk kimliğine derinden bakmayı amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye'nin kurucusu Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün Türklerin onaylayabileceği kimlik yarattığı iddia edilmektedir. Bu kimliğin farklı yönleri ortaya koyulacaktır.

Türkiye'nin kelimenin tam anlamıyla bir ulu devlet olmasıyla, Türk ulusu ve devleti cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında kusursuz bir şekilde çakışmıştır, ancak zamanla bir ayrılık gelişmiştir. Politik ve sosyal kutuplaşmalardan çok, Türkiye'nin kimlik sorunu budur.

Amerika'nın Türkiye hakkındaki bilgisizliği Türkiye'deki Amerikan düşmanlığını körüklemiştir. İki ülke politik düzeyde 'sadık müttefikler' olarak görülseler de, kamuoyu anlayışı (ya da yanlış anlayışı) ilişkilerde sorun yaratmaktadır. Bu karşılıklı bilgisizlik ortadan kaldırılmalıdır. Bu yanlış anlaşılmaya örnek olarak Kürt sorunu tartışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk kimliği, Amerikan karşıtlığı, kritik güvenlik çalışmaları, A.B.D- Türkiye ilişkileri, jeopolitika, strateji**

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Until the past few years, Turkey has been largely addressed in a Cold War framework, focusing on land blocks and strategy. In many ways this was necessary during the Cold War, when overriding ideologies prevailed, splitting the world into two clearly defined camps and presenting the very real threat of Mutually Assured Destruction.

But since the Cold War ended, its terminology and lingo are no longer very helpful, and are often harmful. The United States has produced many geostrategic metaphors for Turkey, all based on global positioning and potential instrumentality, and Turks respond in one of two ways. They either assimilate to these metaphors and repeat them back, because they hear from the West that this will help them to remain “relevant” after the Cold War. Or, they resent these metaphors and this leads to further estrangement from a former “friend,” who, as it turns out, does not really know them at all.

Turkey and America have, in the past, cooperated to a large extent. While it does not seem like the two will ever divorce each other, it can be pretty miserable for both sides when a bellicose man and woman are living together in supposed marriage under

the same roof. Turkey and the U.S. are in such a marriage, by virtue of NATO and the official alliance at the government level, and also by nature of the past they share, but it is a relationship full of offense and fault, suffering from misunderstanding and a lack of communication. It is widely accepted that communication, and the resulting level of understanding, are key to a relationship. While the Realist emphasis on military and economic capabilities of states is important, this analysis will turn to the constraints and capabilities created by identity, by looking at how identity is formed and influences the national conception. Especially in the U.S.-Turkey case, international relations are fraught with unforgiven slights, misconceptions, vulnerabilities, insecurities, and false assumptions. In an attempt to uncover a new level of understanding, this paper is a study of Turkish identity.

## **1.1 Literature Review**

Turkish identity is a popular topic, now filtering down to common culture. This has happened especially since the freedom-inhibiting Article 301 (of Turkey's Penal Code), which was new in 2005, prohibits a Turk from "degrading Turkishness." With this law's inhibition of freedom of speech, it has been an issue hanging over the Turkey-EU relationship, spawning popular concern and investigation into the meaning of Turkish identity and Turkishness.

However, Turkish identity is only very recent as an area of study and is almost non-existent among non-Turkish scholars. Western scholars have examined Turkey strategically and historically, but have not, overall, looked at Turkey from an identity standpoint, and how that historical identity impacts its behavior today.

The first Western works on the Republic of Turkey were mostly exploratory, much like a *National Geographic* article, meant just to familiarize the Western reader with a new people group and its cultural and political forms. Turkey was another Eastern country for the West to re-discover, and the West seemed to look at the Turks as another oriental group to be ruled, forgetting that the Turks themselves were recent heirs of an empire. One Western author noted this conflict quite condescendingly in 1925:

The Turks without exception hated us... The British air of superiority drove them to fury, but, forced to keep it pent up, they raged inwardly, and their hatred became as full of bitter poison as an unlanced boil... and British officials failed to realize that they were a ruling people and not Hindus or negroes to be treated as subjects. It was only a few years since they had possessed a great empire.<sup>1</sup>

Other works of this type describe Turkey to be in “a healthy state of affairs” and include pictures of Anatolian peoples in their villages and garments for the Westerner’s viewing interest.<sup>2</sup> The overall effect is quite comical, especially with a photograph of Turkish peasants in modern day clothes; one sports a toothless grin in new “civilized” clothes that are clearly mismatched to his lifestyle.<sup>3</sup> Another work informs the West, in quite savage terms, that “Ataturk took this nation by the neck at the end of World War II and shook it, demanding that it become modern.”<sup>4</sup>

Then, during the Cold War, strategic works were often concentrated on containing the Soviet Union. The literature on Turkey, therefore, was regarding Turkey’s role as a buffer, as NATO’s “Southern Flank” piece that would hold the Soviet Union in from the

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Armstrong, *Turkey in Travail: The Birth of a New Nation* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Limited, 1925), 178.

<sup>2</sup> M. Philips Price, *A History of Turkey: From Empire to Republic* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 218.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> William O. Douglas, “Introduction,” in *Turkey and the World*, by Altemur Kiliç (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959), 5.

bottom.<sup>5</sup> Turkey was thus formally accepted into the West based on a realization of the value of its geostrategic position and its ability to serve Western interests.

The next grouping of literature on the Republic of Turkey came in the decade that followed the Cold War. These were mostly marked by the “new” geostrategy and geopolitics of Turkey. It was in a key spot on the international playing field, and must be utilized not only for its blockage of the former Soviet Union, but also for access to other regions. But its position was also one of uncertainty, situated precariously between regions on a chunk of land valuable for its waterways, size, richness, and proximity to other areas. Even a cursory glance at titles shows the prevailing tendency to consider Turkey in terms of the “trouble” it was in or the benefits it might bring to the West. A classic is the RAND document by Ian O. Lesser, “Bridge or Barrier: Turkey and the West After the Cold War,” (1992). Others include *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition* (1997), by Simon V. Mayall, *The New Geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey’s Position* (2001) by Bülent Araş, and another RAND publication called *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan* (2000) by Ian O. Lesser, Zalmay Khalilzad, and F. Stephen Larrabee. Khalilzad’s chapter in particular in this book highlights how “Turkey is very important to Western interests.” Mustafa Aydın’s edited volume of 1998, *Turkey at the Threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, has sections referring to Turkey as a “bridge between continents” or a regional “balance holder.” Thus Turkey continued, even after its primary blockage role, to be famously functional.

The third wave of literature, almost all written by Turks studying or working in America, has been the product of recent positive steps toward really understanding

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<sup>5</sup> See Ali Karaosmanoğlu, “Turkey and the Southern Flank,” a chapter in *NATO’s Southern Allies: Internal and External Challenges* (1988), edited by John Chipman, as an example, or any of the documents produced by policy research of the RAND Corporation during that era.



Turkey at a deeper level. Worth mentioning are three recent publications from Routledge: *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who Is A Turk?* (2006) by Soner Çağaptay, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity* (2003) by Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, and *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition* (2004) by Ömer Taşpınar. All include deeper thinking on the issue of identity in Turkey, from authors who have lived out the identity questions and seen them from a foreign perspective as well. Taşpınar has also written the paper “An Uneven Fit? The ‘Turkish Model’ and the Arab World” (2003), suggesting that the “model” idea is not so great after all. Many works studying the European Union’s identity, and Turkey’s identity in relation to accession probability, have also been published in recent years.

Lerna Yanık’s award-winning 2006 paper, “Beyond ‘Bridges,’ ‘Crossroads’ and ‘Buffer Zones’: Defining a New International Role for Turkey,” also argues against reliance on the typical, overused Cold War metaphors, explaining that such usage forces Turkey into a role of passivity and uniformity in foreign policy. An insightful view into how the ‘Turks’ view the Turkish-American relationship can be found in a recently published chapter by Nur Bilge Criss called, “Turkish Perspectives of the United States of America,” in the edited volume *What They Think of Us: International Perceptions of the United States and the War on Terrorism*. Taşpınar’s paper from the Brookings Institution in 2005, “The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey,” similarly offers a deeper look at this phenomenon, based on Turkey’s internal identity conflict, and offers specific policy recommendations. Even RAND strategist Ian O. Lesser has begun to change his tune, in a new work called “Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics,” published in *Survival* in 2006. This article, which advocates a distancing

from the tendency to consider Turkey only in terms of geopolitics, is a drastic departure from his previous titles.

However, some recent works have continued to rely on the same theme of the strategic use of Turkey. In the prelude to a speech by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, in July 2006 at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., Strobe Talbott, current president of the institution, opened by praising Turkey for its contribution to the West, as a “vital ally of the United States for decades, from the Korean conflict to standing with us on the front lines of the Cold War.” Gül then proceeded to play on the U.S. desire for Turkey to serve as a “Muslim model” in the Middle East, saying Turkish democracy “is a gift to the world because the Turkish experience shows that Islam is compatible with democracy and because it inspires other Muslim societies as well.”<sup>6</sup>

This work will be an effort by a non-Turk to move from an outsider’s perspective to a more thoughtful insider’s perspective, really trying to *understand* what is going on beneath the surface. Moving away from sources that are heavily geostrategic, as well as recent ones that begin to stress identity, I looked at sources outside of all this and drew conclusions on my own. But the biggest source is the time I have spent in Turkey, living with Turks, hearing their opinions, learning their language, and adapting to their culture. While this may be an inductivist approach, it is valuable nonetheless for descriptiveness and insight. The goal is not scientific conclusions, but “understanding,” as in Martin Hollis and Steve Smith’s distinction between explaining and understanding in this field of study. One point of their famous work argues that in nature there is often an “absolute” truth because nature is not a human invention. However, the social world is in some ways

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<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20060706turkey.pdf>

a human creation and therefore the goal of international relations should be understanding this social world rather than explaining it.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of such “understanding,” very few, if any, Western authors have the time, desire, and availability to get into the shoes of the other side, as regards Turkey. This kind of effort is evident before the Cold War, as in Chester M. Tobin’s 1944 book *Turkey: Key to the East*. Despite its cold geostrategic title, Tobin’s warm effort shines through. In the introduction he writes:

I came to know the finer characteristics and the worthy national ambitions of the Turks. I associated with them for years. I learned their language. I believe I understand in fair measure their problems and their desires. I personally like the Turks. I thrill at their remarkable resurgence to become a great nation.<sup>8</sup>

But since the Cold War such personal texture has been replaced by themes of geostrategic needs that continue long after the Soviet Union’s collapse. With that, my own goal agrees almost word for word with Price’s in 1944:

...I have been endeavoring to portray to Americans the real Turks and their vibrant progressive nation. Now, more than ever, I feel there is need for a clear, concise, historical picture of the old Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. An accurate interpretation of Turkey’s position in the maelstrom swirling about this two-continent nation is essential to all Americans thinking and warring globally today...It can help to piece together the average American’s jumble of truth and fiction about Turkey into the picturesque, important pattern that it is.<sup>9</sup>

## 1.2 The Aim of Research

Many scholars have examined Turkish nationhood and Turkish nationality, and are starting to mention Turkish identity in their works, although there has not yet been a book or major article devoted solely to the study of Turkish identity. This country needs

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding in International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Chester M. Tobin, *Turkey: Key to the East*, (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1944), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Tobin, 13.

to be studied in the framework of identity, however, because of its unique location and the circumstances that surround it and thus shape its identity, as will be further argued in the chapter to follow. Unfortunately this unique location is exactly what has kept Turkey to being studied mostly from a geopolitical or geostrategic point of view, especially by Westerners. Turkey tends to be seen as place of instrumentality for greater powers' use, rather than an instrument in the concert in its own right.

This thesis aims to take identity studies, which have become popular recently especially with the advent of critical security studies, and apply it to Turkey. This involves a strong examination of history, politics, and sociology in the initial development of identity. While many works are written on the history of the republic, this research will look at the history with regard to identity development under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It will also give special attention to nation versus state in the identity framework, and provide a visual diagram I developed for clarity on Turkish identity.

This thesis also intends to apply some of the identity understanding to the U.S.-Turkey relationship, with the question of what identity shows us in terms of stemming the tide of anti-Americanism in Turkey. This is not a prescriptive aim, but more of a shedding of light, with possible suggestions, in the final sections of the thesis, for increasing mutual understanding.

### **1.3 Précis**

There is no shortage of oversimplified labels about Turkey, so this thesis aims to delve beyond geostrategic classifications, in order to look deeper into the complex

Turkish identity. It will be argued, in an implicitly Constructivist framework<sup>10</sup> and with strong consideration of history and historical patterns, that the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, packaged for the Turks an identity to which they could adhere.

In the early years of the republic, the nation and state of Turkey overlapped nearly perfectly, and the goal was for them to remain so, being a pure nation-state in the true sense of the word. But a detachment has developed. This is the identity crisis with which Turkey has been struggling. Many movements have risen to prominence, promoting various ideologies in the name of Atatürk. Today, more than any political or social issue, it is the question of Turkish identity that polarizes Turks, bewilders the West, and roils international relations.

The United States and Turkey have been called “faithful allies” on the political level and the two countries have indeed enjoyed a positive relationship. However, what is understood (or rather misunderstood) on the public level does much relational harm. It is unfortunate that this once healthy bond has deteriorated so heavily. American ignorance of Turkey’s identity has played a key role in this decline and encouraged Turkish anti-Americanism. Likewise, Turkey does not fully understand America. The labels and challenges can be overcome—and must be—if Turkey and America are to recover the lost alliance, leading to greater peace and prosperity in the future.

## **1.4 Structure**

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<sup>10</sup> Constructivists argue that the world is socially constructed by humans, and that in order to understand we must de-construct some of the realities we assume to be true, especially mutually understood but not always clear concepts like sovereignty, freedom, security, or identity. The concepts are in the collective consciousness, but not as natural facts of the world. They are creations of the human mind, enabling us to discuss issues and comprehend each other, but the concepts can become too entrenched. This then has potential to block creative approaches to problem-solving and assuming as foregone conclusions that are actually only products of our conceptualization.

Chapter 2 will provide theoretical background on identity studies and clarification of the term “identity.” Following that, the understanding of identity will be applied to Turkey in chapter 3, which will show the development of the republic historically, the research barrier inherent in identity as a sociology study versus identity as a historical study, and an overview of the components of Turkish national identity. Chapter 4 will be solely devoted to national identity, expanding on these components and developing them in a vivid metaphor extending throughout the chapter. This will show how Atatürk packaged a new Turkish identity for the new republic. Then, chapter 5 will fit the state into this metaphor of the nation, first with focus on the state’s function internally in relation to the nation. The second part will concentrate externally on Turkey’s international region, role, and rough neighborhood. Chapter 6 will then turn to the Turkey-America relationship, and how the two suffer from a lack of understanding of one another. This will be specifically applied to the Kurdish case as a real example, and then suggestions will be made for promoting mutual understanding in general.

## **1.5 Sources**

This study is based on primary and secondary sources, both old and recent, published in English and Turkish. It includes newspaper articles, congressional proceedings, speeches, lectures, discussions, surveys, and personal conversations. For secondary sources, it uses historical works, strategic assessments, books and papers from think-tank institutions, theoretical volumes, investigative pieces, analytical books, and works by scholars, journalists, specialists, government employees, and citizens.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

The vague concept of *Türklük*—and the related Penal Code article #301 banning its insult—is ever more frequently in the news in Turkey. The English translation into the awkward and forced word “Turkishness,” sounds even murkier. Yet it is the basis not only for myriad legal claims, but also for the very identity of every Turkish person. Its cousin phrase, *Türk Kimliği* (Turkish Identity), holds a similarly high rank, and any perceived or real insult to either one is considered not only traitorous, but also criminal.

Somewhere down in the recesses of the Turks’ self-conception, and deep in the pockets of the republican state Gazi Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk) created out of Ottoman Empire ruins in 1923, there is an unshakable sense of both Turkish identity, and the need to defend it. The Republic of Turkey, the borders of Turkey, and the people of Turkey must be defended at all costs, exclaimed the great leader in many a speech to the people of the newly formed country. While the republic of Turkey, despite pitfalls and potholes along the way, has remained very much intact, and the borders of Turkey have not been credibly challenged since then, it’s the people of Turkey that remain at risk—or at least perceive it that way.

With this in mind, strategists who claim identity security or identity protection is too small a matter<sup>11</sup> are missing a major factor influencing not only domestic conflict but also foreign policy and therefore international relations. This thesis will examine what it means to be a *Turk* in *Turkey*, and what it means to be *Turkey* in the *world*.

These are questions that Americans (and Turks alike, to their own disadvantage, going along with the West) have largely ignored. Americans tend to ask instead, “how does Turkey fit into our American puzzle and our strategy?” or “How can we make Turkey relevant and useful for us?” Although such questions must be asked in a *realpolitik* world, the aim of this paper is to move away from study based on strategy, and instead center on identity, specifically Turkish identity, with a belief that more informed understanding of it will ultimately further the valued strategic purposes of both countries.

One of the purposes of this paper is to dig deeper into the lives of the Turkish people—their history, mindset, self-identification, and sense of placement. Thus, identity studies enter the picture. And with the introduction of such a broad yet vital word as identity, it is first necessary to delineate exactly what the word means and seeks to explain. The following questions will be addressed: What is identity? What is it composed of? How does it form? Is there always one identity? Are there different kinds of identity? Can it be fully known for a particular country, group, or individual? Is identity fixed or fluid, historically permanent or a modern creation? How is it different from nationalism or nationhood or culture or society? Is it separate from ethnicity and race? Does it fit into one of the known theoretical frameworks for international relations? How does it relate to foreign policy, and is it even worth studying?

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<sup>11</sup> This seems to be the prevailing view of international relations Realists. They may acknowledge identity as important, but do not make a study of it.



## 2.1 Identity Defined and Formulated

At its most basic level, identity is an understanding of who “we” are or “I” am in relation to the “other.” The *we* can be classified any number of ways and so can the *other*, but the important aspect is the relation between the two. The principle is that one knows oneself best when contrasted with another or others.

Thus, “national and state identities are formed in relationship to other nations and states.”<sup>12</sup> This becomes quite interesting for Turkey, which is plagued with what is known as the “Encirclement Syndrome,” a peril felt by nation-states that are surrounded by real and potential enemies. Turkey’s internationally geographic positioning has also been characterized, since the Cold War, as a “Tough Neighborhood.” Even with only those thoughts in mind, Turkey’s sense of *self versus other* is extremely salient.

The basic level of identity as self-conception, however, only scratches the surface of a vast subtext of meanings, traditions, rhetoric, expectations, and pride. For a working definition of national identity, leading scholar Anthony Smith’s outline of the fundamental factors of national identity will be used:

1. *an historic territory, or homeland*
2. *common myths and historical memories*
3. *a common, mass public culture*
4. *common legal rights and duties for all members*
5. *a common economy with territorial mobility for members.*

According to Smith, “a nation can therefore be defined as a named human population” sharing the five features above.<sup>13</sup> Thus, national identity is quite broad, and in speaking

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<sup>12</sup> Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 8.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 14.

of a particular country's identity, scholars draw from components such as religion, myth, education, leadership, ethnicity, race, arts and music, language, geography, and cultural norms. But how do all of those components form? Part of it is the natural outflow of history and culture, based on the characteristics just listed. But perhaps an even larger part of it is the actual *packaging* of such characteristics, into a compressed and digestible understanding of oneself. The "whos" and "hows" and "whens" of the packaging process are intriguing, and will be discussed in the case study of Turkey throughout this paper.

A related question is that of identity's sources. One academic, Stephen Saideman, in summarizing a collection of essays on Middle Eastern nations' identities reveals three primary sources of political identity in particular. They are: 1) leaders and power elite, 2) societal forces/domestic conflict, and 3) international factors, especially the ends of empires (particularly interesting for Turkey, which is built on the not-too-distant ruins of a collapsed Ottoman Empire). Yet, such concise categories aside, Saideman still notes that "in sum, the contributors have not arrived at a consensus on what shapes identity. The authors largely concur that multiple identities exist and that the salience of each one varies over time."<sup>14</sup>

This then begs the question of identity versus *identities*. Specifically, does Turkey have one, clear, and easily defensible identity, or does it have multiple, conflicting, and sometimes-contradictory identities? Sources—and even a cursory look at Turkish society—suggest the latter. To assume that nation-states have just one identity would be oversimplification; there are different identities and even various types of identities.

One fundamental distinction is between collective and individual identity.

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Saideman, "Thinking Theoretically About Identity and Foreign Policy," in *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, Ibid, 188-193.

Individual identity speaks for itself, and tends to the focus of psychology, but collective identity spreads to the realm of sociology and nation-state studies. Regarding collective identity, David Snow writes:

...discussions of the concept invariably suggest that its essence resides in a shared sense of “one-ness” or “we-ness” anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one or more actual or imagined sets of “others.”<sup>15</sup>

Within this is the collective process of identity-formation, which can arise subconsciously from the group, or can be directed by an effective leader. Before the Republic of Turkey, any sense of identity in being Turk came from the former route, whereas with the establishment of the republic, collective identity of the nation was purposefully directed by its leader. The *process* itself (even more so than the end result) of directing collective identity is vital to understanding a group’s identity, for it can be seen and grasped, whereas the identity itself is often nebulous at best, or utterly indefinable at worst. The works on collective identity also emphasize that “collective identity is, at its core, a process rather than a property of social actors” and that in the course of actors recognizing themselves as a collectivity, “this process is more vital to conceptualizing collective identity than any resultant product or property.”<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2 State vs. National

When talking collectively about a country of people, one of the most important distinctions that emerged in recent years is “state identity” versus “national identity.” Liberal German historian Friedrich Meinecke did a great service by first making this distinction, in his 1908 *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat: Studien zur Genesis des*

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<sup>15</sup> David Snow, “Collective Identity and Expressive Forms,” *Center for the Study of Democracy*, Paper 01-07, (1 October 2001), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Snow, 4.

*deutschen Nationalstaates (Worldcitizendom and [the] Nation-State: Studies on the Genesis of German Nation-States)*. He separated “the *Kulturnation*, the largely passive cultural community, from the *Staatsnation*, the active, self-determining political nation.”<sup>17</sup> This is a vital difference, for, on top of Smith’s definition of national identity above—that “named human population” group—there is placed a *state*. Sometimes a state is formed first and the people gradually fill it. But in most cases, as in Turkey’s, the state structure is laid upon that pre-existing nation of people (whether collectively aware of themselves or not) to give it leaders, government, institutions, and especially foreign policy, and a viable organ in the international system.

Anthony Smith’s hallmark work on national identity notes the “profound gulf” between nation and state, with the state referring “exclusively to public institutions, differentiated from, and autonomous from, other social institutions and exercising a monopoly of coercion and extraction within a given territory.”<sup>18</sup> Since his work, this difference has been further highlighted, both by academics and by history itself. Since his 1991 publishing of the book, and with developments in the post-Cold War world, it has become both more clear and crucial that “the state and the nation are not coterminous in much of the world.”<sup>19</sup> For the purposes of identity studies, the distinction has been further clarified and codified. Telhami and Barnett, echoing Smith’s definition, present the distinction between the two—national and state—identities:

State identity can be understood as the corporate and officially demarcated identity linked to the state apparatus; national identity can be defined as a group of people who aspire to or have a historical homeland, share a common myth and

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<sup>17</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 9.

historical memories, have legal rights or duties for all members, and have markers to distinguish themselves from others.<sup>20</sup>

Telhami and Barnett's volume notes that "In the Middle East the state's identity can be quite distinct from national identities of the local population, generating the domestic insecurities apparent to even the casual observer."<sup>21</sup> Their collection of essays does not include Turkey (which is often considered more a part of Europe, or the ever-elusive "Eurasia"), but is the aim of this thesis to do so, and to link aforementioned "domestic insecurities" to the Turkish-American relationship so both the U.S. and Turkey can perhaps make more reasonably informed and self-reflective foreign policy decisions.

This thesis, in applying this distinction to Turkey, recognizes that the government of a country, although representing it abroad, does not fully embody its identity. Nor do the people of a country, although inhabiting and comprising it, fully embody the identity. A country's collective identity is found somewhere between the state and national identities, and the two may or may not be aligned with each other.

Overall, national identity seems to present itself as the deeper, primary, antecedent identity, in that states must "legitimate themselves in national and popular terms as the states of particular nations...."<sup>22</sup> Mustafa Kemal, in creating a *state*, also had to take a loose, scattered, and unconnected population, which had plenty of cultural and religious substance, but no real conception of identity as a group, and give them a packaged national identity worth dying for—thus justifying Turkey as the *state* for the *nation* of the Turks. He indeed worked toward exactly that principle of legitimization. Today, however, particularly in relation to Turkey's identity and security on the

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<sup>20</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 8.

<sup>21</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 15.

international stage, the vital linkage appears impeded. This is more dangerous than a mere intellectual phenomenon, in that “the lack of overlap between state and national identity can generate an inherently unstable and precarious situation, one that results in political, economic, and symbolic exercises by the state in order to shift subnational loyalties to the symbols of the state”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, this is what Turkey may be experiencing currently, and has experienced periodically since the foundation of the republic. The two (conflicting) identities will be discussed subsequently.

### 2.3 Identity Changeability

Beyond the “state” versus “national” distinctions, there are always multiple identities at work in a country. Each individual, collectivity, nation, or state can possess various identities, such as identities along religious, ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, or political lines. Perhaps miraculously, “sometimes these identities can be integrated in a relatively harmonious way.”<sup>24</sup> However, most of the time the case is that these identities conflict more than they synchronize, and in the instance of Turkey, there seems to be more cacophony than harmony at times and in recent days. Possibly more applicable to Turkey is to “think of a hierarchy of identities, one that constitutes the core and others that are ‘activated’ during certain social situations and do not undermine the pillar.”<sup>25</sup> Turkey’s “pillar” would be *Türklük* (Turkishness) since the founding of the republic,<sup>26</sup> but as evidenced in the frequent challenges to the penal code article protecting it, plenty of other identities revolve around this pillar.

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<sup>23</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Although the term as such was not coined until much later, the concept was there in the new meaning of being Turk after 1923, and was taught (officially and unofficially) to the public. Turkishness’ meaning, and use in the constitution and penal code, will be detailed further below.

As follows, scholars widely agree that identity is not clear-cut and unitary. However, there is debate in academia as to whether identity is fixed or created. *Primordialists* believe identity is fixed, meaning they argue that communal identities are a “given of social existence.”<sup>27</sup> *Instrumentalists*, on the other hand, believe identity is created. This distinction is important, because it determines whether politicians are able to influence identity, or whether identity is a constraint on politics and politicians than an opportunity for social and behavioral manipulation.<sup>28</sup>

Primordialists tend to see identity as natural, a constant throughout history, whereby the nation and its identity—whether discovered or not—always existed, and it is just the *study* of nation and identity that is recent. Instrumentalists view identity and nation as recent creations in and of themselves, generated through our ways of grasping the world and through our tools of study, arguing that humans did not always see themselves in terms of national groups or cluster together within common identities, but that leaders and elites created these organizational structures.

In this case study of Turkey, the notion of identity falls somewhere between Primordialism and Instrumentalism. It falls short of extreme Instrumentalism, because it assumes instead that identity is not just the result of leaders manipulating the masses and is not something one can just imagine and choose to impose on people. Something has to exist beforehand. But on the other side of the coin, identity and nation are not prior, overriding, and determining influences *in a defined sense*. Leaders have to make it that, but they also have to start with material that is already there. This taking of the raw substance that is indeed “foregoing,” and naming and organizing and shaping it into a

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<sup>27</sup> Saideman, 186.

<sup>28</sup> Saideman, 188.

cohesive identity, is what I call *packaging*, as noted above and to be further detailed in later chapters. It is taking what the Primordialists find to have existed throughout history and successfully and neatly wrapping it up in a process of what Instrumentalists view as *creation* of identity. More specifically, it is a process of condensing, codifying, proclaiming, and instilling. Sometimes it may happen for a nation gradually or quite by accident, but in the case of the Republic of Turkey, it was done swiftly and successfully by the Kemalist regime in the 1920s and 1930s.

It follows that if identity is partially a *created* animal, then it must be fluid as well, in that it can be tamed, treated, tampered with; essentially, it is always open to *re-creation*. Such a characteristic of identity—its changing nature—makes it all the more difficult to study, but all the more necessary as well. It is a dependent variable with a heavy influence not only in domestic politics but also with a large spillover into international relations.<sup>29</sup> Rather than giving up on identity as something too “soft” and intangible to study, we should instead understand how and why it forms in a particular country, and what impact it has on worldview, self-perception, and decision-making. As sociologist Bill McSweeney argues, “Identity is not a fact of society; it is a process of negotiation among people and interest groups... Identity is not to be taken as an independent variable *tout court*; it is often the outcome of a labeling process which reflects a conflict of interests at the political level.”<sup>30</sup> It is this process that will be expounded upon in the chapters to follow.

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<sup>29</sup> It follows that if identity is a dependent variable, it is inherently variable as well. Accordingly, the actors that vary it will be developed throughout this thesis.

<sup>30</sup> Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 73.



## 2.4 Identity, Nationalism, and Culture

Identity must be explained in relation to a couple key terms that will fit into the identity puzzle throughout this thesis. One question is that of nationalism, which certainly ties in with identity and is clearly part of Turkey's case. Ernest Gellner, one of the other leading scholars in this field, handled the connection between nationalism and culture in a way that offers a clear context for understanding how identity fits. In defining the theme and title of his book *Nationalism*, Gellner writes, "Nationalism is a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond. Whatever principles of authority may exist between people depend for their legitimacy on the fact that the members of the group concerned are of the same culture."<sup>31</sup> With this basis, one must ask how identity relates to nationalism and how it relates to culture. In the grand scheme, it appears to fall between the two. Nationalism arises from intense identity solidarity, but identity itself arises from intense cultural solidarity, especially as guided and directed by leaders. Thus, identity is largely cultural awareness intensified—and when used to draw lines in terms of unity and differentiation, it often leads to *nationalism*.

As a side note, nationalism itself is a difficult word to comprehend in Turkish. Two words are used in the newspapers to mean nationalism: *milliyetçilik* and *ulusalcılık*, and there is confusion and debate even among Turks as to the meanings attached to each one.<sup>32</sup> There are also subcategories of nationalism, like *Atatürk milliyetçiliği* ("Atatürk nationalism") and *kafatası milliyetçiliği* ("skull nationalism").<sup>33</sup> Nationalism is tightly

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<sup>31</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> Altan Öymen, "Bahçeli ile Baykal'ın milliyetçilik açıklamaları güzel, ama...", *Radikal*, 17 February 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Öymen.

wrapped up in Turkish identity, Turkish politics, and these days, Turkish crime.<sup>34</sup> It is used to accuse and defend claims of discrimination and exclusivity, and between political parties as a rhetorical device. Nationalism is a common bedfellow of identity. It will be discussed in much detail, with specific regard to Turkey, in later chapters.

In sum, identity itself, for the purposes of this paper, is linguistically situated in a society somewhere between culture and nationalism, in an abstract but important place. This place takes mere culture (language, food, arts, clothing, habits, manners, tendencies) to a place of belonging and non-belonging, often classified in the more restrictive “ethnicity” term. Societally speaking, identity is what makes a particular society particular, setting it off from world society in general and from other clustered societies around it. By this avenue of identity, a social bond of culture, as in Gellner’s definition, becomes something powerful and even dangerous in the potential transformation to extreme nationalism.

## **2.5 Family, Race, Ethnicity**

Within society and identity-speak, there is an added concern of whether an identity is racial or ethnic, and the sparks and issues that fly off from such demarcation and differentiation. While this thesis does not center on ethnic identity, it deserves some explanation based on the overwhelming presence of ethnic problems (or, more correctly, what the West *terms* as ethnic problems) in Turkey.

Kathryn Manzo, who advocates an argument that nationalist practices are a sort of “political religion,” explains nations and nationalism as follows: “Nations are imagined as kinship groups under the authority of a god-like and frequently masculinized state;

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<sup>34</sup> It leads to crime when used as legitimization for hate crimes perpetuated against minorities deemed to be a “threat to the nation.”

those outside the boundaries created and maintained by nationalism are treated as a different...species of either human or animal....”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it follows that those *inside* the boundaries are the same species. Applied to Turkey, everyone is the same “species”<sup>36</sup>—that is, Turk—but to an outsiders’ perspective, there are different “species” that require acknowledgement and minority rights. Although Atatürk made every effort to define Turkey and Turks not by race, as will be elucidated in later chapters, Manzo points out that “race remains alive in collective memory and common sense” despite all efforts to unify under terms of “culture” or “ethnicity.”<sup>37</sup> Even ethnicity becomes familial, though, as Smith notes: “linkage between family and nation reappears in nationalist mythologies and testifies to the continuing centrality of this attribute of ethnicity.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the very word “nation” in the English language was taken from roots in the word “family,” and “the word *race* entered the English language in 1508 as a synonym for family lineage.”<sup>39</sup>

However, though both are associated with family, there are important differences between ethnicity and race. As ethnicity is the most inextricable from collective national identity, and has crucial distinctions from race, it deserves a more complete definition. While instrumentalism might argue that ethnic identity is purely ‘situational’ and primordialists might say ethnic identity is permanent, existing outside of time and space, there is a more appropriate middle road. “Between these two extremes lie those

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<sup>35</sup> Kathryn A. Manzo, *Creating Boundaries: The Politics of Race and Nation* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 3.

<sup>36</sup> With the exception of a few splinter groups, whose minority status is officially recognized because they are “non-Muslim”: Eastern Orthodox Christian, Armenian Orthodox Christian, and Jewish faiths. These groups together constitute less than 0.5% of the population.

<sup>37</sup> Manzo, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 22.

<sup>39</sup> Manzo, 7-8.

approaches that stress the historical and symbolic-cultural attributes of ethnic identity.”<sup>40</sup>

Smith accordingly characterizes “ethnic community,” or the often-used French word *ethnie*, by these attributes:

- 1- a collective proper name
- 2- a myth of common ancestry
- 3- shared historical memories
- 4- one or more differentiating elements of common culture
- 5- an association with a specific ‘homeland’
- 6- a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population<sup>41</sup>

Accordingly, by this definition, ethnicity is a description very different from race, which is biological and genetic. “Such a community must be sharply differentiated from a race in the sense of a social group that is held to possess unique hereditary biological traits that allegedly determine the mental attributes of the group.”<sup>42</sup> Ethnicity, on the other hand, is largely subjective. It has a sense of some permanency, but not bloodlines and biological backing. “Most important, it is myths of common ancestry, not any fact of ancestry (which is usually difficult to ascertain), that are crucial. It is fictive descent and putative ancestry that matters for the sense of ethnic identification.”<sup>43</sup> This distinction of ancestral myth versus factual bloodlines will be important later for studying Atatürk’s understanding of being Turk and how the nation was incorporated under one (cultural) identity. Drawing lines of nationality based on race is considered racism, but ethnicity has more of an element of choice. Can one choose to be Turk or not?

Thus, family and race and nation are more tied together than one might suspect, and even Western models of nation are “*more racial* than they often seem.”<sup>44</sup> It follows

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<sup>40</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 20.

<sup>41</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 22.

<sup>44</sup> Manzo, 8.

that understandings of national identity will almost always tie in components of race and ethnicity, whether they claim so or not. While Manzo observes how ethnicity is powerful in “collective memory,” Saideman’s essay asserts that it is also powerful in the hands of national leaders:

...politicians can use the circumstances of ethnic kin to emphasize certain ethnic identities at the expense of other identities and issues. When constituents focus on economic problems or other troublesome issues, a politician can use a foreign event to increase the salience of ethnic identity, creating unity at least for the short term.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.6 Why Identity?

So why does all of this matter for studying foreign relations? Keeping in mind information about what identity is and what it is not; knowledge of its different categorizations; its changeability; its “fixed” versus “created” aspects; and its place in the bigger picture of culture, society, nation, ethnicity, and race—what does it offer to the study of international politics?

Before answering this question, it helps to take a step back and understand how each theoretical framework treats the issue of identity, and to hone in on the most appropriate one. According to Saideman, the treatment of four main approaches in international relations toward identity can be summarized as follows:

*Realism*- “identity does not matter”

*Institutionalism*- identity “constrains foreign policy”

*Constructivism*- “identity essentially constructs the world so that perceptions of one’s state and the others are defined by one’s identity”

*Liberalism* – identity “influences the ethno-political strategies (and, thus, the foreign policies) of rational politicians”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Saideman, 174.

<sup>46</sup> Saideman, 169.

This paper essentially takes a Constructivist viewpoint, while affirming that identity does indeed also limit foreign policy options (as in Institutionalism) and impact the strategies of politicians (as in Liberalism). To say “identity does not matter,” as in the Realist viewpoint, is to ignore why people feel they need security in the first place. It would reduce international behavior only to the protection of borders and the formulation of strategy, as was indeed done throughout most of history. But there are deeper layers of human desire underneath, and something nearer and dearer to be protected.

Going back to the original means of defining identity, as an understanding of “self” versus “other,” identity becomes the basic venue for differentiation among nation-states: for separation, disagreement, enemies, allies, treaties, etc. Once two groups of people (“nations”) understand themselves to be separate as such, and especially after they draw boundary lines around their land as political states, there is potential for conflict between opposing entities defined by the states and nations with which the people identify themselves. This potential for conflict, and the means of preventing, handling, and solving it, is, in short, international relations.

More specifically within this conflict potential, security is generally the main objective of any nation-state in the international system. The state itself, to be protected as a political unit, needs to ensure autonomy, self-rule, and its borders from invasion. But the people of the state, besides the protection of a political unit to bind and rule them, need another layer of security, a type that has come to be called “societal security.” According to the classic work on this issue by Ole Wæver, et al., and well-noted by Bill McSweeney in his response chapter,<sup>47</sup> state security’s ultimate criterion is sovereignty,

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<sup>47</sup> McSweeney, 69.

while societal security's standard is identity.<sup>48</sup> Thus, state and society are two separate items. Rather than societal security being considered a category or pillar within state security, the work of academics such as Buzan and Wæver in the 1990s separated the two and highlighted the importance of each in its own right. Identity can be a slippery word, but it is crucial in its parallel to sovereignty:

Both concern survival. Sovereignty is the name of the game of survival for a state – if it loses its sovereignty, it has not survived as a state...[but] Survival for a society is a question of identity, because this is the way a society talks about existential threats: if this happens, we will no longer be able to live as 'us'.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, identity is more than an ephemeral term that stumps academics across many fields. At its core, combining both a primordialist and an instrumentalist view, it is a concept that is both the main *root of* and the main *tool for* national survival. If a state does not have an identity to rally around, will it fight—and die—only for political structures?

## **2.7 Eight Reasons**

As in any other country, Turkey's identity defines its people and its people define its identity, and the presence of that identity keeps people feeling secure (i.e. "we" know who "we" are in relation to "them"). Accordingly, that identity is crucial to self-definition and must be protected from outside or even internal corruption. It is this very protection of identity—along with the formation, cultivation, proclamation, and distribution that accompany it—that, when studied, can shed light on Turks' self-perception and international role, as well as the Turkish-American relationship. Turkey needs to be studied from an identity perspective, for eight main reasons.

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<sup>48</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 25.

<sup>49</sup> Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 25-26.

First is the problem of “Turkishness,” mentioned above. What Turkishness exactly means is not transparent, but to insult it is criminal. It is used, in the media at least, as a synonym for Turkish identity, and is often criminalized in situations related to publication and broadcasting, as with the charges last year against Turkish writer Elif Şafak for *Türklüğü aşağılamak* (“degrading Turkishness”). Turkish nationalists brought her to trial “on charges of denigrating Turkish identity under controversial Article 301 of the revised Turkish Penal Code.”<sup>50</sup> The reason was the content of fictional dialogue in her best-selling novel, *The Bastard of Istanbul*. One of the Armenian characters speaks of Turkish “butchers” killing his ancestors in a 1915 genocide.<sup>51</sup> The so-called ‘genocide’ is a weighty, almost taboo topic in Turkey, with the state’s official claim that there was no ordered genocide and that both sides lost many men in the battles. Şafak was acquitted, but not without a display of reaction by the nationalists, with one lawyer informing the media, “It’s unacceptable that people can insult our state with the excuse of writing literature.”<sup>52</sup> The fact that Şafak could even be charged for insulting identity shows it to be a precious commodity, especially to the Turkish state. In short, the Turks have *made* Turkish identity important to study. “We choose our security problems as we choose the interests and identity which accompany them.”<sup>53</sup>

Secondly, Turkey’s geographical position, while ideal in some ways, presents a high degree of nearby danger and plenty of instances of “other” with which to contrast itself. There are seven directly neighboring countries, so the “Encirclement Syndrome” is highly salient and easily activated. Additionally, with a republic formed only through

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<sup>50</sup> “Şafak Exonerated of Insulting Turkishness,” *The New Anatolian / Ankara with AP*, 22 September 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Şebnem Arsu, “Court Acquits Author of Insulting ‘Turkishness,’” *International Herald Tribune: Europe*, 21 September 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Arsu, *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> McSweeney, 12.



violently repulsing encroaching powers eager to seize Turkey's well-positioned land, it became crucial for Turks to know who they were in contrast to those around them. The empire had been one grand mix of identities, races, ethnicities, and cultures, so to build a unified country on those remains required a unified identity. "Everyone can understand Atatürk's need to forge unity from division in order to establish and maintain the new republic under extraordinarily difficult circumstances,"<sup>54</sup> offers one American writer with deep insight into Turkey. However, not everyone actually understands this, and this whole process of republic-formation, Atatürk's need, and a lack of understanding by those outside the republic will be extensively examined.

The Ottoman Empire and the young age of the new republic present a third reason: disassociation from the past. In many ways there is carryover from the empire to the republic, but there was a desire to create distance. Turkey was not to be the Republic of the Ottomans, but the Republic of the Turks. The Ottoman Empire had died a long, slow death, and the new republic was by any means to avoid the "sick man of Europe" characteristic that Europe had bestowed on it.<sup>55</sup> That is to say, the "Eastern Question" was now out of the question.

Fourthly, one of the most bitterly experienced legacies of the fallen empire is the idea of capitulations, which meant privileges extended to foreigners inside the empire. Gradually, and especially by the start of World War I, "the capitulations, extraterritorial commercial and judiciary rights, once granted from a point of strength, had become a

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<sup>54</sup> David L. Arnett, "The Heart of the Matter: the Importance of Emotion in Turkish-American Relations," *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 5:4 (Winter 2006), 34. This article offers an excellent argument and is very well-written, representing one of the few and far between Western writers with a deep understanding of Turkish language, culture, and sentiment. The author spent nine years in Turkey serving with the U.S. Foreign Service, and has genetic roots in Turkey.

<sup>55</sup> Hence, the angry reaction from Turks after Pollock's highly publicized article criticizing Turkey: Robert Pollock, "The Sick Man of Europe – Again," *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 February 2005.

heavy burden.”<sup>56</sup> To be rid of these capitulations became a goal of the Young Turks’ instigating revolution, and the abhorrence of foreigners’ real and perceived interference in Turkey extends even to today. The capitulations left their mark and their legacy.

Related is the idea of regional affiliation, or lack thereof, as it were. With Turkey and Turks not fitting into the categorization of either Middle Eastern or European, there is a complexity of being “on our own.” There has at times been a tone of near desperation to join the European Union (EU), yet always from the outside looking in, for 150 years and counting. Turks remain somewhat rejected by both Arabs, who resent the Turkish dilution of Islam, and by Europeans, who seem to the Turks to spurn the possible presence of Islam and “third-worldness” in their EU club. Turks are left seemingly alone, and thus to be a “Turk” must be something special in and of itself, since there’s no overriding regional identity to instill any pride. Truth be told, it is not a source of dignity and satisfaction these days for one to be a “Eurasian.”

Along with this idea of regional unaffiliation is a lack of security, and the subsequent sixth reason: a fear of being bargained over. One ramification of not belonging to a system is that other nations can bargain over you, as the Turks found out quite miserably in 1917 based on agreements between Tsarist Russia and Britain, or in 1962 in the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union bargained over missile presence on Turkish territory. Indeed, it is this fear of being bargained over that has historically made Turks lean toward Europe. Jobs, economy, and plenty of other reasons play a role, but it is first and foremost a matter of security.

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<sup>56</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, “Change and Continuity from the Empire to the Republic,” (London: Palgrave, forthcoming chapter in an edited book), 21.

Seventh, not only does being a “Turk” have to be something special and worthy, but it had to be converted from an insulting word to an identity bursting with pride. The Europeans feared Turks as one fears a monster in the night. “In Shakespeare’s day and for centuries thereafter, Christians in Europe... considered ‘the general enemy Ottoman,’ better known simply as ‘the Turk,’ to be the scourge of civilization. His chief characteristics were thought to include mendacity, unbridled lust, sudden violence and a passion for gratuitous cruelty.”<sup>57</sup> The idea of being a “Turk” (literally, nomadic as opposed to civilized urban living) thus surmounted extraordinary negative connotations to become a positive term for Anatolian people. Turkish identity, and the related laws and punishments meant to protect it, is now wrapped up in what it means to label oneself with that word and bear it proudly. Bernard Lewis captures this in the opening paragraph to his classic and long-authoritative tome of the history of the republic:

‘The Turks are a people who speak Turkish and live in Turkey.’ At first glance, this does not seem to be a proposition of any striking originality, nor of any very revolutionary content. Yet the introduction and propagation of this idea in Turkey, and its eventual acceptance by the Turkish people as expressing the nature of their corporate identity and statehood, has been one of the major revolutions of modern times, involving a radical and violent break with the social, cultural, and political traditions of the past.<sup>58</sup>

Lastly, Turkey needs to be examined in light of identity issues because of the tangled ethnic issue and a presumed homogeneity of the republic that the rest of the world does not quite see in the same way. This difference of viewpoint creates huge problems for Turkey in terms of how it is seen in the West. In North America and Europe, the Kurds are seen as a minority whose rights are suppressed. In Turkey though, Kurds are not seen as a minority, because there is one nationality. This goes along with

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<sup>57</sup> Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent & Star: Turkey Between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001) 3.

<sup>58</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) 1.

the Muslim idea of an *umma*, or community of people. Race does not factor into this Turkish *umma* that was created in 1923. There is a distinction made between Turks, Persians, and Arabs, but not a separate distinction for Kurds. Even as Anthony Smith notes more generally (apart from the Turkey's specific case), through the vein of national identity and especially in mass education, "state authorities hope to inculcate national devotion and a distinctive, homogenous culture, an activity that most regimes pursue with considerable energy under the influence of nationalist ideals of cultural authenticity and unity."<sup>59</sup> The homogeneity of Turkey will be a major theme of this thesis.

For Turkey specifically, the effort within its borders turns into a problem beyond its borders, to the point where it is a predicament being played out on the international stage. In German analyst Heinz Kramer's chapter "The Myth of National Homogeneity and the 'Kurdish Reality,'" he asserts that "the core of the problem, at least for the proponents of Kurdish nationalist claims, is a political issue: the recognition of a *Kurdish identity* in the state's policy toward the region" (emphasis added).<sup>60</sup> There is a mutual mistrust between Turkey and the West over this issue, in which the West feels Turkey does not understand and Turkey feels misunderstood. The sensitivity of this subject, at home and abroad, causes huge identity issues for the Republic of Turkey and what it means to be Turk.

## 2.8 Conclusion

For now, I am using the term "Turk" instead of "Turkishness" in order to be historically accurate. In defining the new identity of "Turk" for the people of Anatolia,

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 16.

<sup>60</sup> Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000) 39.

Mustafa Kemal was, in effect, defining “Turkishness” as well, but that term was not used. To employ it from the outset of identity formation in the early republic would be an anachronism, because the term was not coined until much later. This will be further explained in chapter 5, along with the legal measures surrounding Turkishness today.

In essence, what follows is a study of the knowledge of what it means to be nationally a “Turk,” and civically a citizen of Turkey—how they have been formulated through history and largely by the efforts of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This can then be applied to alter the downhill slide of American-Turkish relations. Chapter 3 will start with historic background, introducing Mustafa Kemal and the national label “Turk” as it came into being. The national identity of Turkey will then be elaborated extensively in chapter 4 with a corresponding diagram that sets apart the main aspects as I perceive them. Chapter 5 will then turn to state identity, differentiating it from national identity and adding it into the metaphorical picture painted in the preceding chapter. Lastly, chapter 6 will turn these identity issues to the Turkish-American relationship, which has faltered for lack of depth and mutual understanding. America needs to peer deeper than geostrategic necessity regarding Turkey, and see the actual Turkish people, if it is going to keep this country in good favor.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE NATION ARISES

This chapter will attempt to build a bridge from the theoretical to Turkey specifically, through 1) an outline of the history of the republic, 2) an evaluation of whether Atatürk *created* Turkey's national identity or *maneuvered* pre-existing components, and 3) an overview of some of these components. In general, by focusing on *national* identity, this chapter will examine identity as it relates to the *people*. The state, which represents a political unit, government institutions, and official foreign policy, will be the subject of chapter 5.

#### 3.1 The Late Ottoman Empire

It is widely documented that the word “Turk” faced a centuries-long negative connotation. In Europe and subsequently exported to America, published accounts were based on a typical reaction to that which is utterly unknown and foreign to the individual: fear. The “hated” Turk, the “barbarian” Turk, the “terrible” Turk, all made it into European literature as the ideal dark-skinned “bad guy”:

Europeans considered the Ottomans cruel sinners even after the tide of history began to turn against them. ‘I shall always hate the Turks,’ Voltaire wrote to King

Frederick II of Prussia. ‘What wretched barbarians!’ Jane Austen mused in one of her novels about ‘the turban’d Turk who scorns the world.’<sup>61</sup>

Books written by European travelers and observers, then translated and shipped to America, biased those in the new world quite early on about the region called ‘Turkey’:  
“...in Turkey they destroy everything, and repair nothing...The spirit of the Turkish government is, to ruin the labours of past ages, and destroy the hopes of future times, because the barbarity of ignorant despotism never considers to-morrow.”<sup>62</sup> This sounds quite like an unfair bias of the unknown, like Orientalism, even like bigotry, but one cannot fully know Mr. Volney’s experience; only the descriptions are available. “By the late 1800s, support for Armenian relief efforts entered the American mindset that already perceived the Turks as ‘Terrible,’ and “a new generation of Americans had been introduced to the ‘Eastern Question’ in terms of describing Turks as barbaric oppressors and Armenians as ‘hapless victims.’”<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, to be a Turk was not only a bad word in Europe and America,<sup>64</sup> but even an insult to the Ottomans up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

The people had once called themselves Turks, and the language they spoke was still called Turkish, but in the Imperial society of the Ottomans the ethnic term Turk was little used, and then chiefly in a rather derogatory sense, to designate the Turcoman nomads or, later, the ignorant and uncouth Turkish-speaking peasants of the Anatolian villages. To apply it to an Ottoman gentleman of Constantinople would have been an insult.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Kinzer, 5.

<sup>62</sup> Abbe Constantin François de Chasseboeuf Volney, *Travels Through Egypt and Syria in the Years 1783, 1784 and 1785*, Vol. 1, (New York, 1798), 7, in Çağrı Erhan, “The American Perception of the Turks: An Historical Record,” in *Türk Yıllığı: The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations: 2000/2 Special Issue on Turkish-American Relations*, Vol. XXXI, 78.

<sup>63</sup> Erhan, 94.

<sup>64</sup> In the Balkans ‘Turk’ meant anyone who was a Muslim, regardless of ethnic affiliation, and in 8<sup>th</sup> century China, “Tu-kiu” was anyone who belonged to a Turkic tribe.

<sup>65</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 1-2.

Savage in Europe, denigrating in Istanbul, terrible in America, it becomes clear just how miraculous was the transformation of the word and identity “Turk.”

Stepping back though, “Turks” (in Anatolia) were only a small part of the larger umbrella of the Ottoman Empire, and were much more aware of an Ottoman identity than a collective Turkish one. Once representing strength, power, and domination (however savage or uncivilized), the Ottoman by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the weak and ill player in European eyes. Too late in starting official diplomatic relations with the European countries, too distant from the European power centers, and too expansive to stay unified under the appetites of growing European empires, the Ottoman Empire was in its dying days. In 1877, with the Russian-Turkish War, it lost much territory as peoples in the Balkans broke out from under Ottoman rule.

All of Europe had its gaze upon the “sick man”<sup>66</sup> crumbling in the southeast corner of the continent. Europeans then watched as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, but known to the world as “Young Turks”), a militarized reformist-nationalist group formed in the 1890s, rose up in revolt in 1908 against the Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who capitulated. The Young Turks deposed him, and put his brother Muhammed V on the throne in 1909. The new sultan had no actual power; rather, the Young Turks established a regime, reopened free debate and free press, and held elections for a new parliament.<sup>67</sup> But, “unfortunately for the empire, the brave hopes of 1908 proved stillborn.”<sup>68</sup> Internal problems broke apart the ‘Young Turk’ regime, and from 1913 the administration was run, in effect, by Enver Pasha, one of the leaders of that revolution. The government was in flux as the Great War began, and the European powers were all

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<sup>66</sup> A phrase commonly attributed to a first usage by Tsar Nicholas I of Russia.

<sup>67</sup> Hale, 31.

<sup>68</sup> Hale, 32.



tacitly considering “the Eastern Question”: that is, how to eventually divide up the Ottoman Empire, who gets what, and how to prevent another war over the territory when the empire dissolved.

### 3.2 Young Kemal

Meanwhile, a young boy named Mustafa Kemal was growing up in *Salonika* (now in modern Greece but then a province of the Ottoman Empire) under the heavy influence of Western thought, especially French, which was disseminated by the Jews, as it was the largest Jewish city in all Europe at the time and had an Ottoman Jewish population. Originally, Mustafa’s mother, Zübeyde, wanted him to study the Koran and perhaps become a religious leader. Kemal, however, found his inspiration elsewhere. In the absence of a father, who died when Kemal was young, he began to look to the men around town, especially those in military uniform and in particular a neighbor named Ahmet. “There awakened in him an irresistible desire to become a soldier, to show himself off in gold braid like them and carry a sword”<sup>69</sup> At the ripe age of 12, Kemal announced to Ahmet that he would become a soldier as well.<sup>70</sup>

The pride of the uniform aside, Kemal was also a serious scholar, and a leader among his classmates, who tended to follow him naturally and implicitly. He was interested in the study of “the life of nations and men,” and even though he had a following among his friends, he spent many hours alone in contemplation. Something

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<sup>69</sup> Jorge Blanco Villalta, *Atatürk*, trans. William Campbell (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1979), 9.

<sup>70</sup> Villalta, 9.

deep inside him “realized that the hour had come for the Ottoman Empire, as it had for all the others, whose domination had been imposed with the edge of the sword.”<sup>71</sup>

It was when young Kemal headed to military high school in *Manastir* that his mind and future really opened. There he met his friend Fethi, who helped introduce him to Europe in general, and France in particular. Kemal learned about French political thought and the French Revolution, gradually realizing the importance of the French language as well. After at first making little progress with the language, he committed himself to learning it during one summer holiday. And thus began the young man’s westward leaning, to be discussed later in this paper as a prominent theme of the bright new future he was sculpting for Turkey.

### **3.3 The Partition**

Twenty-two years after young Mustafa Kemal’s declaration of his future occupation in the military, he was not only in the military, but was rising to the post of general and leading the Gallipoli campaign against the Allied Forces over control of the Dardanelles.<sup>72</sup> The victory here earned the Turks great reputation as fighting men in the world, and Kemal great status as the leading general in Turkey.

To the astonishment of Europe and the world, in 1915 a Turkish force managed to resist and then repel British-led invaders whose battle plan had been drawn up by no less a personage than First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill... In fierce fighting that lasted eight months and cost tens of thousands of lives, Turkish soldiers managed to hold their peninsula, keep their strait and ultimately overwhelm the Allied expeditionary force. The commander who achieved this, thereby winning the only important Turkish victory of the war, was Mustafa Kemal.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Villalta, 11.

<sup>72</sup> He was promoted to general toward the end of the campaign. Enver Pasha, the Minister of War, held the promotion back as long as possible.

<sup>73</sup> Kinzer, 38.

Despite this one victory, with the overall defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the Great War in 1918, the Anatolian territory was set to be partitioned by Europe. The “Eastern Question” had finally come officially to the table. Nothing was certain about the future of Ottoman land, except that European powers wanted it. Their desires came to fruition in the Treaty of Sèvres, a miserable partitioning of the entire land of modern Turkey into various strips and sections for the European powers. Italy was to get the southern region along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, Greece was to have the Aegean Region extending quite far inland, France would get the region of Hatay including present-day Adana, and the straits in Istanbul were to come under international control. Additionally, in eastern Anatolia, an independent Armenian state would be established in the areas that are now the provinces of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van, and Bitlis, and the Kurds were to have a scheme for ‘local autonomy’ coordinated by the Western European powers, and likely leading to eventual full independence.<sup>74</sup> The only land left for a future Turkish state was a comparatively small remnant in northern Anatolia, undesirable land that lacked the richness, warm coastlines, natural resources, or international value of the other regions.

The partitioning magnitude of this treaty, with the European powers eagerly grabbing their share of the loot, and the incredible resistance the Turks would put up to prevent it, have had a huge impact on the Turkish identity that continues today.<sup>75</sup> The defunct Ottoman government was prepared to accept this treaty, a point for which they were later castigated and demonized for weak surrender of all that was the Turks’ by

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<sup>74</sup> William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy: 1774-2000* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 45.

<sup>75</sup> Quick proof can be found in terms like ‘Sèvres Syndrome’ or ‘Sèvres Phobia,’ the feeling that internal and external elements are constantly ready to divide and partition the Turkish land. Deeper proof of its effect on identity can be seen in proverbs like the age-old maxim, ‘Türk’ün Dostu Türk’tür.’ (‘A Turk’s only friend is a Turk’).

right and inheritance. In fact, several representatives did sign the treaty at the 1920 ceremony in the Paris suburb after which it is named.<sup>76</sup> The treaty, however, was never fully ratified, legalized, or carried out. For, as the European powers did indeed begin to execute its measures even before the 1920 signing, the Turks, organized and rallied by none other than Mustafa Kemal, fought back for their independence.

### 3.4 The Resistance

After his victory in World War I, with his new clout and with various identity tactics to be expounded on later, Kemal was able to gain a popular political following among Anatolian dwellers. In the summer of 1919, at the Erzurum congress, a gathering of former CUP members and old army officials, Kemal was elected chairman and “issued a proclamation declaring that ‘the entire country within its [undefined] national frontiers is an undivided whole’, and that any foreign occupation of it would be resisted by force.”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, the Turks would need to resist by force. However, they were tired and weary, and

...by the end of the war, the number of deserters who roamed the countryside was four times that of the soldiers remaining in the army. This population of miserable, hungry, bereaved and uprooted individuals could only be motivated to take up arms again by a direct threat to its existence. In 1919 this threat came...<sup>78</sup>

From the new capital of Ankara, where Kemal established headquarters in December 1919, he coordinated what came to be known as the *Milli Mücadele* (National Struggle).<sup>79</sup> As described by Simon Mayall, “In disgust at the Istanbul Government’s

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<sup>76</sup> Kinzer, 39.

<sup>77</sup> Hale, 46.

<sup>78</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, “The Core Terminology of Kemalism: Mefkûre, Millî, Muasır, Medenî,” in *Les mots de politique de l’Empire Ottoman à la Turquie kemaliste*, ed. François Georgeon (Paris: EHESS/ESA 8032 CNRS).

<sup>79</sup> Hale, 46.

craven submission to Allied will, societies for ‘the defense of rights’ sprang up to contest the occupation and division of Turkish soil, particularly by the hated Greeks.”<sup>80</sup>

It was amidst this struggle that the *Misak-i Milli* (National Pact) was born. An official statement for the rallying cry of the new nationalist government, this document was to be defended to the letter, rejecting and replacing most of what was written on the scroll of Sèvres. It demarcated the boundaries of a Turkey the nationalists thought acceptable, meaning it let go of the Arab-majority lands of the former Ottoman Empire, but demanded the lands in which there was an “Ottoman Muslim” (in effect, Turkish or Kurdish) majority.<sup>81</sup> It was at this point of the identity-building story that the people of the future Turkey, under Mustafa Kemal’s leadership, first declared and defended their “historic homeland,” which is the first of Anthony Smith’s five prongs of “national identity” cited in chapter 2.

The nationalists sealed their determination with the first convening of the *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi* (Grand National Assembly) in Ankara on 23 April 1920; during this meeting they proclaimed the sovereignty of Turkey as a nation. However, that same month the Sèvres terms were published, and the nationalists’ contemporaries back in the sultan’s administration in Istanbul then, in essence, “sold out” Turkey by signing Sèvres in August. These events “effectively dashed hopes that the Turkish nationalists might be able to negotiate their way out of the partition plan, or could do so in collaboration with the Istanbul government.”<sup>82</sup> The National Struggle was to turn to a military effort.

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<sup>80</sup> Simon V. Mayall, *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition*, McNair Paper 56 (Washington D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997), 15.

<sup>81</sup> Hale, 47.

<sup>82</sup> Hale, 48.

And at this moment in the nationalist Turks' history, it is no exaggeration to say they rose up in astounding unity and courage on the battlefield to assert their sovereignty to the Greeks, the rest of the Europeans, and the world at large. They stood up, incredibly, to defend a territory newly demarcated and an identity not yet established. The Turks proved their determination and stamina to an unsuspecting group of preoccupied and equally war-weary European powers unprepared for such a coordinated resistance. This is a phenomenon still highly honored and memorialized in every Turkish citizens' mind, but the awesomeness of it all was appreciated outside of Turkey too. Indeed, Churchill himself was later to dramatically describe the situation as such:

Loaded with follies, stained with crimes, rotted with misgovernment, shattered by battle, worn down by long disastrous wars, his empire falling to pieces around him, the Turk was still alive. In his breast was beating the heart of a race that had challenged the world, and for centuries had contended victoriously against all comers. In his hands was once again the equipment of a modern army, and at his head a Captain, who with all that is learned of him, ranks among the four or five outstanding figures of the cataclysm...<sup>83</sup>

### 3.5 Victory and Independence

The Turks fought their *Kurtuluş Şavaşı* (Independence War) against incredible odds, but also had luck on their side in terms of Europe's fatigue and general lack of will. "British or French conscripts who had just been told that they had won 'the war to end wars' would not now be prepared to go back to fight another one, in a remote region where no obvious national interests could be identified."<sup>84</sup> The Turks were also fortunate in terms of the Soviets' exclusion from Sèvres, leaving their northern neighbor with a bitter taste of the Entente and willingness to side with the Turkish nationalists. For all

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<sup>83</sup> Patrick Balfour Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1993), 184, in Mayall, 15.

<sup>84</sup> Hale, 48.

Churchill's dramatics, the heaviest of opponents the Turks faced was indeed not the British, but the Greeks, who had by July 1921 managed to advance from the Aegean Sea all the way inland as far as the *Sakarya* River, just 50 miles west of Ankara. It was there that the war hit a turning point, as memorialized with displays, paintings, and sound effects for visitors to the museum below Mustafa Kemal's mausoleum in Ankara today.

This military engagement ushers in for Turkey the establishment of the second of Smith's "national identity" definitive characteristics: "common myths and historical memories." The victories of this war and the ensuing forced retreat the following year of the Greeks back to the coast and off of Turkey's demarcated territory was not only recounted vividly by Mustafa Kemal himself in a glorified six-day speech to the Turks a number of years later, but remains a vital piece of Turkish national pride that is part of the curriculum in schools to this day. Kemal's decisive victory against the Greeks at Dumlupınar on 30 August 1922 is celebrated annually as Turkey's *Zafer Bayramı*, or "Victory Holiday."

Victory Day, *Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayramı* (National Sovereignty and Children's Day) on 23 April, *Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı* (Youth and Sport Holiday) on 19 May, and the anniversary of Kemal's death on 10 November are all state holidays that today memorialize and reinforce the Turks' historical memories, but none is as important as 29 October, *Cumhuriyet Bayramı* (Republic Day). This commemorates the day the Republic of Turkey was formally declared, in 1923. After the Treaty of Sèvres was proved null and void by the events on the battlefield, the powers came to the drawing board again in Lausanne, Switzerland—this time with Turkey's new nationalist government and the Istanbul sultanate government both invited—to compose a new

treaty. This new convening on 21 November 1922, plus the Grand National Assembly's abolition of the sultanate only four days before,<sup>85</sup> resulted in the Lausanne Treaty, a document much more amenable to the Turks. Signed in July 1923, the new treaty afforded Turks almost all of their territorial demands in the National Pact, with the exception of some outer lying regions including Hatay and Mosul, to be decided upon later with France and Britain respectively.

Three results, broadly categorized, came of all this, each of which will be thematic in this thesis. First, it was thus that the Turks established their sovereignty, a value so precious after the nightmare of Sèvres and the late years of the Ottoman experience, when European hands reached freely into their territory especially in the form of land claims and judicial capitulations. Now, Turks had let the world know that they were not willing to be bargained over or bullied. An October 1922 memorandum by the British General Staff acknowledged, "We can no longer treat the Turks as a conquered nation to whom it is possible to dictate any terms we wish."<sup>86</sup> This category will be broadly characterized as "sovereignty/history."

Second, this marks the moment that Turkey became an entity in and of itself, and began the process of acquiring geo-strategic labels by the greater powers. British foreign secretary Lord Curzon's new strategy "consisted of aiding the establishment of an independent Turkey as an anti-Soviet barrier, while protecting British interests."<sup>87</sup> This category will be loosely called the "international factor," as it relates to Turkey's

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<sup>85</sup> So to prevent any representation in Lausanne by Istanbul.

<sup>86</sup> A.L. Macfie, *The Straits Question, 1908-36* (Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1993), 181, in Hale, 53.

<sup>87</sup> Hale, 53.



placement in the world, politically and geographically, and what the rest of the world thought of it.

Thirdly, the first two characteristics of national identity had been jump-started, but lying before Mustafa Kemal and his regime was the equally great task of defining just exactly who the Turks *were*. “A Turk is a person living in the Republic of Turkey,” he proclaimed, but territorial location of living is not a sufficient in and of itself for one’s identity, and Kemal knew that. Establishment of a common, mass public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members, and a common economy with territorial mobility for members (the last three of Smith’s five prongs) lay in the rhetoric and reforms he would institute in the days to come. This third resulting category—the task set before Kemal’s regime—could be called “re-paving” or “packaging” identity.

Of these three categories, one is historical; one is based on international policy, orientation, and outside factors; and one is based on Kemal and his efforts. And if these three factors all have weight, and Smith’s whole definition fits into just one of them (the third—those aspects instituted by Kemal) then it follows that Smith’s tight definition is not expansive enough for Turkish identity.

### **3.6 Kemal’s *Creation*, or Kemal’s *Modification*?**

All this history brings us to the question Did Mustafa Kemal *create* Turkish identity, or did he *mold* and *shape* it based on pre-existing factors? According to sociologist Anthony Smith, identity is based on five prongs (listed in chapter 2). In sociology, however, there is a tendency to come up with neat concepts and ideas, but it does not always fit perfectly when applied to a case study, in this case Turkey. Thus a puzzle in research arises. Although Turks existed loosely under the Ottoman Empire, it

was a diffused arrangement, and the peoples' attachment was more to Islam than anything else. Therefore, in trying to determine which of the five prongs were products of Kemal, it would seem to be *all of them*. So did Kemal himself single-handedly *create* Turkey's national identity? Did no substance of identity exist before him?

"Turk," as stated earlier, although an unpleasant term representing a disjointed group of people who might not even characterize themselves as such, was at least *something*. The historical outline in this chapter describes how Turkey as a state began, but Turkey as a nation—as a group of people—existed long before. They were a scattered people, across a vast land space, who were loosely Ottoman, had very real local (not national) culture and myths, and strongly identified with family or tribal units. But, over and above all, it was to Islam, not Turkishness or the region of Turkey, that they attached their identity:

Until the nineteenth century the Turks thought of themselves primarily as Muslims; their loyalty belonged, on different levels, to Islam and to the Ottoman house and state. The language a man spoke, the territory he inhabited, the race from which he claimed descent, might be of personal, sentimental, or social significance. They had no political relevance. So completely had the Turks identified themselves with Islam that the very concept of a Turkish nationality was submerged—and this despite the survival of the Turkish language and the existence of what was in fact though not in theory a Turkish state. Among the common people, the rustics and the nomads, a sense of Turkishness survived, and found expression in a rich but neglected folk literature.<sup>88</sup>

In this vein, Mustafa Kemal did not start from scratch in constructing Turkey's new identity. He had the historic Turk people, layered with an imported and embraced Islamic culture; and he had the substance of the empire, a pre-existing intellectual and institutional infrastructure on which to build. Fortunately for his regime, this infrastructure was not accompanied by a deep sense of Ottoman identity. The identity

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<sup>88</sup> Lewis, 2.

was instead found in Islam, which became a tool through which the Kemalists could spread nationalism. In addition to this base were the mistakes and lessons learned by the empire, as cornerstones for building new identity.<sup>89</sup>

Herein lies a problem with the definition of national identity promulgated by sociologist Anthony Smith, because in an analysis, none of the five components of identity existed in any significant or measurable way among the Turks before Mustafa Kemal. For “historical territory” (#1) there was a land there of course, but the Turks were not aware of it as a “homeland” as such. Regarding “common myths and memories,” (#2) there were powerful local village stories and legends, but most Anatolians were not aware of their larger history, or of Istanbul and the events there. And, as mentioned above, any sense of nationality was ‘submerged.’ As far as a “mass, public culture,” (#3) there was none.<sup>90</sup> And there were no “common legal rights and duties” (#4) because there was no state structure to impose them, although there were police forces and courts as a part of the empire, to enforce rights. Lastly, with respect to a “common economy,” (#5) again, there was not a state under which the economy could be united. Trading, buying, and selling existed, but only among networks of villages in a non-collective manner.

Therefore, in analyzing Smith’s definition as applied to the Republic of Turkey, one would assume Atatürk *created* a national identity for the Turks, because before his leadership and reforms no “prongs” of national identity existed saliently, but afterward

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<sup>89</sup> Just as one example, “while it had clear-cut foreign policies, the Sublime Porte lacked a foreign policy establishment as well as permanent diplomatic representation abroad. When powerful, the Ottomans did not feel the need for these mechanisms. They maintained an attitude of hubris towards foreign countries, a malady that always seems to inflict the powerful.” Kemal had enough humility on behalf of the new Republic of Turkey to avoid this type of stance. For this and other examples, see Nur Bilge Criss, “Change and Continuity” (London: Palgrave, forthcoming in an edited book), 15.

<sup>90</sup> There was the “literature” mentioned above by Lewis, but “the governing and educated groups, however, had not even retained to the same degree as the Arabs and Persians an awareness of their identity as a separate ethnic and cultural group within Islam.” (Lewis, 2). Indeed, they were not even aware of identity as a concept!

they all did. Yet in reality Atatürk did *not create* the Turks' identity. This is where a heavily instrumentalist view of identity falters, and the disciplines of sociology and history collide. International Relations studies are by nature interdisciplinary, but the various disciplines do not always lend themselves to soluble mixing. The problem in this case of applying a new sociological framework to the past lies in being ahistorical—devoid of historical data. (This is a strength of the primordialists, who see identity as something deeply rooted and always existing.)

On the one hand, tight terms and frameworks like Smith's are helpful; in an enlightening article on ideology by Michael H. Hunt, this point is addressed: "To move in a world of infinite complexity, individuals and societies need to reduce that world to finite terms. Only then can they pretend an understanding of their environment and have the confidence to talk about it and the courage to act on it."<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, the terminology of today does not fit neatly with yesterday's data. This is a methodological problem. Defining "ideology" as "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality,"<sup>92</sup> Hunt asserts the following:

Any attempt to assign ideology its proper influence and to anchor it in a specific social and economic context is attended by a daunting array of pitfalls. Reductionism is the most frequently mentioned. Stressing one complex of ideas, the anxious contend, not only will fail to illuminate the complexity of policy making but may also divert attention from other, more eligible kinds of explanations. While those concerns are justified, diplomatic historians should take them, not as a deterrent, but (as they have proved for intellectual historians) as a spur to try fresh approaches and rethink old ones.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Michael H. Hunt, "Ideology," *The Journal of American History* 77:1 (June 1990), 108.

<sup>92</sup> Hunt, 108.

<sup>93</sup> Hunt, 113.

This study is aiming to be such a “fresh approach,” utilizing the components of historical continuity and international setting *in addition* to Smith’s definition, which, while seeming comprehensive on paper, is overly general and does not work in fully capturing the Turkish identity. More components play a part in the identity development.

This is not to attack Smith’s definition; it is indeed quite helpful as a guideline for components in the third category of assessment for Turkey. Rather, it is a recognition pointing to the insufficiency of modern sociological wording as a framework for analysis of Turkey’s history and identity. Smith himself, in the few pages of his seminal work that are devoted to the case of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, refers to Atatürk’s identity work for Turkey in terms that imply historical *engineering*, not *creation*, of identity.

It was this Turkic ideal, shorn of its extra-Anatolian irredentism, that Kemal Atatürk made the basis of his secular, westernizing nationalism. In effect he *engineered* the secession of the Turkish heartlands from the Ottoman empire and caliphate, *repudiating* Ottomanism and Islam and pushing through a series of modernizing social and cultural reforms in the cities that would *redefine* the empire as a compact territorial political community aligned to the ethnic nation of Anatolian Turks. But, realizing that territorial and civic concepts of the nation require a solitary basis in a national cultural identity, the Kemalists attempted to *furnish* the necessary ethnic myths, memories, values and symbols by *utilizing* the theory of Turkish origins in Central Asia....<sup>94</sup> (emphasis added)

Smith might well recognize the historical carryover implicated in identity, but his 5-pronged definition does not leave room for it, at least in Turkey’s case. Even though a couple of the five characteristics refer to historical factors (i.e. historical territory and memories), neither really existed before Atatürk because the people as a group were not aware of them. Yet, as we have seen and will see, Atatürk did not create something out of nothing. He did more shifting, shuffling, reorganizing, and rejuvenating.

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<sup>94</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 104.

Thus, Smith's definition will be used in terms of the aspects of identity that were not *created* by Atatürk, but that were—based on past experience and lessons as well as individual wisdom—*modified, consolidated, and especially packaged*<sup>95</sup> for the people. But what was he packaging and how did he do this? This, the third of the three categories, will be the subject of the remainder of this chapter and the following one. The category of the international factor, which doesn't appear in Smith's 'national identity' definition at all, will then appear in chapter 5 on state identity. The historical carryover feature will run like a ribbon woven throughout both, as it is the backdrop for both identity packaging (thus proving the Kemalist Regime's work to be indeed a processing job instead of a creating one) and for international and domestic views of Turkey as a state. The coalescence of all three categories makes up the identity of the Republic of Turkey.

### **3.7 Packaging—What to package**

In examining Atatürk's packaging of Turkish national identity, this chapter and the following will focus on the identity-bestowing process (which, as mentioned in chapter 2, is a more important aspect of collective identity than the outcome itself) with the broader questions of *what* and *how*. This analysis is looking at the socio-ethno-national identity that Atatürk and the Kemalist Regime gave the people and not the official political definition of Kemalism, although there will be some overlap. As McSweeney writes, "Identity is not a fact of society; it is a process of negotiation among people and interest groups. Being English, Irish, Danish is a consequence of a political process, and it is that process, not the label which symbolizes it, which constitutes the

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<sup>95</sup> "Packaging" is a unique term that seems to best suit what it was Atatürk did for the Turks' identity, and the term will thus be used throughout this paper.

reality which needs explication.”<sup>96</sup> In this vein, the process will be examined. But first, *what* was to be processed?

In terms of a new identity for the Turkish nation, Atatürk’s reforms and rhetoric—built upon mistakes from the past, lessons from other nations, and his own masterful sense of the possible—centered on 1) a “nation-first” mentality of nationalism, 2) Westernization as the only and best choice for orientation, 3) secularism as the state religion, 4) an understanding of homogeneity for Turks (regardless of ethnicity), and 5) civilization and modernization as priorities for catching up with other countries and not being “left out.” These will be detailed and applied to a vivid analogy in the following chapter, but for now this chapter will conclude with a quick overview of each. These were to be the material, the wrapping paper, of Atatürk’s packaging of identity.

### 3.7.1 Nationalism

Fierce nationalism was a theme that slipped into almost all of Atatürk’s rhetoric. In creating a new country out of rubble and remains, and ensuring its defense and ability to stand in the future, he did not have much choice but to glorify the new state and its people frequently to the public. “Oh Turkish Youth! Your first duty is forever to protect and defend the Republic of Turkey and Turkish independence. This is the sole foundation of your existence and future.”<sup>97</sup> Atatürk spoke with force and passion to give the Turkish people something worthy to fight for. If Turkey was going to achieve the ideals of (retaining) independence, and (progress toward) westernized civilization, modernization, and international relevance, Turks were going to have to always put their country first. In

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<sup>96</sup> McSweeney, 73.

<sup>97</sup> Salahi R. Sonyel, *Atatürk – The Founder of Modern Turkey* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 1989), 147.

this way, Atatürk packaged his ideas and objectives for Turkey in terms of Turkish nationalism, or the “national ideal”:

[He] defined in general but statesmanlike terms the broad basis on which the new Turkey must be built up if it was to exist. Her deeds, he said, were science and knowledge and a high state of civilisation, a free mentality and independence. The Turks must set to work seriously, *thinking only of their country and of nothing but their country*. He reminded his listeners that selfish aims were characteristic of their former rulers, and the bane of the country itself. The objective of all Turks must, he stated, be the national ideal. The aim of the nation must be to occupy in the world the rank of a civilised state... Those who looked back were condemned to be overwhelmed beneath the advancing flood of universal civilisation.<sup>98</sup> (emphasis added)

The terms *millet* and *millî* (“Nation” and “National”) were the key words of Kemal’s rhetoric. In Sivas, where another nationalist congress was held in summer 1919, shortly after the Erzurum one, Kemal said those words 41 times in a 15-minute opening speech.<sup>99</sup>

Mustafa Kemal’s regime also had to take action against local and regional enemies to their cause. The Istanbul government was a distant and militarily weak enemy, but it would be a mistake to underestimate the authority it still held over many of the people. It was busy issuing *fatwas* against Kemal’s regime, inciting the people to rebellion at a time when the nationalists most needed support and adherence in local villages. Thus the rebellions were dealt with harshly, with makeshift structures of the fledgling new government:

Among the nationalists’ countermeasures were the adoption of the ‘High Treason Law’ (Hiyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu) and the institution of revolutionary courts, the so-called ‘Independence Tribunals’ (İstiklâl Mahkemeleri), which dealt very severely with Ankara’s opponents, as well as deserters.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Sonyel, 110.

<sup>99</sup> Zürcher, “The Core Terminology of Kemalism: Mefkûre, Millî, Muasır, Medenî,” 109.

<sup>100</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993), 159.



### 3.7.2 Westernization

Mustafa Kemal's battlefield victories and road to establishment of the Turkish state earned him global recognition. He appeared on the fourth issue ever published of *Time* magazine in the United States, with a large drawing of his bust in military garb, and the title "Where is a Turk his Own Master?"<sup>101</sup> The answer was: in Turkey, a newly forming state carved from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Seven months after that *Time* issue, Atatürk founded Turkey as its own independent, sovereign nation, with the new capital city in Ankara instead of Istanbul. He had deposed the sultan and would similarly abolish the caliphate one year later, with both ending their terms in exile, one voluntarily and one by force. The *Time* magazine article, dated March 24, 1923, described Kemal in glowing terms: "He stands today as the Emancipator of Turkey. He has lifted the people out of the slough of servile submission to alien authority, brought them to a realization of their inherent qualities and to an independence of thought and action."<sup>102</sup>

Thus, with a rejection of the religious-based and "alien" authority in Istanbul, Atatürk's direction for the nascent republic dictated that Western orientation was to become one of the basic principles of the new Turkish Republic. This was actually where he differed from one of the key academics who influenced him, Ziya Gökalp, who—especially early on—advocated a "return to pre-Muslim Turkish customs,"<sup>103</sup> embracing Turkic roots from Central Asian ancestors and capitalizing on those as a rallying point in terms of cultural cohesion. But Atatürk saw where the world was heading, and knew

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<sup>101</sup> Wikipedia, "Image: Time Atatürk," <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Time\\_Ataturk.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Time_Ataturk.JPG)>.

<sup>102</sup> "Where is a Turk His Own Master?" *Time*, March 1923, <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,726976,00.html>>.

<sup>103</sup> Patrick Balfour Kinross, *Atatürk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey* (London: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1964), 57.

Turkey had to jump on board, or risk getting left behind. This “left behind” lesson was one learned from the Ottomans, who in 1836 had been far too late in trying to get in with the European system. Besides, Mustafa Kemal was a forward-thinker.

In Kemal’s mind, whether Turkey was ready for the westernization jump or not, it had to be made. This would later lead to severe polarization in Turkey; but for the time being and the time crunch, it was Atatürk’s only option for a nascent republic. While some of his contemporaries were indulging in the romanticism of ethnic politics, straining for what Gökalp called the “phantom” of (pan-Turkic) Turanism, “Mustafa Kemal was sober in his approach to his career.”<sup>104</sup> He knew where the power lay, and what he must do for Turkey to be aligned with it. As one of his European biographers later wrote, “He would tolerate no half-measures, no piecemeal efforts. Nothing less than the latest European civilization would satisfy him...Mustafa Kemal decided for the West.”<sup>105</sup>

### 3.7.3 Secularism

The Anatolian peoples’ Islamic identity was firm and widespread as Mustafa Kemal came to power, and as a wise politician, he knew Islam would not be cast aside easily—if at all. Thus, although he was not a religious man and did not support pan-Islamism, and although he pursued secularism as his aim, he did not attempt any sort of immediate advocacy of thorough secularism. Nor did he, in the most early stages of garnering support, speak of abolishing the sultanate or caliphate, the peoples’ political and religious authority in Istanbul. There was no talk early on of the anti-religious laws

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<sup>104</sup> Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (London: John Murray Ltd, 1999), 97.

<sup>105</sup> Hanns Froemberg, *Kemal Atatürk: A Biography*, trans. Kenneth Kirkness (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 258.

and reforms he was to later impose on the people.<sup>106</sup> Instead, Kemal, knowing that politics is the art of the possible, navigated the religious waters with superior expertise in such a way that Islam was on his side. Rather than harm the emerging nationalist identity, Islam in fact helped it. As James Kellas notes, “When church and nation coincide, as they often do, the effect is to reinforce a sense of national identity.”<sup>107</sup>

Hence, in establishing secularism for Turkey, Mustafa Kemal dealt with the strong Islamic identity in Turkey with three clever steps: (1) Utilization of Islam as a tool to promote the nationalist cause, by invoking names, terms, and symbols (while letting Europeans fear that there might be a swell of Pan-Islam, when in reality he pursued nothing of that sort).<sup>108</sup> (2) Placement of Islam under the thumb of the nation-state and establishment of a new, Turkey-specific (“Turkified”) brand of Islam that would de-emphasize religious leadership and reinforce the authority of the new state. (3) Development of nationalism as a sort of “political religion”<sup>109</sup> whereby fiery passions and devotions that were once directed toward religion could now be directed toward the glorified nation, supporting his cause. Thus, in light of secularism, instead of Islam, nationalism became the state “religion.” These ideas will be further elucidated in the next chapter on how identity was packaged and delivered, in this case through the channel of religious rhetoric.

Although much has changed in the 85 years since Atatürk’s work and Islamism keeps emerging out from under the thumb of the state, nationalism-as-religion still hits

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<sup>106</sup> For evidence and further explanation, see a telling article by Paul Dumont, “Hojas for the Revolution: the Religious Strategy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk,” *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization*, 1:3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1980-81), 17-32.

<sup>107</sup> James Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1991), 15.

<sup>108</sup> Dumont, 19-22.

<sup>109</sup> For the origin of this term and further detail, see: Kathryn A Manzo, *Creating Boundaries: The Politics of Race and Nation* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1996), 3 and 7.

the mark, and Atatürk himself is exalted despite the lack of desire he ever expressed for worship of himself. Much like *Allah Baba* (Father God) there is *Devlet Baba* (Father State) and recently, a friend described her childhood understanding of Atatürk, mostly based on what she learned in public elementary school, as: “I thought, actually, that Atatürk was perfect—that he and Allah were walking arm-in-arm in Heaven.”<sup>110</sup>

#### 3.7.4 Homogeneity

The issue of Turkish homogeneity is a muddled and complicated one, but as it was one of Mustafa Kemal’s unspoken values underlying the founding and cohesiveness of the Republic of Turkey, it deserves a prominent place among the components of Turkish identity. Although Kemal specifically called the new country “*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*” (Republic of Turkey) and not “*Türk Cumhuriyet*” (Turkish Republic), thus implying a non-ethnic ownership, this was not out of desire for political correctness as we understand it today. Rather, it shows superb rhetorical skills with an intentional message, and a sincerely different view of ethnicity than that of the West—a mixture of conscious effort and subconscious difference.<sup>111</sup>

Ethnicity is a tricky concept. Part of the problem comes from a linguistic and therefore conceptual difference. As there is no good translation in Turkish for the English word *ethnicity*, it appears as an alien term from another language—and thus an alien concept as well. The top three translations used are *ırksal*, which is better interpreted as “racial”; *milli*, which most definitely means “national”; and *etnik*, which is just the Western word, recently added and made pronounceable for the Turkish tongue—and

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<sup>110</sup> Personal communication with Özlem Eskiocak, March 2007.

<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, it must be noted that hard-core nationalistic intellectual thought and intellectuals accompanied Atatürk either in his entourage or from a distance, not to mention Islamists and communists.

lacking deep meaning in Turkish language and history. Even the English word ethnicity faces vastly different meanings and interpretations both in academia and in everyday use.

In the case of Atatürk's unifying measures, he promoted the value of homogeneity through the unity of the Turkish *nationality* over and above differences of *race*. Today, to the West at least, this looks like suppression of ethnic minorities. To the Turks of the early republican years however, and even to most Turkish minds today, Kurds and other racial groups are not seen as a "minority," because there is one nationality: Turk. The Turks recognized Persians, Arabs, and Turks as three separate and highly distinct groups with language, race, and culture differences, but the Kurds were not seen as another separate group. They were within the borders of the New Turkey and thus expected to become nationally "Turk" just like the rest. How they were encouraged in "Turkifying" will be further expanded in the following chapter.

Atatürk wanted a uniform society—*not* a mixing bowl. The Ottoman Empire had made its mistakes in being too much of a mixing pot of people, languages, cultures, and races, and it was time to homogenize. It was far too scattered and patched together, and the new republic could only be formed by consolidation and a more realistic sense of boundary. And from Atatürk's view at that time, perhaps quite understandably judging by the trials from which the Turks had just emerged, the only way the nation could succeed was homogenously. However,

when the Turkish republic was created in 1923, a large proportion of its population consisted of recent immigrants of Slavic, Albanian, Greek, Circassian, Abkhaz, and Chechen origin, whereas people that could claim descent from the Turkic tribes that had come from Central Asia were certainly a minority of Anatolia's population. It was in this complex setting that Atatürk and his associates aimed to create a modern nation-state, an integrated, unitary polity of the French type. For that reason, the model of the nation that Atatürk and his

associates adopted was civic... To be a Turk meant to live within the boundaries of the republic and thereby be its citizen.<sup>112</sup>

However, as a civic identity was not readily acknowledged by the people<sup>113</sup> he had to rally them around a different central commonality: Islam. Despite Kemal's future secular goals, this homogeneity was a Muslim-centered one. With no unifying identity, culture, or Turkishness yet in place in Anatolia, Islam was the only flag around which they could unite. One of the congress reports of 1919 clarifies whom the nationalists regarded as their constituency:

It purports to speak on behalf of 'the Muslims who form one nation (*millet*), consisting of Turks and Kurds' and 'the Muslim majority consisting of Turks and Kurds who for centuries have mixed their blood in an intimate relationship and who form the community (*ümmet*) of one prophet.' The statutes of the society organizing the Erzurum congress are even more explicit: they speak about 'all Islamic elements (*bilcümle anasır-i islâmiye*) of the population' and say that 'all Muslim compatriots (*bilumûm islâm vatandaşlar*) are natural members of this society.'<sup>114</sup>

### 3.7.5 Civilization and Modernization

With Western orientation as the goal, to Kemal, anything that was Western was thereby "civilized" and "modernized." The West was to be Turkey's direction: it embodied the very essence of the civilization and modernization toward which he strove.

Civilization meant expected behavior, ordered codes of conduct, becoming a part of civic society, i.e. the West. It meant changes in manners and norms, and the development of institutions and education. The people were to be enlightened and refined

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<sup>112</sup> Svante E. Cornell, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics," in *Dangerous Neighborhood: Contemporary Issues in Turkey's Foreign Relations*, ed. Michael S. Radu (Philadelphia: The Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2003), 126.

<sup>113</sup> As quoted by Lewis above: "The language a man spoke, the territory he inhabited, the race from which he claimed descent, might be of personal, sentimental, or social significance. They had no political relevance. So completely had the Turks identified themselves with Islam that the very concept of a Turkish nationality was submerged..." (2).

<sup>114</sup> Zürcher, "The Core Terminology of Kemalism: Mefkûre, Millî, Muasır, Medenî," 108.

in the ways of the world. In essence, it meant not being an outsider to the civilized West, rough and backwards, but joining in the refined concert of European cultivation.

Modernization meant advancement, and thorough change of the ideas, styles, and attitudes of the people; these were to become “sophisticated.” Technology, methods, language—all was to be up-to-date in terms of highest success and “catching up.” It was to be a renewal for the people, a revised life that fit with Kemal’s revisions.

Reforms were to be the route for achieving these two goals, and in achieving them, to westernize. Some of the reforms were restrictive, like bans on certain articles of clothing. Others were difficult, such as language reform for the entirety of the Turkish language. Still others were organizational, like the adoption of last names. And others appeared quite progressive, like giving women the right to vote and to hold office.<sup>115</sup> All of these would help with international recognition as well. These reforms will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Lastly, as long as the people knew civilization and modernization were good things, Kemal could shape exactly what they meant. Usually they meant whatever the West was doing. He encouraged the Turks to participate in this blessed advancement. He painted a grand picture for his people, using broad strokes of glory: “I have no doubt that this quality and skill of the Turkish nation to be contemporary will rise like a new sun in the horizon of future civilization.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> These “women’s rights” were for the sake of nation-building, not for the sake of women alone. Still, they were very willing recipients.

<sup>116</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, “Atatürk and Turkish Nationalism,” *November 10, 1994 State Ceremony Speeches and Atatürk and Turkish Identity Panel*, trans. Serap Kızılırmak (Ankara, Atatürk Research Center, 1999), 41.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE NATION PACKAGED

At the dawn of the republic, Mustafa Kemal played a more important role than any other figure in forging Turkey's character. He was larger than life: "The directions and the dimensions of the transformation that Atatürk wrought, appear to be nothing short of the miraculous."<sup>117</sup> Most importantly, for the purposes of this paper, he brought the concept of national identity to the forefront:

Especially our nation, suffered a lot from being far away from nationality... We understood that our fault was forgetting ourselves. If we are expecting the world to respect us, first of all, we should show ourselves and nationality this respect in terms of feelings, ideas, and in all our behaviour and actions. We should also be aware of the fact that the countries who could not adopt their national identity as their own are definitely prey to other nations."<sup>118</sup>

In packaging Turkey's identity, Mustafa Kemal utilized two major techniques, one of language and one of action: (1) rhetoric, mostly a rhetoric of nationalism, and (2) reforms, mostly modernizing and westernizing. Underneath the umbrella of these two were various sub-methods and strategies such as ties to history, instilling of national pride, his own leadership skills and charisma, occasional violence, and educational

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<sup>117</sup> Talat Sait Halman, foreword to *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1:3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1980-81), 3.

<sup>118</sup> Armaoğlu, 38.



edification and cultural channels as a way of reaching the masses. Additionally, in an emotional sense, he played into the peoples' paternal inclinations, fear of dismemberment, distrust of neighboring states, and desire to catch up to the modernized world—sometimes instilling these emotions and sometimes simply reinforcing them. This chapter will discuss first the rhetoric (words), then the reforms (actions), and conclude with a summary of some of the specific channels through which both the reforms and the rhetoric were dispersed and enforced throughout the new republic.

A visual diagram will bring the idea of Turkish identity to life throughout the chapter. The embodiment of Turkish identity, how it fits together and supports itself, will be depicted through the figure of a horse. A noble Turkish animal, quite fitting for Turkey's character, the horse is an image of pride for Turks, with a prominent place in the history of the nation. In 1453, Sultan Mehmet rode into the newly conquered Constantinople upon a white horse, completing his historic capture of the city, henceforth a city for the Muslims. Mustafa Kemal, 468 years later, led the rising new nation of Turks in a victorious tide-turning battle, once again claiming back from the “infidel” the land that belonged to the Muslims. This was the battle of *Sakarya*,<sup>119</sup> later the name of Atatürk's horse, and therefore an apt name for this Turkish Identity Horse.<sup>120</sup>

This chapter will take the components listed at the end of chapter 3 and flesh them out in an analogy. The diagram will begin with *Sakarya's* two hind legs, homogeneity and religion, the two basic pillars of support for the formation and packaging of Turkish identity. These two legs start off the *rhetoric* part of the packaging process. The actual body of the horse will be Turkish nationalism, with the tail representing the ever-

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<sup>119</sup> This is the name of the river, running through central Anatolia (50 miles west of Ankara province) where the *Sakarya* tide-turning Battle of the Independence War was fought.

<sup>120</sup> See diagram in Appendix B.

connected Ottoman past. All of this is part of the rhetoric section. Moving to the *reforms*, the horse's front legs of civilization and modernization, and its head of westernization, will be detailed. The chapter will finish with the *routes* through which Kemal disseminated all this rhetoric and reform.

#### **4.1 Hind Leg #1: Homogeneity**

The idea of a Turkish national identity was not, in fact, brand-new with the Republic of Turkey. According to Kemal Karpaz, it started in the late Ottoman period. Earlier in the Ottoman Empire, the structure of government was such that the political elites were distant from the masses, with the job of upholding allegiance to the sultanate and acting apart from ethnic affiliation. Meanwhile, the ethnic and religious identities of the common people were cohesively bound together in their local groupings, called *millets*, or religious communities. "In practice therefore, the subjects were faced with a clear separation between political allegiance on the one hand and ethnic and religious identity and loyalty on the other."<sup>121</sup> However, this 15<sup>th</sup> century arrangement began to change in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when a new wave of elites:

began to emerge among the Balkan Christians and to search for support among the masses through religious and ethnic-national identification. This was followed by the efforts of the Ottoman governmental elites to identify themselves with the Muslim masses by adopting the popular concepts of Islam and popular ways of expression...Eventually—late in the nineteenth century—the Ottoman elites developed a sense of Turkish national identity.<sup>122</sup>

And yet, this Ottoman state was still a mixing bowl of religions, ethnicities, cultures and races, which could finally no longer be held together as a united whole under the sultan.

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<sup>121</sup> Kemal Karpaz, *An Inquiry Into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State: From Social Estates to classes, From Millets to Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1973), 8

<sup>122</sup> Karpaz, 9.

From the subsequent and gradual dismemberment of the multicultural empire, Mustafa Kemal emerged with an eye toward homogeneity. Unlike some of his other principles, this one was not proclaimed publicly as a value toward which Turks should strive, but was delivered more backhandedly as a given, an unquestioned fact that simply existed. He and the Kemalists achieved this homogenous packaging of the new republic mostly through rhetorical emphasis. This emphasis was to be successfully passed on to the following generations as a matter of principle. Kramer describes how future development of the Turkish state politically was hindered “by the persistence and defense of the Kemalist core values by the state elite and the military. The republican principle, the national and social homogeneity of the Turkish nation, and the secular character of the republic were givens that could not be openly debated or even questioned...”<sup>123</sup>

In a different vivid metaphor for Turkish identity, Soner Çagaptay’s new work addresses the effort of the young Turkish Republic’s leadership to “construct the homogenous Turkish identity that constituted the ‘Turk,’”<sup>124</sup> and concludes that the resulting product is much like Russian *matryoshka* dolls—the type that nest inside one another: “Yet, a bit like Russian dolls, there exists a complex and layered, if not graduated, relationship between the outer doll representing official ‘Turkishness’ and the inner ones colored by the multitude of ethnic and religious identities that characterize Turkish society.”<sup>125</sup> This metaphor helpfully portrays the multicultural anatomy of Turkish identity—despite what Kemal hoped for—whereas the horse metaphor shall depict Turkish identity’s formation.

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<sup>123</sup> Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>124</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, review of *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* by Soner Çagaptay, *Turkish Studies* 8:1 (March 2007) 165.

<sup>125</sup> Kirişçi, review of *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?*, 165.

The question follows that if the new republic did indeed incorporate a heterogeneous mix, what was the nature of the rhetoric that made it pass for homogenous? Here Turkey displays a remarkable divergence from the practices of other nation-states emerging from the Ottoman Empire. As Karpas explains, the gradual disintegration of the Ottoman state was accompanied by the breakdown of traditional modes of organization.

[The] universal religious communities disintegrated into ethnic units which were eventually incorporated into national states. The numerically superior group usually became dominant and treated the different linguistic and religious groups as minorities. The dominant group tried to remold the other groups according to its own concept of national culture...<sup>126</sup>

This prepared the way for a process in the forming republic that did indeed “remold,” but without the categorization of “minorities.” Turkey intended to assimilate “her own Arab and Kurdish minorities,”<sup>127</sup> while not considering them to be minorities as such. Those regarded as minorities, rather, were of different religions, particularly Christians, and this issue was treated differently. While fellow Muslims of different ethnicity or race were absorbed, a few Christian and Jewish communities were tolerated as minorities, but most were “exchanged.” This occurred in a mutually-agreed-upon “Population Exchange” with Greece in the years 1924-1930, whereby some 900,000 Greek Orthodox people of Anatolia were exchanged with some 400,000 Muslims from Greece who came to the new Turkey.<sup>128</sup> According to Bernard Lewis,

What took place was not an exchange of Greeks and Turks, but rather an exchange of Greek Orthodox Christians and Ottoman Muslims. A Western observer, accustomed to a different system of social and national classification,

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<sup>126</sup> Karpas, 6-7.

<sup>127</sup> Karpas, 2.

<sup>128</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 171.

might even conclude that this was no repatriation at all, but two deportations into exile—of Christian Turks to Greece, and of Muslim Greeks to Turkey.<sup>129</sup>

Religious identities had been thus purified to the point where the new republic was now 98 percent Muslim.<sup>130</sup>

The idea then, is that when Mustafa Kemal demarcated a smaller territory to be the future state, the demarcation cut out the different groups so the remaining people were homogenous. In fact, the homogeneity achieved was only a religious one, secured by this population exchange, and not an ethnic, racial, linguistic, or cultural homogeneity. The Kemalist regime solved this (or attempted to solve it, in seeing a need for cohesive homogeneity) by imposing over all the diversity a “national” homogeneity, declaring that all people in the newly formed boundaries were of the Turk “nationality,” and under this new umbrella, the remaining diversities were dealt with as follows.

As mentioned in chapter 3, “ethnic” as a concept did not exist in the Turkish language (or very much in the world yet, for that matter) and so was not an issue. Race was superseded by nation, the idea being that they who lived in the new Republic of Turkey were all Turk, and to be a Turk was noble. This was reinforced in the schools, media, “Peoples’ Houses,”<sup>131</sup> and other venues throughout Turkey. In fact, race as a unifier was deliberately avoided. Regarding language, for purposes of modernization and reform, Turkish was both purified and exalted, and by rule of law made to be both the language of schooling and written only in the new Latin alphabet, reforms to be described below. As Turkey expert Andrew Mango explains, “Mustafa Kemal Paşa, as he then was,

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<sup>129</sup> Lewis, 355.

<sup>130</sup> Hale, 56.

<sup>131</sup> *Halk Evleri*, to be explained at the end of this chapter.

led a national movement of resistance to the designs of ethnic adversaries, who were threatening the largely Turkish-speaking Muslim population of Anatolia...”<sup>132</sup>

Finally, the cultural type of diversity was superceded by the new overriding Turkish culture, which Mustafa Kemal slowly and deliberately directed and fed to the people by means of various channels, to be discussed below. Here one can see the point of view of the Instrumentalists, who argue, among other things, that identity is not always existent but a tool in the hands of clever politicians. In examining politicians’ abilities to choose among available identities to secure for the people, Stephen Saideman asks: “*Under what conditions* will politicians succeed in emphasizing one identity at the expense of others?” Examining various international cases, he concludes generally that: “Although leaders may not be able to repress identities, they can shape the debates, and...they can try to frame issues and to set agendas in ways that highlight the preferred identities.”<sup>133</sup>

Kemal’s “shaping,” “framing,” and “highlighting” would direct Turks toward a new, re-made Turkish cultural homogeneity that would reflect both their past and the westernization and modernization aims for the future. Thus, “homogeneity” as a national characteristic is not entirely natural but somewhat artificial, for better or for worse, as summed up well by Cemal Kafadar: “It now seems that homogeneity is in part a cultural *construction*, built through not only historical exigencies and certain forms of exclusivism but also a linear narrative of the story of ‘our true nation, one united people

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<sup>132</sup> Andrew Mango, foreword to *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, by Sylvia Kedourie, ed. (London, Frank Cass: 1999).

<sup>133</sup> Saideman, 189.

across time’” (emphasis added).<sup>134</sup> Turks today are quick to point out that Atatürk was not ethnocentric. At a state ceremony on Atatürk and Turkish identity in 1994, one academic informed the audience that Atatürk “used the term ‘our noble nation.’ Undoubtedly, this term should not be interpreted with a racist approach. This term was a symbol of the importance he gave to Turkish nation. It was an attempt to transfer the conscience of ‘Ottomanism’ to the conscience of ‘Turkish Identity.’”<sup>135</sup> And yet, accusations of racism left aside, there was still a form of suppression that occurred to some degree:

But whereas the Turkish national conception was benign compared with the fascist ones triumphing in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, becoming a Turk entailed the suppression of an individual’s own ethnic identity. In other words, Atatürk’s maxim was generous in allowing everyone who desired to do so to become a Turkish citizen, but it did not provide a solution for those who were not prepared to abandon their previous identities in favor of the new national idea.<sup>136</sup>

In summary, the Kemalist regime packaged Turkish identity in a uniform wrapping, a homogeneous understanding that would continue to shape Turkish thinking for decades to come. The result is a conception that looks somewhat like racism or ethnic suppression to the West, but is a matter of perception in the eyes of a Turk who has grown up with this frame of thinking. And Mustafa Kemal achieved this national worldview not by mere creation and design, but by embracing and building upon history. Identity does not emerge out of nothingness, and does not occur in a vacuum.

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<sup>134</sup> Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 23.

<sup>135</sup> Armaoğlu, 33.

<sup>136</sup> Cornell, 127.

## 4.2 Hind Leg #2: Religion/Secularism

By far the most powerful force already binding the Ottoman-turned-Turk citizens at the dawn of the republic was that of Islam, the rhetoric of which provides us with *Sakarya's* other foundational hind leg. Mustafa Kemal could hardly be considered a religious man, but he was still a Muslim by name and recognized the peoples' primary devotion to their faith and practices. Though secularism for Turkey was his long-term goal, he and his contemporaries framed the nationalist struggle in the context of religion. He was a clever politician in government settings, but appealed to traditional means to reach the masses. For example, in Samsun in 1919 where Kemal was gathering support, he would attend services in the main mosque with prayers for success, followed immediately by meetings held in the town square.<sup>137</sup> He was a man of strategy. "In former days, Mustafa Kemal had not been particularly noted for his piety. His friends considered him rather a free thinker. Now, wherever he was, he made it a point to go out of his way to visit a mosque and to keep company with all sorts of clerics."<sup>138</sup> When the *Sheikh ul-Islam* in Istanbul (under the sultan) issued a religious *fatwa* against Kemal, condemning him to death, he responded with another *fatwa*, signed by religious personalities on his side, and distributed it among towns and villages of Anatolia.<sup>139</sup>

Kemal also circulated pictures of himself with religious men, included turbaned religious figures in the Parliament for the public to see, disseminated circulars filled with religious language, and otherwise "served to guarantee the orthodox character of the

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<sup>137</sup> Metin Heper, "Transformation of Charisma into a Political Paradigm: Atatürkism in Turkey," *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1:3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1980-81), 71.

<sup>138</sup> Dumont, 18.

<sup>139</sup> Dumont, 19, and Heper, 71.



Anatolian government.”<sup>140</sup> The opening line of a circular a few days before inauguration of the Parliament is revealing:

With Divine Assistance, on Friday, April 23, after the Friday prayer, the Grand National Assembly will be inaugurated...After the prayer, we will go to the premises specially fitted out with the flag and the sacred relic. Before entering the building, a thanksgiving prayer will be said and a sheep immolated.<sup>141</sup>

Such rhetoric seems quite ironic in hindsight, knowing one of the main points of Kemal’s ideology was to be secularism. But without the bastion of religion on his side in the early days, he could never have succeeded in winning support among the Anatolian peoples.

The support garnered, the National Struggle won, the republic well on its way to foundation, Kemal found the right time to abolish the sultanate in November 1922 and the caliphate in March 1924. Kemal’s battle victories and successful defense of Turkey from the “infidel” (whereas the sultan succumbed to the European pressure and was ready to hand Turks’ rightful land over meekly to the invaders) earned him the authority to make these moves. This was a sharp turnaround from what only a few years prior had been a battle waged in the name of the sultan, but only the more religious constituents were very concerned about this apparent contradiction. His berating attacks on the incompetence of the sultan and Istanbul government seemed to be quite true. Additionally, in Turkish culture the sense of Allah as the granter of victory is very strong, so Kemal, through battlefield success, had proved the Divine Hand was with him.

Indeed, even before Kemal, the Ottomans were beginning a process of secularization in theory and practice. This is rarely acknowledged because the two sides are often painted as black and white, with the Ottomans being religious and the Kemalists being strictly secular, but in reality, it was more gray. According to Selim Deringil,

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<sup>140</sup> For these examples and others, see Dumont’s aforementioned insightful article on this topic.

<sup>141</sup> Tekin Alp, *Le Kèmalisme*, Paris, 1937, quoted in Dumont, 20.

“Ottoman nationality was beginning to be envisioned in more and more secular terms despite the religious language in which it was couched.”<sup>142</sup> But Kemal, among contemporaries who were doing revolutionary thinking, was a man of both thought and action, a “practical force,”<sup>143</sup> and it was he who really initiated the secularization process. As the new president of Turkey, he immediately began to make reforms that would bring Islam under the thumb of the state and transform it into a “Turkified” version. Through the process of secularism, “the Muslim institution was dismantled on the surface but in actuality it was absorbed into the Republican bureaucratic structure.”<sup>144</sup> There, in the “structure” was the safest place—according to nationalist goals—for Islam to be: out of the way and under the state’s watchful eye.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs was demoted to a “Directorate of Religious Affairs,” education became secularized, and with religion under government control, the new format was laicism, a “political system characterized by the exclusion of ecclesiastical control and influence.”<sup>145</sup> The original constitution of the new republic in 1924 had proclaimed Islam as the religion of the Turkish state, and had vested the Parliament with the responsibility of enforcing religious laws. However, in a revision four years later, these were suppressed and Islam was no longer even present in the constitution.<sup>146</sup> The Friday sermons in the mosques, a sacred tradition in Islam, serve as a magnifying glass as to what was happening: the sultan’s name was removed from the sermon, showing clearly his loss of legitimacy, and the rhetoric that replaced it was that

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<sup>142</sup> Selim Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908,” in *The Ottomans, the Turks, and World Power Politics: Collected Essays*, ed. Selim Deringil (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000), 139.

<sup>143</sup> Kinross, 56.

<sup>144</sup> Criss, “Change and Continuity from the Empire to the Republic,” 12.

<sup>145</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary. <[www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)>.

<sup>146</sup> Dumont, 23-24.

of the state. “Although the name of the President or the Chief Executive is never mentioned in Friday sermons today, there is a consistent refrain about the continuity of the state and republic. Friday sermons continue to serve as a tool of legitimization.”<sup>147</sup> The sermons, as with other religious themes and practices, became a conduit for this legitimization. The rituals were continued in their familiarity, but the content could be re-orchestrated for the Kemalist cause. Dumont’s incisive article entitled “Hojas for the Revolution” communicated this clearly:

Reforms aimed at modernizing and Turkifying the religious ritual, could not by themselves be very efficient. It was still more important to revise the *contents* of religious messages preached to the citizens. Turkey needed a nationalist, scientific, Western, Republican, statist, secularist, populist, and progressive Islam, in short, an Islam able to help in the propagation of Kemalist ideas. This Islam had yet to be found.<sup>148</sup>

While these transformations of course faced some heavy rebellion in certain patches of the country (to be detailed further below), Kemal had, as mentioned, an overall handle on authority because of his clout. “While there were occasional outbursts... all in all, the new regime had little to fear.”<sup>149</sup> To support this idea, an in-depth study by Gavin D. Brockett on the Anatolian masses reveals that unlike the common (unresearched) assumption that the Kemalist imposition of reforms quite naturally resulted in conservative “reactions,” instead the people largely worked *with* this new identity, bringing it alongside the still-dominant Muslim identity. His research on Muslim leaders and brotherhoods among the population led to the conclusion that, “Rather than spawn automatic rejection of change, they provided Turks with sufficient stability and security to assess the circumstances, and to accommodate, adapt, or reject those secular policies

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<sup>147</sup> Criss, “Change and Continuity from the Empire to the Republic,” 12.

<sup>148</sup> Dumont, 26-27.

<sup>149</sup> Dumont, 24.

that they did encounter.”<sup>150</sup> The outcome of this, Brockett notes, was a “hybrid identity,” a sort of “Turkish-Muslim synthesis” that survives to this day.<sup>151</sup> The synthesis theory is essentially “...the idea that Islam and the pre-Islamic culture of the Turks showed up a great number of similarities. Turks were therefore naturally attracted to Islam and destined to be its soldiers.”<sup>152</sup> As proof, a quotation by Nationalist Action Party leader Alparslan Türkeş in the 1970s runs as follows: “We are as Turk as the Tengri mountain, as Muslim as the Hira mountain. Both philosophies are our principles.” (The Tengri is in Central Asia where the MHP believes Turks’ ancestors migrated from, and the Hira is located Muslim holy lands in Saudi Arabia.)<sup>153</sup>

Overall, Kemal considered the Turks’ Islam to be “a most efficient revolutionary tool”<sup>154</sup> but it also had the potential for rallying people too far, uniting them in something more deeply rooted and powerfully felt than their nascent citizenship, and thus it had to be overcome by a stronger ideological force: nationality. Here, one can witness a form of nationality-as-religion, or as Kathryn Manzo terms it, a ‘political religion.’ According to Manzo, nationalism may be officially secular, but “when it treats the immortalized nation as an entity worth dying for—as the ultimate object of individual loyalty—nationalism operates as a political religion.”<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Gavin D. Brockett, “Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923-38,” in *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 61.

<sup>151</sup> Brockett, 61, although the concept of *Türk-Islam Sentezi*, or Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, was first mentioned by Professor İbrahim Kafesoğlu in the 1970s.

<sup>152</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, “Islam in the Service of the National and Pre-national State,” *Turkology Update Leiden Project Working Papers Archive* (Department of Turkish Studies, Leiden University, October 2004), 11.

<sup>153</sup> E. Burak Arıkan, “The Programme of the Nationalist Action Party: An Iron Hand in a Velvet Glove?” in *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 123.

<sup>154</sup> Dumont, 20.

<sup>155</sup> Manzo, 7.

Kemal faced a nation already religiously passionate, yet distanced enough from their religious authorities in Istanbul, and he worked to transfer that passion to a “political religion” in place of a spiritual one. Where there had been no unifying identity, he packaged one up in “being a Turk” and made the widely held religious identity submissive to it. He took Islam and garnered it under the state, so that Islam played a subservient, dependent role, while the state became its paternalistic distributor.

In a way, Mustafa Kemal was an ‘Awakener,’ to use a term from nationalist vocabulary exemplifying the religiosity of nationalism. According to Gellner, the idea behind “Awakening” is this:

Man needs to be awakened... to his national identity and the political imperatives implicit in it: the need to protect the national culture by endowing it with its own state-protector, the need to unmask, neutralize and drive out the foreigners who wish to destroy and debase that culture.<sup>156</sup>

If there was anyone who warned his people against foreigners who “wish to destroy and debase,” it was Mustafa Kemal. Gellner further explains, “For those for whom human fulfillment is linked to the attainment of national consciousness...national awakening is more important than spiritual awakening; indeed, it is a form of spiritual awakening, perhaps its highest form.”<sup>157</sup> Kemal made such a link for the Turkish people, and thus can be seen as an “Awakener” of societal identity. Through this role he advocated a Turkified form of Islam in service of the nation and a new type of ‘religion’ that would reach a deeper place in the hearts of Turks. This leads into the body of nationalism itself in the new Republic of Turkey. Religion was a hind leg of support but no longer the binding characteristic of the body of people. Instead, “the principle of nationalism was to be the

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<sup>156</sup> Gellner, 8.

<sup>157</sup> Gellner, 8.

integrating link substituting for the idea of *ümmet* or religious community and for Ottoman *din-ü-devlet* or the unity of state and religion.”<sup>158</sup>

#### **4.3 The Body: National Rhetoric**

With two strong hind legs in place, we now look to the body of *Sakarya*, the Identity Horse. The massive bulk of identity for the Turkish nation is Turkish nationalism, the pride of being Turk, the fullness of Turkish citizenship. Mustafa Kemal had to find a way to tell the people, “Look, you are no longer Ottomans; you are something else.” This “something else” found its fulfillment in the newly forming definition of the word Turk. “*Ne mutlu Türkiim diyene!*” (How happy are they who call themselves Turk!), Kemal crowed to people who had long perceived the word “Turk” negatively. “The early republican period under the leadership of Atatürk is interpreted as the glorification of Turkish nationalism... Atatürk is considered to be the greatest of all Turkish nationalists. The first phase of the republic deserves utmost respect, because it takes ‘national culture’ as its basis.”<sup>159</sup>

This new nation of people, within the tradition of the time period, was defined based on the country’s newly won borders. This left some confusion with regard to those living within the new Turkish borders who were of other ethnicity or race, as mentioned before. The requisite for becoming Turk was quite interesting. All that was necessary was to live within the republic’s geographical borders, and to call yourself a Turk. In labeling oneself a Turk, one was expected to love Turkey and conform to all the cultural and linguistic attributes of being “Turk,” partly as understood from the past, and partly as directed by Mustafa Kemal.

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<sup>158</sup> Heper, “Transformation of Charisma into a Political Paradigm: Atatürkism in Turkey,” 72.

<sup>159</sup> Arıkan, 125.

Thus, the word Turk defined a new national community into which individuals, irrespective of ethnicity, would be able to integrate...It is against this background that *every person living within the borders of the republic and accepting its basic principles was welcome to be its citizen*. Immigrants to Anatolia of Caucasian or Slavic origin and indigenous populations of Kurdish, Laz, or Arabic origin all became Turks in their own right, whereas ethnically Turkish minorities outside the boundaries of the republic, in the Middle East or the Balkans, were disqualified from membership in the national community.<sup>160</sup> (emphasis added)

Actually, Atatürk's boundary-based conception of nationality was not so different from international precedent. In a 1919 speech, he "justified the fight for national independence in terms of the prevailing patterns of international relations: 'Today the nations of the whole world recognize only one sovereignty: national sovereignty.'"<sup>161</sup> It was thus a method first for cohesion and consolidation domestically, and second for survival internationally.

Nationalism, and the accompanying concept of nation, was also an avenue to stability in the face of change. Broad-scale change does not occur overnight, especially regarding worldviews and mentalities. However, change will come immediately in the wake of war or revolution. In the case of the making of the Republic of Turkey, there were both. The republic itself was born out of the throes of two wars, World War I and the War of Independence; then Atatürk's Kemalism that followed was "a revolution in the true sense of the world" in that "the ideas of the 'sovereignty of the people' and the 'state of Turkey' were novel and revolutionary."<sup>162</sup> With such revolutionary ideas, stability was needed. Part of this came from religion, as mentioned above, but another

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<sup>160</sup> Cornell, 126-127.

<sup>161</sup> Dankwart A. Rustow, "Mehmed Akif's 'Independence March': Religion and Nationalism in Atatürk's Movement of Liberation," *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1:3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1980-81), 116.

<sup>162</sup> Metin Heper, "Transformation of Charisma into a Political Paradigm: Atatürkism in Turkey," 67.

part of stability was found in the prose and symbols of nationalism. As Smith writes in an essay entitled “The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?”:

...in eras of rapid social mobilization, people have an overriding need to feel that they belong to a community, hierarchy or belief system. There is also an overriding need, in such destabilizing circumstances, to mask the radicalism of social change with a veil of tradition and continuity with an assumed past, usually a national one.<sup>163</sup>

As a skillful leader, Atatürk realized this, and he used a combination of the glories of the recent past (largely his own victory in battle) and the glory of the nation to formulate a measure of stability and continuity. The most famous speech Atatürk delivered, known as *Nutuk* (Great Speech), was an astounding feat of six days straight, in October 1927, in front of the deputies of the Republican People’s Party, but directed toward the Turkish public in general. This speech, which seems during many sections to be a rambling narrative of Atatürk’s own military and political conquests, indeed had a clear purpose: “From the mouth of the great leader of the party, it was thought politic to allow them to hear the history of the National Movement from its very inception so that Turkey’s sons and daughters might, in their turn, learn their history from the desired angle.”<sup>164</sup>

Alongside this speech, immortalized in Turkey’s Republican history, were the *İstiklal Marşı* (Independence March—which became the national anthem) and the *Öğrenci Andı* (Student Vow—much like the United States’ “Pledge of Allegiance”). The Independence March is full of symbols of nationalism, religion, and a homeland that is paradise. First printed by poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy in 1921 and formalized as the national anthem in 1923, the poem-turned-anthem is filled with the “emotional intensity of Akif’s

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<sup>163</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?” in *Reimagining the Nation*, ed. Marjorie Ringrose and Adam J. Lerner (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), 13.

<sup>164</sup> Sonyel, 145.



blend of Islamic and Turkish-nationalist feeling.”<sup>165</sup> The final stanza below provides a glimpse into the heart of nationalism—a unique blend of religion, battlefield glory and honor in bloodshed, a right to freedom and sovereignty, independence, and a sense of belonging to—and pride in—a people group.

Float on then, crescent [symbol on Turkish flag] like the dawns, in glorious flight.  
Proudly I shed my blood to its last drop in your full sight.  
Never shall you, shall my people be confounded in this fight.  
My free-born flag’s eternal right is freedom.  
And independence is my godly nation’s God-entrusted right.<sup>166</sup>

In the “Student Vow,” schoolchildren across Turkey since 23 April 1933 have pledged to love their country and nation first and foremost, and to improve both the country and themselves. They also affirm value in being Turk, paying tribute to Atatürk,<sup>167</sup> who showed the way for the nation to succeed, and pledge to walk in these ways.

I’m a Turk, I’m righteous, I’m hard-working. My principle is to protect the younger ones, respect my elders, to love my land and my nation more than my essence. My ideal is to improve and advance. (Oh, great Atatürk! I pledge that I will walk unceasingly in the road you opened, the goal you showed us.) My existence shall be devoted to the Turkish entity. (How happy are they who call themselves Turk!)<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Rustow, 113.

<sup>166</sup> Rustow, 116. First rhymed translation, composed by Dankwart A. Rustow. Turkish original: *Dalgalan sen de şafaklar gibi ey şanlı hilâl! / Olsun artık dökülen kanlarımın hepsi helâl. / Ebediyyen sana yok, ırkıma yok izmihlâl; / Hakkıdır, hür yaşamış, bayrağımın hürriyet, / Hakkıdır, Hakk'a tapan milletimin istiklâl!*<sup>166</sup> (Mehmet Akif Ersoy, *İstiklal Marşı*, *Milli Kütüphane* <<http://www.mkutup.gov.tr/i-mars.html>>.)

<sup>167</sup> The vow was first developed by the National Education Minister, Dr. Reşit Galip, and was written into the law in May of that year. However, the vow went through several changes since then; the newer parts are marked off by parenthesis above. See: Hüseyin Hüsnü Tekişik, *Çağdaş Eğitim Dergisi*, <<http://www.cagdasegitim.org/?set=aylik&durum=makale&id=1&sorgu=200304>>. The part honoring Atatürk was not added until the 1970s, in an effort to legitimize Kemalism and the unity of the country in view of Communist and Kurdish subversion. This love for Atatürk had thus been instilled more recently. It was not there when he was alive, nor did he demand it.

<sup>168</sup> Turkish original: *Türküme, doğruyum, çalışkanım. İlkem, küçüklerimi korumak, büyüklerimi saymak, yurdumu, milletimi özümünden çok sevmektir. Ülküm; yükselmek, ileri gitmektir. (Ey Büyük Atatürk! Açtığın yolda, gösterdiğin hedefe durmadan yürüyeceğime and içerim.) Varlığım, Türk varlığına armağan olsun. (Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene!)*

With these and other national texts and songs in place, Kemal helped to assemble a sense of one of Smith's prongs of national identity: "common legal rights and duties for all members."<sup>169</sup> Both of these texts establish and affirm a sense of membership and duty.

In addition to these new passages of nationalist rhetoric dispersed successfully among the masses were Mustafa Kemal's own speeches, sound bytes, and excellent use of the media. He inspired Turks with an imitable example of personal humility mixed with national pride. "Do not try to attribute me super, extraordinary qualities. The only thing extraordinary in my birth is my being born as a TURKISH person."<sup>170</sup> With strong words like these, he gave validity to their nascent national identity. Atatürk believed in the true greatness of the Turkish people, and he frequently told them so!

Atatürk's packaging—his official delineations and definitions—has remained doctrinal for Turkey since his time. According to the most recent constitution, of 1982, "Everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk" and "No Turk shall be deprived of citizenship, unless he commits an act incompatible with loyalty to the motherland."<sup>171</sup> Thus, to say 'I am a Turk,' and to live in Turkey as its citizen is to be a Turk. This is the essence of the national ideal upon which the republic was founded.

#### **4.4 The Necessary Tail End: Historical Rhetoric**

There is one other part of the horse in the region of its hind legs and attached to the bulk of its central body.<sup>172</sup> Frivolous and unnecessary as a horse's tail may seem, it actually provides vital balance for the animal. While telling the people they were no longer Ottomans and while heavily criticizing and condemning the Ottoman government

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<sup>169</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 14.

<sup>170</sup> Armaoğlu, 40.

<sup>171</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (1982), art. 66.

<sup>172</sup> *Sakarya* is a female.

in Istanbul before it was abolished, the Kemalist regime still could not survive by divorcing completely from its Ottoman history. The Republic of Turkey carries its Ottoman past behind it much like a horse's tail. It is forever connected, shaping the balance of Turkey today, sometimes getting in the way, sometimes quite convenient, always there. The tail of the past is a driving part of the body of identity, although at first glance it might look like just an add-on, possibly for show. Indeed the tail of the Ottoman past does give an impressive show, but it also taught, and continues to teach, vital lessons for Turkish identity, and despite all the talk of detaching from the past to start afresh, the Turkish nation cannot do without it.

Mustafa Kemal himself wisely realized that the new republic could not arrive on the world stage out of nowhere, much as he wanted a complete break from the Ottoman Empire. Just as a horse looks ridiculous and cannot be taken seriously without a tail, an emerging nation had to use its history to demonstrate “administrative ability” and present itself to the “civilized world”<sup>173</sup>:

Such arguments resonated with one of the basic principles in the “new world order” between the two great wars: a people had a right to nationhood in a civilized world only if they could prove that they had in their historical experience what it takes to create a stable state and to govern in a civilized manner. That is one of the most important reasons why nation-states took up the construction of a past as avidly as they drew plans for industrialized modernity. New generations had to, as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk put it in a saying that is now inscribed on many public sites in Turkey, “be proud [of the nation's past achievements], work hard, and be confident [of the future].”<sup>174</sup>

A second reason for connection to the past was for the people themselves. As stated before, a people, a culture, an identity of some sort, *existed*, although not cohesive and not even necessarily “Turk” in the way it is understood today. The people could not

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<sup>173</sup> Kafadar, 41.

<sup>174</sup> Kafadar, 41.

be cut off from their history, from their past—any more than a horse could be cut off from its tail—so something about that past had to be glorified.

Interestingly, in fulfilling these measures, Kemal and his contemporaries avoided the glorification of the Ottoman past in terms of rulership, empire and conquest (which contradicted with the aims of the nationalists to consolidate and internalize) and instead glorified the land itself, making it into something holy for the Turks. This served much better the purposes of raising up to defend the land demarcated by the 1920 National Pact, and was a key rallying point at a time when the nationalists could not glorify the sultanate because that was what they were about to challenge. As Armaoğlu illuminates:

...a historical relation between a 'nation' and 'motherland' is inevitable. Atatürk, on the one hand was putting forward the concept of a new 'nation,' that is Turkish Nation, and at the same time was making the concept of 'national motherland' which was Turkish for nine hundred years and started from 1071 as an inseparable part of it. It is doubtless that the relation of a 'national society' with a 'national soil' is a basic element of a 'national state.' For this reason, Atatürk when mentioning a 'Turkish state,' he emphasized the salvation of 'motherland' which depended on 'national borders' above all other things.<sup>175</sup>

This fit well with the rhetoric of historical homeland/territory and thus another one of Smith's five prongs of identity. The Anatolians were not aware of a sacred homeland until Kemal gave meaning to it. Kemal, in effect, reached into the past to package a way in which Turks could understand their history and be proud of it, all the while linking it indelibly to the land that was now sovereignly *theirs*.

Another part of connection to the past (or another strand of the identity-tail) came through in *Turkism* rhetoric, especially that of Ziya Gökalp, a contemporary of Kemal's. Gökalp stimulated the homeland rhetoric. The Promised Land or Utopia of the Turks was

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<sup>175</sup> Armaoğlu, 32.

sociologist Gökalp's poetic *Kızıl Elma*,<sup>176</sup> or “Red Apple” of hope. He advocated a trend that helped begin a new look at being “Turk.” To Gökalp, a turn-of-the century advocate of Turkism, and many of his contemporaries, unification of all Turkic brothers in “language, thought, and action”<sup>177</sup> was possible and promising. Worth mentioning for his heavy influence on Atatürk and thus on Turkish identity, Gökalp was the “theoretician of Turkish nationalism,” as Lewis calls him—first a professor, but also a philosopher, journalist, publicist, and propagandist. He grew up in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakır, but like Atatürk and many others of their contemporaries in the intellectual realms, he was heavily influenced by French thought and writing. Especially influential was the idea of “religion as social cement.”<sup>178</sup> Gökalp's patriotism started out in defense of a common Ottoman-ness, but “before long, he became the chief ideologist of a Western-oriented Turkish nationalism, based not on ethnic origin, but on common culture and language.”<sup>179</sup> To Gökalp, Turkism was a word that could be defined at various levels and scopes, but in its most general sense, he said, “Turkism means to exalt the Turkish nation,” and in a more specific definition, stated:

Turk is the name of a nation, and a nation can be defined as a group which possesses a culture peculiar to itself. Therefore, a Turk can have only one language, only a single culture. Some branches of Turks, however, are trying to create a language and a culture which differ from those of the Turks of Anatolia...<sup>180</sup>

Rather than recognizing these peoples as potentially different ethnicities or nationalities altogether, they were viewed as deviant Turks. He argued, “the only solution is to

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<sup>176</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, trans. Robert Devereux (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1968), 20.

<sup>177</sup> Gökalp, 5, as quoted from Ismail Gasprinsky, publisher of Crimean newspaper *Tarjuman* (Translator).

<sup>178</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, 96.

<sup>179</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, 96.

<sup>180</sup> Gökalp, 17.

recognize as a Turk every individual who says, ‘I am a Turk,’ and to punish those, if there be any, who betray the Turkish nation.”<sup>181</sup> Kurdish by descent, Gökalg himself was a Turk because he said “I am Turkish.”<sup>182</sup>

There were also the less-visible parts of the tail: the lessons learned from the empire’s mistakes. Not aligning with the West soon enough, attempting to govern too vast a territory, and allowing judicial capitulations for foreigners to have special rights in Ottoman lands, were among some of the mistakes the Ottomans made and Kemal avoided. Additionally, Kemal, while still distancing from the Ottoman government, used his superb rhetoric and speaking skills to emphasize the parts of Ottoman-ness that could be harnessed for the edification of the Turks’ identity. In a famous speech given when he first arrived in Ankara in December 1919, he “boldly asserts that a people who for centuries have ruled over others has certain proven talents of organization and a dedication to independence, and will not willingly submit to being colonized by others.”<sup>183</sup>

Finally, there were some dark strands to the tail—not mere mistakes, but scars on the Ottoman record. The most clear of these today is the alleged “genocide” of Armenians in 1915, which many outside of Turkey claim was orchestrated as an ethnic cleansing by the Ottoman government, but which Turks claim was a two-way war in which partisans on both sides were massacred. Dark strands such as this give *Sakarya*, the Identity Horse, the need to stand all the stronger and prouder in the face of

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<sup>181</sup> Gökalg, 16.

<sup>182</sup> Selim Deringil, “From Ottoman to Turk: Self-Image and Social Engineering in Turkey,” in *The Ottomans, the Turks, and World Power Politics: Collected Essays*, ed. Selim Deringil (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000), 174-5. Arabs and Persians, based on centuries of history and recognition of the ‘other,’ were the two Muslim groups that were definitely considered not Turkish. Every other Muslim in Turkey’s boundaries was to be incorporated into the understanding of ‘Turk.’

<sup>183</sup> Rustow, 115.

international investigation and accusation. It is preferable to be looked in the face and not from behind. Turkey would rather only the grandeur of the tail to be seen, waving proudly behind, when the horse is viewed from the front.

#### **4.5 Front Leg #1: Civilization**

The hind quarters and main body bulk of the Identity Horse thus established, we now move to the fore section—those parts of the horse representative of the actual reforms and forward-moving actions of the Kemalist regime to (1) civilize, (2) modernize, and (3) westernize the new Republic of Turkey. They did this through political, legal, linguistic, social, educational, and economic reforms—actions carried out in tow with the powerful rhetoric already discussed. The civilization and modernization will represent the two “arms,” or front legs of the horse, stepping forward and reaching ahead. Westernism is the head. The mind, senses, and eyes were focused ever-toward this goal of being Western.

The action of “civilizing” can be defined as: “to cause to develop out of a primitive state; *especially*: to bring to a technically advanced and rationally ordered stage of cultural development.”<sup>184</sup> This describes how Kemal viewed the Anatolian peasantry, in terms of where they were and where they needed to be. Many of Kemal’s first reforms targeted religious traditions that he felt were keeping the people backward and uncivilized. After abolishing the most symbolic of religious figureheads, the sultanate, the caliphate, and the *sheikh ul-Islam* in 1922-1924, two of the first areas of change were the most visible ones: clothing and religious communities. In November 1925, Kemal instituted what became one of the most controversial reforms: the banning of the *fez*, or

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<sup>184</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary. <[www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)>.

religious<sup>185</sup> hat worn by Muslim men in the Ottoman Empire. In response to the outrage that erupted, “Mustafa Kemal justified it by stating that the *fez* was, in a way, the emblem of fanaticism and symbolized the hatred of progress and civilization.”<sup>186</sup> In fact, this hat was not an inherently Ottoman accessory; it was of apparent Moroccan origin, and in 1832 Sultan Mahmud II made it the official headgear for subjects of his empire, both Muslims and non-Muslims, “to abolish external distinctions between communities.”<sup>187</sup> But Kemal preferred the broad-rimmed hat of the West in place of this stiff rimless hat, and modeled the new style for the public as an example.

Islam itself was being reformed and ‘Turkified,’ according to the Kemalists’ new understanding of “Turk”: “It was one thing to exclude professional exponents of Islam from the workings of a modern, national state. It was quite another to modernize and nationalize Islam itself. But the attempt was made.”<sup>188</sup> While the *fez* prohibition was taken the most seriously, that same month, Kemal also closed Dervish lodges and *tarikats* (Sufi religious brotherhoods) although both continued to operate clandestinely. The Grand National Assembly also abolished religious courts, closed some places of worship, and condemned the women’s religious garments (veil and *çarşaf*).<sup>189</sup> He wanted women to look and behave more “civilized,” to be more refined and “culturally developed”—meaning, in essence, more on-par with the West.

Continually admiring the European ways, the Kemalist regime in 1926 adopted the Swiss Civil Code, changing the Turkish family structure, for example, preventing

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<sup>185</sup> It was not actually religious, but Ottoman. However, through all the debate and reaction, it came to be seen as a symbol of religion, or at least anti-reformism.

<sup>186</sup> Dumont, 23.

<sup>187</sup> Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition...”142-3.

<sup>188</sup> Lewis, 413.

<sup>189</sup> Dumont, 23.



polygamy. Regarding minority rights,<sup>190</sup> those who were not taken under the umbrella of being “Turk” (i.e. Christians and Jews) were allowed to maintain their educational and religious institutions, with use of their own languages. But “no such rights were accorded to the Turkish Kurds, who probably accounted for about 10-15 percent of the population at the time, since they represented an ethnic rather than religious minority.”<sup>191</sup>

Education was also reformed, in the context of separating it from religious authority. The state took over education, and the *medreses* (theological seminaries) were closed down. The Ministry of Education<sup>192</sup> began to run schools for imams and preachers, and universities opened departments of divinity. One such department, at the University of Istanbul, appointed a committee to study the modernization of Islam and make recommendations. Their final list of suggestions would have all but transformed the mosque into a European church.<sup>193</sup> As Lewis writes, “It was possible to turn the Ottoman sultanate into a national republic, with a president, ministries, and parliament. It was not possible to turn the mosque into a Muslim church, with pews, organ, and an imam-precentor.”<sup>194</sup>

#### **4.6 Front Leg #2: Modernization**

The other forward-reaching “arm,” or front leg, of *Sakarya* is modernization. “To modernize” is to “make modern, as in taste, style or usage,” and “modern” is “involving recent techniques, methods, or ideas: up-to-date.”<sup>195</sup> So, how does one “make modern”?

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<sup>190</sup> Some authors will refer to ‘human rights,’ but this term was not used anywhere during those years. But, minority rights were used and minorities for Ankara were non-Muslims.

<sup>191</sup> Hale, 56.

<sup>192</sup> Graduates from this ministry then staffed the Directorate of Religious Affairs.

<sup>193</sup> Lewis, 413-4.

<sup>194</sup> Lewis, 415.

<sup>195</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary. <[www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)>.

How does one change the taste, style, and usage of a whole nation? Kemal did this through more reforms.

First, he endeavored to Europeanize the Turks' tastes. To be modernized meant to be more European, because the West was "modern." He had a fondness for women, cigarettes, and alcohol, all of which was known to the public in terms of his more "modern" lifestyle. Although the Koran strongly recommends abstinence from alcohol,<sup>196</sup> Kemal highly enjoyed *rakı* (the Turkish strong, clear, aniseed alcohol) and encouraged production of domestic alcohol by opening breweries in the Ankara area. This was one way he encouraged an aspect of culture already present; for generations, *rakı* has been consumed generously throughout Anatolia.

More immediately influential, however, were the reforms in language. As one of his many modernizing reforms for Turkey, Kemal in 1928 overhauled the writing system. From the Arabic script used under the Ottoman Empire for Turkish writing,<sup>197</sup> he switched the nation's usage to the Latin script, especially the letters in German and French. There was even a brief stint of popularity for the Sun Language Theory,<sup>198</sup> which claimed "on the basis of a heliocentric view of the origin and nature of human languages, that Turkish was the Ur-language from which all civilized languages derived."<sup>199</sup> The complete overhaul of the alphabet and reading system of course tied in with his westernism, which can hardly be separated from his drive to "modernize" Turkey. "Adopting the Latin script, as some Turkish reformers had advocated even before the

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<sup>196</sup> The Koran does not directly prohibit alcohol, but warns believers against its dangers. Additionally, the Prophet Mohammed never drank, and high-practice Muslims follow his example as a way to purity and eligibility for Allah's mercy.

<sup>197</sup> Linguistically speaking, the Arab alphabet did not suit the Turkish language, which is not a Semitic language. Arabic has two vowels, whereas Turkish has eight.

<sup>198</sup> This was a form of legitimacy and did not bear out scientifically—so it was of no consequence.

<sup>199</sup> Kafadar, note 30, p. 163.

Great War, would put Turks in the same camp as the Western Christians.”<sup>200</sup> Indeed Kemal’s intention in this reform was to advance the Turkish people educationally and intellectually:

My friends [he said], our rich and harmonious language will now be able to display itself with new Turkish letters. We must free ourselves from these incomprehensible signs, that for centuries have held our minds in iron vice. You must learn the new Turkish letters quickly. Teach them to your compatriots, to women and to men, to porters and to boatmen. Regard it as a patriotic and national duty...and when you perform that duty, bear in mind that for a nation to consist of 10 to 20 per cent of literates and 80 or 90 per cent of illiterates is shameful... The fault is not ours; it is of those who failed to understand the character of the Turk and bound his mind in chains. Now is the time to eradicate the errors of the past...<sup>201</sup>

The literacy rate was 10 percent in the empire, but with the new alphabet jumped to 45 percent.

Atatürk also modernized by means of industry, transportation, and technological and economic reforms. This included the foundation of the Turkish State Railways in 1927, and the abolition of the hazardous “capitulations” of the Ottoman Empire, which had been granted by successive sultans to Christian nations, allowing Europeans to interfere far too much in Ottoman affairs, from economic privileges to education to the judiciary rights of foreigners living on Ottoman soil. These were abolished in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which stated: “Each of the High Contracting Parties hereby accepts, in so far as it is concerned, the complete abolition of the Capitulations in Turkey in every

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<sup>200</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, 464.

<sup>201</sup> Quoted from Millî Eğ. Söylev, i. 32-33, in Lewis, 278.

respect.”<sup>202</sup> This was a big step for ensuring that Turks had their sovereignty and could be taken seriously as a power in the West.<sup>203</sup>

Lastly, within progress and modernization there is often a desire to change camps and somehow break from that past, but when the past is viewed as something like an animal’s tail, we know that is not really possible. Still, the elites in Kemal’s regime tried:

Implicit in this ideology was the conviction that the Kemalist elite was distinct from the Anatolian ‘masses’ in terms of national intelligence and adaptability, and was therefore responsible for leading Anatolian townsmen and peasants out of darkness and into light. The Kemalist conception of progress derided institutions and cultural accretions – especially religious beliefs and practices – associated with the Ottoman-Islamic past; it reflected not only the elite’s limited understanding of but also its hostility towards the very beliefs and rituals crucial to the definition of Anatolian Muslim identities.<sup>204</sup>

Just as the tail symbolizes the crucial role in identity of the past, the Kemalists also had a clear idea of the ‘light’ toward which they were heading. The front legs of the horse support the head: westernization.

#### **4.7 The Head: Westernization**

No term better describes the mind and senses of Turkish identity than westernization. Raised in the Western end of the empire and educated in Western thought, Kemal faced distinctively Westward and called upon all of Turkey to do the same. This is a theme running from the tail to the head. The Ottoman state had been trying to become a member of the European state system since 1815. The Ottomans were proud in the powerful days; they did not even condescend to start permanent diplomatic

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<sup>202</sup> Treaty of Peace with Turkey signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923. Article 28. Brigham Young University: Harold B. Lee Library, <<http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/1918p/lausanne.html>>.

<sup>203</sup> Moreover, secularization had a lot to do with trying to abolish the capitulations; it was not only about pushing Islam into the private sphere. If and only if the judiciary and the legal system was secularized could they have legitimate grounds to abolish the capitulations.

<sup>204</sup> Brockett, 45.

relations with European countries until 1836. Until then, Ottomans had only been sending envoys—never a permanent resident to reside in foreign countries as ambassador. After this late entry, however, the Ottomans never fully made it “in,” so to speak.<sup>205</sup> Kemal was determined to overcome this distance; even though the Western powers were his former battlefield enemies, he saw value in aligning with their way of life.

In addition to the reforms thus listed, a few more of Kemal’s key reforms paid clear service to his westernization goal. In 1926, he switched the country to the Western calendar, reserving the Muslim calendar only for commemorative religious affairs. He also changed the break in the work week from the Muslim holy day of Friday to the Western-style weekend of Saturday and Sunday. In 1934, all the “Ahmet”s and “Ayşe”s of villages across Turkey could no longer be known only by their first name. The “backwardness” of single names was eliminated with the required adoption of surnames. This reform is one of the most fascinating, as a nation of people scrambled to choose their new family name. Turks chose their surnames based on professions, accomplishments of their relatives, or by adding “son of” to the name or position of their father, similar to the Western “Johnson” or “Watson.” Some even chose from lists distributed by the state with good, suitable names, like *Yılmaz* (“Dauntless, undomitable”) or *Şimşek* (“Lightning”). Naming a whole country was an interesting affair—names were as pretty as *Şafak* (“Dawn”), as menacing as *Karaaslan* (“Dark Lion”), or as silly as *Yarımbyıkoğlu*<sup>206</sup> (Son of the Man with the Half-Mustache). Only one name was

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<sup>205</sup> One ramification of this not belonging to a system is that other nations can bargain over you. The “Eastern Question” concept and subsequent events made this clear and instilled in the Turks a healthy fear of being bargained over. This fear remains today, understandably, and thus the need to affiliate with a regional system is one of the main reasons why Turkey is trying to join the European Union.

<sup>206</sup> *Yarımbyıkoğlu* from Kinzer, 47.

forbidden for the common people, and that was the one chosen by Kemal: *Atatürk*, or “Father of the Turks.”

Yet, despite all of Atatürk’s reforms and modernizations in Turkey, there are complications for Turkey’s “European-ness.” Referring to the situation as the “Never-Ending Story,” Meltem Müftüler-Bac writes that Europe views Turkey as alien and all political-democratic grounds aside, there remains the “perception of Turkey as the Other of Europe.”<sup>207</sup> Still, the head of *Sakarya* remains a Western-facing identity, with Turkey currently jumping through the necessary hoops, albeit more slowly and unwillingly lately, to meet Europe’s official standards for acceptance into the Union.

#### **4.8 Routes: Delivering the Identity Package**

With *Sakarya*, our Identity Horse model thus established, this issue remains: by what means or channels was all this identity *delivered* and *enforced* among the people of Turkey? A clever and charismatic politician, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had his fingers on the pulse of the people of Turkey, and appealed first of all to their emotions. Rallying the people against the enemies who had tried to divide and conquer them (first, the European encroaching powers, and second, the Istanbul government who had allowed the Europeans to do so), Kemal instilled a national pride and defensiveness. This message—coming from a single patriarchal type leader like himself—worked because of the peoples’ prior inclination toward paternalism and attitudes toward leadership.<sup>208</sup> “The state tradition in Turkey is that the people exist to serve the state rather than the state existing to serve the people. There is a tradition that has prevailed for hundreds of years,

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<sup>207</sup> Meltem Müftüler-Bac, “The Never-Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union,” in *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 242.

<sup>208</sup> Sunni Islam’s worldview is that even the worst leadership is better than chaos. Shi’ites, on the contrary, believe in rebelling against bad government.

and which characterised the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>209</sup> This instinctual attachment to leadership has allowed Turkey’s leaders, especially Atatürk, to deliver an identity and shape the national hearts of the people.

#### 4.8.1 Education

And there was no better way to cultivate the emotional attachment of a nation than to focus on the youth, the soon-to-be citizens of the new republic, which Kemal did astoundingly well, utilizing every channel of public reach. “Naturally, the Republican party was engaged in intense propaganda in favor of the reforms. All the means of action were mobilized: schools, press, radio, cinema, literature, theater....”<sup>210</sup> The first of these, the education system, was a primary means of inculcating nationalism. In the schoolroom, children begin the early development of their beliefs and attitudes, adopting a worldview and a filter through which concepts and events are appraised. Thus, cultivation of the young mind is vital, and Atatürk realized this, as noted in a paper on his educational modernization: “He realized that the essence of modernity lay in the minds of people, and he embarked upon a radical policy of transforming the very nature of the polity and culture through reforms that would change not only the outward appearance but ideally the mentality and behavior of the people as well.”<sup>211</sup> Thus, the minds were targeted, and the young minds especially, as curricula were reorganized to fit the new ideologies. Ottoman history and Islamic religion were removed from the curriculum and “textbooks were rewritten to include discussions of the establishment of the Republic, its

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<sup>209</sup> Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (London: Hurst & Company, 2003), 89.

<sup>210</sup> Dumont, 24.

<sup>211</sup> Joseph Szyliowicz, “Atatürk and Educational Modernization,” *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1:3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1980-81), 118.

principles and goals.”<sup>212</sup> The “Student’s Vow,” cited above, was another method of implanting national devotion and service in the nation’s youth.

Outside of the formal classroom, the whole country itself indeed became a classroom, with literature and textbooks disseminated among the people to instruct them in their new lives and identity. There were so many reforms and changes that people needed manuals for how to function. The Kemalist regime was more than happy to provide such manuals, and within them to foster national devotion. Authors were commissioned by the government to write books like “Lessons for Religious Peasants,” or “My Religion,”<sup>213</sup> whose titles resonated with the people’s connection to Islam but whose contents furthered the government’s ideal of how the Turkish citizen should behave:

Whether in verse or in prose, the precepts were the same; A Muslim truly worthy of the name had to love his country, pay his taxes regularly, respect the laws of the Republic, submit to the progressive guidance of the State cadres, do his utmost to learn modern techniques, apply scrupulously the principles of good hygiene, consult a doctor in case of illness to avoid giving rise to epidemics, and work energetically for the development of his country. In short, the principal characteristic of a Muslim was to be a model citizen.<sup>214</sup>

In short, as Zürcher summarizes, “an extreme form of nationalism, with the attendant creation of historical myths, was used as the prime instrument in the building of a new national identity, and as such was intended to take the place of religion in many respects.”<sup>215</sup> This furthers the idea of nationalism-as-religion described above.

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<sup>212</sup> Szyliowicz, 119.

<sup>213</sup> Dumont, 27.

<sup>214</sup> Dumont, 27.

<sup>215</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 189.



#### 4.8.2 People's Houses

Moreover, a type of formalized public classroom, called *Halk Evleri* (People's Houses) or *Halk Odaları* (People's Rooms) was established to function as a center of socialization for the masses. Initiated in 1931, the project expanded to include over 400 People's Houses in cities and 2,338 People's Rooms in rural areas by 1945.<sup>216</sup> These venues became centers for adult education, as articulated in a speech by Atatürk announcing that "an education system not supported and complemented by adult education could never achieve nationalist goals. According to the RPP [Republican People's Party] elite, the People's Houses were supposed to create a mass society which in turn would serve to create the true nation."<sup>217</sup> These centers accordingly emphasized modernization, laicism, and nationalism, fulfilling an important role of political communication, "disseminating new patterns, symbols, and loyalties throughout the society and helping to socialize the masses in the values of the Republic."<sup>218</sup> Their mission was to propagate and infuse the principles of Kemalism, and in this way they became a kind of "Republican mosque."<sup>219</sup> This is a strong example of the idea of nationalism as the new religion.

Significantly, the People's Houses were a means by which the elite could reach the masses, bridging somewhat a huge societal gap that left the majority of Turkey—peasants of Anatolia—unattached and often unaware of what was going on in Ankara. The People's Houses thus served like distant cells through which the lifeblood of nationalism could be transferred. "The masses had to be educated by the elites into their

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<sup>216</sup> Szyliowicz, 122.

<sup>217</sup> M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey," in *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 69.

<sup>218</sup> Szyliowicz, 122.

<sup>219</sup> Dumont, 24.

new status as citizens with a Turkish national identity. In this respect the establishment of the republic was not only a political task but also an undertaking in national education that still continues.”<sup>220</sup>

#### 4.8.3 Media

Another tool of republican propaganda was that of the media, which even before Kemal’s rise to political power displayed a heavy patriotic leaning. In 1918, after U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s famous “Fourteen Points” speech, the Turks latched onto point number 12, which called for the “secure sovereignty” of “Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire.” According to the recollections of a leading Turkish newspaper editor at the time, “The Turkish papers of patriotic tendencies, which included all but two newspapers, agreed among themselves to publish every day, on their first page with as much emphasis as possible, Wilson’s twelfth point.”<sup>221</sup> Thus, even before Atatürk’s nationalism, the newspapers were promoters of patriotism and national defense. Then, during Atatürk’s time, the media were expected to conform to the new republican principles, and those that did not were denounced. In his Great Speech, Atatürk depicted his opponents in the media as both small in number and hesitant: “The proclamation of the Republic was received with joy everywhere and enthusiastic demonstrations took place. Only a few people, together with two or three newspapers in Istanbul, hesitated to

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<sup>220</sup> Kramer, 8.

<sup>221</sup> Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Memoirs* (London, 1926) p. 148, 190, quoted in Howard A. Reed, “Atatürk, the Turkish Nationalists and the United States: A Neglected Prospect for Peace in 1919,” *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1:3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1980-81), 100.

participate in the general festivities.”<sup>222</sup> Atatürk’s words deliver a stark contrast between the “joy” of the people following him, and the “hesitancy” of the few who did not.

#### 4.8.4 Transport of Words and Messages

Other methods of distribution and communication of principles included telegraphy and railways. Atatürk heavily utilized the telegraph services, which gave him a vital link to other politicians and to the rest of Turkey. The telegraph held the value of being able to quickly reach distant places in the country with important information. Reed’s article emphasizes this tangible communication method as one of the most important: “This telegraphic link was used effectively to encourage, cajole or congratulate fellow nationalists or to warn, castigate and threaten opponents...It is fair to say that the Turkish National Liberation movement could hardly have succeeded without the availability of the telegraph machines....”<sup>223</sup>

Atatürk’s “social engineering”<sup>224</sup> through all these methods was highly successful. His heavily emphasized key words, and his pithy quotations in the media helped ensure his words would reverberate over the Turkish nation for years to come. His methods succeeded. His speeches are posted on walls, his quotations show up in the media every day, and his orations are literally carved in stone. The establishment of state traditions and holidays was another means of socialization or instillation of identity. Thus the holidays honor the anniversaries of events such as the tide-turning independence battle (1922) and establishment of the Grand National Assembly (1920). These types of

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<sup>222</sup> M. K. Atatürk, *The Speech: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, trans and abridged by Önder Renkliydırım (Istanbul: Metro, 1985), 105.

<sup>223</sup> Reed, 106.

<sup>224</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, “Mercenaries of Ideology: Turkey's Terrorism War,” in *Terrorism and Politics*, ed. Barry Rubin (New York: St. Martin’s, 1991), 124.

triumphs were to be the raw material of the “existing, living memories and beliefs of the people” who were to compose the nation. Around triumphs such as these, traditions, myths, history, and symbols could be drawn and then celebrated.

#### 4.8.5 Law Enforcement and the State

Moving away from popular societal forms of identity delivery, law enforcement was another means of ensuring implementation of new reforms and the new shape of identity. “Some heads fell for having refused to abandon the *fez*. This state of affairs lasted for some time until the clerics conceded. The revolution then freely pursued its course.”<sup>225</sup> In chapter 5, some of the non-benign means of identity delivery, through law and the state apparatus, will be explained.

Mustafa Kemal found plenty of avenues for his rhetoric of identity to penetrate the masses, but ascribing a national identity upon the people was only half of the task; the other half was to create a state structure to govern them. This state structure had to mirror Kemal himself, so that it would last long after his own death. It would have to rule effectively, and demonstrate his same ability to keep his hand on the pulse of the nation in order to guide it successfully. Whether or not his new state system could match the demands of the identity he packaged and delivered for Turkey is an important question that did not seem to be asked at the time, but is staring Turkey in the face today. Kemal’s patriarchal role worked well in pulling the nation quickly from one era to another, and his accomplishments are astounding by any measure, but questions remain. Were some problems not really solved, but merely covered up? Was it healthy for Turkey to revere and idolize one man as the sole founder of its nation? How would the rest of the world

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<sup>225</sup> Dumont, 23.

react, and how would other nations contribute to or even condemn Turkey's own identity understanding? Did Atatürk successfully build in the prospect for change after him, and would Turkey be able to change with the times and veer from the specific prescriptions of Atatürk when necessary? The next chapter will examine *devlet*, the mighty state, which inherited Atatürk's paternal, fatherly role over the nation.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE STATE REI(G)NS

In addition to “national identity,” there is a “state identity” for every nation of people that is bound within a political state. In Turkey’s case and in many other cases, this political unit lies over the nation. This is not always the case; for example, in the U.S., the state unit was established early-on, then the people filled it. The former pattern for nations is more common and difficult, in terms of state and national identity meshing together throughout the life of the nation-state. Anthony Smith describes a “partial success” that is linked to a country’s relative “homogeneity”:

In [such countries’] nationalism, the ideology and symbolism, has grafted a new concept of *national political identity* [what I call “state identity”] on to a pre-existing ‘lateral’ ethnic identity. This process has met with only partial success, depending on the degree of cultural homogeneity of the state’s population – that is, the degree to which it constituted an ethnic state – and whether it was able to divest itself of empire and hence of culturally different communities. Where the process has been relatively successful, nationalist ideals and symbolism have helped to redefine an imperial community as a fairly compact nation and political community.<sup>226</sup> (*emphasis added*)

This last sentence, I believe, was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s main goal. The demarcation of tighter borders, the National Pact, the population exchanges, the umbrella of everyone

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<sup>226</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 106.

being ‘Turk’—all of these speak of the quest for a “fairly compact nation and political community” mentioned by Smith. And Kemal was successful in his project, at least at first. It is only in recent years that the linkage between state and national identity seems dismembered. In terms of our analogy, the state can be symbolized by a horse jockey, or perhaps the horse’s owner, walking ahead of the horse and leading him by the reins over a rocky mountain pass. The jockey has two major responsibilities, both of which Mustafa Kemal carried out brilliantly: to see the path ahead, knowing which path will be successful and where danger lies; and to know the horse, sensing its needs and abilities to follow, keeping its safety in mind. In his era, Mustafa Kemal *was* the state, the horse jockey himself, as this chapter will show, but since his death that role has been bequeathed elsewhere, with much less success.

## **5.1 Defining *State***

Here it is helpful to first define what is meant by “state,” especially as opposed to nation. The state itself represents the institutions, government structure, and overall political unit on a map, all of which are used to govern the people and give them a sense of location, and to represent the Turkish nation in concrete form in the international system. A formal definition, a synopsis by John A. Hall and G. John Ikenberry, characterizes the concept “state” as: 1) a set of institutions, manned by the state’s own personnel 2) institutions at the center of a geographically bounded territory, usually referred to as a society 3) a monopolizer of rule-making within its territory, tending toward the creation of a common political culture shared by all citizens.<sup>227</sup> There are many other definitions as well, but for this study it should suffice to think of ‘state’ as

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<sup>227</sup> John A. Hall & G. John Ikenberry, *The State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 1-2.

institutions, geographic political territory within the international system, and the government and law that rule the people within the country.

At this point, definitions in mind, one must note that the state is not universally present, but rather a constructed entity. Societies tend to assume the state to be true, everlasting, and necessary. As Gellner strongly asserts, “The existence of a centralised state is an important part of the background of the nationalist vision of the world. But the state itself is not universally present: there are, for instance, stateless tribal societies...”<sup>228</sup> Telhami and Barnett’s work, which was largely the springboard for applying this state-national divide to Turkey, agrees on this matter, describing the state as inherently non-universal but speaking of it as a “project”: “Indeed, a state-building project can be understood as a social engineering exercise intended to generate the very state-national conflation assumed by international relations theorists.”<sup>229</sup> In fact, this complete state-national overlap is quite rare. Smith stresses the low number of “genuine ‘nation-states’” today. “If ‘nation-state’ is taken to mean a single ethnic community and common culture, then only about ten percent of existing states would qualify. If some ‘tiny minorities’ are left out of the calculation, a ‘few more’ would qualify.”<sup>230</sup>

## 5.2 A Statist View

Within this understanding of the state as non-universal,<sup>231</sup> this chapter will approach it with a statist view, that the state “is an actor in its own right as either an

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<sup>228</sup> Gellner, 5.

<sup>229</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 9.

<sup>230</sup> Anthony Smith, “State-Making and Nation-Building,” quoted in *The State, Conceptual Chaos, and the Future of International Relations Theory*, ed. Yale H. Ferguson and Richard W. Mansbach (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 45.

<sup>231</sup> This is not to say that nations *are* necessarily universal. They are not “eternal categories,” nor “preordained or irreversible.” To read about this and the process whereby nations were built, see Miroslav Hroch, “Real and Constructed: The Nature of the Nation,” in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91-106.



exogenous or an intervening variable.”<sup>232</sup> It is produced outside of the system of nationhood, and acts as an agent upon it. This is a political—not economic—statism, based on powerful state tradition; the state is a strong and separate actor.<sup>233</sup> However, the state is still composed of individuals at its core. Eric Nordlinger understands the state as: “all those individuals who occupy offices that authorize them, and them alone, to make and apply decisions that are binding upon any and all segments of society. Quite simply, the state is made up of and limited to those individuals who are endowed with society-wide decision-making authority.”<sup>234</sup>

In turn, those individuals and their institutions, grouped collectively as the “state” in a geographically bounded and rule-making body, must provide political, judicial, economic, and societal leadership for the nation. This may be done in line and in step with what the nation wants and needs, or apart from the “heartbeat” of the nation and its identity. This makes sense as the state is made of individuals, for individuals are fallible, and power-hungry. In this way, it is possible for the state and nation no longer to overlap, but to diverge, just as it is possible for a dog to “walk” its owner (picture a large dog gone wild, dragging its owner down the street) or, in our case, for a horse to pull its own jockey. Alternatively, the jockey could be pulling the horse in a direction it is not able or not willing to go. Both scenarios would create discord, and could turn harmful or even violent.

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<sup>232</sup> Stephen D. Krasner, “Approaches to the State: Alternative conceptions and historical dynamics,” quoted in Ferguson and Mansbach, 57.

<sup>233</sup> This understanding of the state in a statist framework also fits well for the purpose of studying Turkey, as the ideology of the state itself in Turkey is one of etatism (i.e. statism) as one of Mustafa Kemal’s six “arrows,” or principles, for the founding of the Republic.

<sup>234</sup> Eric A. Nordlinger, *On the Autonomy of the Democratic State*, quoted in Ferguson and Mansbach, 57.

And yet the line between the state identity and national identity is not always completely clear, especially considering, as mentioned in chapter 2, “the lack of overlap between state and national identity can generate an inherently unstable and precarious situation, one that results in political, economic, and symbolic exercises by the state in order to shift subnational loyalties to the symbols of the state”<sup>235</sup> One can see such exercises in the aforementioned “Student Vow,” for example, which is a manifestation of national identity but also reinforces the overlap with state identity by linking it to the state. Gellner offers a word picture with an insightful synopsis of how the nation and state are linked in practice:

In simpler terms – Ruritania for the Ruritarians! Let all the Ruritarians be joined in the sacred fatherland! And let no one other than Ruritarians – bar perhaps a small number of well-behaved visitors who know their place as guests, and who do not occupy key decision-making positions – take up much space in the sacred land of Ruritania.<sup>236</sup>

The bottom line, for Turkey, is an overall *strong* state. Sources in general agree that Turkey is at least partially a strong state, with some for example attributing this to the strong state tradition inherited from the Ottoman Empire,<sup>237</sup> and others saying it cycles between being weak and strong.<sup>238</sup> But judging by various standards, including its own, the *devlet*<sup>239</sup> in Turkey has a deep and protective bearing over Turkish society. This

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<sup>235</sup> Telhami and Barnett, 9.

<sup>236</sup> Gellner, 16.

<sup>237</sup> See: Selim Deringil, “The Ottoman Origins of Kemalist Nationalism: Namık Kemal to Mustafa Kemal,” in *The Ottomans, the Turks, and World Power Politics: Collected Essays*, ed. Selim Deringil (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000), 177-198, which argues that the state structure Kemal established was actually quite Ottoman-like in nature, rather than a movement that can be recognized “purely as the brainchild of Mustafa Kemal,” as many authors, especially foreign ones, tend to assume.

<sup>238</sup> See: Metin Heper and E. Fuat Keyman, “Double-Faced State: Political Patronage and the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey,” *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 259-277, an article which calls the state strong in terms of prudence, but weak in terms of responsiveness, highlighting the various waves of political personalities, parties, and coups.

<sup>239</sup> This word translates to ‘state’ in English, but carries with it a connotation of greatness and authority not present in the English equivalent.

is distinguishable in some countries, but absent from others. In a hallmark book about the strength of states, Joel S. Migdal writes:

Some states have gained much more mastery than others in governing who may heal the sick and who may not; the duration, content, and quality of children's education; numerous specifications of a house one may build for oneself; with whom one may or may not have sexual relations; and countless other details of human actions and relationships. It is not simply that some states have leaders who purposely have the state do less.<sup>240</sup>

Turkey is one such state that has, as Migdal puts it, "gained mastery." Turkey can also be understood as a transcendental moderate state, when applied to a different set of state categories, that of transcendentalism ('statist orientation') versus instrumentalism ('societal orientation').<sup>241</sup> In the former, the state transcends society and acts as an independent force influencing it, while in the latter, society instead is the higher force, and the state is an instrument in society's hands to serve its own needs. Metin Heper expounds on these categories, using them to explain the cause of deficient political analyses of Turkey in the past. He notes that the extreme form of transcendentalism is when the state smothers society, and in extreme instrumentalism, society smothers the state. But, "in moderate transcendentalism, a 'consensus' is imposed upon society in the form of static norms. The state is institutionalized around those norms."<sup>242</sup> This is exactly Turkey's case. The "consensus" was "imposed upon society" by the Kemalist regime, and the regime's reforms and rules became accepted "norms," and even more appropriately "static norms" in that those who carry them forward expect them to be unchanging. Furthermore, "in an extremely transcendental polity the state is often structured in the person of the ruler. The rule is of a personal type...The most desirable

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<sup>240</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 18.

<sup>241</sup> Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Northgate, Great Britain: The Eothen Press, 1985).

<sup>242</sup> Heper, 8.

trait on the part of the civil servants is their loyalty to the person of the ruler.”<sup>243</sup> Thus, it is possible that Turkey was extremely transcendental during the time of Atatürk .

This established, the rest of this chapter will discuss the identity of the state *in* Turkey, then Turkey *as* a state. The roles of the state will be grouped into two main sections: first internal, then external. One concerns the state’s relationship with its own society, and the others concern the state’s relationship with the rest of the world.<sup>244</sup>

### 5.3 The State in Turkey (Governing Society)

An interesting term in Turkish, *Devlet Baba* (Father State) is used to refer to the paternalistic role of the state in caring for the Turk, with the idea being—especially for the lower classes—that if there is a bad harvest or similar economic disaster, the state will come to the rescue. This idea got its start with the adoption of statism in the new republic in 1931, while the government was facing a financial crisis spurred by the Great Depression that started in the United States in 1929. It was at this point that *devletçilik* (statism) became one of the official pillars of Kemalism. “What this term meant exactly was never clearly defined. It was certainly not a form of socialism: private ownership remained the basis for economic life. Rather, it meant that a state took over responsibility for creating and running industries for which the private sector could not accumulate the necessary capital.”<sup>245</sup>

While *Devlet Baba* as a term was not used by Mustafa Kemal, he can be considered the first “Father State.” He was the rescuer, guide, and protector of the people, and the one whose newly adopted surname meant “Father of the Turks.” However, he

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<sup>243</sup> Heper, 9.

<sup>244</sup> Ferguson and Mansbach, 41.

<sup>245</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 205.

was the only leader to fulfill this role. Atatürk modeled a savior role, but he knew that if the republic was to continue without him, the state itself must join in that role with him and then inherit it. Thus he glorified the state, raised it upon a pedestal, and gave it a “strong state” character that was both a continuation of the Ottoman inheritance and a requisite (as he saw it) for the success of the newborn republic. Hence, fatherhood was passed to the state, the main representatives of which were and are the military and its elites. Thus, after Atatürk, the horse’s jockey became the state.

### 5.3.1 Military Heirs

In this way, the horse’s jockey once *was* Atatürk,<sup>246</sup> because he himself symbolized and epitomized the state, but after him and still today the jockey *is* the state. Not since Atatürk has another person been able to embody the term “Father State.” The role of the state, and an accompanying “National Protector” role, have been assumed by the Turkish military. They consider themselves the heirs of Atatürk and indeed resurrect and honor him through their regular practices. This status continues today and it remains true in polls that Turkish citizens trust their military most. When there is a political problem internally or a foreign threat externally, it is the military who comes to the rescue, and the public broadly approves:

The Turkish people as a whole are proud of their army, want it to be strong, and accord it a status which no army enjoys in any other NATO country. In Turkey,

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<sup>246</sup> However, to avoid the risk of over-simplification, it must be emphasized that he was working off of the Ottoman structure, affected by world ideologies and events, and had plenty of contemporaries influencing him. Just because he was the jockey does not mean that the whole revolution and reform was the one-man show it is often made out to be. Many authors do indeed acknowledge this. See, for example, Selim Deringil, “The Ottoman Origins of Kemalist Nationalism: Namık Kemal to Mustafa Kemal,” Ibid, and Devereux’s introduction in Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, Ibid. Also see Ferguson & Mansbach’s refutation of the “great man” approach to state studies, although it is “occasionally” an appropriate concept: Ferguson and Mansbach, 59-60.

the army is always praised, never criticized, and, in an emergency, it is seen as the nation's saviour.<sup>247</sup>

The military, by way of inheritance, is not only expected to be the main bearer of the idea of the state, but to hold unwaveringly to the fundamentals of Kemalism, as established by Mustafa Kemal and his regime. Political Kemalism itself is difficult to define. Kemal defined it with six arrows<sup>248</sup> but it was more than just principles. Its vague character encompassed nationalism and homogeneity and all the principles Atatürk packaged into national identity. Many have taken it to be an ideology all its own, the foundations of the identity for the state. By encoding Kemal with an '-ism' people look for an ideology, but there was not one; at best it was a guideline. "It never became a coherent, all-embracing ideology, but can best be described as a set of attitudes and opinions, which were never defined in any detail."<sup>249</sup> When taken as ideology, it is broad enough and vague enough to be anything and everything:

Sometimes Kemalism was even described as the 'Turkish religion.' Nevertheless, as an ideology it lacked coherence, and perhaps even more importantly, emotional appeal. This ideological void was filled to some extent by the personality cult which grew up around Mustafa Kemal during and even more after his lifetime. He was presented as the father of the nation, its saviour, its teacher. Indoctrination in schools and universities (where 'History of the Turkish Revolution' became a compulsory subject in 1934) focused on him to an extraordinary degree.<sup>250</sup>

Within this, though, Atatürk himself said *a lot* of things, many of which can be interpreted, re-interpreted, or even construed to support any and every political policy

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<sup>247</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, *Shirts of Steel: An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1991), xiii.

<sup>248</sup> The *Altı Ok*, or 'Six Arrows' are: republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, revolutionism, and statism (the last was added later, in the 1930s).

<sup>249</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 189.

<sup>250</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 190.

across the spectrum. “As a result, Kemalism remained a flexible concept and people with widely differing world views have been able to call themselves Kemalist.”<sup>251</sup>

Thus, with the political manipulation and lack of clarity in Kemalism, what has grown up in the military in its place (since the late 1970s and 1980s) is an “Atatürkism,” which dotes not on notions, but on the man himself—carrying on his essence. In the words of a general who has disseminated Atatürkism in the Armed Forces:

Communism is considered an ideology but in my opinion it’s Atatürkism that really fits the definition of an ideology, as it has an answer for any event or development. It is dynamic, not static like communism. We put this ideology into practice in every field, in the family as well as in education.<sup>252</sup>

New recruits, in their initial training, as recorded by Birand in the 1980s, heard the following in a speech from one of their commanders:

Your flag will be the great Atatürk. Your ideology will be his principles, your aim will be the direction he showed us. You will follow unswervingly in Atatürk’s footsteps.<sup>253</sup>

This is indeed tantamount to the devotion of some religions, such as dedicated Christians’ attitude toward Jesus, or pious Muslims’ attitude toward Mohammed.

Indeed, his soul is living on, somewhat resurrected, through the army. Each year on 27 December, the military celebrates Kemal’s initial arrival to Ankara during the War of Independence:

On this occasion the cadets in the Army Academy race to the building where the Grand National Assembly was first held, wearing battle-dress to ‘represent the arrival of Atatürk.’ The underlying point for all to see is that the ‘Atatürks are not dead but living and, if need be, will save the country from disaster, keep the Republic alive and deliver it to the nation.’<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 189.

<sup>252</sup> Birand, 55.

<sup>253</sup> Birand, 3.

<sup>254</sup> Birand, 52.

And so it is with the assumed blessing of the leader, and as the torch-bearers of Kemalism/Atatürkism, that the military takes up the state banner, and for the eighty years of the republic, it is the military that has been “acting as the state elite.”<sup>255</sup> Those in the military see it as their main job to protect and preserve the Turkish state. The military guarantees the Republic of Turkey, safeguarding it as if by contract passed down from Atatürk. “The Turkish Chief of Staff’s declaration one day before the 24 December 1995 General elections that ‘the Turkish Armed Forces are the most effective guarantor of the Turkish Republic which is a secular, social and lawful state’ succinctly clarifies the military’s position in Turkey.”<sup>256</sup>

### 5.3.2 Swerving and Rectifying

Should the republic start to swerve from secularism, or other Kemalist/Atatürkist principles (as the military elites perceive them), democracy is called into question. This has been seen in three military coups to overthrow a misbehaving government, in 1960, 1971, and 1980.<sup>257</sup> In an interview with young military cadets, investigative journalist Birand had the following interaction:

‘Sir, we are the army of the regime. It is our duty to defend and guard this country, and to keep the state sound and the regime secure.’

‘Do you believe in democracy?’

‘Of course, is there a better form of government?’

‘Fine. But what happens if a government elected by the people’s votes takes a decision that you consider to be against Atatürk’s principles; do you still consider that you have the right to intervene?’

A hand shot up in the back of the hall. I received a reply in a firm voice. ‘We are opposed to anybody, no matter whether they are there by the grace of the ballot box or the votes of the National Assembly, who attempts to violate Atatürk’s

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<sup>255</sup> Heper and Keyman, 265.

<sup>256</sup> Müftüler-Bac, 247.

<sup>257</sup> There was also a “postmodern” coup, smaller in scope, in 1997. Although the military never demanded Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan’s resignation, their actions and pressure prompted him to step down.



principles. We have a right to act to this end in the interests of our people, and for their protection.’...

‘But, lads, don’t you have faith in the people? You are, after all, talking about those chosen by the people.’

‘My people are poorly educated. They may be misled by politicians and the self-interested.’

‘So you see yourselves as Turkey’s guardians?’

‘Of course we do. As long as we are surrounded by external enemies, and face perverted ideas at home, we are the country’s guardians. We need, therefore, to be very well-prepared.’

‘Who has given you this task?’

‘Atatürk and our elders. We have been told this is our right, even our duty. And we have accepted it as such.’<sup>258</sup>

This illustrates the superior position of Kemalism/Atatürkism even over democracy, but this issue quickly becomes complicated; Kemal’s original intent for the government structure and political institutions of Turkey (i.e. the state) seems to have been a firm and realistic straightforwardness:

Gentlemen! Every one of our compatriots and coreligionists may nourish a high ideal in his mind; he is free to do so, and no one will interfere. But the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey has a firm, positive, material policy, and that, gentlemen, is directed to the preservation of life and independence ... within defined national frontiers. The Grand National Assembly and government of Turkey, in the name of the nation they represent, are very modest, very far from fantasies, and completely realistic...<sup>259</sup>

But, ripe with desire for modernization and reform, Atatürk strove for radical change, and one would think he expected his own reforms and principles to be *re*-reformed and *re*-considered in the years to come.

His disciples, however, have largely not gotten that message; despite conservatives interpreting *Devrimcilik* or *İnkılapçılık* (revolutionism) as “a commitment to ongoing change and support for the Kemalist reform programme,”<sup>260</sup> it seems that the idea of ongoing change is frightening and avoided at all costs by the bearers of the state

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<sup>258</sup> Birand, 22-23.

<sup>259</sup> Lewis, 352-353.

<sup>260</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 190.

today. Regarding leadership and change, it is important to note that Atatürk himself embraced change, and it is only after his lifetime that the “norms” mentioned earlier by Heper have become “static.” As Arnett explains: “Those who loudly invoke ‘Atatürk’ attempt to use his memory as an obstacle to change, although the man himself was the very embodiment of change.”<sup>261</sup>

Turkey’s strong state role appears undisputed. The people in fact expected it to be so. “There was nothing democratic about the Ankara regime, and it was in many respects as ‘statist’ and undemocratic as its Ottoman predecessor.”<sup>262</sup> But one question remains regarding the strong state leadership given to the new Turkish nation. This chapter has been asserting so far that the state and the national identity coincided well, if not perfectly, during Atatürk’s years, based on his knowledge and skill in instituting and packaging them. But did all the constituents of the new Turkey accept the state that was being organized over them?

### 5.3.3 Violence and Law

The state, in addition to the definitions relating to geography, government and institutions, has an instrumental purpose too, as we have seen. It is the “result of a political process, one in which the state system was used as an instrument for generating national identity and commitment.”<sup>263</sup> This “instrument” is usually benign enough, and in truth, “under the benevolent authoritarianism of Atatürk, there was little overt opposition to [the] reforms.”<sup>264</sup> But the instrument also possesses a deep force with which to silence

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<sup>261</sup> Arnett, 35.

<sup>262</sup> Deringil, “The Ottoman Origins of Kemalist Nationalism: Namık Kemal to Mustafa Kemal,” 181.

<sup>263</sup> Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) xv.

<sup>264</sup> Criss, “Mercenaries of Ideology: Turkey's Terrorism War,” 124.

opponents. The new Kemalist state was pressed to do this during darker days of opposition to the various principles of the empire, whether the Turkish identity, secularism, or modernizing reforms.

The first and largest violent revolt after the establishment of the republic came from the east, in February 1925. It was waged under the green flag of faith in the name of Islam, of upholding the cause of Allah and the religion of the people, but was possibly more deeply rooted in the Kurdish cause, after the hope given them by the Allied Powers of an independent Kurdistan was dashed by the demise of the Sèvres Treaty. Led by Sheikh Said of Palu against “the abolition of the Caliphate and the godless policy of the Kemalist government,”<sup>265</sup> the movement represented the largest rebellion against Kemal and his regime. Response was swift and fierce. If Turkey was to be the unified and homogenized nation Kemal wanted it to be, Kurdish uprisings were not to be tolerated. As Kemal said, “If we can manage to keep the right wing under control, we do not need to fear the left...One should not wait before crushing a reactionary movement...One should act at once.”<sup>266</sup> And act they did.

On March 3, the “Law for the Maintenance of Order” was pushed through Parliament, “giving extraordinary and, in effect, dictatorial powers to the government for two years,”<sup>267</sup> along with its instrument of implementation—the *İstiklâl Mahkemeleri*,<sup>268</sup> or “Independence Tribunals.”<sup>269</sup> By the end of March, Sheikh Said’s rebellion was put

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<sup>265</sup> Kinross, 397.

<sup>266</sup> Kinross, 398.

<sup>267</sup> Lewis, 266.

<sup>268</sup> These were actually established back in the early 1920s with the purpose of trying soldiers who abandoned duty, so this was nothing new, but they began to be used for fresh purposes.

<sup>269</sup> The names of both the law and the tribunals appear quite euphemistic: in essence, their purpose was “to give the Government wide dictatorial powers. For a period of two years [and it was extended a second two years, until 1929] the Cabinet was accorded the right to forbid and suppress any organization, any attempt, or any publication which might encourage ‘reaction and rebellion.’” Kinross, 400.

down and he was brought to Diyarbakır, where a month later the Independence Tribunal established there sentenced him and 46 of his followers to death as traitors. Regarding this new law and the tribunals (which were established in Ankara and in the east), Mustafa Kemal

explained that these extraordinary measures had ‘given to all government officials the task of preventing an incident before it happens rather than repressing it after it has happened.’ The state must have the power to suppress speedily ‘the aggressive actions of drunkards in the streets, bandits in the mountains, rebels who dare oppose the armed forces of the Republic, and those who create confusion in the innocent mind of the nation.’<sup>270</sup>

The Law for the Maintenance of Order was further utilized, once in effect and operating successfully, for the protection of the nation’s “innocent mind.” This included, apparently, the change in headgear for Muslims, and was used half a year later to enforce the new law that made it illegal to wear the *fez*. Two years later, in his marathon speech of 1927, Kemal explained the ban in light of legality:

We did it while the Law for the Maintenance of Order was still in force. Had it not been, we would have done it all the same, but it certainly is true that the existence of the law made it much easier for us. Indeed, the existence of the Law for the Maintenance of Order prevented the large-scale poisoning of the nation by certain reactionaries.<sup>271</sup>

The reactionary ‘poisoning’ came not only from the religious or Kurdish zealots of the east, but also from remnants of the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress) in the west,<sup>272</sup> where the Kemalist regime foiled a plot to assassinate its great leader. In June 1926 in Izmir, police discovered a conspiracy to throw a bomb into Mustafa Kemal's car. One month later, following trials at the Independence Tribunal that was quickly transferred to Izmir from Ankara, conspiracy leader Ziya Hurşid and accomplices were

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<sup>270</sup> Kinross, 400-401.

<sup>271</sup> *Nutuk* (ii. 895; cf. Speech, p. 722) quoted in Lewis, 270.

<sup>272</sup> A few ring leaders were bidding for power. The rest of the participants were implicated by association.

executed. The Ankara Independence Tribunal then returned to the capital, where it carried out further trials and executions of major political opponents of Mustafa Kemal.<sup>273</sup> Politically too, experiments in opposition parties were tested, but ultimately failed to satisfy Kemal in his direction for the Turkish state. “Experimentation with multiparty democracy in 1924 and 1930 failed because the new parties’ opposition to the tenets of the Turkish revolution was perceived to be harmful.”<sup>274</sup>

In sum, in purging opponents as in other areas, the state was an actor in and of itself, guardian of the nation Mustafa Kemal had defined. Its job was to be strong, protective, paternalistic—to take the young nation by hand.<sup>275</sup>

#### 5.3.4 Turkishness

To be fair, there are also components of the strong state hand outside of the military, although they often come under the military’s watchful eye. One is the legislation of Turkishness. How does one prove or legitimize being Turk, so that the concept as defined, shaped, and packaged by Atatürk might be protected? What does *Türklüğü*, mentioned at the beginning of this paper, really mean? There is not much of an exact definition outside the minds of Turkish people. The constitution includes the direct Turkish word for “Turkishness” in the fourth paragraph of its preamble<sup>276</sup> (as amended

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<sup>273</sup> Lewis, 275.

<sup>274</sup> Criss, “Mercenaries of Ideology: Turkey's Terrorism War,” 124.

<sup>275</sup> In an Assembly meeting to discuss what to do about the Said rebellion in the east, Kemal is quoted as saying, “It is necessary to take the nation by the hand. Those who started the Revolution will complete it.” Kinross, 399.

<sup>276</sup> “Hiçbir faaliyetin Türk millî menfaatlerinin, Türk varlığının, Devleti ve ülkesiyle bölünmezliği esasının, Türklüğün tarihî ve manevî değerlerinin, Atatürk milliyetçiliği, ilke ve inkılâpları ve medeniyetçiliğinin karşısında korunma göremeyeceği ve lâiklik ilkesinin gereği olarak kutsal din duygularının, Devlet işlerine ve politikaya kesinlikle karıştırılmayacağı;” < <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/Anayasa.htm>>.

on 17 October 2001) but the official English version of the same paragraph<sup>277</sup> omits the exact word, using instead the “Turkish historical and moral values” instead of “Turkishness’s historical and moral values.” This is the only mention of the word in the constitution, as the term itself is newer, and in fact its mention in the fourth paragraph is one of the changes added as of 2001.

The vagueness of the concept notwithstanding, The Turkish Penal Code offers descriptive legal measures surrounding it:

1. Public denigration of Turkishness, the Republic or the Grand National Assembly of Turkey shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and three years.
2. Public denigration of the Government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial institutions of the State, the military or security structures shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and two years.
3. In cases where denigration of Turkishness is committed by a Turkish citizen in another country the punishment shall be increased by one third.
4. Expressions of thought intended to criticize shall not constitute a crime.

Some would say ‘Turkishness’ is whatever the state wants it to be, according to the circumstances and the time period and the situation under investigation. According to one scholar, Turkishness is not completely equivalent to Turkish citizenship, which bears a political-territorial definition. Turkishness, rather, includes a political *and ethnicist* logic.<sup>278</sup> He asserts instead that:

...there are different degrees of Turkishness, being a subject of the Turkish Republic, being a Turkish subject, and being Turkish and, more importantly, that

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<sup>277</sup> “The recognition that no protection shall be accorded to an activity contrary to Turkish national interests, the principle of the indivisibility of the existence of Turkey with its state and territory, Turkish historical and moral values or the nationalism, principles, reforms and modernism of Atatürk and that, as required by the principle of secularism, there shall be no interference whatsoever by sacred religious feelings in state affairs and politics; the acknowledgment that it is the birthright of every Turkish citizen to lead an honourable life and to develop his or her material and spiritual assets under the aegis of national culture, civilization and the rule of law, through the exercise of the fundamental rights and freedoms set forth in this Constitution in conformity with the requirements of equality and social justice;”  
<<http://www.byegm.gov.tr/mevzuat/anayasa/anayasa-ing.htm>>.

<sup>278</sup> Mesut Yeğen, “Citizenship and Ethnicity in Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40:6 (November 2004), 54.

Turkish citizenship fails to overlap with or exhaust Turkishness in the full sense of the term. What is even more interesting is that there is a remarkable correlation between the different levels of state apparatus and different degrees of Turkishness. For instance, the institutions at the heart of the state (military) match themselves with being of Turkish race, while the institutions at the edge of the state (state dormitories) are content to match themselves with Turkish Republic citizenship.<sup>279</sup>

There seems to be a fundamental problem between what is intended by Turkishness and the result. The intention may be an entirely political one, encompassing and inclusive of all people,<sup>280</sup> but the outcome is different.

Official intentions and doctrine aside, Turkishness is instead used by the state to mean the values they, as the protectors of Kemalism, and meaning usually the military elites, want to uphold. One of the chief issues is refutation of the so-called Armenian “genocide,” on the grounds which two of the biggest-name charges were filed.<sup>281</sup> From these, we can assume that denying “genocide” is one of the absolutes of state-defined Turkishness.<sup>282</sup>

### 5.3.5 Measuring Sticks

In searching for what “Turkishness” could possibly mean, being Turk is certainly (or officially, at least) not defined by ethnicity. Practicing Turkish culture is too broad and undefined of a measurement. And just being a Turkish citizen does not bring a person to the point of Turkishness, as shown above. There must be other concrete measuring sticks by which being Turk is evaluated. One is language and another is religion. “The

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<sup>279</sup> Yeğen, 56.

<sup>280</sup> Yeğen writes that: “Turkishness designed by Turkish citizenship is assumed to have nothing to do with being from a real or an assumed ethnic descent. As such, it is believed that Turkish citizenship is expansionist and inclusive rather than exclusivist and differentialist.” 55.

<sup>281</sup> Charges against novelist Orhan Pamuk, for “insulting Turkishness,” were dropped in January 2006. Novelist Elif Şafak, charged with the same, was acquitted in September 2006.

<sup>282</sup> This topic, “what is Turkishness?” could constitute a study all its own, based on reviewing recent charges, sentences, trials, and reactions in the West. Suffice to say for now that the concept is confusing at best, misleading at worst.

language of the Republic of Turkey is Turkish, according to the constitution.”<sup>283</sup> As Lewis noted as early as 1961, “A visitor to Turkey will encounter at once the first and unmistakable sign of Turkishness—the Turkish language, which, despite long subjection to alien influences, survives triumphantly. Scholars have noted the remarkable capacity of Turkish to resist, displace, and even supplant other languages with which it has come in contact.”<sup>284</sup>

The Turkish religion is an odd reality. The ancient Turks with whom modern Turks often valiantly link themselves were not Muslim; Islam was imported later. But today, although of course unofficially, to be Turk is to be Muslim. When a baby is born in Turkey, unless requested otherwise by their parents, which is very rare, the religion “Muslim” is recorded on their Personal Identity Card. There is debate as to whether it is possible to be a Turk and also be Jewish, Christian, or any other religion; different people will give vastly different answers.<sup>285</sup> As Yeğen mentions indirectly in a footnote on Turkish citizenship, it is possible, as a *non-Muslim* settled in Turkey, to be a Turkish citizen, but not to “assimilate into Turkishness”; but non-Turkish *Muslims*, on the other hand, “may become Turkish.”<sup>286</sup> And, as Lewis asserted in the 1960s, but which still holds generally true today, “To this day the term Turk is never applied to non-Muslims,

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<sup>283</sup> Until August 2002, the Kurdish language was forbidden by the Turkish government in education and broadcasting.

<sup>284</sup> Lewis, 7.

<sup>285</sup> Another paper could be written on this topic alone, and would indeed produce interesting results. On the one hand, two Protestant Christians in Istanbul faced trial in November 2006 under charges of “insulting Turkishness” as they were attempting to convert fellow citizens to Christianity. And three Christians (one German, two Turk) were murdered in Malatya in April 2007, by 5 fanatical Muslim youth claiming to be defending their state or their religion (media sources differ). On the other hand, there is a growing fellowship of Christian Turks in Ankara, and it is completely permissible legally to have a religion other than Muslim listed on a Turk’s identity card.

<sup>286</sup> “Note that while the term ‘subject of the Turkish Republic’ points to all citizens of the Republic, i.e. non-Muslims settled in Turkey, who, according to the logic of the Turkish state, may not assimilate into Turkishness, non-Turkish Muslim inhabitants of Anatolia, who, according to the state, may become Turkish...”



though they be of Turkic origin and language like the heathen Chuvash and Christian Gagauz, or citizens of a Turkish state, like the Christians and Jews of Istanbul.”<sup>287</sup>

Above are some of the ways the state has defined itself and its people internally.

What was the rest of the world to see of this newly born state?

#### **5.4 The State of Turkey (In the World)**

At the founding of the republic in 1923, Turkey proclaimed to the world its own sovereignty and statehood. Yet sovereignty itself is somewhat elusive; no country on earth is ever purely sovereign. Even a relationship makes an entity less sovereign. Kenneth Waltz clarifies and limits the often-murky definition, serving our understanding of Turkey’s ability to be sovereign:

The error lies in identifying the sovereignty of states with their ability to do as they wish. To say that states are sovereign is not to say that they can do as they want. Sovereign states may be hardpressed all around, constrained to act in ways they would like to avoid, and able to do hardly anything just as they would like to. The sovereignty of states has never entailed their insulation from the effects of other states’ actions... Sovereign states have seldom led free and easy lives. What then is sovereignty? To say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems.<sup>288</sup>

So Turkey is sovereign; it can decide for itself. But a sovereign state still needs a region, an affiliation, a network of relationships in which to belong. As Turkey has painfully learned, it cannot comfortably hang regionally unattached by itself.

In this regard, what remains unclear today is the *place* of this sovereign state in the world. As Turkish scholar Criss writes, “we are still discussing the importance of being European, Turkey, the EU and the Middle East, at the dawn of the twenty-first

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<sup>287</sup> Lewis, 8.

<sup>288</sup> Waltz, quoted in Ferguson and Mansbach, 63.

century.”<sup>289</sup> Turkey’s international region, role and rough neighborhood are all crucially intertwined with its identity as a nation. Each of these will be explained in the sub-sections to follow.

#### 5.4.1 A Region

A state is in some ways free to choose its own regional affiliation and identity. Turkey chose Europe, quite adamantly, although at times has courted the Middle East,<sup>290</sup> or tacitly accepted a role, suggested by the U.S., as “model” for the Middle East. But a state is in some ways bound by what others say. If the EU doesn’t accept Turkey, and if Westerners think of Turkey as “Middle East,” then can Turkey still call itself European? Who decides the regions and who belongs in which one? According to critical security studies scholar Pinar Bilgin, a professor at Bilkent University, Turkey has been moving in and out of different regional configurations. In the 1920s, the Royal Geographical Society (of Great Britain) moved Turkey from “Near East” to “Middle East,” which was a broadening regional term at that point.<sup>291</sup> Then, directly after World War Two, in which Turkey was neutral, Stalin made heavy demands on Turkey, which partially contributed to Turkey’s choice to ally with the West. But more so, Turkish policy-makers used the Soviet threat “for domestic security purposes, to curb the ‘extreme’ left and re-inscribe...Turkish state identities as staunch Western allies, thereby strengthening their economic as well as military relations with the United States.”<sup>292</sup> Thus, during the Cold War, “nobody questioned Turkey being Western”; but U.S. interests shifted with the end

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<sup>289</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, “Turkey as a Metaphor Between Europe and Asia,” 1.

<sup>290</sup> It is a common theme in Turkish foreign policy that when Turkey would get a blow from the West, it would strengthen ties with the Arab world.

<sup>291</sup> Pinar Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East: A Critical Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 73.

<sup>292</sup> Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East...*, 93.

of the Cold War, and “now we’re Middle East.”<sup>293</sup> Turkish identity is thus very much influenced by outside forces, whether they are determining Turkey’s regional understanding of itself, or directly influencing the inscription of state identities. Processes of labeling and categorizing—and re-labeling and re-categorizing—leave their mark on Turkey’s ability to place itself in the world.

These outside forces can be in the form of such perceptions and categorizations, or they can also be portrayed, in our horse-and-jockey metaphor, as winds and rains that effect the pair as they travel. Rains of disaster (wars, enemies, failed alliances, embargoes, etc.) and winds of international politics (globalization, changing structures of polarity, integration and exclusion, etc.) are all outside circumstances that have a direct bearing on the nation-state’s operation. The horse will function differently in various climate conditions, and the jockey must be aware of this too.

And yet the public within Turkey has an opinion all its own, a factor attracting more attention recently.<sup>294</sup> Somehow, in Turkey as in other countries, the nation must follow the political leadership of the state, but the state must also follow the heartbeat of the nation. Determining this heartbeat is a very difficult task indeed. According to some preliminary qualitative research among highly educated Turkish female students in Ankara, I found the direction and desire for European regional affiliation to be not as clear-cut as Atatürk once planned.<sup>295</sup> cursory survey results reveal an identity affiliation

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<sup>293</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, Bilkent University, personal communication, May 2007. The official stance of Washington’s State Department is that Turkey gets grouped in Europe, but doctrine and the reality of attitude can diverge greatly.

<sup>294</sup> See: Ian O. Lesser, “Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics,” *Survival* 48:3 (Autumn 2006) 83-96, and Kemal Kirişçi, “Turkey and the Muslim Middle East,” in *Turkey’s New World*, ed. Alan Makovsky and Sabri Sayarı (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000), 41.

<sup>295</sup> Other authors support this as well. See, for example: Meltem Müftüler-Bac, “The Never-Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union,” in *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

of “European” to be last on a list of six identity possibilities in which the students could characterize themselves.<sup>296</sup> Also, among about half of the survey respondents, there seemed to be a resentment toward being regionally or geographically identified, as if to say that it undermined their importance as individuals or Turks. Responses like these call into question Turkey’s regional desires and directions, and also suggest an inward retreat. These responses should also cause scholars to ask: “Why are we so anxious to geographically locate this country? Is the West nervous about it being a loose and unanchored factor in between Europe and Asia? Is Turkey anxious about fitting in and being ‘at the table, not on the menu’?”<sup>297</sup> Is that why all feel such a need to label Turkey geostrategically?”

#### 5.4.2 A Role or Label

Bilgin refers to Turkey’s specific tendency to be represented based on its crucial location as the “assumption of geographical determinism.”<sup>298</sup> Lesser refers to this, in layman’s terms, as “the real estate connection.”<sup>299</sup> The connections provided by the Anatolian peninsula, the sea access afforded by the straits, the proximity to larger powers, the closeness of natural resources, the division point between continents, and a host of other factors make Turkey a geostrategic game piece. Zbigniew Brzezinski’s hallmark

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<sup>296</sup> The others being, in ranking order from most selected to least selected, “Turk,” “Muslim,” “Mediterranean,” “Middle Eastern,” “Eurasian.” Several students refused such an affiliation or checked all of them, then described themselves as “of the whole world,” or “all of these and none of these.” Another respondent refused the categories and wrote “I am of Turkey.” One student said her primary identity is not geographical, but as a woman. Another student checked the “Turk” and “Muslim” identities, but next to the rest wrote “I don’t believe in these categories.” About 20 interviews in total were conducted.

<sup>297</sup> Famous quotation by late President Özal, spoken in regard to his energetic support for Turkey to participate in the anti-Iraq coalition of the first Gulf War. See, Alan Makovsky, “The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Insight Turkey* 1:2 (April-June 1999).

<sup>298</sup> Pinar Bilgin, “Turkey’s Changing Security Discourses: The Challenge of Globalisation,” *European Journal of Political Research* 44 (2005), 185.

<sup>299</sup> Lesser, 94. He refers to this perspective, thankfully, as an outdated, stale, and uncreative way to think about the Turkish-American relationship in the future. However, in the end he still advocates “strategic cooperation.” Cold War conceptions die hard.

book marks Turkey as one of the five “Pivotal Players” on the globe’s grand game board.<sup>300</sup> This is one of many game-like or strategic analogies for Turkey’s position.

The title of Criss’ aforementioned work, “Turkey as a Metaphor Between Europe and Asia,” is thus quite appropriate, for there is no shortage of labels and metaphors, used extensively by both Turks and foreigners, to characterize Turkey’s strategic importance on the world stage, mostly with regard to the purposes it can serve relative to its more powerful neighbors. Among the most common labels are: Barrier, Buffer, Bridge, and Model. The first two referred to blocking the Soviet Union by being NATO’s “Southern Flank”—an “anchor” on the Soviets’ “Soft Underbelly”—thus playing a role of “containment” of Soviet Power. The latter two refer to the more recent goal of a hopeful way of entering and influencing the Middle East through an ally. Turkey was thus an “important pillar” of NATO. There are also lesser used labels like Pawn, Bastion, Tool, and Forward Base (all of which denote the idea of being used by the West in reaching the East). Further degrading are terms that seem to imply Turkey to be in deceptive cohorts with the U.S. or West in the Middle East, referring to Turkey as America’s “subcontractor” or “agent” of the West.<sup>301</sup>

These nicknames are more metaphorical, but there are also labels based on strategic terminology, like “stalwart ally” or “staunch ally” or “strategic partner,” or “stable island,” all of which characterize Turkey primarily for its geographic location and instrumentality. In these terms, Turkey’s main importance to others lies in *where* it is, not

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<sup>300</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997). The others are Ukraine, Azerbaijan, South Korea, and Iran.

<sup>301</sup> These last two are less common, found in Kirişçi, “Turkey and the Muslim Middle East,” 39 & 55. They do not express Kirişçi’s views, but how Turkey has been seen from the angle of other countries at times.

who or what it is.<sup>302</sup> Finally, there are vague and generalized labels that attempt, mostly unsuccessfully, to identify the Turkish state and nation based on characteristics like democracy and Islam, whichever suits the purposes of the label-bestowing country at the time. One hears “Muslim Democracy,” “Democratic example in the Middle East,” and even, quite alarmingly to the Turks, “Islamic Republic.”

These labels are not altogether healthy. While useful at times, these labels can be quite influential—even damaging. Bilgin emphasizes the power of representations in shaping a country’s identity from the outside. For example, the way Turkey is represented in America is not merely a foreigner’s view or helpful word picture for political strategists, but reinforces what Turkey actually *is* and *will become*. In other words, if it is treated according to certain codes and standards, it will probably live up to those set for it. Bilgin acknowledges “the different impact representations have on those who produce the representations and those who are represented. What all share is the damaging effect representations have had on both groups of actors.”<sup>303</sup>

The Turks do not always want such labels given to their state. The “bridge” or “model” illustration is worn out:

Turks will continue to be uncomfortable with prevailing American thinking about Turkey’s role in the broader Middle East and North Africa. Few Turks, even those keen to expand Turkey’s relations to the south and east, welcome the notion of Turkey as a ‘model’ for the Middle East, either because they prefer to see Turkey’s role described in Euro-Atlantic terms, because they are skeptical about the exportability of democracy to the Arab world, or both.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> This kind of thinking pervades through all of the Cold War literature on Turkey’s international role. Only in the recent few years, with post-positivist international relations thinking, have authors and scholars—both Turkish and American—begun to question it.

<sup>303</sup> Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East...*, 14.

<sup>304</sup> Lesser, “Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics,” 91-92.

In his balanced article assessing Anti-Americanism in Turkey, Ömer Taşpınar writes that “The [U.S.] Administration has come to realize that it was a mistake to portray Turkey as a successful model for the Islamic world after September 11. The Kemalist establishment is not impressed by such calls.”<sup>305</sup>

Accordingly, Islamic depictions have lost their flavor as well, if they ever had any. Secular educators, politicians, and many journalists, have publicly shown resentment of religious labels, whereby the U.S. attempts to use Turkey as a Muslim example: “But...the U.S. administration still appear[s] to be betting on religion, a policy that is extremely irritating to many in Turkey. During the first anniversary of the Iraq War, US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said that Iraq would become an Islamic republic, just like Turkey and Pakistan. The *faux pas* stirred Turkish ire.”<sup>306</sup> In a May 2005 U.S. Senate hearing on the State of U.S.-Turkey Relations, panelist Zeyno Baran, a Turkish woman who is director of the International Security and Energy Programs at the Nixon Center, explained it this way to Congress members: “Following 9/11, when America searched for Muslim allies, Turkey stood as the most obvious and most promising one. For the United States, promoting Turkey as a country with moderate Islamic traditions made perfect sense.”<sup>307</sup> The problem is, many Turks do not want Turkey to be known in the world for its “Islamic traditions.” That is the last identity label many secularist Turks want affixed to their state and, by association, nation. However, in a good-intentioned effort at repairing relations, which was the main goal of the hearing, Baran continues:

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<sup>305</sup> Ömer Taşpınar, “The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey,” Brookings Institution Paper (16 November 2005).

<sup>306</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, “Turkey as a Metaphor Between Europe and Asia,” forthcoming in an edited book, 15-16.

<sup>307</sup> House Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the Committee on International Relations, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 11 May 2005, Serial No. 109-48, 7.

If this role is explained correctly, I am certain that a majority of Turks would agree. However, incidences in which senior United States officials have misspoken, with one labeling Turkey an Islamic Republic, have brought out the worst fears among Turks and many genuinely believe that the United States wants to experiment with creating a moderate Islamic Republic of Turkey and therefore, are strongly opposed to any U.S. initiatives that highlight Islamic elements in Turkey.<sup>308</sup>

Overall, Turkey seems to be viewed by strategists as a stepping stone. No one uses such a term because it is not politic, but it boils down to this. Turkey, by nature of its land's location, cannot seem to escape attempts at its geostrategic utilization by other countries. To Turkey itself, however, there is one factor that supercedes all these instrumental labels in terms of how the state views itself: its tough neighbors.

#### 5.4.3 A Rough Neighborhood

The threat from enemies is one of the most important unifying factors, keeping the Turkish nation on its toes to defend the Turkish state. This is one area where Atatürk masterfully overlapped the national and state identities for the long-haul. Enemy logic, emphasized for nationalist goals, presents another form of continuity with the living past. Born out of the “Eastern Question” and then the Sèvres Treaty, both of which showed Ottomans/Turks just how few friends they had, the idea of being surrounded by hostile enemies eager to snatch Turkey's territory still resonates strongly today. The first strands of this passionate lament can be seen in Atatürk's famous “Speech to Turkish Youth,” (also quoted above):

With force and deceit, all the fortresses of your beloved homeland might be taken, all its ships seized, all its armies scattered, and every corner of the homeland invaded by the enemy...Oh youth of the Turkish future! Even in these situations and conditions your duty is to save the Turkish independence and Republic. The strength that you need to do so exists in the noble blood flowing in your veins.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, 7.

<sup>309</sup> Sonyel, 147.



As mentioned above, at the establishment of the republic, the most important value was sovereignty—Turkey was its own and belonged to its people, Atatürk declared. Furthermore, no one could again try to interfere to break it apart. To drive this point home, Turkey’s Constitution says in one of its opening articles: “The Turkish state, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity. Its language is Turkish.”<sup>310</sup> Today, this idea of local enemies being a threat to Turkish unity is still manifested in terms like “Sèvres Phobia”<sup>311</sup> or “Encirclement Syndrome”<sup>312</sup> or Turkey being surrounded by a “Rough Neighborhood.”<sup>313</sup> The enemies ready to divide Turkey are seen as *inside* too. In a passionate description of “Armenian Terrorism” in former Turkish Ambassador to the America Elekdağ’s speech, he exemplified what is engrained in Turkish mentality, from grade school civics courses: “The only real winners of this terrible campaign are the forces of totalitarianism which would like nothing better than to de-stabilize Turkey and divide her from the West.”<sup>314</sup>

The link to the past inherent in this fear cannot be overstated. Mustafa Kemal himself put it bluntly:

But after every offensive, one must be prepared for a counter-attack. Continuous counter-attacks from the west, and discontent and insurrections in the Islamic world, had the ultimate result of burying the Ottoman Empire under the pall of history.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, art. 3.

<sup>311</sup> See, for example: Kemal Kirişçi, “U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership,” in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, ed. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 138.

<sup>312</sup> This term was first applied to Stalin’s fears for the Soviet Union, of being squeezed in by surrounding and threatening powers. It has also been applied to Israel, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia.

<sup>313</sup> It has been frequently cited, sometimes as “tough neighborhood,” “rough neighborhood,” or even “dangerous neighborhood,” which is the title Michael Radu’s compilation volume.

<sup>314</sup> Şükrü Elekdağ, “The Future of Turkish-American Relations,” in *Turkey: Time Honored Ally of America*, ed. Francis P. Butler and Ralph E. Ropp (Merrifield, VA: TPC Logistics Services Inc., 1985), 36.

<sup>315</sup> M. K. Atatürk, *The Speech: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, 76.

In this way, Kemal wrapped state identity and national identity together, packaging them in the same box.

While enemy threat contributes to the unity of the Turkish nation and state in some ways, the unfortunate outcome is a continual reification of geographic paranoia, of Turkey's traditional fears of abandonment, of territorial loss, and of outside interference in its sovereignty. This reification generally works well for Turkey, especially in terms of the military elites' hold on power, except that the nature of neighboring threats leads to making neighbors into a national security issue, and eventually to over-securitization. Socially constructed insecurities get produced and reproduced,<sup>316</sup> sometimes to the detriment of what soon becomes a security-obsessed country. Over-securitization then interrupts and retards democracy.<sup>317</sup> Philippos Savvides, writing from the Greek point of view, typically antagonistic to Turkey, argues that Turkey cannot democratize because of a fixation on security issues. "Democracy becomes the victim of the securitization process...The expansion of laws establishing dress codes or making illegal certain cultural practices are indicative not only of Turkey's legitimization [sic] crisis, but also of a vulnerable state agonizing to preserve its ailing ideological character."<sup>318</sup>

Still, the enemy logic resonates well with the public, and prevails in classrooms and newsrooms. Students across the country take a required course in middle school called *Vatandaşlık* (Citizenship),<sup>319</sup> and in high school called *Milli Güvenlik* (National Security) in which they learn about issues like the ever-present threat of Turkey's

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<sup>316</sup> Pinar Bilgin, "Clash of Cultures? Differences Between Turkey and the European Union on Security" in *The Europeanization of Turkey's Security Policy: Prospects and Pitfalls*, ed. A. L. Karaosmanoğlu and S. Taşhan (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 2004), 26.

<sup>317</sup> Although one problem with critical theorists who argue these points is that they never offer a solution.

<sup>318</sup> Philippos K. Savvides, "Legitimation Crisis and Securitization in Modern Turkey," *Critique* 16 (2000), 61.

<sup>319</sup> Similar to civics or government classes in U.S. high schools.

bordering neighbors. Respondents of the aforementioned qualitative survey (graduate-level females) referred to Turkey's bordering neighbors as "quite problematic" and "able to influence Turkey for the worst." One student said, "all the countries are in a competition to be the regional leader." A physics student wrote bluntly, "None of them love us and they are all our enemies," and an archeology student wrote, "They are ready to attack at every moment."

However, students are also beginning to think differently and see a need for change in the relationships. One or two thoughtful students wrote positively of the shared cultural terrain with neighbors and how Turkey should take advantage of this. A history student specializing in Greece said that the neighboring countries have the "people she feels close to." And a literature student viewed Turkey's neighbors "as the countries about which we should be more informed, and which are close to us but unfortunately 'far,' and which we are afraid of and consider as enemies."

Overall, while international society and an over-emphasis by strategists and politicians is mostly to blame for Turkey being stuck in various geostrategic labels, Turkey is also to blame for reinforcing fears about its geographical precariousness.

## **5.5 Conclusion on the State**

Amidst public opinion, international views, carrots and sticks, pulls and pushes, Turkey clings just as strongly as ever to its sovereign choice. While it can be a "staunch ally," it has demonstrated that it makes its own decisions and refuses to be a submissive pawn, tool, or instrument in the hands of larger powers. It demonstrated this most recently on 1 March 2003, when the Grand National Assembly voted against allowing American troops to use the *İncirlik* air force base as a northern front to invade Iraq.

Interferences in sovereignty make any country feel threatened, but perhaps Turkey even more so, with tender wounds of capitulations and other interferences from its Ottoman past that are not easily forgotten.

The problematic presented in this chapter is between the horse and the jockey: the nation and the state. National identity (represented by the will of the people, public opinion, direction of academics and journalists, desires of the youth) cannot remain suppressed under state identity. It worked for a time—a time of radical change when opponents were silenced and transformation reigned. In that case, identity was not suppressed, because Atatürk worked to harmonize the two. The nation felt a privilege, an honor, in belonging to the state. This may not be the case today.

If there is an identity complex in Turkey, it is between the nation and the state. Granted, there is plenty of polarization between the Islamists and the Secularists, the Right and the Left, the “pure” Turkish nationalists and the Kurds. But identity issues run deeper than political polarization. Identity issues are about the foundation of the state and nation, the very depths of who they are and how their knowledge of themselves formed. In the case of Turkey, the state and nation formed in an overlap, but did not stay that way.

Does this have any implications for the Turkish-American relationship? The next chapter will explore whether the context above will have any consequence in Turkey’s relationship with its former “intimate strategic partner,” the United States.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE OLD FRIEND ACROSS THE POND: TURKEY AND AMERICA

The Republic of Turkey and the United States of America are allies. But does anyone realize it? This was the question that first prompted this thesis topic.<sup>320</sup> Whatever the case, the relationship between America and Turkey today does not much resemble an alliance, especially on the public level. Many Americans are practically oblivious to Turkey (“Is that in the Middle East?” “Do they speak Arabic there?” “Do they eat a lot of *turkey*?”), and Turks are experiencing a rising and alarming tide of anti-Americanism—along with much of the rest of the world. “When the spirit has gone out of a relationship, an alliance is effectively dead,” wrote Parker T. Hart, former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey.<sup>321</sup>

A recent newspaper headline seized my attention, proving this point: “Iraqi Kurds Ponder: With Turkey or With the Americans?”<sup>322</sup> That such a title can appear is evidence that the social, popular-level disconnect between the allies is impacting parties outside of

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<sup>320</sup> Perhaps a whole separate paper could be written on the question of “what, exactly, *is* an ally?”

<sup>321</sup> Parker T. Hart, “The United States and Turkey: The Disintegration of a Twenty-Five Year Alliance,” in *Turkey: Time Honored Ally of America*, ed. Francis P. Butler and Ralph E. Ropp (Merrifield, VA: TPC Logistics Services Inc., 1985), 64.

<sup>322</sup> İlınur Çevik, “Iraqi Kurds ponder: With Turkey or with the Americans,” *The New Anatolian*, 12 Feb 2007.

the relationship itself. Turkey and America are not currently functioning like a team, but as two separate entities with diverging options pulling this third party in different directions.

It is this disconnect between two supposed allies that interests and concerns me. As an individual, I have received wonderful hospitality and welcome from my Turkish friends, roommates, and hosts. They are gentle, helpful, kind, and self-sacrificing. And yet from all these same people, there is no shortage of seething attacks on the American government and foreign policy.

This begs the question: is the passion we are seeing in Turkey not really anti-Americanism, but a mere anti-Bushism or “anti-Iraq-Warism,” as Nancy McEldowney, Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. in Turkey, suggests?<sup>323</sup> Would it end if Bush left office and the Iraq War ended tomorrow? My answer is no.<sup>324</sup> There is something else going on underneath the surface, under the politicians and policies—something to do with Turkish identity, something that relates to its very foundation, its very makeup.

Part of the problem, as alluded to in the introduction, is the lack of a framework through which to study country relationships outside of a military-strategic or strategic-diplomacy comprehension. This is *especially* the case of America and Turkey, whose alliance has been based almost wholly on geostrategy and mutual defense.<sup>325</sup> The reason words and approaches are important is because we can no longer rely on military strategy

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<sup>323</sup> Nancy McEldowney, “Turkish-American Relations and the Future of Turkish-American Relations” (lecture, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, 29 November 2006). She insisted that there is no Anti-Americanism in Turkey.

<sup>324</sup> And so is, as I perceive it, the answer of many other academics who write about the deeper roots of Anti-Americanism in Turkey and the pitfalls of the relationship in the past. See, for example, Ömer Taşpınar, “The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey,” Brookings Institution Paper (16 November 2005), and Nur Bilge Criss, “A Short History of Anti-Americanism and Terrorism: The Turkish Case,” *The Journal of American History* 89:2 (September 2002).

<sup>325</sup> In this case, though I fault the limitations of such terminology, I agree much more with the label “staunch ally” than some sort of illusion of a “strong friendship.”

and group alliances to bind us. Cold War terminology is old, stale, and unhelpful. Even writers who still employ it are beginning to write about the importance of *understanding* between the two countries. The Cold War thinking and terminology that has dominated most<sup>326</sup> of the past writings on the America-Turkey relationship does not leave much room for understanding in this sense. It helps us understand the game board of the world and geostrategic imperatives to blockade the enemy, but does not allow for the kind of mutual understanding of identities, desires, processes, temperaments, attitudes, insecurities, and vulnerabilities. It masks those in a detrimental way. This understanding—and what exactly that entails—will be the main theme of this chapter.

Keeping in mind the importance of both identity and understanding, this chapter will apply what has been learned about Turkish identity to the U.S.-Turkey relationship. In the first section it will be argued that America needs to better understand Turkey, in identity terms and not just geostrategic location, if the relationship is going to continue successfully in the post-Cold War Era. Secondly, Turkey likewise would benefit from taking on a better understanding of America, especially its policies and processes. This effort at understanding will be applied to a real example full of misunderstanding: the Kurdish Problem. This will relate to the Turks' *diversity*. This is a delicate issue, but it must be addressed, as a thesis on Turkish identity would be amiss without it. Finally, a promotion of understanding between the two countries will be addressed. The relationship needs a more sensitive approach and a good deal of texture on the public level to meet the problems on the policy level.

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<sup>326</sup> Not all, but almost all. There are exceptions. A notable one is a 2006 work by Lerna Yanık, "Beyond 'Bridges,' 'Crossroads' and 'Buffer Zones': Defining a New International Role for Turkey," Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey. For more refutations of Cold War terminology or thinking, see also works by Pinar Bilgin, Ömer Taşpınar, and only the most recent work of Ian O. Lesser.

## 6.1 America Understanding Turkey

This section will explain America's historical and current view of Turkey, full of negativity and miscalculations. Then, it will describe what the U.S. must keep in mind about Turkey's side of the relationship story in order for America to better discern the specific brand of anti-Americanism in Turkey. This specific brand will be developed, and contrasted with other types of Anti-Americanism, such as Arab or European, that differ from Turkey's type.

### 6.1.1 America's View of Turkey

Heretofore only considered in a strategic light, with occasional but minimal tourism, the U.S. view of Turkey and the Turkish people is none too favorable. With a historical image of the 'Terrible Turk' adopted from Europe,<sup>327</sup> compounded by anti-Turk lobbies by Greek-Americans and Armenian-Americans, the average American thinks of the Turk without much esteem, if at all. This view, however, is not deep-rooted, and easily transforms for anyone who knows a Turk directly or indirectly, visits Turkey, or even hears of another's trip to Turkey. Yet the bottom line is a lack of comprehension of this "faithful ally" and "friend."

A cursory glance at Western newspapers reporting on the current political upheaval in Turkey is revealing. After a large-scale Ankara protest in mid-April 2007, *The Washington Post* unfortunately reverted back to the outdated metaphor: "Turkey

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<sup>327</sup> Çağrı Erhan, "The American Perception of the Turks: An Historical Record," in *Türk Yıllığı: The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations: 2000/2 Special Issue on Turkish-American Relations*, XXXI, 75-97. Historical accounts, popular novels, personal communications and newspapers all contributed to the perpetuation of the negative image. Erhan writes that: "this kind of anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic line of *New York Times* [sic] was repeated in many editorials. In 'The Eastern War' of 23 October 1876, the editor argued that the fanaticism of the Mohammedans made the Turks 'the terror of Europe for so many centuries.'" 92.



aspires to become the first Muslim member of the European Union, and has long touted itself as a bridge between the Western and Islamic worlds.”<sup>328</sup> In reality, most Turks do not talk about being a bridge to the Middle East anymore. If a foreigner even mentions that term, words are met with rolling eyes and soft chuckles, or sometimes exasperation. Rather than Turkey “touting *itself* as a bridge,” the *U.S.* insists on touting it as a bridge, because it is a familiar metaphor making American politicians strategically comfortable. Another article, in *The New York Times*, announces “But there are two Turkeys now,” referencing the debate over the role of Islam in Turkey.<sup>329</sup> This would be like saying there are also two United States, divided over the role of Christianity in America.

To boil it down to “two Turkeys” is oversimplification. In a newspaper venue there is not much space with which to work, but there is a price to pay in America’s lack of understanding of its allies. Rather than “two Turkeys”—a simple polarization between left and right, or between religious and secular, or between Kurds and Turks—there is a fundamental disconnect between the national and state identity. But getting a coherent explanation of such a complex disconnect into a few inches of news page is no easy task, and thus Americans know very little about this faraway “secular” republic with an “Islamic Hue.”<sup>330</sup>

#### 6.1.2 America Does Not “Get” Turkey

So what is to be *understood*? This section overviews identity characteristics of the Turkish-American relationship in history, and examines the problem today. This casts

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<sup>328</sup> Suzan Fraser, “300,000 March Against Turkey’s Leader,” *The Associated Press*, in *The Washington Post*, 14 April 2007.

<sup>329</sup> Sabrina Tavernise, “300,000 Protest Islamic Hue of Turkish System,” *The New York Times*, 15 April 2007.

<sup>330</sup> Tavernise, “300,000 Protest Islamic Hue of Turkish System.”

light on the nature of Anti-Americanism in Turkey currently, to be explained in the following section.

Turkey and America in fact have a very positive historical relationship. Even before the republic itself was born, Americans were present and influential. It was a time of high prosperity for the American-Turk relationship on a public and cultural level, for the Americans were respectful of the Turks' newly emerging identity, and indeed the 12<sup>th</sup> point of Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" speech became a rallying cry in the Turkish press for their sovereign rights.<sup>331</sup> The Americans in Turkey were usually relief workers and missionaries, but also some politicians, journalists, and researchers with such tasks as to "ascertain the desires of the indigenous near Eastern people,"<sup>332</sup> which sounds not too unlike "go study the Turks' identity." Some twenty of these Americans were even in Sivas—where the influential September 1919 Congress of nationalists was held—as records indicate, and "were in close contact with the majority of Turkish citizens in Sivas."<sup>333</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, as the republic was being constructed, America and Turkey had good, if not extensive, relations. Both went through a period of isolationism, focusing on inward domestic structure and trying to stay neutral regarding the stewing world events. Mustafa Kemal had appeared on *Time* magazine's cover in 1923 and was earning recognition in America, but it was not until 1927 that America sent an ambassador to Turkey. Other countries' ambassadors began slowly moving to the capital in Ankara, but it then took until 1937 for the U.S. ambassador to make the move, marking

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<sup>331</sup> Howard A. Reed, "Atatürk, the Turkish Nationalists and the United States: A Neglected Prospect for Peace in 1919" *Journal of the American Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Civilization* 1:3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1980-81), 99-100.

<sup>332</sup> Reed, 102.

<sup>333</sup> Reed, 105.

the United States as the last one to take up full-time residence in Ankara.<sup>334</sup> Many in the West had not been confident the Kemalist Regime would last.<sup>335</sup>

The 1940s were the tumultuous war years, during which Turkey, quite incredibly considering its position, managed to stay neutral until the very end, when it sided with the Allies and began to seek protection from the perceived threat of the expanding Soviet Empire to its north. The Turks then counteracted the recently acquired international reputation for military non-participation by fighting valiantly and faithfully alongside Western powers in the Korean War, sending nearly 5,500 troops. Following that war, stories circulated about the bravery and skill of Turkish soldiers. In sending men to such a far-off place in which it had no direct interest, Turkey had achieved its unspoken goal: the West was duly impressed, and in 1952 Turkey was admitted to NATO, earning a huge security umbrella and financial support for itself.

Thereafter, Turkish loyalty to the U.S. was observed firsthand by a former American ambassador in Turkey, writing about this time frame: “*Arkadaş*, the word for friend, literally means ‘the one who walks behind you,’ i.e., to protect your back. For twenty-five years the attachment of the Turkish people to the United States was that of the *arkadaş*, affectionate, grateful and ready for sacrifice.”<sup>336</sup> This was especially characteristic in the so-called Golden Era (1950s) of Turkish-American relations. “During the ‘golden era’ Turkey manifested a loyal, single-minded friendship with the United States. Turkish leaders lent almost blind support to the United States and the Western alliance, and displayed total confidence in U.S. commitments within NATO.”<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Criss, “Change and Continuity from the Empire to the Republic,” 24.

<sup>335</sup> Criss, 24.

<sup>336</sup> Hart, “The United States and Turkey: The Disintegration of a Twenty-Five Year Alliance,” 61.

<sup>337</sup> Elekdağ, 37.

But then the severe “body-blow” in 1964 with the Johnson letter followed by a second “body-blow” of the 1975 U.S. arms embargo against Turkey both did “lasting damage to the foundation of trust which underpins U.S.-Turkish relations.”<sup>338</sup> These were the first major breaks in the tranquility of the relationship. Today, it is highly unlikely that such a foundation of trust still exists.<sup>339</sup>

While these blows to the Turks were unexpected and overall quite negative in their outcomes, one benefit was a professionalization of Turks’ foreign policy: “the political crises experienced in Turkish-American relations compelled Turkey to seek self-sufficiency in matters of defence and re-kindled the spirit of equal partnership.”<sup>340</sup> The Turks learned that they could not count on international friendships to be gracious. Very shortly before the arms embargo on Turkey passed in the U.S. Congress in 1974, the Chief of General Staff of the Turkish military turned to his secretary in the face of reporters’ questioning and expressed his shock that they would believe such a possibility could materialize. “Look at what they say, Orhan. The U.S. is going to stop the aid. Could something like this happen? The U.S. helps us. Would they ever stop aid?”<sup>341</sup> A few days later he was caught with his foot in his mouth and a sizeable dilemma.

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<sup>338</sup> Parker T. Hart, “Testimony of the Honorable Parker T. Hart Before the European Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations” (7 March 1984) in *Turkey: Time Honored Ally of America*, ed. Francis P. Butler and Ralph E. Ropp (Merrifield, VA: TPC Logistics Services Inc., 1985), 54.

<sup>339</sup> The Johnson letter was written when a Cyprus crisis erupted and Turkey was about to invade the island to protect Turks living there against the Greeks. At the time, Khrushchev was threatening Turkey with nuclear warfare if Ankara went into Cyprus. U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson hinted that if the Soviets got involved, the U.S. might not come to Turkey’s aid, despite the NATO contract that pledged to do so. It was a subtle warning with loud ramifications. The embargo act was a similar case, but a much louder and more material warning. Turks took it very seriously and subsequently shut down America’s installments and listening posts in Turkey. The embargo lasted three years. For more detailed accounts of these and other major milestones in the U.S.-Turkey relationship (which will be referred to in this section but not explained) see works by George Harris, Nur Bilge Criss, Howard Reed, and Kemal Kirişçi.

<sup>340</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, “U.S. Forces in Turkey,” in *U.S. Military Forces in Europe: The Early Years, 1945–1970*, ed. Simon W. Duke and Wolfgang Krieger (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 332.

<sup>341</sup> M. Ali Kışlalı, “ABD Bunu Hep Yapardı,” *Radikal*, 17 Feb 2007.  
<<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=213250>>.

This “abandonment” hit hard. A sense of abandonment in fact pervades the Turks’ international identity. After World War I, everyone abandoned them and wanted to carve up their land, as history books inform Turkish schoolchildren. It was from this that Mustafa Kemal came in and rose up as a savior. But the abandonment theme continued, especially with regard to America “abandoning” Turkey in the Cyprus crises in 1964 and 1975.<sup>342</sup> Part and parcel of this is the idea of being used. As many Turks feel it, America needed Turkey for the Soviet blockade, for positioning of listening posts and locating of strategic weapons and forces, but when Turkey needed America’s help in the Cyprus crisis, the U.S. withdrew support. The Turks were outraged, in both instances. They asked themselves, “why should we be loyal when the U.S. is not?”

It could almost be described, in Turkish minds, as a ‘hostage’ situation, with them as the weaker power being ‘held hostage’ to the demands of the greater power.

In sum, Turkey perceived itself as hostage to US domestic policies that were basically sympathetic to Greece. It resolved at that point never again to submit its national security and foreign policy to the vagaries of such a narrow dependency. Thus, the special US-Turkish relationship ended with Turkey’s new perception of its precarious position, a position in which it had become enmeshed during almost three decades of total reliance... Whatever the future of Turkish-American relations might be, the special feelings for Americans will probably never be completely rekindled in Turkish hearts.<sup>343</sup>

This points to some of the historical roots of anti-Americanism in Turkey.<sup>344</sup> Rather than a brand new phenomenon, it is a trend with a history, a gradual development.

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<sup>342</sup> “Abandonment” was the viewpoint of the Turkish masses, especially as the situation became sensationalized in the press. The U.S. had reasons for the letter, as Turkish scholars acknowledge, and would not perceive it as “abandonment.” The issue is now laden with emotion; clearly the U.S. did not expect it to turn out this way. Some suggest Johnson could have written the letter as he did, but less bluntly.

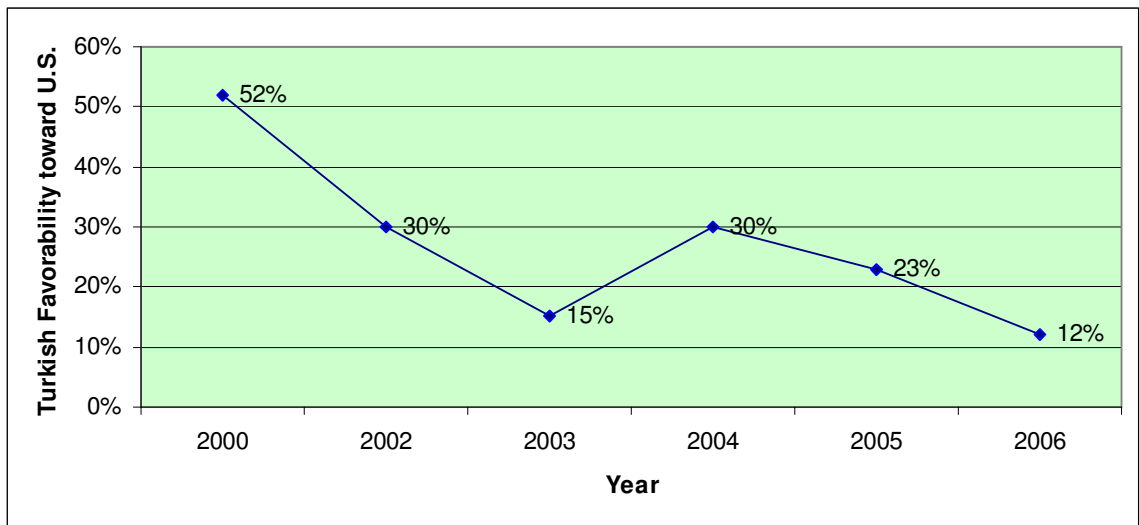
<sup>343</sup> Francis P. Butler, “Reassessing Turkey: A Faithful Ally Disillusioned and In Trouble,” 26.

<sup>344</sup> See: Criss, “A Short History of Anti-Americanism and Terrorism: The Turkish Case,” Ibid.

### 6.1.3 Anti-Americanism In Turkey

It is against this backdrop that we look to anti-Americanism in Turkey today. There were always bumps in the road, but what has gone so terribly wrong lately? A June 2006 Pew Survey published the percentage of Turks' favorability toward the U.S. from 1999 - 2006.<sup>345</sup> Favorable opinions of the U.S. in Turkey were as follows.

Column A	Column B
Year	Fav. To U.S.
1999/2000	52 %
2001	no data taken
2002	30 %
2003	15 %
2004	30 %
2005	23 %
2006	12 %



<sup>345</sup> <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252> (May 2007). However, it must be kept in mind that polls are whimsical. The average respondent on the street is going to give an emotional, uninformed reaction, usually based on what is currently popular. There is also a stark difference, not reflected in the polls, in Turkey in terms of U.S. favorability. Men and women over 50, who remember the whole past relationship and some of the aspects (negative and positive) of it, tend to have more favorable views. For more on emotional responses and overreactions among the Turks, see Arnett, "The Heart of the Matter: the Importance of Emotion in Turkish-American Relations," Ibid.

This of course coincides with the events of the Iraq War, which Turks so vehemently oppose, but as mentioned earlier, this phenomenon is more than just a policy-related trend, and some scholars have begun to organize and characterize it.

Very recently, Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane published a book on the *types* of anti-Americanisms in the world.<sup>346</sup> Not content to group it all under one category, they distinguished four major types and classified nations into these types, which differ in their intensity, causes, and perception of threat. In *liberal anti-Americanism*, the United States is criticized for not living up to its own ideals, and faces charges of hypocrisy from nations that do not feel threatened and would never attack the U.S., but support popular anti-Americanism nonetheless. This would be the likely type for most Western European nations. *Social anti-Americanism* flourishes in democratic societies that contrast with America's political institutions and market-oriented processes, favoring instead a deeper state involvement. This type is slightly more intense than liberal anti-Americanism, but these societies share America's basic values and tend to be advanced industrialized countries as well; Scandinavian nations or Japan might be examples. The third type is *sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism*. Those who fit in this type:

focus on two values: the importance of not losing control over the terms by which politics are inserted in world politics and the inherent importance and value of collective national identities. These identities often embody values that are at odds with America's. State sovereignty thus becomes a shield against unwanted intrusions from America.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein, and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

<sup>347</sup> Katzenstein and Keohane, 32.

Turkey fits exactly in this definition. One of the foundations of this type is “nationalism, collective national identities that offer a source of positive identification”; correspondingly, “national identity is one of the most important political values in contemporary world politics, and there is little evidence suggesting that this is about to change.”<sup>348</sup> The strength of Turkey’s national identity is one of the main ideas of this thesis. Another base of this anti-Americanism type is state sovereignty, which is highly celebrated and protected in Turkey. Every nation values sovereignty, but Turkey has a fixation with it. This is logical, for fitting within this type are the countries in parts of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa “where state sovereignty came only after hard-fought wars of national liberation [and] sovereignty is a much-cherished good that is to be defended.”<sup>349</sup>

The fourth type of anti-Americanism, according to Katzenstein and Keohane, is radical anti-Americanism, which is the violent kind that believes America’s identity stands against the values of what is good and right in the world. In its most extreme form, this type leads to the belief that America should be destroyed. Some Arab nations fit in this category, but Turkey does not.

## **6.2 Turkey Understanding America**

In parallel to the above section on “America Understanding Turkey,” this section will explain Turkey’s historical and current view of America, replete with stereotypes and poor channels through which information is obtained. Then, it will argue how important aspects of the U.S. that Turkey does not “get,” especially congressional procedure, lead to misperceptions and frustration.

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<sup>348</sup> Katzenstein and Keohane, 32.

<sup>349</sup> Katzenstein and Keohane, 32.



### 6.2.1 Turkey's View of America

Just as America has historical and current misconceptions—or complete lack of understanding—about Turkey, the problem exists in reverse. Except for a few top-level universities recently, Turkish schools do not study America, as a government or from the viewpoint of its foreign policy. American studies is confined to literature, or social studies at best. Outside of the classroom, Turks learn of America via Hollywood movies, video games, Burger King, and Starbucks.

The other main venue of information about America is politics, which tends to get blown out of proportion, as when Johnson's 1964 letter, which hinted rather broadly at a U.S. unwillingness to come to Turkey's rescue, caused such an uproar that rumors of a U.S. forceful *attack* on Turkey began to fly.<sup>350</sup> Turkish government administrations have not made great efforts to promote the image of alliance and friendship to the Turkish public. Instead, it has become fashionable to be anti-American. Politicians, journalists, and students seem especially outspoken about it.

The statistics are troubling. "Polls after polls confirm that growing numbers of Turks perceive their NATO ally more as a national security threat, rather than a strategic partner."<sup>351</sup> A recent Pew Research Center poll analysis coincided with the Pope's visit to Turkey in 2006.<sup>352</sup> The article analyzing the results mostly provides shocking statistics on how many Turks have an unfavorable view of the U.S., have no confidence in President Bush, and rate Americans negatively. Roughly two-thirds of Turks see Westerners as

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<sup>350</sup> Hart, "The United States and Turkey: The Disintegration of a Twenty-Five Year Alliance," 62.

<sup>351</sup> Ömer Taşpınar, "The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey."

<sup>352</sup> Richard Wike, "Turkey: Troubled Terrain for Pope Benedict: The Pontiff Visits a Country Where Negative Views of Christians and the West Are on the Rise," Pew Research Center, 27 November 2006.

violent, selfish, arrogant, and fanatical.<sup>353</sup> Furthermore, 77% of Turks oppose the U.S.-led “war” on terrorism, which Turks perceive as working against them rather than with them, and as being directed against only America’s terror enemies rather than terror enemies in the world as a whole.<sup>354</sup> Moreover, Turks’ anti-Americanism is greater than that of other European countries surveyed—more on-par with the Muslim World, with which America often groups it.<sup>355</sup> Whenever Turkey is categorized with other countries, it is either “Middle East,” “Muslim World,” or “Conflict Area.” This might reveal how the U.S. perceives Turkey in terms of regional affiliation and strategic placement, but maybe these statistics reveal that America is correct to group it this way.

Quantitative results from an informal poll among female graduate students in early 2007 reveal similar outcomes. When answering the question “How do Turks in general usually think of Americans?” answers were mostly negative. “Too self-assured, indifferent, and covetous/greedy,” wrote one respondent, while another said, “a large amount are below average,” and another, “ignorant.” But several refused to answer the questions, often citing the reason that they did not want to generalize, and others were more positive. This shows hope. One respondent even wrote that Americans are “hard-working.” Still, even in the negative answers, the adjectives are not hateful, showing an anti-Americanism that is not radical or dangerous, and that can still be curbed.

### 6.2.2 Turkey Does Not “Get” America

Multiple scholars and authors point to an injurious lack of understanding, on the Turks’ part, of American policies and processes. “To be sure, many Turks misjudge

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<sup>353</sup> Wike. For poll results, see: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?PageID=824>.

<sup>354</sup> Wike. For poll results, see: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?PageID=824>.

<sup>355</sup> <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=796> and <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=683> (accessed May 2007).

American strategy and intentions with regard to Kurdish separatism and Iraq. Successive American administrations have made clear that the United States does not...threaten the *integrity* and *security* of a NATO ally.”<sup>356</sup> A well-spoken Turk advising U.S. Congressional representatives explained the understanding gap across the ocean:

It is really about the long-term vision the United States has in the broader Middle East ... and the support for democracy and freedom initiatives, which have *not been correctly understood* in Turkey. Instead, they are feared and associated with wars and with instability around Turkey ... there has to be a much more deeper engagement, maybe at the Administration as well as the congressional level, on working with the Turks about the vision. The democracy and freedom agenda is debated in the United States as well, and when it crosses the Atlantic and comes to Turkey, it only leads to terrible speculations and concerns and, in fact, to Turkish lack of cooperation on a whole set of issues that actually would be in Turkey’s interest as well, *if they understood* what the vision was.<sup>357</sup> (emphasis added)

But then again, for the Turks, confusion and mistrust of America’s intentions is hard to avoid when mixed messages abound. A recent article in *The New Anatolian* published what appears to be an exposé by an American that the U.S. is deceiving Turkey.<sup>358</sup> Scott Sullivan, identified to readers only as a “former Washington government employee,”<sup>359</sup> is cited from a different, and rather obscure, petroleum website that, “Turkey now knows, if it had any lingering doubts, that the U.S. favors an independent Kurdistan,” and that “The U.S. has demonstrated that it is prepared to deceive Turkey about its pro-Kurdish stance... U.S. assurances that it will restrain the PKK in Kirkuk are worthless and are humiliating for Turkey, while emboldening the PKK, when Turkey accepts them.”

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<sup>356</sup> Ian O. Lesser, “Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics,” *Survival* 48:3 (Autumn 2006), 88.

<sup>357</sup> Zeyno Baran (response to a question during House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Ibid), 34.

<sup>358</sup> “Former US Government Employee: Turkey Must Strike Immediately to Take Kirkuk,” *The New Anatolian*, 01 March 2007.

<sup>359</sup> He is also a columnist on the website <http://www.theconservativevoice.com>.

Articles like this are published without any backup sources or ever direct correspondence with this “informant.”

Policy is not the only point of misunderstanding. The political process is just as misinterpreted: spoken by a Turk who was a former ambassador to the U.S.,

...the abstruse American political system and the institutionalized conflict between the executive and the legislature are not comprehended by the average Turkish citizen, and the distinction appears largely irrelevant to the Turkish press, which views the consequences of the American foreign policymaking process as more significant than the process itself.<sup>360</sup>

Writing seventeen years after Elekdağ’s speech, Kirişçi concurs on this issue: “an important source of Turkish resentment toward U.S. policies on several issues—including Turkish human rights, the Armenian problem, Cyprus, and Greek-Turkish relations—stems from Turkish decisionmakers’ failure to appreciate the role of the Congress and civil society in crafting U.S. foreign policy.”<sup>361</sup> This misunderstanding is more than a minor lack of information, because it means no effective Turkish lobby in the U.S., where ethnic lobbies against Turkey, in contrast, have quite a powerful voice.

### **6.3 A Real Issue: The Kurdish Problem**

This thesis has outlined the complexity of Turkish identity. Now this will be applied to the example of the “Kurdish Question,” as it is commonly labeled. This section will address the issue of the 12 – 15 million Kurds who live in Turkey and particularly the segment within the Kurds who refuse to adopt<sup>362</sup> Turkish nationality.<sup>363</sup> The analysis thus far has demonstrated the complexity of the Kurdish issue. Below is an effort to comb

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<sup>360</sup> Elekdağ, 43.

<sup>361</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, “U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership,” in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, ed. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 141.

<sup>362</sup> Some say “integrate,” and others say “assimilate.” I chose a more neutral third option.

<sup>363</sup> Turkey’s total population, as of mid-2006, was 73,700,000. (Population Reference Bureau). Totals on the number of Kurds vary among sources.

through the reasons the Kurds are a “problem” or “question” in Turkey, instead of just part of the population, and to shed light on the Western contribution to the problem as well. There is much need for understanding between the two. Misunderstanding often leads to conflict, and the current Kurdish problem in Turkey, and how it is interpreted in the West, is no exception. What seems at first obvious and clear-cut from a Western perspective takes on new shades and colors when seen through the frame of trying to understand the Turkish identity and people. This happened for me as I studied Turkey’s relative homogeneity or diversity.

As has been examined throughout this thesis, Turks’ understanding of their nation’s makeup and identity is completely different from the Western mindset: “...perceptions and misperceptions abound. Turkey is overly sensitive about disintegration...Western Europeans, especially during the last decade, believe that they have reached the highest level of political, economic and humanitarian systems possible.”<sup>364</sup> Regarding the Kurds, or most other Muslim minorities in Turkey, ethnicity was not a factor at the foundation of the republic, and they were welcomed and invited to join in becoming Turkish in nationality. In fact, to say “minorities” is even misleading and exhibits a Western viewpoint, for many Turks today do not see it that way at all:

In Turkey, there is an estimated population of about 12 million people of Kurdish origin constituting about one-fifth of Turkey’s population. Problems basically centre around the recognition of the separate cultural identity of the Kurdish population and the use of the Kurdish language...The Turkish government does not recognize Kurds as a separate minority; and views the problem as being one of military conflict.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Nur Bilge Criss and Yavuz Turan Çetiner, “Terrorism and the Issue of International Cooperation,” *Journal of Conflict Studies* 20:1 (2000).

<sup>365</sup> Meltem Müftüler-Bac, 250.

This is still the case, although the outlook is somewhat jumbled now with the Western influence of ethnic minority protection and human rights. A lack of understanding pervades all this. The West raises positive values, like rights and freedoms, with presumably good intentions. But problems arise when these countries do not even have the concept of ethnic minorities,<sup>366</sup> except as imported from the West, and thus it leads to fragmentation of a unit the people once thought was whole. But the case of how Turks identify their nation today is largely informed by the same values of the past

### 6.3.1 Facing Kurdish Nationalism

But what of the Kurds? “The Republic naturally reflected an ethnic mosaic because of the Ottoman heritage; the shrinking borders had brought in Muslim émigrés of many different ethnic backgrounds. Kurdish nationalism was eschewed both deliberately and subconsciously.”<sup>367</sup> Some Kurds chose to integrate into Turkishness. Those who did were assisted by government measures to educate everyone in how to be a Turk and how to fit into the newly packaged Turkish identity. The wealthy Kurds, especially, had their kids sent to schools in the big cities that taught integration, but some Kurds chose not to integrate. “The Republicans defined nationalism, not as one based on race, ethnicity, or religion, but on a common culture of nationality, of being united during good times and bad. Nationalism...was not accepted by all the Kurds at the time.... Denialism was to make it formidably difficult.”<sup>368</sup> Some Kurds revolted and were quickly put down by the nationalists, as mentioned in earlier chapters. This violent squashing of opposition was later explained—and still is explained—to Turks as a “British provocation,” which

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<sup>366</sup> Turks, of course, knew of *religious* minorities, and that concept was well-understood, but *ethnic* divisions were not.

<sup>367</sup> Criss and Çetiner, 4-5.

<sup>368</sup> Criss and Çetiner, 4-5.

Taşpınar attributes to simplistic reductionism. According to him, it is a resistance to assimilation and centralization that constitutes the heart of the matter.<sup>369</sup> (Whether it was assimilation or mere integration that was asked of the Kurds is another hot topic in itself.)

Other Kurds stayed quietly determined, through multiple generations, to keep their identity as Kurd instead of Turk. Observations by journalist Stephen Kinzer, while dramatic, present a picture of the continuing separateness of identity. He records the translated words of an old man in Diyarbakır, a traditionally Kurdish city of southeast Turkey:

‘Even though it is dangerous for me to say this, I have been greatly oppressed in my lifetime,’ he told me as he leaned his chin on his wooden cane. ‘I have been tortured many times. One of my sons died after forty days of torture by the police. All of this has happened to me and to so many of us because we claim our rights. Kurds don’t even have minority rights in a region where we are the majority. But we have to keep demanding them. We can’t stop...Each generation produces a leader who fights for our rights.’

Sitting silently nearby, taking it all in, were a handful of earnest-looking teenagers. They are the new generation of Kurds, eagerly absorbing stories that fire their political commitment...I had the sense of a torch being passed. As long as Kurdish consciousness is nourished this way, no amount of military or political pressure applied by the Turkish authorities will be able to pacify these people.<sup>370</sup>

Smith’s assertion, mentioned in chapter 5, that there are very few actual nation-states, in the true sense of the term, is revealing. Turkey seems to fall in this category—hoping and assuming itself to be a true nation-state, with the political unit and borders of nationality perfectly overlapping—but it is not. It is heterogeneous. And yet, since the start of the republic, Kurds were not acknowledged. They were not treated poorly, but simply, in Turks’ minds, as equals—as fellow Turks. Taşpınar simplifies it in one

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<sup>369</sup> “*Mesele özünde asimilasyona ve merkezileştirmeye direnişten ibarettir.*” Ömer Taşpınar, “Kimlik Sorunlarımız Yine Depreşiyor,” *Radikal*, 14 May 2007.

<sup>370</sup> Kinzer, 109-110.

sentence: “*Kürt varlığını kabul etmeyen, laik bir ulus-devlet ortaya çıkmış.*” (A secular nation-state that does not accept the existence of Kurds came into the picture.)<sup>371</sup>

### 6.3.2 Turkish versus Western Views

Thus some Turks operate with the assumption of homogeneity, perhaps quite validly, for it is what they have always known and been taught, and their actions based on this assumption come to appear as repression of the Kurds—especially to Western eyes. But most Turks tend to see it as a matter of inclusion versus exclusion, and thus in their own eyes they are playing the “good guy” role of including the people of Kurdish origin in the privilege of being a Turk. Columnist İlnur Çevik recently wrote about the issue as it affects current events today, saying “We are against exclusion and we support inclusion. We believe in showing our Kurdish brothers and sisters that we see them as a part of us...”<sup>372</sup> In reality, there is generally *not* a sense of racism accompanied by forced assimilation, but a deeply felt fundamental belief that Kurds in Turkey *simply are* Turks.<sup>373</sup> It is not as black and white as the West, or Turkey for that matter, might think.

A good example to illustrate this is former President of Turkey, the late Turgut Özal. Easily one of Turkey’s most popular presidents, he was also a Kurd. If by being Kurdish, Özal was considered an outsider of a different race or nationality, he could hardly have been elected to lead Turkey. One of the primary characteristics of a sovereign nation is refusal to allow outsiders to be in leadership posts.<sup>374</sup> Thus, Özal was Turkish. He was Turk, but he was of Kurdish origin: a Turk and a Kurd. Not either/or,

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<sup>371</sup> Taşpınar, “Kimlik Sorunlarımız Yine Depreşiyor.”

<sup>372</sup> İlnur Çevik, “Inclusion of Kurds or Exclusion?” *The New Anatolian*, 11 May 2007.

<sup>373</sup> This is the majority viewpoint in Turkey. There are, however, plenty of extreme, and even not-so-extreme, exceptions. See İsmail Saymaz, “Dikkat Irkçı Var!: Türkiye’deki Bazı Dernekler Hitler’i Aratmıyor,” *Radikal*, 18 Feb 2007.

<sup>374</sup> Gellner, 6.



but both,<sup>375</sup> like being a Japanese American or Italian American. The problem is, some Kurds are not content to have “Turk” in their title, and some nationalistic Turks are not content with those same people keeping “Kurd” in their identity title.

As explained throughout this thesis, and relevant to the conflict-ridden issue at hand, Mustafa Kemal tried to make Turkey fit into a perfect nation-state. He intended for the political borders of the state to encase a group of people who all embraced Turkish nationality. The incentive for such congruence is powerful:

The nationalist principle requires that the political unit and the ‘ethnic’ one be congruent. In other words, given that ethnicity is basically defined in terms of shared cultures, it demands that everyone, or very nearly everyone, within the political unit be of the same culture, and that all those of the same culture be within the same political unit. Simply put: one culture, one state.<sup>376</sup>

Kemal’s efforts worked for the most part, through peaceful means and sometimes force. He attempted this—for better or for worse depending on one’s angle—by making “Turk” into a supra-ethnic, culturally and religiously based category. What results is an ethnically diverse but cultural-nationally homogenous (in theory) country, which worked since ethnicity as a separate category was not in their vocabulary.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> This idea of integrated Kurds in political roles of mainstream (i.e. non-Kurdish-specific) parties being sufficient to represent the Kurds is fiercely debated. Çevik explains: “So many people today say ‘exclusion’ for the Kurds should be the rule. They say the Kurds are already represented in the Parliament in the mainstream parties and thus have a strong voice. The Kurds counter by saying these are people who have fully integrated into the Turkish system and do not have any ethnic aspirations.” (İlnur Çevik, “Inclusion of Kurds or Exclusion?” Ibid.) Furthermore, “the ethnic situation in Turkey is not a clear division along a Turkish stratum versus the Kurds. If anything it is first and foremost a class struggle between the Kurds themselves.” (Criss and Çetiner, 6).

<sup>376</sup> Gellner, 45.

<sup>377</sup> However, as Gellner argues, in the mind of mankind culture is never completely separate from a genetic basis. “The fact that we are capable of ‘culture’ at all no doubt has a genetic precondition...The presence of ‘culture’, however, introduces a mode of transmission of traits or activities from generation to generation which is no longer dependent on being inscribed into the genetic constitution of the members of the group. This transmission completely changes the rules of the game: it allows incomparably greater diversity and incomparably faster change. It is only superficially paradoxical that this liberation from genetic constraint itself has a genetic base. A specific genetic base is required before culture is possible; once it is possible, it permits developments unconstrained by the usual rules of governing genetic change.” Gellner, 1-2.

On the opposite side, the findings of a European author writing as an observer about the republic shortly after its founding are incredibly revealing of the differing views of how it all happened:

From the national and religious point of view, Turkey had become an almost homogenous state. The Christian minorities hardly existed any longer...

Today there are neither Greeks nor Armenians left in Asia Minor; the only national minority still existing is composed of the Kurds, in number about 1,200,000. *Mustafa Kemal has made an effort to solve their problem by trying to make Turks of them.* He has pressed his action with cruel determination. In sanguinary fights his incomparably superior army has succeeded in quelling the repeated risings of the Kurds, who cherish their liberty; and for the time being their rebellious spirit has been broken. There was no room for national minorities in the Europeanized national state which Mustafa Kemal created, and none have been tolerated.<sup>378</sup>

Thus, Kemal's actions worked in theory, but problems resulted then, manifested in uprisings and revolts, and result even more in a world where today the definitions of nationality and ethnicity everywhere blur together, and where some of this country's constituents clearly place their ethnic identity over their national one. According to the "*Biz Kimiz?*" (Who are we?) series in the newspaper *Milliyet* in March 2007, only 39.2% of those who identified themselves as 'Kurd' in a survey said they feel they can live out their identity, however they define it personally, with freedom and peace. The rest said that in regard to living their identity, "there are some problems" (33.4%), "there are legal barriers" (22.7%), and "there are barriers from my environment" (4.7%).<sup>379</sup> In terms of a solution, today, "Kurdish nationalism can only be satisfied in a pluralistic society,"<sup>380</sup> but Turkey overall does not view itself as pluralistic or diverse.

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<sup>378</sup> Hans Kohn, "Ten Years of the Turkish Republic," *Foreign Affairs* 12 (Oct 1933) 145-6. (But then again, this is the age-old story of tribes and nomads' resistance to centralized states.)

<sup>379</sup> "Kimliği Yaşamak Tartışmalı," in the "*Biz Kimiz?*" series, *Milliyet*, 23 March 2007.

<sup>380</sup> Criss and Çetiner, 4.

In short, Turkey does not have homogeneity, but it *can* have unity. That unity must be pursued, however, apart from a desire for homogeneity. Nevertheless, what should be a drive for unity—a healthy goal—within this diversity gets interpreted by many as an unhealthy preservation of nationalism and drive for homogeneity—an unhealthy goal if it is not the reality. The West then views all this as human rights violations, and Turks look at the same situation as a valid threat of separatism. Whether each side is right or wrong is not clear, but what is clear is that a lack of understanding produces much violence and condemnation. This Kurdish issue is just one important area, but what is required is more general understanding, in both directions, beyond this issue.

#### **6.4 Reaching the American Political Machine**

If America's role in this, based on what has been argued, is to understand Turkey better, it follows that Turkey needs to take action as well. It could *help* America understand better, but it requires Turkey comprehending the U.S. politics and entering into the system, as has been starting to happen quite recently. This can be done through lobbying on American soil, or by a clearer message conveyed from Turkish soil.

##### **6.4.1 In America**

In the U.S., lobbying plays an extremely influential role in Washington. Some say Turks do not have the lobbying mentality. One small explanation might be that the concept itself is shady. The Turkish term for the verb 'to lobby' (*kulis yapmak*) is a combination of the word for 'backstage' and the verb 'to do'—so it is like 'to do backstage,' which sounds dubiously deceptive, not at all a neutral term. Meanwhile, the English homonym conveys the idea of openness and transparency, as the 'lobby' of a

building is open to everyone and not at all concealed. Some Turks are frustrated by the idea that successful lobbying is a *condition* to having a good relationship with America. It does not seem natural. Another explanation might be the Turkish attitude that it is the government's job to do government work, and not up to the average citizen to interfere. If interference is needed, the military will do it.

Turkey expert David Barchard emphasizes how much this hurts Turkey in the big picture. "The Turkish Diaspora, especially embassies abroad in the West, and Turkey itself aren't doing a good job of networking, spending money, hosting diplomats, bankers, politicians, and journalists," he explained to a mostly-Turkish student audience.<sup>381</sup> As recently as 2001, the Turkish Diaspora in America was generally considered scattered and unorganized:

Despite growing Turkish visibility in American society...the Turkish American population remains largely unknown and undocumented. Questions about their socio-economic status, their integration in American society, their relations with other groups, their organizations, the interest they have in Turkish American affairs, and most importantly, the roles they play in promoting Turkish culture and Turkish interests in the United States have not yet been examined.<sup>382</sup>

The Greeks and Armenians in America, by contrast, have long been doing a steady job of convening and lobbying, often to the detriment of Turkish-American relations.

A question puzzling many Turkish scholars is why the Turks, even after having realized the value of this political activity, do not lobby very effectively in America. Rather than any sort of purposeful policy choice, the lack of a thriving Turkish lobby is the result of natural circumstances. An in-depth article published in 2004 by Şuhnaz

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<sup>381</sup> David Barchard, "Analysis of Western European Attitudes Toward Turkey" (guest lecture at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, 2 May 2007).

<sup>382</sup> Birol Akgün, "The Turkish Diaspora in the United States and Its Role in Promoting Turkish-American Relations," *Türk Yılığ*, Ibid, 101.

Yılmaz entitled “Impact of Lobbies on Turkish-American Relations,” elaborates on the Turkish lobby, a “relative latecomer to the Washington lobbying scene”:

Due to the absence of a large Turkish-American community, the configuration of the Turkish lobby differs significantly from its Greek, Armenian, and Jewish counterparts. Because of its size, the Turkish community is at a highly disadvantageous position regarding its base of support and grass-roots action capabilities. The Turkish community numbers around 300,000-350,000 people. Unlike the Greek, Armenian and Jewish groups, who started immigrating to the US in large numbers at the turn of the twentieth century, most of the Turks are either first- or second-generation immigrants. The Turkish community mainly consists of middle-class and upper middle-class families. While attempting to join mainstream American society, most of the Turks try to maintain their Turkish identity, traditions, and culture. Religion is also a more private affair for the Muslim Turkish community, unlike the Greeks and Armenians, who, through their Christian identity, share an important common denominator with most of American society.<sup>383</sup>

One of the keywords here is “grass-roots,” which can be defined as “the identification, recruitment, and mobilization of constituent-based political strength capable of influencing political decisions.”<sup>384</sup> But in Turkey, “grass-roots democracy is not a tradition,” explained Criss. “We don’t have it in Turkey so we don’t know how to use it in the U.S. either,” added political science professor Aylin Güney.<sup>385</sup> In Turkey, political activism and volunteering tends to be limited to older ladies, not seen as a duty of individuals from a broad range of views.

The Armenian lobby, by contrast, “founded the Armenian Assembly of America as a grass-roots organization in 1972. It grades members of Congress on votes concerning Armenia.”<sup>386</sup> One of the chief goals of the Armenian lobby is to get Congress to pass a resolution officially labeling and condemning the event of 1915 as “genocide.” Greek

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<sup>383</sup> Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “Impact of Lobbies on Turkish-American Relations,” in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, eds. *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 195.

<sup>384</sup> Yılmaz, 182.

<sup>385</sup> Roundtable discussion, Bilkent University, May 2007.

<sup>386</sup> Kamer Kasım, “US Policy on Caspian Oil and Its Implications for Turkish-American Relations,” in Aydın and Erhan, *Ibid*, 143.

lobbies then center largely around conflicts with Turkey regarding the Aegean Sea and the island Cyprus, both of which are huge sore spots in the Turkish-Greek relationship.

Against all this, Turkey's government "might seek to develop a stronger proactive lobbying effort on its own behalf, advancing its case through educational or other outreach programmes aimed at members of the House and Senate."<sup>387</sup> While there is at least some effort at a Turkish lobby currently,<sup>388</sup> the fact remains that Greek and Armenian lobbies have had more success in producing results favorable to their causes.

#### 6.4.2 From Turkey

Barchard also asserts that the Turks must learn how to better court international opinion, such as making some of their placards in English when they have political demonstrations. That way, the foreign press can pick up on the message and it can be conveyed to the West. Write on your posters "No more veils and the right to drink wine!" or "We want freedom!" he suggests. "Turks need to improve their English terminology—you need to get into the mindset of him to whom you're trying to convey the message."<sup>389</sup> The American Embassy's Cultural Affairs Officer, Elizabeth McKay, said that Turkey "does not play its cards well, and it has a full deck to play." She echoed the idea that Americans are not favorable toward Turkey because Turks are not reaching American minds: "They don't tell their story well. They let others tell their story."<sup>390</sup> Barchard also conveyed the idea that thousands of protestors draped in Turkish flags (as has been the case at recent political demonstrations in Turkey's major cities) might look like a proud

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<sup>387</sup> Alistair D. Edgar, "The Shape of Things to Come? Defining US Foreign Policy on Turkey after 2001," in Aydın and Erhan, *Ibid*, 244.

<sup>388</sup> See Yılmaz's aforementioned article for details on various lobbies in America that affect the Turks, including the Turkish lobby itself.

<sup>389</sup> Barchard, "Analysis of Western European Attitudes Toward Turkey."

<sup>390</sup> Elizabeth McKay, (Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy in Ankara) in personal interview with the author, March 2007.

display of solidarity to Turks, but it looks frightfully nationalistic to the West, which does not always comprehend that by waving the flags and posters of Atatürk, a Turk is trying to convey a message of secularism and modernity.<sup>391</sup> The flag appears Islamic and many Westerners do not know Atatürk.

## 6.5 Promoting Understanding

A poster in various rooms of the main library at Bilkent University, the top private university in Turkey, reads “*Okumanın bittiği yerde şiddet başlar.*” (Where reading stops, violence starts.) A more appropriate phrase in the context of this paper might read: “Where understanding stops, hatred starts.” This section will provide some follow through on the understanding factor, including increased sensitivity, person-to-person contacts below the government level, scholarship in each country on the other, visits between the countries, and public relations efforts. In the end, both countries need to grow and mature in their perspectives in order to make headway.

### 6.5.1 A More Sensitive Approach

The idea that the U.S. does not *understand* Turkey is emphasized by American and Turkish authors alike. Criss writes of the “American government’s failures to *respect* Turkey’s own geo-political concerns and to *understand* how Turkey seeks to balance...” (emphasis added)<sup>392</sup> Taşpınar describes “Turkey’s identity dilemma” which has been overlooked by America and by Turkey because of the mask of the Cold War that

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<sup>391</sup> Barchard, “Analysis of Western European Attitudes Toward Turkey.”

<sup>392</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, “Turkish Perspectives of the United States of America,” in *What They Think of Us: International Perceptions of the United States and the War on Terrorism*, ed. David Farber (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

artificially bound them into an alliance of supposed like-minded ideology.<sup>393</sup> As a result, America did not understand Turkey from the outset of their relationship, and the identity dilemma “was neither addressed by nor carried onto the U.S. agenda during the Cold War years.”<sup>394</sup> In a passionate speech in 2003 to the Turkish-American Association, Akif Işık asserts that the U.S. *misunderstands* Turkey, and needs to adopt a more *caring* and *gentle* approach to its valuable ally. The bottom line of his diatribe was this: “The U.S. administration should be more sensitive towards Turkey’s security concerns,” otherwise Turkey will be forced to look elsewhere for international partnerships.<sup>395</sup>

In another published speech to the Turkish-American Association, this time by the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey in 2000, the concept of understanding is mentioned. Quite interestingly, in listing “three strong impressions” Westerners have of Turkey, the first one he notes is that “people understand Turkey’s importance to the region.”<sup>396</sup> Revealingly, the “understanding” mentioned by other authors was there, but not in the way they would hope for: some Americans understand Turkey’s *importance*, but do not understand *Turkey*. This is not helped by Turkish politicians’ pandering to the America’s geostrategic carrots. When Özal, for example, had a tendency to play back everything the U.S. State Department had offered, it appeared as though Turks not only agreed with all the characterizations, but maybe even came up with them on their own:

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<sup>393</sup> Other authors have remarked on this phenomenon as well. It existed not just in Turkey but in other alliances too during this bipolar stage. When there was a common, huge enemy, allies tended to forgo, overlook, or ignore other differences in order to unite against the big threat. Meltem Müftüler-Bac’s article makes this point too.

<sup>394</sup> Taşpınar, “The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey.”

<sup>395</sup> Akif Işık, “Feature [sic] of Turkish-American Relations: Friend or Foe.” (paper presented at the Turkish-American Association (TAA), Ankara, Turkey, 12 May 2003.

<sup>396</sup> Robert W. Pearson, “200 Years of Turkish-American Relations,” (keynote address by U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, at the opening session of the Conference on 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Turkish-American Relations, Ankara, Turkey, 6-8 November 2000), published in *Türk Yıllığı*, Ibid.



Turkey is a country situated in the extreme west of Asia and extreme south of Europe. Therefore, this country, geographically, constitutes an intersection of two socially and culturally different worlds. Turkish people have successfully compromised and integrated those differences in this society. So, Turkey is a *cultural bridge* between East and West. Turkey is also an economic bridge between the technology-rich West and oil-rich Mid-East and the developed North and developing South... this dual affiliation of Turkey is *an advantage especially for the Western countries*.<sup>397</sup> (emphasis added)

Özal clearly delivered such a message for the sake of America continuing to see Turkey as advantageous to itself. In short, the U.S. sees a Turkey that fits into crisp geostrategic metaphors and whose strategic and political importance will continue to grow. But does the U.S. see anything deeper?

This reality has been enormously problematic, and though it was recognized decades ago by more insightful individuals, their voices were apparently too small to be heard. “From the American perspective, the US must revise the assumptions that have guided its relations with Turkey since World War II,”<sup>398</sup> wrote Francis P. Butler, who was raised partially in Turkey and attended the Turkish War College. It is the experience of individuals like Butler—who have lived in Turkey and know more than what can be observed by mapping a game board on the globe—that is invaluable. In 1980 he wrote:

Two questions need to be resolved at this point. In view of the changed assumptions as discussed above, what will be Turkey’s actions and policies in the community of nations in the future? And what can the US do to guide its developing relationship with Turkey into policy as favorable as possible for itself? The order in which these questions are asked *does* make a difference: *No longer may the US ordain general policy and expect Turkish policy to conform*. Turkey intends to develop policy independent of US interests, an intention which must necessarily *alter the approach the US takes to its ally*.<sup>399</sup> (emphasis added)

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<sup>397</sup> Turgut Özal, “Interview: Turgut Özal: Bold Moves in Turkey,” in *Turkey: Time Honored Ally of America*, ed. Francis P. Butler and Ralph E. Ropp (Merrifield, VA: TPC Logistics Services Inc., 1985), 19.

<sup>398</sup> Francis P. Butler, “Reassessing Turkey: A Faithful Ally Disillusioned and In Trouble,” in *Turkey: Time Honored Ally of America*, ed. Francis P. Butler and Ralph E. Ropp (Merrifield, VA: TPC Logistics Services Inc., 1985), 27.

<sup>399</sup> Butler, 27.

Such prudence has gone unheeded in the decades since Butler wrote that.

### 6.5.2 Seeking Texture

In understanding all this, America can see where and how Turkey feels threatened by it. In the areas of sovereignty and nationhood, in Turkey's strong state tradition and its self-determinism, America appears to be interfering and encroaching. Its activities in Turkey's border states are unnerving, as evidenced in an outrageous but wildly popular recent novel that tells a shocking tale of America moving from Iraqi invasion to Turkish invasion, with greedy eyes set on Turkish boracite mines. *Metal Fırtına* (Metal Storm)<sup>400</sup> may have been sensational fiction, but Turks bought a half million copies, as it fits with the theme of the day that America is overstepping its bounds; any nation must fear that it *could be next*.

In the past five years, and especially after the March 2003 decision not to allow American troops to invade Iraq from Turkey's *İncirlik* base, it has been very fashionable to be anti-American in Turkey, especially among the youth.<sup>401</sup> To Turkish youth, America is somewhere between a menace and a threat, falling neatly into their political lessons on a "rogue state." In the midst of this, the strength of governmental ties appears quite feeble. "What can be done together to strengthen and enhance relations between our countries and our peoples?" the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, Ross Wilson, asked at a conference. He described the "Privatization of U.S.-Turkish relations," which means people-to-people contact among the two publics: universities, sister cities, and other real-

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<sup>400</sup> Orkun Uçar and Burak Turna, *Metal Fırtına*, (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2004).

<sup>401</sup> The growing youth population composes a vast percentage of the population in Turkey: 28 percent are between the ages of 10 and 24. (Population Reference Bureau).

life interactions. “There’s not enough texture there—private texture that provides balance when government-to-government relations hit some potholes and turbulence.”<sup>402</sup>

Unfortunately the texture that was once there has been lost. For decades, the texture was there in some small form. As mentioned above, Americans were present and overall well-liked and accepted in Turkey as missionaries, relief workers, educators, doctors, government specialists, and journalists throughout the waning years of the empire and the foundational years of the republic.<sup>403</sup> Turks were in America too. One Turkish girl wrote of her experiences, after a trip to America in the 1910s, in a novel *Unveiled: The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*:

Here in America lived a legend made of blood and thunder. The ‘Terrible Turk’ ruled the minds of the American. A huge person with fierce black eyes and bushy eyebrows, carrying daggers covered with blood. I did not fit into the legend of the ‘Terrible Turk’ so I was not one. In fact many people were disappointed to meet a real true Turk who turns out to be fair, meek and not very unlike an American.<sup>404</sup>

It often takes *real people* to dispel myths. Stories like this—which do not sound too unlike a role reversal of some of the experiences I have had as an American in Turkey today—prove that residents in each country know stereotypes and preconceptions and generalizations about people in the other, but do not really know their identity. They are surprised when they meet a citizen from that country who does not fit the identity mold in their minds. But the opportunity for meeting citizens is rare on both sides. The Turkish Diaspora in America is not making itself known, and Americans in Turkey, especially outside of the three major cities, are few and far between.

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<sup>402</sup> H.E. Ross Wilson, U.S. Ambassador to Turkey (lecture and roundtable discussion, Bilkent International Security and Strategy Seminars, Bilkent IR Dept., Bilkent Hotel, Ankara, Turkey, 28 February 2007).

<sup>403</sup> Reed, 102-109.

<sup>404</sup> Selma Ekrem. *Unveiled: The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, in Erhan, 95.

In comparison to today, many more Americans once lived in Turkey. From the start of Turkey's participation in NATO in 1952, there was heavy American presence, propaganda, and popularity in Turkey:

From the 1950s through the 1970s, Americans had wide access to the Turkish society by living among the Turks. Many middle class apartments in Ankara and Izmir had at least one American family resident. And even if the Turkish families could not speak English, their children were beginning to study it as a second language. Short of linguistic aptitude, the medium of reciprocal hospitality was the common language. Probably, similar informal contacts took place in Turkish provincial cities where several US bases were located.<sup>405</sup>

Now, however, "privatized" cultural relations are slim. Misunderstanding reigns, and not just on America's side. As Mark Parris, another former ambassador to Turkey, pointed out at a 2005 congressional hearing, the "first lesson is that this relationship, even less than most, does not run on auto pilot."<sup>406</sup>

### 6.5.3 Increased Scholarship and Dialogue

Turks and Americans have very different worldviews. Consequently, understanding occurs all too easily. One remedy might be more in-depth scholarship. "So long as intellectuals who work on Turkey don't know the language or the literature, how can anyone *really* understand Turkey?"<sup>407</sup> Finally, the scholarship in each country on the other one is inadequate. As stated above, Turks' main vein of learning about America is through popular culture and films (and a biased media). Everybody remembers the inflammatory issues—the "body blows"—but nobody studies these, with a determination to understand why they actually happened, and dig a little beneath the surface story that the media sensationalizes. "In this culture, critical thinking is not cultivated. People think

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<sup>405</sup> Criss, "Turkish Perspectives of the United States of America," 5.

<sup>406</sup> Mark Parris, speech during House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Ibid, 25.

<sup>407</sup> Criss, discussion.

they know America when they don't.”<sup>408</sup> Americans, as mentioned above, know very little, if anything, about Turkey. Turkish or Ottoman studies is no longer funded in the U.S. as it was in the past. Scholarship and government are too intertwined; federal funding for studies goes up and down depending on America's foreign policy priorities—like oil flow, terrorism, or Islamic extremism. “Even then, studies that result from fashionable topics are instrumental at best or message laden at worst.”<sup>409</sup>

The upper echelons of American public diplomacy in Turkey advocate learning and dialogue whole-heartedly. Nancy McEldowney, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, points out that to improve the image of America in Turkey, “the solution is not advertising. It's *understanding*, being prepared to enter into a dialogue. Be willing to overcome the idea that ‘If you disagree with me, you're not only wrong, but there's something *wrong* with you.’”<sup>410</sup> Ambassador Wilson talks about “confidence-building,” to put this into action. He advocates “getting our senior people together for meetings—meetings where people actually *listen* to what the others say, not just stuffy VIP meetings.”<sup>411</sup>

#### 6.5.4 Visits Between Countries

In the past, there were more U.S. citizens in Turkey: Erhan writes that American presence in Turkey in the early part of the twentieth century helped to dispel the “Terrible Turk” myth back home. American visitors in Turkey “provided an important outlet in publicizing Turkey in the US and means of promoting closer ties between the two

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<sup>408</sup> Criss, discussion.

<sup>409</sup> Nur Bilge Criss, review of *Turkish Studies in the United States*, by Donald Quataert and Sabri Sarayı, eds., *Turkish Studies* 5:2 (Summer 2004), 156.

<sup>410</sup> McEldowney, lecture, Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> Wilson, lecture and roundtable discussion, Ibid.

countries.”<sup>412</sup> Of course, the presence of Americans in Turkey or Turks in America could always have the potential to backfire. Turks are highly present in Europe, especially Germany, but that does not lead to German favorability toward Turks and Turkey overall. Additionally, the idea of sending people could be construed as imperialism, especially if coming from America. Even so, it is always dependent on whether the people sent are well liked and well received.

Ambassador Wilson heavily stresses this point of human exchange—“getting more Americans here”—and his embassy in Ankara promotes it as well. Statements on the website encourage Americans to come to Turkey for tourism, while the official programs bring Fulbright scholars and English teachers to all parts of Turkey. Still, Turkey is not high on Americans’ tourism list, and there is very little civilian-to-civilian contact. As for Turks visiting America, there is a much greater number going in that direction; in fact, there are an average of 12,000 Turks in America per year only as students, aside from tourism and visits to family/friends, and trips for other purposes. These Turks have a much greater understanding of America and its culture and identity, but they are not doing much to promote a positive view of America in Turkey, said the Cultural Affairs Officer Elizabeth McKay. We want them to speak up, she said. “They need to build an alumni organization.” McKay also said that the biggest division between Turks and Americans is “preconceptions—being uninformed about each other.” She said Americans are guilty of believing stereotypes and of a lack of awareness. “And both sides are guilty.”<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Erhan, 96.

<sup>413</sup> McKay, personal interview, Ibid.

Meanwhile, Turks have no incentive to build such an alumni group—if they do not have a trend of organizing and lobbying for their own country (in the U.S.) are they going to do it for another country? And even if they did, these embassy soft power and people power measures are a good tactic for trying to eradicate anti-Americanism as much as possible, but they will not harness political support in the long run.<sup>414</sup> American soft power/propaganda was a deliberate Cold War policy. It worked then but did not necessarily translate into longer-term political support. Oddly, what *does* seem to work is not “backstaging” or persuading, but personal visits and sincere emotional connection:

For example, the genuine affection of the Turkish people for Bill Clinton stems not from any policy decisions that he made in regard to Turkey when he was President but rather from the simple human act of picking up a Turkish baby and allowing it to play with his nose when he was visiting the region struck by the devastating 1999 earthquake.<sup>415</sup>

Turkey’s news stations have a tendency to replay powerful scenes for the Turks over and over again, entrenching coverage in the collective mind. If America better understood the Turkish mindset and culture, its current leaders could build bridges in this way.

## **6.6 Growth and Maturity**

Both countries need to grow and mature in this process. Americans, especially policymakers and diplomats, need to appreciate Turkey’s differing view, with an awareness of historical background. Turkey, on the other hand, needs to mature in valuing diversity, let Kemalism blossom and develop, and move away from conformity to past tradition if necessary. Atatürk didn’t intend for everything to remain the same and be set in stone, so Turkey needs to be able to grow and change beyond what he prescribed, just as he advocated. “Ataturk himself, an avid reformer and one of the greatest

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<sup>414</sup> Criss, discussion.

<sup>415</sup> Arnett, 35.

visionaries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, would surely resent his artificial image of stern ultra-conservative as crafted for him by contemporary nationalists.”<sup>416</sup>

The U.S., for its part, misses out on vital elements of nationhood and identity when it only considers a country strategically. In fact, a low understanding of identity taints strategic imperatives, with the result being that no one wins the day. Despite the constraints of *realpolitik* in international relations, the Turks have a high sensitivity to U.S. perceptions, and an emotion-ridden past experience. “The task of the United States is to be aware of such emotionalism in Turkey and to acknowledge it in ways that are positive and productive for both countries.”<sup>417</sup>

If both sides grow in these ways, they can meet in the middle, but if these impediments continue, anti-Americanism is going to grow in Turkey and both sides will be injured. America is going to continue to face an “unreliable geostrategic ally.” Although this terminology does not facilitate understanding, I recognize this is what top U.S. officials are ultimately seeking. America will continue to “lose” Turkey, as many analysts have described the situation. And Turkey, for its part, is going to be hindered in its Western ambitions—the entire front half of its identity as put forth by Atatürk and depicted in the horse analogy. Modernization and civilization in the Western direction require that Turkey is understood in the West. But in the West’s perception, currently, one of *Sakarya*’s hind legs, homogeneity, is unfortunately impeding its front, forward-moving legs.

Creatures that live must change and grow. Movement and blood flow, not stagnancy, characterize a living animal. As body parts and environmental circumstances

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<sup>416</sup> Arnett, 35.

<sup>417</sup> Arnett, 35.



change, it must adapt. Organisms either grow or die; they cannot remain the same. As a tree grows, it changes shape and appearance, but it is still the same tree. This is also true for a horse. Blossoming, adaptation, and growth are positive actions.

Creatures that live are also complicated. They have intricate systems with complex functioning. Biologists seek to understand these systems. They study, investigate, diagram, and explain these organisms to the rest of us. Could we benefit from “nation biologists,” armed with the task of dissecting national identity, in order to promote foreign relations? It is not a pure, natural science, but perhaps country leaders and decisionmakers could profit from a separate science for the strange animal of the nation.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

“No major country in the Middle East has been less studied by American scholars or more ignored by the American media,” commented Alvin Z. Rubenstein of the University of Pennsylvania, referring to U.S. ignorance of Turkey. “Turkey is simply the most important country in the Middle East,” he added.<sup>418</sup>

With that, I peeled away the film of geopolitical strategy and embarked on a study of Turkish identity. Trying to pin down a nation’s identity is virtually impossible, but in studying it, valuable lessons can be learned. This thesis has covered a broad and often unwieldy topic, but has developed a model and some conclusions to promote understanding.

#### 7.1 Theoretical Additions

I developed a conceptual framework for understanding Turkish identity in a metaphorical way. The horse figure, *Sakarya*, developed in this thesis attempts to take the hazy notion of Turkish identity and simplify it into a comprehensible model. This model

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<sup>418</sup> Patricia Carley, “Turkey’s Role in the Middle East: A Conference Report,” (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1995), 2.

is largely based on the identity as Atatürk defined it 80 years ago, but the Turkish people's fierce and continued devotion to this leader and his principles and directives means the model is still relevant, and applicable to today. However, it might need to change in the near future, as Turkey tries to adopt the norms of the European Union and globalization, both of which are presenting problems for the back half of the *Sakarya* model, particularly the hind leg of homogeneity.

Additionally, I add the state character into the model of national identity. If Turkey's national identity, and thus the nation itself, is represented by the horse, then the horse is being led by the state—its institutions, laws, military, and international role. It is the state that governs the people of the nation, and the state that represents them in an international system. It is the task of the state (or jockey) to lead the nation (or horse) successfully.

## **7.2 Findings**

### **7.2.1 State versus National Identity**

A first conclusion reached through the course of this paper is the significant state-nation disconnect. A recent political cartoon depicts Prime Minister Erdoğan running forward full-force with his arms wrapped around an EU flag, as if about to finish a race. In the next block, he runs smack into what looks like a soft wall, causing him to drop the flag and smash his face. In the third block, we see what he has struck: two huge feet (shown only up to the ankles) are planted on the ground, with the label “silent majority” (*sessiz çoğunluk*) written on the side of them. What looks at first glance like a scar on the tip of the left big toe is actually a miniscule Erdoğan who has just run into it.<sup>419</sup> See

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<sup>419</sup> Emre Ulaş, “Cilalı Taş Devri,” *Radikal*, 3 May 2007.

Appendix C. He is being criticized by the cartoonist for rushing ahead blindly, almost unthinkingly, while a gigantic silent majority opposes him.

However, on the same token, the leadership cannot just cater to the will of the people, as Ömer Taşpınar emphasizes in his discussion. He offers policy suggestions for Turkey to steer away from enmity with the U.S., but adds that the current administration “is unlikely to pursue such initiatives because of its preoccupation with Turkish public opinion.”<sup>420</sup> Zeyno Baran, also based in Washington, D.C., makes a similar comment: “For their part, the Turkish leadership and influential opinion makers need to be more responsible and lead their people, rather than themselves being led by populism. If they believe in the United States-Turkish partnership, they need to nurture this partnership and defend it.”<sup>421</sup> This goes in accordance with the idea that the dog should not be walking its owner. A leader should know the pulse of the public, but not be controlled by it. It is fair to say that this is a tough balancing act for the jockey, and few nations’ leaders get it quite right. Taşpınar too refers to the jockey’s job: “Of course, a successful foreign policy would desire the backing of the Turkish public. However, real leadership entails the *ability to steer the population in the right direction*” (emphasis added).<sup>422</sup>

Turkey scholar Henri J. Barkey makes this same point, but pits it as government versus establishment, with a crisis and lack of trust between them: “...there is a serious crisis between, shall we say, the Turkish establishment and the current government. The establishment doesn’t trust the government and the government doesn’t trust the

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<sup>420</sup> Taşpınar, “The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey.”

<sup>421</sup> Baran (statement during House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Ibid), 8.

<sup>422</sup> Taşpınar, “The Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey.”

establishment.”<sup>423</sup> If one considers the government as representing the state,<sup>424</sup> and the “establishment” as representing the people or nation, then this comment rings familiar.

### 7.2.2 Geostrategy Not the Answer

One of the clearest findings is that deeper answers do not lie in the field of geographic strategy. Ian O. Lesser’s most recent article, while presenting a turnaround from his former geographical emphasis on Turkey, still suggests that we take “steps that could bolster damaged perceptions on both sides and help to restore the strategic character of the relationship.”<sup>425</sup> This first half of this phrase is heading in the right direction; the second half is lacking. The character of the relationship has always been “strategic”—the problem is that it has never made it much deeper. I argue that instead of restoring the “strategic character” of the relationship, we see it as an issue not of strategic character, but of a deeper problem of identity. A relationship based on strategy was too shallow. It masked real problems,<sup>426</sup> and it keeps the thinking narrow and outdated—hindering understanding and creativity in problem solving.

In a hearing before the U.S. Congress, Barkey seems more in-line with this new thinking: “...despite the overused ‘strategic relationship’ expression, the U.S. and Turkey have never managed to deepen their friendship beyond certain limits... The U.S. has not had with Turkey the same cultural, normative and historical bonds that it has with many European countries.”<sup>427</sup> A distancing from Cold War strategic lingo will help each nation not only better understand the other, but also understand their own *changing* identities.

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<sup>423</sup> Barkey (statement during House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Ibid), 13.

<sup>424</sup> But sometimes rather than representing the state, the government may represent the *umma*—the Sunni religious community. This is continually an issue in Turkey.

<sup>425</sup> Lesser, 92.

<sup>426</sup> Lesser himself remarks on this earlier in the same article.

<sup>427</sup> Henri J. Barkey (statement during House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Ibid), 16.

World patterns are shifting and unstable, and Turkey especially is going through great pains of identity searching in its continued march toward westernization.

In America, a post-Cold War triumphalism and sudden unipolarity has produced a nation unsure of how to handle its world leadership role. Some U.S. leaders expect the same Cold War alliances and faithfulness from NATO members. Thus on 1 March 2003, many in America were shocked when Turkey's Parliament voted against opening its land for U.S. use in the war in Iraq. But this is the fruit of democracy being cultivated in Turkey; Turks, as represented by their parliament, will make their own decisions, even if they contrast with U.S. plans.

Strategists, scholars, and policymakers who grew up under Cold War tutorial are often uncomfortable with such shifts in imperatives requiring attention, and particularly the need to study topics like identity when they expect good strategy to be sufficient. It is especially surprising with Turkey, where even the military, which once bore the American-Turkish relationship on its back, is no longer so pro-American. The expectations from the U.S. are met with disappointment. "They're looking for things that are no longer there."<sup>428</sup> Later in the same aforementioned House hearing, Rep. Thaddeus McCotter added this to what the various Turkey experts had said:

So it would seem to me that much of the problem that we are facing is the nature of a transforming relationship with the additions of new partners on each side, and I don't know that you can find *one single way* to address that relationship, if, as the Prime Minister has pointed out, this is a mature and positive relationship. I think you would have to proceed from that premise that this is *not the Cold War relationship* that we had in the past.<sup>429</sup> (emphasis added)

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<sup>428</sup> Criss, discussion, 8 May 2007.

<sup>429</sup> Thaddeus G. McCotter (comments during House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Ibid), 35.

In this vein, Nancy McEldowney, last year, emphasized the use of “soft power” in the relationship, whereas in her student days, “I was ignoring that and counting nuclear weapons.”<sup>430</sup> New forms of approach, and therefore study, have developed.

It must be added that some officials in the U.S. government are taking steps toward understanding Turkish identity. Insightful strategists have stopped focusing on simplistic Cold War analogies and moved to the realm of caring about Turks’ international frustration, humiliation, and—most of all—identity:

The volatility of debate has given rise to and coincided with an undercurrent of popular nationalism, frustration with Europe, and even anti-Americanism. One cause of these trends is Turkish citizens’ frustration with PKK terrorism from Iraq, and a popular belief that the United States could do more to combat the PKK terrorists, whom Turks view as the greatest threat to their national security. Another cause is the identity crisis dominating Turkish society as Turkey strives for admission in the European Union. Many Turks feel humiliated by what they perceive as the shifting of accession requirements by the EU...<sup>431</sup>

Clearly, feelings and frustrations get stirred into the current political events, mixing identity with politics and policy. Analyses like these are hopeful in terms of getting to deeper levels of truth, but it still remains unclear whether such ideas as Turkish identity factors are really reaching decision makers and influencing policy. It is also unclear how (and if) the Turks, nation and state together, will handle the humiliation from the EU and pave their own way—to Europe or elsewhere.

### 7.2.3 The Turkish People

It would also be safe to say, as another conclusion from the research for this paper, that the previous incentives behind the U.S.-Turkish friendship have led us astray.

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<sup>430</sup> McEldowney, lecture, Ibid. In fact, soft power was always there—it was a Cold War policy of the U.S. in Turkey, and it worked then, although soft power does not translate into political support.

<sup>431</sup> Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, “U.S.-Turkish Relations and the Challenges Ahead,” Testimony Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Europe. Washington, D.C. (15 March 2007) <<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/81761.htm>>.

Kirişçi cites former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott as saying in 1998 that the two “driving forces” behind the U.S.-Turkey alliance were: 1) values central to the United States, and 2) the importance of Turkey’s strategic location.<sup>432</sup> Where, in the midst of these two, is an understanding of *Turkish* values? Is it irrelevant? The Turks end up being known only for their strategic position, when they would like to be known for more than that. Even when discussing “Turkey’s critically important contribution to Western defense and to United States security,” former ambassador to the U.S. Şükrü Elekdağ said that Turkey’s contribution “stems from three elements: Turkey’s strategic and military value; her political commitment; and the moral fiber and strength of the Turkish people.”<sup>433</sup> This last element is important. The first one is of course always mentioned in the U.S.-Turkey political dialogue, and the second often accompanies it, with Turkey being upheld for its democratic pursuit, but the third is often overlooked. “The Turkish people” (i.e. the Turks’ identity) themselves hardly appear on the radar. By contrast, the American people often enter into America’s image and role, as evidenced by President Bush’s frequent references to “the American people” in his speeches.

#### 7.2.4 Influence but *not* Interference

Turks clearly, as another conclusion, want to be known for something in the world. Like any other nation, they desire a reputation and influence abroad, something bigger and deeper than geostrategic necessity for others’ pursuits. “Turkey oscillates between feelings of insecurity about its waning influence in global politics and a sense of strategic indispensability,” Baran explained to Congress.<sup>434</sup> This stems from Atatürk’s

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<sup>432</sup> Kirişçi, “U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership,” 138.

<sup>433</sup> Elekdağ, 39.

<sup>434</sup> Baran, (statement during House Subcommittee, *The State of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Ibid), 10.



vision for Turkey. Alongside the obvious benefits of civilization and modernization for Turkey internally was Atatürk's thirst for international recognition for Turkey. His rhetoric called for a Turkey that contributed to the betterment of the world. In 1930 he told Turks, "Our nationalism, within the contemporary world and as an important part of it, is aimed at the development of the world and to make people live in wealth and happiness."<sup>435</sup> Recognition was also important in the sense that the more it was received from the international community, the more the sovereignty and boundaries of the new republic would be secure as it was still trying to make its way in the world.

In this vein of recognition and influence internationally, what Turkey seems to want to be known for in the world today is a willingness to help peace operations, and even balanced and faithful sacrifice for the cause of good, but *not* interference in the sovereign rights of another country. Their contributions can be seen in the UN operation in Somalia, the NATO sanctions during the war in Yugoslavia, and the UN peacekeeping force in Bosnia. Their stabilizing role in the Balkans is evidenced by participation in NATO exercises on the Albanian-Serbian border, and then eventually an active role in NATO's intervention against the Serbian army in Kosovo, followed by troops to assist refugees and peacekeeping.<sup>436</sup> In the end, this was good for the U.S., but also for Turkey in that "its military presence in such humanitarian and peacekeeping operations has helped allay some exaggerated fears of Turkey, particularly in the Balkans."<sup>437</sup>

However, in all of this, Turks clearly also want to be known for always respecting territorial integrity and not meddling in the domestic affairs of another sovereign nation,

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<sup>435</sup> Armaoğlu, 44-45.

<sup>436</sup> İlhan Uzgel, "The Balkans: Turkey's Stabilizing Role," and Kemal Kirişçi, "U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership," both in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, ed. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi, Ibid, 49-70, 129-150.

<sup>437</sup> Kirişçi, "U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership," 137.

with the same respect they would expect for their own country: “Further, Turkish officials are very much against interference in the internal affairs or territorial integrity of Iraq or Iran. In principle such non-interference is a well-established norm of Turkish foreign policy, and this tradition also heightens Turkish decisionmakers’ discomfort over U.S. policy toward northern Iraq and the support for the Iraqi opposition.”<sup>438</sup>

#### 7.2.5 Sovereign Pride

Additionally, a related conclusion is that what Turks exactly do not want to be known for are some of the major themes that have sprouted in the America-Turkish relationship. There was already—from the tail of the Ottoman past—a historical insecurity about international vulnerability or abandonment, which the U.S. has only served to exacerbate. There are also fears of allying too closely, leading to the psychological frustration of over-dependence and to the anxiety of a lack of reciprocation. During the early years of the Cold War, there was a phrase in Turkey, “*Allah vermezse, Amerika verir*” (“If God does not provide, America will.”) Later on, Turks learned this was not true; the U.S. was not able or even willing to give them everything. At times the reality of this felt like a slap in the face to Turks. These are all major themes, summed up well in Francis P. Butler’s opening lines of his essay “Reassessing Turkey: A Faithful Ally Disillusioned and in Trouble”:

To assess the relationship between Turkey and the United States, one must deal in perceptions. It has been Turkey’s contention since the mid-1960s that the US has employed a paternalistic and *condescending* attitude in relations with its NATO ally. To the policymakers in Turkey, this perception further means that American decisionmakers feel that Turkey’s need for close ties is far greater than that of the US. Actions by the US have increasingly been perceived as those of a tolerant

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<sup>438</sup> Kirişçi, “U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership,” 141.

master who feels justified in *bullying* a dependent that reaps most of the benefits of the relationship.<sup>439</sup> (emphasis added)

These words still hold true today, evidenced by the attitudes surrounding 1 March 2003 and 4 July 2003. The response from America to the March 1 vote of Parliament was harsh, even “condescending.” Then on July 4, when American troops mistakenly captured and “hooded” Turkish troops near the Iraqi border, “bullying” would be a good word to describe how the Turks felt they were treated, even humiliated, by their ally. “Many Turks saw this episode—in which the Turkish troops were disarmed, hooded, and detained—as a deliberate provocation and a clear sign that Washington favored Iraqi Kurds over a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally... More than a year later, the Turkish military remains furious about this episode.”<sup>440</sup> This event has become infamous in Turkey, known simply and treacherously as *Çuval Olayı* (Hood Event).

Rather than serving as a “tool of U.S. policy”<sup>441</sup> or a “pawn of the West”<sup>442</sup> or a “client” of America,<sup>443</sup> in the Middle East or any other region, and rather than being regarded in terms of servility, submission, or dependence, Turkey wants to be known for its *own* contribution to the world, of its own will and sovereign choice. Turks are heirs of a great empire, and while they have no imperialistic designs, they do have a certain natural pride that is inherent from the glory days of the past.

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<sup>439</sup> Butler, “Reassessing Turkey: A Faithful Ally Disillusioned and In Trouble,” 23.

<sup>440</sup> Soner Çağaptay, “Where Goes the U.S.-Turkish Relationship?” *Middle East Quarterly* 11:4 (Fall 2004).

<sup>441</sup> “...although Turkish decisionmakers have become increasingly concerned about Iraq’s weapons capabilities, they are generally opposed to using force against Iraq. In this regard, public opinion plays a very important role and there is great reluctance to be seen as a toll of U.S. policy in the region...” (Kirişçi, “U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership,” 141).

<sup>442</sup> “In its Middle Eastern relations Turkey was looked upon by the Arabs as a pawn of the West” (Mustafa Aydın, “Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Changing Patterns and Conjunctures during the Cold War,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 36:1 (January 2000) 113).

<sup>443</sup> “The Turkish public was also offended by the idea that the US treated Turkey as a client whose interests were negotiable.” (Aydın, 123)

## 7.3 Practical Applications

### 7.3.1 In the United States

The national identity of Turkey—or the model horse *Sakarya*—is made up of parts that the U.S., and the West, do not understand. They pulled that horse on their team at a time of dire need, at the start of the Cold War, but did so without knowing the horse fully, and with a false assumption that Turkey therefore fit neatly into their Western views and attitudes. The horse’s face pointed toward that West, and that was enough. And its two front legs of modernization and civilization made it seem advanced and in-line with what the West would expect in an ally.

What the U.S. did not see was the rest of the body, the tail, and especially the back legs. These influence the horse’s functioning just as much as the front half, but the U.S., and West in general, do not really see and understand them, so it causes confusion when this “modern” and “civilized” nation does not behave according to Western norms and expectations. The West, misunderstanding this and other aspects of Turkish identity, often treats Turkey in a way perceived as that of a child in need of discipline. The Turks resent this, and, more every day, resent America especially.

If the U.S. is going to halt this tide of anti-Americanism flowing widely in the streets and *sokaks* of former good friend, the first step is an effort at understanding. Turkish studies in America need more attention and funding—and not just at critical strategic moments. Average Americans are often concerned about travel to Turkey—they need to know it is not a danger zone, not a “conflict area” where they are going to get caught in a war. The State Department’s official stance may be that Turkey is grouped in Europe, but the typical American thinks of it as “Middle Eastern.” Additionally, it seems

unfortunate that often times when Turkey is addressed in the news, it is accompanied by the phrase “an important NATO ally,” as if readers consistently need to be reminded that in the official U.S. view, the Turks are “good guys.”<sup>444</sup> European countries do not get the same NATO ally label in daily articles, but Turkey remains murky in the American collective consciousness.

Lastly, knowledge of the “importance” of being a NATO ally is becoming stale information. Despite continued activity, NATO is not as important as it once was in the international community. Instead, the U.S. should be wondering about the “importance” of the Turkish people, and their long-standing pro-American attitude that is slowly fading. Turkey’s geographic location will always be there, but not the heart of its people with the West. Turkey and America might always stay “married,” as alluded to in the introduction, but life can be wretched in a marriage of two people who only stay together for “strategic necessity.”

### 7.3.2 In Turkey

Turks, for their part, are responsible for misunderstanding too. They could help America understand their country’s point of view better, and could seek to actually learn and understand the U.S. instead of just condemning it. Helping the U.S. might be in the form of organizing in Washington to lobby or just make their presence known. The Turkish American Association<sup>445</sup> is doing this now, but the anti-Turkish Greek-Americans and Armenian-Americans have been doing it much longer and more

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<sup>444</sup> I was struck by this reality while casually reading a recent *Newsweek* article about the lead-up to the French elections. The line said, “Washington supports the bid by Turkey, an important NATO ally, to join the European Union. I realized how frequently this qualifier is added before or after the mention of Turkey in mainstream U.S. articles. (Christopher Dickey, “Sarko, the American?” *Newsweek* (19 March 2007), 28).

<sup>445</sup> See: <<http://www.ataa.org/>>.

effectively. Turks in America could also write articles, editorials, or other short pieces to get out into the mainstream media and make their point-of-view known accurately. As Mustafa Kibaroğlu remarks,

The pool of publications pertaining to Turkey's relations with its neighbors and the great powers has recently grown with the inclusion of new books, journal articles and media pieces. Nevertheless, it is hard to say with confidence that all of them are worth reading, let alone using them in academic research as valuable sources of reference, due to the simple fact that, some of them really do seem to have been written by people who have never even set foot in Turkey. Thus, credible material that can be found regarding Turkey's attitude vis-à-vis other nations and their foreign policy behaviors are not plentiful, especially at a time when there is growing need for timely and accurate information.<sup>446</sup>

Turkish-Americans could help resolve this by proactively getting their views into the popular press. The freedom of expression and freedom of press in America can be an asset to them.

Back in Turkey, students especially need to take a deeper, more intelligent look into America, and learn about it not from just popular novels, television series, and movies that villainize it. Anyone can condemn without really knowing much, but it takes more effort to understand.

Turkey also needs to open up, to be receptive to growth and change, as mentioned at the end of chapter 6, though it may be painful. The condemnation of critical thinking is only self-injurious in the long run. The recent suspension of a professor at Ankara's Gazi University for criticizing Atatürk's legacy is not suitable for a growing, maturing country. "News reports said the professor was suspended after he referred to the late soldier-statesman as 'that man,' criticized the statues and pictures of Ataturk that adorn government offices and schools, and said an era of one-party rule under Ataturk had led

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<sup>446</sup> Mustafa Kibaroğlu, review of *Turkish Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Changing Role in World Politics*, by Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın, eds., *Turkish Studies* 5:2 (Summer 2004), 154.

to ‘regression rather than progress.’”<sup>447</sup> This kind of comment was apparently incompatible with the university’s goals. The president of the university commented that “a professor ‘does not have to like Atatürk but I cannot allow a person who is opposed to the Republic’s main principles to educate students.’”<sup>448</sup> Even if the whole country is not ready for it, universities, in particular, must be places for freedom of expression.

In a book review, Bilgin refers to a view that the moment of “identity crisis” is one of “opportunity for policy-makers to reinscribe the state identity in line with changing perceptions of national interest.”<sup>449</sup> Turkey must take this chance to do exactly that: get the jockey to effectively lead the horse. Picture the state and nation as a jockey and horse currently struggling through a rocky mountain pass. Winds and rains are blowing in both directions, sharp rocks poke up from the ground, and the compass is broken. It becomes more vital than ever for the jockey to be in-tune with the horse, to be paying attention to its well being and make sure it is not tripping on stones, or in dire need of food, or being bitten by a snake. If the jockey only looks ahead—even if the landmark ahead is the European Union—he will miss out on the needs of the horse. He might even arrive at the landmark only to find the horse is not behind him anymore.

Both the state and the nation have the same goal in the end: to uplift their country and make it a prosperous place, both domestically and on the world stage. They are now at a critical juncture, with the needs and desires of the nation changing rapidly in the face of world events. It is up to the state to lead well, with gentleness and firmness, through the storm.

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<sup>447</sup> “Turkish Professor Suspended for Criticizing Atatürk’s Cult,” *The Associated Press* in the *International Herald Tribune*, 4 December 2006, Europe section.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> Pinar Bilgin, review of *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*,” by Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Studies* 5:2 (Summer 2004) 153.

## 7.4 Future study

If I had more time to work, or if another scholar were to pick up with this study after me, I would recommend more extensive interviewing and polling among Turks across the country. More than halfway through my studies, I found in the newspaper *Milliyet* a comprehensive identity survey that largely supplemented and confirmed some of my own conclusions about the Turkish people overall.<sup>450</sup> (See Appendix D.) Also, at the very end of my studies, I came across the results of a survey conducted in 2000 by a Fulbright scholar and professor at Ankara's Middle East Technical University, analyzing international relations students' knowledge and attitudes about the United States.<sup>451</sup> Lastly, a Fulbright fellow's 2005-06 study on the "youth perspectives" on politics in Turkey, obtained by interviewing and polling university students, reveals more about the perceptions and identities of the coming generations of Turkish leaders.<sup>452</sup> This study produced expected results, and could have gone further by really probing Turks' ideas about the Turkish-American relationship.

I recommend a deeper analysis of all these survey results and traveling around Turkey to follow up with interviews and questioning of youth specifically on the issue of America, so as to obtain more hard answers, to move further from the theoretical realm and published ideas, and into the real-life groundwork. These would need to be done in Turkish, as it is difficult to get real, personal, identity-related answers outside of one's native tongue. Additionally, interviews around Turkey would supplement what is missed

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<sup>450</sup> "Biz Kimiz?" A five-day series by *Milliyet*. 19 March – 23 March 2007.

<sup>451</sup> Ann Kelleher, Özlen Küncek, and Sevilay Kharaman, "Turkish Student Attitudes about the United States: Results from a Survey of 112 International Relations Majors at Two Universities in Ankara," *International Studies Perspectives* 4:3 (August 2003), 250-64.

<sup>452</sup> Jinnyn D. Jacob, "Conflicting Voices: a Study of Youth Perspectives on Contemporary Turkish Politics," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 5:4 (Winter 2006), <[http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi\\_turkey\\_tpq\\_id\\_81.pdf](http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_id_81.pdf)>.



in mere polling. The extent to which identity influences opinion, (and in turn, policy), lies beneath the numerical figures of poll results. Polls or surveys often contain emotional reactions and spontaneous answers to yes/no questions, but interviews provide deeper layers of understanding, a window into one's thought processes.

Another question is to what extent the public is influenced by various sources in forming opinions. Do so many people hate America because of what they see in the movies and television series that villainizes it? Do they react to what they hear from politicians? Do they learn it from the press? Are they influenced by their peers? How many actually feel threatened by America in their everyday lives, and how many just say it is a threat because that is what they are told? And this especially interests me: how many, outside of the big cities, have ever *met an American*? Equally interesting, how many Americans have ever *met a Turk*?

Lastly, there was not enough space or time to address specifically what the Turkish government can or should *do* to effectively attend to the horse. This involves politics and policy recommendations beyond the scope of this paper, but is a relevant question regarding the metaphorical model and the corresponding state-nation disconnect.

## 7.5 Closing Remarks

In an article written by a German ten years after the founding of the Republic of Turkey, the author takes a lighthearted, exploratory view of the new country, comparing Kemal's reforms and new delivery of identity to the sudden and fantastic opening of windows in a stuffy room, letting in fresh air and sunlight for all the Turks.<sup>453</sup> Thinking about this metaphor, it finally hit me—why are we all so eager to come up with

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<sup>453</sup> Hans Kohn, "Ten Years of the Turkish Republic," *Foreign Affairs* 12 (October 1933) 148.

metaphors and analogies for Turkey? Westerners do it, but Turks do it too. Çağaptay referred to Turkey as being like Russian nesting dolls. The 2006 award-winning essay by Yanık, which similarly denounced “clichéd metaphors” from the Cold War era, also mentioned that Turkey could potentially play a “broker role” between the U.S. and the Middle East. A Turkish friend told me just as I was writing this last chapter that she and her nation are so identity-confused that it is as though Turkey is perpetually stuck as a confused teenager.<sup>454</sup>

Why the metaphors? There was once a formula in Turkey to describe this problem: *nev-i şahsına münhasır*, meaning that Turkey only looks like itself and resembles no one else. How appropriate: Turkey’s identity in the world and even in itself seems a bit of a mystery to all who attempt to tackle it. It follows that because Turkey is so complicated, we need metaphors to simplify matters, helping us to grasp something that might otherwise elude us. They serve as a point of desperate clarity as the world, and Turks themselves, try to grapple with the unplaceable, indefinable, misunderstood, and definitely over-simplified Republic of Turkey.

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10 Cotton-field in Valley of Meander near Ephesus, Western Anatolia

11 Turkish shepherd tending village flock of sheep and Angora goats, near Akshehir, Central Anatolia

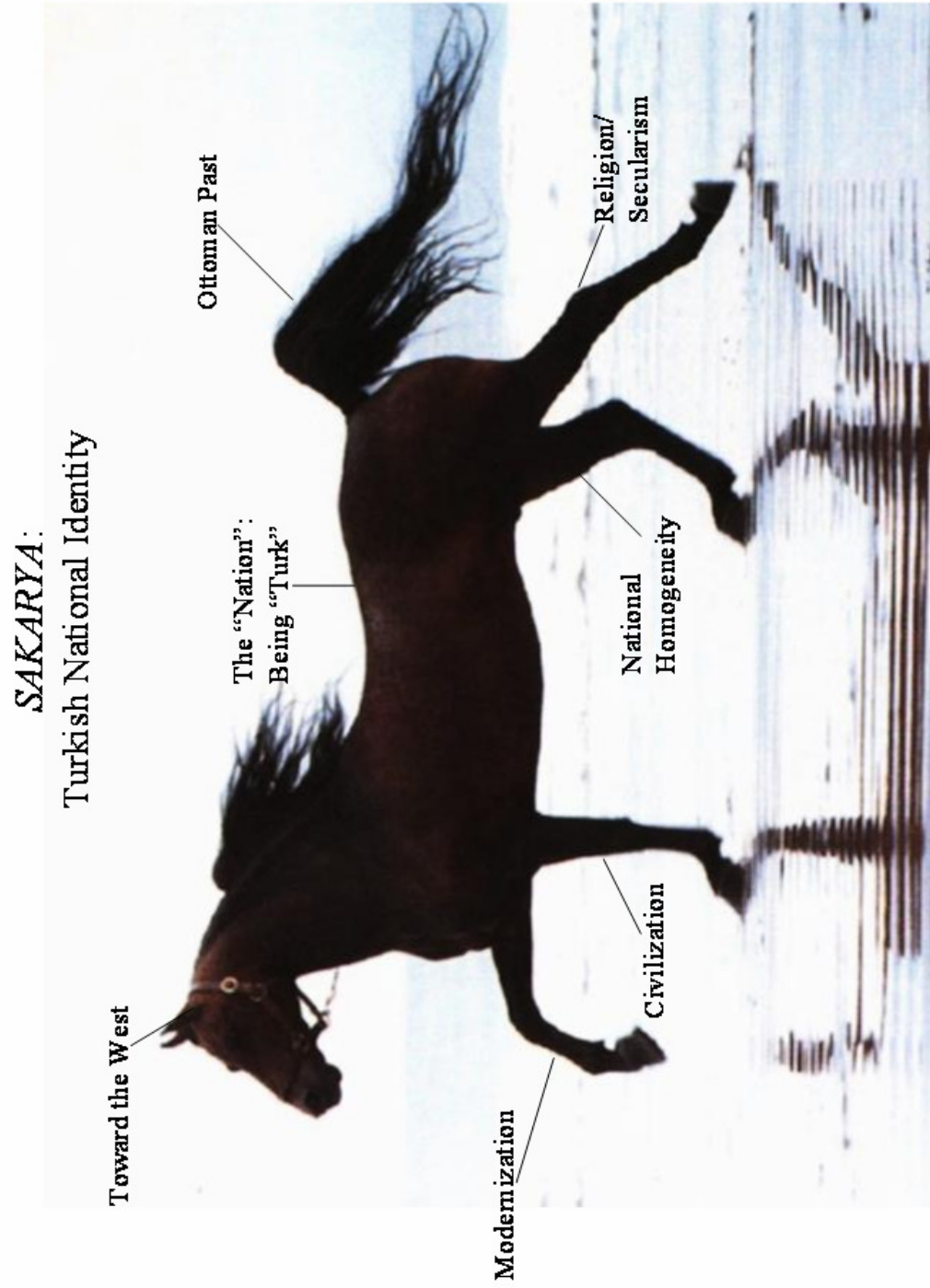


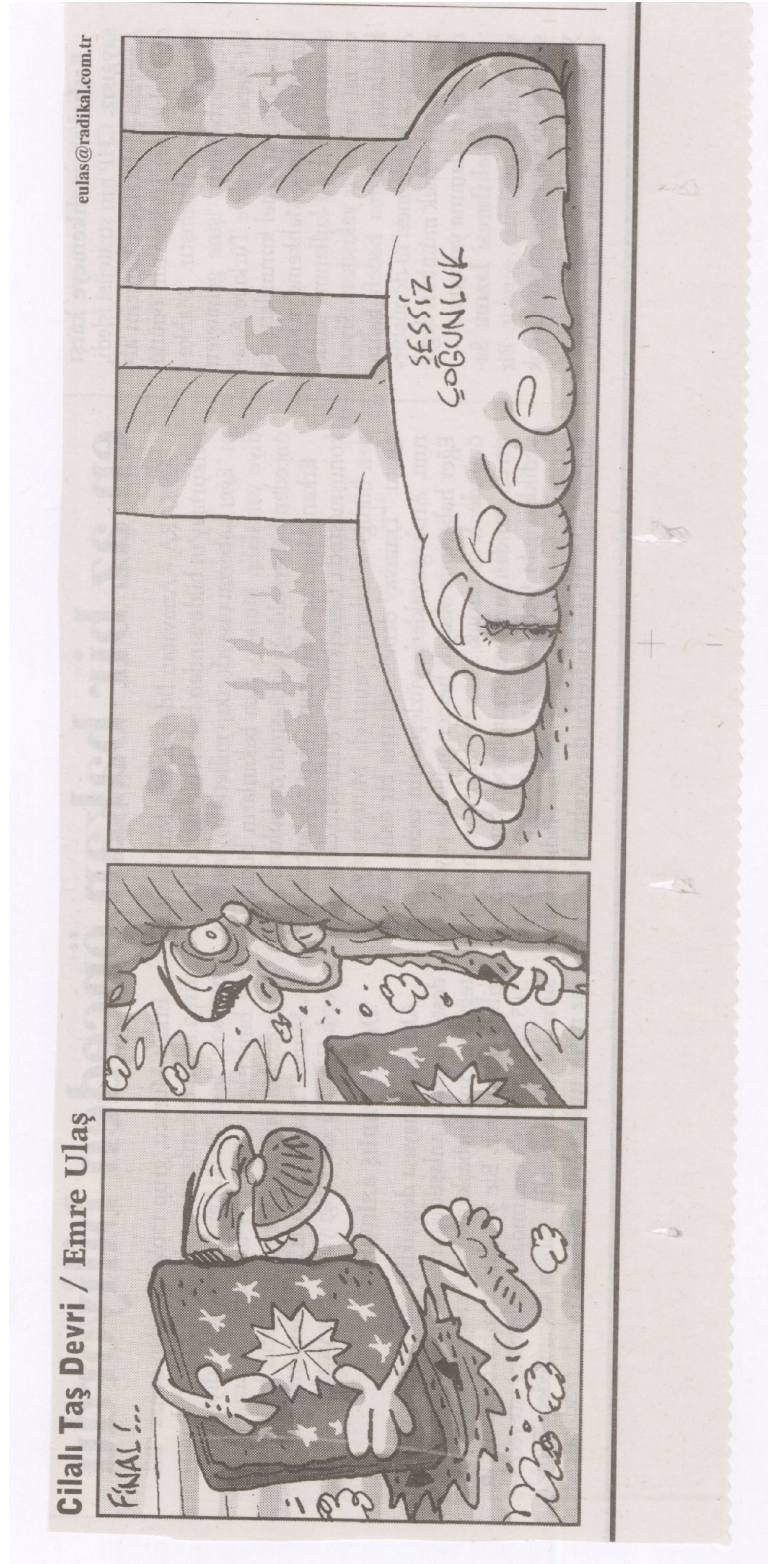
6 The backbone of the old Ottoman Empire. Turkish peasants in province of Seyhan  
(Photo taken by author in 1913)

7 Modern Turkish peasants in European clothes in village in Ankara province  
(Photo taken by author in 1950)









## APPENDIX D

### “WHO ARE WE?”

In 2006, the Turkish research and consultancy organization KONDA conducted a Turkey-wide survey, including 2,685 villages and 2,286 cities, in 79 of the 81 provinces, with a grand total of 47,958 people. Many of the surveys were conducted through face-to-face interviews, and more than 1,500 researchers were involved. Many of the results, along with analysis and commentary, were published in a one-week series called “*Biz Kimiz?*” (“Who are we?”) in the newspaper *Milliyet* in late March 2007. A PDF file of all survey results, along with further background information on the survey, is available through the KONDA website at <[http://www.konda.com.tr/html/ttya\\_tr.pdf](http://www.konda.com.tr/html/ttya_tr.pdf)>. Four of the charts from the site have been included in this appendix, with English translations.

#### D.1 The Breakdown

Turks today appear to be generally living the same identity as was packaged by Atatürk’s principles. The entrance of the concept of “ethnicity” presents an interesting factor. Among the options for defining their identity, ethnicity was not among the top three, but this seems to reflect that fact that this Western-originated word is a new addition to the language, and therefore is not how Turks have historically been taught to conceive of themselves. Instead, it is about a simple description of “being from Turkey”



followed by the categorizations of religion and city of birth. Ethnicity is then in a much-lower fourth place, followed by occupation, gender, clothing, and lastly, age group.

When forced to give an ethnic description, the vast majority of the population identifies themselves simply as Turk (81.33%). The only substantial departures from this are the Kurds/Zazas (9.02%) and a general—actually non-ethnic—category of citizenship in Turkey (4.45%). Atatürk taught that for one to live in the republic of Turkey and to say he/she is a Turk is enough to therefore be a Turk. Thus, it is not surprising that poll respondents largely classified themselves simply as “Turk.” There were deeper distinguishing categories available, sometimes based on roots, but respondents seemed to avoid those, proving the lack of an ethnic differentiation mentality overall.

Supporting ethnic groups, however, is a different matter altogether. Here the norms and expectations of the international community appear to have had their influence. Most likely the demands of the EU factor into this section heavily. In all of Turkey, 66.58% said the state should support ethnic groups, whereas another 33.42% said it expressly should not support them. Not surprisingly, the question of state support for religious groups yielded a substantially different response, with 76.45% saying it should and 23.55% saying it should not. The ten percent difference on either side with this category, could be expected, for it was religious minority groups that were recognized and respected as such since the beginning of the republic. The minorities that were acknowledged were the religious ones. State support for them in some form has existed since the founding of Turkey.

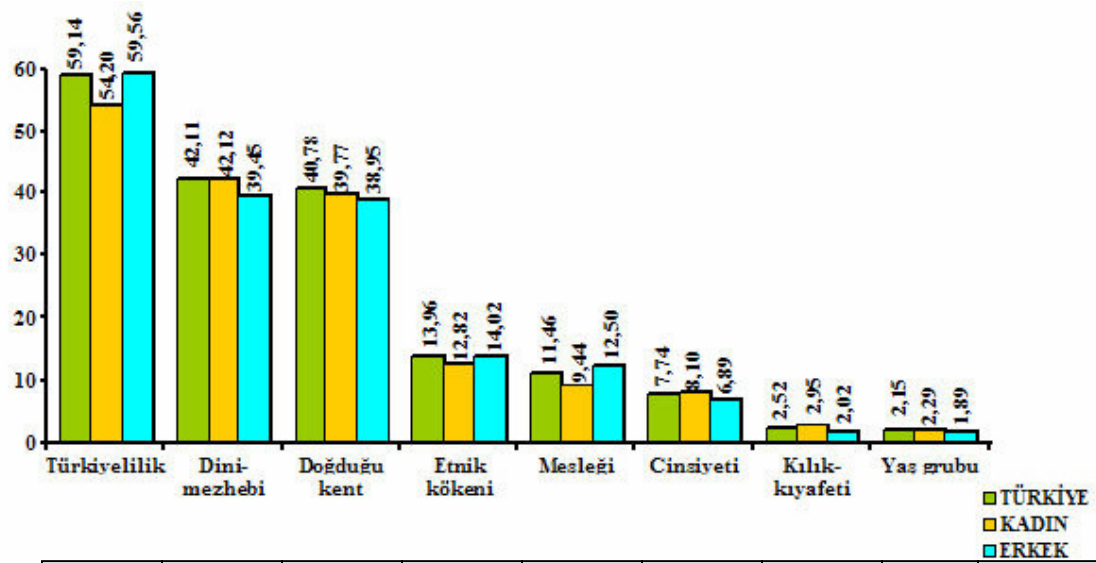
Lastly, there is the question of Turkish citizenship. This chart is perhaps the most interesting of all, for here we see the passion and emotion of the Turkish people, the

inherent love-for-country instilled and cemented in each mind. An immense 82% consider their citizenship in Turkey to be directly dependent on their *love* for Turkey. Saying that one is from Turkey (63.8%) and being Muslim (54.31%) also have the majority of Turkey believing in these conditions as requisites for Turkish citizenship. The ethnic category, however, is a complicated one, with respondents split down the middle over whether Turkish ethnic origin is a condition for citizenship. Slightly more said it is.

This last graph shows a profound confusion about ethnicity and where it falls into the citizenship terms. Even the phrase “to be Turk by ethnic root,” to which they had to respond, is muddled. What, then, is “Turk”? If Turk is to live in Turkey and say “I am a Turk,” then does it even have ethnic roots? Who, then, is an ethnically pure Turk? These are identity questions with unclear answers, if any. What does remain clear is that Turkish identity is founded on the hind legs of religion and of a homogenous Turkishness—which may be ethnic, may be geographic, or may just be the ability to say “I love Turkey.”

## D.2 Definitions of Identity in Turkey

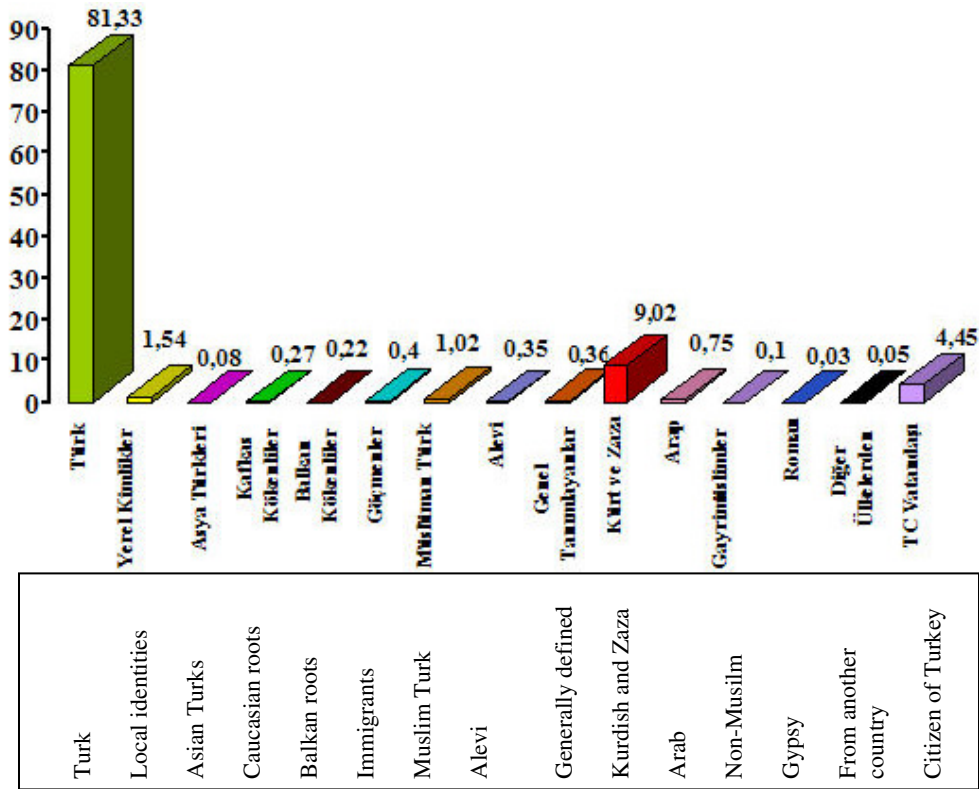
Options respondents wanted to use to express their identity



Being from Turkey	Religion/denomination	City of birth	Ethnic root	Occupation	Gender	Apparel	Age group	Turkey Women Men
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### D.3 Ethnic Identity

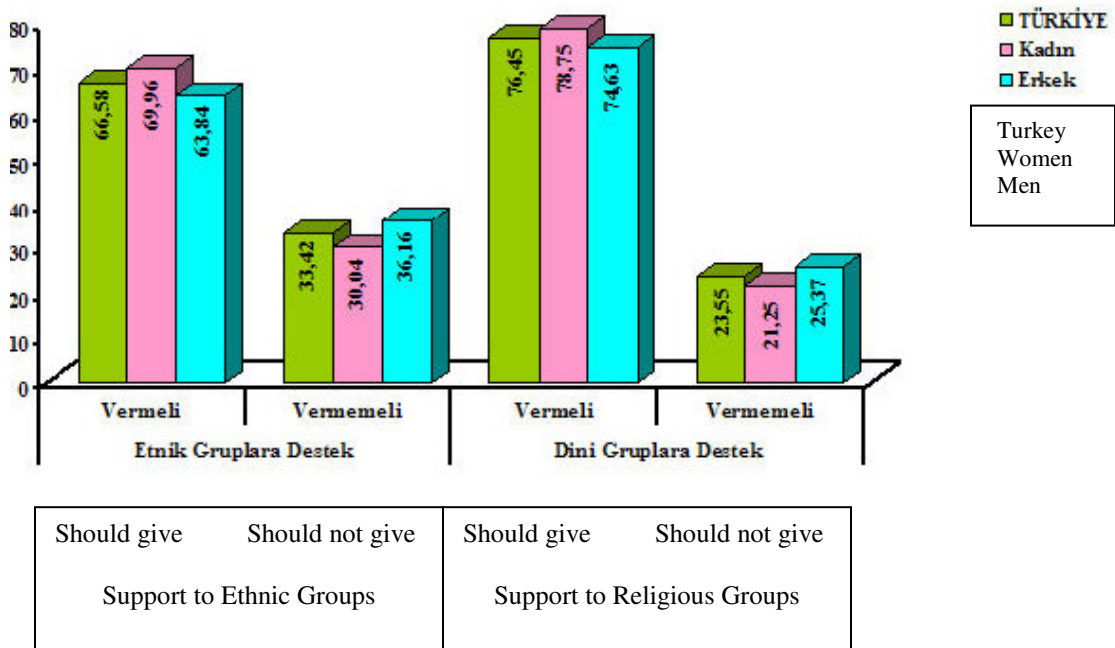
How the people of Turkey define themselves in ethnic terms



#### D.4. Identity-State Relations

##### Supporting Ethnic and Religious Minorities?

- *Should the state give support or not give support for ethnic minorities' preservation of their own traditions and customs?*
- *Should the state give support or not give support for citizens to be able to live out their religious beliefs, their own principles, and worship as they wish?*



## D.5 Conditions of Citizenship

What do you understand from your citizenship?

Some people say that in order to really be a citizen of the Republic of Turkey there are the conditions below. But others say these are not conditions. In your opinion are the ones listed below conditional or non-conditional?

