

THE TEACHERS OF THE REPUBLIC:
MEDIATING BETWEEN STATE AND STUDENTS

Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Political Science and International Relations

by

Evren Yalaz

Boğaziçi University

2006

“The Teachers of the Republic: Mediating between State and Students”,
a thesis prepared by Evren Yalaz in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts degree at the Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences

The thesis of Evren Yalaz
is approved by:

Prof. Dr. Yeşim Arat (Committee Chairperson) _____

Prof. Dr. İlkay Sunar _____

Prof. Dr. Fatma Gök _____

July 2006

ABSTRACT

The Teachers of the Republic: Mediating between State and Students

by

Evren Yalaz

The purpose of this study is to examine how primary school teachers mediate the republican ideology. It aims to analyze how the teachers both contribute to the reproduction and reinforcement of the official ideology, and on the other hand, to what extent they develop opposition, resistance and transgressions. Through considering schools as ‘contested domains’ in which neither total domination nor total emancipation takes place, this study analyzes the dialectical relations between the structures of the education system and the agencies of the teachers. By focusing on in-depth interviews with primary school teachers, firstly I analyze the teachers’ perceptions of the Republican Days and their interpretations of republican values. Secondly, I examine teachers’ conceptual perplexity in defining democracy and their discontents about the functioning of democracy in daily school life. Thirdly, I focus on teachers’ conceptions of cultural differences in Turkey and explore how working experiences in the regions populated by culturally different people affect the inculcation of Kemalist ideology. Hence, by taking teachers’ perceptions, interpretations and experiences as the basis of this research, I aim to analyze the contradictions between what is officially stated and what is actually lived in daily school life. Moreover, I dwell on how those contradictions lead to transformations in the boundaries of Kemalism and bring about refractions in the inculcation of official ideology.

ÖZET

Cumhuriyetin Öğretmenleri: Devlet İdeolojisini Öğrencilere Aktarıırken

Evren Yalaz

Bu çalışmanın amacı ilköğretim okullarındaki öğretmenlerin cumhuriyet ideolojisine nasıl aracılık ettiklerini araştırmaktır. Öğretmenlerin nasıl hem resmi ideolojiyi yeniden üretip güçlendirilmesine hizmet ettikleri, hem de ne dereceye kadar muhalefet ve direniş geliştirerek ideolojinin sınırlarını aştıkları incelenmektedir. Okulları ne tahakkümün topyekûn egemen olduğu ne de bu tahakkümden tamamıyla bir kurtuluşun mümkün olduğu ‘mücadele alanları’ olarak düşünerek, bu çalışma eğitim sisteminin yapılarıyla öğretmenlerin özneliği arasındaki diyalektik ilişkiyi incelemektedir. İlköğretim okullarındaki öğretmenlerle yaptığım derinlemesine mülakatlara dayanarak öncelikle öğretmenlerin Cumhuriyet Bayramları hakkındaki görüşlerini ve cumhuriyet değerlerini nasıl yorumladıklarını analiz ettim. İkinci olarak, öğretmenlerin demokrasiyi tanımlarken yaşadıkları kavramsal karmaşayı ve okullardaki demokrasinin işleyişi konusundaki memnuniyetsizliklerini inceledim. Üçüncü olarak ise, öğretmenlerin Türkiye’deki kültürel farklılıkları nasıl kavramsallaştırdıklarını ve farklı kültürlerden gelen insanların yaşadıkları yerlerdeki çalışma deneyiminin Kemalist ideolojinin öğretilmesini nasıl etkilediği üzerinde durdum. Böylece, öğretmenlerin görüşlerini, yorumlarını ve deneyimlerini temel alarak, resmi olarak ifade edilen ile okullarda gündelik olarak yaşananlar arasındaki çelişkileri inceledim. Ayrıca, bu çelişkilerin Kemalizm’in sınırlarını nasıl değiştirdiğini ve okullarda resmi ideolojinin öğretilmesi konusunda nasıl kırımlara neden olduğu üzerinde durdum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I began to think about my acknowledgement even before writing the first words of this thesis. I should admit that finding the appropriate words to express my gratitude to people who made this thesis possible is as difficult as writing the thesis. During writing nights and days, I learned how transforming floating thoughts into words required hours of pondering, how creativity includes the ongoing process of construction and de-construction, and how one needs ‘true’ friends at the moments of joy and sorrow.

I want to thank my advisor Yeşim Arat for her assistance, encouragement and patience. Even at moments of deep pessimism, her enthusiasm became my inspiration for completing this study. Those couple of sentences is not enough to express how much I learned from her. I am also grateful to my jury members for their precious comments and criticism. I want to express my gratitude to Fatma Gök who encouraged me to study education and İlkay Sunar whose comments will help me to further this thesis during my Ph.D study. I also would like to thank to our graduate advisor Murat Akan for his support and trust. I am also thankful to Kim Fortuny for her patience while editing my study.

I would like to thank all of my interviewees whose trust, generosity, and candidness made this study possible.

I am indebted to my family for their patience and support. Especially, I want to thank my mother not just for her care, encouragement and support, but also for helping me connect with the primary school teachers in this study. I am also grateful to my brother Kadir for showing great patience with my unending questions about his school experiences and for sharing his computer with me.

Words are not enough to express my gratefulness to my dear friend Sema. She taught me that without stepping on the bottom, it is not possible to ascend. Her support was always with me whether I was on the bottom or at the top. I also want to express my special thanks to my dear friends Sude and Esin. Their kindness and encouragement helped me overcome all of the difficulties at every stage of my thesis.

I also want to thank to my dear friends, Özlem, Begüm, Cengiz, Yasemin, Zeynep, Burcu, Yeşim, Onur, Ozan, Burak, Evrim and Eylem. They made the thorny process of writing this thesis a kind of joy for me.

And Anıl, in spite of your absence, your presence is in every line of this study. Your love and support always crossed the Atlantic and appeared beside me.

To teachers who make 'another world' possible...

THE TEACHERS OF THE REPUBLIC:
MEDIATING BETWEEN STATE AND STUDENTS

TITLE PAGE.....	i
APPROVAL PAGE.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
KEYWORDS.....	xi
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
TRANSFORMATIONS IN 1980S AND RECONSIDERING NATIONAL EDUCATION.....	4
DESCRIPTION OF FIELD WORK.....	5
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
MAJOR THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF EDUCATION.....	12
1- FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH.....	14
2- CONFLICT THEORIES.....	17
-Theories of Reproduction.....	19
a- Theories of Social Reproduction.....	20
-Althusser: Education as an Ideological State Apparatus.....	20
b- Theories of Cultural Reproduction.....	23
-Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Reproduction in Education.....	23
3- BEYOND THE THEORIES OF REPRODUCTION: TOWARDS A THEORY OF RESISTANCE.....	28
-Cultural Production and Ethnographic Studies in Education: Paul Willis....	30
-Teachers as the Agents of Transformation.....	32

CHAPTER III: MODERNIZATION PROJECT AND NATIONAL EDUCATION IN TURKEY.....	35
1- RECONSIDERATION OF TURKISH MODERNIZATION PROCESS.....	36
2- TURKISH NATIONAL EDUCATION.....	42
-Formation of Modern Turkish Education.....	43
-Education in the Turkish Republic.....	44
-Ideology of Turkish National Education.....	50
-Qualitative Research on Turkish National Education.....	54
CHAPTER IV: MEDIATION OF REPUBLICAN TEACHERS: REPRODUCTION AND CONTESTATION.....	58
1- COMMEMORATING THE REPUBLICAN DAYS AND INTERPRETING REPUBLICAN VALUES.....	60
-Transition from Ottoman Rule.....	62
-Remembering the Memories of the War Years.....	68
-Transmission of National Values and the Sense of Unity.....	71
-Criticizing the Formality of the Republican Days: Disapproval of Cliché Forms.....	74
-The ‘True’ Meaning of the Republic and Kemalism.....	76
2- CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY AT SCHOOLS.....	86
-Unclear Borders of Democracy, Republicanism, and Popular Sovereignty.....	88
-Democratic Life in Schools.....	93
3- PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.....	99
-Working in the East.....	102
-Education in the Native Language.....	108

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	115
APPENDIX A: PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES.....	120
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS USED IN THE INTERVIEWS	123
BIBLIOGRAPY.....	126

KEYWORDS

- Republican ideology
- Turkish national education
- Mediation of teachers
- Reproduction of official ideology
- Resistance in education

Does the perfecting of order begin in chaos?

If so, when does chaos leave its place to that perfected order?

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to examine how primary school teachers mediate the republican ideology. In this thesis, I endeavor to bring a new perspective to the study, which theorizes schools as the major tools that reproduce the official ideology and reduce public school teachers to functionaries of the state. Throughout this study, I will explore how the mediation of teachers leads to both reproduction and reinforcement of official ideology, which is mainly promulgated through formal curriculum and text books, and how the domination of official ideology is resisted and challenged through the agencies of teachers. By employing the qualitative methods, I want to go beyond the textual surveys that aim to reveal the ideological content of rules and regulations on education, textbooks and curricular programs, and the directives of ministry of education. Primarily via in-depth interviews, I aim to dwell on teachers' interpretations, narratives and their daily experiences within schools and thus explore the complicated site of schools in which the struggle between domination and resistance takes place.

By stating that “the rituals of chaos” are in fact a part of the “secret adventures of the social order”, Torres and Mitchel argue that the educational reality with its rituals, its chaos and its symbolic order constitutes the central aspect of the

reproduction of the social order.¹ In other words, they argue that social order is constructed in the chaotic state of educational reality. In this study, I aim to reverse the focus of analysis from the question of ‘how the order is perfected’ to ‘how the order is challenged and transformed’. Hence, rather than focusing on the mechanism of social reproduction, I attempt to explore the contradictions, transgressions, and resistance within the so called ‘order’ of the schools.

Hence, the purpose of my study is to analyze how the Kemalist ideology is (re)produced and transmitted to students as well as how it is transformed and challenged during this (re)production process. In addition to the impact of the teachers’ subjectivities on the socialization process, it is also aimed to delineate how the actual life experiences within schools lead to the contradictions and refractions in the inculcation of the official ideology. Throughout this research, we will be able to see how public school teachers both stay within the Kemalist paradigm and challenge the boundaries of it. Moreover, this study aims to reveal what kind of contradictions rise during the interpretation and implementation of the republican values and how those contradictions are layered by public school teachers. In this sense, the broader objective of this study is to examine how teachers’ oppositions and challenges are dissolved within the Kemalist paradigm and therefore their aspirations for an education system that is more democratic, universal and sensitive to cultural differences are restricted and curtailed.

The first part of this study shall aim to delineate a theoretical framework in order to develop necessary conceptual tools that serve for grasping the complicated sides of education. Through visiting a historical overview of the educational

¹ Torres begins his book with an epigraph of “The perfecting of order begins in chaos” taken from Monsivais, *The Rituals of Chaos*. I believe that those words have been very influential in constituting my theoretical framework. See: Carlos Alberto Torres, *Democracy, Education, and Multiculturalism* (NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), p: 1.

theories, it is purposed to see how the theories of resistance contribute to the educational studies by bringing the concepts of conflicts, contradictions and resistance as the focus of their analysis.

In the second part, we shall visit the literature that critically analyzes the Turkish modernization project and principles of the republican regime. Moreover, in this part, studies that examine the ideological content of Turkish national education and the analyses that focus on the role of national education in formation of “good citizens” of the state will be discussed. Throughout this chapter, it is aimed to delineate the historical and political context of the nation building project in Turkey and explore the significant role of education in the formation of nation state.

The third part will be based on the analysis of my field work and aim to elucidate teachers’ mediation of formal curriculum. In this part, firstly teachers’ perceptions on the commemoration of the Republican Days and their interpretation of the republican values will be analyzed. Secondly, teachers’ conception of democracy and their perplexity about the conceptual borders of democracy, popular sovereignty and republicanism will be discussed. In addition, I will analyze the teachers’ discontents about the functioning of democracy in actual school life. Thirdly, teachers’ interpretations of the cultural differences in Turkey and their attitudes towards the students coming from different cultural origins will be explored. Moreover, we shall explore how working in the regions populated by culturally different people deeply affects both the conceptions of teachers and the daily school experiences.

TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE 1980s AND RECONSIDERING NATIONAL EDUCATION

In Turkey, the 1980s came with a wind of change. It is argued that social, political and economic transformations taking place in this period challenged the main pillars of the republican ideology. The emergence of new collective belongings such as Kurdish movement and political Islam resulted in a process of questioning the limits of the Kemalist conception of citizenship and democracy. The current situation can be defined as an ‘organic crisis’ of Kemalism or ‘crisis of hegemony’ in the Gramscian sense. In other words, along with the proliferation of new political and social identities Kemalism has lost its benchmark position that indicates the ability to hegemonize the whole discursive field.² On the other hand, recent confrontations against the republican pillars have resulted in the rise of the Kemalist consciousness and support at the level of civil society. For the first time in the republican history, Kemalism is not imposed by state organs but supported by a civil initiative. In this sense, the 1990s can also be seen as the consolidation of the Kemalist hegemony. However, regardless of which position you take, the current situation can be depicted as simultaneous presence of change and struggle for continuity. Thus, the current ambiguous picture makes it more interesting to analyze the perceptions of teachers who experience ongoing transformations as members of society and at the same time as those who work as a civil servant in the state’s schools, charged with the maintenance of social order.

² Nur Betül Çelik claims that the 1990s came with the subversion of the Kemalist hegemony. She argues that ambiguous and unstable political and social milieu of the 1990s manifests the fact that Kemalism has lost its ability to mediate all of the floating elements in the entire discursive field. For detail of this account see: Nur Betül Çelik, “The Constitution and Dissolution of the Kemalist Imaginary”, *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* ed. by David Howard et. al. (NY: Manchester University Press, 2000).

All of the primary school teachers that I interviewed completed their educational life in the 1970s or the 1980s and have been working as primary school teachers in the 1990s. Although they grew up in a period that did not consist of an extensive criticism of the republican modernization project or a challenge against the Kemalist principles, their professional life time coincided with the proliferation of questions about Turkish modernism, challenges to official ideology, and confrontations against the education system due to its authoritarian, gender-biased and mono-cultural aspects. Although during the modernization project, education has been a very important tool to inculcate ‘good citizens’, the current effectiveness of the education system in performing its socialization function becomes a controversial issue. Hence, it becomes very crucial to explore the mediation of official doctrines and Kemalist dictums under an atmosphere of resistance for change and struggle for order. Thus, the present study becomes an important contribution to the literature of political science and educational studies, not only because it focuses on the subjectivities of teachers and brings a new perspective to the theoretical debate on whether the structures or the agencies shape the social reality, but also because it endeavors to bring a light to the ambivalences, contradictions and transformations taking place within schools as a result of social and political transformations of the 1980s.

DESCRIPTION OF FIELD WORK

Why in-depth interviews

This study is mainly based on in-depth interviews with primary school teachers from three different public schools. I conducted 13 in-depth interviews that ranged from 1 to 2 hours in average. I used the snowballing technique in order to contact the teachers. Moreover, during my field work, I had the opportunity to

attend some of the courses as well as meet with a number of teachers and participated in their conversations at the teachers' office. My experiences during the field work proved that in-depth interviews are the most appropriate way of collecting qualitative data in order to explore the nuances of teachers' beliefs, ideas and their interpretations of school experiences. When I attended courses and tried my chance at a participant observation method, the result was a distracted teacher and curious looks of students. Moreover, throughout my interviews, rather than follow a completely structured questionnaire, I preferred to proceed from a topic guide. Conducting interviews without a standard questionnaire sheet enabled me to use probing technique and push my interviewees to elucidate their points. On the other hand, my topic guide and semi-structured questions prevented a kind of excessive rambling and helped me construct the thematic analysis of my research.

In addition to the advantages of in-depth interviews, there were a number of problems that I encountered during my field work. The major difficulties that I faced were gaining the trust and overcoming the reservations of my interviewees. In this respect, my connections with some of teachers helped me gain the voluntary support and intimacy of my interviewees. Moreover, my affiliation with Bogazici University was the other factor that facilitated my field work. In addition, I preferred to make multiple visits to some of my interviewees and realized that our second meetings became much more productive than the first ones.

One other problem about conducting interviews with teachers was to arrange time available for them and find a quite place that was isolated from external interruptions and eavesdropping. I mostly interviewed teachers during their off-

hours and during study hours³ that are scheduled after the regular course schedules. I preferred talking with them in the classrooms, since they appeared more comfortable and prone to talk near their students rather than their colleagues.

Why primary school teachers:

Since my study endeavors to examine the impact of teachers' mediations on the transmission of the republican ideology and values, I preferred to focus on primary school teachers whose clout on the socialization process is considered to be more than the teachers of higher grades. Primary level education consists of children between the ages of 6-14. Since primary school students are at their very early ages; the way they are socialized in school has great influence on their later lives. It is known that the socialization process in schools does not take place in a one-sided way in which teachers are the absolute holders of knowledge and students are empty pages waiting to be filled. There is an ongoing interaction and exchange of ideas between students and teachers. However, it should be admitted that the direction of interaction in primary schools mainly appears to be from teachers to students. For this reason, my research is primarily based on the interviews with primary school teachers.

With the enactment of 'the 8 year uninterrupted compulsory primary education law' in the August 1997, primary school education began to take 8 years consisting two stages (*kademe*). The primary stage takes place during the first five years and one teacher is responsible for all of the verbal, mathematical and scientific courses. At this stage, only foreign language education, fine arts and physical education courses are given by the teachers specialized in those fields. The

³ Study hours are supplementary programs that are optional for students. They are scheduled to help students complete their home works and projects at the school under the guidance of their teachers. During these hours, teachers do not lecture but consult when students need help. Thus, during study hours I had opportunity to interview with teachers.

secondary stage of primary school education consists of the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. At this stage, every course is given by the teachers specialized in a particular branch. In my sample, 10 of the interviewees were teachers at the primary stage and were responsible for teaching a wide range of courses. On the other hand, 3 of my interviewees were social knowledge teachers at the secondary stage.

School profile:

For my field work, I chose 3 public schools at the primary level situated in socio-economically different regions of the Kadiköy district. Moreover, I attained formal approval from the Ministry of National Education for conducting interviews at those schools. For ethical concerns, I have replaced both the names of those schools and the teachers with pseudo names.

My first school, Canan Okur İlköğretim, was located in a special residential area that has its own shopping centers, walking areas, parks and security personnel. Canan Okur İlköğretim, with its one main building, one hall for gymnasium, two auto-parks and its garden, is situated in the center of this residential area. Although as a public school it also suffers from a lack of sufficient public funding and support, unlike the other public schools in Istanbul, it has additional revenue from the parents' donations. It has 1500 students that mostly dwell in the borders of this residential area.

My second school, Mualla Altın İlköğretim, is in an area between Bostancı and Kazasker. Unlike my first school, this school is not situated in a residential area that is protected by a private security agency; on the contrary it is in an environment with separate apartments, shopping centers and offices. This area can be defined as the place in which rents for housing are not as high as was the case in the

environment of Canan Okur İlköğretim, but can be afforded by families above a certain income level. The general profile of students in this school is children coming from middle class families.

My third school Hatice Bodur İlköğretim is in an area called Kayışdağı where the border of Kadıköy municipality finishes and Ümraniye begins. It is surrounded by shanty houses that are built by people who migrated from the Black Sea region and Eastern Anatolia. Students coming from lower income groups constitute the population of Hatice Bodur İlköğretim.

Interviewee profile:

While designing my sample, I tried to choose teachers from closer age cohorts. 10 of the interviewees have more than 20 years teaching experience; 3 of them have been working as teachers more than 10 years. Except 2 of my interviewees, all of them completed their education in the 1970s and began working as teachers in the 1980s. Thus, the age profile of my interviewees enabled me to examine the contradictions and conflicts of teachers who actually live the transformations facing Turkey during their life span. Moreover, I aimed to keep the gender proportion of my respondents at a balance. While 6 of my interviewees were male, 7 of them were female. Besides, 9 of them had the experience of working in the east part of Turkey and 4 of them did not work in the east part (See Appendix A for the details of interviewee profile).

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Europe, the emergence of the modern school system and the supersession of traditional socialization institutions such as church and family by modern public schools traces back to the early nineteenth century. The development of modern nation states accelerated the process that led to the dissemination of public schooling and the prevalence of the deliberate, institutionalized and state centered educational system. As Füsün Üstel argues, the secularization of the state authority along with the development of the nation state system, in other words, the shift from divine sources of sovereignty to ‘popular’ sovereignty, led to the formation of modern schools that represent the key institutions of citizenship education.⁴ Thus, from the beginning of the early nineteenth century, schools have become the major institutions that are based on the planned, deliberate and intentional socialization process and that have the capacity to shape values, beliefs and attitudes of future citizens.

The undeniable significance of schools in the formation of future citizens and their critical impact on the dissemination of dominant sets of principles and behaviors made the examination of schools an important topic of academic studies.

⁴ Füsün Üstel, *‘Makbul Vatandaş’ın Peşinde: II. Meşrutiyet’ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi* (In the Search of ‘Good Citizens’: Citizenship Education in Turkey: From the 2nd Constitutional Monarchy to the Present) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p: 11.

Moreover, the interaction among education, society and the state has become one of the focal points of social research. Historically, educational thought has developed in dialogue with the social theory of its time. The major theoretical approaches in social theory, discussions and debates, paradigm shifts, and transformations have deeply affected the studies of education. Thus, education with its great impact on the production of the dominant meaning systems and formation of the desired attitudes and behaviors has become a crucial area of social research and has been studied from multiple perspectives.

This chapter aims to conceptualize the mechanism that leads to the production, reproduction, transformation and distortion of the dominant meaning systems by mainly focusing on the domain of education. In other words, I want to delineate a theoretical framework that elucidates how schools (re)produce the official and dominant meaning systems, attitudes and perceptions and how this mechanism is contested and transformed through the mediation of agencies within schools. In this sense, I aim to develop the necessary theoretical tools that grasp the contested/contradictory terrain of education, which includes the interplay of power, domination, struggle and resistance.

In this chapter, firstly, I want to focus on the major educational approaches that develop different answers and explanations to the perennial questions of how schools serve social and cultural reproduction and to what extent they contribute to the social change and transformation. The historical journey of educational theories brings us to recent studies that attempt to go beyond the structural perspectives and one-sided determinism and aim to illustrate the interaction between domination and resistance within schools. Secondly, I want to elaborate how the theories of resistance in educational studies provide us with a theoretical framework that

focuses on dialectical relation between structure and agency, domination and struggle, as well as power and resistance. In this account, schools rise as the complex sites that are neither identified with emancipation of teachers and students nor defined with the domination of the one set of ideas and behaviors. In short, throughout this chapter, I will search for ways of portraying schools both as the major tools of state that aspire to reproduce the official ideology and create ‘good citizens’, while considering them as ‘contested domains’ in which the domination of official ideology is refracted and challenged through the mediation of teachers.

In my case study, I endeavor to elucidate the complicated relation between the agency of teachers and structural factors of education. Through analyzing teachers’ narratives and experiences within schools, I aim to understand how Kemalism, as the official ideology of the Turkish Republic, struggles to hegemonize the field of education, how it is mediated by agencies of primary school teachers and how it is transformed through the practices and experiences within the classrooms. For the sake of theoretical refinement, this chapter does not cover all aspects of the theoretical discussions related to the theories of hegemony and resistance. However, the theoretical journey of this chapter, through summarizing the existing approaches concerning the problematical relation among education, state and society, explaining how a particular ideology strives to constitute its hegemony and how this homogenization process is contested, will enable us to grasp the necessary theoretical tools for this study.

MAJOR THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF EDUCATION

After the dissemination of mass schooling in the nineteenth century, fundamental debates on education and the different positions concerning the main objective and

function of public schools began to emerge: Marxists argued that education is determined by the relations of production of its time and in capitalist mode of production, education serves the ideological reproduction of the bourgeois class; Durkheim perceived education as an integrative institution that contributes to the maintenance of social order; Weber pointed out that education constitutes new principles of control such as instrumental rationality or bureaucratic domination.⁵

Although there are multiple theories that are concerned with the interaction among education, society and the state, the period of the 1960s and the 1970s were identified with the division of the field between two opposing camps: theories of order and stability (Functionalist theories) and theories of radical change (Conflict theories). On the other hand, the rise of postmodern thought and poststructural theory led to the proliferation of theories and brought new levels of analysis to the sociology of education. Especially the development of qualitative methods in social sciences and the dissemination of ethnographic studies had great impacts on the studies of education. By employing micro-level analyses and expanding the focus of research to the examination of interactions within schools, concrete experiences within classrooms and complicated relations among teachers, students and the formal curriculum, those new studies of education began to differentiate themselves from the conventional conflict theories, which are mainly identified with social and cultural reproduction theories.

Although it is very difficult to demarcate the borders between different approaches to education, I believe examining the theoretical literature of education under three headings will provide us an insightful categorization. In order to draw a historical sketch of educational theories, I will begin with the functionalist theory,

⁵ Carlos A. Torres and R. A. Morrow, *Social Theory and Education* (NY: SUNY Press, 1995), p: 6.

which had outset the theoretical discussions on education. Then, I will present the emergence of conflict theories of education and their accounts of social and cultural reproduction in education. Finally, I will explain the developments of the educational research that push the borders of the reproduction theories further and bring new concepts and methods to the study of education.

1-FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH:

Functionalist theory, which is also referred to structural functionalism, consensus, or equilibrium theory, has been one of the most influential theories in the sociology of education.⁶ Functionalism focuses on a conception of society that resembles a biological organism and argues that society is made up of interdependent parts, each complementing and supporting one and other and thus contributing to the maintenance of the whole system. As in the case of the human organs, which are necessary for the survival of the body, particular systems and institutions -- such as education-- are necessary for the survival of the society.⁷

Durkheim, as the founding father of functionalist theory, outlines the basic principles and conceptions of this approach. He was born in the unsettled period of great transformations and very much concerned with the breakdown of community, solidarity and traditional rituals along with the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. In this sense, he looked for solutions to maintain social stability and cohesion. However, Durkheim did not consider returning to the past as a solution to social disintegration, rather he expressed that modern societies

⁶ Ibid., p: 42.

⁷ Jeanne H. Ballantine, *The Sociology of Education: A Systemic Analysis* (NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 2001), p: 7.

had to develop new forms of social control and cohesion to live within a cohesive society.⁸

The contributions of Durkheim to social theory have been very significant and decisive for the sociology of education. Education is a very crucial institution for Durkheim, since the spread of shared values, creation of consensus and maintenance of the social order take place through schools. He argues that the function of education:

is to develop in the child: (1) a certain number of physical and mental states that the society to which he belongs considers should be possessed by all of its members; (2) certain physical and mental states that the particular social groups (caste, class, family, profession) similarly considers ought to be possessed by all of those who compose it.⁹

Thus, he points out that the survival of society depends on “a sufficient degree of homogeneity”, which is perpetuated and reinforced by education through “fixing in the mind of the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that social life demands”. Thus, Durkheim defines education in the following way:

Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined.¹⁰

The other most influential and well-known figure of functionalist theory is Talcott Parsons. He was deeply affected by Durkheimian theory and enriched the structural functionalism by providing “a systematic and metatheoretically grounded

⁸ Peter Cookson and Alan Sadovnik, “Functionalist Theories of Education”, *An Encyclopedia: Education and Society* ed. by Levinson, Cookson and Sadovnik (New York : RoutledgeFalmer, 2002), p: 268.

⁹ Anthony Giddens, *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1972), p: 201.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p: 204.

approach". The analysis of education was one of the main concerns of Parsons. He argued that individuals are born with their ascriptive statuses (such as class and gender), but the schools constitute a competition in which children obtain equal conditions of opportunity.¹¹

Morrow and Torres mention the four primary functions of education in Parsons' theory: the academic, distributive, economic, and political socialization.¹² *Academic function* of schools is to transmit "universal cognitive skills" that will be necessary to perform in society and integrate the children to the larger whole. Functionalism perceives the schools as neutral instructional sites in which technocratic rationality prevails. It assumes the existence of an objective and value free knowledge and aims to inculcate the young members of society with this 'predictable', 'verifiable' and 'transferable' knowledge. *Distributive function* of schools is to provide efficient distribution of talent in the work places through a merit based competition. Thus, this approach stresses that although inequities exist in society, schools accommodate all people with the equal opportunity to enhance their skills and to accomplish the upward mobility. *Economic function* is related to the role of education in increasing economic productivity by providing high skilled workers. *Political socialization* is the function of schools to sustain social integration and control.

Beginning in the 1970s, the functionalist paradigm and its assumptions have been highly criticized by theories that consider the social order as the product of ideological manipulation or explicit coercion. Most of the criticism is constellated around the claim that the functionalist paradigm has perceived schools as neutral institutions that endow 'real' and 'objective' knowledge and hence reject examining

¹¹ Torres and Morrow, p: 57.

¹² Ibid., p: 55.

the relations among power, knowledge and ideology. Consequently, latent indoctrination of unequal power relations is dissolved within the assumption of objective knowledge. The existing structure and ideology of the dominant society is rendered unproblematic and the relation between social control and education is legitimized. Connection between forms of socialization in schools and reproduction of class, gender, racial and ethnic asymmetries is discarded from the theories of education.¹³

Thus, as a response to the functionalist theories, critical educational theories, usually called as conflict theories, began to challenge the dominance of the functionalist theories. However, it should be pointed out that although the credibility and the effectiveness of the functionalist paradigm have been highly curtailed in the academic milieu, it persists as the dominant paradigm in the official view of schooling and maintains its practical and ideological effect throughout the state policies of education.

2- CONFLICT THEORIES

Although the category of ‘conflict theories’ is a very broad and obscure one, their critical position against functionalism and their assumption of the existence of contradictions --and thus tensions-- among parts of society combine those diverse theories under the same heading. Conflict theories presuppose unequal power relations among the various groups and schools are considered the main sites that reproduce those unequal relations. It can be argued that the writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber constituted the basis of conflict theories.¹⁴

¹³ Henry Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (Bergin & Garvey, 2001), p: 3.

¹⁴ Hurn Christopher “Conflict Theory”, *An Encyclopedia: Education and Society*, p: 111.

Although Marx did not stress the social and cultural reproductive role of education in general, and public schools in particular, his radical arguments about the existence of class antagonism within the capitalist system and the inevitability of the emergence of conflicting interests between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie paved the way for contemporary conflict theories in education. In spite of the common assumptions of Marxism, internal divisions within western Marxism in the twentieth century came up with two opposing paradigms: the critical, humanist, and historicist side of Marxism criticized the structural and positivistic determinations and was concerned with the problems of human agency and subject; the positivist wing of Marxism was concerned with scientific credentials and became increasingly structural and deterministic.¹⁵ The vocal of the two camps have been confined within either a one-sided idealism or a one sided-structuralism and they can not develop a dialectical theory that links human agency and structural factors.¹⁶

The ‘New Sociology of Education’, which represented the transition from the traditional paradigm of functionalism to conflict theories, attempted to understand how knowledge, power, and ideology are related to each other and how schools contribute to the reproduction of dominant social structures and relations of production. Although the ‘New Sociology of Education’ aimed to elucidate intricate questions such as how schools constitute subjectivities, prioritize certain knowledge, produce meaning systems, and serve for the maintenance of social, economic and political order, their overemphasis on social and cultural reproduction prevented them from going beyond the simplistic conceptions of schools as institutions reproducing the existing order.

¹⁵ Torres and Morrow, p: 125.

¹⁶ Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, pp: 4-5.

Theories of Reproduction:

Beginning in the 1970s, theories of reproduction have gained a dominant position in the conflict theories of education. They mainly focus on the relation between education and the economic order of society and endeavor to understand how schools maintain the existing social relations and division of labor for the purpose of sustaining existing relations of production.

Although theories of reproduction emerged as a radical break from traditional approaches and represented one of the most rigorous theories of critical sociology of education, they could not escape from criticism. Firstly, their ahistorical structural analysis, one-sided determinism and simplistic view of social and cultural reproduction have been questioned. Secondly, theories of reproduction have been highly criticized, since they leave no place for human activity, possibility of agency's impact on the structural factors and thus no hope for change. Those theories have perceived the schools as 'black boxes' and did not consider opening them up and examining contradictory real life experiences or complex relations within everyday life of schools. Henry Giroux argues:

Yet while such (reproductive) approaches represent an important theoretical break from idealist and functionalist paradigms in educational theory, they still remain situated within a problematic that ultimately supports rather than challenges the logic of existing order. The point here is that there are some serious deficiencies in existing theories of reproduction, the most important of which is the refusal to posit a form of critique that demonstrates the theoretical and practical importance of counter-hegemonic struggles.¹⁷

There are two main positions in reproductive approaches: The first one is the theory of *social reproduction*, which is exemplified in the works of Althusser; and

¹⁷ Ibid., pp: 76-77.

the second one, the theory of *cultural reproduction* that is represented in the theory of French sociologist Bourdieu.

a- Theories of Social Reproduction:

Theories of social production generally examine two basic functions of schools: firstly, schools serve for the reproduction of work skills and provide the allocation of students coming from different classes for their class specific jobs. Secondly, schools do not just provide students with skills; they also reproduce the attitudes that legitimize the existing economic and social relations.

Althusser: Education as an Ideological State Apparatus

At the beginning of the 1970s Althusser emerged as a very important figure of structural Marxism and brought a new perspective and explanations to Marxist thought. While pursuing the question of how “the reproduction of the conditions of production” becomes possible, he elucidated the theory of social reproduction.

In order to understand Althusser’s contribution to the theories of social reproduction, we should briefly re-visit his “interventions” in classical Marxist thought. Firstly, he elaborates the problematical relation of base (economic structure) and superstructure. Contrary to the orthodox Marxism that embraces a mechanical determination of superstructure by economic base, Althusser brings a more complex analysis by arguing that “(1) there is a ‘relative autonomy’ of the superstructure with respect to the base; (2) there is a ‘reciprocal action’ of the superstructure on the base.”¹⁸ Although Althusser assumes that “in the last instance” economic structure determines superstructure by giving the famous example of an

¹⁸ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, *Mapping Ideology* ed. by Žižek (London, New York: Verso, 1994), p: 105.

edifice in which floors are constructed on the base, he eliminates the previous crude analyses by mentioning the role of superstructure in social reproduction.

Secondly, Althusser departs from the early works of Marx that conceptualize ideology as “illusion”, “theoretical bubble blowing”, “fantasy”, or “phantom”, and claims that ideology has a material effect. The argument that “ideology has a material existence” leads Althusser to analyze the institutions of ‘civil society’ such as schools, families, churches, media etc. since “an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices”. Ideology becomes the “operating realities that possess efficacy” and its materialization takes place through the practices of subjects, which are also constituted/interpellated by ideology and through the material existence of state apparatuses.

Althusser distinguishes “state power” from “state apparatuses”. The state appears as a site in which the all of the political class struggles for obtaining the state power take place. State apparatuses have crucial roles in attaining and maintaining state power. State apparatuses are composed of “Repressive State Apparatuses” that function through violence, repression and force located in public realm; and “Ideological State Apparatuses” are located in the private domain and function through ideology. He lists the existing ISAs as religious, educational, family, legal, political, trade-union, communications and cultural ISAs. Although at the first sight ISAs can be considered disparate social institutions, according to Althusser they have a common goal of reproducing the existing social and economic relations in society. Althusser underlines the importance of ISAs in acquiring and maintaining state power and adds that “no class can hold State power over a long

period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in State Ideological Apparatuses.”¹⁹

Althusser emphasizes the dominant position of schools among the other ISAs by mentioning that no other Ideological State Apparatus makes the social formation obligatory for all children, for eight hours a day and for five or six days a week. Beyond the alleged ‘neutrality’ of schools, Althusser claims that “school teaches ‘know-how’, but in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or mastery of its ‘practice’.”²⁰ Thus, he links the function of schools to the creation of submissive individuals who takes the class domination for granted. He claims that:

children at school also learn the ‘rules’ of good behavior, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labor, according to job he is ‘designed’ for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labor and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination.²¹

Althusser is criticized since there is no emphasis on the human mediation in his analysis of power and domination. He does not explain how people produce, reproduce and transform the meanings. In Althusserian conception of schools, human beings are perceived as the passive bearers of ideology, simple agents of hegemony and carriers of predefined meanings. Thus, schools turn out to be straightforward ideological institutions which completely reproduce the existing system of production. As Giroux argues:

In fact, Althusser’s notion of domination is so one-sided that it is impossible to deduce from his perspective the possibility of ideologies which are oppositional in nature. This is no small point, because it suggests that schools are not to be viewed as social sites marked by the interplay of domination,

¹⁹ Ibid., p: 112.

²⁰ Ibid., p: 104.

²¹ Ibid., p: 102.

accommodation, and struggle, but rather as sites that function smoothly to reproduce a docile labor force.²²

b- Theories of Cultural Reproduction:

As parallel to the theories of social reproduction, cultural reproduction theories also strive to delineate the mechanism of how social and economic inequities are reproduced and reinforced through education systems and schools. However, contrary to the theories of social reproduction, cultural reproduction does not assume that schools are the mirrors of the economic and social structure of society. Instead of employing a structurally deterministic method, theories of cultural reproduction aim to link the issues of consciousness, knowledge, biography and culture to power, domination and class system. Furthermore, their focus on the mediating role of culture in the process of reproducing inequality differentiates them from the theories of social reproduction.

Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Reproduction in Education

Bourdieu, as a very prolific philosopher and sociologist who has written on a very broad range of disciplines and issues, represents the cultural reproduction position in social theory. Although he was highly influenced by classical theoreticians/sociologists such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber, Bourdieu brings a new perspective and new formulation to sociology in general and sociology of education in particular.

Before moving into Bourdieu's theory of reproduction in education, it is necessary to introduce his central problematic, conceptual framework and his theoretical constructs that are essential to understand his theory of reproduction. It can be argued that the primary objective of Bourdieu is to develop a theory of

²² Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, p: 82.

practice and human action that unfolds the dialectical relation between individuals' thought and activity and the objective world.²³ In his theoretical framework, the concept of 'field' represents the objective world, relations and social positions; whereas 'habitus' stands for the delineation of "the dynamic of structure in social reality as expressed through human knowledge and action".²⁴

Although Marxist theories have been very influential in Bourdieu's critique of bourgeois society, he refuses to analyze society in terms of economic classes. Instead he develops the concept of 'field', which is a system of social positions constituted in terms of power relations. He argues that fields can be defined as networks of objective relations among objectively defined positions and that they are relatively autonomous spaces, which are "the site of a logic and a necessity that are *specific and irreducible* to those that regulate other fields".²⁵ Bourdieu is very much against the perception of education as one of state's apparatuses and he theorizes education as a relatively independent 'field' with its own principles. He differentiates his theory from Althusserian account by saying that:

I am very much against the notion of apparatus, which for me is the Trojan horse of 'pessimistic functionalism': an apparatus is an infernal machine, programmed to accomplish certain purposes no matter what, when, or where. ... The school system, the state, the church, political parties, or unions are not apparatuses but fields. In a field, agents and institutions constantly struggle, according to the regularities and the rules constitutive of this space of play (and, in given conjunctures, over those rules themselves), with various degrees of strength and therefore diverse probabilities of

²³ Although Bourdieu is criticized due to his one-sided deterministic accounts, David Swartz and Michael Grenfell emphasize his dialectical theory about human thought and action and the objective structure. See: David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); Michael Grenfell, *Bourdieu & Education: Acts of Practical Theory* (Florence, KY, USA: Taylor & Francis, 1998).

²⁴ Michael Grenfell, 1998. p: 14.

²⁵ Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 97.

success, to appropriate the specific products at stake in the game.²⁶

Habitus is defined as a system of subjective dispositions, class or status group based taste, knowledge and behavior that “ensures the active presence of past experience, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliable than all formal rules and explicit norms.”²⁷ Thus, habitus represents a “socialized subjectivity” that mediates the objective social structure and human practice.

The definitions of ‘field’ and ‘habitus’ become more explicit, as Bourdieu explains the interaction between them. On the one hand, there is a relation of *conditioning* in which ‘field’ structures the ‘habitus’. On the other hand, there is a relation of *cognitive construction* that ‘habitus’ serves for the constitution of the ‘field’ as “a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value”.²⁸ Hence, these two kinds of relationships between the ‘field’ and ‘habitus’ end up with the circular reproduction system in which social life constitutes the habitus of different groups of people; habitus generates the internal dispositions and external practices and thus constructs the way of perceiving the objective world. Along with this theoretical framework, habitus becomes the key term for the Bourdieu’s account of reproduction. Since it has a role of mediating between human actions and thought, ‘field’ becomes a position that reinforces the reproduction of social structure through human dispositions and practices. As Bourdieu puts it:

Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 102.

²⁷ Bourdieu quoted by Michael Grenfell, 1998, p: 14.

²⁸ Bourdieu and Wacquant, p: 127.

And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a ‘fish in the water’: it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted.²⁹

According to Swartz, education holds a central place in the theory of Bourdieu and rises as the principle institution that controls the allocation of status and privilege and maintains the inegalitarian social system. Thus, while pondering the field of education Bourdieu tries to answer his key question of “how do inequalities of privilege and power persist inter-generationally without conscious recognition and public resistance?”³⁰ Bourdieu dismantles the commonly accepted assumption that education provides chances of upward mobility for children coming from lower social classes and argues that education is one of the most responsible institutions for the reproduction of unequal social structure. Herein, Bourdieu develops the concept of *cultural capital*, which is a kind of “scholastic capital” including material resources, educational qualifications and knowledge, social confidence, cultural awareness.³¹ Families pass their cultural heritage to their children and this mechanism results in the unequal distribution of cultural capital among different social classes and status groups. Although the official view of schooling claims that schools are the key institutions that have the capacity of balancing the inequality originated in families’ social class, they reproduce and reinforce this inequality through privileging certain cultural heritages and penalizing others.³²

According to Bourdieu education maintains inequalities through performing two different functions: “*internal logic* of its functioning in the service of its

²⁹ Ibid., p: 127.

³⁰ Swartz, p: 190.

³¹ To learn about the different aspects of cultural capital, see: GrenFell, p: 59.

³² Swartz, p: 199.

external function of social conservation”.³³ The internal function of education includes “function of conserving, inculcating and consecrating”.³⁴ With the guise of ‘neutrality’ and the formal function of providing children with basic skills and knowledge, schools become the fields in which asymmetrical power relations take place. Thus, dominant classes exert their power and monopolize the production and dissemination of knowledge. However, reproduction in education does not just take place through this one-sided control. Bourdieu complicates the picture of reproduction by claiming that oppressed people also actively participate in their own subjugation.³⁵ In the framework of Bourdieu, submission and the passivity of the oppressed people take place since their habitus constitutes the permanent and unconscious idea about their chances of success and makes the existing social structural seem naturally given.

Within the logic of Bourdieu’s analyses the possibility of change and resistance becomes problematic. Although at the outset Bourdieu endeavors to develop a theory that elaborates the dialectical relation between human thought/practice and social structure, his theoretical framework becomes a circular reproduction process. Thus, Bourdieu’s theory also suffers from the over emphasis on one-sided domination and becomes incapable of explaining the resistance of teachers, students and parents, appearance of counter-hegemonic discourses and practices in classroom and the effects of contradictory experiences in daily school life. As Connell argues:

The ruling-class school is no mere agent of the class; it is important and active part of it. In short, it is organic to its class. Bourdieu wrote a famous essay about the school as

³³ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), p: 177.

³⁴ Bourdieu quoted in Swartz, p: 190.

³⁵ Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, p: 89.

conservator; we would suggest an equal stress should be laid on the school as *constructor*. (with my emphases)³⁶

3- BEYOND THE THEORIES OF REPRODUCTION: TOWARDS A THEORY OF RESISTANCE

Although the theories of reproduction represented a radical rupture from a traditional functionalist paradigm and contributed to the emergence of the ‘new sociology of education’, which brought a critical outlook to the field of education, their structuralist, one-sided and deterministic accounts have been highly criticized. One of the major flaws of reproduction theories is their simplistic, one-dimensional and static understanding of power, domination, culture and ideology. They fail to develop a rigorous theory that opens up the ‘black boxes’ and examines the dynamic and dialectical processes within schools. The reproduction theories under-theorize the processes of contradictions, conflicts, oppositional behaviors, and resistance within schools and perceive teachers as simple tools of hegemonic powers and students as passive, malleable, submissive objects of reproduction process. As Giroux argues:

By ignoring the notion that dominant ideologies and social processes have to be mediated rather than simply reproduced by the cultural field of the school, social-reproduction theorists exempt themselves from one of the central questions in any theory of reproduction i.e., the question of explaining both the nature and existence of contradictions and patterns of opposition in schools. The existence of such patterns suggests that dominant educational values and practices have to be viewed in such a way that their determinate effects can neither be guaranteed nor taken-for-granted.³⁷

Recently, along with the dissemination of poststructural and postmodernist approaches in social theory, a number of new studies in the field of education began

³⁶ Connell, quoted in Henry Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, p: 91.

³⁷ Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, p: 86.

to emerge. With the awareness of the theoretical limits and deficiencies of the reproduction theories, those new studies aim to develop a more insightful analysis of schools and education by emphasizing the multiple dimensions of power, domination and culture. They broaden the theoretical framework of reproduction theories by re-defining power as an oppressive and productive force and culture as a constitutive and constituted site. Conceptualizing schools as the site of struggles led them to emphasize the incomplete character of domination. Although the system of domination in education has a comprehensive mechanism, it can never totally fulfill its task of hegemonizing the total field of education. Since the human agencies within the education system mediate, develop critical stances and oppositional behaviors, resist and create counter-hegemonic attitudes in their daily life of school, domination can not totally penetrate the site of education. Thus, these new studies of education bring a new perspective to the sociology of education and open ways to develop a theory of resistance.

The new studies rise as a reaction to the macro level analyses that miss the dynamics of everyday school life and underestimate the interactions between groups of peer, between teachers and students, or between teachers and principals. They diverge from the ‘macrocosmic’ approaches of functionalism and conflict theories and pose the questions such as how people perceive the events and situations around them and how they react to these events and situations³⁸

Those new studies of education, through bringing new perceptions and methods, have attenuated the basic principles of reproduction theories. As a result, they emerged as the new viable critical theories of the sociology of education. It can be argued that new studies of education have challenged the two pillar arguments of

³⁸ For further discussions about interaction theories, see: Ballantine, pp: 13-15.

reproduction theories. Firstly, rather than focusing on the mechanism of reproduction, new theories aim to examine the ‘conflicts’, ‘contradictions’, ‘discontinuities’ and ‘resistance’ within the ongoing reproduction process. Hence, the shift in research questions and beginning points constituted an outset for ‘theories of resistance’ and enabled these new studies to reach new arguments and conclusions about the educational systems. Secondly, by employing the techniques of ethnographic research, new studies could broaden their field of analysis and open up the ‘black boxes’ which were previously perceived just as a part of an ‘input and output’ process. Departing from the macro analysis of reproduction theories, micro level analyses opened new avenues to depict the complex and contradictory picture of schooling process. As Levinson argues this new perspective led scholars “to understand how ‘reproduction’ could be both contested and accelerated through actions by the same people, in the same local institutions.”³⁹

Cultural Production and Ethnographic Studies in Education:
Paul Willis

Ethnographic studies in education brought up a new concept of ‘cultural production’, which paved the way for perceiving students and teachers as active agents of the socialization process of education and indicated that students and teachers can create their own cultural forms that resist ideological domination. Hence, beyond the importance of ongoing reproduction and socialization processes within schools, focusing on cultural productions of various groups and the complex relations of domination and cultural production enervated the assumption that ‘formal schooling culture was unopposed’.

³⁹ See for further discussion: Bradley A. Levinson and Dorothy Holland, “The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: An Introduction”, *Cultural Production of the Educated Person: Critical Ethnographies of Schooling and Local Practice* ed. by Levinson (Albany, NY, USA: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp: 9-13.

In 1977, the ethnographic study of Paul Willis who studied working class kids in Hammertown represented pathbreaking research and generated enduring effects in the study of education. By challenging previous assumptions that perceived students as passive, submissive, ideologically interpellated subjects, Willis argued that “social agents are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation, and a partial penetration of those structures.”⁴⁰ Through conducting a long term participant observation, Willis concluded that working class students were active and vital part of the education process. Moreover, by forming their own cultural patterns and codes, students resist the conventional school environment and curriculum. At the beginning of *Learning to Labour*, Willis offers an uncommon research question and says that the surprising process is not how working class kids get working class jobs but why they let themselves. The answer to this question does not lie on the manipulative character of school culture; on the contrary, Willis argues that working class kids constitute a “counter school culture” and they resist school knowledge and authorities. Willis aims to depict the complementary and contradictory relations of class cultures, patriarchy, racism and formal curriculum and comes up with very insightful analyses. For instance, through exalting masculinity and identifying mental work as ‘effeminate’, ‘pen pushing’, ‘not really doing things’, ‘cissy’, Willis explains how working class kids reject the middle class culture of the school and create their own cultural patterns.⁴¹ Stanley Aronowitz pointed out the importance of Willis’ work as following:

This is the enduring contribution of *Learning to Labor*: it helps us to understand that people cannot be filled with ideology as a container is filled with water. They reproduce

⁴⁰ Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p: 175.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp: 147- 152.

themselves in an antagonistic relation to the prevailing culture and ideological practices. Self-determination does not imply, however, that a new society is produced thereby; but it does mean that the future can never be as certain as the best laid plans of institutional authorities would have it.⁴²

Thus, by pioneering ethnographic research and micro level analysis in educational studies, Paul Willis has launched a new era in the sociology of education. The theoretical journey of educational studies beginning from the functionalist paradigm and continuing with theories of social and cultural reproduction, have reached a stage that represents the significance of delineating the dialectical relation between human agency and school structure. Recent studies of education consider ‘conflicts’, ‘contradictions’, ‘antagonistic experiences’, and ‘resistance’ as the focal points of their research. Consequently, schools rise as complicated fields in which neither total emancipation and liberation nor total oppression and domination take place.

Teachers as the Agents of Transformation

Although Paul Willis mainly focuses on the cultural production of working class students, re-considering the role of teachers with the light of class-cultural theory developed in *Learning to Labour* becomes necessary to a more complete picture of schooling. In the structural-functionalist perspective, teachers are reduced to mere functionaries of the state that indoctrinate future citizens. In this sense, structural functionalism disregards the potential of teachers for producing their own cultural patterns and developing critical stances against official policies. Thus, questioning the roles of teachers becomes as critical as re-considering the cultural production of students.

⁴² Stanley Aronowitz, “Preface to Morningside Edition” in *Learning to Labour* by Paul Willis.

Dennis Carlson argues that a multifaceted and less deterministic treatment of teachers and their professional life is very important for understanding the role of teachers as the agents of transformative change in schools.⁴³ Carlson criticizes the social reproduction theories that reduce teachers to functionaries that work in the service of capital through supervising, disciplining, and indoctrinating future workers. On the contrary, he analyzes the paradoxical position of teachers, i.e. as the agents of an oppressive schooling process and as oppressed workers within the bureaucratic organization of schools. In this sense, teachers not only appear as the agents of state ideology but also are represented as the victims of exploitation and oppressions within the hierarchically and bureaucratically organized school system.⁴⁴

In addition to considering teachers the agents of social and cultural production, Carlson points out some of the parallel aspects of teachers' proletarianization with the other workers. The process of teachers' proletarianization includes three ongoing processes. Firstly, new instructional technologies and materials lead to the emergence of de-skilled teachers. In this sense, predetermined class room processes result in teachers' losing power and control over their work. Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux define this process as the technical and the social division of labour that includes the growing loss of power among teachers and relegates teachers to instrumental tasks that limit the possibilities of oppositional standings.⁴⁵ Secondly, the demanding nature of pre-

⁴³ Dennis Carlson, "Teachers as Political Actors: From Reproductive Theory to the Crisis of Schooling", *Harvard Educational Review* vol. 57, no. 3 (August 1987), pp: 283-307. Also see: Dennis Carlson, "Beyond the Reproductive Theory of Teaching", *Bowles and Gintis Revisited: Correspondence and Contradiction in Educational Theory*, ed. by Mike Cole (NY: The Falmer Pres, 1988).

⁴⁴ Carlson, "Teachers as Political Actors", p: 280.

⁴⁵ Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux, *Education Still Under Siege* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1993), p: 34.

determined curriculum and frequent testing leads to the intensification of teachers' labour. Thirdly, decline in the salaries of teachers compared to other educated workers results in the increased substitutability of teachers' labor. Thus, emphasizing teachers' commonality with other groups of workers results in teachers' potential as a serious challenge to the reproductive functions of schools.⁴⁶

Consequently, focusing on the cultural production of teachers and analyzing the forms of resistance within schools provide a new perspective that enriches the one-sided account of structural functionalism. The term of resistance rises as an important theoretical construct that enables us to understand the dialectical nature of schooling. Although teachers' everyday resistances take place in de-politicized forms and remain in the expressions of discontent --usually kept in the self-contained class rooms in Carlson's words-- they are very significant to understand the actual process of the socialization of students and inculcation of formal curriculum. In this sense, visiting the theories that emphasize the resistance taking place within the daily school life becomes very important to analyze the mediation of official ideology through the agencies of teachers.

⁴⁶ Carlson, "Teachers as Political Actors", pp: 280-281.

“Çıktık açık alınla on yılda her savaştan;
On yılda on beş milyon genç yarattık her yaştan”

CHAPTER III

THE MODERNIZATION PROJECT AND NATIONAL EDUCATION IN TURKEY

In this chapter, I will examine the defining characteristics of the republican modernity project and national education in Turkey. Formation of the nation state and constitution of the national education system in Turkey took place in the same historical context. Therefore, elucidating the major aspects of the Kemalist modernity project contributes to delineating basic characteristics of national education in Turkey. This chapter firstly visits the literature that critically analyzes the Turkish modernity project and evaluates the major pillars of the republican regime. Secondly, it is aimed to examine the significant role of schools in forming the modern nation state and in reproducing its official ideology. Through this literature review, it is aimed to delineate the historical and political context of Turkish modernization as well as present the discussions on the ideological content of national education in Turkey.

1- RECONSIDERATION OF THE TURKISH MODERNIZATION PROCESS

The modernization experience in non-western countries constituted different patterns and sometimes contrasting forms compared to European examples. In Turkey, the modernization process has been mainly associated with the efforts of the state elite. In this sense, it resulted in a paradoxical situation in which the liberation of the people from old dogmas has been realized at the cost of a modernism dominated by the state authority. In this respect, Reşat Kasaba's depiction of the Ottoman and Turkish reforms as a "peculiar inversion of Enlightenment thought", indicates the ambiguity of Turkish modernism. As Kasaba argues, universalistic ideals of the enlightenment period turned out to be the tools of political leaders for promoting ethnic and official nationalisms and their particularistic goals. Moreover, the "principle of human progress" ended up exalting only one culture. Other cultures, unless they give up their particular identities, were perceived as not suitable for progress.⁴⁷ Besides, Levent Köker points out that the unique way of experiencing modernity in Turkey brought about a contradictory position of Kemalism: on the one hand Kemalism appeared as a project of modernization abolishing all handicaps in front of the process of westernization, democratization, industrialization and progress; on the other hand Kemalism itself became a horizon of all possible political expressions.⁴⁸ In other words, the Turkish modernization

⁴⁷ Reşat Kasaba, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities", *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. by S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1997), p: 27.

⁴⁸ Levent Köker "Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük: Modernleşme, Devlet ve Demokrasi", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* (Political Thought in Modern Turkey) ed. by M. Belge (İstanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 2001-2005). For a detailed discussion on the contradictory relations among state domination, modernization and democracy, see: Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* (İstanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 1990).

experience in the early republican era took place hand in hand with state domination, coercive activities, promotion of one culture, language and religion.

Historically, the origins of Turkish modernization trace back to the Ottoman reformation period, which was launched with the proclamation of Tanzimat Fermanı (literally, imperial edict of re-organization) in 1839 and Islahat Fermanı (edict of improvement) in 1856. This new era in Ottoman history was identified with the re-organization of the state authority through reformation processes in army, bureaucracy, educational and the legal systems. Although the republican period can be depicted as a continuation of the Ottoman reformation movement, the foundation of the Turkish Republic was often identified with a radical rupture from the Ottoman Empire and the republican reforms were envisioned as a revolutionary break from the vestige of empire.⁴⁹ Hence, the official discourse of the Turkish Republic drew an antagonistic picture between the past and the present in which Ottoman times corresponded to backwardness, underdevelopment, ignorance, and imprisonment of the people; while on the other hand, the Turkish Republic represented westernization, modernization/enlightenment, progress, and the emancipation of the nation from the darkness of ignorance.

The transition from a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural empire to a unitary nation state determines the main characteristics of the Turkish modernization process in the republican era. In Turkey, modernity did not appear as a gradually evolving process that had its driving force at grass root level; conversely, it had a state centered character imposed from above. According to

⁴⁹ Although the argument of the revolutionary rupture from Ottoman times constitutes a kind of *raison d'être* for the new republic, recent studies about Turkish modernization and democratization history successfully challenge this argument and emphasize the continuation of the Ottoman reformation period and republican modernization. For more discussion about the continuity of Turkish modernization process, see: Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change* (NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

Keyder, in the Turkish case, modernization was not a self-generating societal process; on the contrary, it was considered a project that was directed by the agency of the modernizing elite. The Turkish modernizers in Turkey endeavored to impose certain institutions and values as well as attempted to shape the beliefs and behaviors of people.⁵⁰ Moreover, Kasaba points out the similarities of Turkish reformers with the Jacobins who set out a radical revolution that transformed every aspect of life in France. The Jacobins re-designed the calendar system, re-named the days and months, altered the measurement systems, and re-drew the administrative map of France. The main premise of those radical changes was that once the environment is transformed, people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors will change simultaneously.⁵¹ In this respect, the Kemalist reforms have a close affinity with the Jacobins' revolution. The passage to the republican regime not only brought about the macro changes in socio-political and economical domains such as the abolition of sultanate (1922) and caliphate in (1924), the enactment of the new constitution (1924) and civil code (1926) as well as the adoption of new economical development programs; but also re-designed details of daily life in Turkey. In November 1925, the hat law was promulgated and any clothing style that had affiliation with Islamic symbols became forbidden. The western (Gregorian) calendar (1925) took the place of the Islamic one. In 1928, Arabic script was abolished and the new Turkish alphabet with Latin characters was adopted. Although those new reforms were associated with different fields of social, political and economic life, they shared the common objective of breaking bonds of the past and generating a new symbolic system through a top-down reformation method.

⁵⁰ Keyder, Çağlar "Whither the Project of Modernity?", *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. by S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1997), p: 39.

⁵¹ Kasaba, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities", p: 24.

Modernization-from-above came with nationalism-from-above, in which the state “demarcates the boundaries of nation” by defining the unity and the national collectivity as well as by determining the limits of this collective entity. In other words, formation of a new nation state came forth with the practice of defining the elements that are suitable and congenial to the ‘innate’ nature of the Turkish nation and purging the elements that are claimed to be incompatible with the composition of the new nation. Hence, the foundation of the Turkish Republic was based on the official position that presumes the homogeneity and unity of the Turkish nation. In this sense, differences could just have a folkloric place. In Keyder’s words:

...a citizenship constituted foundationally around universally applicable civil rights never developed. Instead, authoritarian nationalism emphasized unity and collective purpose. The nation was supposed to express a homogeneity deriving from ethnic unity, and this unity would be expressed in a single voice. Hence, the collectivist vision implied its authoritarian implementation because it called “for a cadre of interpreters and expressers to know and represent the unique voice of the nation.”⁵²

Thus, the early era of the Turkish Republic represented well-articulated efforts to construct a nation with ‘one language’, ‘one religion’ and ‘one culture’ under the same flag. One of the interesting characteristics of this period is that masses did not organize a collective action against top-down reforms and stayed as silent objects of the modernization without manifesting any significant popular resentment.⁵³ On the other hand, success of the Kemalist nation building project turned out to be a highly contentious issue after the 1990s. It has been argued that social, political and economical transformations beginning in the 1980s represent the dissolution of the main pillars of Kemalism and the demise of the project of

⁵² Keyder, p: 42.

⁵³ Ibid., p: 43.

modernity in Turkey. Economic liberalization in the 1980s and revitalization of the ethnic and religious identities in the 1990s -- particularly the rise of the Kurdish question and the emergence of political Islam-- indicated a renunciation of the economic policies of the Kemalist regime as well as the erosion of the republican assumption of the existence of a unitary and homogeneous Turkish nation.⁵⁴

The last decade of the twentieth century is identified with confusion, uncertainty, lack of direction and the wondering of elites about what went wrong in the modernization process. Henceforth, Turkey faces an antagonistic movement taking place at the sphere of civil society: on the one hand, the emergence of the new political identities and the rise of their silenced demands challenge the centrality of the Kemalist ideology. Escalation of the Kurdish question in the 1980s and rising demands for group-based rights undermined the official assumption implying unitary Turkish nation. Challenges for the right of education in native languages and the requests for broadcasting and publishing in Kurdish demonstrate the repressive aspects of official policies against the different cultural groups as well as indicate the limits of so-called 'civic' and 'difference-blind' citizenship of Turkey. Moreover, the rise of political Islam and the success of pro-Islamist parties in local and general elections in the 1990s have been identified as threats against the principle of secularism by the Kemalist groups. Besides, transformation of the headscarf issue into a political conflict leads to the division of both state organs and civil society into two opposing sides of the debate. In addition to the rise of contention between the Kemalist and Islamist groups, the culmination of the protests that assert wearing headscarf in the public realm as a democratic and civil right

⁵⁴ For details of this argument see: Reşat Kasaba and Sibel Bozdoğan, "Turkey at a Crossroad", *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. by. S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

broke the Kemalist monopoly as the sole interpreter of modernization and democracy.

On the other hand, recent challenges to Kemalist ideology resulted in the rise of the Kemalist consciousness in some segments of civil society. Although the Kemalist ideology was not able to organize a civil collectivity during its formation period, by the 1990s a popular support and civil initiative for protecting Kemalism and republican values from rising threats have been generated. Necmi Erdoğan identifies this new wave as the emergence of neo-Kemalism and differentiates it from the state-centered Kemalist ideology. Neo-Kemalism aims to develop a civil initiative in order to prevent the challenges to the Kemalist hegemony.⁵⁵ Emergence of civil society institutions, which explicitly identify themselves as Kemalist, organization of the Republican Day celebrations not just as a formal state ceremony but as a popular festival, re-mixing of nationalist marches by pop stars can be interpreted as indicators of a rising grip of Kemalism on civil society.

Moreover, the study of Yael Navaro Yashin focuses on how the statist discourse prevails in everyday public culture and how the official ideology is reproduced in the lives and beliefs of ordinary people. In this sense, she argues that civil society abandons its classical function as the necessary counter-balance to state; on the contrary, it generates different faces of the state.⁵⁶ In addition to Yashin, Esra Özyürek analyses how the state-led imposition of the Kemalist ideology is transformed by the citizens who voluntarily produce, circulate, and

⁵⁵ For elaboration on this issue, see: Necmi Erdoğan, “Neo-Kemalism, Organik Bunalım ve Hegemonya” (Neo-Kemalism, Organic Crisis and Hegemony), *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce* (Political Thought in Modern Turkey) ed. by M. Belge (Istanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 2001-2005).

⁵⁶ Yael Navaro Yashin, *Faces of the State* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

consume Atatürk's imagery.⁵⁷ Thus, the infiltration of state symbolism into the private sphere has been realized through the commercialization and privatization of Atatürk's image.

Hence, recent literature on state ideology and public culture in Turkey indicates the contradictory process in which the main pillars of Kemalism are challenged by the globalization process, economic liberalizations and the rise of new political identities; simultaneously Kemalism penetrates into the civil society and generates a voluntary support of the citizens. Therefore, recent ambiguities and contradictions with respect to the dominant position of Kemalism necessitate inquiries that analyze how the official ideology is reproduced and reinforced and to what extent it is challenged and transformed. In this regard, it becomes crucial to reconsider the functions of public schools, which I have already pointed out, were considered the major tools of Kemalist modernization. In the next part, after discussing the general characteristics of national education in Turkey, the role of public schools in reproducing the state ideology will be critically analyzed.

2- TURKISH NATIONAL EDUCATION

The characteristics of education in the Turkish Republic were mainly determined by the nation-building project of the Kemalist elites. Schools were seen as crucial institutions to realize a social transformation and inculcation of republican values and official ideology of the new state. In this respect, the republican education strives to socialize people in the direction of the republican way of life and aims to ensure the internalization of republican values. Hence, the republican education as a product of cultural policies of nationalist revolution was crystallized

⁵⁷ Esra Özyürek, "Miniaturizing Atatürk: Privatization of State Imagery and Ideology in Turkey", *American Ethnologist*, vol.31, no.3 (2004), pp: 374-391.

as a tool to create a new nation and a new society.⁵⁸ Hence, the main principles and the ideology of Turkish national education were settled and fixed concurrently with the formative period of the new Turkish state.

Formation of Modern Turkish Education

In Turkey, the emergence of modern schools and the westernization of the education system go back to the nineteenth century. During the recession period of the Ottoman Empire, education was seen as a solution to re-generate the prosperity of the state through re-gaining military successes. Thus, the first school established according to western norms was a naval military school (*Mühendishane-i Bahri-i Hümayûn*) founded in 1776. During the period between 1776 and 1839, a number of serious measures were taken to modernize the education system. For the first time in Turkish history, instructors from western countries were employed, foreign language education was started, students were sent to European schools with state fellowships, and primary school education became obligatory.

In the *Tanzimat* Period (1839-1876) the systematization of educational reforms was the aim and the dissemination of formal education was started. In this period, education began to shed of its militaristic purposes and aimed to adopt a cohesive function for bonding multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural nations of the empire under the Ottoman citizenship. In 1848, the first teachers' college (*Darülmüallimîn*) was established and teachers began to acquire a professional education. Although the number of graduates from teachers' college was inadequate to transform the whole system of education in Ottoman times, this

⁵⁸ Gürsen Topses, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitimin Gelişimi" (Development of Education in Republican Period), *75 Yılda Eğitim* (Education in 75 Years) (Istanbul : Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), p: 9.

first attempt to systematize teachers' education was a very significant step towards the modernization of schools.⁵⁹

Education in the Turkish Republic

The foundation of the new Turkish Republic required two processes that were necessarily linked to each other. On the one hand, it was aimed to break all forms of affiliations, attachments, sentimental and material bonds with the Ottoman times. During the transition period, people were not only suggested but also forced to strip their Ottoman identity and become the new citizens of the Turkish Republic. In order to achieve this, a total rupture at the mentality of people was necessary, and the foundation of the Turkish Republic was represented as a reference point that divided time as old and new, dark and illuminated, primitive and modern, and hence re-interpret the history according to this bracket point. On the other hand, concurrently with the process of dismantling previous forms of belonging and expurgating the ingrained practices and meaning systems, it was also required to tie these bondless people together and ensure cohesion and unity in the country. Thus, the promotion of Turkish nationalism that stipulates new terms for common belonging, national identity and shared loyalty becomes highly crucial. The diligence of re-defining the principles of commonality led to the demarcation of the elements as compatible and contradictory to the nation. Thus, the nation building project resulted in a process that defines the Turkish nation in a specific way and purges alternative definitions and forms of articulations.

In this vein, education rises as a major means to realize a total transition to the new nation state and to achieve the creation of the new Turkish nation that is

⁵⁹ For the detailed information about the history of Turkish education from beginning to 1997, see: Yahya Akyüz, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi* (Turkish Education History) (Istanbul: İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1997).

united under the rule of the Turkish state. Hence, moving on from the early days of the republic, education became a very important tool to socialize people with the principles of the new regime. Although nation building was a deliberate project of the state elites, through the ideology of education, it turns out to be a natural, inevitable and irreversible collective movement of the nation. After legitimating the break from the past and gaining popular consent for the rule of the new state, education played an important role in raising loyal citizens for the new political regime and the work force for the crawling economy of the republic. Thus, it may be argued that beginning from its inception and moving to the current time, the education system in Turkey aimed to raise “good citizens” whose unity was sustained through the nationalist sentiments and who are loyal to the Turkish state and ready to work with heart and soul for the welfare and prosperity of it.

After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the immediate objective of educational policies was to reach as many people as possible and educate/socialize them in republican ideology. Primarily, the dissemination of formal education institutions throughout the country and the increase of the literacy rate were aimed achievements. Thus, the standardization of the school system, the spread of new schools across the country and the socialization of the new teachers who are conscious about values of the new republic were sought. At the inception of the republican regime, the literacy rate was less than 10%. However, within a short period, important developments were achieved in terms of the increment in the number of public schools and number of students.⁶⁰ The other development that took place during the republican era was providing equal opportunity of education

⁶⁰ While between the periods of 1923-24, there were 4894 primary schools and 341,941 students were attending at those schools, this number reached to 6,598 primary schools and 489,299 students in 1930-31, and 10,596 primary schools and 955,747 students in 1940-41. See: Akyüz, p: 304.

for people coming from all income groups regardless of their gender differences. During this era, it was aimed to abolish the high gap between the number of male and female students. While in 1923-24 there were 62,954 female students at the primary level of education, this number reached to 174,227 in 1930-31. Although the content of education contained many authoritarian and undemocratic elements, a kind of democratization of schooling was attained through providing the equal opportunity of education to people who did not have chance for education before. Thus, the republican education enabled a kind of upward mobility for the students coming from lower groups.

Besides the advancements in the spread of schooling and significant increases in student enrollment statistics, the content of national education became a highly debated issue during the foundation period. Although the education system and the formal curriculum in Turkey underwent some transformations and changes during the history of the Turkish Republic, the main pillars that had been delineated in the 1920s continue to be the defining principles of the current education system. Besides, the early republican education is usually considered the “golden era” of educational developments and achievements and thus the adherence to the principles of this era is endeavored to be sustained. Hence, an elaborate analysis of the principles that define the characteristics of early republican education provides us with significant insights about the groundwork of the education system in our times.

Ismail Kaplan argues that the Turkish education was built on three constitutive components, namely “nationalism”, “religion” and “utilitarian-instrumentalism” during the foundation of the republic.⁶¹ As stated before, nationalist ideology was required to create a sense of belonging and to ensure the

⁶¹ Ismail Kaplan, *The Ideology of National Education in Turkey and Its Implications for Political Socialization* (Ph.D diss., Bogazici University, 1998), pp: 281- 283.

unity of people under the name of the Turkish nation. Besides, the utilitarian logic in education pursued the aim of creating a workforce for the economy of the new nation state. Although “nationalism” and “utilitarian instrumentalism” constantly determine the logic of Turkish nationalism, the role of ‘religion’ in education system become in flux. As educational policies change from eliminating all of the religious elements from formal curriculum to collaborating with religion in the formation of loyal citizens, the role of religion in education has been a highly disputed issue.

Although it is aimed to adopt the western school systems and modern education techniques, the formal curriculum of republican education focuses on inspiring the students with nationalist feelings. In this respect, Ziya Gökalp’s formula of “National education and modern training” was embraced as the main policy of the national education.⁶² Along with the propagation of nationalist sentiments in the textbooks and in the curricular programs, policy makers of the early period explicitly declared the necessity of prevailing Turkish nationalism. In 1924, minister of education Vasıf Çınar promulgated a directive which declared that education should be based on “national substance and modern techniques”.⁶³ Besides, in the directive issued on May 1927 by Mustafa Necati the Minister of Education, it was stated that education should emphasize the national issues and focus on Turkey and Turkishness.⁶⁴

Furthermore, in this period, the national days were designed as important symbolic celebrations and they became the means of generating/stimulating nationalist feelings of students. Along with the nationalist content of the textbooks

⁶² “Milli terbiye ve asri talim: İşte tedris sahasında istihdaf edeceğimiz gaye” see: Ziya Gökalp, *Milli Terbiye ve Maarif Meselesi* (National Nurture and Education Issue) (Ankara: Diyarbakır’ı Tanıtma ve Turizm Derneği Yayınları, 1962), p: 31.

⁶³ Directive of education that was issued on 8 September 1924 mentioned in Akyüz, p: 286.

⁶⁴ “Müdür ve muallimler gençlerin memleketimiz ve milli cemiyetimiz için hazırlamaları lazım geldiğini daima hatırlamak, öğretim ve eğitim faaliyetlerine Türkiye’yi ve Türklüğü merkez almak mecburiyetindedirler.” in Akyüz, p: 287.

and lectures in classrooms, performances during the celebrations brought the public visibility and reinforced the nationalist feelings and sentiments of people. In 1929, primary schools' regulation explicitly stated the necessity to use every means that breed and strengthen nationalist feelings in children. For that purpose, "Turkish revolution, the benefit of the revolution and the wars that were fought to reach those benefits should be explained. The celebration and performances that are organized during the great national days such as 23 April and the Republican Days, give opportunities to increase national sensitivity."⁶⁵

The other main principle that consistently defines Turkish education is utilitarian-instrumentalism. According to this logic, education becomes a tool to pursue success and progress in material life. Utilitarian-instrumentalist dominance in education restricts the philosophical dimensions of education such as teaching critical thinking, questioning and inquiring; on the contrary, it privileges the knowledge and information that are useful and pragmatic for material life. In Mustafa Kemal's words: "The method to be implemented in education and instruction is to make knowledge a practical and usable instrument which provides success in material life rather than a superfluous ornament, a means of domination or a civil pleasure."⁶⁶

Lastly, the impact of religion in Turkish education has always been a very controversial issue. The role of religion in the education system has been oscillating from exclusion of all religious components to the adoption of religion as a

⁶⁵ "Çocuklarda milli hislerin beslenmesi ve kuvvetlendirilmesi için her fırsattan istifade edilmelidir. Türk inkılabı, bu inkılabın nimetlerine bu nimetlere erişmek için yapılan savaşlar layıkıyla anlatılmalıdır. 23 Nisan ve Cumhuriyet bayramları gibi büyük milli günlerde mektepte tertib olunacak müsamereler ve şenlikler çocukların milli hassasiyetini artırmak için fırsatlar verir." in Akyüz, p: 301.

⁶⁶ "Eğitim ve öğretimde uygulanacak usul, bilgiyi insan için fazla bir süs, bir tahakküm vasıtası, yahut medeni bir zevkten ziyade maddi hayatta muvaffak olmayı temin eden pratik ve kullanılabilir bir cihaz haline getirmektir." mentioned in Ismail Kaplan, p:136.

complementary partner of the official ideology. It can be argued that the secularization of the education system was the most radical and disputed reform of the early republican era. During the formative period of the republican regime, a series of decisive steps towards the secularization were gradually taken. The first fundamental step towards the secularization of education was taken with the enactment of the law on Unification of Instruction (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) on March 3rd, 1924. This law aimed to centralize the decision making organs and the control mechanisms of the education system in order to attain the unity of purposes and objectives of the national education. Hence, all of the educational institutions were brought under the control of the Ministry of Education. The religious schools (*medrese*), which were previously functioning under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Foundations (*Şer'iyeye ve Evkâf Vekaleti*), were connected to the Ministry of Education and all of them were replaced by Pastor and Preacher Schools (*İmam Hatip Mektepleri*).⁶⁷ Although 29 Pastor and Preacher Schools were opened in 1924, this number was decreased to 2 in the period of 1926-1927. During the years of 1929-1930, all of the religious schools were closed. In 1927, obligatory religion courses were eliminated from the program of primary and secondary schools. In 1928, Arabic script was replaced by the new Turkish alphabet consisting of Latin characters and Arabic and Persian language courses were removed from the curricula.⁶⁸ All religious elements were purged from the school system and rationalist and positivist way of thinking became the only legitimate source of education. The belief that “science should be the sole guide” was one of the major

⁶⁷ For a detailed discussion on pastor and preacher schools, see: Bahhattin Akşit, “Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late Ottoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in the Republic”, *Islam in Modern Turkey* ed. by Richard Tapper (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1991).

⁶⁸ İsmail Kaplan, p: 158.

characteristics of republican education.⁶⁹ In 1924, Mustafa Kemal addressed teachers: “For everything in the world, for materiality, for spirituality, for life and for success, the most genuine guide is science and technology. Searching any other guide other than science and technology is a sign of heedlessness, ignorance and aberration”⁷⁰

However, beginning from the 1950s, the secularization measures of the early republican era began to deteriorate. In this period, compulsory religious courses were re-inserted to curriculum and Pastor and Preacher Schools were re-established. The 12 of September 1980 military coup came with the culmination of religious dominance in the education. After the military coup in 1980, a kind of Turkish-Islamic synthesis became the leading principle in education. Thus, the impact of religion on the education system was gradually consolidated.

Ideology of Turkish National Education

Recently, the critical examination of Turkish national education and the attempt to uncover the ideological aspects permeated in the education system attract the interest of scholars both from educational studies and from political science. Formal education is not a neutral domain that is exempt from power relations and the domination of ideological formation; on the contrary, it is closely linked with the objectives and needs of the ruling ideology and its elites. However, stripping the education system out of its so-called ‘neutral’ and ‘formal’ clothing requires re-consideration of the official policies, formal documents and daily practices taking place in schools. Thus, recent studies that critically examine legal documents including constitutions, laws and regulations, the directives of governments and

⁶⁹ Topses, p: 15.

⁷⁰ “...Dünyada her şey için, maddiyat için, maneviyat için, hayat için, en hakiki mürşit ilimdir, fendir. İlim ve fennin haricinde mürşit aramak gaflettir, cehalettir, dalalettir.” Quoted from Güneş Kazdağlı, *Atatürk ve Bilim* (Ataturk and Science) (Ankara: TÜBİTAK Yayınları, 2002), p: 43.

Ministry of Education, and party programs provide us with very insightful analyses about the dominant political ideology within schools. Moreover, re-consideration of formal curriculums and textbooks draws out the general characteristics and ideological content of the national education in Turkey.

Taha Parla brings a critical outlook to the formal documents of the republican regime and uncovers the nationalistic, leader-worshipping, militarist and anti-democratic aspects of Kemalism.⁷¹ In the third volume, Parla examines the ideology of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) by focusing on the party program of 1931. Herein, Parla concludes that the Turkish national education system does not aim to bring up students who are equipped with universal values and critical minds; on the contrary, it strives to raise citizens who internalize the principles of the mono-party regime and who are loyal to the republican leaders, Turkish state, and Grand National Assembly. Moreover, knowledge does not have any value in essence but is perceived as a tool to create the materialist *homo-economicus*.⁷²

In addition to Parla's examination of official documents of the republican state, textual analyses of the early republican textbooks, syllabi and curriculums also render the founding principles of national education in Turkey. Barak Salmoni, through examining life knowledge (*Hayat Bilgisi*) courses in the period of 1927-50 and focusing on 1927 and 1936 primary curriculums, dwells on how the processes of westernizing, modernization and nationalist socialization became compatible with each other and how they appeared as complementary for the new Republic of

⁷¹ In the first and second volumes, Parla makes a textual analysis of the personal statements of Atatürk who is the chief ideologue of the official ideology in Turkey. In the third volume, he examines the official documents of Republican People's Party, which was founded by Atatürk and became the only authorized party during the mono-party rule. See: Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmî Kaynakları* (Official Sources on Political Culture in Turkey) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991).

⁷² Parla, pp: 71-79.

Turkey.⁷³ Hence, Salmoni explores how the modern global pedagogical methods were adopted and at the same time how the nationalist socialization goal was pursued in the field of education. His examination elucidates the gradual increase in the dose of nationalist indoctrination and the eagerness to cultivate students with official state ideology from 1927 to 1936 primary school curriculum. However, although the intensity of the indoctrination changes from one decade to the other, Salmoni concludes that “life knowledge” courses strive to cultivate order and discipline, loyalty to the state leaders and mono-party rule, love for the republic and commitment to the unity of the nation.⁷⁴

One of the most comprehensive bodies of research on the ideology of the education system in Turkey and its implications for political socialization is conducted by Ismail Kaplan.⁷⁵ By extensively surveying the constitutions, programs of major parties, laws and regulations on education and the speeches of the political leaders, Kaplan examines how the education system was directed with the statist and nationalist ideology. Consequently, Kaplan finds out that the Turkish education system is far from enriching students with democratic and humanistic values or teaching them independent thinking, mutual respect, toleration and cooperation; on the contrary, it is aimed to raise permanently loyal and obedient children who are bred by nationalistic values. Thus, the education system in Turkey does not adopt a

⁷³ Barak Salmoni, “Turkish Knowledge for a Modern Life: Innovative Pedagogy and Nationalist Substance in Primary Schooling, 1927-50”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 4, No.3 (Autumn 2003), pp. 103-144.

⁷⁴ In addition to the examination of “life knowledge” courses, Salmoni also analyses how the concept of democracy is defined and transmitted in schools during the formative period of the republican regime. He reaches the conclusion that since democracy is interpreted as the necessary condition for stability, order and solidarity during the early years, military interventions to civilian politics and non-democratic policies against cultural differences do not appear as incompatible to the democratic rule. See: Barak A. Salmoni, “Ordered Liberty and Disciplined Freedom: Turkish Education and Republican Democracy, 1923-50”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, v40, i2 (March 2004).

⁷⁵ Ismail Kaplan, *The Ideology of National Education in Turkey and Its Implications for Political Socialization* (Ph.D diss., Bogazici University, 1998).

“free, egalitarian and universalistic mentality of enlightenment”; conversely, it includes authoritarian, totalitarian, and repressive elements.

Moreover, Kaplan accepts that education is not a one-sided inculcation but an interactive process. The interactivity of education leads to the fact that “what is taught is not necessarily what is learned or conversely, what is learned is not necessarily what is taught. To put it differently, values inculcated by the schools are not necessarily internalized and adopted by the student”. However, instead of pondering the complex and contradictory sides of the socialization process in schools, Kaplan concludes that “when the values transmitted by different factors are parallel to each other there occur no neutralizing interventions or conflicts, there remain no countervailing tendencies. In such an environment what is taught at school tends to be what is learned by students.”⁷⁶

Although analyses of the legal documents produce very important conclusions about the ideology of education system, the major shortfall of these studies is the absence of teachers and students in the picture of education. It should be said that the attempt to delineate a macro picture of the education system in Turkey and to stipulate the general characteristics of it creates very important and comprehensive analyses of education. However, these studies result in the underestimation of the complex and contradictory sides of interactive processes within classrooms for the sake of drawing a consistent picture. Hence, macro analyses become inadequate to examine the impact of subjectivities on the process of socialization, results of the mediation of formal principles, and thus possible conflicts and crisis during the transmission of republican values to the students. In this respect, qualitative field studies that deal with the relation between the official

⁷⁶ Ismail Kaplan, p: 287.

discourse and educational practices become very significant to indicate the complexities of schools.

Qualitative Research on Turkish National Education

The principles of education constantly reiterated in the official documents and reproduced through formal curriculums and the textbooks are carried out by the agencies of teachers, students and school administration. Hence, taking the impact of agencies into consideration enables us to fathom the incompatibilities between what is declared in *de jure* but practiced in *de facto*. In other words, rather than focusing on the official explanation of republicanism, nationalism, and democracy, examining how the very actors in the education system conceptualize and interpret these terms enhances and enriches the study of education. In this sense, qualitative field research that focuses on the interpretations and meaning systems of the agencies broaden the horizon of educational research. In addition, delving into the conflicts between what is officially stated and what is practically adopted, it explores the transformations and distortions taking place in the sphere of official ideology.

The research of Buket Türkmen on the transformation of laicism and high school youth becomes very relevant to the concerns mentioned above.⁷⁷ Türkmen explores how individuals experience social transformations and how those new experiences result in the transformation of the main dynamics that constitute the social domain.⁷⁸ Thus, she endeavors to analyze how the rise of political Islam leads

⁷⁷ Buket Türkmen, "Laikliğin Dönüşümü: Liseli Gençler, Türban ve Atatürk Rozeti" (Transformation of Laicism: High School Youth, Headscarf and Atatürk Rosette), *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri* (New Public Faces of Islam) ed. by Nilüfer Göle (Istanbul: Metis, 2000).

⁷⁸ Herein, Buket Türkmen adopts Touraine's conception of the subject. According to Touraine subject is a call to transform the Self into an actor. Thus, it is "individuals' will to act and to be recognized as an actor." See: Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass. : Blackwell, 1995).

to the transformation of experiences in daily life and how this transformation requires redefining the concept of secularism. In this sense, the conflictual picture of schools stemming from the clash between values of formal education and the perception/attitudes of students becomes apparent. Social transformations taking place in the 1980s resulted in the questioning of the borders of the public realm and this transformation resulted in the incongruence between the holistic nature of state schools and experiences of students who have grown up in a times of social change. By focusing on in-depth interviews with high school students, Türkmen talks about a kind of crisis within schools that leads to the lessening effect of schools' values on daily lives of students.

This insightful study of Buket Türkmen exposes the tensional interaction between the formal domain of schools and the experiences of students who have actually grown up in the unsettled times of the 1980s. Thus, she demonstrates how the micro studies focusing on the lived experiences of the people bring light to the contradictory processes taking place in schools. Although Türkmen's study is very elucidatory, she fails to analyze the mediatory role of teachers. In other words, while analyzing the clash between the official doctrine that is transmitted by schools and students, she does not deal with the position of teachers with respect to the official curriculum. Hence, a qualitative study that focuses on how teachers mediate formal curriculum and examines the possible contestations during the transmission of official discourse becomes very significant.

In addition to the qualitative study of Türkmen, Sam Kaplan analyzes how political concepts such as democracy, freedom, and civil rights are constituted inside and outside of the schools as well as how they are mediated and refracted in daily

conversations and social practices.⁷⁹ Through conducting fieldwork between 1989 and 1991, Kaplan finds out that the concept of democracy turned out to be a “scaffold” that signifies an ambiguous and contingent framework. In this sense, along with procedural definitions in textbooks, people from different generations, locality, gender and socioeconomic class attach various meanings to democracy. Although students associate democracy with individual freedoms, their parents usually connote it with the patrimonial regime in which the father state provides material opportunities and freedoms. Thus, the discerning study of Kaplan through employing the tools of anthropology reveals the contested nature of political signifiers and indeterminate links between formally designed socialization in schools and actual interpretations and practices.

In this thesis, I also aim to focus on the experience and interpretations of the actual actors in the education system and attempt to undermine the idea that deliberate plans, programs and objectives completely determine the actual practices and processes within school. More specifically, through examining teachers’ interpretations of republican values, democracy and cultural differences, I aim to expose the incongruity between formally imposed definitions and teachers’ interpretations of those terms. I argue that conceptualizing teachers as direct tools of the state ideology and students as passive receivers of this indoctrination may lead to an over-simplified picture of education. However, focusing on the actual agents of education and their perceptions of formal curriculum becomes indispensable for reaching a more elaborative examination of education. Focusing on the actual interpretations and practices of teachers enables me to analyze how the agency of teachers generates refractions during the transmission of formal curriculum. In other

⁷⁹ Sam Kaplan, “Nuriye’s Dilemma: Turkish Lessons of Democracy and the Gendered State”, *American Ethnologist*, vol. 30, no: 3 (2003), pp. 401-417.

words, through differentiating ‘what should be taught’ from ‘what is actually being taught’, I will dwell on how teachers mediate the formal curriculum.

CHAPTER IV
MEDIATION OF REPUBLICAN TEACHERS: REPRODUCTION AND
CONTESTATION

This chapter aims to analyze the teachers' mediation of official ideology. Through this research, we will be able to see how the interplay of domination and resistance takes place in daily school life and thus analyze how republican teachers can both reinforce and contest the reproduction of official ideology. In this sense, this study endeavors to enrich the theories that conceptualize schools as uniform tools of the state and reveals the complicated nature of the education process by focusing on the contradictions, resistance, and transgressions taking place within daily life of schools.

In the previous chapter, I have surveyed the literature that theorizes the Turkish modernization project and critically reviewed the studies that conceptualize schools as the centers that reproduce the official ideology and endeavor to create 'good citizens' of the republic. In this chapter, I will dwell on how primary school teachers define and interpret the republican regime, democratic values, and cultural differences. Through focusing on their personal statements, interpretations and experiences in schools, I aim to delineate how republican teachers both stay within and challenge the boundaries of the Kemalist paradigm. Moreover, I will analyze

how the contradictory lived experiences within schools, which are not anticipated and covered by formal doctrines, lead to the transformations and distortions in the ideology of formal curriculum as well as how the teachers' attempt for reconciling universal and democratic values with Kemalism results in the impingements on the boundaries of Kemalism. In other words, by portraying schools as a 'contested domain', this research will focus on the processes in which mediation of formal curriculum by teachers results in the reproduction, transformation, and challenges in official ideology but does not lead to a paradigmatic shift that endows teachers with alternative breadth of view. Consequently, I will explore how teachers' aspirations for a democratic, universal education system that is sensitive to cultural diversities are restricted and curtailed due to the encircling of Kemalism.

In the first part of this chapter, I want to focus on teachers' reflections on the commemoration of Republican Days and elucidate how teachers define republican values and mediate them. In this vein, rather than focusing on the consistent definition of republican values and tenets of the Kemalist ideology delineated by the state organs, I aim to depict the contradictory conceptions of primary school teachers. In the second part, teachers' conception of democracy and their ideas on inculcation of democratic habits at schools will be analyzed. In this respect, I will dwell on the intertwined borders of democracy, popular sovereignty and republicanism. Moreover, teachers' perceptions on the functioning of democracy at schools as well as their personal interventions to provide a more democratic milieu for students will be presented. In the third part, teachers' conception of cultural differences and their attitudes towards people coming from different ethno-cultural groups will be explored. In this sense, I will analyze how contradictory experiences

of teachers who have worked and lived in the regions, populated by culturally different people, lead to the refractions and transformations in the official discourse.

1- COMMEMORATING THE REPUBLICAN DAYS AND INTERPRETING REPUBLICAN VALUES

In order to elucidate the teachers' ideas and sentiments about republican values, I choose to concentrate on the commemoration of the Republican Days. Talking about a familiar activity that teachers participate/organize every year in schools enabled me to investigate more abstract issues such as values of republic, meaning of Kemalism and their significance. In the Turkish conjuncture, state officials appear very reluctant to express their political ideas on Kemalism, republican state and its ideology. Therefore, talking about the Republican Days served to overcome teachers' reservations about sharing their ideas on political issues and contributed to the formation of a more unrestricted and candid interview atmosphere.

Before moving on how primary school teachers perceive the celebration of the Republican Days, I want to briefly point out the theoretical importance of commemoration days. In this respect, John Gillis presents a very insightful analysis on the relation between commemoration days and the formation of national identity.⁸⁰ According to Gillis people having a national memory and sharing a common history are bound together not just by remembering but also by forgetting.⁸¹ In this sense, construction of a "founding moment" that represents the end of the past period and indicates the beginning of a new future becomes very important. The "founding moment" does not naturally come to view but it is

⁸⁰ John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity", *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. by Gillis (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁸¹ Gillis, p: 7.

constructed by official history and all other events are arrayed with respect to this moment. In this account, official history has a selective nature, which eliminates any alternative interpretations of the history and fixes the narration of the past around certain privileged events.

Through commemoration days, a common narrative is constructed about the foundation of the state and disseminated throughout the nation. In this process both the performers and the audience are interpellated as the national subjects. Secondly, besides nationalizing both the audience and performers through constructing a public memory, commemoration days contribute to “historicize the nation”. Thus, beyond their personal history, people are located in a national history. In other words, people are related to the official interpretation of the past. Thirdly, national days structure the public time on a yearly basis. Hence, independent from which sentiments are evoked, it becomes impossible to remain indifferent to the national days.

Alev Çınar examines the contested site of Turkish national history through employing the conceptual framework of Gillis. She inquires how the nation is inserted into the official history through celebrating the Republican Days and how this official history is challenged through unofficial celebrations of the Conquest of Istanbul by Islamist circles.⁸² She claims that establishment of the republican regime was considered the “founding moment” of the Turkish nation and all other events were arranged according to this moment. By exposing the adversity of war time and the arduous conditions that were experienced during the foundation of the republic, the Republican Day celebrations serve to historicize the nation around the official

⁸² Alev Çınar, “National History as a Contested Site: The Conquest of Istanbul and Islamist Negotiations of the Nation”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2001), pp: 364-391.

interpretation of the history. Besides, celebrations on national days strive to exhibit a public visibility that manifests a unity and collectivity of people around the principles of the republic.

The functions of national days become more explicit and concrete in the words of my respondents. In the following parts, teachers' representation of the republican regime will be discussed through focusing on their thoughts and sentiments evoked by the Republican Day celebrations.

Transition from Ottoman Rule:

The common point mentioned by almost all of my respondents was that the foundation of the Turkish Republic represents a turning point in the history of Turkey and represents a kind of emancipation from the calamity of the Ottoman state and its institutions. Thus, teachers' perceptions on the foundation of the republic exemplify the selective nature of official history and construction of a 'founding moment' that conceives a great national victory as the starting point. In the words of the teachers, Alev Çınar's argument becomes apparent "in order to create a new beginning, an end has to be created as well. ... This required the construction of the immediate past as worthless, corrupt, declining"⁸³.

The binary opposition between the Ottoman rule and the republican regime is explicitly demonstrated in the words of Ahmet Bey.⁸⁴ During my interview, Ahmet Bey began explaining the importance of the republican regime with a poem that he had written for a Republican Day celebration in Giresun. The first stanza of

⁸³ Çınar, p: 370

⁸⁴ Ahmet Bey was one of my respondents from Canan Okur İlköğretim Okulu and has been working as a primary school teacher for 27 years. He spent most of his professional life working as a teacher of the public schools located in the eastern villages of Turkey. Hence, Ahmet Bey experienced all kinds of difficulties in his professional life: either in the form of insufficient physical conditions for carrying out education such as lack of necessary school building or motorway to reach the school or in the form of the cultural and linguistic handicaps such as teaching how to read and write in Turkish to Kurdish students who do not know a word of Turkish.

the poem was “How happy you are that the Republic has been founded, fezs were abolished, and hats were invented”⁸⁵ and then continued with the closure of religious schools (*medrese*), the establishment of modern schools, and thus rose the sun in the country. Not just the words of the poem but the enthusiasm of Ahmet Bey while telling me about the event brought out that the foundation of the republic is perceived as a decisive moment in Turkish history and the republican regime is understood in its antagonism to Ottoman times.

Ahmet Bey’s poem exalts the prevalence of western style clothes and the foundation of modern schools through scorning the Ottoman version of them. Thus, there is an inclination that splits history ‘before the republic’ and ‘after the republic’. In this perspective, the immediate past before the republican regime is condemned, while the republican period is completely praised. Thus, the republic symbolizes “a transition to a different rule other than Ottoman”⁸⁶ and constitutes a liberation moment from the old regime. While all of the positive developments and progressive movements are associated with the republican regime, the immediate past stands as symbol of backwardness and oppression.

In the poem of Ahmet Bey, the analogy of the “rising sun” represents the establishment of the republic and indicates how the republican regime brought progress, development, and westernization. On the other hand, Ahmet Bey uses the same analogy for his appointment to a backward village in the east of Turkey. He describes the arrival of a new teacher to the eastern region of Turkey as the “arrival

⁸⁵ Ahmet Bey: “Ne mutlu sana cumhuriyet kuruldu, fesler kaldırıldı, şapkalar icat edildi”

⁸⁶ Nazım Bey: “Osmanlı yönetiminden farklı bir yönetime geçiş olarak düşünüyoruz biz cumhuriyeti.”

of light” or “rise of sun”.⁸⁷ Thus, the civilizing mission of the Turkish modernization project is manifested in the words of Ahmet Bey. With this respect, the republican regime personifies itself in the bodies of republican teachers and Ahmet Bey’s personal success of persuading the villagers to celebrate the Republican Day turns out to be the success of the republican project in pursuit of the civilizing mission. In this sense, one of the main reasons behind Ahmet Bey’s enthusiasm concerning his poem was that when his daughter, who was also a student at this school, read this poem during the celebration, the words of the poem became a matter of dispute in the village. Especially, Ahmet Bey’s support for the dress code resulted in the opposition of villagers. Moreover, one of the villagers explicitly confronted Ahmet Bey and expressed his vexation about the lyrics. However, Ahmet Bey concludes his anecdote by telling how he persuaded that villager about the merits of the republic and gained the collective support by forming a dialogue with people and explaining the meaning of the republic to them.

The binary opposition between the republic and Ottoman rule also becomes explicit in the following words of Güler Hanım:

(During the Republican Day celebrations) the concept of democracy is taught. ... What were we *before* the republic and what did we become *after* the republic? We can compare those two and conclude that the republic is an *exit moment*. ... After the republic, reforms took place, suffrage and right to be elected, the concept of democracy, abolition of the sultanate and the banishment of the sultan, electing the rulers through free will became possible after the republic. We become aware of those developments through the (Republican Day) celebrations.⁸⁸ (with my emphasis)

⁸⁷ Ahmet Bey: “Örneğin o köye atandım, beni karşılayacak vatandaş köyüme yeni bir öğretmen gelmiş, ışık gelmiş, köyüme yeni bir güneş doğuyor, o güneş beni aydınlatacak, çocuklarımı aydınlatacak mantığıyla gittiğimde maalesef...”

⁸⁸ Güler Hanım: “Demokrasi kavramı veriliyor. 29 Ekimde Cumhuriyet kavramını öğreniyoruz ve 29 Ekimlerden sonra neler kazandığımızı öğreniyoruz. Cumhuriyetten *önce* neydik, cumhuriyetten *sonra* ne olduk, bu ikisini mukayese edebiliyoruz. İşte bir sürü haklarımız oldu, onun bir *çıkış noktası* olduğunu hükmedebiliyoruz. Yani bu cumhuriyetten önce yoktu, cumhuriyetten sonra devrimler

Güler Hanım was originally a journalist but eleven years ago making a radical decision she became a primary school teacher. Due to her previous position, she was more comfortable while mentioning the political issues and problems than the other interviewees. Her expressions about celebrating the Republican Days demonstrate that she was a fervent supporter of the republican regime. Güler Hanım conceptualizes the foundation of the republic as “an exit moment” that leads to the prevalence of democracy. Thus, in the words of Güler Hanım the republican regime becomes congruent with the principles of democracy. For instance, during her lessons, when she encounters resistance from a student against republican values, she immediately points out the liberation of women through republican rule in order to prove the auspiciousness of the republican regime. She also shows Iran and Afghanistan as the examples of undemocratic countries and argues that when someone criticizes the republic or Atatürk, the very act of criticism takes place owing to Atatürk and his reforms.⁸⁹ In this sense, the anti-liberal and authoritarian sides of Kemalism are excised and the republican regime becomes identical with liberal values such as ‘right for self-governing’, ‘abolition of patriarchal system’, ‘freedom of speech and expression’, and ‘the sustenance of critical thought’. However, those liberal values are not perceived as the natural rights of individuals; on the contrary, they gain legitimate ground within the framework of Kemalism. Thus, although the republican regime has been “an exit moment” from the Ottoman rule, there appears no ‘exit moment’ from the Kemalist paradigm.

oldu, seçme seçilme hakkı, demokrasi kavramı yani padişahın gittiğini, artık saltanatın kalktığını, bundan sonra kişilerin artık kendi özgür iradesiyle istediği kişiyi seçebileceğine cumhuriyetten sonra mümkün olduğunu, o bayram kutlamalarıyla onu anlıyoruz.”

⁸⁹ Güler Hanım: “Bazı ülkeleri örnek gösterdiğiniz zaman işte İran, Afganistan gibi, kadın özellikle mesela kız öğrenciyi ele alacak olursak, kızların ikinci sınıf görülmesini örnek gösteriyorum. İşte çıkıp benimle bunu konuşmasını bile bir demokratik bir şey olarak örnek verebiliyorum. Yani ‘sen bana bunu söyleyebiliyorsun’, bunu söyleme düşüncesi bile Atatürk sayesinde olmuştur.”

Besides, the foundation of the republic is represented as a progressive moment desired by the popular will (or that should be desired once the ignorance of people is eradicated). During talks about the transition period, there is always an endeavor to prove that the republican regime is ‘good’ for Turkish people whether or not it is preferred by or imposed on the public. In the words of teachers, the Ottoman times were identified with unequal status of women and religious education in which the punishment of bastinado (*falaka*) was used. Thus, the foundation of the republican regime, which is portrayed as an attempt to eradicate the backwardness, becomes indispensable for the goodness of people.⁹⁰ In this vein, either the ignorance about the merits of the republic or the ‘ill-willed’ people who desire the continuation of the old regime may lead to the criticism or rejection of the republican regime. Herein, the following words of Erkan Bey expose a position of ‘ends justify the means’ and he attempts to justify the authoritative sides of republican reforms:

At that time, maybe Turkish society might not have adopted the republican regime. He (Atatürk) found it (republic) appropriate for the Turkish nation and he is right about that. Those were top down reforms and they could be rejected. Perhaps, the public would not embrace those reforms and objectives. Atatürk set out some objectives such as reaching to the stage of modern civilizations. However, the level of education and religious beliefs of the public became impediments to these objectives. ... From time to time, some insurgencies, reactionary movements took place. ... That was not the fault of the people because they did not know what was the democracy and republic. They had a low level of education and they were ruled for a long time by monarchy. They were not aware of the developments in the world. Of course, the ill-willed people who wanted the continuation of the old regime directed the people in this

⁹⁰ Ahmet B: “Neden bu ülke cumhuriyeti istedi? Neden istedi, okullar yoktu, medreseler vardı yani dayaklı eğitim, falakaya yatırmalı eğitim vardı. İkincisi, erkek kadının önünde 10 metre önde yürürdü. Kadının yüzü kapalı, yani çok af buyurun kadının sırtında sopası karnında sıpası eksik olmaz mantığına karşı çıktığı için cumhuriyet ilan edildi.”

way. Thus, in the period of Atatürk, I don't think that people had yet internalized the republic and democracy.⁹¹

Erkan Bey is a teacher from Mualla Altın İlköğretim Okulu. He has been working for more than 26 years and spent his early professional years in the eastern part of Turkey. While talking about the foundation of the republic, he indicates the undemocratic aspects of the Kemalist modernization project. Thus, by mentioning the top-down imposition of the reforms, the insurgencies that occurred during the reformation period, and the lack of a grass root support for the republican regime, Erkan Bey gives the impression of developing a critical analysis about the early days of the republic. However, his critical remarks about the Turkish modernization project are dissolved without challenging the legitimacy of the Kemalist paradigm. The major reasons behind the opposition against the reformation process turn out to be either ignorance of the merits of the republic or the manipulation of 'ill-willed' (*kötü niyetli*) people. In this sense, he does not mention confrontations against the authoritarian rule of the republican regime and assumes that people react against democracy rather than authoritarianism. In this respect, the authoritarian side of the reforms becomes exempt from any kind of criticism. Hence, he rationalizes the undemocratic character of the Kemalist reforms and legitimates the authoritarian rule by conceptualizing the republican regime and reforms as absolutely good for people. Moreover, he points out a deterministic account in which education of the

⁹¹ Erkan Bey: "O zaman Türk halkına belki sorsalar cumhuriyeti falan kabul etmezdi herhalde. O, Türk milleti için bunu uygun görmüş ki haklı. Yani tepeden inme devrimler bunlar, reddedilebilirdi. Dolayısıyla bu devrimleri, bu hedefi, amacı halk kucaklamamış belki de. Atatürk belli hedefler koymuş çağdaş uygarlık düzeyi gibi ama halkın o zaman ki eğitim durumu, dinsel inançları falan hepsi engel olmuştur. ... Yer yer bazı ayaklanmalar, olaylar da meydana geldi. ... Bu halka da kabahat bulmak, suç bulmak mümkün değil, çünkü halk demokrasi nedir, cumhuriyet nedir bilmiyor. Uzun yıllar monarşiyle idare edilmiş, eğitim düzeyi işte, dünyadaki gelişmelerden de pek haberdar değil. Tabi kötü niyetli kişiler, eski rejimin devamını isteyenler de halkı bu konuda sürekli yönlendirmişlerdir. Dolayısıyla en azından Atatürk döneminde halkımızın bilinçli olarak cumhuriyeti, demokrasiyi özümsemiğini, benimsediğini düşünemiyorum."

public and elimination of 'ill willed' people will directly lead to embracement of the republican regime.

Besides, Erkan Bey continues his words by accepting the mistakes that were made during the foundation period. He points out that Atatürk as a human being can also make mistakes. Use of violence during the suppression of uprisings and the policies of relegation and proscription exemplify the mistakes that Atatürk made during the foundation period. However, according to Erkan Bey, Atatürk's 'good-will', his patriotism and altruism, his aspiration for the development and modernization of Turkey invalidate any kind of criticisms about Atatürk. In Erkan Bey's words, Atatürk preferred to establish the republican regime in order to bring the modern forms of governance and rejected the maintenance of the monarchical rule and become one of the successors of the Ottoman dynasty.⁹² Hence, choosing the establishment of the republic rather than declaring his sultanate proves the 'good-will' of Atatürk and justifies any failure that took place during the foundation years.

Remembering the Memories of the War Years:

Commemoration of the Republican Days becomes an important tool to remind the students about the painful experiences of the Turkish independence war that was launched after the defeat in the First World War. Thus, the foundation of the republic represents a military success against the invasion of the motherland and

⁹² Erkan Bey: " Belki eleştirmek de güzel, ona da katılıyorum, demokrasi gereği ama bazı şeyleri de inkar etmek yanlış. Yani haklıya hakkını vermek lazım. Eleştirecek yanları da olabilir. Atatürk bir monarşinin devamında yeni bir devlet kurmuş, bunu iyi niyetle yaptığı açık yani tartışılmaz. Belki o padişahlık makamını yıkabilir kendi padişahlığa devam edebilirdi. ... (Cumhuriyet dönemindeki hatalar) Mesela, bazı ayaklanmalar falan var. Onların bastırılmasıyla ilgili, şiddet kullanılmasıyla ilgili, bazı sürgün olayları falan var. ... Atatürk de insandır, o da hata yapar. Ama tabii diğer kesimlerin de hataları vardır ama Atatürk'ün yaptığı şeylerin iyi tarafları çok. Bu bakımdan onun savunulacak yanı var."

a victory against the foreign aspirations for the disunity of the country. In this sense, celebration of the Republican Days corresponds to remembering the national glories and attainment of national independence despite all of the impossibilities.

(On the Republican Days) the struggle of the Turkish nation against all of the arduousness and poverty... Both the invaders and their supporters were very powerful countries. It is necessary to teach the students the sentiment and idea of what a country could achieve in spite of all of the hardness and poverty. Also the role of Atatürk... It is also a very demanding mission to guide a nation that is ruled by monarchy for long years according to this sacred idea. Atatürk succeeded in this.⁹³

On the date of 29 October 1923, the republican regime was declared. Before that, our ancestors had suffered a lot. We struggled a lot in order to save this country and embrace our freedom. This is the festival of all the public. This is the fete of the Turkish nation. If we do not know value of it, what can we leave for the next generations? If we cannot teach the meaning of the republic, the meaning of liberty and make them (youth) notice the external threats... (Today's) youth does not care about those issues.⁹⁴

While the transition to the republican regime is identified with the adoption of democratic and liberal values, celebration of the Republican Days basically implies the prioritization of national independence and the struggle to gain it. Herein, the focus on the merits of the republic leaves its place to the emphasis on national independence. The Republican Day celebrations become important to

⁹³ Erkan Bey: "Yani orada Türk milletinin tüm güçlülere, yokluklara karşı verdiği mücadele. Hem işgal edenler hem de onları destekleyenler güçlü devletler. Yani o duyguyu, düşünceyi öğrenciye vermek gerekiyor. Tüm zorluklar ve yoksullular içinde bir milletin neler başarabileceğini göstermesi açısından. Atatürk'ün de rolünü... Uzun yıllar monarşiyle idare edilmiş bir toplumu tüm engellemelere rağmen öyle güzel bir amaca, kutsal bir amaca yöneltmek de büyük başarı isteyen bir iş. Atatürk bunu başarmış."

⁹⁴ Osman Bey: "29 Ekim 1923'te Cumhuriyet ilan edildi, bundan önce atalarımız dedelerimiz çok zorluk çekti. Yani bu vatani kurtarmak için, bağımsızlığımıza kavuşabilmek için çok mücadele ettik. Bu bütün halkın bayramı, Türk ulusunun bayramı. Eğer biz bunun değerini bilmiyorsak bundan sonra gelecek nesillere ne bırakabiliriz? Cumhuriyetin anlamını eğer öğretmezsek bağımsızlığın anlamını öğretmezsek, dışardan gelecek tehlikeleri bunlara sezdiremezsek... gençlerin umurunda bile değil."

refresh the memories of the difficulties that were lived during the foundation period. By mentioning the memories of war years, i.e. the hardness of poverty and destitution, and the bitter experiences during the transition period, it is aimed to create a sense of gratitude for the founders of the republic. Moreover, commemorating the martyrs who had died during the Turkish independence war becomes an important means to stimulate a collective devotion for preserving the national independence, which is identified with the republican regime. Thus, while celebration of the Republican Days cultivates a respect for the founders of the republic, it also stimulates the sense of responsibility for the preservation of republican values.

Besides, relating the importance of the Republican Days to the memories of the war years implies the existence of internal and external threats against the republic. In other words, emphasizing the war times and creating an enthusiasm by mentioning the military achievements imply the existence of enemies who try to destroy the republican regime. Internal threats are usually connoted by the political Islamist movement that aspires for a state ruled by *sheria* (Islamist law) or the ethnic and religious groups that have secessionist objectives. On the other hand, external threats are embodied by the countries that imposed the treaty of Sevres after the First World War and pursued the aim of dismembering the Ottoman Empire. Internal and external threats are redefined depending on the political atmosphere and constitute controversy in a Turkish context. Suffice it to say that mentioning them indicates the cultivation of militaristic and nationalist sensitivities during the celebrations, rather than fostering democratic and humanistic values.

Transmission of National Values and the Sense of Unity:

The commemoration days become an important means to promulgate official history as the collective memory of the nation. While teachers perceive the celebrations as important tools that cultivate national values and sense of unity in students, their oscillation from authoritarian nationalism to a more civic one is worth considering.

In the words of teachers, national values become equivalent with the protection of the republic, homeland, flag and the national anthem. In this sense, the unity of the nation, sustenance of the republican regime and its principles are seen as under a constant threat. Hence, the Republican Day celebrations turn into a public performance that represents the unity of the Turkish nation and their collectivity against internal and external threats. Herein, the constitution of an ‘us’ as the real owner of the country and ‘them’ as the threats of national unity come into view.

One of my interviewees indicates that national values that are stimulated during the Republican Days include “standing as a holder of the national flag and the national anthem”. In this sense, through mentioning the necessity of protecting the symbols of the Turkish Republic, she implies the existence of an animosity against the republican regime. However, she immediately clears her position by declaring she is not obsessed with the idea of “Turkey belongs to Turks”.⁹⁵ The same kind of reservation also appears in the conversation of my other respondent. While saying that teachers should inculcate the concept of nationalism to Turkish students and being a Turk requires learning nationalist values, she concurrently advocates the rejection of any extremist forms of nationalism and declares her

⁹⁵ Sevim Hanım: “Bu milli değerler işte özel günler dediğimiz bayramlar, kutlamalara ve anmalara katılma anlamında, bayrağa sahip çıkma, istiklal marşına sahip çıkma anlamında. Türkiye Türklerindir falan filan gibi takıntılarım yok.”

commitment to Atatürk's nationalism.⁹⁶ Although positioning themselves as the supporters of Atatürk's nationalism appears as the key solution to eliminate the authoritarian and ethnic-based sides, the civiness of Atatürk's nationalism only come to view in a *de jure* form. On the other hand, teachers' emphasis on the existence of internal and external threats and the attempt to equate national celebrations with preservation of national independence prevents the development of a *de facto* civic nationalism.

Moreover, participation in the celebrations of national days turns out to be a necessary condition for claiming your ownership and confronting the threats. This position finds its best expression in the following words of Kamile Hanım:

According to me both the ideas of Atatürk and his republic are very precious. Throughout my professional life, I maintained the mission of preserving this sentiment. While 50-60% of students are absent during the celebrations, from my class at most two or three students do not come only after giving me valid excuses. I do not allow any kind of soldiering. I accuse my children: If you do not stand as the holder of your country, others will do it instead of you.⁹⁷

Kamile Hanım, who has been working as a primary school teacher for more than 30 years, is known for her disciplined and unbending character concerning Kemalism and republican values. During the interview, she repeatedly identified herself as a 'republican teacher' and pointed out her sincerity over the celebration of

⁹⁶ Nermin Hanım: "yani milliyetçilik kavramını vermelisiniz sonuçta. Mutlaka yani Türk olduğumuza göre, Türk öğrenciler bu vatanda olduklarına göre. Mutlaka milliyetçilik kavramını da öğrencilerimize öğretmemiz gerekiyor sonuçta öğretmen olarak. Bu çerçevede de milli bayramlarımız Atatürk'le bağlantılı bir şey. ... Milliyetçilik demek ille de ırkçılık anlamında değil de, ben Atatürk'ün bize önerdiği milliyetçiliği tasvip ederim. Öyle aşırı tasvip edeceğim bir şeyim yok. Yani her Türk genci milliyetçidir zaten, olmalıdır, vatani korumak açısından falan."

⁹⁷ Kamile Hanım: "Benim için gerçekten Atatürk'ün düşünceleri de cumhuriyet de çok kıymetli. Meslek hayatım boyunca da o duyguları kendi adıma korumayı görev bildim. Bayramlarda yüzde 50 yüzde 60 fire verilirken, ben de taş çatlasa 2-3 öğrenci çok ciddi mazereti varsa izin alarak gidebilir. Diğerleri tarafımdan cumhuriyete sahip çıkmamakla eş değer görülür ve böyle bir şeye müsaade etmem. Böyle bir kaytarmaya müsaade etmem. Siz sahip çıkmazsanız başkaları sizin ülkenize farklı şekilde sahip çıkarlar gibi ithamda bulunurum çocuklarıma. "

the Republican Days. On the one hand, her commitment to the preservation of republican values and Kemalism, and on the other hand, her emphasis on universalist and democratic values made her a special case among my interviewees. My other respondents also equate Kemalism with democratic and universalist values but they do not elaborate on the aspects of democratic and universal education. On the contrary, Kamile Hanım articulates what she means by more democratic and universal education. Although she emphasizes the existence of internal and external threats against the republican regime and declares her anxiety about the future of the country, she also complains about the textbooks because they cultivate a narrow minded Turkish nationalism. Her following words are important in showing the contradictory positions that teachers take:

Our current administration brings up individuals who obey, who are narrow minded and can think within limited boundaries, who have faith and stick to their faith, who are devoted to Turkish nationalism. Okay, let's become a nationalist, but as a proud member of the world nations, let's be a valuable asset. Nevertheless, I believe that other people should be equal to us. However, I think our textbooks do not sustain this vision.⁹⁸

It can be said that although a kind of ethnic nationalism prevails during talking about the Republican Days, teachers endeavor to preserve their civic nationalist position. Thus, their position oscillates from a threat-based view of protecting the unity of the country and its republican regime to a more civic and universal position. In this sense, the changing position of Kamile Hanım exemplifies the dilemma between a threat-based nationalism and a more civic one.

⁹⁸ Kamile Hanım: "Bizim şimdiki yönetimin itaat eden insan yetiştirme, belli bir çerçevede çok dar bir şekilde düşünebilen, inançları olan, inançlarına bağlı, Türk milliyetçiliğine bağlı... Evet milli olalım, dünya ulusları ailesinin onurlu bir üyesi olmak adına milli olalım, bir değer olalım. Fakat bu diğer insanların da bizimle eş değer olması gerektiğine inanıyorum. Fakat ders kitaplarımızın bu bakış açısında olmadığı kanaatindeyim."

One reason behind this dilemma may stem from the fact that the forms and content of celebrations are adopted from previous years and are not subjected to a radical change. Although we recently observe the popularization of the Republican Day commemorations through celebrating them in public squares with the participation of celebrities, the format of celebrations at schools usually stays constant with the continuing emphasis on the independence war, heroic descriptions and the stories about the foundation of the new republic. On the other hand, especially with the rise of the demands for group-based rights of Kurdish people, the quest for reaching a civic nationalism accelerated in Turkey. In this sense, it can be said that the dilemma of teachers stems from the continuation of nationalist indoctrination of commemoration days that ignores differences and the emergence of new questions and criticisms about the limits of official nationalism.

Criticizing the Formality of the Republican Days: Disapproval of Cliché Forms:

Although teachers point out that celebration of the Republican Days has an important role as the protector of the republican regime, they also emphasize their discontent about the existing forms of celebrations. The main reasons behind their discontent appears to be the enforcement of cliché forms of celebrations by the state authorities, the decline in the enthusiasm and sincerity about the celebrations, and the ineffectiveness of transmitting the ‘essential’ meaning of the republic through celebrations.

Sevim Hanım who has been working as a teacher for 24 years, points out that celebrating the national days turns into a kind of drudgery (*angarya*) for the people. Teachers are made to organize the celebrations and they also force the students to attend the celebrations. She admits that when the organization of the

celebration program and the participation in it take place in the form of imposition, celebrations diverge from their ‘true’ meanings and become a kind of fulfillment of a formal duty. In addition, teachers’ reluctance for participating in the celebrations does not display any disloyalty, disavowal or negation of republican values. On the contrary, teachers oppose the existing forms of celebrations since those celebrations do not serve the inculcation of ‘essential’ values of the republican regime.

Things are enforced in this country. For instance, you must be at school on October 29th (the Republican Day), you must prepare a program. National day celebrations are also enforcements. And enforcements make you bored after a time. Moreover, it has become a cliché. You shall come to school on those days, a certain program will be followed, this will be done, that will be done... And I believe these days are degenerating. They turn into complete enforcements. Participation takes place not by will as it used to be, but either by teacher’s insistence or students coming from home just to do their performance at the celebration.⁹⁹

Moreover, according to Kamile Hanım the Republican Days have the crucial tasks of transmitting ‘essential’ values of the republic and comprehending it in the right way. She considers the Republican Days as an important tool to communicate Atatürk’s aspirations and desires for the Turkey (*ülke için yapmak istedikleri*). However, a current reluctance of people to participate in the celebrations results in her disappointment about the current celebrations. She continues to state her dissatisfaction about the current celebrations in the following way:

Moreover, what is the republic? How is it perceived? Is it really being experienced? These must be questioned by society, by (ministry of) national education and by students.

⁹⁹ Sevim Hanım: “yani bazı şeyler bu ülkede dayatma. İşte 29 Ekim’de okulda olmalısınız, program hazırlamalısınız. Yani milli bayramlar için söylüyorum dayatma. Dayatmalar da bir süre sonra sıkıyor. Bir de klişeleşmiş durumda. O günlerde okula geleceksiniz, o günlerde şu program uygulanacak, şöyle yapılacak, böyle yapılacak diye...Ve gittikçe dejenere olduğuna inanıyorum bu günlerin, iyice dayatma var. ... Katılım eskisi gibi içten değil, öğretmenlerin dürtüklemesiyle ya da işte çocuklar evde olduğu için çıkıp gösterisini yapacak diye geliyor.”

However, this is not the case. Celebrations are parried with fancy words without realizing the essential meaning. Thus, it does not contribute to understanding the meaning of the republic. It may be remembered as a joy, or a special day by kids, but I do not think that it serves in comprehending the republic in the right way.¹⁰⁰

In the above statement, Kamile Hanım's focus on the 'essential' meaning and 'true' understanding of the republican regime and its values imply a perception of the existing understanding of the republic as 'corrupted' or 'artificial'. Moreover, allusion to the 'essential' version of the republic is not unique to Kamile Hanım but also shared by my other respondents. It can be argued that the major reason behind teachers' discontent about the existing Republican Day celebrations rises from their inability to inculcate the 'true' meaning and transmit the 'essential' version of the republic. In the following part, implications of teachers' emphasis on the 'essential' meaning of the republic will be discussed in more detail.

The 'True' Meaning of the Republic and Kemalism:

It should be stated that during my interviews the basic question that the teachers strive to answer is 'what went wrong in the modernization process and why could we not attain the position projected during the foundation years?' Their complete embracement and the support of the early republican era make it necessary to explain why Turkey could not achieve a complete 'development' and 'modernization' by getting rid of its economic underdevelopment as well as social and political backwardness. Herein, one of the basic justifications of the backward

¹⁰⁰ Kamile Hanım: "Hatta cumhuriyet nedir? Nasıl algılanıyor? Gerçekten yaşanıyor mu? Bunların sorgulanması lazım. Toplum, milli eğitim ve öğrenciler tarafından. Fakat bu yapılmıyor. Bayramlarda da özüne inmeden süslü laflarla geçiştiriliyor, onun için de çok da cumhuriyetin algılanması amacına katkı sağlamıyor. Sadece bir coşku, özel bir gün olarak çocukların kafasında yer ediyordur ama cumhuriyetin doğru algılanması anlamında çok büyük bir kazanç olduğunu zannetmiyorum."

situation of Turkey emerges as the failure in the internalization of the ‘true’ meaning of Kemalism and the lack of consciously understanding the ‘substance’ of the republican principles. Thus, Kemalism becomes closer to any other dogmatically endorsed ideology such as fundamental Islamism or orthodox Marxism, which also perceives the current doctrine as corrupted and claim the existence of a genuine version of it.

My respondents did not explicitly talk about what they mean by the ‘true’ version of Kemalism. However, they imply that the principles and objectives that were interpreted during the foundation period constitute the ‘essential’ substance of Kemalism. Six principles (nationalism, republicanism, statism, populism, secularism and revolutionism), which were enumerated in the Republican People’s Party program in the 1931, are considered as the main pillars of Kemalism. In this sense, the foundation period appears as the ‘golden era’ in which state embodies the ‘true’ interpretations of the Kemalist principles.

In the words of teachers, ‘true’ Kemalism turns into a more liberal, democratic, humanistic, universalistic, anti-patriarchal, and egalitarian ideology when they complain about the authoritarian aspects of the national education system, the narrow mindedness of the textbooks, or centrally imposed cliché forms of the Republican Days. On the other hand, the ‘true’ version of Kemalism becomes a more patriotic, nationalist, independence-loving, collectivist, secularist ideology that advocates the unity and solidarity of the nation when teachers mention the existence of internal and external threats against the Turkish Republic. Hence, ‘true’ Kemalism appears as an ‘empty signifier’ that is filled by various substance and principles. However, at this point, the problem is not how teachers define a ‘true’ version of Kemalism but why they need to talk about a ‘truer’ version of it and

identify the early years of the republic as the ‘golden age’. In other words, the functions and objectives of adherence to an ‘essential’ version of Kemalism need to be explored.

It can be said that embracing the ‘true’ version of Kemalism and identifying the early years of the republic as the ‘golden age’ of ‘true’ Kemalist values provide teachers with a legitimate ground for criticizing the existing order of the state and the current functioning of the republic. In this vein, positioning themselves as the bearers of ‘true’ Kemalism accommodates teachers with immunity from being outlawed, banished, and marginalized. Talking from a subject position that is devoted to genuine Kemalism and its principles enable teachers to criticize the current malfunctioning of the state order, to confront the current state policies as well as to question the legitimacy of the elected rulers. Hence, within this picture their contestations, criticisms and questions serve to push the boundaries of Kemalism and open the avenues for transforming the official state ideology. On the other hand, their subject position as the protector of ‘true’ Kemalism curtails the nature of their criticism and prevents the emergence of an ‘exit point’ from the Kemalist paradigm. Although teachers suffer from the problems stemming from the authoritarian aspects of Kemalism, remaining within the paradigm hinders them from depicting the sources of those problems. Enclosure within the paradigm restricts teachers’ horizon for developing the necessary conceptual tools to identify the sources and reasons of the malfunctioning in the republican regime.

What were the reasons that lead to the deviation from ‘true’ republican values? Which conditions resulted in the emergence of a corrupted version of Kemalism? My respondents endeavor to answer these questions and come up with various answers. On the one hand, degeneration of the current state organs and

fraudulence of elected rulers constitute one of the main reasons behind the divergence from the ideal form of Kemalism. In this sense, teachers feel the necessity of protecting the ‘genuine’ version of official ideology from the corruptive effects of current rulers. Secondly, failure in disseminating Kemalist values throughout the country and generating a popular support is considered the other reason for the divergence of the country from the early republican objectives. Thus, teachers argue that the early republican policy of ‘imposing reforms for the sake of people, in spite of people’ became unsuccessful in creating a collective will and gaining the hearts and minds of people. Consequently, the failure in disseminating ‘true’ republican values throughout the society facilitated the challenges and reactionary movements against values of the republic as well as paved the way for corrupted interpretations of the republican principles.

To begin with, teachers’ adherence to the ‘true’ version of Kemalism leads them to put distance between the current state organs and develop a critical stance against current state policies. Discontentment and the criticism about the existing condition of the country expose themselves in the argument ‘the republic that is delineated by Atatürk in the foundation years is not working properly’ (*cumhuriyetin işleyişindeki zafiyet*). In this sense, the corruption of state organizations and its rulers as well as their divergence from values of the early republican period constitute the main reasons behind the malfunctioning of the system.

Although my respondents point out their commitment to democratic principles and emphasize the importance of ‘self-governance of people’, they do not hesitate to declare their uneasiness about the elected rulers of the country. For instance, Kamile Hanım states that deficiencies in the electoral system pave way for

the election of people who do not represent the common interest of the public. According to her, the ineffectiveness of the current rulers in pursuing ‘true’ Kemalist principles leads to the attenuation of the republican regime. She continues her idea in following way:

While the public in Turkey seems to abandon the republic, I perceive deficiencies in the functioning of the republic. I do not perceive the people who are considered to be the representatives as the true representatives of the public. I mean, they do not deserve to rule the public. The public is imposed upon to elect among people who have the financial power and want to keep their ruling position or who are assigned directly by the party leaders due to the lack of a pre-election system. Although our republic passed its 80 years, this kind of administration does not allow us to break free from being underdeveloped. Since we are not a country living in happiness and prosperity, people’s belief and trust for the republican regime is weakened. That is why, they search for different ways, and join different political groups to gain some advantage or to feel attached to something, and they form an anti-movement for the republic.¹⁰¹

In the above statement, the happiness of the people and their trust in the republican regime is linked to the material prosperity of the country. In other words, she does not mention the necessity of civil rights and liberties to reinforce people’s support for the republican regime. In this sense, the proliferation of new belongings and emergence of new political groups takes the place of these as the result of the debilitation of the republican regime. Thus, social transformations in the 1990s were

¹⁰¹ Kamile Hanım: “Türkiye’de hakikaten toplum cumhuriyetten vazgeçmiş görünürken cumhuriyetin de işleyişinde zafiyet görüyorum kişi olarak. Bu da milletin temsilcileri olarak baktığınız kişileri ben milletin temsilcisi olarak görmüyorum. Yani hakikaten toplumu yönetmeye layık insanlar değil. Belki para gücü fazla olan insanların yönetimde güçlerini korumak adına, yönetimde olmaması gereken parası olan insanların hükmettiği, bu insanların halkın önüne konduğu, özellikle seçim döneminde ön seçim kavramının olmaması, siyasi parti başkanlarının sevdiği beğendiği, uygun gördüğü insanların halka dayatılarak seçildiği kanaatindeyim. Bu da tabii ki yönetsel zafiyetlerde cumhuriyet 80 yılını aşmasına rağmen ülkemiz geri kalmışlıktan kurtulamıyor. Yeteri kadar mutlu ve refah içinde yaşayan bir ülke olmadığımız için toplumun ya da halk kitlelerinin diyelim cumhuriyete olan inancı da zayıflıyor. Onun için başka arayışlar, farklı siyasi gruplara giderek işte bir yerlere ait olup oralardan menfaatlenme gibi eğilimler cumhuriyete karşı güç oluşturuyor.”

not conceptualized as a challenge to the Kemalist ideology; on the contrary, they are perceived as the result of the malfunctioning republican state.

Besides Kamile Hanım, Ahmet Bey also points out his distrust in the elected rulers and declares his anxiety over the current situation of the republican regime. He mentions the discrepancy between the republic that Atatürk had founded and the current forms of the republic. Moreover, he states the impossibility of reaching the level of modern civilization with the current version of the republic. However, the major handicap blocking development appears to be the corruption of the state organs. As in the case of Kamile Hanım, Ahmet Bey also does not focus on the deficiencies in consolidating civil rights and liberties during the republican period and states that:

As a member of parliament, I could kill somebody, or rob a bank, or my name might be in news stories of corruption, but I will still hold immunity from arrest. There is no governing system like this. This is not the republic that Atatürk dreamed of, and founded; this is not the basis of the republic that Atatürk left to the Turkish nation and people. The motto of ‘reaching to the level of civilized nations’ cannot be achieved with the current republic.¹⁰²

On the other hand, failing to generate a popular adoption of ‘true’ republican values appears as the other reason behind the current dissolution of the republican project. In this respect, the expressions of Nazim Bey become remarkable. Nazim Bey has been a primary school teacher for 16 years. During the interview, his critical remarks imply his affinity with a leftist position. It should be pointed out that he was one of the most audacious respondents who pushed and sometimes

¹⁰² Ahmet Bey: “Türkiye’de bir parlamenter olarak adam öldüreceğim, banka soyacağım, yolsuzluklara adım karışacak ama benim dokunulmazlığım olacak. Böyle bir idare şekli yok. Atatürk’ün kurmak istediği ve kurduğu cumhuriyet, Atatürk’ün Türk halkına ve milletine hediye ettiği cumhuriyetin temeli bu değil. Çağdaş, medeni milletler seviyesine çıkmalıyız ibaresi bugünkü cumhuriyet ile mümkün değil”

transgressed the borders of Kemalism. Nazim Bey admits the existence of a crisis in the explanation of republican values to the public since the foundation of the republic.¹⁰³ In this sense, the republican state in the foundation period considered as the holder of the ‘true’ meaning of Kemalism, its authoritarian position as the bearer of the ‘absolute truth’, and as the actor of top-down modernization is not criticized. However, insufficiency in inculcation of the ‘true’ meaning of Kemalism in people becomes the subject of criticism. In the following statement, the concerns of Nazim Bey about the adoption of republican values become explicit:

I do not think that every student graduating from primary school completely understands the republic and we have question marks in our minds whether the republic is being experienced as it is supposed to be. I mean, what did Atatürk’s republic used to include, could the dissemination of the republic to the society be completely provided? Because the republican regime and Atatürk set some principles, however it is controversial whether they were disseminated or not, whether they are fully experienced. Thus, we have question marks in our minds.¹⁰⁴

When we consider the concerns of Nazim Bey, his complaints about the insufficient dissemination of republican values and his advocacy for a complete adoption of the republican principles become apparent. However, in the following statement, Nazim Bey develops a self-criticism and changes his prior position. By rejecting the idea of being a strict Kemalist, he confronts dogmatically adhering to Kemalism.

¹⁰³ Nazim Bey: “(Cumhuriyetin değerlerinin halka anlatılması anlamında) Bence bir kriz yaşıyor. Zaten cumhuriyet kurulduğundan beri bu kriz yaşanmıştır ... Değerlerin halka anlatılmasına gelince. Bence anlatılmamıştır veya çok az bir kesim anlamıştır ve yaşamıştır. Cumhuriyetin değerleri ne kadar yaşatıldı ne kadar o insanlara benimsetildi?”

¹⁰⁴ Nazim Bey: “...her ilköğretimi bitiren öğrencinin ben cumhuriyeti tam olarak anladığına inanmıyorum ve cumhuriyetin tam olarak uygulandığı konusunda da çelişkilerimiz var, kafamızda soru işaretleri var. Yani Atatürk’ün kurduğu cumhuriyet neyi kapsıyordu, bunun topluma yansımaları gerçekten tam olarak sağlandı mı? Çünkü cumhuriyetin, Atatürk’ün ilkeleri vardı, bunların yansısını yansımadığı tam olarak yaşatıldığı da tartışılır yani. Bizim de kafamızda soru işaretleri var o konuda.”

But it is true that I cannot be a strict Kemalist; this contradicts my character. I am an Atatürkist and I appreciate his values. However, everything must be evaluated within its time. I believe many things have changed, were passed over in Turkey. Let me give you an example from the Republican People's Party. The RPP could not have a breakthrough and could not become a real left party. The reason is their obsession with that single idea. Nevertheless, Atatürk, as far as I understand, did things within those contexts, and never told us to 'adhere to those things rigidly and do not progress'. The things he did were done within the conditions of his time. But time has changed of course. Atatürk has a statist principle, which is not valid now. I think populism does not exist. I mean, when you further investigate populism, it mentions social justice, which does not exist currently. Then, there is no reason to fool ourselves. Things have changed with time, just like we call it an adjustment to the century. It is changed along with the things that are brought by the new century.¹⁰⁵

This statement above seems to open the ways to demystifying Kemalism and critically evaluating it through refraining from any doctrinaire exaltation and orthodox conformity. Moreover, by considering Kemalism as a time and context bound ideology and mentioning the changes taking place in the principles of Kemalism, he challenges the position that represents Kemalism as the carrier of universal principles of modernism and enlightenment. In other words, Nazim Bey endeavors to break the boundaries that limit any controversy about the ubiquity of the Kemalist paradigm and attempts to evaluate Kemalism in its own time and conditions. Moreover, by pointing the inevitability of change even for values of Kemalism and perceiving this change affirmatively, Nazim Bey seems to avert any

¹⁰⁵ Nazim Bey: "Ama şu da bir gerçek tamamen katı bir Kemalist olamıyorum, bu benim yapıma ters. Yani Atatürkçüyüm ve onun değerlerine sahip çıkıyorum, önemsiyorum ama her şeyi kendi döneminde değerlendirmek lazım. Bence birçok şeyler değişti Türkiye'de, aşıldı. Cumhuriyet Halk Partisini örnek vereyim, benim düşüncem şu: CHP henüz o kabuğunu kıramadı, genel anlamda bir sol parti olamadı. Bunun nedeni de bir şeye takılıp kalmaları. Oysa Atatürk benim anladığım kadarıyla o günün şartlarında bunları yapmıştır ve bu değerlere sıkı sıkıya bağlı olun da kendinizi geliştirmeyin dememiştir yani. O günün şartlarında o yapılmıştır. Ama bu değişti tabii. Şimdi Atatürk'ün Devletçilik ilkesi var, geçerli değil. Halkçılık ilkesi bence yok. Yani halkçılık ilkesini açtığınız zaman orada sosyal adaletten bahseder, bunlar yok. O zaman da kendimizi kandırmaya gerek yok. Bunlar zamanla değişmiştir, yani çağa ayak uydurma diyoruz ya hani. Çağın getirdikleri şeylerle değişmiştir."

kind of attachment to a ‘golden era of Kemalism’ and ‘real interpretation of Kemalism in this golden era’. However, he cannot completely exit from the Kemalist paradigm and feels the necessity of legitimizing his words about change by referring to Atatürk. Thus, his position of criticizing the dogmatic aspects of Kemalism finds its existence through the consent of Atatürk.

The words of Nazim Bey reveal the dilemma between the attempt to maintain ‘true’ republican values through sustaining a popular adherence and the effort to grasp the changing conditions of the day and adapt them to those new conditions. On the other hand, the effort of pushing the borders of Kemalism for the adaptation of the new conditions of the world is very well exemplified in the words of Kamile Hanım. Kamile Hanım who explicitly declares her anxieties about the current functioning of the republican regime and who states her trepidations about the ongoing relinquishment of republican values emphasizes the central role of education in preserving the principles of the republican regime. Besides presenting education as the key solution for sustaining the republican regime, she also finds self-mobilization of each individual necessary for perpetuating republican values. At this point, she admits the general mistake that the republican teachers made by dogmatically adhering to republicanism and Atatürk. For Kamile Hanım adoption of universal values and human rights appear as a more viable solution than firmly endorsing Kemalism.

We made that mistake in the past: Atatürk and the republic are not everything anymore. Universal values, human rights, humans living in humane conditions; our country must come to this point and must represent progress.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Kamile Hanım: “Biz geçmişte de şu hatayı yaptık: her şey Atatürk, cumhuriyet falan değil artık. Evrensel değerler, insan hakları, insanın insan olması, insanın insanca yaşaması bizim ülkemizin de artık bu noktaya gelmesi, ileriye temsil etmesi gerek.”

It should also be pointed out that Kamile Hanım's attempt to transgress the borders of Kemalism vanishes with her statement that claims the compatibility between Kemalism and democratic/universal values. She states that "whether it is named Kemalism, or democracy, or Atatürkçülük, I may see people who carry universalistic values as Kemalist or democratic." Hence, on the one hand she challenges the borders of Kemalism and brings a more universal outlook to the problems of the country; on the other hand, Kemalism is reproduced as the ultimate ideology that determines the possibility of any alternative explanation and solution to the malfunctioning of the republican regime.

Consequently, although teachers contest the borders of Kemalism and sometimes transgress those borders, their criticism continues to take place within the Kemalist paradigm. Teachers' discontent and anxiety about the current situation of Turkey lead them to find sources of the problems. At this point, adherence to an 'ideal' form of Kemalism that was delineated in the foundation years appears as the basic solution to the problems of the country. Although teachers re-articulate 'ideal' form of Kemalism differently and re-fill it with different substance, the conceptual tools of Kemalism become insufficient to find satisfactory explanations and necessary solutions to the current problems. However, since teachers do not develop a critical consciousness about Kemalism and look for other ways to conceptualize the problems and develop solutions for them, they become stuck within the Kemalist paradigm.

2- CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY AT SCHOOLS

The definition of democracy and its relation with republicanism and popular sovereignty has always been a controversial issue for studies that explore the inculcation of democracy and its principles. With this respect, the work of Barak Salmoni that examines the definition and characteristics of democracy in the early years of the republic becomes very significant.¹⁰⁷ Salmoni, rather than labeling the Turkish national education as non-democratic and authoritarian, aims to dwell on how democracy was defined and communicated during the first generation of the republic. He argues that in the early republican era, fresh memories of socio-political anomie, defeat in First World War and the disunity followed by this defeat led to the necessity of cultivating a sense of nationalism and loyalty to the central state. Thus, the characteristics of the period required the association of democracy with national independence, social equality and solidarity.

Moreover, the study of Salmoni provides us with important analyses about the problematical interpretations of ‘individual freedom’ and ‘equality’, which can be regarded as two major premises of democracy. To begin with, in the literature of studies of democracy, ‘individual freedom’ is defined as the absence of any restraints upon the individual’s right of stating his/her decisions and choices. Besides, the notion of equality assumes that every individual deserves equal respect and dignity. Thus, in democratic regimes, every individual is entitled with the right of equal access to the goods of society as well as equal right to define the common good.

¹⁰⁷ Barak A. Salmoni, “Ordered Liberty and Disciplined Freedom: Turkish Education and Republican Democracy, 1923-50”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, v40, i2 (March 2004).

However, Salmoni claims that during the early years of the republic, national independence was conceptualized as the necessary condition of individual freedom. In other words, the foundation of the republican regime after the victory in the independence war was represented as the prerequisite for the emergence of democracy in Turkey. Moreover, abandonment of monarchical rule and dissemination of popular sovereignty led to the delineation of the republican regime as the necessary condition for consolidation of democracy in Turkey. On the other hand, during the foundation years of the republic, the notion of individual equality appeared as identical with social equality. In this sense, the conception of social equality, which was interpreted as cultural and social homogeneity, brought the rejection of ethnic, cultural, and religious differences. Hence, national independence as well as social homogeneity, solidarity and cultural commonality appear as the key words for the enhancement of democracy in Turkey. According to Salmoni this specific definition of democracy with the emphasis of national independence and social unity contributed to the creation of a political culture that conceptualizes ethnic and religious pluralism as non-democratic as well as considers the intermittent military coups and attempts to curtail Kurdish political expressions as compatible with democratic rule.

The study of Kenan Çayır, which explores how the concepts of democracy and human rights are re-defined and communicated in textbooks, also indicates that the narrow conception of democracy is not particular to the early years of the republic but an ongoing characteristic of the Turkish education system.¹⁰⁸ Çayır's study is a part of a project that aims to promote human rights in textbooks by

¹⁰⁸ Kenan Çayır, "Ders Kitaplarında İnsan Hakları ve Demokrasi Bilinci" (Human Rights and Democratic Consciousness in the Textbooks), *Ders Kitaplarında İnsan Hakları: Tarama Sonuçları* (Human Rights in Textbooks: Survey Results) ed. by B. Çotuksözen, A. Erzan, O. Silier (Istanbul : Tarih Vakfı, 2003).

depicting the form, content and pedagogical techniques conflicting with human rights and democratic values as well as projecting the solutions for improving textbooks and educational programs. Hence, in the light of the extensive survey that analyses 190 textbooks, Çayır addresses the problem of how the definition of democracy is narrowed down to the election systems and thus a very restricted and misleading conception of democracy is prevailed in the textbooks. Democracy, defined in textbooks as people's right to self governance, and limitation of democracy to a formal procedure of elections, prevents the envisioning of a concept of democracy that requires the active participation of citizens for preserving their rights and liberties, the co-existence of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups, and the partaking of various groups in the definition of 'good life'.

Hence, both of the studies of Salmoni and Çayır provide us with important analyses about the interpretation of democracy and its premises in textbooks and curriculum programs. In this respect, teachers' conceptions of democracy and their definition of democratic premises become very significant in a more comprehensive picture of the democracy education in Turkey. Moreover, teachers' perceptions on the democratic life in schools as well as their ideas and discontents about school activities that are designed to foster the consciousness of democracy and democratic participation in students contribute to enhance our analyses about the education of democracy in schools.

Unclear Borders of Democracy, Republicanism, and Popular Sovereignty:

To begin with, my interviews with teachers manifest a general confusion about the meaning of democracy. Teachers usually use the terms of democracy, republicanism and popular sovereignty interchangeably and form equivalences between them. The equivalence of democracy with republicanism indicates that

teachers perceive emanation of democracy as the result of the republican regime. Herein, origins of democracy are related to the processes that include abolition of the monarchy, establishment of the republican regime and nationalization of sovereignty. It can be said that one of the reasons behind this perplexity stems from defining both democracy and republicanism as forms of governance that require ‘self-ruling of the people’. With this definition, emphasis is put on the basic aspects of democratic electoral systems that are the ‘freedom to elect the rulers’ and the ‘right to be elected as the rulers’. Hence, restricting the concept of democracy to electoral procedures abandons the necessary conceptual tools that differentiate democracy from other political concepts that also emphasize the importance of popular will. The confusion of democracy, republicanism and popular sovereignty culminated in the words of Kamile Hanım:

I define the republic as the borders that Atatürk demarcated and I see myself as a republican teacher. I define true democracy as the full participation of people in governance. ... I perceive democracy as dignifying people as humans. ... When we come to *Kemalism*, I see it as equal to *democracy*, and perceive it as *popular sovereignty*. In this sense, I don’t see any contradiction between the two. They are equivalent and in peace with each other, whether we name it as *Kemalism*, or *democracy*, or *Atatürkçülük*. I may see people who carry *universalistic values* as *Kemalist* or *democratic*.¹⁰⁹ (with my emphases)

This statement of Kamile Hanım is very important since it exemplifies the common confusion of republicanism, democracy and popular sovereignty. Besides the major perplexity about the conceptual borders, the words of Kamile Hanım also

¹⁰⁹ Kamile Hanım: “Cumhuriyeti Atatürk’ün çizdiği sınırlar olarak, kendimi bir cumhuriyet öğretmeni olarak tanımladığımdan gerçek demokrasinin, ki bu da halkın yönetime tam katılımı, kendi temsilcilerini kendileri seçmeleri babında bakıyorum. ... Demokrasiyi ben yönetime katılma, insana insan olarak değer verme olarak algılıyorum demokrasiyi. ... Kemalizme gelirse Kemalizmi ben demokrasiyle eş değerde görüyorum. Onu da ulusal egemenlik olarak algılıyorum. Bu anlamda ikisi arasında bir çelişki görmüyorum. Barışlıdır, iki düşünce birdir. Bunun adına ister Kemalizm diyin, ister demokrasi diyin ister Atatürkçülük deyin. Ben demin de dediğim gibi evrensel değerlere sahip insanları Kemalist olarak da görebilirim, demokrasi olarak da görebilirim.”

exhibit an oscillation between appreciating democracy as the essential part of enlightenment philosophy and valuing it as the product of the Kemalist project. Although Kamile Hanım summarizes the restricted interpretation of democracy by defining it as the participation in governance, she pushes the borders of this limited definition by mentioning the dignity of human beings as one of the premises of democracy. Moreover, she mentions the association between democracy and universal values. Even though she does not elaborate on what she means by universal values and how they are related to democracy, the very attempt of praising people with universal values and perceiving them as democratic is worth considering. In this respect, the concept of democracy is not placed in a context-dependent and therefore restricted definition; moreover, it carries the connotations of perpetuating human dignity, equality and freedom. On the other hand, she mentions her loyalty to the republican ideology and equalizes democracy with Kemalism. In this sense, universal values of democracy leave their place to the ‘borders that Atatürk delineated’. Thus, the conception of democracy is framed within the boundaries of the republican regime. In this sense, how Kemalist doctrine can undermine human dignity and freedom becomes out of question. Although Kamile Hanım emphasizes that she does not see any contradiction between Kemalism and democracy, her arguments indicate a dilemma between legitimating democracy as an inevitable condition of modernism and as a gratuity of the Kemalist project.

The position that considers the republican regime as the prerequisite for democracy becomes explicit in the words of other respondents. For instance, Emine Hanım who has been working as a teacher in Istanbul for 30 years perceives any progressive movement as the result of the republican regime. She states that the

major objective of the education system is to raise an Atatürkist generation who is totally loyal to values of Atatürkism.¹¹⁰ By pointing out “students firstly learn the meaning of the republic and than the meaning of democracy”, Emine Hanım perceives democracy as a product of the republican regime. She defines democracy as the freedom of expression, but rather than adhering to democracy due to its superior characteristics, she praises democratic values because they were aspired to by Atatürk. Hence, democracy is not valued because it provides necessary conditions for fostering individual rights, liberties and equalities; but it is praised due to its affiliation with the republican regime.¹¹¹

In addition to Emine Hanım, Ahmet Bey perceives ‘freedom of expression’ as the defining characteristic of the republican regime.¹¹² In the words of Ahmet Bey, there is also a conceptual perplexity and unclearness between democracy and the republican regime. After defining republic as the expression of ‘free will’ (*özgür irade*), Ahmet Bey takes an interesting position and claims that “the republican regime is unfortunately protected only by the Turkish military”.¹¹³ In this vain, he talks about the military origins of the republican regime and points out that the republic was founded by the Turkish army and Mustafa Kemal who had come from

¹¹⁰ Emine Hanım was one of my respondents who reiterated the name of Atatürk and Atatürkism in a very frequent way. More exactly, during one hour of interview, she used the word of Atatürk and Atatürkism 32 times. However, she avoided to explain what she means Atatürkism and the principles of Atatürk. In her words, Atatürkist youth turned to be the youth who follows the way of Atatürk. In that sense, Atatürkism gains a tautological definition.

¹¹¹ Emine Hanım: “Önce Cumhuriyeti öğreniyorlar zaten, sonra demokrasi nedir?, Atatürk’ün ilkeleri nedir? Atatürk bizim nasıl bir yolda ilerlememizi sağlamış, inkılapları nedir?, bize neleri kazandırmış? Nelerden nelere geçmişiz biz?”

¹¹² Ahmet Bey: “Cumhuriyet bireye olan özgürlüğün tam anlamıyla gerçekleşmesi olayıdır bana göre. İnsan kendini özgürce ifade edebilmeli cumhuriyet yönetiminde.”

¹¹³ Ahmet Bey: “Cumhuriyeti kim yaşıyor? Askeriye yaşıyor. Bakın dikkat edin, Türkiye’de cumhuriyeti ordu yaşıyor. ... Bakın ben size başta cumhuriyet özgür iradedir dedim. Maalesef Türkiye’de Mustafa Kemal Atatürk asker kökenli olduğu için cumhuriyeti de kurduğu için, biliyorsunuz cumhuriyet mecliste tartışmalı bir dönemde kurulmuştur, buna asker sahip çıktı. Sivil toplum örgütleri o konuda ne kadar sahip çıkıyor? Maalesef Türkiye’de eğer açık ve dürüst olmak gerekirse bazı çağdaş ve demokratik sivil toplum örgütleri cumhuriyet ifadesini kullandıkları zaman solla tehdit edilmişler. Efendim bunlar solcudur. ... Gerçekten cumhuriyete sahip çıkan insanlar komünist damgasını yediler.”

a military position. Later, he mentions that whenever a modern, democratic civil society organization attempted to embrace republican values, it was blamed for being a pretender and carrying secret leftist and communist purposes.¹¹⁴ In this sense, since the restrictions, proscriptions and misjudgments had eliminated the civil supporters of the republic, the army was left as the only ‘true’ supporter of the republican regime. Thus, he opposes the non-democratic official policies and activities that ban, outlaw and interdict the civil society. However, Ahmet Bey’s criticism and challenge of authoritative state policies do not rise due to the prohibitions on freedom of expression or restrictions on different ideas and ideologies. On the contrary, opposition to the homogenization policies becomes limited, since Ahmet Bey only criticizes the restrictions on organizations that are the ‘true’ supporter of the republican regime. As the republican ideology delineates the borders of legitimacy, differences and diversities are only justified as long as they stay within the borders of Kemalism. Thus, rather than pursuing the idea of ‘legitimacy of opposition’, which is a compulsory principle of democratic rule, a restricted version of ‘freedom of expression’ comes to view. Moreover, the influence of the military in the reproduction of republican values becomes exempt from any criticism. In this sense, the republic as representing the ‘free will’ of people and the army as the ultimate protector of the republic co-exists within the expressions of the same teacher.

To sum up, while analyzing teachers’ perceptions of democracy, we come up with two interrelated processes. On the one hand, teachers define democracy by

¹¹⁴ In order to understand Ahmet Bey’s statement, we must reconsider the political context of the post-coup era in the 1980s. It is argued that during the junta regime, political restructuring of the country was achieved through repressing every manifestation of dissent. Thus, not only the radical leftist groups are arrested but also social democrats, trade unionist, legal politicians, professors, teachers and lawyers were suspected. See: Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (NY: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd, 1998), p. 294 and also Feroz Ahmet, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (NY: Taylor & Francis Group, 1993), p. 184.

referring to basic enlightenment values such as universalism, human rights and liberties. Thus, Salmoni's analysis, which points out the definition of democracy with national unity, uniformity, solidarity and social equality in Turkish education, is modified through adding the necessity of 'freedom of expression' and equal human dignity. Thus, by emphasizing the importance of individual rights and freedom, teachers push the boundaries of official discourse from a unity and solidarity-based conception to a more universalistic and democratic perspective. On the other hand, those democratic rights and liberties do not become apparent because the legacy of modernity and enlightenment made them ineligible for every individual. Democracy gains legitimacy as long as it is perceived as a component of Kemalism. In this sense, political rights and liberties such as electoral franchise and the right of being elected, as well as basic civil rights such as freedom of speech and expression are adopted within the borders of Kemalism. Those liberal rights and freedoms become desirable and convenient as long as they are congenial with Atatürk's project. Obtaining rights and freedoms with the republican regime is not considered as an obligatory process of the modernization project; on the contrary they are perceived as the grants of Mustafa Kemal. Hence, locating their liberal concerns within the Kemalist paradigm narrows the conception of rights and liberties as well as legitimizes authoritarianism.

Democratic Life in Schools:

In addition to teachers' definitions of democracy and their perceptions of democratic values, how democracy is cultivated through school activities is also worth considering. Although teachers are very enthusiastic about the benefits of democratic regime and loyal to the democratic premises, they appear to be very discontented about the functioning of democracy within schools. Even though

teachers admit the significance of schools in fostering democratic consciousness and flourishing the democratic habits of students, they complain about the insufficiency of schools in fulfilling those tasks.

In the words of teachers, the activities of the ‘educational clubs’ (*eğitsel kol*) are considered a major part of cultivating the democratic attitude and behavior of students. The objectives and functions of ‘educational clubs’ are regulated by a formal directive¹¹⁵ and their aim is to improve students’ special interests, talents and aptitudes. Furthermore, they endeavor to bring up active children who participate in social life and take part in the decision making processes at schools. Formally 43 different branches of educational clubs are aligned in the directive and the school administrations choose among those different branches. Educational clubs become important for the inculcation of democracy since the membership to each clubs is determined through election in the classrooms. Thus, students firstly become candidates for their desired branches and depending on the results of the election they are assigned to the existing clubs. It is compulsory for students to become a member of an educational club.

The other election activity in the classrooms takes place during the selection of the ‘head of the class’ (*sınıf başkanı*). A student who gets the majority of the votes becomes the head of the class. According to the third year textbooks, the ‘head of the class’ has the duty of preserving the order and cleanness of the classroom.¹¹⁶ Moreover, in practice, heads of the class are mostly charged with assisting the teacher and noting students who make noise and disturb the class order. In this sense, rather than representing the interest of students and facilitating the

¹¹⁵ See: “İlköğretim, Lise ve Dengi Okullar Eğitici Çalışmalar Yönetmeliği” *Tebliğler Dergisi* 06/06/1983 - 2140

¹¹⁶ *İlköğretim Okulu Hayat Bilgisi* (Life Knowledge), (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 2000), p: 24.

communication between the students, teachers and administrative authorities, heads of the class become the representatives of teachers. In addition, along with the new directive on the primary school regulation, besides the head of class, another student is elected and becomes the class representative in the student commission.¹¹⁷ Although it is planned to increase the students' participation in the decision making processes, it is admitted by my respondents that formally stated functions of student commission cannot be achieved in actuality.¹¹⁸

My respondents share the discontent about the social activities that prepare students for democratic life. For instance, Kamile Hanım complains about the insufficiency of the student commissions that participate in the decision making processes within the schools as well as criticizes the inactivity of the 'educational clubs'. She points that activities of the clubs are very insufficient to socialize students for democratic life and claims that the principles of the republic, in the sense of participating in governance, are not fulfilled in schools.¹¹⁹ Erkan Bey also criticizes the inactivity and ineffectiveness of the student commissions and 'educational clubs'. He points out that due to the overloaded curriculums, teachers cannot find the necessary time for engaging students in the social and democratic activities. Although the elections and voting activities within schools are designed to endow students with democratic habits, the complaints of my respondents

¹¹⁷ See: *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı İlköğretim Kurumları Yönetmeliği*. Available (online): <http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/225.html> (16 June 2006, 18:10).

¹¹⁸ It can be argued that the education system does not intrinsically lack the activities that cultivate the democratic habits of students. There are certain mechanisms that can be employed by both teachers and students to enhance democratic life in schools. However, there are no systematically designed incentives to motivate both students and teachers for using these tools in a more efficient way.

¹¹⁹ Kamile Hanım: "Öğrenci kurullarımız da yok. Sosyal kollarımız da aktif değil. Yani yönetime katılma demokrasinin işleyişi bu anlamda okulumuzda oldukça zayıf. Belki kendi sınıfımda seçim yapıyorum, işte sınıf başkanı seçiyorum, diğer kolları seçiyorsun, onların çalışmalarını denetleyip bu çalışmalara izin veriyorsun; ama okul genelinde sosyal etkinliklerin cumhuriyetin temelleri burada başlıyor yönetime katılma adına kesinlikle burada işlemiyor."

demonstrate that the school activities for democratic life remain in the formal documents only.

Besides discontent about the insufficiency of social activities in preparing students for democratic life, some of my respondents express their uneasiness about the authoritative organization of the education system. They argue that the organization of decision making mechanisms in the education system lacks democratic characters and centrally taken decisions bring a sense of inefficacy among the teachers. Moreover, the lack of having a voice in the formation of rules and regulations results in the alienation of teachers and students from the administrative mechanisms of schools. For instance, Mehmet Bey who has been working as a teacher for 30 years explains his discontent in the following way:

The educational auditing institution is an agency of the status quo. I mean whatever you say them, they mention rules, and do not even discuss them with you. They parry and say ‘the rules say so. We also believe that this is wrong but since the rules state something, we must carry them out.’ But when a child tells us such things, we discuss it with the child, tell him the reasons.¹²⁰

In addition to admitting that inspectors appointed by the ministry of education strive to preserve existing order, Mehmet Bey complains about their unresponsiveness towards the criticism and questions of teachers. Moreover, his remarks about the rules and regulations are very important to understand the kind of alienation taking place in schools. The statement of Mehmet Bey reveals the process by which the rules and regulations, which were once set out by people, began to be

¹²⁰ Mehmet Bey: “Müfettişlik kurumu tam bir statükocu bir kurumdur. Yani onlara bir şey söylemeniz bile onlar onu bir kitabına uydurup tartışmaya bile girmiyorlar. Geçirtiyorlar işte ‘yönetmelik şöyle der. Tamam, biz de yanlış olduğuna inanıyoruz ama yönetmeliğin şu maddesi böyle dediği için böyle yapmak zorundayız.’ Ama çocuk bize gelip de öyle bir şey söylediği zaman biz çocukla tartışıyoruz, işte nedenlerini anlatıyoruz.”

conceptualized as the ultimate authorities and became exempt from any criticism. Mehmet Bey also states that although students have the chance of discussing their ideas and posing questions to teachers, teachers do not have the same opportunity for discussing their ideas with inspectors coming from the ministry of education. In this sense, even though classes sustain a more democratic atmosphere, the administration of schools in general is reproved due to the absence of democratic characteristics.

Moreover, Nazim Bey claims that including students in the decision making processes results in the increase of their eagerness to obey the rules. He states that if the rules are prepared with the contribution of teachers and students, people will be more prone to respect those rules that they have created. Thus, in Nazim Bey's words, generating popular support for the rules that regulate daily life in schools requires the involvement of the teachers and students in the decision making mechanisms.¹²¹

Discontent about the authoritative features of school administrations culminates in the words of Kamile Hanım. She points out the lack of tolerance for any criticism in schools and mentions that critical ideas or opposing tendencies of teachers increase the tension between the teachers and administration. She mentions that the school administration perceives itself as the ultimate authority and does not consult teachers and take their ideas for reaching commonly agreed decisions.¹²²

¹²¹ Nazim Bey: "Kuralları öğretmenler ve öğrenciler beraber getirmeliler ki bak biz bu kuralları uyguladık bunlara uymalıyız diyebilsinler. Yani o kararların alınmasında çocukları da katacağın ki çocuklar diyecek ki ben bu kararı aldım, benim buna uymam lazım. Yani eksiklikler çok milli eğitimde."

¹²² Kamile Hanım: "Bizim okulda yönetime katılmak konusunda, öğretmenler idari olarak, kurullarda alınan kararlar gibi, söz sahibi değiller. Yukarıdan aşağıya emri vaki. ... Aynı tarz öğretmenden çocuğa da yansıyor. ... Öğretmen-idare işleyişinde de böyle bir şey söz konusu değil ortak karar almak, oturup sorgulayıp yanlışlarımızı birlikte düzeltmek gibi bir eğilimimiz yok. Orası kendini bir otorite olarak görüyor, aşağıdan görüş almaya gerek duymuyor. Aşağıdaki de istenmediği halde

Moreover, she differentiates the teachers' conception of 'good citizens' from the official one. In this sense, she resists authoritarian official policies that struggle to raise obedient and uncritical people. Hence, following words of Kamile Hanım challenges the studies that underemphasize values of teachers and perceive them as the simple tools of state ideology.

I do not believe that our national education system has an aim of bringing up individuals. They want to raise people who obey, who do not think, people who approve, who subjugate. We do not want to bring up people who obey. We want to bring up individuals who think, who produce, who create, who have universal values, who can think in modern ways and know how modern life is.¹²³

Moreover, Kamile Hanım emphasizes the importance of differences and diversities of students and appears to be a very tolerant teacher who encourages different ideas in the classroom. However, she complains that the same tolerance is not provided to teachers by the school administration. Thus, teachers become the subject of censorship due to their own differences. On the other hand, teachers do not develop a consciousness about how the homogenizing aspects of Kemalism conflict with the encouragement of differences and diversities. The following statement of Kamile Hanım becomes very important in this sense:

“For me, diversity of people and their individuality is very important. It is very natural that people be different, have different thoughts, show different kinds of behavior and I believe these diverse thoughts should be encouraged. However, in Turkey rather than tolerating the difference of students, even the differences of teachers are not tolerated. For instance, I appreciate the value of labor. We have an administration that is disturbed by the statements that I used during the celebrations. If I read a

görüŖ belirtirse bu da sürtüŖme konusu oluyor. Bu beni rahatsız ediyor dediğinde de karşı taraf da rahatsız oluyor. HoŖgörü yok bu anlamda da.”

¹²³ Kamile Hanım: “Bizim milli eğitiminin insan yetiŖtirmek gibi bir amacı olduđuna zannetmiyorum. İtaat eden, düşünmeyen, kafa sallayan, kul olmayı becerebilen insanlar istiyorlar. ... Biz itaat eden insan yetiŖtirmek istemiyoruz. Biz düşünen, üreten, yaratan, değerleri olan, evrensel değerlere sahip, çağdaş düşünen, çağdaş yaşamı bilen insanlar yetiŖtirmek istiyoruz.”

poem, or quote from Atatürk, they want me to talk the way they like and prefer. My thoughts, my differences are not assets for them. Diversity is not perceived as a beauty, as richness. You are blamed and considered guilty. There is no tolerance for differences in Turkey. Naturally, we cannot expect children to have this tolerance, which we do not have.¹²⁴

These expressions of Kamile Hanım become very significant in depicting the complexity of the educational system. Besides the criticism of the absence of any tolerance for different ideas and criticisms in schools, the expressions of Kamile Hanım undermines any position that considers the schools as a monistic institutions. In this respect, Kamile Hanım brings out the conflictive relations of school administration and teachers. Thus, in the words of my respondents, teachers are not portrayed as agents that have the authority to impose the official ideology on students; on the contrary, they are depicted as the victims of the undemocratic characteristic of the educational system.

3- PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Fraser states that “A truly democratic system of education then begins with a commitment to extending the best society has to offer to every citizen and at the same time ensuring that every citizen has voice and power in defining the nature of the social good itself, not merely receiving as ‘best’ the social good of one of the nation’s many ethnic groups.”¹²⁵ Therefore, the education of democracy includes

¹²⁴ Kamile Hanım: “Benim için insanların farklılığı ve bireysel olması çok değerlidir. Onların her birinin farklı olmasının, farklı düşüncelere sahip olmalarının, farklı davranış biçimleri göstermelerinin son derece doğal olduğuna ve böyle olması gerektiğine ve farklı düşüncelerin de cesaretlendirilmesi gerektiğine inanan bir insanım. Sınıfımda böyle davranıyorum. ... Türkiye’de yani öğrencilerimizin farklılığını kabul etmekten ziyade öğretmenlerimizin farklılığı da kabul edilmiyor. Mesela ben emeğe değer veren bir insanım. Ben kutladığım bayramlarda ara sözlerde rahatsız olan bir idaremi söz konusu. Arada şiir okuyorsam, Atatürk’ten sözler söylüyorsam kendilerinin beğendiği, arzu ettiği tarzda konuşmamı istiyorlar. Benim düşüncelerim, benim farklılığım onlar için bir değer değil. Farklılıktır, bir güzelliştir, bir zenginliktir olarak algılanmıyor. Suçlanıyorsunuz, suçlu insan gözüyle bakılıyor. Farklılıklara Türkiye’de tahammül yok. Bize olmayan tahammülün zaten çocuklara olmasını bekleyemeyiz.”

¹²⁵ James W. Fraser, *Reading, Writing, and Justice: School Reform as If Democracy Matters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p: 47.

both giving equal opportunity to all groups to voice their demands and ensuring the recognition of differences, democratic dialogue and mutual-respect. In addition to teachers' conception of democracy and their views on democratic life in schools, their perceptions and attitudes towards different cultures become very important in understanding the inculcation of democracy in the Turkish educational system.

To begin with, it was apparent that the teachers were uneasy that the talking about cultural differences. Moreover, their initial exposition of cultural differences appears very important to show their avoidance of talking any contentious issue about ethnic and religious differences in Turkey. For instance, Güler Hanım and Emine Hanım firstly connect cultural differences to the differences in the levels of students' ability and mental capacity and argue about the necessity of organizing classes according to the levels of students. Nazim Bey, who usually takes a more radical position compared to other teachers, conceptualizes cultural differences as geographic varieties. He claims that the educational system in Turkey includes cultural differences through teaching the geographic and climatic differences, varieties in the agricultural products and regional differences in the fields of economic activities.

Teachers' initial interpretations of cultural differences and their reluctance to relate the term to the different ethnic and religious groups in Turkey indicate their aversion to touching on the controversial issues that challenge the assumption of homogeneous Turkish society. In other words, their initial silence about the different cultural groups and identities in Turkey represents the ongoing dominance of the republican ideology that takes the unity of public culture for granted and relegates all kinds of differences to the private realm. Moreover, it should be pointed out that talking about cultural differences in Turkey, i.e. stating ideas on Kurdish identity or

Alevi people, appears to be sensitive subjects that may lead to their being outlawed and proscribed. Teachers' positions as state officials bring certain restrictions on their statements and expressions regarding sensitive issues in Turkish politics.¹²⁶ Thus, before talking about the ethno-cultural problems in Turkey, they clarify their positions as the supporters of 'indivisible solidarity of the Turkish state' and endeavor to take a secure standing with respect to those sensitive issues. It should be pointed out that the problems of Kurdish identity appear to be unmentionable and even prohibited issues for teachers. Many times, my respondents indicate their anxiety by lowering their voices during pronouncing the word of 'Kurdish'. Moreover, this tendency becomes more explicit in the words of Erdal Bey:

For example, when I think of the first times that I started my job, even mentioning the word 'Kurd' in classroom was considered to be discrimination. But today we talk a bit more freely; however as teachers, we must be *objective*.¹²⁷

Although literally the term of objectivity refers to being impartial and unbiased through eliminating all kinds of prejudices during evaluating a position or an argument, in the use of Erdal Bey, it implies the obligation of keeping 'silence' regarding the Kurdish problem. In this sense, being objective coincides with staying within the borders of the official ideology and not dwelling upon any alternative interpretation on the issue of different ethno-cultural identities. Thus, when the consensus on silence is held off, they usually prefer to reiterate the official position that ignores cultural differences and argue for the unity of nation under the same

¹²⁶ State officials' rights and responsibilities are regulated by the law called *657 Sayılı Devlet Memurları Kanunu*. In 7th article it is stipulated that under all circumstances, state officials are charged to preserve the state's interest. Moreover, it is strictly forbidden to engage in any political and ideological activities as well as make any declaration in this account. See: (online) http://www.memurlar.net/documents/library/657_06072006.htm (14 June 2006, 18:00)

¹²⁷ Erkan Bey: "Mesela ben göreve ilk başladığım zamanları düşünüyorum, derslerimizde yani Kürt falan demek bile bazen ayrıcalık sayılıyordu. Ama günümüzde biraz daha rahat konuşuyoruz yani ama biz öğretmen olarak *objektif* olmalıyız."

flag. Emphasis is put on the unity around a common public culture and differences are perceived as folkloric and traditional enrichments. In this sense, the words of Ahmet Bey become very important, since he demonstrates how the official position concerning cultural differences is reproduced through the teachers.

Multiculturalism is very important in the country's development. Think of nature, you cannot see a rose or a thorn bush alone. There are flowers, roses as well as thorn bushes, trees. Nature includes everything. Then, nature can become nature. Is nature constituted by all creatures more beautiful, or something made of only one component... Turkey should benefit from traditions and customs of people who constitute this country. What is that? Look at our folklore. Look at eastern, southern folklore, Eastern and Western Black sea folklore, Middle-Anatolia's, Mediterranean, Thrace's, Marmara's folklore and Turkey's mosaic structure. Anyone who denies this, denies everything. We must accept that there are cultural differences in Turkey.¹²⁸

Ahmet Bey perceives cultural differences as the multiplicity of folklores and traditions and takes an affirmative position towards the multicultural characteristics of Turkey. In this sense, multicultural groups are considered folkloric and traditional diversities and their representational problems in the public realm and the oppositional relations between the dominant groups and the minorities are not mentioned. Ahmet Bey's statement skips any implication of the contentious situation that stems from unequal power relations among the different cultural groups, as well as refrains from mentioning the tensional issues concerning the

¹²⁸ Ahmet Bey: "Şimdi bakınız, çok kültürlülük bir ülkenin kalkınması için çok önemlidir. Yani bir doğayı düşünün doğada sadece bir gülü, bir çiçeği göremezsiniz. Çiçeği de var, gülü de var, dikenini de var, ağacı da var, her şey vardır. Doğa o zaman doğa olur. Yani bütün canlıların oluşturduğu doğa mı daha güzel olur, yoksa tek tip bir şey olanı mı daha güzeldir. ... Türkiye'de Türkiye'yi oluşturan bu insanların her bölgenin, her yörenin örfünden adetinden faydalanması lazım. Nedir? Folklorumuza bakın. Doğunun folkloru, güney doğunun folkloru, doğu Karadeniz, batı Karadeniz'in folkloru, İç Anadolu'nun, Ege'nin, Trakya'nın, Marmara'nın folkloruna bakın ve Türkiye'yi çok mozaikli bir ortama... Bunu inkar ederken her şeyi inkar ederler. Türkiye'de bazı kültürel farklılıkların olduğunu kabul etmek zorundayız"

demands for group-based rights. Thus, forming an analogy with nature and perceiving cultural differences as the diversity of flowers in nature portrays a peaceful co-existence of different cultural groups and dissolves any conflictual matter with respect to group-based rights.

Although teachers usually reproduce and reinforce the official position during conceptualizing cultural differences at a theoretical level, their actual life experiences within schools create incongruity between their adopted official position and their actual experiences. In other words, official ideology that ignores claims of different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups becomes bounded when teachers come across with the opposition of a student coming from a different ethnic group or when they begin working in a village that is populated by Kurdish people. The meta-narrative of the state that provides a scheme for perceiving cultural differences and eliminates all alternative interpretations is challenged by the micro-narratives of the teachers. It should be stated that teachers were also socialized in the direction of state ideology. In this sense, refractions and challenges in the formal discourses do not appear as a result of the conscious activities of the teachers. In this sense, when I talk about how the teachers' actual life experiences lead to refractions in the official ideology, I do not imply the existence of empowered subjects that have the capacity to emancipate themselves from ideological bondage. On the contrary, I claim that the reason for the inconsistencies and contestations stems from the fact that what is officially reiterated does not cover and explain what is lived and experienced by the teachers. This situation results in the enduring attempts of the teachers to find reasons and explanations to their contradictory lived experiences and to dissolve those contradictions within the borders of official discourse. Hence, neither the complete reproduction of state ideology nor the total challenge to it was

realized during the mediation of formal curriculum. Moreover, within this process, the official ideology cannot preserve its consistent and deliberative form as in textbooks or curricular programs; on the contrary, it is transformed and sometimes distorted through the agencies of teachers.

Working in the East:

Teachers perceive their experiences in the eastern part of Turkey as one of the most significant occurrences in their professional lives, one that has influenced their view points. During the interviews, descriptions of teachers manifest the discrepancy between teaching in the west and the east part of Turkey. Since the most industrialized and urbanized cities are located in the west part, teachers do not suffer from wrecked school buildings, absence of transportation to schools or the bad conditions of residential areas. On the other hand, highly populated classrooms and the economic difficulties that stem from teachers' low salaries to meet the subsistence level of city life constitute the major problems of teachers working in the west. Besides, more commonly in the west part of Turkey, parents of students who are closely interested in the education of their children appear as additional control mechanisms that check the quality of education in schools. The impact of parents on the educational process increases in schools located in high socio-economic regions. In this respect, the teachers from Canan Okur and Mualla Altın İlköğretim complained about the meddling of parents more than the teachers from Hatice Bodur İlköğretim.

On the other hand, the teachers describe the life in the eastern part of Turkey as one of living with indigence, backwardness and inhumane living conditions. Most of my respondents mentioned the lack of either an appropriate school building or residential places for teachers in the region. Moreover, due to the lack of sufficient

numbers of teachers, classes from different grades are combined and instructed by one teacher. Furthermore, the linguistic differences between the teachers and students appear to be one of the major problems of education in the eastern part of Turkey. When teachers are appointed to the places populated by Kurdish people, they come across students whose native language is Kurdish and thus do not know a word of Turkish. In this sense, teachers' experience of teaching Turkish to Kurdish students becomes one of the most distinctive features of the education in the eastern part of Turkey.

The very experience of living in a Kurdish populated region and teaching Kurdish students resulted in the concretization of the abstract term 'cultural differences' in the minds of teachers. Thus, when teachers talk about life conditions in the east, their affiliation with local people, and their relations with Kurdish students, apart from the meta-narrative that is officially reiterated, their own experiences and narratives come into view. The dissonance between the official claims and lived experiences of the teachers result in the refraction and thus transformation of official ideology. In other words, teachers' attempts to justify the incongruity between the meta-narrative and lived experiences appear to be the main reason for the refractions, transformations and distortions in the official discourse. Ahmet Bey, who has worked in the Kurdish populated regions, reflects one of the most explicit forms of refraction in the official discourse. Although when defining cultural differences, he pointed out the analogy of nature and perceived the differences as folkloric and traditional diversities, while talking about his experiences in the east, he takes a more critical position about the state policies.

In our national education, we teach English and French in our schools. The language of education is even English in some of the schools. Why do we hold back the rights of cultural

differences from our own citizens, from our own society, who have Turkish Republic IDs, display the Turkish Republic's flag on their IDs? If you ask for respect for the flag, for the state, you must give worth to the ideas, the people, and the society. If you do not respect these people and society, Turkey becomes gangrene. It is impossible to recover from gangrene. Look, if you are going to be a patriot, be a populist, in short, you are going to be an Atatürkist. I do not believe that Atatürkism, Atatürk's principles, Atatürk's reforms, are completely put into practice in today's Turkey. What is populism? It is to address a whole society. Atatürk initiated the independence war from Samsun, but he finished it in Erzurum and Sivas. Atatürk did not initiate the independence war in Istanbul, or in Edirne. Look, there is no *kahraman* (heroic) Izmir, *kahraman* Konya, *kahraman* Kütahya, *gazi* (ghazi) Balıkesir. There is Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Serhat Kars. There is şanlı (glorious) Urfa, not şanlı Ankara or şanlı Bolu. Please consider it carefully. In the Turkish Republic, the people in charge must declare this with honesty. In Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa the public won their independence by themselves. No Turkish Republic army went in there.¹²⁹

The above statement of Ahmet Bey exemplifies how the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, official and counter-official discourse stands together, interact with each other and appear as a convoluted statement. In the present quotation, Ahmet Bey refers to multiple issues and problems. Firstly, his remarks about education in native languages constitute a serious challenge to the official position, which strictly bans discussions on the right of education in native language. In this

¹²⁹ Ahmet Bey: "Eğer Milli Eğitimde kendi okullarımızda İngilizce'yi, Fransızca'yı öğreniyoruz, hatta eğitim dili İngilizce bazı okullarda. Neden kendi vatandaşımıza, kendi halkımıza, kimliği Türkiye Cumhuriyeti olan, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin bayrağını kimliğinin üstünde taşıyan insanlara biz bu kültürel anlamdaki farkları çok görüyoruz. Eğer siz bayrağa, devlete saygı istiyorsanız fikirlere değer verin, insanlara, topluma değer verin. Tüm bu kişilere ve topluma değer vermediğiniz müddetçe Türkiye kangren ülkesi olur. Bu kangrenden kurtulunması mümkün değil. Şimdi bakınız, Türkiye'de vatansever olacaksınız, halkçı olacaksınız, kısacası Atatürkçü olacaksınız. Ben bugünkü Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Atatürkçülüğün tam anlamıyla, Atatürk'ün ilke ve inkılaplarının tam anlamıyla uygulandığına inanmıyorum. Halkçılık nedir? Bütün halka hitap edebilmektir. Atatürk Kurtuluş savaşına Samsundan başladı ama Erzurum ve Sivas'ta bitirdi. Atatürk Kurtuluş savaşını İstanbul'da başlatmadı, Edirne'den başlatmadı. Bakın batıda kahraman İzmir yoktur, kahraman Konya yoktur, kahraman Kütahya yoktur, gazi Balıkesir yoktur. Bakın Gaziantep vardır, Kahramanmaraş vardır, Serhat Kars vardır. Şanlı Urfa vardır, şanlı Ankara yoktur, şanlı Bolu yoktur. Bakın dikkat edin. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, gereken insanlar bunu dürüst bir biçimde açıklaması lazım. Kahramanmaraş'ta, Gaziantep'te, Şanlıurfa'da halk kendi kurtuluş savaşını kendisi kazanmıştır. Oraya Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ordusu girmemiştir."

sense, the allegedly ‘difference blind’ position of official ideology that advocates non-discriminatory policies towards any cultures and ethnicities is seriously invalidated when it becomes apparent that official policies enforce the domination of one language and ignore demands of the other cultural groups. Thus, the neutrality of the formal curriculum is undermined due to the discrimination against other cultural groups by depriving them of the right to education in their own language. In addition to voicing the demands regarding the right to education in the native language, Ahmet Bey’s justification for this cultural right is also worth considering. In his statement, cultural rights are perceived as the main tools that ensure loyalty to the state and to the flag. Thus, although official ideology is challenged through asserting cultural rights, the very contestation becomes bounded since cultural rights and freedoms are advocated in order to reinforce the state authority.

On the other hand, Ahmet Bey’s conception of Atatürkism and the principle of populism manifest how the official discourse is transformed and distorted. In other words, Ahmet Bey attempts to find a solution to the ethno-cultural problems by using the tools of the official ideology. However, his attempt results in different interpretations of official ideology. In this sense, Ahmet Bey endeavors to shed light on the Kurdish problem by referring to the ‘true’ interpretation of Kemalist principles. He re-defines the Kemalist principle of ‘populism’ (halkçılık) in a way that encompasses rights and liberties of the cultural minorities. Hence, problems of cultural discrimination, inequality, intolerance and injustice do not appear due to the nation state ideology that struggles to construct a homogeneous society with one culture, language and religion; on the contrary, the ‘true’ version of nation state ideology is perceived as the ultimate solution. Kemalist ideology determines the

horizon of the possibilities and eliminates all other explanations and solutions regarding the problems of differences in Turkey. Ahmet Bey's challenge to official policies does not lead to a paradigmatic shift or result in the emergence of new conceptual tools that enable alternative considerations.

Another interesting point that rises from the words of Ahmet Bey is the transformation of the official narrative of the independence war in favor of Kurdish people. It should be stated that the narrative of the independence war that resulted in the foundation of the independent Turkish Republic has a significant place in the Turkish political conjuncture. In addition to reminding people of the difficulties of acquiring and sustaining national independence, inherent boundaries of citizenship are drawn by including the people whose ancestors fought for this country. Furthermore, referring to the national independence war strengthens the monistic assumption of Turkish society and implies the necessity of preserving national solidarity in order to fight against the internal and external forces that aspire for the disunity of the Turkish state. Ahmet Bey, however, mentions the independence war in order to find a legitimate ground for the recognition of the problems of Kurdish people. Thus, while on one hand, he stays within the borders of the official nationalist canons, on the other hand, he transforms those borders by articulating the officially ignored problems of Kurdish people.

Education in the Native Language:

When I consider the statements of my respondents who have work experience in Kurdish populated regions, the main source of criticism against official policies concentrated around the language problem. In this regard, two reasons can be offered to explain the teachers' emphasis on the language problem. On the one hand, different from other rights and liberties that are usually discussed

at a conceptual level, the language problem in schools is directly associated to actual reality, as well as entirely affecting and altering daily life in schools. On the other hand, the domination of one language does not appear to be a problem that only impinges on the rights of minorities. The problem is shared also by the teachers, since the education is an interactive process. For instance, Ahmet Bey criticizes the state policies that replace the Kurdish names of villages with Turkish ones and mentions that local people do not adopt the new names that are enforced by the state. He reached this conclusion when he was appointed to Bitlis and could not find his work place, because even though the name of the village was changed by the state, the local people continued to use its original name.

In addition, the difficulties that Ahmet Bey experienced during teaching the Kurdish students how to read and write are also worth considering. Although the Ministry of Education imposes the method of deduction (from whole to parts), Ahmet Bey talks about the inappropriateness of this method for students whose native language is different than Turkish. For this reason, Ahmet Bey states how he went beyond the regulations of the ministry and taught literacy by using the inductive (from parts to whole) method in the village of Bitlis. This experience of Ahmet Bey demonstrates how the authoritarian and exclusionary aspects of the official policies of education make teachers transgress the borders of officially promulgated regulations. Hence, this example reveals that when the official policies cannot cover daily experiences within schools, refractions and transformations within the official statements and regulations become inevitable.

Nazim Bey who has worked in Van for five years, also expresses the importance of building an education system that includes the differences of people and criticizes the state's homogenization policies.

They (Kurdish people) are respectful of Turkey. On the other hand, when you talked with even the most uneducated person in that region – although it was the time that terror peaked – they used to say ‘our flag is the same, our country is the same but they do not give us our rights’. I mean, what are the rights they mean when they are asking for them? What can these rights be? Maybe, it is having a TV program, listening to songs or producing things in their own language. For instance, I always wanted to tell stories to children in their own language. Their grandfathers or fathers tell them stories, but I would like to do it in a more scientific and systematic way. I mean, I always wanted do this in order to broaden children’s imagination. I always thought to myself it would be good. Those children are missing something in this respect. I mean, the children in the east are successful in Mathematics but they have problems with Turkish language courses.¹³⁰

After stating the importance of cultural rights, Nazim Bey also talks about the results of the mono-lingual policies in the east of Turkey. For instance, in spite of their success in mathematics, the failure of the students from eastern regions in verbal courses is perceived as the result of mono-cultural official policies. Besides, Nazim Bey’s aspiration to tell stories in the students’ own language undermines the studies that perceive teachers as the simple tools of the state. Nazim Bey’s statement demonstrates the creative sides of being a teacher. On the other hand, the inclusion of the Kurdish stories to the curriculum does not come to view as the ineligible and undeniable cultural rights of the Kurdish people. By mentioning the necessity of telling Kurdish stories in a more scientific and systematic way, Nazim Bey endeavors to neutralize his political assertion through taking refuge in science.

¹³⁰ Nazim Bey: “İşte Türkiye’ye saygılılar ama şu var oradaki en cahil insanla bile konuştuğunda ki o zaman terörün en yoğun olduğu dönemdi, şöyle söylediler ‘yani hocam bizim bayrağımız bir, vatanımız bir ama bize hak vermiyorlar’ derlerdi. Yani hak vermiyorlar derken neydi bunların istediği, bu hak ne olabilir? İşte dillerinde belki televizyonda bir türkü programı olması, kendi dillerinde bir türkü dinlemek, kendi dillerinde bir şeyler üretmek. Ben mesela çocuklara kendi dillerinde masallar anlatmayı çok istemişimdir. Çünkü masalları belki dedeleri, babaları anlatıyor ama bir de bunu bilimselleştirip daha derli toplu masallar anlatmayı isterdim. Yani çocukların kendi hayal dünyalarının gelişmesi açısından falan ben bunu istemişimdir, yani kendi kendime olsa iyi olur diye düşünmüşümdür. Bu konuda o çocuklar tabi ki bir şeyleri eksik yaşıyorlar. Yani doğudaki çocuklar matematikte çok başarılıdır ama bir Türkçede çok zorlanırlar.”

Moreover, with his emphasis on science, he reproduces the Kemalist dictums that consider science as an essential part of the republican project.

In addition to Ahmet Bey and Nazim Bey who seem to have a more critical position towards the official ideology, support for a more inclusive education that sustains cultural rights also comes from teachers with a mainstream standing. For instance, Nermin Hanım who sometimes takes an ethnic nationalist position regarding republican values, states her support for establishing an educational system that is sensitive to local languages.

(Do you think that national education should include other languages?) Yes, it should. First, I see (different) culture(s) in the class as a richness. Besides, children must also get used to this. They should not laugh, should not find somebody speaking other Anatolian languages such as Kurdish strange. Because, not only the Turkish nationalists saved this country, there were people coming from all origins, all languages. Everybody must know his own language but Turkish must be common. I mean, no child should be deprived of his native tongue. In the end, it is not his fault he is given birth to by a Kurdish mother. We educate Kurds too, Lazs too, for example in my class, there are people from all over.¹³¹

The words of Nermin Hanım expose the co-existence of two different sides. On the one hand, she argues for ensuring the commonness of Turkish; on the other hand, she develops a sense of respect for differences by emphasizing the right for learning and using the native languages. Moreover, her justification for the cultural rights oscillates between a nationalist discourse and a more universal approach.

¹³¹ Nermin Hanım: (sizce Milli Eğitim farklı dilleri de kapsamalı mı?) “Kapsamalı. Bir kere ben zaten sınıftaki o kültürü zenginlik görüyorum sonuçta. Bunun yanı sıra çocuklar buna da alışmalı. Gülmemeli öbür Anadolu’ca konuşanlara bir Kürtçe mesela duyduğu zaman yadırgamamalı. Çünkü bu ülkeyi sadece milliyetçiler kurtarmadı, her dilden her kökenden insan vardı. Herkes anadilini bilmeli ama Türkçe ortak olmalı. Çocuk anadilinden de mahrum edilmemeli yani. Sonuçta onun günahı değildi bir Kürt annesinden doğmak. Biz önümüze geleni ayıt edemiyoruz ki, sen Kürtün okutmayacağız seni diyemiyoruz ki. Kürtü de okutuyoruz, Lazı da okutuyoruz, mesela benim sınıfımda her bölgeden insan var.”

While she points out the endowment of cultural rights to people whose ancestors fought for this country and participates in a nationalist discourse, she also refers to a more universal vision by rejecting the discrimination of any ethnicity and culture.

Teachers, who have never worked or lived in culturally different regions, give elusive answers concerning the inclusion of cultural rights by national education. Rather than pointing out the problems of different cultural groups, they emphasize the importance of unity and commonness. For instance, Canan Hanım who has just worked in Istanbul perceives the solidarity of people around common objectives as a condition for national development and welfare. She puts emphasis on the equality of people and does not problematize the accommodation of differences.¹³² On the other hand, the statements of teachers those have worked in the eastern regions and have taught students from different cultural groups expose an increased tolerance through the formation of an empathy towards the different cultures. In this vein, Nazim Bey complains about prejudices of people who have never visited the eastern part of Turkey. He mentions that those people take a conservative and nationalist position and do not show tolerance or respect for culturally different people.¹³³

It can be stated that teachers' statements on the language problem in the eastern parts of Turkey provide very important findings about the incongruity between state policies and lived experiences. Although official policies exclude the

¹³² Canan Hanım: "Biz bu sınırlar içinde yaşıyorsak, bu devletin geleceği için çalışmalıyız. Bizim hedeflerimiz olmalı? Daha mutlu yaşamak istemiyor muyuz? Niye ayrılık düşünelim? Neden birbirimizden farklı olduğumuzu düşünelim? ... En iyisi biz el birliğiyle, güç birliğiyle ülkemizi en yüksek seviyelere getirelim diyoruz. Ya bunun için çalışalım. Tabi ki farklılıklar olabilir ama herkes ortak amaçta birleşecek. Sonuçta herkes eşittir diyoruz. Ya bu eşitliği biz de farkında olmalıyız."

¹³³ Nazim Bey: "Mesela, Doğuyu hiç görmemiş, orada yaşamamış insanlarla burada konuşuyoruz, oradaki insanlara ön yargıyla bakıyorlar. Kendi ailelerinde aşırı milliyetçi mi tutucu mu diyeyim tavır aldıklarına inanıyorum. Ailelerin kendilerinden olmayanlara hoşgörüyüyle bakma eğitimi verdiklerine inanmıyorum. ... İşte kendilerinden olmayanlara saygı duymalısın gibisinden."

voices of different cultures from the formal curriculums, the very experience of teaching to culturally and linguistically different students provides the consciousness of developing a more inclusive education system. It is important to note that the teachers' advocacy for formulating a curriculum that is sensitive to local languages does not become apparent as a part of a systematic propagation or a dictum of political groups, parties or civil society organizations; on the contrary, their experiences and actual life in schools lead them to mention the language problem. Hence, teachers do not develop a comprehensive criticism of mono-cultural aspects of the education system, but their antagonistic experiences result in the contestation of homogenizing policies.

To sum up, focusing on experiences, interpretations and narratives of the teachers provides an alternative perspective to studies that conceptualize schools as the direct tools of the state and elucidates the complicated sides of schools. On the one hand, the official ideology that is promulgated in the textbooks and curriculum programs is also reproduced by the public school teachers. However, this reproduction never takes the form of a total reflection of official ideology. On the contrary, actual school life, i.e. interaction with students and school administration, leads to contradictory experiences that result in the dissonance between what is deliberated in official statements and what is lived in actuality. In addition, my interviews with teachers reveal that Kemalism is not a doctrine that the republican teachers think *about* but an ideology that they think *with*.¹³⁴ In many cases, the tools of Kemalism become insufficient to elucidate the reasons of recent social and political transformations as well as explain the contradictory experiences of

¹³⁴ Gillis develops the same formulation for identities and memory. Although identities and memory are political and social constructs, they appear as “not the things we think *about*, but things we think *with*” In this sense, Kemalism constructs the identity and collective memory of teachers and becomes a reference point that determines the horizon of possibilities. See: Gillis, p. 5

teachers. However, since teachers are encircled within the Kemalist paradigm, the present contradictions become layered and contestations are curtailed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine how primary school teachers mediate the republican ideology. It endeavored to analyze to what extent teachers contribute to the reproduction and reinforcement of official ideology and on the other hand, to what extent they develop oppositions, contestations, and transgressions. In other words, this study focuses on the dialectical relationship between the structural factors of the education system and the agencies of the teachers through elucidating the interplay between the domination of the official ideology and the resistance of agencies in daily school life. In this respect, it aimed to explore the complicated site of schools in which both the (re)production and the challenge of the official ideology come to view in a convoluted form.

By focusing on the in-depth interviews with the primary school teachers and considering their statements, interpretations and experiences as the basis for this study, I wanted to examine the following questions: How do the public school teachers both stay within the Kemalist paradigm and reproduce its basic tenets; and on the other hand, how do they challenge and transform the boundaries of Kemalist ideology? What kinds of contradictions rise during the interpretation and implementation of republican values in actual school life? How do these contradictions become layered? How do the contradictory lived experiences of

teachers lead to conflicts between actual school life and the state ideology? And how do those contradictions bring about refractions in the inculcation of the official ideology?

The elucidation of those research questions necessitated the development of a theoretical framework that grasps the complicated nature of schools. In this sense, major theoretical approaches to the study of education were overviewed and this historical analysis brought us to the development of theories of resistance. Theories of resistance with their focus on contradictions, conflicts and resistance provided me with the necessary theoretical constructs to understand the dialectical relations between structures and agencies, as well as between domination and resistance in the educational process.

Those educational theories that consider the resistance of agencies as the basis of their research agenda and thus bring a new perspective to the studies, theorize schools as monistic institutions that reproduce the dominant ideology and reduce teachers to simple functionaries of state. Those structuralist accounts consider schools as ‘black boxes’ and ignore the impact of human subjects and the internal mechanisms of schools. However, throughout this research I pursued the aim of examining the relation between ideological modes of domination and their actual unfolding in daily school life. Although in the third chapter, I reviewed the studies that critically examine the formation of the nation state in Turkey, as well as the principles of republican ideology and the ideological content of the Turkish national education, the basic agenda of this thesis was to analyze the difference between the textual existence of Kemalist ideology and its interpretation and implementation in actual school life.

After developing the theoretical tools that delineate the complicated nature of education and reviewing the previous studies which were based on the exploration of the Turkish modernization project and the ideological aspects of its education, the major arguments and analyses of the present study were discussed in the fourth chapter. In this chapter, the teachers' mediation of the republican ideology was discussed under a thematic analysis.

According to the first theme, I examined the interpretation of republican values by mainly focusing on teachers' perceptions of the commemoration of Republican Days. In this part, teachers' statements portrayed the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic in a form of binary opposition between the past and the future. While all terms of backwardness, ignorance and under-development were associated to the Ottoman times, the Turkish Republic was represented as the embodiment of progress, development and westernization. In this sense, the republican regime appeared as the absolute 'good' for people, immune from any kind of criticism and oppositions. On the other hand, teachers' unconditioned adherence to the republican regime brought out the question of 'what went wrong in the modernization project and prevented us from attaining the objectives that were set forth during the foundation years'. In this sense, recent problems that Turkey encounters, i.e. the rise of political Islam and the exacerbation of Kurdish problems, were not considered as the result of Kemalist modernization or regarded as the failure of the republican project; on the contrary, sources of all social, political and economic problems were related to the deviation from the 'true version' of Kemalism. Teachers' emphasis on the existence of a 'truer' or 'essential' version of Kemalism and their representation of the foundation years as the 'golden age' of Kemalist ideology became very important to understanding their

oppositional positions to the current state policies. I argue that teachers' embracement of the 'true' version of Kemalism provide them with a legitimate ground for criticizing the existing order and express their discontents about the current functioning of the republic. While adherence to the 'true' version of the republic enables teachers to develop criticism and resistances against the current functioning of the state, at the same time, it restricts any alternative perspective or interpretation of the current problems.

Secondly, I analyzed teachers' conception of democracy and their discontents about the functioning of democracy in daily school life. In this part, contradictory definitions of democracy indicated teachers' perplexity about the conceptual borders between democracy, republicanism and popular sovereignty. On the one hand, teachers perceive democracy as a product of the republican project and connect it to the terms of republicanism and popular sovereignty. On the other hand, they endeavor to define it as the universal rights and liberties of individuals, i.e. the preservation of human dignity and freedom of expressions. Moreover, those conflicting definitions of democracy do not result in the development of self-consciousness about the anti-democratic terms of the republican project. Conversely, contradictions are dissolved through limiting the conceptions of individual rights and liberties within the Kemalist frame.

As the third theme, I analyzed teachers' conceptions of cultural differences and explored how working experiences in the regions populated by culturally different people affect the inculcation of the official ideology. In this sense, I mainly focused on narratives of the teachers who were appointed to the eastern part of Turkey and had work experience in the Kurdish populated regions. In this part, I examined how the incongruity between the official claims and actual experiences

leads to the refraction and transformation of the official ideology. One of the major challenges of teachers who had work experience in the east rises against the monolingual state policies. In this sense, teachers who had work experience in the eastern part do not hesitate to declare their support for the right of education in the native language, since they faced the difficulty of teaching the formal curriculum to Kurdish students who did not know a word of Turkish. Hence, they resist the official position that ignores the right of education in the native language. On the other hand, their challenge against the official policies does not result in the development of a critical consciousness about the Kemalist ideology. On the contrary, providing those cultural rights turned out to be a necessary condition of the Kemalist principle of populism (*halkçılık*) or became a kind of benevolence toward people whose ancestors fought in the independence war side by side with Turkish people.

To sum up, the Kemalist paradigm mainly determines the horizons of teachers. In this sense, Kemalism becomes a doctrine that teachers do not think *about*; on the contrary, it becomes an ideology that teachers think *with*. Remaining within the Kemalist paradigm restricts teachers' envisioning of a more democratic, universal and multicultural education. On the other hand, schools are neither holistic institutions that are only defined by the ideological domination, nor static structures that are immune from change. There is always a struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic elements, as well as a contest between domination and resistance. Hence, there is always hope for change.

APPENDIX A

PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES

i. Kamile Hanım: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 24 February 2005.

School: Canan Okur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 29 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: Sivas
Work Places: Sivas, İskenderun, İstanbul

ii. Sevim Hanım: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 February 2005.

School: Canan Okur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 23 years
Branch: Primary school teacher
Birth Place: İstanbul
Work Places: Erzurum, Trabzon, İstanbul

iii. Emine Hanım: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2005.

School: Canan Okur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 30 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: İstanbul
Work Places: İstanbul

iv. Ahmet Bey: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 March 2005 and 16 April 2005.

School: Canan Okur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 27 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: Kars
Work Places: Giresun, Bitlis, İstanbul

v. Osman Bey: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2005.

School: Canan Okur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 26 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: Zonguldak
Work Places: Zonguldak, İstanbul

vi. Taner Bey: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 8 April 2005.

School: Canan Okur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 25 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – Second stage (Teacher of Citizenship Education)
Birth Place: Giresun
Work Places: Giresun, İstanbul

vii. Nazim Bey: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 1 April 2005 and 19 April 2005.

School: Mualla Altın İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 16 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: Kars
Work Places: Van, İstanbul

viii. Erkan Bey: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 20 April 2005.

School: Mualla Altın İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 26 years
Branch: Primary school teacher - Second stage (Teacher of Social Knowledge)
Birth Place: Tokat
Work Places: Tokat, Gaziantep, İstanbul

ix. Mehmet Bey: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 6 April 2005.

School: Mualla Altın İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 30 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: Çanakkale
Work Places: Erzurum, Çanakkale, Yozgat, İstanbul

x. Rüya Hanım: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 April 2005.

School: Mualla Altın İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 29 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: Batman
Work Places: Batman, İstanbul

xi. Güler Hanım: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 March 2005.

School: Hatice Bodur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 10 years
Branch: Primary school teacher – First stage
Birth Place: Ordu
Work Places: İstanbul

xii. Canan Hanım: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 April 2005.

School: Hatice Bodur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 12 years
Branch: Primary school teacher - Second stage (Teacher of Social Knowledge)
Birth Place: İstanbul
Work Places: İstanbul

xiii. Nermin Hanım: Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 April 2005.

School: Hatice Bodur İlköğretim Okulu
Teaching Experience: 26 years
Branch: Primary school teacher
Birth Place: Mersin
Work Places: Diyarbakır, Mersin, Erzurum, Edirne, İstanbul

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS USED IN THE INTERVIEWS

Personal Questions:

- Could you tell me about yourself?
- Where were you born? When were you born?
- Which schools did you attend?
- Which cities did you inhabit?
- How long have you been working as a teacher?
- At which schools did you work?
- How long have you been working at your current school?
- What is your branch of teaching?
- Why did you choose to be a teacher?

The Commemoration of Republican Days:

- Why do we celebrate the Republican Days?
- What is the significance of the Republican Days for you?
- Which values are desired to be given to students during the Republican Day celebrations?
- Is there any difference between the celebrations of your childhood and the current ones? If yes, what is the reason for this difference?
- Are you content with the forms of celebrations that are regulated by the Ministry of Education? If no, how should they be celebrated?

Democracy and Cultural Differences:

- According to you, what kind of citizens does Turkish national education aim to bring up?

- Does the Turkish national education system endeavor to build a consciousness for common citizenship?
- What are the main aspects of this common citizenship that are aimed to be taught at schools?
- Does the notion of citizenship that is disseminated through schools have the capacity to include people coming from different ethnic and religious groups?
- Does the formal curriculum contain elements from different values, thoughts and beliefs? What do you think about this situation? Do you take some extra precautions to teach tolerance for differences?
- What do you think about students coming from different cultures?
- Do you give the right of expression to students coming from different origins?
- What do you think about students who oppose and ask questions? In this sense, how do you define the ideal student?
- How do you define democracy?
- What do you think about group rights?
- What do you think about the functioning of democracy in daily school life?
Are you content with the education of democratic culture at schools?

Kemalism / Atatürkism:

- How is Kemalism talked about in the textbooks?
- How do you teach Kemalism?
- How does Kemalism define the ideal form of society? Have we attained this ideal form? If not, why not?

- What do you think about the recent social and political transformations that emerged after the 1980s? Does the rise of the Kurdish issue constitute a challenge to Kemalist principles? What do you think about the headscarf issue?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmet, Feroz, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (NY: Taylor & Francis Group, 1993).
- Akşit, Bahattin, “Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late Otoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in the Republic”, *Islam in Modern Turkey* ed. by R. Tapper (London: I.B. Tauris &Co Ltd, 1991).
- Akyüz, Yahya, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi* (Turkish Education History) (İstanbul: İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1997).
- Althusser, Louis, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, *Mapping Ideology* ed. by Zizek (London, New York: Verso, 1994).
- Altunışık, Meliha Benli and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change* (NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).
- Aronowitz, Stanley, “Preface to Morningside Edition” *Learning to Labour* by Paul Willis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).
- Aronowitz, Stanley and Henry Giroux, *Education Still Under Siege* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1993).
- Ballantine, Jeanne H., *The Sociology of Education: A Systemic Analysis* (NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 2001).
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1990).
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- Carlson, Dennis, “Teachers as Political Actors: From Reproductive Theory to the Crisis of Schooling”, *Harvard Educational Review* vol. 57, no. 3 (August 1987), pp: 283-307.
- Carlson, Dennis, “Beyond the Reproductive Theory of Teaching”, *Bowles and Gintis Revisited: Correspondence and Contradiction in Educational Theory* ed. by Mike Cole (NY: The Falmer Press, 1988).
- Çayır, Kenan, “Ders Kitaplarında İnsan Hakları ve Demokrasi Bilinci” (Human Rights and Democratic Consciousness in the Textbooks), *Ders Kitaplarında İnsan Hakları: Tarama Sonuçları* (Human Rights in Textbooks: Survey Results) ed. by B. Çotuksözen, A. Erzan, O. Silier (İstanbul : Tarih Vakfı, 2003).
- Çelik, Nur Betül, “The Constitution and Dissolution of the Kemalist Imaginary”, *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* ed. by David Howard et. al. (NY: Mancester University Press, 2000).

Christopher, Hurn, "Conflict Theory", J. *An Encyclopedia: Education and Society* ed. by Levinson, Cookson, and Sadovnik (New York : RoutledgeFalmer, 2002).

Çınar, Alev, "National History as a Contested Site: The Conquest of Istanbul and Islamist Negotiations of the Nation", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2001), pp: 364-391.

Cookson, Peter and Alan Sadovnik, "Functionalist Theories of Education" *An Encyclopedia: Education and Society* (New York : RoutledgeFalmer, 2002).

Erdoğan, Necmi, "Neo-Kemalism, Organik Bunalım ve Hegemonya", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* (Political Thought in Modern Turkey) ed. by M. Belge (İstanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 2001-2005).

Fraser, James W., *Reading, Writing, and Justice: School Reform as If Democracy Matters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).

Giddens, Anthony, *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1972).

Gillis, John R., "Memory and Identity", *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. by Gillis (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Giroux, Henry, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Bergin & Garvey, 2001).

Gökalp, Ziya, *Milli Terbiye ve Maarif Meselesi* (National Nurture and Education Issue) (Ankara: Diyarbakır'ı Tanıtma ve Turizm Derneği Yayınları, 1962).

Grenfell, Michael, *Bourdieu & Education: Acts of Practical Theory* (Florence, KY, USA: Taylor & Francis, 1998).

Kaplan, Ismail, *The Ideology of National Education in Turkey and Its Implications for Political Socialization* (Ph.D diss., Bogazici University, 1998).

Kaplan, Sam, "Nuriye's Dilemma: Turkish Lessons of Democracy and the Gendered State", *American Ethnologist*, vol. 30, no: 3 (2003), pp. 401-417.

Kasaba, Reşat, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities", *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. by S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

Kasaba, Reşat and Sibel Bozdoğan, "Turkey at a Crossroad", *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. by S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

Kazdağlı, Güneş, *Atatürk ve Bilim* (Ataturk and Science) (Ankara: TÜBİTAK yayınları, 2002).

Keyder, Çağlar, “Whither the Project of Modernity?”, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* ed. by S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1997).

Köker Levent, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* (İstanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 1990).

Köker, Levent, “Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük: Modernleşme, Devlet ve Demokrasi”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce* (Political Thought in Modern Turkey) ed. by M. Belge (İstanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 2001-2005)

Levinson, Bradley A. and Dorothy Holland, “The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: An Introduction”, *Cultural Production of the Educated Person: Critical Ethnographies of Schooling and Local Practice* ed. by Levinson (Albany, NY, USA: State University of New York Press, 1996).

Özyürek, Esra, “Miniaturizing Atatürk: Privatization of State Imagery and Ideology in Turkey”, *American Ethnologist*, vol.31, no.3 (2004), pp: 374-391.

Parla, Taha, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları* (Official Sources on Political Culture in Turkey) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991).

Salmoni, Barak, “Ordered Liberty and Disciplined Freedom: Turkish Education and Republican Democracy, 1923-50”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, v40, i2 (March 2004).

Salmoni, Barak, “Turkish Knowledge for a Modern Life: Innovative Pedagogy and Nationalist Substance in Primary Schooling, 1927-50”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 4, No.3 (Autumn 2003), pp. 103-144.

Swartz, David, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

Topses, Gürsen, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitimin Gelişimi” (Development of Education in Republican Period), *75. Yılda Eğitim* (Education in 75 Years) ed. by F. Gök (İstanbul : Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999).

Torres, C. A. and R. A. Morrow, *Social Theory and Education* (NY: SUNY Press, 1995).

Torres, Carlos Alberto, *Democracy, Education, and Multiculturalism* (NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998).

Touraine, Alain, *Critique of Modernity*, (Cambridge, Mass. : Blackwell, 1995).

Türkmen, Buket, “Laikliğin Dönüşümü: Liseli Gençler, Türban ve Atatürk Rozeti” (Transformation of Laicism: High School Youth, Headscarf and Atatürk Rosette”, *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri* (New Public Faces of Islam) ed. by Nilüfer Göle (Istanbul: Metis, 2000).

Üstel, Füsün, “*Makbul Vatandaş*”ın *Peşinde* (İstanbul: İletişim yayınları, 2004).
Willis, Paul, *Learning to Labour* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).
Yashin, Yael Navaro, *Faces of the State* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
Zurcher, Erik J., *Turkey: A Modern History* (NY: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd, 1998).

- Online Sources:

657 Sayılı Devlet Memurları Kanunu
http://www.memurlar.net/documents/library/657_06072006.htm (June 14, 2006, 18:00)

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı İlköğretim Kurumları Yönetmeliği,
<http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/225.html> (June 16, 2006, 18:10)

- Other Sources:

“İlköğretim, Lise ve Dengi Okullar Eğitici Çalışmalar Yönetmeliği” *Tebliğler Dergisi* 06/06/1983 – 2140.

İlköğretim Okulu Hayat Bilgisi (Life Knowledge), (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 2000)