

Reproduction of Post-Colonial Mental Codes in Modern Turkey

Barış ERDOĞAN*

Abstract

In establishing their new nation-state by waging war against the occupant Western countries during the aftermath of the World War I, the secular nationalist cadres who were educated in the Western-modern schools of the semi-colonial Ottoman State implemented a modernization project that acknowledged the superiority of Western values in order to “civilize” the society that they were attempting to build. These secular nationalist cadres gained legitimacy via running a national Independence battle against the colonialist imperialist powers, and they pursued a internal colonialism and local orientalism approach excluding the various social groups that existed in the periphery of their own nation-state from the political, cultural, social, and economic fields. However, different social groups resisted against this civilization project in various forms from the very beginning, and brought to power the “Islamist” Welfare Party (RP) in 1996 and then Justice and Development Party (AK Party) in 2002. As a response to this development, RP was discredited in the political and social arena and finally overthrown by a ‘post-modern coup d’état’, and AK Party faced a closure trail and the military e-memorandum. This article shall employ a post-colonial perspective to carry out a sociological discussion of the processes that fostered the mental codes of these “secular nationalist cadres” that were determined to modernize their nation-state at any cost.

Keywords: Internal colonialism, post-colonialism, center-periphery, February 28 process, Turkey

Modern Türkiye’de Post Kolonyal Zihinsel Kodların Yeniden Üretimi

Öz

Yarı sömürgeleştirilmiş Osmanlı Devleti’nin Batılı modern okullarında yetişen milliyetçi seküler kadrolar Birinci Dünya savaşı sonrası yeni ulus-devletlerini işgalci Batılı ülkelere karşı savaşarak kurdular. Ancak inşa etmeye çalıştıkları toplumu “medenileştirmek” için batılı değerlerin üstünlüğünü kabul eden bir modernleşme projesini hayata geçirdiler. Meşruluklarını sömürgeci emperyalist güçlere karşı ulusal

* Asst. Prof. Dr., Istanbul Gelisim University. E-mail: bariserdogan74@gmail.com

kurtuluş mücadelesini yürütmekten alan bu kadrolar “milli bir kolonyalizm ve yerel bir oryantalizm” ile kendi milli devletlerinin çerperinde yer alan farklı toplumsal grupları siyasal, kültürel, sosyal ve ekonomik sahalardan dışladılar. Ancak bu medenileştirme projesine karşı farklı toplumsal gruplar Cumhuriyetin başından beri farklı formlarda direniş gösterdiler ve 1996 yılında destekledikleri “İslamcı” Refah Parti’sini (RP) ve daha sonra 2002 yılında Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi’ni (AK PARTİ) iktidara getirdiler. Bunun üzerine milliyetçi seküler kadrolar, Refah Partisi’ni siyasal ve sosyal alanda itibarsızlaştırmış ve bir post modern darbeyle iktidardan uzaklaştırmıştır, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi ise kapatma davası ve askeri e-muhtıraya maruz kalmıştır. Bu makalede ulus-devletlerini her ne pasına olursa olsun modernleştirmek isteyen “milliyetçi seküler kadroların” zihinsel kodlarını besleyen süreçler post kolonyal bakış açısıyla sosyolojik olarak tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İç sömürgecilik, postkolonyalizm, merkez-çevre, 28 Şubat Süreci, Türkiye

Introduction

Post-colonial studies in the academic realm particularly focus on societies and countries with a colonial experience. However, it is also possible to adopt a post-colonial perspective to generate knowledge and conduct analyses of nation-states such as Turkey, which has never been run by colonial powers or whose human or economic resources have never been directly colonialized.

In decolonized societies of today’s world, the postcolonial mental codes in political, economic and social spheres bear the capacity to reproduce themselves even if the political power holders change over time. As depicted by post-colonial studies, societies with a colony/semi-colonialization experience are faced with a major paradox. Although different social groups or alliances may struggle for decolonization from the colonial administration, as they try to be “modern” and “powerful” such as the colonial administration itself, they end up with a mental structure that is in line with the colonial power, which ultimately serves the interests of the latter. Consequently, the elites that aimed at freeing their country from the reign of the colonial administration or from semi-colonialism have gradually alienated themselves from the local cultural values of their society upon “colonial mimicry”¹. As the colonial administration claimed to bring/transfer civilization to its colonies or semi-colonized countries, the new elites who were raised with the mental codes of the colonial administration have followed suit based on a similar claim, attempting to control the economic and cultural resources of the

¹ Homi Bhabha, *The location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 2004, 120.

various ethnic, sectarian, and linguistic social groups in the periphery of the nation-state, and trying to discipline these social groups through an orientalist perspective. Surely, not every model that is copied can be an exact replica of the original within the social structure where it gets implemented. Ideas conceived in one country or society often become “warped, exaggerated, or distorted when applied to another”². For instance, secularism, which constitutes the basis of the French nation-state and points at the separation of religion and state, has turned out to be a concept that is “closely related to ‘the mission of the West to bring civilization’ ”³ in a non-Western context such as Turkey. Via elites trained in Western institutions, secularism has come to refer to the name of a social engineering process that involves transferring of a series of ethical and aesthetic Western norms to the Turkish society⁴, beyond the state’s control over the religious sphere.

Founded upon the ideology of secular nationalism, the Republic of Turkey and its predecessor, the Ottoman State, have never been run under colonial administration. In 1923, after the colonial powers of World War I such as Britain, France and Italy invaded and attempted to colonize the multi-ethnic, multi-religion, semi-colonized Ottoman State, the elites raised in Western education institutions led a war against the occupying powers and founded the nation-state based on homogenizing diverse ethnicities and faiths within the scope of Western aesthetic and ethic norms. “Thus while the Turks never lived under colonial conditions, the leaders of the Turkish Republic intellectually embraced an attitude of westernization that was colonial-like in their relationship with the majority of the population”⁵.

The tension between the center and the periphery in this nation-state culminated in the post-modern coup d’état known as the “February 28 process”, which lays a fruitful ground to decipher the postcolonial mental codes in modern Turkey. This article takes the February 28 process as a basis to carry out a sociological analysis from the perspective of postcolonial studies to discuss how the ruling secular nationalist cadres (secular groups who consider the Western conception within the concept of nation-state) that has been ruling the country since the beginning of the Republican era has produced a “internal colonialism” and “local orientalism” approach toward social groups that existed within the periphery of their nation-state. The conclusion section discusses the capacity of postcolonial mental codes to

² Michael Roskin, *Countries and Concepts, Politics, Geography, Culture*, Prentice Hall College, 2010, p.186.

³ Nilüfer Göle, *Seküler ve Dinsel Aşınan Sınırlar*, İstanbul, Metis Yay., 2012, p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Merve Kavakçı, *Islam, Headscarf Politics in Turkey, A Postcolonial Reading*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p.7.

reproduce themselves although the dominant social groups may change over time, such an example of local dynamics shaped around Islamic religion and traditional values has begun to occupy the center since 2002 in Turkey.

Internal and External Colonialism

Since 1946, excluding the short-lived military periods, formal democratic institutions have been operating and democratic elections have been taking place on a regular basis in Turkey. However, for very long years, social groups that emphasize local and traditional aesthetic and ethic values and underline religious brotherhood over nationalism have not only been excluded from the system under the pressure of the military bureaucracy as the engine driving Turkey's modernization, but also they have been alienated from the social and economic spheres⁶. These social groups with a heterogeneous structure have increased their visibility and impact in the public sphere upon a number of technological and social changes in the world and in Turkey in the 1990's, and rapidly organized under the umbrella of political Islam. As pointed by Göle, politicized Islam has resisted the authoritarian and exclusionary politics of secular nationalism⁷. Via the Welfare Party (RP) that adopted an Islamist discourse, the subalterns of the country won their first victory in metropolitan cities such as Istanbul and Ankara during the local elections in 1994. Welfare Party, built around the claim of implementing a non-capitalist socioeconomic program titled "Just Order", secured the first place in the general elections held in 1995, owing primarily to the votes of those in the social periphery. In 1996, Welfare Party established a coalition government with the central right-wing True Path Party. The secular nationalist cadres exerted efforts to discredit the new government and the resistance movement. Tanks appeared on the streets of the capital city of Turkey, and on February 28, 1997, the National Security Council issued a number of recommendations, forcing the incumbent government to carry out a number of practices that frustrated the circles with Islamic sensitivity⁸. The recommendations comprised 18 items, the first of which reflects the spirit of February 28: The principle of secularism is to be strictly enforced, and if necessary, laws should be modified to serve that purpose.

In order to comprehend the mental codes of the secular nationalist cadres who know what is best for "archaic society" which needs to be salvaged from backwardness, first it is necessary to examine the development of

⁶ Ali Bulaç, "İslamın Üç Siyaset Tarzı veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, İslamcılık*, Vol. 6., İstanbul, İletişim, 2005, p.66.

⁷ Nilüfer Göle, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

⁸ Niyazi Günay, "Implementing the 'February 28' Recommendations: A Scorecard," *Research Notes No. 10*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, May 2001.

internal and external colonialism in Western Europe from the perspective of nationalism and secularization. That is because the birth of a mimicked internal colonialism and local orientalism can only be understood through an understanding of the original.

Colonialism, in rough terms, is a system where the majority of a nation's economic, human, and cultural (religious, spiritual, moral) capital, is monitored by a minority power that is usually external. This system "necessarily meant un-forming or re-forming the communities that existed there already, and involved a wide range of practices including trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions"⁹. On the other hand, internal colonialism is a system where a single nation state or the social groups in the center use the power apparatus of the economic, social, and cultural capital to exercise psychological or physical power over an ethnic, sectarian, linguistic or class-based community from the periphery of the society¹⁰. In both internal and external colonialism, changing the psychological and cultural patterns of the colonized circles constitutes a significant area of activity for reinforcing and sustaining colonialism. Modern schools and secular institutions have assumed an important role to serve that purpose in the case of internal colonialism, while first the missionary organization¹¹ and then the modern educational institutions assumed an important function in external colonialism practices.

In Western Europe, the process that involves an intersection of the emergence of capitalism, birth of colonialism¹² and process of nation-states buildings dates back to the 17th century. Though at times independent of each other, these processes were mostly intertwined, and cultivated each other outside the European territory as well¹³. The Western capitalist production model has transitioned from colonialism to imperialism in order to sustain its existence and to keep under control the resources and markets outside the continent. In the meantime, as a model of political organization, it evolved into the nation state model.

⁹ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism, Postcolonialism*, London, Routledge, 2005, p. 8.

¹⁰ Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 18-19.

¹¹ See Stephen Howe, *ibid.* p.89-91, for the activities of missionary organization in colonies.

¹² Colonialism existed before the Western European states. However, originally, earlier colonialism is a product of pre-capitalism period. On the other hand, colonialism that emerged in Western Europe in the 17th century developed and spread along with capitalism. See Tom Bottomore (ed.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2001, p. 96-98.

¹³ Arif Dirlik, *Kriz, Kimlik ve Siyaset: Küreselleşme Yazıları*, İstanbul, İletişim, p. 152.

Particularly the processes of nation-state formation served to accelerate the internal colonialism process in colonialist states. There was an attempt to secularize and homogenize the society as much as possible in tandem with the political and economic interests of the ethnic, linguistic, religious, confessional and economic interests of the ruling power in the center. For instance, the French Revolution, which was the source of inspiration behind Turkey's modernization, and its underlying nationalist ideology, is the clearest depiction of the relationship between the nation-state process and internal colonialism. Using Anderson's terminology, the French nation and its supporting myths (such as Gaulois myth) were created as a fictive, "imagined community"¹⁴. During this process of identity-building, a unitary language and secularism have been important elements to maintain the homogeneity of the nation. A report written by L'abbé Grégoire in the wake of the Revolution reveals that only 3 million out of the 28 million population in France could speak French back then¹⁵. However, French was deemed the cement of the new nation-state and was spoken by the urban bourgeoisie and the ruling classes for the unity of the nation. The education system was completely revamped to carve a new nation out of this cement¹⁶. Through the "Talleyrand plan"¹⁷, and later Ferry's secular, compulsory, free national education program that prohibited education in languages other than French, the goal was to inculcate the French language and a secular thought system across the society¹⁸ and create an almost all alike citizenry. As a result of these policies, regional belonging, and linguistic and religious differences were minimized in France.

As a consequence, colonizing ethnic, linguistic, religious and confessional groups from different social strata, new dominant social groups established on the basis of scientific knowledge, rationalism, and secularism, accumulated capital, and consolidated their political and cultural powers in Europe¹⁹.

¹⁴ Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? (discours prononcé à la Sorbonne en 1882)*, Paris, Éditions Mille et une nuits, 1997.

¹⁵ Henri Grégoire often referred to as L'Abbé Grégoire, «Rapport sur la nécessité d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser la langue française», Retrieved from <http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/francophonie/gregoire-rapport.htm>

¹⁶ Antoine Auger and Guillaume Picon, *Il était un fois notre école*, Paris, Gründ, 2014, p. 100.

¹⁷ Alain Rey, Françoise Duval, Gilles Siouffi, Perrin *Mille ans de langue française, histoire d'une passion*, Paris, Perrin, 2007. pp. 938-939.

¹⁸ Antoine Prost, *Regards historiques sur l'éducation en France XIXe-XXe siècles*, Paris, Belin, 2007.

¹⁹ Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's political thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp.48-50.

The internal colonialism model, which burgeoned in Western Europe, would later be mimicked and used by new, non-industrialized nation-states such as the Republic of Turkey, which lacked the infrastructural organizations of the colonialist states and where the cultural resources were shaped around Islamic religion and local values.

Colonial Mental Codes

The dominant social groups of the colonialist Western European countries kept the diverse identities of the social groups in the periphery of its own national borders under control, and excluded from the political sphere those that resisted homogenization and internalization of the habitus of its bourgeoisie.²⁰ While they colonized the economic and human resources of the communities that lived on the occupied lands outside the continent. In return, they transferred some of the wealth from external colonies to the homogenized subalterns²¹. By doing so, they somewhat damped the risk of insurgency by the subalterns while they gained social support for external colonialism at home²². At the same time, colonialist states promised to bring progress and civilization²³ to the people of occupied lands to secure the legitimacy of their presence at abroad²⁴.

As matter of fact it is clear that the goal of colonialist states was to inject cultural values “to other the colonized subject to fit the interests of the

²⁰ Even in today’s France, in order to serve at the upper ranks of the state, it is required to attend some special schools and acquire the habitus demanded by the bourgeoisie. See Claire Oger, *La façonnage des élites de la République*, Science Po., Paris, 2008, p. 14; Pierre Bourdieu, *La Noblesse d’Etat, Grandes écoles et esprit de corps*, Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1989.

²¹ Eric Hobsbawm, “Lenin and the Aristocracy of Labour,” *Revolutionaries*, New York, The New Press, 2001, p.121-129.

²² However, for the continuity and robustness of external colonialism, any identity difference within the national borders was deemed dangerous. For example, the founder of the League of Patriots in France, politician Paul Déroulède points at this fact as he asserts, “We cannot hope to achieve anything abroad before we have cured our domestic ills.” Peter Watson, *Ideas: A History of Thought and Invention From Fire to Freud*, New York, Harper Perennial, 2006, p. 682.

²³ The British-origin, South African politician Cecil Rhodes asserts, “I claim that we are the leading race in the world, and the more of the world we populate, the better it will be for mankind . . . Since [God] has obviously made the English-speaking race the chosen instrument by which He means to produce a state and society based on justice, freedom and peace (...)” almost sanctifying colonialism. Peter Watson, *op.cit.*, p.666.

²⁴ French historian Jules Michelet (1789-1874) refers to France’s “pontificate of modern civilization” Peter Watson, *op.cit.*, p.681 : İsmet Özel describes civilization as a form that Catholicism has taken during the modern era. The author argues that in the colonialist period, the Redemptpion role of Jesus was assumed by civilization. See İsmet Özel, *Üç Mesele, Teknik, Medeniyet, Yabancılaşma*, İstanbul, Tiyo, 2013, p.113.

colonizing subject”²⁵. Hence the local people were educated in modern schools where the medium of instruction was the mother tongue of the colonialist powers, as one of the most important activities of classical colonialism. For example, until 1839 when the Ottoman State declared the Ottoman Reform (*Tanzimat*), which was ideologically inspired by the human rights and citizenship concepts of the French Revolution²⁶, and rested upon the indoctrination by the Western states²⁷ there were 40 foreign schools opened by the Western states, compared to 1914, when there were 500 exclusively French schools²⁸ in operation²⁹. It was not only the non-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman State, but also the Muslim elite that exerted efforts to give a Western education to their children³⁰. In addition to these foreign schools, the administrators of the Ottoman State, who realized that by and by they were lagging behind the West in military, social and physical sciences, established schools such as *Mektebi Tıbbiye* (1827), (School of Medicine), *Mektebi Harbiye* (1834) (Military School), and *Mektebi Mülkiye* (1859) (School of Political Sciences), where they could bring up the bureaucrat elites of the nation. The Ottoman Administration entrusted their future administrators³¹ in the hands of Western educators, thinking that an education system that copies the West would help them recover from the fall. The talented children of particularly middle-class Muslim families raised in these schools set “moral class boundaries” between themselves and the social environment they came from³². The cultural capital of this new generation was shaped in these schools

²⁵ Ebru Yetişkin, “Postkolonyal Kavramlar üzerine Notlar”, *ToplumBilim*, Vol. 25, 2010, p.18.

²⁶ Sinan Akşin, “Fransız İhtilalinin II. Meşrutiyet Öncesi Osmanlı Devleti Üzerindeki Etkileri Üzerine Bazı Görüşler”, *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi* 49 (03), 1994, pp.23-29.

²⁷ Sinan Akşin, “Fransız İhtilalinin II. Meşrutiyet Öncesi Osmanlı Devleti Üzerindeki Etkileri Üzerine Bazı Görüşler”, *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi* 49 (03), 1994, pp.23-29.

²⁸ As the colonialist, France started secular schools to serve its own people, it also encouraged the foundation of its own Catholic schools in colonies as well as in semi-colonized states such as the Ottoman State, with a view to expand its hegemony. See Bayram Balcı, *Les écoles missionnaires turques en Asie centrale*, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003. p.33.

²⁹ Not all foreign schools carried a license during the Ottoman era, therefore the State did not know their exact number. Sezen Kılıç, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Yabancı Okullar (1923–1938)” *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 2005, 21 (61), pp.267-268.

³⁰ For instance, in 1914, the French Saint Joseph School in Istanbul, 8 students were children of princes, 22 of marshalls and generals, and 90 of high-level bureaucrats. Kenan Okan, *Türkiye'deki Yabancı Okullar Üzerinde Bir İnceleme*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Planlama-Araştırma ve Koordinasyon Dairesi, Ankara, 1971, p.5, cited in Sezen Kılıç, *ibid.*

³¹ Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, New York, Verso, 1987, p.49-51.

³² See “Moral class boundaries” concept was used for the first time in order to describe the tense relationship between the working class children who studied at Lehmann University and the class that they were raised in. Wolfgang Lehmann, “Becoming

to a certain extent, and their mentality was inspired by the sources of Western philosophy as well as the secular and nationalist thoughts of the French Revolution. Soon, this new generation came to play a major role in the political and cultural life of the Ottoman State. The representatives of this generation that emerged in the second half of the 19th century would force the sultans to write a Constitution, try to reform the administrative system by secularizing Islamic courts, schools and foundations, and they would ultimately establish the Republic of Turkey³³.

Nevertheless, during the historical process, the superstructures of the colonialist mentality seemed to be the only recipe followed by the newly burgeoning young nationalist³⁴ elites that struggled against a colonial/semi-colonial order in a vast geography from India to the Ottoman State, Iran and Egypt. Therefore, the nation states that they dreamed to establish were indirectly a “community” fictionalized by the other through the replication of the colonial mindset³⁵. According to Chatterjee, even Anderson’s imagined community was colonized³⁶. They frowned upon the way that the mimicked Western nation state wrote its history, and argued against their myths, and institutions, yet they considered them to be superior in their minds, and designed and established the new nation states replicating their model.

The elites of these nation states thought that they would be civilized if they built a physical and mental replica of the colonialists who defined them as “the other”, and as “barbarian objects that needs to be disciplined”. In Bhabha’s words, that was the onset of a “colonial mimicry”. Those who resisted this mimicry were described in anachronistic, barbaric, atavistic, and even animalistic terms through a discourse produced by the ideological mechanisms in the hands of the ruling power, such as schools and the media, and they were finally excluded from the system. Consequently, the nationalist modern elites driving this civilization campaign took the place of the colonialists as an exploitative force. Said summarizes this new condition as

Middle Class: How Working-class University Students Draw and Transgress Moral Class Boundaries?”, *Sociology*, vol. 43 (4), 2009, pp. 631-647.

³³ Çağlar Keyder, *ibid.*, p. 87-88.

³⁴ According to Edward Said “Nationalism is a word that has been used in all sorts of sloppy and undifferentiated ways, but it still serves quite adequately to identify the mobilizing force that coalesced into resistance against an alien and occupying empire on the part of peoples possessing a common history, religion, and language.” Edward W. Said, “Yeart and Decolonization” in Terry Eagleton, Frederic Jameson, Edward W. Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, p. 74, Nimneapolis, University of Minneseto Press, 1990.

³⁵ Antonis Liakos, *Dünyayı Değiştirmek İsteyenler Ulusu Nasıl Tasavvur Ettiler*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2008, p.91.

³⁶ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 5.

follows: “Instead of liberation after decolonization one simply gets the old colonial structures replicated in new national terms”³⁷.

Surely, the sociological and intellectual developments in history must be evaluated within the timeframe in which they occurred. Hence it is necessary to focus on the concept of *Episteme* that Michel Foucault uses in his work “*The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*”³⁸. Researching the origins of scientific knowledge and its development like an archaeologist, Foucault argues that each historical period has its defining sequential (threshold, detachment, breakage, change, transformation) order or main codes. In other words, every period in history is dominated by an intellectual climate that defines its unique convictions and beliefs. This climate determines the dominant discursive practice of that period. This discursive practice may lead itself towards an epistemic violence. That is to say, those who are outside the dominant discourse of a given period are marginalized in society.

It is possible to employ the aforementioned perspective in evaluating the tension and colonial relationship between the center and the periphery since the foundation of the Republic, and even from the modernization of the Ottoman State until now. The main goal of the founders of the Republic of Turkey whose cultural capital was partially inspired by the Jacobean tradition of the French Revolution³⁹ was to gain national independence from the Western imperialist states, and elevate the national culture to the level of the Western civilization, which represented the advanced civilization of the day. This was a conflict in the sense that there was an effort to be like the one that they wanted to emancipate from, and it was necessary to convert the people into ideal citizens. In a Muslim culture, this citizen with a “secular habitus” should have been from the Sunni sect of Islam, and regarding his ethnic origin he had to be a Turk who had adopted Western values.

The ethnic components that fell outside this identity frame, mainly the Kurds, were Turkified by force. Nonetheless, the main problem beyond ethnic origins was that the majority of the society was Muslims with local cultural and moral values, and now they were being pushed into a Western identity. Gellner defines this unique aspect of Turkish secularization as “didactic

³⁷ Edward W. Said, *op.cit.*, p.74.

³⁸ See Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses, (The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences)* Paris, Gallimard, 1966.

³⁹ Reşat Kasaba, “Eski ile yeni arasında Kemalizm ve Modernizm” in *Türkiye’de Modernleşme ve Ulusal Kimlik*, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2005, p.20.

secularism”⁴⁰. Rather than sociological dynamics, Turkish secularism has been constructed as a civilization project that was socially engineered based on mimicry of the Western culture⁴¹.

As the “civilization operations” went on, the educational institutions of those who insisted on preserving their identity were closed down⁴², education in different local languages was banned (While Kurdish education was banned, the elite students of the nation learned English, French, and German in public schools), and their political parties were also banned and were subject to legal proceedings. From a Foucauldian approach, those who resisted the Western project of civilization were faced with a series of “oppressive powers” including execution, imprisonment, exile, and official censorship reminiscent of the pre-modern era⁴³. As a sociological outcome of this, specific groups of oppressed people were faced with social exclusion once more. They were left uneducated since they were not allowed to produce their own cultural resources, which were rendered valueless. Since they were unable to master the official language, they were excluded from the education system, and this hampered their access to economic resources. In rural areas or urban ghettos, they remained as cheap laborers “unable to improve their economic, cultural and social capital”, “uneducated”, “distant to the bourgeois (someone who has adopted Western values, in the context of Turkey), taste and life style”, and “deprived of aesthetic values”⁴⁴. Therefore, once again, in the mental codes of the ruling secular nationalist cadres, it was deemed legitimate to “modernize” or “civilize” the helpless and deplorable people “despite the people, for the people”.

From this perspective, internal colonialism should not be merely viewed as the colonizing of the economic resources of a particular social group by a minority in the center. Internal colonialism also deprives a broader population in society from the cultural and social capital that would help them flourish.

⁴⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 68.

⁴¹ See Bobby S. Sayyid, “Bir model olarak Kemalizm ve İslam’ın Siyasallaşması”, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, İslamcılık*, Vol. 6., *op.cit.*, p. 954.

⁴² After declaration of the Republic, within the framework of the Law of Unification of Education, there were a series of acts including the closing down of traditional schools; secular, free and compulsory education; replacing the Arabic alphabet with Latin alphabet; regulation of dress code with the “Hat Act” (code vestimaintaire), changing Muslim calendar to Gregorian calendar, switching from Islamic law to Swiss civil code, closing down of dervish lodges and *zawiyahs*, etc.

⁴³ See Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1975.

⁴⁴ See Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1979.

Conclusion

In the backdrop of the February 28 process, the rapid strengthening of the social and economic networks of the subalterns that threatened the position of social groups with economic and political advantages in the society surely plays a role. However, mere economic and political concerns would not suffice to explain the reaction of secular nationalist cadres in the February 28 process. The Western education that secular nationalists underwent and the culture that they internalized mostly as a form have shaped their mental codes for the most part. In the end, they dictated their secular habits to those who resisted the civilization project within the national borders with a genuine interest in becoming strong and civilized like the colonialist states, and they tried to inculcate the Western culture to those groups on that basis⁴⁵.

Over the years, Turkey's political, social, and economic structure underwent major changes. The military control over the social and political area since the inception of the Republic ended for the most part, and the social structure engineering in line with the demands of the secular nationalist elite collapsed. In Turkish society, the social groups from rural areas that adopted local and Muslim values, who were deemed asymmetrical, and whose cultural, social and economic resources were kept under control for a long period of time, rose to the center of social and political sphere with Ak Party coming into power in 2002. However, it wasn't an easy process for them. On 27 April 2007, just before the election of the new President of the Republic, the Turkish military issued a dire warning by way of a late-night posting on its website. The general staff declared its opposition to the Ak Party's candidate, Abdullah Gul, reminding the Turkish government of the military's role as a "staunch defender of secularism." It warned that it would display its "position and attitudes when it becomes necessary." And in 2008, the party was accused of being "a focal point for anti-secular activities" and of acting against the Constitution, which mandates – in Article 2 – that Turkey is a secular state, and was faced with a threat of closure and a ban for its high-ranking officials by the Constitutional Court⁴⁶. The closure request failed by one vote, as only 6 of the 11 judges ruled in favor whereas 7 votes were required. However, 10 out of 11 judges agreed that the Ak Party had become "a center for anti-secular activities", leading to a loss of state funding for the party. Nonetheless after every single election, AK Party consolidated its power against secular nationalists cadres and currently, the ruling party embraces local and Islamic

⁴⁵ Nilüfer Göle, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

⁴⁶ European Stability Initiative, *ESI Briefing: Turkey's dark side. Party closures, conspiracies and the future of democracy*, 2 April, 2008, p.5. retrieved from http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_104.pdf

values; headscarf, which was banned in universities and public institutions since it clashed with secularism is now respected, and the Ottoman past and traditions are taken up by the government and society as never before.

Despite all these developments, as these local dynamics that failed to create an original civilization project at the intellectual level after the foundation of the Republic came closer to the center ⁴⁷, they have begun to reproduce a “homogenizing and centralist” power language and practices within their own national borders, in tandem with the overarching trends lingering from the colonialist modernist legacy of the past. In fact, the development of such scientific and intellectual discourse occurred under significant influence of the orientalist language⁴⁸. They oppose the aesthetic, ethic, and historical understanding of secularism, yet they are constructing a new social system following a similar setup⁴⁹. As underlined by Kara, the idea that has persisted since the first generation Islamists, that is the “secret desire to be like the powerful enemy, the infidel”, “a notion of Europe and Westernization that is both an enemy/ infidel and a source of imitation”⁵⁰, echoes much stronger than in the past within the local dynamics that are now residing in the center. That is because the excluded social groups that have been pushed to the periphery for years would now like to enjoy economic development, heighten their level of prosperity, compete in the capitalist market, and become a leader in the international arena. The secular nationalist groups’ paradox of mimicking the enemy in order to become “independent” and “civilized” is now experienced by the local dynamics that bear the motive to become “strong” and “Muslim” this time⁵¹.

⁴⁷ The turning point for the Islamist circles to integrate with the ruling power and the international capitalist system is neither during the Welfare Party period that came to power in 1996 nor the Justice and Development Party that came to power in 2002. Upon transition to the multi-party system in 1946, the Islamist movement has constantly progressed towards the center, though there were interruptions along the way.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 46.

⁴⁹ Particularly in the mental backdrop of first generation Islamists there is an explicit and implicit acknowledgement of the Western linear view of history from August Comte to Karl Marx. See Ali Bulaç, *op.cit.*, 61.

⁵⁰ Tanıl Bora, “İsmail Kara ile İslamcı düşünce ve politaka üzerine: ‘Ankara’ya ve sisteme üçüncü büyük entegrasyon dönemi””, *Birikim*, 303-304, 2014, p.73.

⁵¹ In his work titled *Üç Mesele...*, İsmet Özel voices the tension and the paradox regarding the “national goals” and “Islamist goals” from the perspective of Islamists with regard to development and economic advancement. Özel asks the following question: “Are we going to work towards attaining a powerful society and Islamize it, or are we going to work towards attaining a Muslim society and try to strengthen it?” İsmet Özel, *op.cit.*, p. 172.

To conclude, following in the secular nationalist cadres' footsteps, the social groups embracing local and Islamist values adopt as a constant truth the technological and scientific developments in the Western world based on the Cartesian worldview, the scientific method, and the mechanistic conceptualization of the universe.⁵² It is highly challenging to distinguish between the Western civilization formed by this philosophical accumulation and its colonialist mental codes in the social sphere. Although the subaltern and dominant identities may switch places over time as a result of social mobility, postcolonial mental codes may reproduce themselves in various forms.

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Özet

Bu makalede modern Türkiye'de postkolonyal zihinsel kodların yeniden üretimi arkasında yatan toplumsal dinamikler sosyolojik bakış açısıyla tartışılmaktadır.

Postkolonyal çalışmalar akademik alanda özellikle sömürge ve sömürgecilik tecrübesi yaşamış toplumlar ve ülkeler üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Oysaki Türkiye gibi işgalci güçler tarafından yönetilmemiş, insani ve ekonomi kaynakları direk olarak sömürülmemiş ulus-devletler hakkında da postkolonyal çalışmaların bakış açısıyla bilgi üretmek, analizler yapmak mümkündür.

Günümüz dünyasında eski sömürgeler ve yarı sömürgeleşmiş toplumlarda kolonyalist zihinsel kodlar siyasal, ekonomik, toplumsal alanlarda, iktidar sahipleri zaman içinde değişse de, kendini yeniden üretme kabiliyetine sahiptir. Postkolonyal çalışmaların gösterdiği gibi sömürge/yarı sömürge tecrübesini yaşamış toplumların önünde büyük bir paradoks vardır. Farklı toplumsal gruplar ya da ittifaklar sömürge idaresine karşı bağımsızlık için mücadele etseler de yöntem olarak onun gibi "modern" ve "güçlü" olmaya çalıştıkça, sömürgecinin zihinsel yapısıyla, onun çıkarına uygun şekilde, uyumlu hale gelmektedirler. Bunun sonucu olarak sömürge yönetiminden ya da yarı sömürgeciliğinden ülkelerini kurtarmak isteyen elitler "sömürgeci taklitçiliği" ile

toplumlarının yerel kültürel değerlerine zaman içinde yabancılaşmışlardır. Nasıl ki sömürge yönetimi kolonilerine ve yarı sömürgeleştirdiği ülkelere medeniyet getirme/transfer etme iddiasındaysa, bu sefer sömürgecinin zihinsel kodlarıyla beslenmiş yeni elitler aynı iddiayla milli devletin çeperlerindeki farklı etnik, mezhepsel, dilsel sosyal grupların ekonomik, kültürel kaynaklarını denetlemeye girişmişlerdir ve de oryantalist bir bakışla bu sosyal grupları disipline etmeye çalışmaktadırlar.

Bu ulus-devletlerin elitleri sömürge döneminde kendisini “öteki” olarak belirleyen, “disipline edilmesi gereken bir barbar nesne” olarak gören sömürgeciye fiziksel ve zihinsel olarak benzeyerek medenileşeceklerini düşünmüşlerdir. Benzemeye direnenler ise egemenlerin elindeki ideolojik aygıtların ürettiği söylemle çağdışı, barbar, atavik hatta hayvani şekillerde tasvir edilmişler; sistem dışına itilmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak bu “medenileştirme kampanyasını” yürüten milliyetçi seküler elitler, sömürücü bir güç olarak sömürgecilerin yerini almışlardır. Toplumunu modernleştirmek ve uygarlaştırmak adına yeni bir iç sömürgecilik düzeni kurmuşlardır.