

ON THE PURSUIT OF A NATION:
THE CONSTRUCTION OF FOLK AND FOLK MUSIC IN THE
FOUNDING DECADES OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

KORAY DEGIRMENCI

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

E-mail: korayd@metu.edu.tr

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Abstract — Résumé

This paper largely investigates the dynamics of cultural policy in the founding years of the Turkish Republic (1923-1940s) by looking at a particular cultural form, Turkish folk music. The reconstruction of Turkish folk music and the development of the term 'folk' reflect certain cultural and political aspects of the formation of the nation-state and of Turkish nationalism. The paper also attempts to understand the in-

spirational sources of the founding cadres' cultural policy by looking at the genealogy of the term 'folk' (in Romantic thought and during the Enlightenment period) and their folk discourse.

Key words: Nation; Construction; Folk; Turkish Folk Music; Turkish Republic; Cultural form; Turkish nationalism; Turkish music; Nationalism; Romanticism

Introduction: Some Preliminary Notes on Cultural Forms

The cultural reproduction process cannot be envisaged outside power relations. Rather, power relations are totally intrinsic to the cultural domain. Cultural transformation as a political strategy includes appropriation and reprocessing of the meanings in cultural forms, institutional regulations to transform the meanings and aesthetic forms of cultural output, especially in the case of the State, and utilization of some particular cultural discourses in order to maintain a politically favorable position. Thus, control over cultural forms is to be considered as a crucial element with which politics operates in the cultural domain.

There are two general assumptions in this article that form the basis of the argument. The first one relates directly to the nature of cultural forms and their meanings. Cultural forms or productions are the bearers of meanings and codes of behavior inherent in the culture itself. They also provide a hint to the intricate relations among those meanings. Changes in culture are visible largely when concern closely touches upon the meanings and changes in cultural forms. Based on such premises, cultural reproduction or the changes in culture can be investigated through an analysis of the cultural productions that seem best to reflect meanings in culture. The second assumption is an instrumental one that tackles the conception of culture itself. Culture can be defined methodologically in two ways. It can be depicted as a seminal element that brings forth the cultural forms or determines the general framework of the realm of meanings in those cultural forms. In that case, the meanings in cultural forms are generally the indicators of the culture that directly provide their content. In the second case, political strategies are to be imagined to have a certain capability of transforming cultural products for their own political interests. Therefore, the restrictive function of culture in the formation of cultural products is also considered in the definition. This view is instrumental to any investigation of the relationship between politics and culture. Thus, culture or cultures circumscribe the possible forms that cultural products can take as a result of the manufacture of politics. The field of 'possible forms' is also determined by the power of different political discourses and their domains of hegemony — sometimes they are intersected sometimes they remain at the opposite poles.

This article attempts to demonstrate some peculiar characteristics of the relation between culture and politics in the founding years of the Turkish Republic (1923-1940s) by looking at a particular cultural form, Turkish folk music. The history or the reconstruction of Turkish folk music reflects political aspects of the formation of the nation-state and Turkish nationalism. Nationalism emerged as a political and social engineering project from the spirit of the Enlightenment in Western Europe, which was accompanied by the formation of nation-states. The aspect of engineering in nationalism in the construction of Turkish folk music is apparent in whole terms in the Turkish case in which the task of constructing a congruent structure from a population having numerous and different cultural roots was seen as the primary concern.

The Construction of the Folk

Debates on the discourse of 'the folk' inevitably include an elaboration on nationalism. This hand-to-hand relationship between the folk and nationalism actually appears as the result of a historical fact. The growing interest in the folk and folk culture and thereby the resulting folk discourse, was an indispensable feature of European nationalisms during the nineteenth century. Indeed, this close inter-

est in the folk refers to a search for origin. The notion of origin revealing genuineness and authenticity gives the nationalist political discourse legitimacy as well as meaning in its pursuit of constructing a nation having the same cultural roots in origin. The very notion of states and nationalism as constructing the imagined concept of nation¹ plays a crucial role at this point. The process of constructing a nation with all its essential elements, including a common culture along with a common language and heritage, is explicated thoroughly in some other works as well.² The nation assumed to have the same origin and cultural heritage is nothing but 'an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.³ Although there are many controversies among these works,⁴ their conception of nationalism as having a crucial role in constructing an imagined concept of nation and the origin myth is almost the same. This article operates with the same conception of nationalism in understanding the 'constructed nature of culture' in the case of Turkish folk music.

Indeed, the concept of the folk has powerful connotations of cultural unity, although it is generally identified with the common people and they can be used interchangeably. It marks a point of departure when used as a reference in any political or cultural discourse. In fact, these two domains are unrecognizably overlapping, especially when they appear as the two major realms within the snapshot of the emergence of the national in the cultural domain. The concept of the folk in a particular territory presumes a cultural homogeneity and unity among peoples living in that territory. Even in its most naive form, this presumption about homogeneity is severe; an outgrowth of an inculcation of the idea reflecting a concordance or integrity in the 'cultures' of peoples in a territory. Besides, it inevitably refers to a seminal point from which the other parts of the society derive. The folk discourse and the integrity of culture operate together through the origin myth. Therefore, the character of the folk readily involves a notion of authenticity rather than being an ordinary element.

The increasing concern for the folk and, generally, the notion of cultural patterns distinguishing nations from each other were the main tenets of Romantic thought which was best reflected in the works of Johann Gottfried Herder. The German philosopher is seen as the discoverer of the idea that every people has a *Volksgeist*.⁵ The notion actually has roots in the Enlightenment; the idea that every

¹ Eric J. HOBBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

² Ernest GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

³ B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities...*, 5.

⁴ For example, Anderson in this work goes further and questions the existence of any community, the point on which he criticized Gellner; for his theory's implication of a duality between real/contrived communities.

⁵ Tine DAMSHOLT, On the Concept of the 'Folk', *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, Vol. 25 (1995): 5-24, 9.

nation has its own distinctive cultural features was widespread in the eighteenth century. 'The notion of the spirit of a nation or a culture had been central' to Vico, Montesquieu, Hamann and to Zimmermann.⁶ There was investigation of the folk in the Enlightenment as well, although the concern was considerably different; it definitely conceptualized folk life as a primitive state that would be eliminated by progress. In Romanticism, however, the folk was identical with the nation; its primitiveness was considered as being closest to the original, pristine, authentic national culture. Another major difference between the Enlightenment and Romanticism regarding their conceptualization of the folk directly relates to the concept of progress. Whilst the Enlightenment honored progress in the mirror of the primitiveness of the folk, the collectors of folk culture in the Romantic period 'idealized the past in order to condemn the present'.⁷ They expressed their longing for the past, being at home, in their search for the folk, the origin, and the authentic. The very meaning of the word *volk* in German refers to people with common culture, values, and history. Their pursuit of the past was their journey to a prehistoric time in which the national had not been spoiled by the evil of industrialization.

The growing interest in, and actual need for the folk inevitably resulted in an interest in folk research. The collections were tools for excavating the cultural inheritance of the nation. These collections could be folksongs or folk or fairy tales. Herder's own collection of folksongs was followed in Germany by the texts of Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, and the folk and fairy tales of the Grimms.⁸ The expression of the national in music, hence its emergence as a cultural artistic form having inherently national roots, is an outgrowth of the changes in understanding the musical domain, especially in nineteenth century Europe. Finkelstein's remarks pointing out the differences between the two opposing trends in interpretation of musical pieces at the end of the eighteenth and at the end of the nineteenth century are very illustrative at this point.⁹ Whilst the notion of music as a cosmopolitan or international art was shared among the paradigms of perspectives in the former period, this idea of cosmopolitanism gave way to the search for roots or nation in the form of studies of folk culture in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, the discovery of the folk in other cultural realms dates back to an earlier time. Storey regards the interest in folk culture as having two major historical periods, one of which proved the existence of inquiry about folk culture, even at the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰ The collection of ballads or folk tales was pervasive in

⁶ Isaiah BERLIN, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*, ed. by H. Hardy (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 172.

⁷ John STOREY, *Inventing Popular Culture: From Folklore to Globalization* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003).

⁸ Ben CURTIS, *On Nationalism and Music* (Ph. D. Thesis. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002), 95.

⁹ Sidney FINKELSTEIN, *Composer and Nation: The Folk Heritage in Music* (New York: International Publishers, 1989), 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

folk study activities in the earlier period. Its persistence was made clear with the publication of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Francis James Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1857) marking the end of the first period. He saw the search for the folk in the second period as mainly taking place in the musical domain; an endeavor that also produced two major works: Carl Engel's *An Introduction to the Study of National Music* (1866) and Cecil James Sharp's *Folksong: Some Conclusions* (1907), which also mark the beginning and end of the second period.

These attempts at redefining and reconstructing the folk and folk culture are to be seen as the main tenets of the process of constructing the category of nation. The issue is clearly expressed in Bohlman's work: »The musical symbols of an imagined community are many: an identifiable corpus of folk song ... folk songs that spell out the history of the nation in overt and subtle forms; and, in general, the equation of folk music with national music.«¹¹ The culture of the folk, the peasants, was defined as the character of the nation in its pure and natural state. The activity of collecting the cultural forms of the folk and their preservation and reincarnation in the form of contemporary works were considered as the essential steps in regaining the national culture. After the discovery of cultural heritage in folk research, it is 'reprocessed' in order to create the national culture. 'Contemporary' national culture is supposed to emerge from the remnants of the 'original' national culture.

Turkish Nationalism and the Discovery of the Folk

Such a brief history of the folk and folklore studies in the general framework of Romantic nationalism in Europe tends to offer an overarching explanation for the emergence of the folk in all countries, as if these societies together followed a linear developmental pattern in their political and cultural history. However, Calhoun's admonition is plausible here in dealing with any phenomena of different countries, which are multifarious enough to prevent any generalization. There is no single, universal definition, hence the theory of nationalism, which can be applicable in all other contexts. Rather, the peculiarities of versatile nationalisms depend highly on the 'contingent relations' and 'distinct cultural traditions'.¹² In some cases, such an inquiry would go further to the extent that it would question whether such a cultural tradition exists at all. Investigation of cultural products and their transformation would help to demonstrate the peculiarities of various nationalisms, as they are mainly dependent on the cultural traditions with which

¹¹ Philip V. BOHLMAN, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 54.

¹² Craig CALHOUN, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 123.

they operate. Elaborating on the history of Turkish nationalism definitely transcends the bounds of this paper. However, a brief review of Turkish nationalism is necessary in order to point out some peculiarities of the context.

The identity problem, which is generally discussed by scholars in the context of the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, had indeed been debated in Ottoman history for about a century. The multi-religious and thus multi-cultural structure of the Ottoman Empire compelled the Ottoman intellectuals to create a conceptual unity against the rising threat of nationalism among ethnic groups living together under the authority of Ottomans. Yildiz conceptualized the attempts of unifying the population throughout the Ottoman Empire in three stages.¹³ These were the modernizing *Tanzimat* movement proclaimed in 1839, which strived to unite people on the basis of citizenship in a modernizing state, the Pan-Islamist stance of Abdulhamid II, and the ethnically based Turkish nationalism of the Committee of the Union and Progress after the Balkan Wars in 1912-13. The 1908 Revolution gave way to three strands of thought, which attempted to explain the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire, while speculating about the possible unifying power of the population according to their views: Western secular modernists blamed *Sharia* for the backwardness, Islamists who claimed that the main cause of the backwardness was the lack of necessary Islamic order, and Turkists who stated that the cause of backwardness must be searched for in »the loss of national culture through Islam's tendency to superimpose itself as a civilization at the expense of national cultures.«¹⁴ In Yildiz's perspective, the Republic inherited ethnic nationalism from the 1908 Revolution. However, there have been also attempts to differentiate the nationalism of Kemalism from any category of ethnic nationalism. Gulalp sees the base of Kemalism as territorial nationalism, which he considers as similar to Ottoman nationalism. In this conception, people living on the territory of Turkey were defined as Turks.¹⁵

Complicating the issue, though, is the fact that the concepts of Turkishness, Islamism, and Ottomanism in the perspective of Ottoman intellectuals in the 19th century were quite different and controversial. In the *Tanzimat* period, for example, Islamism and Turkishness implied almost the same category, thus Islamism was a class of nation.¹⁶ This understanding also seems to have operated in the concept of *Jeune Turc* (Young Turk), which was used to denote the Ottoman intellectuals living abroad during the *Tanzimat* period. They called themselves new Ottomans, since neither the concept of *jeune* nor Turkishness meant anything to

¹³ Ahmet YILDIZ, '*Ne Mutlu Turkum Diyebilene'*: *Turk Ulusal Kimliginin Etno-Sekuler Sinirlari* (1919-1938) (Istanbul: İletisim, 2001).

¹⁴ Niyazi BERKES, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), 351.

¹⁵ Haldun GULALP, 'The Crisis of Westernization in Turkey: Islamism versus Nationalism', *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 1995).

¹⁶ N. BERKES, *Turkiye'de Çağdaslaşma* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002), 225.

them.¹⁷ This identity crisis continued in the process of establishment of the Turkish Republic as well. The transformation of the Ottoman Empire with a multi-religious structure into a new Republic with an almost totally Islamic population,¹⁸ though with an urge to construct a secular state, fostered the predominance of the concept of Turkishness that already had strong roots and culminated after the 1908 Revolution.

Although there was migration of primarily Armenian and Greek minorities after the First World War, Turkey continued to have a multicultural and ethnically diversified population owing primarily to the presence of Laz, Kurds, and other groups. The statements of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk¹⁹ in one of his speeches interestingly expressed this multicultural feature, which did not cease to exist after the population exchanges: »Gentlemen ... [he reminded his audience] the members who make up this exalted Assembly are not only Turks, are not only Circassian, are not only Kurds, are not only Laz; it is composed of all of them and is an Islamic body.«²⁰ Indeed his speech partly reflects the ideology of Ottomanism in one sense; Ottomanism claimed to embrace all people living in the Empire that belong to different nationalities and religions. However, after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the unification of peoples in Turkey under the name of a single nation became a major concern. This was not an easy task considering the offensive meaning attributed to the word Turk in the Ottoman Empire, which implied nomadic, uncivilized people who belong to a tribe.²¹

Turkish nationalism in the early Republican era was generally considered as having a strong affiliation with the ideas of Ziya Gökalp, one of the most important intellectual figures of the time. Although there are many objections to this close affinity,²² Turkish nationalism in the early periods of the Republic seems to have taken its inspiration from Turkism, especially from Gökalp's ideas on the issue of Turkishness, if not the issue of Islam. He was the ideologue of the Young

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹⁸ »Before the war, one out of four persons living in present-day Turkey was non-Muslim«. Çağlar KEYDER, *State and Class in Turkey* (London: Verso, 1987), 79. The 1927 census showed that non-Muslims constituted only 2.6 percent of the whole population. Feroz AHMAD, *The Development of Class-consciousness in Republican Turkey, 1923-45, Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic 1839-1950*, ed. by D. Quataert and E. J. Zürcher (London and New York: Taurus Academic Studies, 1995), 75.

¹⁹ Atatürk means literally the *Father of the Turks*.

²⁰ Quoted in F. AHMAD, *The Development of Class-consciousness ...*, 76.

²¹ Serif MARDİN, *Din ve İdeoloji* [Religion and Ideology] (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Yayınları, 1969), 102. Basgoz also points out the offensive meaning of Turk among Ottoman elites. For them, it »implied only uneducated townspeople and ignorant villagers.« Such meaning of Turk was already rehabilitated in the 19th century. İlhan BASGOZ, *Folklore Studies and Nationalism in Turkey, Journal of the Folklore Institute*, Vol. 9, No. 2/3 (August/December 1972): 162-176, 164.

²² Sevkettin SUREYYA AYDEMİR, *Tek Adam* [The Unique Man] (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1966).

Turks movement and Turkism in broad terms, basing his theory of Turkism on a distinction between culture (*hars*) and civilization (*medeniyet*).²³ This distinction served as a theoretical instrument to make viable simultaneous adoption of Westernization and preservation of the national culture. Interestingly, Islam was also a part of this project, since it was to be combined with Western modernism under the rubric of Turkish nationalism. He clearly saw Turkishness as being more remarkable than the other features in its capacity for integration. Indeed, he defended the secularization of Islam via Turkification. Although Turkish nationalism, particularly the views of Atatürk, resembles Turkism or Gokalp's ideas to a greater or lesser degree, the practices and 'revolutions'²⁴ of the early Republican era under the strong leadership of Kemal Atatürk were marked by the principles of Turkish nationalism, which strived to integrate peoples in Turkey under the label of Turkishness.

Ziya Gokalp's interest in folklore studies was evident from his vast collections of folk tales; they included *Ergenekon* (1912), *Alageyik* (1912), *Ulker ile Aydın* (1913), *Kızıl Elma* (1913), and *Yaratılış* (1917). Indeed, the beginning of folklore studies dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century with the fundamental consideration of creating a common or national language, since there had been a growing discrepancy between the language of the Ottoman elites, mainly constituted of Arabic and Persian vocabulary, and that of the common people using Turkish.²⁵ This concern for the purification of the language was reflected in literature as well; authors joined this movement after *Tanzimat* tried to use a language that they thought the common people could understand. Among them were Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Ziya Paşa, Ahmed Rasim Sinasi, and Abdülhak Hamid. The main incentive behind their interest in folklore and the purification of language gave way to a search for Turkish culture and origin in the folklore studies of the Republic era. The activity of collecting folklore art forms was institutionalized by the foundation of the Department of Culture under the Ministry of Education. This institutionalization continued with the establishment of the Institute of Turcology in 1924 and the Folklore Association in 1927, whose main focus was folklore studies. Other prominent figures actively involved in folklore studies were Fuat Köprülü, chairman of The Institute of Turcology, and Pertev N. Boratav, who represented a folklore methodology that emphasized cross-cultural emphasis, by which it differed from the Romantic-nationalist approach represented by Köprülü and Gokalp.²⁶

²³ Ziya GOKALP, *Turkculugun Esaslari* [The Principles of Turkism], (İstanbul: İnkılap ve Aka, 1978). There are some critics claiming that Gokalp was influenced from Ferdinand Tönnies' concepts of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* in his conceptualization of the relation between culture and civilization. For one of these critics, see Uriel HEYD, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: the life and teachings of Ziya Gokalp* (Westport: Hyperion Press, 1979).

²⁴ *Devrimler* or *inkılaplar* in Turkish; in the plural.

²⁵ I. BASGOZ, *Folklore Studies ...*, 162.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 174.

Basgoz offers a good summary of the meaning and significance of folklore studies in that period:

... each folklore genre had a special value for the nation: proverbs reflected the high morals and philosophy of the Turkish ancestors, epics exemplified Turkish heroism, riddles demonstrated the cleverness and finesse of the Turkish mind, folk poetry revealed the natural sentiments of the people; in sum, folklore as a whole expressed the national spirit which had been undermined for centuries.²⁷

Therefore, this immense activity of collecting folklore forms was the major part of the project of constructing the imagined concept of nation, which was supposed to overarch all the distinct cultural traditions. Undoubtedly, those forms shared similar characteristics that could be attributed to the same heritage. However, the concern should focus on the deliberate aim of those collections, which was definitely to bring out the similarities rather than the differences in folklore forms that can inevitably suggest a heterogeneous cultural background rather than a homogeneous one. If one way of constructing a cultural heritage is overlooking the differences, the other is reprocessing the collected folklore forms to categorize them under the same rubric, which seems to operate better within the context of the collection of folksongs.

Reprocessing the Folksongs: The Construction of Turkish Folk Music

The understanding of music, hence the creation of national music, in Ziya Gokalp's work was based on his distinction between culture and civilization. He stated that both Eastern and Western music had emerged from Greek music, which was not natural, thus artificial, since it is mainly based on quartertones.²⁸ Besides, for him, Greek music was monotonous and boring. Western music transformed the inherent structure of Greek music in the Middle Ages by the musical innovations in the newly emerging opera. They removed quartertones from the musical structure and added harmony instead. However, Eastern music had not been capable of any improvements in the musical domain; it was 'ill' in that sense.²⁹ This music was the music of the Ottomans. After those explanations, Gokalp pointed out that we have three kinds of music now: Western music, Eastern music and folk

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁸ Z. GOKALP, *Turkculugun Esaslari*, 126-27.

²⁹ Gokalp described Eastern music as morbid. Here, »Gokalp is clearly speaking the language of the Western orientalist. The idea of the morbidity and irrationality of the East has a history as long as that of Western orientalism, ...«. See Martin STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 34.

(*halk*) music.³⁰ The latter was the music of our culture whilst the first was the music of our new civilization. Therefore, our national music shall emerge from the synthesis of these two musical forms, namely folk music and Western music, which would be 'healthy'.³¹ Indeed, Atatürk's view on music converges with Gokalp's thoughts. In an interview with a German reporter, he clearly stated similar opinions about Eastern music. In his response to the German interviewer implying that the only thing that the West was never capable of understanding was Eastern music, Atatürk stated that »these [Eastern music] are inherited from the Byzantines. Our genuine music can be heard among the Anatolian people.«³² In the same interview, he stated that Turkish people don't have time to wait for four hundred years for their music to reach to the level of Western music.³³ This mechanistic approach to the musical development and the 'magic formula' proposed by Gokalp formed the underlying mechanism of the 'revolutions' accomplished in the musical sphere in the founding years of the Republic.

Indeed, westernization in the musical sphere was far from being the sole concern of the Republican era. Beginning from the *Tanzimat* period, there had been many attempts to promote Western music. The year 1826 is seen as the starting point of *tanzimat* in music, in which Western music was introduced to Ottoman society.³⁴ It is interesting that the first westernization movement in music happened in the Army; in 1826 Giuseppe Donizetti, brother of the famous opera composer Gaetano, was invited to head the military band of *Nizam-i Cedid* (the Army of the New Order), which was founded by Selim III. Donizetti then taught at the Palace Military Band School (*Saray Mizika Mektebi*), which was founded in 1833 with the aim of training prospective musicians in the military band. This period fundamentally influenced the musical taste of the palace in which Donizetti and his band gave performances of western polyphonic music. Many famous musicians visited the Ottoman palace during that period.³⁵ Another significant development in this period was the gradual adoption of western-style notation also for music other than that of the Army Band.³⁶ Although there were many differences

³⁰ In Turkish, the word *halk* actually conveys almost the same meaning with an emphasis on a common heritage as *volk* in German does. The word folk means *halk* in Turkish, which comes from Arabic and also has the meaning 'to create'. It means common people or peasants as well as the people in general (in Latin, *vulgus*) and nation. It has also connotations of peoples from different cultures and historical roots as in the word folks, *halklar*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 127.

³² A. Adnan SAYGUN, *Ataturk ve Musiki: O'nunla Birlikte, O'ndan Sonra* [Ataturk and Music: With Him and After Him] (Ankara: Sevda Cenap Muzik Vakfi Yayinlari:1, 1987), 9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁴ Bulent AKSOY, *Cumhuriyet Donemi Musikisinde Farklilasma Olgusu*, in *Cumhuriyetin Sesleri*, ed. by G. Pacaci (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfi, 1999), 30.

³⁵ They included Franz Liszt, Luigi Arditi, August von Adelburg, Henri Vieuxtemps. See Gonul PACACI, *Cumhuriyetin Sesli Seruveni*, in: *Cumhuriyetin Sesleri*, ed. by G. Pacaci (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfi, 1999), 10.

³⁶ Orhan TEKELIOGLU, *The Rise of a Spontaneous Synthesis: The Historical Background of Turkish Popular Music*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (April 1996): 194-216, 199.

in the views of the sultans regarding Western and Turkish music in the waning periods of the Ottoman Empire, the words of Sultan Abdulhamit II are really interesting:

To tell the truth, I am not especially fond of *alaturka* music. It makes you sleepy, and I prefer *alafiranga* music, in particular the operas and operettas. And shall I tell you something? The modes we call *alaturka* aren't really Turkish. They were borrowed from the Greeks, Persians, and Arabs.³⁷

Gokalp and Abdulhamit II shared almost identical views on this issue. Gokalp also saw the Ottoman music tradition, which is based on *alaturka* forms, as alien to Turkish culture. It can have been expected that Gokalp would reject those forms at a time in which the remnants of the Ottoman Empire were rapidly declining, but Abdulhamit II also tended to reject the music of the Ottomans, which had a tradition of almost five hundred years.

It can be concluded that the westernization movement in music in the waning decades of the Ottoman Empire was similar to the reform movements in other spheres, as they were actually desperate attempts to clutch at the progress in western societies. It also suffered from the eclecticism of the westernization movements in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Although the attempts at westernization of music never meant any embodied transformation in the musical sphere, they passed on a considerable heritage to the Republic. There were many musicians trained in the musical schools of the Ottoman Empire, in which the curriculum was constituted on the basis of the principles of Western polyphonic music. Another major contribution was the adoption of the Western-style notation system.

The music of the Ottoman Empire is generally conceptualized in a duality between the music of the people and the music of the palace. Just before the establishment of the Turkish Republic, music consisted largely of Classical Turkish Art Music (transformed into a more popular form — Turkish Art Music in the Republic period), which was composed and performed mainly for the palace circle, but also heard in urban settings; local traditions of rural folk music which were multifarious to a great extent and listened to and performed among people in rural areas (mostly unknown to the palace circles); and the music of the *tarikats* (religious or Sufi³⁸ orders) called *tekke* (lodge) music, which is another important category of music and a totally religious one.³⁹

In order to create a national music and to get rid off Ottoman institutions and replace them with their Republican equivalents, the Turkish Republic began to transform or to close down the musical institutions; even the ones which were founded on the basis of Western polyphonic music. The Palace Symphony Orches-

³⁷ Quoted in: *ibid.*, 197.

³⁸ M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 36.

³⁹ O. TEKELIOGLU, *The Rise of a Spontaneous ...*, 197-98.

tra, the only institution performing Western music in the Ottoman Empire, was closed down in 1924 and replaced by the Presidential Music Band (*Riyaseti Cumhuriyet Orkestrası*). The training institute, the Palace Military Band School (*Saray Müzikası*), was also closed and replaced by the School for Music Trainers (*Musiki Muallimleri Mektebi*). Monophonic music education (Ottoman music) was banned in public and private schools in 1927.⁴⁰ Lodges and cloisters (*tekke ve zaviyeler*), which were the centers of *tekke* music, were also abolished. In 1934, art music was banned from the radio stations for two years.⁴¹ In order to establish a Western musical education and performance, Paul Hindemith was invited by the government to head the foundation of the Ankara School of Music in 1935.⁴²

Collection of music pieces, particularly from the Anatolia region, played a significant role in the process of constructing the discourse of Turkish folk in the musical sphere.⁴³ Gokalp stressed the importance of collecting folksongs to create a national music culture and indeed he engaged in the activity of collecting folksongs in Diyarbakir and carried out »ethnographic research among Arabs, Kurdish, and Turkish tribes« and hoped »to establish a small museum of ethnography« there.⁴⁴ As early as in 1920, collecting activities were institutionalized under the Bureau of Culture (*Hars Dairesi*) established by the Ministry of Education. In the same year, *Daru'l Elhan* (later in 1926, the Istanbul Conservatory) participated in the activity of collection. The Ministry of Education assigned the Asal brothers, Seyfeddin and Sezai, to collect folk songs. Their collection of some hundred tunes from Western Anatolia, *Yurdumuzun Nagmeleri* (Melodies of our Country), was published in 1926.⁴⁵ Béla Bartók was invited to Turkey to carry out a field trip to collect folksongs.⁴⁶ Istanbul Conservatory, with the advice and on the recommendations

⁴⁰ O. TEKELIOĞLU, Modernizing Reforms and Turkish Music in the 1930s, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 2, No.1 (Spring 2001): 93-109, 95.

⁴¹ M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate ...*, 36. »Unable to hear music that they enjoyed«, people »either turned off their sets, ... or tuned in to Egyptian radio«. *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 38. Stokes also mentioned the opposing views of Hindemith expressing his awareness of the problems of this kind of musical colonialism. Hindemith believed that the solution was encouraging the students of music to produce the music that people wanted to hear. After some work, he left Ankara.

⁴³ In addition to collecting songs, at this time, the Republic also collected pure Turkish words. All this was happening within the background of the language purification movement. For more information see one of the major works about this subject: Uriel HEYD, *Language Reform in Modern Turkey (Oriental Notes and Studies)* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1954).

⁴⁴ Quoted in I. BASGOZ, Folklore Studies and Nationalism in Turkey, *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, Vol. 9, No. 2/3 (August/December 1972): 162-176, 166-167. Before Gokalp, other intellectuals of the time [Rauf Yekta Bey (1915), Musa Sureyya Bey (1915), Ahmet Cevdet, and Necip Asim (1916)] stressed the importance of field research orientated to collecting folksongs. See M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate ...*, 34.

⁴⁵ Feza TANSUG, *Turkish Popular Music: The Political Economy of Change* (The University of Maryland; Department of Music. Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, 1999), 39. The author also mentions the active involvement of the State Conservatory in Ankara in the collection efforts, carrying out field research from 1937 to 1952. In those research projects, about eleven thousand recordings were made. *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁶ His collection was published as a book. Béla BARTÓK, *Turkish Folk Music from Asia Minor*, ed. By B. Suchoff (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1976).

of Bartók, collected 2000 folksongs, many of which were published between 1925 and 1935.⁴⁷ In the 1931-1951 period, the *Halkevleri* (People's Houses), which were government promoted associations, engaged mainly in the activity of collecting folk songs.

After all these efforts to collect folk songs, the main concern was promotion of the folk songs, which were then supposed to serve the aim of creating a national music. The idea was exactly the synthesis first proposed systematically by Gokalp. However, the period of the 1940s marked a general change in this attitude. The songs were no longer seen as raw material; their originality constituted their value as art.⁴⁸ With his radio program *Yurttan Sesler* (Voices from the Homeland), started in 1948, and his books, Mustafa Sarisozen contributed much to this understanding and also to the leveling process, which tried to eliminate 'qualitative' differences among forms of music belonging to various regions of Turkey.

What happened to the differences across and within regions (supposedly seven regions) regarding the musical structure and lyrics in those folksongs? The differences were preserved, even welcomed, but in a very typical modernist discourse. Paradoxically, they are parts of the 'cultural mosaic' of a homogeneous Turkish culture. If one way of delineating a nation as a single body is constructing a homogeneous or integral culture, the other is rendering more or less congruent the different cultures in a given territory. They already have the same roots; the differences are tolerated in this way. The discourse of the 'mosaic of cultures' that has gained popularity in contemporary Turkey, seems to have roots in the tradition of folklore studies.

Ahmet Adnan Saygun, the most prominent figure, both as a composer and intellectual at that time, prepared a report entitled *Pentatonicism in Turkish Folk Music* in 1936. The idea that Turkish folk music has a pentatonic structure had additional implications rather than being merely a musical analysis. In actual fact, Soviet ethnomusicology asserted that the modal structures had derived from the pentatonic structure of folk music.⁴⁹ Saygun claimed that, together with the musicologist Mahmud Ragip Gazimihal, he had found clues of pentatonicism in Turkish folk music. This feature was also intrinsic to the musical structure of Asian Turks, the Turks who lived behind the Urals, and Hungarian and Finnish people as well. He investigated the expansion lines of pentatonicism in history. And interestingly, his main hypothesis was that there could be a relationship between the people living in the fields remote from the center of those expansion lines and from Turkishness.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ I. BASGOZ, *Folklore Studies ...*, 169.

⁴⁸ F. TANSUG, *Turkish Popular ...*, 40 and see M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate ...*, 40-41, for further information about the developments at that time.

⁴⁹ M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate ...*, 51. Stokes considered the existence of the idea in Turkey as a consequence of Bartók's influence.

⁵⁰ A. A. SAYGUN, *Ataturk and Musiki ...*, 47.

The process of constructing a cultural origin or heritage generally involves two elements. One is eliminating the differences and the other is reprocessing the 'differences' in folk forms in order to define them as a part of an imagined entity. Collections of folksongs and the political construction of the discourse of Turkish folk music from those 'inheritances' is an epitome of the second. Thousands of various music pieces collected from certain regions of Anatolia were put under the constructed categories of the institutions. The standardization and the categorization of folk forms in order to produce a 'safe' variety and difference involved, among others, Turkification of the lyrics and changing the rhythmic structure of the music in order to adjust it to the invented lyrics. Ironically, in some cases, those attempts included changing the polyphonic structure of the music into monophonic structure in order to adjust it to the organizational structure of 'orchestra' at TRT (Turkish Radio and Television).⁵¹ The polyphonic structure of the Black Sea music, which can be best performed with the *kemence* (a traditional instrument), was transformed into monophonic structure, which would otherwise have been in conflict with the orchestral structure of the music performed at TRT, guided by the monophonic instrument, the *baglama*.⁵² In this process, changes in lyrics also accompanied the changes in the rhythmic structure. Therefore, the effects and meanings of a particular song entirely changed with the transformation of the sound and the lyrics.

Conclusion and Some Notes for a Further Study

Romanticism was in a state of nostalgia in which the present was condemned and the past idealized. Although there have been many similar attempts by Turkish nationalism to identify folk culture in order to celebrate it as the national culture, those attempts have been very much concerned with the cultivation or refinement of that folk culture (although it is a genuinely national culture) in order to elevate it to the level of the culture of Western civilization. In Romanticism, the element of pureness attributed to folk culture made it directly superior to the urban or mass culture, which was seen as adulterated by sweeping industrialization. Secondly, there was a combination of Romanticism and the Enlightenment regarding the comprehension of folk culture. There was idealization as well as refinement, or an urge to refinement, of folk culture. This was very much related to the westernization ideal of the founders of Turkish Republic. Turkish culture was to be seen as inherently western culture or as capable of being a western culture.

⁵¹ For a keen explanation of those attempts regarding the transformation of the musical structure, see M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate ...*, Chapter 3: 'Rule, System, and Technique': *Reconstructing Turkish Folk Music*.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Chapter 3.

Herder once stated: »'People' does not mean the rabble in the streets, which never sings or creates but rather screams and mutilates true folk songs«. ⁵³ This distinction between the 'rabble in the streets' and the genuine 'folk' has always been a major reference in cultural debates in the history of the Republic. The specter of *halk* haunts the cultural as well as political sphere. Complicating the issue, although the word *halk* does not have a primary meaning of peasants or people from rural areas, in the case of Turkish folk (*halk*) music, the word has the definite meaning of peasants or rural people. Therefore, *halk* in the urban sphere has never been sufficiently defined from the aspect of cultural significance.

Any inquiry on the cultural sphere consistently raises the same question about cultural forms and their relations to the social and political realm: What is the nature of the mutual relations between those realms? This question inevitably brings forth the methodological issue; the way that we deal with cultural forms. Rather than seeing various cultural forms categorically, any inquiry in the cultural realm should tackle the issue with constant consideration of the floating forms and meanings that are ostensibly essential elements in cultural forms. Even when the transformation seems to be a qualitative one, from folk music to a different genre, for example, it can be ostensive. This is definitely true for the later developments in Turkey regarding the position of Turkish folk music. It certainly has not ceased to exist; it has continued to exist in the form of folk music and in the form of other music genres as well, like *arabesk*, or Turkish popular (or 'pop') music. ⁵⁴ It has passed its meanings or forms to other genres, a process which has strong roots in politics. Another important point is directly related to the peculiarity of the musical domain. As music accompanies almost all social practices and the meaning in music is transmitted by both language, lyrics, and musical features, such as patterns of rhythm and melody, it has a distinctive place among other folk forms. Deconstructing the discourses of authenticity and originality, which are the main tenets in nationalist modernist discourses, requires an understanding of the music by looking at the effects and meanings that people attached to it.

Such a brief panorama of folk music in the early period of the Turkish Republic reveals the primary importance attributed to the institutional regulations among other forms of political power. However, this fact never diminishes the significance of the symbolic power imposed on folk music. The categorization and the reprocessing of folk forms to eliminate difference are within the sphere of this symbolic power. The engineering aspect of nationalism was at the basis of that transformation process, based mainly on institutions. Particularly in a country in which the formal political domain was confined to a single party, the political construction of culture was based largely on the predominance of a single ideology, in

⁵³ Quoted in J. STOREY, *Inventing Popular Culture ...*, 4.

⁵⁴ This point can be observed in the case of *Arabesk*. See M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate ...*

this case, Kemalism. However, this study shall suppose that this period also refers to an alternative methodological point regarding the relation between politics and culture, along with the definition of politics within the cultural sphere. The total exclusion of Classical Turkish Art Music and *tekke* music from the public sphere engendered particular resistance forms. One of these resistance forms was *Nota* Magazine (the first issue was published in 1930); its main aim was proposing a new idea of synthesis that definitely opposed the project of sudden change in the music of the Republic elites.⁵⁵ Another major development, which can be counted among those resistance forms, was that the *tekke* musicians, after the abolishment of *tekkes*, played the leading role in creating popular music forms in urban spaces.⁵⁶ These resistance forms challenged the classical perspective regarding the relation between politics and culture, which mainly depends on macro politics and institutional regulations within that sphere. All those attempts, though seemingly cultural, include political discourses within themselves. Therefore, the popular reaction to the banning of Turkish monophonic music in radio broadcasts, as mentioned in the paper, led to later developments that can be interpreted as the result of this 'political' attitude. Thus, this understanding of the relation between culture and politics also has significant implications for the domain of popular culture. It is no longer a mass production of cultural forms: it can be interpreted as a source for political resistance. Every cultural form is a composition of meanings, aesthetic traditions, and messages, which together refer to a political discourse. In its chase for hegemony, any political strategy appropriates different elements from various cultural forms, removes them from their contexts and reprocesses them in the new contexts. The construction of Turkish folk music is an epitome of this process.

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⁵⁵ I owe this information to Orhan Tekelioglu. For detailed information on *Nota* Magazine see O. TEKELIOGLU, *Modernizing Reforms ...*, and also O. TEKELIOGLU, *Türk Musiki İnkilabının İçsel Tarihi: Nota Dergisinin Kapanması* [Inner History of the Turkish Music Revolution: The closing down of *Nota* magazine], *Toplumbilim*, No. 9 (March 1999): 15-25.

⁵⁶ For more information see M. STOKES, *The Arabesk Debate ...*

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Sažetak

U POTRAZI ZA NACIJOM: KONSTRUKCIJA NARODA I FOLKLORNE GLAZBE U OSNIVAČKIM DESETLJEČIMA TURSKE REPUBLIKE

U članku se istražuje kulturna povijest turske folklorne glazbe s posebnim naglaskom na glazbene reforme koje su poduzete nakon ustanovljenja Turske republike (1923). Elite u Republici tragale su za raznim modelima (osobito za modelima istočnoeuropskih zemalja) i pozivale mnogobrojne poznate glazbenike, uključujući i Bélu Bartóka, s namjerom da pozapadnjače tursku folklornu glazbu. Što se dogodilo s drugim glazbenim tradicijama u Turskoj koje su bile proizvodi multikulture i viševjerske populacije koja je živjela u Otomanskom carstvu? U tim glazbenim reformama bio je na djelu društveni inženjering koji se nadahnjivao Prosvjetiteljstvom u namjeri da konstruira primjerenu strukturu koja bi se sastojala od stanovništva s različitim i mnogobrojnim kulturnim i vjerskim korijenima. Razlike su ostale sačuvane, bile su čak dobrodošle, ali u vrlo tipičnom modernističkom diskursu koji djeluje na specifičan način prepredenim uklanjanjem razlika. Smatralo ih se dijelom 'kulturnog mozaika' harmonične turske kulture. Ako je jedan način ocrtavanja jedinstvenog tijela nacije konstruiranje homogene ili integralne kulture, onda je drugi način davanje veće ili manje primjerenosti različitim kulturama na određenom teritoriju. Zbirka glazbenih komada iz Anatolije bila je standardizirana, tekstovi su bili prevedeni na turski i, što je paradoksalno, izvorni višeglasni komadi pretvoreni su u monodijske. Članak se također bavi diskursom osnivačkih elita o narodu, koji je u velikoj mjeri pridonio stvaranju te primjerene strukture u području glazbe. Suprotno od političkih ideala osnivačkih kadrova, koje su uglavnom oblikovala načela Prosvjetiteljstva, njihov pojam o narodu spoj je romantičke i prosvjetiteljske misli.

