

REPUBLIC DAYS IN THE POST 1997 PERIOD TURKEY: COMMEMORATIVE
ACTIVITIES AS EMBODIED AND CONTESTED INTERVENTIONS TO THE
IMAGINARY TERRAIN OF THE 'NATION'

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of
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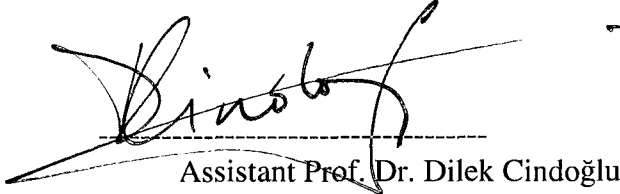
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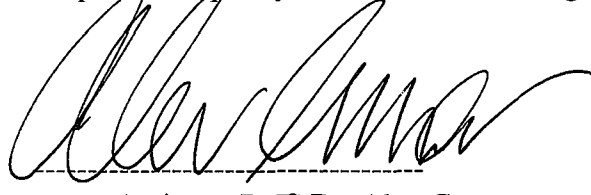
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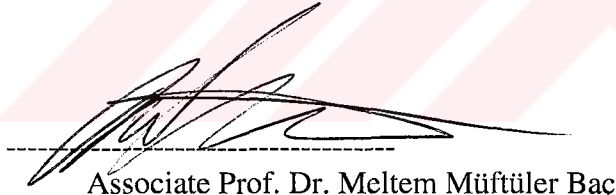
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ABSTRACT

REPUBLIC DAYS IN THE POST 1997 PERIOD TURKEY: COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES AS EMBODIED AND CONTESTED INTERVENTIONS TO THE IMAGINARY TERRAIN OF THE 'NATION'

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This thesis explores the Republic Day holiday celebrations and their representations in three newspapers; *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* in the post-1997 period from a perspective which argues that commemorative activities are a point onto which interventions signify both embodiment and contestation for the 'national imaginary'. To this end, this thesis examines the differences in the way various nationalistic discourses relate to the 'national imaginary' by employing various presences in the terrain of the Republic Day holiday. Resulting from this analysis, this thesis argues that the differences in the way various ideological positions relate to the Republic

day holiday do not lessen, in fact strengthen the function of the Republic Day holiday in the reconstruction and reimagining of the terrain of the 'nation', since the differences in 'national imaginary' are expressed via interventions to the Republic Day holiday which thus occurs as a legitimate referent 'of the nation.'

Key Words: Nationalism, Turkey, Post-1997 Period, Republic Day Holiday, Commemoration



ÖZET

28 ŞUBAT SONRASI TÜRKİYE'DE CUMHURİYET BAYRAMLARI'NIN DEĞİŞEN ROLÜ: ULUSAL İMGELEMİ YNEİDEN OLUŞTURAN VE ŞEKİLLENDİREN YAKLAŞIMLAR

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Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr . Dilek Cindoğlu

Eylül 2004

Bu tez 28 Şubat kararları sonrası Türkiye'sindeki Cumhuriyet Bayramı kutlamalarını ve bu kutlamaların *Zaman*, *Hürriyet*, ve *Cumhuriyet* gazeteleri tarafından temsillerini; 'Cumhuriyet Bayramı' kategorisinin dinamizminin, 'Türk ulusu' kategorisinin dinamizmine denk geldiği perspektifine dayanarak ele almıştır. Bu amaçla, bu tez bu üç gazetenin Cumhuriyet Bayramı kutlamalarına yaklaşımlarında geliştirdikleri farklılıkları incelemektedir Bu inceleme sonucunda, bu tez farklı ideolojik söylemlerin Cumhuriyet Bayramına dair farklı yaklaşımlarının, Cumhuriyet Bayramı'nın 'ulusal imgelem'in sürdürülmesindeki rolünü

azaltmadığını, aksine güçlendirdiğini öne sürmektedir, çünkü yaklaşımlardaki bu farklılık Cumhuriyet Bayramı'nın 'ulusal imgelem'i temsil etme ve ona atıfta bulunma rolünü Cumhuriyet Bayramı'nın her koşulda 'ulusa dair' olması sebebiyle desteklemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Türkiye, 28 Şubat Kararları Sonrası Dönem, Cumhuriyet Bayramı, Bayramlar



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The reason that holidays and rituals are so revealing that they have a very special place in the architecture of the society. To put it succinctly, many sociologists hold that newborns are little savages who become socialized by being introduced to the values of their society. ...Looking at holiday's leads one to ask which values a given society, in a given historical period, seeks to reinforce. (Etzioni, 2002:1)

The childhood memories of Turkish citizens are full of scenes from holidays that they have participated throughout their compulsory school education. In these celebrations they might have had a major or minor contribution: They might have read a poem, might have sang a song in the chorus, might have taken role in a parade: or they might have represented their school in the stadium celebrations or by visiting the president on the day of the holiday together with other representatives from other schools. Whether they liked it or not, whether they were aware of what exactly was celebrated, from a young age they get used to the idea of the `nation`, even though they were not aware of what exactly they were being taught. With feelings of patriotism and belongingness, these school parades prepared these future citizens with the national imaginary. The themes that were introduced in these school

celebrations were simply national: military power, respect to the past, an awareness of belonging, a link created between the past and the future citizens of the nation, a realization of time and place, sacrifice, honor, fear and so on. These school celebrations can be thought as the first introduction of the citizen with the image of the `nation`.

However this thesis is not designed to study these school celebrations and their affects in creating competent citizens in Turkey. This would require a more extensive study with different methodologies, which is not in the scope of this study. The research of this thesis focuses on one of the holidays among many others that are celebrated in the school curriculum. In this thesis the Republic Day holiday celebrations and its representations in three newspapers; *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* in the post-1997 period are explored. On this ground, there are two theoretical assumptions that this thesis bases its argument upon.

First, this thesis approaches the question of national identity from a perspective that argues that collective identities are persistently reconstituted and reinstitutionalized according to a present agenda. That is, this thesis takes the category of the `nation` not as a given, primordial entity which is stable; but rather a category that is dynamic, in which nation-states are argued to be constantly reimagining and reconstructing themselves, redrawing the boundaries of their imaginary terrain and redefining who constitutes a national citizen. Within this general theoretical approach the question that concerns nationalism studies are argued to be a `how?` question as much as it is a `what?` question. More clearly, it is argued that `national identity` is a category of practice, that is national belonging

and the awareness of belonging is argued to be practiced in everyday lives of the citizens, such as in Olympic games, in football matches, in international competitions and many others.

Second, taking `nation` as a category of practice, commemorative activities are taken as proper sites where national identity is practiced. It is argued that a commemorative activity possesses a `symbolic repertoire` (Spillman, 1997: 31) which includes themes that are crucial for the national imaginary; in other words a commemorative activity provides a narration of the nation. This narration of the `nation` with the symbolic repertoire of themes carries `commemoration` to a position where national identity is both embodied and redefined. In that sense, commemoration is taken as a dynamic point which corresponds and sustains the dynamism of the category of the `nation`. More clearly, commemoration is taken as a site which the national imaginary is embodied onto and which also serves to the embodiment of the national imagination. Therefore the dynamism of a commemorative activity, that is, the changes in the way it is celebrated are argued to be a mirror of the present agenda of a nationalist construction.

With these two assumptions, the Republic Day holiday celebrations and their representations in three newspapers: *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* in the post-1997 period is the subject of this thesis. First, this thesis will analyze the Republic Day holiday celebrations via their representations in three newspapers: *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*. It is argued that newspapers are crucial in constituting and fostering national imaginary through their representations of various events occurring within the country and around the world. That is newspapers are important actors in

the drawing of the boundaries of 'we' and the 'other'. The question of whether newspapers reflect public opinion or whether they affect public opinion is a question whose direction of interaction cannot be assessed certainly. Therefore this thesis assumes that the mentioning of Republic Day holidays in these newspapers provide clues about the way it is experienced in the society. However, if our aim had just only been to see the events that have happened in the terrain of the Republic Day holiday, it would have been enough to look at one of these newspapers. The reason for choosing three newspapers which differ in their political orientation stems from another assumption of this thesis. It is assumed that the difference in the political orientation of these newspapers can be observed from the way in which they represent the Republic Day holiday celebrations, such that, their approach to the Republic day holiday is shaped by the nationalistic discourses that they represent. From this perspective some of the dominant themes that these newspapers use in their representation of the Republic Day holiday will be examined and compared.

Relying on the assumptions that, nation is a construction which is reconstituted and reimagined continuously and that from commemorative activity these interventions and negotiations can be examined, this thesis has chosen the Republic Day holiday celebrations as a research object in order to observe the themes that are used in these celebrations in the post-1997 period. The reason for choosing the post-1997 period is two-fold. First, it has been a practice among scholars of Turkish politics to periodize the history of the Turkish Republic according to the military coups. In line with his practice, when trying to decide the date to which this study will back to, 1997 has been chosen since the 28th February process has taken place on this year. By this choice, it is assumed that at least an insight into the

political conjuncture of the post-1997 period will be provided by this study. But this is not the only reason for choosing the post-1997 period for this thesis. Second, in this period there has been an alteration in the way the Republic Day holiday has been experienced by Turkish society. Marches and concerts were introduced as part of the celebrative activities and the participation of civil society organizations in these celebrations have increased. In fact, the Republic Day holiday was presented as transforming from a holiday-that-is-watched to a holiday-that-is-participated in. This thesis is not designed to examine the reasons behind the changes that have occurred in the ways the Republic Day holidays are celebrated in Turkey. Nevertheless this thesis will also question whether or not the Republic Day holiday has altered from a holiday-that-is-watched to a holiday-that-is-participated-in, and whether or not this alteration has been as spontaneous as it is presented to be.

The second chapter is dedicated to the literature review of nationalism studies and studies about commemorations. In this chapter; first the ways in which approaching the question of 'what nationalism is' is explored via examining modernists, primordialist and ethnicists approaches to nationalism. Among these approaches, the modernist approach which states that 'nation' is an imaginary construction, is the one that this study will develop in its analysis of the Republic Day holidays. The modernist approach regards nationalism as a modern phenomena and this study will base its argument on this theoretical approach which takes 'nation' as an imaginary construction (Anderson, 1983) and argues that this imaginary is being constituted through invented traditions. (Hobsbawm, 1992) However, the base of this study does not only consider 'nation' as a question of substance but also a question of practice. This argument is substantiated by stressing

that nation and national identity are practiced in everyday lives of citizens, and argues that the imaginary construction of the 'nation' can be understood by addressing the practices of national identity that reconstitute and redefines the 'nation'. Following this theoretical background, in the second section of the second chapter, the extent to which commemorative activities can be taken as a proper site for reading 'nation' and 'national identity' are discussed. In line with Spillman (1997) and Gillis (1994), this study is grounded on the assumption that commemorative activities are points, which address the national imaginary directly, hence looking at what is commemorated, when and by whom provides answers about the 'nation' and 'national imaginary'. Next, the specific focus of this study; the Republic Day holiday is discussed within the general historical framework of Turkish national holidays, stating that holidays are not stable points which societies easily reach a consensus upon. That is holidays are assumed to be dynamic points on which interventions, negotiations and contestations continue. Linking the dynamism of holidays to the dynamism of the imaginary terrain of the 'nation', in the second chapter, this thesis argues that studying commemorative holidays are a possible means to figure out the major discussions in the imagination of the 'nation'.

Since this study aims to do a similar analysis, the third chapter intends to provide a general sketch of the main points relevant to the discussion of Turkish national identity. Therefore, the third chapter addresses the question of national identity in Turkey, with the objective of providing a historical background of the development of questions of 'nation' and 'national identity'. Thus this historical background begins with referring to the early republican period, namely to the ways in which the Kemalist nationalist project constituted national identity in this period.

It can not be assumed that Kemalism and its definition of national identity has remained unchanged since 1920s, still it is important to understand the initial premises of the construction of national identity in order to understand the current conjuncture of the question of national identity in Turkey. Therefore, the emphasis of the Kemalist nationalist project on science and positivism, the project which prescribed the national self as modernizing and as a homogenous entity are explained. Then the study moves on to the situation in the post-1980 period. The jump from the early Republican period to the post-1980 period might seem annoying for a chapter which argues that it discusses the development of the question of national identity. This choice reasons not from since this study views the developments between 1930s up until 1980s as unimportant, but when it comes to the question of national identity, 1980 is a turning point; and most scholars argue that only with the developments after 1980 the grounds on which Kemalist national identity rests on have begun to be challenged. (Keyman, 1995; Kasaba, 1997; Kadioğlu, 1997) Therefore in order to understand the main discussions about national identity in contemporary Turkey an introductory summary of the developments in the post-1980 period are necessary. It follows that throughout the 1990s the rise of the Kurdish problem and the rise of Islamism have been the most important issues, and the reasons for these issues to become problems, are linked to prescription of the Kemalist nationalist project which developed a certain distance towards Islam as a religion and towards the Kurdish population by labeling them as the internal other of the 'nation'. Between these two most problematic issues this study is more interested in the rise of Islamism although the Kurdish problem will be incorporated into the analysis of the Republic Day holidays to some extent. The interest on the rise of Islamism is associated with the 28th February process and the

political conjuncture of Turkey in the post-1997 period is discussed lastly in the third chapter. This discussion looks at three developments, which are considered to be related to the objectives of this study. These are primarily the developments in the post 1997-period with emphasis on military's increasing hold in politics; second, the development of Islamist politics in the post-1997 period and third the rise of nationalistic discourses in this period. The issues that are included in this chapter might seem so proliferated, however since the aim of this chapter is to provide the background of the analysis that will be made on the following chapter, it is necessary to be so, since the issues that will be included in the analysis of the Republic Day holiday are diverse.

The fourth chapter is the analysis chapter of this thesis. As has been mentioned before, this analysis is carried out through readings of newspapers; *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* by looking at their representations of the Republic Day holiday throughout the post-1997 period. In this reading there have been various themes that have been identified, but the aim of this study is not to offer a statistical comparison of the themes used in representing the Republic Day holiday between newspapers and throughout the years. Instead this study argues that the Republic Day holiday is a dynamic point that represents the national imaginary; and this point both serves as inclusive of the nation and both as a point where negotiations and contestations continue regarding the nation. Accordingly the analysis is organized under three sections. In the first section of the fourth chapter; the differences in the way these three newspapers approach Republic Day holidays will be explored by the differences in the themes that they use in their symbolic repertoire addressing the national imaginary. In this section the argument is that the differences in the

nationalistic discourses these newspapers present can be observed from the ways in which they represent the Republic Day holiday. In the second section, the ways in which the Republic Day holiday generally serves as a type of commemoration in the institutionalization of the idea of the 'nation' by providing temporal and spatial reference points will be explored. In this section the argument is that although there might be contestations and interventions in the Republic Day holiday, in any case the Republic Day holiday serves as point in which the imagination of the 'nation' is sustained. In the third section, these interventions and negotiations in the Republic Day holiday are analyzed by the stress being on the specificities of Turkish politics which are argued to be observable from the Republic Day holiday celebrations. From this perspective, this study has refrained itself to look at three issues. First, the military's involvement in Republic Day holiday celebrations, second, to the instances where the 'headscarf' question has found place in the Republic Day holiday celebrations and third, the presence of the state versus society discourse in the rhetoric of secularists` and Islamists` in the context of the Republic Day holiday celebrations.

Following out the steps outlined above, this study attempts to show the ways in which a commemorative activity can be studied, in order to understand the imaginary terrain of national identities. It is suggested that the dynamic category of the 'nation' can be followed from the changes that occur in the discussion of the celebrations of commemorative activities. From this perspective, Republic Day holiday is taken as a site where the discussions about 'national imaginary' in Turkey can be observed.

However, this is not the only intention of this study. A more important question that will be posed is whether or not the difference in the way different ideological positions approach the Republic Day holiday resemble antagonism or harmony for the national imaginary. That is, the extent to which the Republic Day holiday sustains in referring to and reflecting the 'national imaginary' in spite of the different approaches that different ideological positions take on themselves will be questioned.



CHAPTER 2

NATIONALISM, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND COMMEMORATION

In this chapter the general focus will be on nationalism and national identity, with specific significance devoted to the practices of national commemorations. These commemorations are argued as proper sites for reading the reconstructive practices upon which national identity constitutes itself. First, various understandings of nationalism are elaborated, with the aim to highlight primordial, modernists and ethnicists' approaches to nationalism. Throughout this study, 'nation' is approached from a modernist perspective, thus Anderson's notion of imagined communities and Hobsbawm's account of the 'invented traditions' that serve to this imagination will be given specific emphasis. Second, the focus will be turned onto national commemorations by adopting Spillman's argument which points out that looking at national commemorations provides a full reading of the national identity; and Gillis's account that national commemorative practices are a site where memory and identity coincide will be incorporated. On the light of this theoretical background, some historical information about the practices of national holidays in Turkey will be presented in line with the particular roles these holidays play in the constructional

and reconstructional affirmations of national identity. In other words, these holidays are taken as a site where national identity is embodied and both as a site where national identity is redefined.

2.1. Nationalism

2. 1.1 Nation as a Category of Analysis

Nationalism determined the norm for the legitimacy of political units in the modern world. Thus being a nation-state has become the accepted standard to gain political legitimacy. Although there is not a certain definition of what exactly constitutes a nation-state, still the terms the 'nation', 'nationalism' and 'national identity' have been used interchangeably in studies concerning the relations within and between states. Furthermore, there have been various approaches to nationalism concerning its genesis; this debate is most often described as the debate between 'primordialists' vs. 'modernist'. Though it is not possible to offer an all-encompassing presentation of various scholars of these two different ways of approaching nationalism, to look at the major differences between these two perspectives are necessary to understand nationalism from a theoretical perspective, which is the objective of this section. In order to highlight the theoretical ground of this thesis, it has been considered necessary to present the primordialist, ethnicists, and modernists' approaches to nationalism among which the 'modernist' perspective has been the theoretical basis upon which this thesis will grow on.

2.1.1.1 Primordialist Perspective on Nationalism

The scholars, who adopt a primordialist view of the nation, bring an essentialist view of the 'nation', arguing that a nation precedes the state, and it is inevitable that a nation will self-assert itself into being by becoming a nation-state. This view is constructed around seeing the nation as a 'sleeping beauty', waiting to be awakened by a nationalist movement in order to regain its status in a 'world of nation-states' by becoming a nation state. This status of becoming a nation-state is always a regained status, since the primordialist view of the nation always refers to a glorious mythic past. This is the general national 'story', which contains a foundation myth, locating the origin of the nation in a mythic time, which has had always involved the same community moving throughout history gradually. (McCrone, 1998:28) According to Geertz, the concept of primordialism is defined as:

One that stems from the 'givens' or, more precisely, as cultures are inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed 'givens' of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on, are seen to have an ineffable and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves. (Geertz. 1973:259)

Thus, according to this definition the membership to nationhood is seen as a given natural character which can not treated as an acquired status. Therefore the primordialist perspective about a 'nation' assumes an existence before and a bond between all the members of a group before these members even realize their particular belongingness. Before a nation-building process is at stake, the future

members of that nation-state possess an unknown consciousness regarding their togetherness. That is *they* do not know that *they* are part of a 'nation', but this belongingness is 'given' to *them*, thus *they* will sooner or later realize *their* membership ties which assert them the status of being fellow nation members. This perspective suggests that the nation-building process can only revitalize a once-existent nation, by making the members of that nation become aware of their belongingness to the nation. In contemporary discussions, the primordialist view does not find very much popularity, and the modernist view about the origin and character of the 'nation' prevails over this essentialist view. However, still it should not be forgotten that this view is the one that is taught to most of the children who attend classes as part of a national education program in many nation-states, and at least some of the ordinary citizens of a nation-state thus share this primordial view regarding their nationhood.

2.1.1.2. Modernist Perspective on Nationalism

By 'modernists', scholars who have been drawing attention to the 'invented' and 'constructed' aspects of the nation, such as Gellner, Deutsch, Hobsbawm and Anderson are referred. By focusing on economic and social changes associated with the term 'modernity' modernists argue that nations were largely an outcome of the process of modernization. That is, nationalism makes nations rather than the other way round, since nationalism is the cultural and political ideology of modernity.

Anderson approaches the question of nationalism from a constructivist perspective. His main contribution to the field of nationalism studies is that he addresses the centrality of 'image' in creating a national reality. According to Anderson, nation is an "imagined community", and is imagined as limited and sovereign. (Anderson, 1983:1) Nations are imagined as possessing four features: having united members, being limited in number; being sovereign; and being a community. (Anderson, 1983: 6-7) Here, it is important to notice that the idea of imagination does not imply falsity vs. genuinity; rather it implies that communities are different from each other in the way they are imagined. (Anderson, 1983: 15) This 'imaginary' is the "symbolic means through which a nation comes to perceive and understand its distinctiveness, and separates itself from others, namely 'national traditions' and 'national cultures', are the outcome of a process of social construction."(Gunter, 1997:57) Thus, the construction of the national self is a process that is carried out by the various meanings associated to the 'national' in the national imaginary. This 'national self' inevitably constitutes itself different from an 'other', which both draws the boundaries of the national self and thus sets a limit to the imagination and at the same time the other's otherness finds so much reference in the constitution of the national imaginary that it becomes hard to set a clear limit between a national self and its other's. Although, in the practice of national imaginary the boundaries between the 'national self' and its others are imperceptible, still the existence of an 'other' is central to the construction of the national imaginary, since 'we' are what 'others' are not.

This constructivist view of identity accordingly assumes that identities vary across space and times, due to societal conditions and the changes that any group

might encounter. These identities might also alter because of the group's own active involvement in redrawing boundaries, asserting new meanings, interpreting their past according to their present, thus constructing and reconstructing their identities. Unlike the primordialist view, which favors an essentialist view, constructivism emphasizes the role individuals play in the interpretation of their own environment. That is, the 'nation' is not considered as a 'given' but as an 'imaginary' that is constructed via the interpretation of the individuals that together claim to be the 'nation'.

According to Anderson the emergence of a nation is realized through particularly three stages in the European context. For the purposes of this paper, the initial stage of development will be elaborated, since it is not a step peculiar to Europe and thus can be applicable to a wider context in studies of nationalism. This first development is linked to the other stages of development of the idea of nationalism, by being a preliminary change in the way of thinking about time. Anderson's point about time is introduced by the idea of simultaneity, without, he argues, the genesis of nationalism cannot be understood. The idea of simultaneity is realized through two dimensions: simultaneity-along-time and simultaneity-across-place. (Anderson, 1983:5) Simultaneity-along-time emphasizes the link between past and present and refers to time as moving steadily from past to present. Simultaneity- across-place, the concept of vertical time, refers to the 'moment' at which different things happen at different places. Anderson's argument is that, with the innovation of vertical simultaneity, a profound change in the capture of time was introduced, which in turn played a fundamental role in the emergence of nationalism. Accordingly, Anderson's claim places the conceptualization of 'time' at the heart of 'nationalism'. Here, 'time-as-

simultaneity' is not only important since it has played a role in the emergence of nationalism, but also the way by which time is understood plays significant roles in the way 'nation' and 'nationhood' is perceived. That is how 'time' is thought affects how 'nation' is understood, and consequently the way 'time' is perceived, has the potential to alter the way 'nation' is perceived.

As another point, Anderson argues that the development of 'simultaneity as a way of thinking about time, was supported by the development of 'print-as-commodity'. (Anderson, 1983:37) The development of print technologies in a capitalist market place made possible the imagination of a nation across time, and thus was essential to the emergence of national consciousness. At this point, Anderson particularly stresses the novel and the newspaper as vehicles through which the national conception of subjectivity has occurred. (Anderson, 1983: 25-30) His point about the novel and newspapers is also tied to his emphasis on the 'imagined' position of the nation. He argues that, by the imagination that is provided by the newspapers and novels, the readers begin to possess a consciousness of being a part of 'we' even if they do not see each other face to face. That is, the daily newspaper through its use of the vernacular makes the nation imaginable and bounded.

For Anderson the conceptualization of the 'nation' is highly reliant on the narration of the nation. Time-awareness in association with the emergence of novels and newspapers, thanks to the development in print-technologies occupy a central place in Anderson's 'imagined community'. Although, his account concerns developments from the Enlightenment period onwards especially in European

history, it is still relevant to the development of nationalism in Turkey. Indeed, his emphasis on the relationship between the national consciousness and print-capitalism cannot be limited just to the initial phase of the development of nation-state. Accepting that newspapers are crucial in developing a 'national language' and consequently a 'national identity', paves the way to arguing that newspapers are still effective means to shape and understand the reconstruction and reimagination of a national community. Therefore, whilst Anderson presents the development of print-technologies as a feature of modernity, which has affected the initial development of national communities; his conceptualization is a dynamic one since it can also consider the role of newspapers in various configurations of national identities.

Like Anderson, Hobsbawm also emphasizes 'modernity' as the defining factor in the process, which has led nationalism to be a dominant discourse of contemporary world. According to Hobsbawm, nationhood is constructed through "invented traditions", which he defines as: "a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."(Hobsbawm, 1992:1) This term includes both any 'tradition' that is observably constructed and formally instituted, and also those traditions whose invention cannot be traced that easily. Hobsbawm argues that there does not exist a difference between these two types of traditions when the rapidity of their institutionalization is considered. (Hobsbawm, 1992:1) Hobsbawm's emphasis here is that, the specific tradition that is invented at a certain point at time, succeeds in achieving legitimacy by referring to the past: which means that the 'tradition' gains meaning by the 'referred past' that is shaped according to the present

conditions and priorities. He argues that the period of industrialization and nation-formation utilized especially three types of invented traditions:

- a) Those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behavior. (Hobsbawm, 1992:9)

Regarding nationalism, Hobsbawm's account emphasizes that 'invented traditions' are highly relevant to the recent historical innovation of the 'nation', the nation-state, and national symbols such as national flags, national anthems, national emblems, national histories and so forth. In fact, according to Hobsbawm, since the 'nation' is an innovation of modernity, it has been supported by 'invented traditions' through exercises in social engineering. This view demonstrates that there is no 'real' tradition in opposition to 'invented' traditions, as long as traditions are constructed, institutionalized and mobilized for current political objectives.

When Anderson's 'imagined communities' and Hobsbawm's 'invented traditions' are considered together, it can be argued that nations are imagined communities and this imagination is highly reliant on the institutionalization of invented traditions. In order for the members of a nation to feel themselves within the imaginary, there ought to be practices, events, activities that are shared by the members. This shared platform provides a ground on which the 'national imaginary' can be sustained and strengthened. Here it is worth remembering that the invention of a tradition is particularly carried out through the circulation of daily newspapers, as Anderson has stated. Not only the initial institutionalization of a tradition is made

known through the circulation of newspapers, newspapers are also crucial in the continuity of the national imaginary.

2.1.1.3. Ethnacist Perspective on Nationalism

Although the modernist view prevails in studies of nationalism, there has been a major attack on the 'modernist' thesis by ethnicists, which is deemed necessary to be elaborated in this thesis. Both Hobsbawm and Anderson argue that the imaginaries are constructed by highly symbolic means in order to create a national community. However, according to Smith (1988), this imagination can only be effective if it can actualize pre-modern symbols. Smith's critique of the modernist view does not take a primordialist stance; further he particularly rejects a crude primordialism. Rather his point is that, even though there have been major differences between pre-modern and modern nationalism's, still there are many instances where nations predate modernization. He argues that alongside modernity, there is a set of myths, symbols and cultural practices, the 'ethnie', which have been influential in the appearance of the modern nation. In his words, "the modern nation, to become truly a nation requires the unifying myths, symbols and memories of pre-modern ethnie." (Smith, 1988: 11) That is although there might be other forces playing roles in the realization of 'nation-state', there ought to be a particular emphasis given on the 'pre-modern ethnie', whose 'story' is necessary for the appearance of a 'true nation'. This ethnosymbolic analysis of a nation aims at revealing the invisible ties between the actual nation-state and the pre-modern national community. Although there may be nation-states whose linkage to a pre-modern ethnie is obvious, still Smith's account

includes a dilemma. This dilemma stems from the fact that it is not possible to understand whether or not the existence of a pre-modern ethnies has resulted in the appearance of that particular nation-state, or the occurrence of that particular nation state has been vital in the revitalization of the premodern ethnies. (McCrone, 1998:14)

The scope of this thesis is not suitable to seek the possible answers of this question, but it is worth noting that among these three approaches to nationalism, this study constructs its argument around the modernist approach which conceptualizes the nation as an 'imagined community'. In line with this theoretical background, which sees the 'nation' as a site of analysis, the argument will be developed in order to incorporate the perspective seeing the 'nation' as a site of practice, which is believed to provide a solid basis for the thesis of this study.

2.1.2. Nation as a Category of Practice

The primordialist, modernist and ethnicist views all approach the question of nationalism from a theoretical perspective and examine the historical specificity of each nation, with the emphasis being on the genesis of 'nationalism'. The discussion generally emerges between two extremes. On the one hand, it can be argued that prior to the formation of the state there is no 'national identity; that is, that 'national identity' was constructed and imposed by a founding elite. On the other hand it can be argued that the substance of a national identity can only be secured if this national identity refers to a premodern ethnies, or to an ethnosymbolic community.

However, in the scope of nationalism studies, there is also an approach which emphasizes the everyday practices, cultures and traditions of a nation. These approaches perceive the question about nationalism as a “how?” question, rather than a “what?” question. (McCrone, 1998: 4) In other words, if we are to leave aside the historical structuring of nation-states and nationality, we are left with the everyday practice of national identities. Once a nation-state is formed there occurs a site of practice where national identities are on stage, and on this stage the ‘nation’ is represented through various meanings, which are most of the time peculiar to itself. This is the stage of ‘national traditions’ and ‘national cultures’, where the nation simultaneously puts itself into being as a subject, and is an object that is shaped by this representational process. That is the imaginary domain of national identity is argued to be a domain that is dynamic, not stable in the sense of a ‘given’ national identity. Leaving aside the particular historical, political and social circumstances within which a nation-state is formed, the history of a nation-state involves the reconfiguration of the peculiar ‘national citizen’ that it envisages.

According to Brubaker (1996:10), “Nation is a category of practice, not (in the first instance) a category of analysis. To understand nationalism, we have to understand the practical uses of the category ‘nation’, the ways it can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action.” Here the emphasis is not on the substance of a nation, but rather on the practices and processes through which nationhood as a political and cultural form is institutionalized within and between states. This means that national identity is not a ‘given’ that regulates relations between and within states, but is rather a category which constantly renovates itself through representational practices. This national

identity is under the influence of reconstructional practices, that is the subjects of the given national identity constantly have the means to change and reinterpret this national identity. In any case, in every nation state there is a continuous reconstruction about national identities and national identity does not remain as it was initially constructed during the formation process of the nation-state. This view does not mean that the scope of nationalism has changed; rather it implies that the practicalities of nationalism necessitate a dynamism entailed onto the category of national identity.

Thus, the category of 'national identity' is open to the influence of the changes in a given nation-state, in time and across different subgroups, and it cannot be conceptualized as a fixed category. According to Gillis, "national identities are, like everything historical, constructed and reconstructed; and it is our responsibility to decode them in order to discover the relationships they create and sustain." (Gillis, 1994: 4) This view emphasizing the nation, as a category of analysis, is thus preoccupied with the 'how' question rather than the 'what' question regarding the nation, and creates a sphere of research in which the assumptions behind the category of 'national identity' can be investigated. Although the assumptions and priorities behind the construction of a national identity are important, these assumptions can only be understood properly when the practices of national identity is examined.

In this study, therefore the focus will be on the practices of national identity in Turkey. This type of an analysis can be made by various devices, such as studying historical accounts, examining specific organizations and time-periods, public monuments or more specifically analyzing certain discourses associated with

national identity. Through this perspective, the main focus of this study will be the Republic Day holiday in Turkey, which is thought within the framework of national commemorations, to be explained in the next section.

2. 2. Commemoration

2. 2.1. The Relationship between Commemoration and National Imaginary

Commemorative practices are found in almost all nation-states, and they have been studied by scholars who have examined commemorations as part of the national sphere in which identities occur in connection with other sites of nation-building such as museums, statues or sports activities. For the purposes of this study, the studies of Spillman and Gillis are of particular importance, since they argue that studying commemorations are an affective way to understand the practices of national identity and that commemorative activity provides a linkage to bring together the 'memory' and 'identity' of the imaginary domain of a nation.

Spillman's study compares the centennial and bicentennial commemorations of the United States and Australia, in order to reveal what 'nation' has meant to the citizens of these states. Her research largely relied on the examination of newspaper texts and the documents of the organizations who have arranged these commemorations. Through this examination, she reveals a large range of topics which allows her both to analyze the use of commemorations in each case and also to compare these two cases. Her close study of the centennial and bicentennial

celebrations in Australia and the United States reveals much about attitudes to the land, to history, to international positioning and to prosperity in the conceptualization of national identities in those countries. What Spillman found was, since these two states were formed largely by immigrant populations, the way their national identities are imagined is of a particular type, since they have a lesser chance of referring to premodern ethnosymbolic communities. As a result of her research she finds out the differences and similarities between these two settler societies which do not constitute the focus of this study. However her study opens an area of research where national identities can be observed in the uses of symbols, and in meanings exposed in commemorations. In her study, she refers to how centennial organizations construct norms for the nation, such as the theme of 'freedom' in the American case. She argues that, in these two countries there are symbolic repertoires through which national identities were expressed, themes such as, international recognition, international identification, a founding moment, progress, shared history, prosperity and diversity were all used to celebrate the 'nation' in these commemorations

Spillman's study reveals that analyzing commemorative activities is an essential means to understand the practical display of national identity, since they come to be platforms where intense episodes in a diffused field of cultural production occur and represent themselves. In these commemorations, "meanings and values were associated with the nation in a process of cultural production, selection and dissemination which was itself embedded in a broader public sphere." (Spillman, 1997:33) That is, the study of commemorations are effective in the aim of reading the symbolic repertoire of a 'national imaginary' since a commemoration serves as a site where the national imagination actualizes, represents and reconstructs itself.

Whereas, Spillman views history and memory as a part of the symbolic repertoires operating in commemorations, Gillis's work places 'memory' at the heart of commemorative activities of any kind. '*Commemorations*', the collection of articles, takes as its starting point the claim that: "identity and memory are particular constructs and should be treated as such". (Gillis, 1994: 5) Memory and identity come together in commemorative acts, which involve the coordination of individual and group memories. Even though memories of identities seem to be natural, in fact they are deliberately formed; that is, while some issues might come again and again to the fore, for other issues a society might adopt a collective amnesia. Thus, what we remember and what we forget is a matter of decision, that is involves an act of human judgment. More significantly, the ways in which we remember is important in studies of commemorations. That is not only what we remember should be taken into consideration but also how we remember and through which practices we show our remembrance is crucial in the aim to understand the importance of memory. Gillis's argument about the selectiveness of the memory refers to the 'national imaginary' as well, since the telling of a national history always involves some misinterpretations or at least the silence upon some issues which are considered sensitive for a national cause. Unlike the study of Spillman, Gillis's perspective adopts the concept of 'commemoration' not only to public festivals, but also to museums, monuments, in fact to any act of expression that refers to an event that is rather commonly remembered.

In line with Gillis's (1994:6) perspective, memory and identity come to be not concepts that we think *about* but are tools that we think *with*. The particular identity

that we place ourselves in, affects our perception of the world. According to Gillis, 'memory' of the 'past' can not be assigned the status of a natural object; that is, can not be treated as an objective fact. Rather, memories exist only through politics, social relations and histories. Moreover, memories are the outcome of the assertion of a particular identity rather than another, such that every assertion of an identity involves a choice that affects not only a particular group but simultaneously the 'Other's of that group.(Gillis, 1994: 5) When thought in line with Anderson's conceptualization of the national imaginary, Gillis's argument adds the dimension of the 'memory', which is important in the conceptualization of both the national self and the Other's of that national imaginary. That is both a national group and both groups within a nation make choices regarding what to remember and how to remember it. This choice is inextricably linked with the norms and rules that assign an essence to the identity of that group. In other words, 'memory' and 'identity' come to be norms, which through them the relations between groups are determined.

The role commemorative activity occupies in the relation between identity and memory is crucial to understand the various processes by which the historicizing of the past occurs. What is chosen to be remembered, to be commemorated, to be celebrated, to be visited. involves a choice. The foundations of that particular identity influence this choice, while some events achieve significant interest, some others might not be considered worth to be commemorated. Moreover the interpretation of any event involves choices also, as to a particular event might be interpreted in different ways in different circumstances. For example, in the narration of a national history in history textbooks certain events are explained in detail, whereas some are neglected or passed over only with superficial information.

Thus a study on commemorative activities is useful in two respects. First, commemoration is a site where national identities express themselves. Second, what is remembered and how it is remembered; what is forgotten and how it is forgotten; what is commemorated and how it is commemorated in a national sphere are all important determinants in a struggle to attach meaning to the various incarnations of national identity. This is one of the ways by which the 'nation' as an imaginary construction is communicated through national subjects. By looking at the above posed questions, the priorities and boundaries of the nationalist imagination reveal themselves in the sites of commemorative activities. In other words a commemorative activity is reflective and referring to a certain 'national imaginary', thus it is self-referential in its relation to the imaginary domain of the 'nation'. Being self-referential means that, commemorative activities both shape and are shaped by the changes that occur in the terrain of 'national imaginary'. It will be returned to the uses of studying commemorative activities in an attempt to understand a particular expression of national identity later, but first commemorations in Turkey will be outlined, by relying on the analysis of national holidays. Within the field of national holidays, the focus will be on the 'Republic Day holiday', since it contains the idea of a 'founding moment', which indicates a point where the linkage between memory and identity of a 'nation' finds a way of expressing itself.

2.2.2. Turkish National Holidays

There are a large number of national holidays in Turkey. Although the initial institutionalization of these holidays cannot be straightforwardly attributed to the founding elite of the Republic, it still can be argued that they were part of the 'invented traditions' which were involved in fostering the imaginary of the citizens. Thus national holidays can be considered as part of the larger scheme of political rituals which are effective in producing emotional states by which perception of the political world can be influenced. (Kertzer, 1988) In Turkey, these national holidays were established in the early Republican period and have been consolidated over the years with the assistance of a state-controlled education system. It is highly interesting that scholars of nationalism have neglected these commemorations in their studies of Turkish national identity, given that throughout public education, every child in Turkey participates in a series of commemorations either in the school s/he is attending or by taking a role in the events held in the stadium. Öztürkmen argues that Turkey is a country rich in holidays and that the concept of holiday should not be limited to national holiday celebrations. She organizes the secular holidays of Turkey under four main headings:

(1) National Holidays, celebrated by closing state offices throughout the country. These include: Republic Day, Atatürk's Commemoration, Youth and Sports Day, National Sovereignty and Children's Day and Victory Day. (2) Other important holidays related to the Republic's reforms. These are celebrated primarily in schools and the relevant public offices, but state offices are not closed. Red Crescent Week, Language Day, Domestic Goods Week, and Maritime Week are major examples. (3) Local holidays with "national significance", such as the Independence Day of a certain locality when Atatürk paid a special visit to a particular town. "The liberation of İzmir" and Atatürk's first visit to Ankara are two examples. (4) Traditionally celebrated local festivals, promoted and regulated by local municipalities. Originally celebrated as spring festivals, such as the Aksu Şenliği in Giresun

and the Kakava Şenliği in Kırklareli, these events generally host a prominent statesman or a national star in search of recognition on a national scale, with coverage in nationwide media. (Öztürkmen, 2001:48-49)

In this study, the focus is onto national holidays. The national commemorations that are experienced in contemporary Turkey, all refer to a particular time period, between May 19, 1919, when Atatürk started to organize the revolutionary movement in Anatolia and November 10, 1938, the Day that Atatürk died, commemorated as the National Mourning Day. Öztürkmen argues that there are four major national holidays in Turkey. These are most importantly the National Sovereignty and Children's Day (23 April), Youth and Sports Holiday (19 May), Victory Day (30 August) and Republic Day Holiday (29 October). (Öztürkmen, 2001: 51) However these holidays are not the only ones that have been celebrated in the history of the Turkish Republic. There have been many others that were celebrated once and then forgotten. Furthermore, the importance of any given holiday has also increased or decreased over time. Thus, any study concerning 'national holidays' ought to be aware of their dynamic nature. Here the dynamism of national holidays coincides with the dynamism of the category of national identity. Later, it will be argued that national holidays are crucial in the reshaping of national identities because of their dynamic structure.

The dynamism of holidays, thus, is exemplified by first holidays which were once celebrated and then forgotten and second by holidays whose popularity has changed over time. To the first dimension of the dynamism of holidays, an important example is the People's Houses' Festivals' which was celebrated widely throughout the early republican period but is largely unknown today. (Öztürkmen, 2001: 49) Apart from the abolition of a holiday as in the case of the People's houses festivals,

second, the intensity of a holiday might change throughout time, such as the Republic Day Holiday which was celebrated for three Days in 1930's, whereas it is celebrated only one Day nowadays. Finally, a certain holiday might become an issue of conflict such as the *Nevruz Bayram*. The *Nevruz Bayram* can be considered as a holiday that has been most intensively discusses regarding its origins and the people who are going to celebrate it. Following the proclamation of the Republic, under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the holiday was celebrated as the Ergenekon Feast in 1922, 1923, 1924 and 1926 and later celebrations were held regionally.¹ In the current conjuncture the *Nevruz Bayram* is celebrated unofficially and is attached different meanings by different circles. According to Aksoy; (1996:2) the *Nevruz Bayram* can be approached from three perspectives, being religious, ideological and as an Anatolian rite of spring. Today, it is widely considered as an Anatolian rite of spring but still the example of *Nevruz* shows how a holiday can create a popular discussion, by being considered as the date to remember the Ergenekon (Myth of Creation) by Turks and as a holiday of the Kurdish people by other circles.

Despite the large number of holidays, the studies concerning these holidays have been of a limited number. There is not a proper historical account of how these national holidays were first institutionalized or studies about the celebrations of these holidays in the contemporary period. Sakaoglu draws attention to the neglect of Turkish studies concerning these holidays, not only they have not been studied as sites of national practice, but also the historical information about how these holidays were legalized, were organized or were abolished is lacking. (Sakaoglu, 1996:4)

¹ "Nevruz in Turkish Culture" (Website Publication:
http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/ncwspot/2002/mar_apr/n24.htm)

There are many other examples of historical change of these holidays in Turkish history. It is not argued that these commemorations influenced the development of Turkish political history, but rather that the demonstrations, the speeches, the activities in these commemorations are shaped in accordance with the changes in the foundations of the national imaginary. According to Spillman, “Such organized public festivals have long been seen as important representations and affirmations of collective identity, and they became important instruments for the constitution of national identities during the nineteenth century.”(Spillman, 1997:6) Also in Turkey, these commemorations have been influential in the prescription of the national imaginary. These commemorations follow a similar path from the beginning of the Turkish Republic, and are structured around a highly hierarchical, non-spontaneous arrangement about who will participate in the commemoration and what they will do in the celebration. For example in 1934, the sequence of events was announced by the newspaper *Ulus*, before the celebration:

1. Nearly all the buildings, houses, public places, cars, even minarets must be decorated with red and white ribbons, flags and bay leaves and be illuminated with electricity.

2. The scouts and villagers who have come to Ankara, will salute the ‘Victory Monument’ at 14.00, the process of salutation is explained in 4 steps, which I will not focus on. However it is worth to say that the places where people will stand, the moment when they will blow their trumpets, the sequence of singing the ‘national anthem’, and the ‘Oath of Loyalty’ are all predetermined.

3. There is a special article about how magnificent the wreaths that will be placed on the ‘Victory Monument’ ought to be, and even additionally a covert threat

entailing by stating “The Municipality will take care over the excellence of these wreaths.

4. All people are invited to the ceremony. However their places are shown in the sketch, accompanied by a word of warning: No one ought to be in the place where he should not be! The arrangement will be as follows: first the police, then the military band, a squadron of soldiers. then the scouts and finally the people. These grouping will be in 3 parts, and ‘each group will follow the group in front of it 25 steps behind.’

5. Cannons will be fired at night, and the public who hear the sounds of the cannons, will stay silent in the “Position of Respect” for a minute. Then all the trains, cars, factories will sound their horns.

6. During the torchlight procession, all the people who are included in it will sing the national anthem while they shout ‘Long live!’²

One of the interesting points of these celebrations is their pre-determined structure, leaving no room for any action that might occur as a spontaneous reaction whether in a positive or negative manner. There are various ways to interpret the essence of these commemorations. In Turkey, according to Özbudun, “Official ceremonies are the means by which an ideal society shows its devotedness to the rulers who have justified their legitimacy by the right to show their respect to Atatürk. in these ceremonies the society (ruled ones) in their position of passive followers learn and accept this hierarchy by this symbolic power demonstration. It is certain that the ceremonies of Turkish Republic are elitist, hierarchical and formalist.”(Özbudun, 1997:156) This account is not surprising, given the top-down

² “Cumhuriyet Bayramı Nasıl Kutlanacak?”. *Ulus*, 29 October 1934.

elitist project of Kemalism to create a monolithic Turkish citizenry, however the predetermined structure of the commemorations cannot just be attributed to peculiar characteristics of the Turkish nationalist project, but still they are linked to each other.

The present study has come into existence by two interconnected questions in mind. First, the high frequency of commemorations in the Turkish Republic has made me aware of the fact that there haven't been any studies focusing on commemorations as a way to read the particular aspects of Turkish national imaginary. This study is thus intended to fill this gap in Turkish nationalism studies. Second, in the recent years of the Turkish Republic, there have been some changes in the way commemorations have been celebrated and in their representations in the newspapers. However, this is not a comparative study, designed to figure out the differences between the ways in which commemorations were celebrated in the early republican period and the ways in which they are celebrated in the contemporary period. Rather the focus is to reveal the ways in which one of these commemorations has been experienced in a particular period, namely the Republic Day holidays in the 1997-2003 periods.

2.2.3 Republic Day Holiday

With these goals in mind, this study has been designed to examine the Republic Day holiday celebrations in the post-1997 period. This period is chosen since it will be argued that the 28th February process that had begun in 1997 opened a

new period in the Turkish political arena. In Turkey, October 29 is celebrated as the Republic Day holiday, commemorating the day when the National Assembly announcement brought the new Republic into being in 1923. (Çınar, 2001: 365) Although the 10th anniversary of the initiation of the Republic into being was celebrated more enthusiastically than any other commemoration before, the law regarding the national holidays and regular vacations was only put into effect on May 27, 1935, which states that the Day that the Republic was declared (October 29) should be a national holiday. (Özbudun, 1997: 146)

The reason for choosing this commemoration is obvious. First, the Republic Day has a natural superiority when compared to the other commemorations since it addresses the formation of the Turkish republic. It represents the idea of a founding-moment, which has a fundamental basis onto the construction and reproduction of a national identity. Celebrating the very moment when the nation-state was founded is the main theme of the Republic Day holiday. Thus, the Republic Day holiday is attached a special meaning in the symbolic repertoire of the Turkish nation, since by itself it represents a chain of meanings in the specificity of the Turkish historical and political development, with its providence of a site for the reproduction of national sentiments. Second, the choice of the Republic Day holiday has also been influenced from some changes that might be noticed in the celebrations in recent years, in which political actors and competing forces have begun to participate in the rhetoric of the Republic Day holiday. Leaving the reasons behind the choice of Republic Day holiday to be elaborated later, in the next section all the mechanisms through which national holidays serve to the construction of national identities will be elaborated.

2.2.4 Functions of National Holidays

According to Çınar, there are three main mechanisms through which commemoration Days serve for the construction of national identities:

First, they are among the main mechanisms through which national history is inscribed into public life, and are instrumental in the *construction of public memory*. ... Second, commemoration days serve to locate the nation in time, thereby *historicizing the nation*. Commemorative celebrations not only constitute the 'people' as a national community in the present, but also as a community connected to the past. ... Third, commemoration days are also effective means through which *time is nationalized*. The commemoration of a historical moment on a specific day each year serves to structure public time on a yearly basis, such that public life comes to be arranged around such days. (Çınar, 2001: 371-372)

Thus, the functions of commemorations in creating and recreating national identities can be examined under three headings: first, the creation of a public memory, second the display of the nation's place in time, third the periodization of national life. Next, these three functions will be explained more closely.

2.2.4.1. Public memory

All types of commemoration days serve as a medium to instrumentalize public memory. First of all, the commemorative activity is a public event, which is a platform where members of the nation confront each other; this confrontation supports the phenomenon of 'mass' which is crucial in national imaginary. The reference to the 'mass' is made by the crowdedness in the celebrations. This crowdedness is an essential part for the inscription of public memory and national

imaginary in the citizens' minds. The crowdedness of the public event enables the citizen to imagine himself/herself as a member of the 'imagined community' relying his/her national sentiments on a more concrete experience.

Moreover, the commemoration as a public event enables the state and the citizens to confront each other, since the mass gathering of the public event appeals to a general and not to a particular audience. The direct contact between a huge crowd and central symbols and activities of the state, has been an effective way for the modern nation-states in their attempt to foster their legitimacy, to inculcate a sense of solidarity or to create identification with certain key symbols. (Ben-Amos and Ben-Ari, 1995: 165-166) This mass gathering becomes a part of the national memory, and it is obvious that "commemoration days are a much more entertaining way to elicit public interest and instruct people in national history, than, say, history classes in schools. (Çınar, 2001:371) Thus, in commemorations days entertainment of the people and seriousness of the state overlap, leading this experience to be of a peculiar kind.

2.2.4.2 The Nation's Place In Time:

National commemoration practices are an integral part of the whole national history archives, such as monuments, libraries, museums, flags, histories. History is an important aspect of the national understanding, situating a subject in a particular calendrical time of the nation. In this sense, the celebration of the national holiday serves as an indicator of the 'nation-time', as citizens imagine themselves both in the

horizontal and vertical meanings of the concept of 'simultaneity' of Anderson. In the horizontal understanding of time, the participation in the Republic Day holiday designates a link between the present time and the past; that is, the national citizen is linked to the day of the declaration of the Republic. Thus, participating in this national event is a reminder of who we are, it situates the national subject in the calendrical time of the nation. At the same time, this commemorative activity provides a horizontal link between the citizens of the state, since the national holiday is celebrated by all offices of all of cities and of towns throughout the country.

2.2.4.3 Periodization of National time:

Given the high frequency of national holidays, the lives of citizens come to be arranged around these Days. When the organizations of these holidays fall onto the duty of the national education system, such as in Turkey, these holidays come to periodize the academic year. According to Öztürkmen the students of national education, had a close experience regarding the national holidays in which they enjoyed costumes, the stage appearances, and the successful performances of these holidays. (Öztürkmen, 2001:33) However, the periodization of everyday life on a national basis does not require a straightforward enjoyment of these celebrations: "even if the public is not really sure what exactly is being celebrated, or they are not informed, or they do not care; nonetheless their lives are still arranged around these dates." (Çınar, 2001:372) In any case, whether the public participates or not, enjoys or not, still as members of society they are affected by these national holidays since they become the constitutive elements of everyday life.

Thus, the Republic Day holiday can be considered both as a tool by which the specifics of the national imaginary is sketched out and can both be considered as possessing functions in the realization of the national imaginary. In other words, the Republic Day holiday has both a constitutive role in the national imaginary and is both affected directly from the dynamism of national imaginary.

In this chapter, a theoretical background for the argument of this thesis has been provided, entailing that the reading of the Republic Day holiday is able to provide a reading of the national imagination, which is the objective of this study. In order to provide this background; first, the primordialist, modernists and ethnicists approaches to the question of nation and nationalism has been explained. Among these three approaches, which take nationalism as a site of analysis, this study has relied upon the modernist view which perceives the nation as a construction and nationalism as an imaginary domain within which relations are organized in the social and political world. Second, 'national identity' comes to be a site where 'nation' is practiced; that is studies of nationalism ought to incorporate the 'how' question as well as the 'what' question. In the aim to explore the significance of the commemorations in the Turkish context, the later half of this chapter has been devoted to provide an outline of Turkish national holidays with a specific emphasis on Republic Day holidays which is the object of this thesis.

In line with this theoretical background, thus, this thesis stands on the assumption that commemorative practices can be taken as a site where national identity expresses its symbolic repertoire relying on Spillman's argument, and in this

site practices of remembering and forgetting should be taken as particular constructs. In other words, what happens in the Republic day holidays, what have been of issue worth to be reported in newspapers, which activities have been organized, which discourse has been used in the representation of these holidays are all questions that are intended to be asked in this study.

However, in order to study the Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period properly, it is deemed necessary to outline the historical development of Turkish national identity and some common discussions upon which the Turkish national imagination has relied. This will be the subject of the next chapter.



CHAPTER 3

TURKISH NATIONAL IMAGINARY

In this chapter the aim is to provide some of the themes and points of discussions that have been occurring in any discussion regarding nationalism and national identity in Turkey. In the previous chapter it has been argued that nationalism studies ought not to be confined to an approach regarding nationalism and national identity as a site of analysis, but also as a site where national identity is practiced in endless negotiations. In the aim to examine the practices of national identity in Turkey, the significance of commemorative activities and the peculiarity of the Republic Day holiday in this context have been explored. Departing from the argument made in the previous chapter, in this chapter the focus will be the specifics of Turkish national imaginary that will be argued to be observable from the celebrations of the Republic Day holiday in the next chapter. However, in order to figure out the ways by which the practice of Republic Day holidays relate to the imagination and construction of national identity in Turkey, it is essential to have some information about the specifics of the Turkish national imaginary that will be argued to be observable from the celebrations of the Republic Day holiday in the next chapter. In other words, this chapter is designed to provide background information about Turkish national

imaginary. This background information is necessary to the analysis of the Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period.

In order to provide this historical outline of Turkish national identity, the examination will be made in three sections. The reason for examining the changes in the configuration of the national imaginary in three sections is because it has been thought to be the most proper way of presenting the necessary background for the analysis that will be made in the next chapter regarding the themes occurring in the symbolic repertoire of the Republic Day holidays. First the early republican period is outlined with the emphasis made on a homogenous Turkish nation progressing towards modernization by the Kemalist nationalist project. In this section, the emphasis is on the from-above nature of the nationalist project, which has led to “the people” to be considered as objects of this project. Second the changes that have occurred in the post-1980 period in the national imaginary will be outlined in order to show how in this period this initial project came to be challenged from different groups in the society, with a particular emphasis on the rise of Islamism. Third, the 28th February process and the aftermath of this process will be looked at, since this study is designed to examine the Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period and without understanding the 28th February process the relevance of the themes that occur in the Republic Day holidays can not be linked to the questions of national identity in Turkey.

3.1 Early Republican Period

In this section the two faces of the construction of the ideal Turkish citizen will be elaborated. Although the early republican period can be studied from various perspectives, this study will refrain itself to the emphasis on science and progress, which has resulted in first the emphasis on modernization and second on an emphasis of a homogenous Turkish society.

In the construction of the Turkish national imagination, the focus was made not on what the Turkish citizen was but rather what the Turkish citizen will be. The aim of the nationalist project was emphasized frequently as to reach the level of contemporary civilizations, in Mustafa Kemal's words. In this project the companion of the Turkish national citizen ought to be science. Having no experience equivalent to western enlightenment, the Kemalist national identity took its guide to be the scientific explanations of the world. Thus the Kemalist national project was inspired by positivism, which was regarded as a true interpretation of the world based on scientific laws. Thus, one of the basic premises of Kemalism is its emphasis on scientificism, in Mustafa Kemal's words: "Science is the only true guide in life." The belief in science is certainly an aspect of modernity, in the sense that modernity offered a linear development model, which Kemalist national identity took at its core. However, the will to modernization constituted just one face of the Kemalist nationalist project, since the emphasis on modernity at the same time meant an emphasis on homogeneity, that is; "Turkish national identity takes the nation as a homogenous whole." (Peker, 1998: 41) More clearly, the construction of Turkish

national identity rests upon scientificism and positivism, which in turn has produced two other basis of national identity: first, the emphasis on the will to modernization, and second the nation being a homogenous entity proceeding towards this goal. Now, these two faces of the Kemalist nationalist project will be elaborated.

3.1.1 The National Self as Modernizing:

An important feature of the envisaged Kemalist national identity is thus the aim to modernization. Borrowing from the European understanding of modernization based on the enlightenment ideal of science, the Kemalist national identity was built around a claim to modernization and progress. The claim to modernization and progress was constructed around a role bestowed upon the nation-state which was going to lead the nation through the necessary education to reach the desired 'modernization'. The formation of a nation-state with a defined citizenry was seen essential to the process of modernization, and the process of modernization was expected to be carried out by the nation-state. Thus, the Turkish nation-state had a sacred mission in some sense that is in Mustafa Kemal's words, a will to carry the nation to the level of contemporary civilizations. To elaborate this character of the Turkish nationalist project, Kaman puts the term 'modernist nationalism' at the heart of Turkish national identity. According to him,

In the Ottoman/Turkish experience the process of modernization -as- Westernization was, by and large, a self-inflicted process....It progressively radicalized and culminated in an ambitious attempt at wholesale civilization conversion. Statism and absence of direct colonial rule made possible the construction of a national identity that was primarily modernist in character. (Akman, 2004: 39)

Thus, 'civilizational progress' was the most important aim of the Kemalist nationalist project. The society ought to be modernized, in the sense of a 'modern nation'; in this mission the state elites were playing the role of vanguards to carry the peripheral portions of the society to the necessary civilizational level. Akman, as well as Kasaba (1997: 24), points out that the state elites of the early Republican era perceived the periphery to be 'neglected' by previous governing elites. Thus, the people were seen as a 'silent other', who are passive and inert, and who can be rescued from their situation by being educated by the state elites. (Akman, 2004: 36-39) That is the 'people' were seen to be objects of the process of modernization and were prescribed to follow the rules and norms that had been outlined by the nationalistic project. This neglect of the people who have different needs and different aspirations was also supported by the emphasis on positivism, which implied a conception of the society as having invariable laws, which in turn, provided a natural emphasis on social harmony rather than segregation. The positivist understanding of the world, offered a rational true world to which each person could reach by using his/her own reason, which was seen as a potential of the people who were going to constitute the nation. However, for the Republican elites the meaning of positivism meant that the state ought to carry out the necessary educational facilities to carry the society to a level in which the people could reach the true/rational world by using their own reason.

This role bestowed upon the state was supported also by the elite-led nature of the nationalistic project. According to Mardin (1971: 199): "The Turkish revolution was not a movement buttressed by mass support. ... The civil aims of the

revolutionaries, i.e. the political and social modernization of Turkey, however, were not paralleled by popular demands. The Turkish reformation did not originate in the thrust of the masses.” Here, the masses refer to the mostly Anatolian people in a war-torn situation, who were highly illiterate and who were mostly living in rural areas. The educations of these people were held through the reforms that were initiated by the republican elites.

These reforms first started with the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, which was immediately followed by the abolition of the office of the caliphate in 1924. Up to 1930, various reforms were put into effect in order to transform the society. These were most importantly; the abolition of religious courts, the reform of the calendar, the dissolution of dervish orders, and the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code. The initiation of these reforms had mainly the reason of creating a ‘nation’ that was modernizing and thus proceeding towards prosperous tomorrows. Moreover, these reforms were an attack to the existing cultural practices, which were mainly formed around Islamic practices. The initiation of these reforms was part of the construction of a secular public sphere, which will be elaborated later.

These reforms ought to be considered in a broader framework in which various meanings of the ‘modern’ were transmitted to the society by various agents of the nation-state. The Kemalist reforms were not just designed to transform the state apparatuses, in the sense of ‘creating a modern state’, but at the same time were aiming at penetrating into the lifestyle, manners and behavior and daily customs of the Turkish people. (Göle, 1996: 58) Consequently, the meaning of the ‘modern’ took different interpretations in the practice of national identity. Kasaba also makes

the same point, according to him, the Kemalist leaders were concerned with the formal elements of change, such as the outward appearance of people, the cleanliness of streets and the type and nature of institutions. (Kasaba, 1997: 24) Thus, the nature of the Turkish nationalist project as being 'modernist' was not refrained to the institutions and agents of the state, but actually was aiming to transform the Turkish society into a 'modern society'. Here the important point is that, this modernizing project was not initiated from below, but rather carried out by the state, that is from above. this character of the Turkish nation-state is mostly referred to as the 'strong' state tradition.

Thus, another notion that has to be figured out is the from-above nature of Turkish nationalism, but this is not in the sense that the masses were mobilized by the elites; rather the elites carried out the reforms even if the masses did not express an interest in those civil and political objectives. According to Kasaba (1997:24) the creation of a Turkish society was perceived by the political elite's in Turkey, as a project that ought to be handled by themselves in which they saw the people living in Turkey as objects of their experiments. (Kasaba, 1997:25) Eventually the from-above nature of the Turkish modernization project lays at the basis of some problems that have been seen particularly in the post-1980 period.

The desire to modernization and the existence of some non-modern, (not essentially religious but traditional) practices produced a tension to be balanced in Turkish national identity deriving its existence from the definition of the national citizen from the early republican period. The opposition between 'traditional' and the 'modern', 'state' and 'society', and the state intervention on the everyday life of

Turkish citizens has drawn much attention from scholars of Turkish national identity, but the analysis of these various studies would pass the scope of this study. It might be sufficient to say that, the Kemalist national project, in the name of modernization interfered to all areas of social life, to education, to culinary practices, to habits, to family life and so on. This interference consequently led to a tension between the modern and the traditional, state and society, thus the aim to govern the society from a scientific perspective led to an implicit imposition of certain type of good life. This certain interpretation of good life included in it, what the 'Turkish citizen' would constitute its place on. That is, the emphasis on modernization led to the construction of a homogenous Turkish citizenry, which defined itself in relation to its others. This emphasis on a homogenous Turkish citizenry will be elaborated in the next section.

3.1.2 The National Self as a Homogenous Entity

Thus, another dimension of the definition of Kemalist national identity, which is a more behind-the-scenes emphasis, is the claim to homogeneity. This claim of the Turkish nation as being a homogenous whole was important on the construction of the nation-state and was used as a point of legitimacy. This point is illustrated by Keyder (1997:153 cited in Peker, 1998:6) as: "If there was a homogenous nation with a common past, their interests and future goals should have been common, too. The state would be the narrator and the agent to realize these common goals and interests." The existence of a homogenous nation was, thus a means to legitimize the existence and interferences of the state in the social, economic and political fields.

This emphasis on the homogenous nation is formed around the definition of national identity based on the concept of citizenship. However, the liberal definition of citizenship includes a dilemma in itself which arises from the definition of 'identity' itself. This dilemma has on one extreme a strict definition of citizenship defined on bases of political definitions, and on the other extreme an essentialist sacred definition of identity based on ethnic or religious affiliations. This dilemma also constitutes the problematic of defining a group (not necessarily national) regarding its identity. Akman (2004: 39) points out that "the issue of ethnic identity was relegated to a secondary position in the ideology of Republican nationalists: concerns with ethnic identity and nationalism were, by and large subordinated to the dictates of the overall project of modernity". The definition of the nationalist project as being modernist, thus, puts citizenship over all other identifications, whether they are religious or ethnic. In order to incorporate the whole 'people' into the common umbrella of citizenship, the Kemalist elites constructed 'Turkish national identity' with the emphasis on homogeneity, such that everyone living in the territory of the Turkish nation-state was defined as Turkish. According to Oran (1988: 235), Kemalist definition of citizenship is definitely limited with the territory and takes as its defining characteristic the common culture of the Turkish nation. Atatürk has himself defined the constitutive elements of Turkish national identity as: "political integrity, linguistic integrity, a common history, a common morality, a common descent and race." (Afetinan, 1969:22 cited in Peker: 1998: 39) This definition bypassed all differences basing their claim on ethnic and/or religious grounds. Such as, whatever the religious or ethnic affiliations might be, still anyone living in the territory of the 'state' was considered as being Turkish. Hence the concept of citizenship in Turkey is a gained status, depending on the commitment to the nation;

thus the degree of belonging to the nation is calculated by the degree of performance shown for the priorities of the nation.

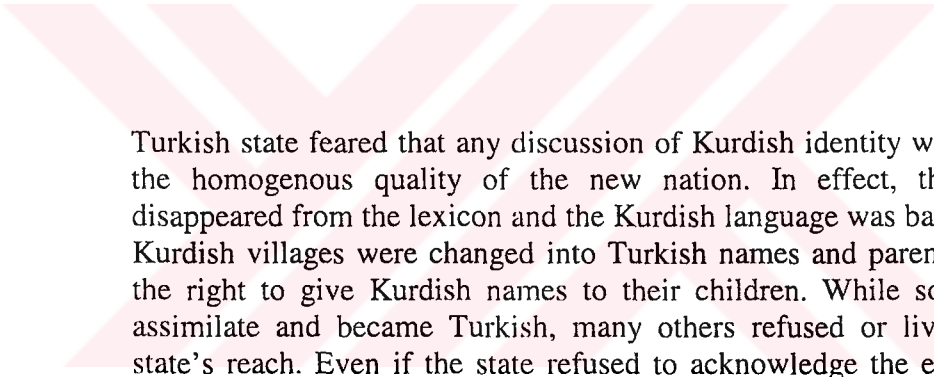
Although this definition of 'citizenship' is positive, and is open to the membership of all the people living in the territory of the state, still there were reservations to the incorporation of people into the domain of citizenship. That is the definition of 'we', the 'national self' constituted 'others' to secure the position of its definition. As it has been mentioned in the second chapter, any national identity needs an 'other' to define its own identity properly.

What the Kemalist national identity defined as the 'other' is certainly not clear as much as its definition of its own identity. According to Peker, (1998: 47-51) the 'other' for the Turkish national identity was formed upon two grounds, internal and external. She defines the internal ground as Islam and the associated Ottoman past. Here it is worth to remember that the Ottoman past was reinvented by the Kemalist discourse as being bound by religious inefficiencies, and referred to as the obstacle to modernization. In the aim of modernization, religion -Islam- was seen as an irrational attitude towards the world, and the attempts were taken to rationalize it. Thus, the nationalist discourse in Turkey, established a tense relationship with Islam, 'religion', by progressively distancing itself from religion, which resulted 'Islam' to be the constitutive outside of Kemalism. The distance developed in relation to Islam has been a visible side of Turkish modernist nationalism. The emphasis was made by labeling Islam as an out-of-date way of governing the society, and everything new was welcomed in the name of modernizing the society. In the encounter with Islamic forces, Kemalist elites presented themselves as secular, modernizing and anti-

religious, however paradoxically the Kemalist conception of secularism, became a 'official dogma of irreligion' and was imposed on the Turkish society just as Islamic dogma had been imposed in the past. (Adivar, 1951:128 cited in Hakan, 2000:3) This imposition of secularism, not only constituted 'Islam' as an internal other, but also constituted the periphery as a 'silent other' that in time would be incorporated into the national state, which supported the tension that had been constituted by the educational role bestowed upon the state. That is not only the national state intended to educate the society towards the image of a westernized, modern, secular nation but also the state emphasized that everything associated with the past ought to be left behind. Here it is important to notice how the state's role in educating the periphery coincided with the distance developed towards Islam, such that Islamic practices were seen as resulting from the backwardness of the uneducated people, which resulted in the expectation of Islamic-backward- practices to be left behind when the state elites successfully complete their role of educating the society.

There have been many ways by which 'Islam' was constituted as the internal other of the Kemalist nationalist project, whilst Kurdish population was constructed as an external other of Turkish national identity. Kural (1995:99 cited in Peker, 1998:38) argues that, in the eyes of the republican elites, Kurds were perceived as the only ethnic group that had a claim to ethnic separation in past, and thus were conceived as having a potential distaste to the Turkish nationalist project. As far as they accepted to be a Turk, to feel and act as a Turk, and to leave aside their ethnic origins they were adequate to be included within the nationalist discourse claiming the Turkish nation to be a homogenous entity.

However, the emphasis made on the Turkic nature of the new national-state created the discomfort in the Kurdish population, who were previously included in the Ottoman Empire, since the Ottoman Empire had constituted 'Islam' to be the common umbrella under which ethnic minorities came together. This discomfort led to the Sheikh Said Rebellion on 1925, which was forcefully suppressed by the republican elites. Although there had been other Kurdish revolts, such as Ağrı in 1930 and Dersim (Tunceli) 1937, the Turkish state have not considered these revolts to be necessary to be known publicly, that is although the history textbooks incorporate the 1925 revolution, they do not even mention other revolts that have taken place. About the attitude of the Turkish state towards the Kurdish population, Barkey (2000: 93) argues:



Turkish state feared that any discussion of Kurdish identity would contradict the homogenous quality of the new nation. In effect, the word Kurd disappeared from the lexicon and the Kurdish language was banned, names of Kurdish villages were changed into Turkish names and parents were denied the right to give Kurdish names to their children. While some Kurds did assimilate and became Turkish, many others refused or lived beyond the state's reach. Even if the state refused to acknowledge the existence of the Kurds, the issue would not die.

The ways in which the Kurdish issue returned into the political scene after 1980 will be elaborated later, but, it is worth to mention that the Turkish state did not have succeeded in neither obliterating Islamists nor making Turks out of Kurds, still it was successful in creating an "urban, state-dependent, guided and secular society, an intelligentsia, a civil servant class and a state-nurtured state elite."(Barkey, 2000:94) This success was realized through the two faces of the Kemalist nationalist project, namely a homogenous nation proceeding towards modernization.

The definition of the envisaged Kemalist national identity had two faces, one being the emphasis on positivism, science and modernization; and the second being the emphasis on a homogenous Turkish nation that would work in the route to progress. Although it has led to the above mentioned successes, still, this definition laid upon two dangerous grounds; first, it included a certain tension between the 'modern' and the 'traditional', 'state' and 'society', which in turn created a distance between the modernization project and its objects; second it constituted a domain between 'we' and the 'other', which led to identity crises particularly in the post-1980 period. With the accumulation of the problems that it led to, still, the dominance of the inscribed monolithic identity of the Kemalist nationalist project was more or less effective up until the 1980's. Although the mono-party regime faced a serious challenge in the 1950. by the election of the DP to government, the modernization project of Kemalism was to a degree seen as successful and was still dominant in the state discourse. However, the post-1980 period saw a series of challenges to the Kemalist nationalist project.

Before moving to the post-1980 period, there is still an aspect of Turkish nationalist construction that is necessary to be incorporated in this study, which is the role bestowed upon women and their positioning within the nationalist framework. Since the 'other' of Kemalism, included religion which denied women's existence in public sphere, Kemalist mentality choose to constitute 'new women of the Kemalist era' as a citizen who holds the right to participate in public life. What Kemalist ideology offered to women was not something that challenged the 'second among equals' situation of women, but one which just transformed it into a new platform of Turkish nationalism which assigned new roles for women in the public and private

spheres. In association with the modernist ideal of 'civilizing the nation', Kemalist ideology envisioned women as a bridge between (western) civilization and the (Anatolian) nation, in the hope of constituting a mutually obligatory respect between Kemalist reforms and Anatolian Women, who were expected to save the republican reforms from degeneration and who were saved from the fanaticism of Islam by these reforms. (Göle, 1996: 64) Thus, women were placed between 'civilization' on the one hand, and 'nation' on the other, the double burden of Turkish ideal women citizen, hence forced her to achieve a healthy balance between west and east, civilization and tradition. (Yeğenoğlu: 1998: 134)

In the construction of the Turkish national citizen, women were constituted as 'militant citizens' being the signifiers of societal change, and thus the domain wherein which identities had been drawn was transformed. The category of the Turkish women was utilized in order to emphasize the changing relationship between citizenship and religion. This changing relationship between religion and women was emphasized through the changing role of women in the public sphere. In this separation the public sphere was constituted as a sphere where the new Turkish citizen can be observed and consequently religion was confined within the private domain of the individual believer. (Göle, 1997:51) In order to strengthen this separation, the increasing appearance of women in the public space, by 'unveiling' them both in metaphorical and in real senses was instrumentalized. As Yeğenoğlu says:

The unveiling of women became a convenient instrument for signifying many issues at once, i.e. the construction of modern Turkish identity as opposed to backward Ottoman identity, the civilization and modernization of Turkey and the limitation of Islam to matters of belief and worship. During the early

Republican period, the veil carried connotations of Muslim backwardness and it was argued that a true Turkish woman had never been covered. (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 132)

Accordingly, the unveiling of women signified the opening from the Ottoman Empire to the newly founded Republic. Consequently, the women's place in the construction of Turkish nationalism denoted at the same time the introduction of the public/private sphere distinction and this distinction was particularly made evident by unveiling women. Actually the public-private dichotomy is the basis upon which western political theory is constructed, and the "idea of public is Western in its origins and its basic features are understood as universal access, individualism, equality and openness." (Göle, 2002:174) This idea of public sphere was what was offered by Kemalism to the society, and mainly to the women, in other words Kemalist project envisioned 'social visibility' (Göle, 1996: 71) to women.

Obviously, Kemalist project introduced the public-private distinction in matters of religion particularly. This distinction, which dates back to Locke, is essentially a concept emerged in western political life. Essentially, the 'public sphere' denotes openness and accessibility by all the members of the society, wherein they ought to give up some of their individual tenets, that is their differences, to come together under the umbrella of a minimum collectivity of mass being. On the other hand, private sphere denotes a smaller space of freedom allowed to individuals wherein they can more freely exercise their individual differences, but ought not to step the boundaries of that given sphere. Especially, the public versus private phenomena is the basis upon which contemporary theories of citizenship is constructed. From a theoretical perspective, this distinction is reasonable and even necessary to form a

common denominator of citizenship and of a national identity which is shared by all the members of the society. The terms under the Turkish people with all “their diversity of cultures and interests can live territorially together in the political association” (Lehning: 1998:226) of Turkish state, is thus set by the Kemalist project of nationalism.

Thus, the behavior and visibility of the women in the public sphere was an important constituent of the Turkish nationalist imagination and has been the most contested part of it by the rise of Islamism in the post-1980 period. The various faces of the ‘Headscarf’ question will be elaborated in the section about the rise of Islamism in the post-1980 period. Here it is worth to emphasize the role of women as cultural carriers by their visibility in the public sphere is a notion that is central to the construction of Turkish national imaginary, and such a role bestowed upon women has been constructed in opposition to the Muslim imaginary.

In this section, the main focus has been the fundamental tenets of the Kemalist nationalist imagination, first the emphasis’s on science, progress, modernization has been explained, second the distance that this imagination has constituted towards ‘Islam’ and the ‘Kurdish’ ethnic community has been outlined, and third the role bestowed upon women as civilizational carriers together with the introduction of a public/private sphere distinction has been elaborated. The aim of this section has been to both provide a historical background of the question of national identity in Turkey, together presenting some historical information on the reasons these issues have been problematic in the Turkish context. These issues are linked to the study of Republic Day holidays in the next chapter. In other words,

since this thesis argues that the issues that occur in the symbolic repertoire of the Republic Day holiday are reflections of the issues that occur in the discussion of national identity in Turkey, without understanding the impact of the societal engineering that the Kemalist nationalist project it could not have been possible to carry out the desired analysis.

The intention of societal engineering carried out by a strong state was not uncomplicated, as it had been conceived. The problems that the nation-state had encountered prior to the 1990's was mostly handled by the Turkish military, this point is noted by Barkey (2000:97) as:

Well before the troubles of the 1990's, the military intervened on three different occasions to bring events and errant political processes under control starting in 1960. Reliance on its military to save the day when faced with crises has made this institution a fixture of everyday political life. The Turkish General Staff, as the representative of the highest echelons of the military, has become an arbiter and, in many cases the originator of policy decisions.

The interventions of the military sustained the 'strong' role of the Turkish state, and thus the state-led modernization project was carried up until late 1970's, despite various problems faced. The role of the military in Turkish political scene was once more evident in the 1980 Coup, in the next section the focus will be the post-1980 period with the changes that has been brought to Turkish political and social life.

3.2. Post-1980 Period

As a date, 1980 ensembles various moments in Turkish history; in economic, political, and social matters. Moreover, in the last two decades Turkey has been affected from the processes of globalization. That is not only the change that has been brought by the military intervention has affected Turkey in the post-1980 period, but also the changes in the communication technologies affected Turkey. Before moving on to discuss what these changes have meant in the Turkish context, the immediate situation before the military coup and the changes that have been brought by the new regime in economic, social and political matters will be elaborated.

The immediate situation before the military coup designated the problems that required attention by the new regime. In the economic sphere, in late 1970's, Turkey was in a condition of economic turmoil, since the economic model of import-substitution proved inefficient vis-à-vis the oil crisis. In the political sphere, the society was divided along political groups and the weak coalition governments were unable to create political and economic stability. These problems were intended to be solved by the military when they intervened on 12 September 1980, which perceived the situation more problematic than before. Thus, the 1980 coup is considered as “an attempt by the military to shore up the defenses of what it perceived to be a weakened state under assault by Leftists, Islamists and Kurds by returning to the ideological precepts of the Kemalist era.” (Barkey, 2000:88)

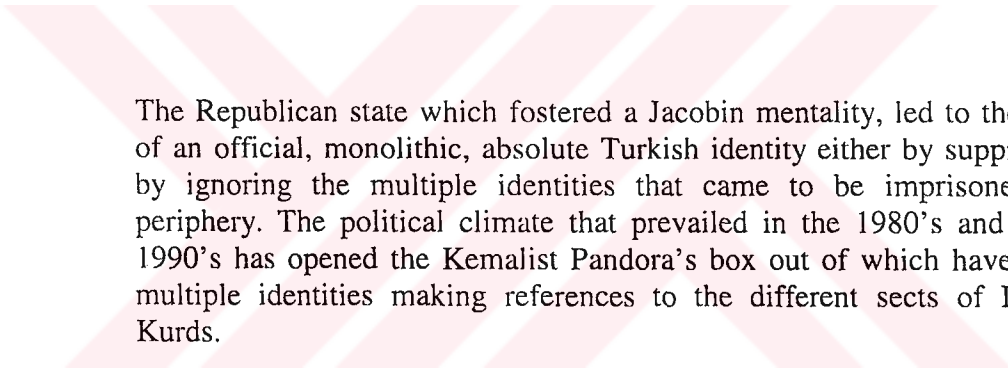
The post-1980 regime began by attempts to solve the chronic problems of Turkey with an emphasis on the Kemalist conception of Turkish national identity with some corrections appropriate to the political and economic conjuncture. According to Öniş (1997:751), in the political sphere, the military government approached the problems by primarily two actions taken. The first was the employment of Islam by the military elite in order to form a control over the leftist political parties. The outcomes of the employment of a 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' bringing together nationalist and religious elements has been various, and to a large extent has been held responsible for the emergence of Islamism throughout 1990s. The second action taken by the military was the closure of political parties, and the introduction of a % 10 threshold in order to limit the participation of small parties in politics. (Peker, 1998: 71-73) Although, these measures were taken in order to prevent the fragmentation of the political system and to bring political stability, with the lift on the ban of political leaders, the leaders came back to the political arena after 1987, such as Bülent Ecevit and Süleyman Demirel. Öniş (1997:749) argues that, this has resulted in the existence of two major parties in the left and the right, which provided an opportunity for more marginal parties.

In the economic sphere, the solution was initiated as the passage to a market-oriented economic model. This need aroused partly from the realization that Turkey had to open its economy to the world and to adjust its main economic mechanisms in accordance with the prescriptions of global capitalism. The initiation of the structural adjustment programs by the IMF, entitled the restrictions on imports to be lifted, the Turkish Lira to be adjusted to international rates of exchange, and the reduction of state subsidies. The understanding towards economy thus entered into a

transformation, in this new phase the emphasis was on the liberalization of the economy and privatization. (Peker, 1997: 74-76)

3.2.1. Multiplication of Identities

These changes in the economic and political sphere were a serious challenge to the hegemony of Kemalist national identity. In contrast to the colorlessness of the previous period, the new period signaled a multiplication of the opportunities that social and political forces could employ for the goal of recognition. As Kadioğlu (1997: 192) claims:



The Republican state which fostered a Jacobin mentality, led to the creation of an official, monolithic, absolute Turkish identity either by suppressing or by ignoring the multiple identities that came to be imprisoned in the periphery. The political climate that prevailed in the 1980's and the early 1990's has opened the Kemalist Pandora's box out of which have emerged multiple identities making references to the different sects of Islam and Kurds.

Accordingly, the 1980 military intervention opened a “discursive space for the revitalization of the language of difference, a discursive space for the marginalized and silenced identity to surface and express its resistance to the national secular identity.” (Keyman, 1995:113) More clearly, the imposition of the monolithic Kemalist identity can be seen as a reason for the increase in the requests for public visibility by various groups in the post-1980 period alongside with the new measure taken by the military government. According to Kasaba, the reason for the increase in the claim to identity in the post-1980 period, is not just based on the new measures taken by the military government. He argues that,

By the 1980's, the situation had changed completely. The Turkish people, few of whom now remembered the early years of the republic, had grown extremely suspicious of, and downright cynical about, the latest incarnations of the promises of 'enlightenment and prosperous tomorrows.' Instead of making further sacrifices for a future that kept eluding them, they were starting to inquire about the institutions, beliefs, identities and cultures from which they had been forcefully separated. (Kasaba, 1997:16)

This inquiry of Turkish citizens was partially supported by the development in communication technologies. In the immediate aftermath of 1980, the urban population exceeded the rural population, and the metropolitan culture was under the influence of international forces. With the changes in the economic sphere, this new urban population was provided with fax machines, private televisions and radios, computers, videos, and the satellite broadcasts of international television companies.

All these changes in the post-1980 period provided a ground for the Turkish population to shift their focus. According to Kasaba (1997: 31): "with the declining hold of Kemalist restrictions and other state-centered ideologies, we are better able to see most men and women living in Turkey not merely as objects of a project, but also as subjects of their own history." Kasaba's account is an optimistic view about the changes in the post-1980 period; however these positive changes carried along two highly problematic issues, and the Kurdist and Islamist movements in the beginning of 1990's. Since the Turkish people began to question the Turkish state, which was appearing to be too much secular for the Islamists, too much Sunni for the Alevi's and too much Turkist for the Kurds, the monolithic identity of the desired Turkish citizen began to be contested from all segments of the society. Each of these major identity groups in Turkish politics, have had different causes and have pursued different routes in the post-1980 period, however still they have one thing in

common that they are more or less what the Turkish state had excluded in its authoritarian and from-above nature of strong state tradition. What Turkish state envisioned as the “Turkish citizen was more or less constructed on a monolithic character, by excluding the ‘public sphere’ to the plurality of cultural differences”. (Gençoğlu, 1997: 42) This vision of Turkish society was not shared by all the portions of the society, intensively in the post-1980 period it has become obvious that each Turkish citizen had not embraced Kemalist ideology full heartedly. More clearly, the answer given to the question: ‘Who am I?’ by Turkish citizens have diversified, moreover all the answers had a political claim, at least a level of acceptance of their existence, which brought individuals and the state which was supposed to be representing them, against each other. Whilst, the individuals emphasized their differences, affiliating themselves with the group that they belong to, i.e. Kurds, Alevi’s, Muslim’s, the state was emphasizing what they all have in common, and what they all ought to place above their particularistic identities, their citizenship to the Turkish state.

The most problematic issues in the post-1980 period have been the rise of Islamism and the rise of Kurdish nationalism. Throughout the 1990’s, these two issues have occupied the central place in discussions, however the studies of Islamism have greatly exceeded the studies about Kurdish nationalism. In the next section, the focus will be on the rise of Islamism which has led to the 28th February process. The other developments of the Turkish political scene are not considered to be less important than the rise of Islamism, moreover it is argued that the development of various nationalistic discourses through the 90’s have been important as much as the importance of the rise of Islamism.

3.2.2 Rise of Islamism

As I have noted before, the employment of a ‘Turkish- Islam Synthesis’ by the military in the immediate aftermath of the 1980 Coup, was determinant in the rise of Islamic identity. The developments such as compulsory religious education and the increase in the number of schools giving religious education contributed to this process. These developments were accompanied with the emergence of Islamic organizations (both in the form of political parties- the Welfare Party and Islamic Brotherhoods). Furthermore, the visibility of an Islamic identity in the public sphere by the ‘headscarf’ question led to a major confrontation between Kemalist secular elites and newly formed Muslim elites. The ‘headscarf’ question occupied a central place in Turkish political conjuncture, and simultaneously it has been a point of confrontation wherein the tension between the state and society, traditional and modern can be observed. This question is also closely tied to the different understandings of public and private spheres. As has been argued before, the republican elites institutionalized the public sphere as a site for the implementation of a secular and progressive way of life. This conceptualization of the public sphere as a secular sphere was constructed particularly against the Muslim social imagination. This difference in the understanding of the public sphere had mostly been observable in the veiling/unveiling of women. Just as unveiling women had been a tool in the institutionalization of the Kemalist nationalist project, the rise of Islamism was signified by the rise in the number of women veiling themselves in the public sphere. The “struggle between Kemalist establishment and the Islamists for the control of public space” (Hermann, 2003: 67) has been tied to the increasing visibility of women wearing headscarf.

As has been outlined in the previous section, for the republican elites, the construction of women and their roles as being the cultural carriers of the nationalist project necessitated the unveiling of women. Unveiling, as a symbol signified a break with the past. On the other hand, women for an Islamist interpretation, a woman has to be covered when she is out of her '*mahrem*', thus in a "Muslim context, women's participation in public life, corporeal visibility and social mixing with men all count as modern and even foreign". (Göle, 2002:177).

The context, upon which the 'veiling' is discussed in Turkish political arena, was not politicized before the 1980's. Up until the post-1980 period, women who adopted a traditional life-style, that is women to whom the nationalist project have not reached, did not attempt to cover themselves with 'turban' but rather they wore 'başörtüsü'.³ Mostly, the majority of women who have never given up veiling themselves were seen as representatives of the continuation of traditional modes of behavior, and this where the distinction between 'turban' and 'başörtüsü' arouses. According to this argument, 'turban' is seen as a symbol of political Islam, whereas 'başörtüsü' is seen as a traditional way of covering one's head. The one's who wore 'başörtüsü' were seen as ones that Kemalist enlightenment and modernization project have not reached yet, and thus their headscarf was acceptable to some extent since they have not get the proper education nor the proper tools to release themselves from the ties of religion. These women with 'başörtüsü' were not against the

³ The difference between 'başörtüsü' and 'turban' not only stems from the fact that the meanings attached to them are different, but also that the way they are worn is different. 'Başörtüsü' is tied loosely under the chin which might leave some hair seen, whereas 'turban' is a more strict and diligent way of covering all the hair and the neck. In this study, 'headscarf' will be used in order to avoid the complexities that might arouse from using these two terms which have different connotations.

Kemalist nationalist project since they did not have a claim of being ‘modern’ like the headscarfed women had.

Therefore, the post-1980 ‘turban’, is different than ‘başörtüsü’ since that these two “represent different currents but also the different background, education, public participation and militancy of the women who cover their hair.”(Göle, 2002: 177) The meaning of ‘covering one’s head’ is different than it was before; these women are those who do not imitate their mothers or grandmothers, but are the ones who deliberately have decided to cover their heads. Theirs is a conscious choice, willing to distinguish themselves from the traditional style of head covering, the ‘başörtüsü’. The headscarf question has occupied the major place of discussions through out the 1990’s that any discussion relating to the rise of Islamism has been tied to this question. The reasons and motives behind the women’s will to cover themselves is a question that needs a different research, but in any case, it is certain that it “symbolizes the political aspect of the Islamist movement in Turkey during the last decade.” (Gençoğlu, 1997:68)

Alongside the symbolic dominance of headscarf in the public sphere, in the political sphere the rise of the Welfare party left no place to be suspicious about the extend of the rise of Islamism. This situation was partly affected by the dynamics mentioned as the outcomes of the policies of the military government, as well as some other factors such as the fragmentation of the party system alongside with the weakening of the center in politics, and the inability of the existing parties to find solutions to economic, social and cultural dislocations created by the accelerating process of globalization. In the post-1980 period, the dominant representative of

political Islam has been the National Outlook Movement, which has had participate in the political life, by the National Salvation (*Milli Selamet*) party-(MSP), the Welfare (*Refah*) party-(RP), later the Virtue (*Fazilet*) party-(FP), and more recently the Felicity (*Saadet*)Party-(SP) ,and Justice and Development (*Adalet ve Kalkınma*) - (AKP) parties.⁴ Here the focus will be briefly on some of the attributes of the Islamist movement represented by the RP up until the 28th February process, and then the route that political Islam has followed in the post-1997 period will be addressed. .

From the onset of 1990's the RP emerged as the standard-bearer of the anti-Kemalist opposition and become the largest political party in Turkish political scene. The RP was the organized political party of the national outlook movement between 1983 up until 1998, and justice and identity have been the key words defining its ideology in this period. (Hakan, 2000:23) "The party made a Third-worldist emphasis, favored an economic model of 'just order', criticized the traditional definition of secularism and claimed to be 'truly secular', and employed an Islamic version of nationalism, portraying Turkey as the leader of the Islamic world."(Peker, 1996: 88) The link constituted between the Islamist world and Turkey as being the leader of this world, was partly supported by the references to an Ottoman common past. Yavuz (2000:22) similarly states. "The National Outlook movement, unlike other Islamic movements has not negated tradition, but has sought to traditionalize the past by creating an invented ideal Ottoman society that would serve as a model for structuring the present and the future." The ideological sphere that the Islamist movement positioned itself open is thus a sphere which has been consciously not

⁴ In the rest of this study these political parties will be referred according to their Turkish acronyms.

touched upon by the Kemalist nationalist project. In this tension between these two, the discussion was based upon an east-west distinction, in which Kemalist bureaucrats claimed to represent the West and carry the nation towards modernization, whilst the Islamists claimed that the solution for the inefficiencies that the nation encounters will be found in the East.

The difference between the notions that the Islamist movement has included in its ideological display, was moreover accompanied by a different attitude it has developed towards the voters as a political party. Özbudun highlights this point as: The RP is the only party is the only one that appreciates the importance of classical door-to-door canvassing by hundreds of thousands of highly motivated, devoted, disciplined party workers. Further, such activities are not limited to campaign periods but continue year round. (Özbudun, E. 2000:84) In other words the RP has emphasized on the direct contact between the party officials and the voters, and the manner by which this confrontation take place had been different from the usual manner that the Turkish society had been used to. The attitude of the RP officials implied a more direct contact, in which the party official did not have the intention to educate people, but used rhetoric of listening to “the people”. The ways in which the Islamist bureaucrats have incorporated the notion of ‘civil society’ by utilizing the state versus society distinction evident in the construction of Turkish nationalism is pointed out by Yashin as:

Indeed, Welfarists spoke in a culturally specific translation of the popular terms of the contemporary West European politics of citizenship. They knew the language of modern statecraft well. Mayors whom I interviewed, ... claimed that their party represented the real diversity of cultural life in Turkey, in opposition to the culture of secular elites represented in entrenched and monist institutions. (Yashin, 1998:8)

That is, the RP implied a sphere of the society wherein it legitimated its power, and left the remaining sphere to the secular elites who were labeled as single-minded, cold and serious in the way they approach to the society. More clearly stated, the RP opened a new page in which the relation between the state and the society had started to be questioned. The implication of including ‘the people’ which was constituted in opposition to ‘the state’, if nothing else, led to the increasing visibility of ‘civil society’ used as a notion to provide a point of legitimization for power in Turkey. In her analysis of the ways in which Islamist and secularist elites have incorporated the notion of ‘civil society’ in to their legitimizing discourse, it is interesting to observe that these ways have been imitated by the secularist elites. For example, “the women who have started ‘houses of learning’ have often admitted that they modeled their practice on that of Welfare Party activists who had walked from door to door in shanty neighborhoods in order to recruit people to their side and world-view.”(Yashin, 1998: 16)

This is the ways in which the rise of Islamism has been realized in the Turkish political scene. This realization and the encounter of the Islamist bureaucrats with the secularist elites were not without trouble, and some particular developments led to the 28th February process, which in turn led to the closure of the RP. The reasons behind the 28th February process are not the concern of this study, but the implications of this process and some characteristics of the post-1997 period will be elaborated in the next section.

3.3 Post-1997 Period

The time span of this study is not the 1980's, it is even not the 1990's, rather it is the period between late 1990's and early 2000's, namely the post-1997 period. Thus, for the study to acquire meaning, some of the key features of Turkish Politics in this period ought to be figured out. In this section, there are mainly three issues that are addressed. First the 28th February process will be explained briefly. Second, the development of Islamist politics in the post-1997 period will be explored. Third, the rise of various nationalistic discourses will be addressed.

3.3.1 28th February Process and Its Aftermath

The standard-bearer of the rise of Islamist politics, RP, carried on its existence in the political scene up until the mid-1990. From the beginning of the 1990's Turkey was witnessing the fragmentation of the political center, but both instability and the rise of Islamism made it evident in the eyes of the secular elites, when the Islamist RP formed a coalition with the Doğruyol (True Path) Party. For the military elite, RP's seat in the government was a very obvious sign of Islamist reactionism, thus, they issued a series of measures to the RefahYol government in order to prevent the supposed Islamization of Turkey. "Unlike previous instances, there was no direct government overthrow. Instead the military chose to engage in an 'education' campaign, whereby prosecutors, judges, academics, journalist, businessmen and others were summoned to the Turkish General Staff headquarters ..." (Barkey: 2000:102) With the developments beginning on February 28, 1997, and

by the implicit intervention of the military, the RP was closed in January 16, 1998 by a decision of the Constitutional Court and some of its leading figures, were banned to be a member of a political party for a five-year period. This process has been labeled as the '28th February process', and according to Cizre and Çınar,

This phrase was coined to indicate not only the far-reaching implications of the National Security Council decisions, but also the suspension of normal politics until the secular correction was completed. This process has profoundly altered the formulation of public policy and the relationship between state and society. No major element of Turkish politics at present can be understood without reference to the February 28 process. (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 69)

Although the 28 February event was not an intervention as large as the 1980 military intervention, still its effects were evident in the relations between state and society. Given the traditional tendency of examining Turkish political history with reference to the point of intervention of the military, it is meaningful to argue that the post-1997 period signals an alteration in the reality of Turkish politics. Cizre and Çınar, (2003:310) have argued that the impact of the 28 February process can be made on three grounds, the effects on Turkish politics and society, the support provided by the 28 February process for the increasing role of Turkish Army Forces in the political life. and lastly the effects on the evolution of political Islam. However, here the argument will be made on two other following grounds which this study is more interested in. First, the development of Islamist politics in the post-1997 period, and second the development of diverse nationalistic discourses will be explained.

3.3.2 The Development of Islamist Politics In The Post-1997 Period

The RP was eventually closed down on January 16, 1998. The party was immediately replaced by the *FP*, which was again closed on June 22, 2001. (Cizre and Çınar, 2003:323) These two closures of the parties continuing in the line of the national outlook movement impacted the Islamist bureaucrats and it might be argued that it led them to reconsider their ideological connotations.

Because of this reconsideration; after the closure of *FP*, the Islamist political agenda developed on two lines; the traditionalists and the reformists. In a month, the traditionalists formed the SP on July 20, 2001. On August 14, 2001 reformists formed the AKP. Thus, the 28 February process slowed the rise of political Islam for about four years, and in the subsequent years, the Islamist political elites were divided in two groups, reformists and traditionalists which take a different posture in the presence of the 28 February process. (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 311-315) When observed from the year 2004, it is highly reasonable to argue that this split opened a better place in the political arena for the reformists, whereas forced the traditionalists to the political periphery.

The new face that the reformist AKP adopted was an entire breakup with the tradition that they had come from. “The reformist JDP- persistently rejects being Islamist, defines itself as a conservative democratic party, and emphasizes the democratic character of the party organization, its spirit of teamwork, and the importance of consensus-seeking in politics.” (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 327) The

results of the November 3, 2002 regime proves that the new path that AKP adopted in their split from their initial party, has proved efficient, at least efficient enough to bring them to power. The impact of this election is assessed by İnsel as a quit from the post-1980 regime which according to him had aimed to impose on the society an authoritarian and conservative statist conception of politics. (İnsel, 2003: 293) He argues that: “The realization of such an exit, not by the traditional Westernizers, but by a movement like the AKP, ... will finally make the normalization of Turkey’s century old Westernization adventure possible.” (İnsel, 2003: 306) Thus, according to İnsel the election of AKP to office by the 34.3 percent of the votes, signaled a period of normalization of the democracy in Turkey.

Whether or not the election of AKP as the government signals a period of normalization is not the concern of this study, but it is certain that by year 2004, the 28th February process even if not ended has lessened in its impacts. Besides the rise of Islamism, which have been devoted an important place in the discussion of Turkish national identity so far in this chapter; in the last decade an obvious rise of the nationalistic discourses in the Turkish political scene has been observed. In the next section these nationalistic discourses will be talked about in the aim to show that not only Islamism was on the rise in the 1990’s but there were also other political actors in the Turkish political scene.

3.3.3 The Rise of Nationalist Discourses

The state tradition in Turkey envisioned a nonpluralist nature of state-society relations, such that the political elites were not accustomed to a plurality of voices. As has been mentioned, however, the political scene in the post-1980 period was the period in which various groups voiced their existence. The post-1997 period, however was different than the 80's and early 90's, in the sense that the main political leaders acted in line with a necessity to "comply with the need to both stabilize the rule of the original Kemalist project and revive the myth of a homogenous nation and society." (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 312) Partly from the assertion of the Kemalist identity by the impact of the 28 February process, and partly from other reasons, thus a rise in Turkish nationalism was observed in the post-1997 period. The impact of the 28 February process on the rise of Turkish nationalism, stemmed from the fact that in this period, "Turkish political parties have retreated from constituency-serving position to a state-supporting one." (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 317) The attitudes of the political parties have been dispersed to the society as well. Cizre and Çınar (2003: 319), argue that the post-1997 period had witnessed a symbolization of politics by a particular understanding of politics of needing a dose of moral injection in terms of framing public interest as the triumph of the 'good' forces against 'evil', the victory of secularism against the creeping threat of the Islamization of life. On the contrary, Bora assesses the same period as an era witnessing the rise and bifurcation of Turkish nationalism. That is, the rise of symbolic repertoires regarding nationalism is assessed by Cizre and Çınar as a

reaction to the rise of Islamist forces. whereas Bora argues that not only the rise of Islamism but other reasons were also operative in the rise of nationalist discourses.

Bora (2003: 433-436) argues that, the reason for the outburst of nationalistic discourses was Turkey's confrontation with a crisis regarding survival and threat occurring immediately after a course of self-confidence, that can be symbolized in the person of Turgut Özal. Throughout the 1990's there had been various factors that supported the self-confidence of Turkey, such as, the increasing accumulation of wealth as a result of the change in the economic system, the belief that Turkey would become a member of EU, and the optimism of ANAP's Turkish-Islamic-Western synthesis. However, according to Bora, this self-optimism was blocked by various happenings in the beginning of the 1990's. In this context, he refers to the Gulf War, the realization of the unwillingness of Turkic states to consider Turkey as their unconditional leader and the increasing signs of economic inefficiency. (Bora, 2003: 435)

Thus, Bora argues that the Turkish society responded to the crisis of self-confidence from different sites of nationalist discourses. He numerates five ways of nationalism that have developed in this process. These are official Kemalist nationalism, left-wing Kemalist nationalism, liberal neo nationalism, Turkist radical nationalism and Islamist nationalism. (2003: 436) Whilst each of these had rhetoric of their own, with accompanying languages and symbols; Bora argues that, (2003:438) liberal nationalism has formed the dominant pattern of the Turkish nationalistic discourse. With the emphasis on prosperity, economic development, consumer-culture, liberal nationalism emphasizes the progressivist -

developmentalist aspect of the process of modernization. (2003: 436-441) When taken altogether, thus the late 1990's and the early 2000's have seen a rise in the nationalistic discourses, that is, in this period: "Nationalism's tyrannizing discourse dominates politics and everyday life." (Bora, 2003: 450)

In this chapter, a general scheme of the development of Turkish politics of national identity has been drawn. For this aim, first the early republican period has been examined with an emphasis on science, civilizational progress, modernization and homogeneity. Then the changes that have occurred in the post-1980 period in the Turkish political scene have been illustrated. These have provided the background to understand the political conjuncture in the aftermath of the 28th February process. Although most of the issues that have been touched upon in this chapter are important for the analysis of the Republic day holidays, still three issues among others are more vital. These are first, the degree to which the notion of 'civil society' has been incorporated in the discourse of politicians; second the rise of Islamism and the changes that have occurred in its path in the post-1997 period; and third, the rise of nationalistic discourses. These three issues will be especially addressed in the analysis that will be made in the next chapter.

This study is partly interested in the post-1997 period with specific reference to the nationalist discourses and the ways in which they were symbolized in the Republic Day holidays. However, in accordance with the aim of conducting this chapter, everything that has been mentioned to be crucial in the construction and realization of Turkish national identity will be incorporated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE REPUBLIC DAY HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIONS IN THE NEWSPAPERS

In this chapter, the objective is to examine the Republic Day holiday celebrations in the post-1997 period in Turkey by utilizing the representations of these holidays in three newspapers; *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*. This analysis will be made via the theoretical framework that has been outlined in the second chapter and by searching for the themes that have been dominant in the symbolic repertoire of Turkish nationalist imaginary which has been explained in the previous chapter.

Throughout the years covered by this study, the celebration of the Republic Day holidays has taken various forms. Thus, it is argued in the newspaper articles about the holiday that there has been an alteration in the way Republic Day holidays are experienced by the society in recent years. Öztürkmen (2001: 47) argues that earlier the formalism and the over-emphasized nationalism of celebrations eventually created a sense of alienation; whilst at the same has had an accumulative effect upon successive generations. Öztürkmen gives 1994, the year when the Islamist Welfare party assumed power over the municipalities of Istanbul and Ankara, as the date

since when there has been a remarkable revival of the national holiday celebrations. 1994 is also pointed out by Yashin (1998: 15) as the date when the secular bureaucrats became aware of the rise of Islamism, and started to employ similar gestures like those of the Islamist bureaucrats who were using the rhetoric of incorporating civil society organizations into their discourse. Yashin gives the example of the 1994 Republic Day holiday as the year when this incorporation of the civil society rhetoric into the discourse of both the Islamist and secularist bureaucrats gained significance. This study admits that 1994, the year in which the Welfare Party won the municipalities of Ankara and Istanbul, can be considered as the starting point of a change in the way the Republic Day holiday has been experienced, perceived and presented. In this study, however, the focus is not the post-1994 period, but rather the post-1997 period. The reason for choosing 1997 is because that 1997 is the year on which the 28th February process began and since that this study is interested in the post-1997 period.

In the political history of the Turkish Republic, military coups have been a periodically recurring event. The causes and results, the overarching effects, the uncalculated responses experienced by the society after the 1960, 1971 and 1980 coups have received significant attention from scholars of Turkish politics. (such as: Özbudun, 2000; Heper, 1985) Consequently, periodization of the study of Turkish political development in terms of military interventions has been a common practice among scholars of Turkish Politics.

In contrast to previous coups, the most recent, so called 'postmodern' military intervention of 1997, has been studied mostly for its causes, whereas its results and

whether or not it signals a new period with distinguishing features, has not yet received much attention in academic studies. There might be particular reasons lying behind this attitude towards the '28th February process'. First, since it is a more recent intervention, its effects on society have not yet been very much observable and there is still an uncertainty about the scope of its effects. Even if, this military intervention was staged against the rise of Islamism in the Turkish political scene, still it is reasonable to assume that its effects were not just restricted to that particular group. Second, throughout the 28th February process the military did not take on power officially, but rather operated behind the scenes. This attitude has led for the 28th February process to be considered as a 'post-modern coup', thus its obvious effects have been less explicitly known publicly.

Nevertheless, like the previous military interventions of 1960, 1971 and 1981 it is reasonable to assume that the '28th February process' has a particular place in understanding recent Turkish political development. Thus, studying Turkish political history by taking 1997 as a turning point to some extent and approaching the post-1997 period as the fifth period of the political history of the Republic of Turkey seems to be a plausible starting point. Kışlalı, separates the political history of the Turkish Republic into five periods for which he takes each military coup as a signifier of the consequent period. Although his argument about the fifth period can be considered as questionable, in which he claims that a "return to Kemalism" with the support of civil society organizations is the main theme of the post-1997 period, still his account is remarkable since it shows how Turkish political history is conceived.⁵ Supposing that this period has some distinct as-yet unexplored features,

⁵ Kışlalı, Ahmet Taner. *Cumhuriyet*, 28 October, 1998

is the beginning point of this thesis. Naturally, the post-1997 period can be studied by various means, and by focusing on various aspects of society. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to examine this period with a specific emphasis on the celebrations and representations of the Republic Day holidays. The choice of the Republic Day holiday is moreover appropriate to be used as a tool to explore the post-1997 period in Turkey, when the argument made by Kışlalı signifying the post-1997 period as a period when “return to Kemalism” is actualized by the support of the civil-society organizations since that the Republic Day holiday celebrations, especially in the immediate aftermath of the 1997 process, were a highly participated event by the civil society organizations. For this reason this chapter has devoted a subsection for the participation of civil society organizations in Republic Day holiday celebrations in the post-1997 period.

The practice of the Republic Day holiday has been on the agenda of the Turkish state since its formation. In the early republican period, the celebration of ‘Republic Day holiday’ was a tool of the nationalist discourse; it was the platform from which the state exerted its existence, and created a stage for the members of the society to imagine themselves within nationhood. Especially when the educationary role the Turkish state has bestowed upon itself is considered, it can be argued that the Republic Day holidays were used as a tool both to show the newly founded nation-state’s organizational abilities to the world and the authority of the nation-state to the national citizens. Even though, the scope and popularity of the Republic Day holiday has diminished in time, still it remains a public sphere for Turkish nationalist practices. Previously, the Republic Day holiday had a consistent form which included “sentimental poetry recitation, orderly but hard-to-adapt stadium

performances, tiring costume parades, and an authoritarian organizational style” (Öztürkmen, 2001: 51) which characterized the “holiday” as a holiday which is watched and followed through its stages. As has been pointed out in the second chapter, the sequence of events was predetermined and no spontaneous participation in the celebration of the holiday was possible. However, after the 1994 period, the celebration of the Republic Day holiday became to be argued as being more of a societal experience, rather than being an official Day celebrated only by public servants of the state. Especially in the last decade there has been a change in the way the Republic Day holiday is experienced in Turkey, which Öztürkmen (2001: 47) notes as “a new approach to celebrating national holidays with rock concerts, extensive TV coverage and public interviews had began.”

Throughout this study, this understanding about the development of the Republic Day holidays as a transformation from a holiday-that-is-watched and a holiday-that-is-participated-in is taken as another point of departure. However, this study does not refrain itself by a bi-polar opposition in the understanding of neither ‘holidays’ nor the Turkish political scene. This study actually questions this bi-polar opposition which basically argues that, previously the holidays were a holiday-that-is-watched because of the ‘authoritarian’ nature of the regime, but nowadays the holidays began to be celebrated as a holiday-that-is-participated-in since the society is more of a democratic nature. It is believed that it is not sufficient to argue that the Republic Day holidays have been a site where ‘the people’ have begun to participate in the celebrations rather than being subject to the predetermined sequence of events in which they are expected to engage. Rather this study questions this argument which implies that the celebration of the Republic Day holiday has basically

transformed, and is more inclined to argue that “societies do not easily reach a consensus on the idea of holidays.” (Öztürkmen, 2001: 47)

This study will argue that the Republic Day holiday can represent and be represented as a site of national identity, which is embodied and redefined from a number of perspectives. The various perspectives which can be observed from the practice of Republic Day holidays, makes it questionable to straightforwardly argue that the Republic Day holidays have been transformed from a holiday-that-is-watched to a holiday-that-is-participated-in. It is believed that there has to be a more detailed study of the so-called transformation of the celebrations of the Republic Day holidays, which incorporates different perspectives on commemorative activities in order to understand its different faces in association with how it serves the national imagination of Turkish citizens. This study is thus designed to fill this gap in Turkish nationalism studies.

Specifically, it is argued that holiday practices which have a commemorative nature are not only important since because they refer to history, but their celebration also creates a particular understanding about the society who participates in it. That is, the Republic Day holiday is not just a public event, but it is a site where different interest and power groups interact and react to each other. This stems from the fact that a commemorative practice by all its signs, by the manner in which it is celebrated, the speeches, the actors, its music, its commonality and popularity is a mirror of Turkish politics and society if we can read it properly.

Approaching the Republic Day holiday as a political production of the society acknowledges the importance of representative experiences. Among the four categories that Öztürkmen groups Turkish holidays, the groups of national holidays are most generally experienced by a large number of participants, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. Thus, if we are to look for the platform where individuals feel their 'belonging' to a mass public identity, it is worth doing this by the help of 'Republic Day holidays', which is where expression and experience coincide, and the link between individual and society is realized, while the visible (or sometimes not so visible hand of the authority figure (the Turkish state, the military, the municipal government) is sensed.

This study will develop along two lines of analysis, which are linked to each other. In both of these two sections, the assumption is that the Republic Day holiday is an embodiment of national identity. In the first section, the question is the ways in which the Republic Day holiday represents the nation as an imagined community. The second section questions the specifics of the Turkish political scene with respect to the varying attitude of various political and social groups towards the Republic Day holiday.

Thus, the analysis is handled in a two dimensioned framework. This first dimension approaches the question of Republic Day holidays by understanding the 'nation' as an imagined community. At the same time commemorative activity is perceived as a proper tool to understand national identities. This section stands on the theoretical framework outlined in the second chapter about the studies of nationalism and commemoration as being a proper way to read national identity. On this ground,

there are a number of interrelated premises, that this study is basing its arguments on. First, the 'nation' is seen as a production of modernity, and, more significantly, 'national identity' is seen as a construction and reconstruction of meanings that individuals attach to their national belonging. Thus, nation and nationality is not seen as a given, but rather are particular constructs whose boundaries are redrawn throughout time. Second, Anderson's account claiming the 'nation' to be an imagined community is utilized through the medium of Republic Day holidays in the context of Turkish politics. The objective is to show the ways in which nationalism operates through the representation of Republic Day holidays in newspapers while tending to construct the 'nation-as-this and people-as-one'. (Torfing, 1999: 193) The third argument within the first line of analysis is, as Hobsbawm argues, that nationalist discourses develop by inventing traditions. By utilizing his argument this study is interested in the possible traces of the invention of tradition in the celebrations of Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period.

After analyzing the Republic Day holiday as a site of nationalist imaginary, which provides a site for the construction of the nation and the continuous invention of traditions to enable this imagination from a general perspective, this study, aims to analyze the Republic Day holidays from a more specific attitude, this time approaching them in relation to the development of Turkish national identity as outlined in the previous chapter. In this second line of analysis, the main interest is to analyze the characteristics of the celebrations of Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period. In this dimension, there are three main questions that are going to be investigated. First, the presence of the military in the Republic Day holiday celebrations is going to be examined. In this examination the question is whether or

not the military has participated in the Republic Day holiday celebrations differently than it previously had done. Second the question of 'headscarf' within the context of the experience and representation of Republic Day holiday will be investigated. Third, traces of the incorporation of the 'civil society' rhetoric into the discourses of statecraft will be focused, in order to see how the notion of 'the people' has been utilized through the medium of the Republic Day holiday.

Before moving on to develop these two general lines of analysis, the years covered by this study ought to be explained in order to provide the necessary historical background to the analysis. In 1997, the Republic Day holiday was celebrated afterwards the beginning of the 28th February process. That year an attempt on behalf of the Islamist circle was seen, since the Greater Municipality of Ankara organized an alternative concert for the celebration of the Republic Day holiday. 1998, was the 75th anniversary of the Republic and thus the celebrations were extended and at the same time supported by different activities aiming to include the 'the people' into the Republic Day holiday. In 1999, because of the recent earth quake the celebrations were down scaled, and hence the reason for not fully celebrating the Holiday was a theme in the newspapers. Here the state versus civil society distinction can be observed. In 2000, neither the celebrations are held extensively nor the representation of the Republic Day Holiday is of a great amount in the newspapers. In 2001, the celebrations were considered in association to the place of Turkey in the world because of the recent 11 September terrorist attacks in USA. In this year, the Republic Day holiday was used as a medium to express the importance of Turkey in resolving the conflict between Islam and the Western countries. In 2002, the Republic Day holiday came just before the general elections

on Nov 3rd, and so the celebrations did not create very much interest, although the politicians participated in the celebrations to a lesser degree, while at the same time considering the approaching election. 2003, was the eightieth anniversary of the Republic. This year the 'reception crisis' holds a central place in the representation of the Republic Day Holiday in the newspapers.

With the aim of studying the post-1997 period, based on the representations, events, situations occurring and recurring in the site of 'Republic Day holiday', the newspapers *Zaman*, *Hürriyet*, and *Cumhuriyet* has been chosen to cover. By studying newspapers it is attempted to elaborate on the ways in which the Republic Day holiday has been represented in the media. By analyzing newspapers of different political orientations: placing *Hürriyet* on the center, *Cumhuriyet* on the left and *Zaman* on the right side of Turkish political spectrum, it is aimed to reveal the attitudes in regard to the practice of Republic Day holiday. The time span of this study is thus the years between 1997 and 2003, i.e. the post-1997 period. The intention is to research media coverage of the Republic Day holiday in a longitudinal study, by comparing the same context over seven years (1997-2003) and simultaneously between newspapers differing in political orientations. Within these sampling units, the data consists of all the articles in these three newspapers, in the given time period, which are related or referring to the 'Republic Day holiday'. The time period within these years from which the selection of data lies between is, 22 October and 5 November, in order to cover one week before and one week after the official date of the commemoration, that is on October 29.

Another obvious assumption of this thesis is thus that the representation of the newspapers is a proper and rich way of reading the Republic Day holidays in the aim of understanding Turkish politics of national identity. This reading has a two-fold objective. First the analysis of different newspapers enables this study to show some differences between the nationalistic discourses that these newspapers represent in relation to the Republic Day holiday. Second the analysis of the newspapers provides information about the activities, and discussions that have evolved around the celebrations of Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period. Relying on these data the two lines of analysis that has been explained previously would be made.

Since this study has been basically made through the news articles that have been collected from the newspapers, the main source of information has been these newspapers. However, these three newspapers have not approached or represented the Republic Day holiday in the same way, moreover there have been difference in the intensity of the interest devoted to Republic Day holiday in the same newspaper through the years of this study. Before moving to the two lines of analysis mentioned above, it is deemed necessary to first reveal the basic differences that have been noticed in these three newspapers through out this study. So in the next section, these newspapers and the basic themes that they utilize in the representation of the Republic Day holiday will be shown.

4.1. Newspapers

In the previous chapter, Bora's classifications of the nationalistic discourses that have dominated the political scene in the 90s in Turkey have been presented. In this section the aim is to reveal how the three newspapers that have been used in this study reflect three of the five categories of nationalistic discourses that Bora has presented for the study of nationalism in Turkey in the contemporary period. Taking *Zaman* as a representative of the Islamist circle, *Cumhuriyet* as a representative of the Kemalist nationalist circle, and *Hürriyet* as a representative of the liberal circle, it will be argued that their attitude towards the Republic Day holiday and their representation of the various activities and events in relation to the Republic Day holiday is an indicator of differences in their interpretation of national identity and the national imaginary. These newspapers are not taken as direct representatives of these nationalistic discourses that Bora has classified, but it is argued that these newspapers are important media organs that hold a place in these nationalistic discourses. These newspapers differ in the themes that they use in their representation of the Republic Day holiday and the absence or presence of information that they use about the Republic Day holiday is argued to be the reflection of the nationalistic discourses they represent. This does not mean that these nationalistic discourses are homogenous entities which are directly represented by these three newspapers, still they are important in studies of nationalism, national identity and national imaginary since they are part of the construction and communication of the nationalistic discourses that have been dominant in the Turkish political scene throughout the years of this study. One of the other two nationalistic discourses that Bora highlights, official nationalism, will be studied in

the third section of this chapter, in relation to the military's presence in the Republic Day holidays. In contrast to that subsection, in this section the focus will be the representations of the newspapers in their manner towards the Republic Day holiday. Thus, the Republic Day holiday is taken once again as a site, but this time, a site where differences between various nationalistic discourses can be observed. It is interesting that even Bora begins his article with an anecdote about the 1995 celebration of the Republic Day holiday, in which "all existing types of nationalisms were present".(Bora, 2003:433) Hence it can be argued that Bora also observes the Republic Day holiday as a site of the 'nation' in which different nationalistic discourses present themselves.

In other words, in this section our aim is to look at these three newspapers in order to reveal their nationalistic discourses by looking at the themes that they use in the representation of the Republic Day holiday. It is not argued that there are clear boundaries between the nationalistic discourses that these newspapers present, moreover they might even overlap. It is rather argued that the ways in which these newspapers approach the Republic day holiday is informative about the nationalistic discourses that they belong to.

4.1.1. *Zaman*

The newspaper '*Zaman*' has been incorporated in this study as a representative of the Islamist circle, although there are other Islamist newspapers such as Akit and Milli Gazete. The reason for choosing this newspaper is that it has

the highest circulation among all the newspapers of the Islamist circle. Islamist circle, as outlined in the previous chapter has evolved from an extreme stance towards the Kemalist regime, to a more moderate attitude in its relation to the regime. The way '*Zaman*' represents the Republic day holiday is also indicative of the change in the Islamist circle. It is observed that the number of articles written about the holiday and the space allocated for the news of the Republic Day holiday has increased in time, and expressions have changed from "this year it is obvious that the state needs to emphasis 'Republic' as a concept via the extended celebrations of the Republic Day holiday"⁶ to "people have celebrated the holiday hand in hand without troubling about the crisis scenarios"⁷. These two different attitudes towards the Republic Day holiday can be interpreted as in the first quotation the Republic Day holiday is stressed as being an activity that is exterior to the reader, whereas in the second quotation the Republic Day holiday is presented as an activity for tension-management in the society. That is, the analysis of *Zaman* has revealed that the attitude towards the Republic Day holiday is correlated with the attitude that the Islamist nationalistic discourse has developed towards the state. Since the time-period of this study begins with the aftermath of the 28th February process and moves through the years ending with 2002-2003 on which the AKP government assumed power, the rhetoric of the newspaper *Zaman* has been affected by the political developments of this time period. However, rather than analyzing the differences between newspapers year by year, it is preferred to look at some major differences that have aroused attention thematically.

⁶ Koru, Fehmi. *Zaman*, 26 October 1997.

⁷ *Zaman*, 30 October 2003.

Unlike in *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, in *Zaman* there are expressions which incorporate Islam as a religion in the context of the Republic Day holiday, that is “Republic-as-compatible-with-Islam” is the theme that has been largely found in the symbolic repertoire of the national imaginary that *Zaman* envisages. That is the people who visited Anıtkabir for the Republic Day holiday are presented not only as visitors but also as people who prayed for Atatürk.⁸ There is a similar account incorporating praying and the Republic Day holiday, in which people are said to visit graves and pray for the people who have died in national wars, with a note that the mothers of the martyrs have visited the graves and have prayed for them.⁹ Both of these two instances reveal an attitude peculiar to *Zaman* developed towards the holiday. *Zaman*’s attitude is that, just as in religious holidays, in national holidays people are also considered to be approaching the holiday in a similar manner, in which the respect to the ‘past’ is shown by praying for the dead. Moreover, there is a phrase that has concerned the author at first sight, which is “Long living the Republic. God bless the founders of it.”¹⁰, although this phrase can be considered as an ordinary phrase which might not be worth of notice, still it is interesting, since such a phrase can be seen in neither *Hürriyet* nor *Cumhuriyet*.

In addition, there is an article that has appeared various times about the Republic Day holiday in *Zaman*, “The Republic is not against Islam”¹¹ which tries to bring together Islam and the Republic to a ground of compatibility. In this article, the author argues that Islam as a religion is the most suitable religion for democracy

⁸ *Zaman* . 30 October 2001.

⁹ *Zaman*. 30 October 1999.

¹⁰ Çevik, İlnur. *Zaman*, 29 October 1997.

¹¹ *Zaman*, 29 October 1999.

and for a republican regime. This can be interpreted as part of an attempt to bring religious motifs in the imaginary construction of the nation and state.

All these expressions can be seen as an attempt to reconcile Turkish nationalism and Islamism. Bora classifies the degree of nationalism in Islamism as a perspective which places “Turko-Islam” as the core of authenticity of Turkish national identity. (Bora, 2002: 449) Thus, expressions which bring together Islam and the Republic Day holiday ought to be observed as an indicator of the instances where Islamism and nationalism coincide in the rhetoric of *Zaman*. As will be mentioned in the subsection about the headscarf question, the consideration of Anıtkabir as a place where the grave of Atatürk is and not as a place of the ‘nation’ also shows the difference of *Zaman* from *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet*. Moreover, there are instances mentioned before where *Zaman* has included the information about people who have visited the graves of the martyrs in the Republic Day holiday, which is again not seen in the other two newspapers.

In other words, the theme that has been dominant in the rhetoric of *Zaman* in the representation of the Republic Day holiday has been the compatibility of Republican regimes with Islam. This notion also addresses the will on the part of the Islamist circle to be considered as part of the national imaginary without leaving their religious affiliations behind. That is *Zaman* stresses that religious affiliations are not an obstacle to engage in Republic Day holiday celebrations, which means that being religiously conservative is not an obstacle to belong to the national imaginary

4.1.2 *Hürriyet*

Hürriyet is taken as a newspaper whose ideological position is on the center. Moreover, when compared to *Zaman* and *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet* appears to be the newspaper which is the less intellectual and whose ideological position is most hidden. This study has chosen *Hürriyet* since it is a representative of 'common way of looking to things' even if it contains ideological positions in it. In representing the Republic Day holiday celebrations, the themes that *Hürriyet* includes in the symbolic repertoire are; first an emphasis on the progresses that the Turkish nation has achieved especially in the field of economy and second an optimistic approach which emphasizes the Republic Day holiday as an opportunity to manage the tensions in the society.

According to Bora, the ideological position *Hürriyet* represents, is closely tied with liberal neonationalism. Bora defines liberal neonationalism as: "a discourse that interprets modernization using the ideology of economics, and that emphasizes the progressivist - developmentalist aspect of the process of modernization."(Bora, 2002: 440) Thus, this nationalistic discourse can be seen as an offspring of the Kemalist nationalist vein, with the emphasis given to modernization and progress, the first face of the Kemalist construction of national identity, which has been outlined in the third chapter. The emphasis given to the field of economy can also be seen from the statements of some columnists who write about the formation of the Republic in their articles written for the Republic Day holiday. For example; Uluengin states that "Mustafa Kemal has pointed in the 1923 İzmir Economy Congress that new Turkey

has chosen the route of economic liberalism of democracies.”¹² Similarly, when talking about the popularity of the 10th year march, Çölaşan stresses that: “the war that we have won in 10 years was a war of economy”, by war of economy he points the formation of sugar and textile factories, and the construction of railways.¹³ These two instances reveal the importance given to economic development in the national imaginary by the nationalistic discourse that *Hürriyet* is argued to be a representative of.

In explaining this neonationalist liberal circle, Bora also incorporates the perspective of Özkök, the editor-in chief of *Hürriyet* in his analysis of this nationalistic discourse. In relation to this study’s focus, the Republic Day holiday, the attitude of *Hürriyet* to the holiday can be understood in relation to Bora’s account in which he argues that Özkök preaches a “civil” entertaining, national self-confidence that appeals to everyday life, and which has no truck with “gray colors, grave speeches or politics.” (Bora, 2002: 444) This attitude towards ‘national identity’ is also evident from the representation of the Republic Day holidays by *Hürriyet* and this is the second distinguishing theme of the representation of the Republic Day holiday by *Hürriyet*. That is, the entertaining nature of the Republic Day holiday is emphasized more often in *Hürriyet* when compared to the other two newspapers. The following anecdote : “When we get to the square we understood that seriousness did not change the celebration atmosphere, the Turkish nation was having fun just as it wishes.”¹⁴ shows the emphasis made on the entertaining and civic nature of the holidays, which has been a shared view of the *Hürriyet* columnists.

¹² Ulucngin, Hadi. *Hürriyet*, 29 October 1998.

¹³ Çölaşan, Emin. “Yeniden Onuncu Yıl” in *Hürriyet*, 28 October 1998.

¹⁴ Berberođlu, Enis. *Hürriyet*, 30 October 1998.

In other words, the themes that have been dominant in the representation of the Republic Day holiday by *Hürriyet* have been an emphasis on the economic development that the nation has achieved and moreover the emphasis on the entertaining nature of holidays which entails an optimistic future for the nation even if various problems persist.

4.1.3 *Cumhuriyet*

Cumhuriyet can be classified as the newspaper that most easily fits into the classification of Bora. *Cumhuriyet* is the bone of the Kemalist nationalism which Bora (2003:439) defines as being a left-wing discourse, in which the motifs of anti-imperialism, independence and secularism has occupied its agenda in late 90's and early 2000's. This perspective on national imagination and identity is also evident in the way *Cumhuriyet* presents the Republic Day holiday. Moreover, the anti-imperialistic character of the regime can be said to be emphasized only by *Cumhuriyet* in the articles of the columnists, who argue that the day of the foundation of the Republic should be considered as the day when the anti-imperialistic stance of the 'nation' began. Generally, the stance of *Cumhuriyet* towards the Republic Day holiday can be said to be a view emphasizing how seriously the holiday ought to be taken into account. Another point of the *Cumhuriyet* newspapers' representation of the Republic Day holiday, is that *Cumhuriyet* columnists mostly advise readers to take the Republic Day holiday as a day that should be both entertaining and both thoughtfully handled, in the sense that the history of the Republic should be looked at and understood, for the 'nation' to be ready for the future.

Another theme that has been dominant in the symbolic repertoire of *Cumhuriyet* has been the emphasis made on ‘secularism’. This emphasis is stressed by columnists arguing: “Republic means laicism before everything else.”¹⁵, “laicism is an inseparable part of a Republican regime”¹⁶. The emphasis on the secular character of the state in *Cumhuriyet* corresponds to the same amount of emphasis being made on the democratic nature of the regime in *Zaman*. Thus, a republic versus democracy discussion can be observed in the articles of the columnists of these two newspapers, in which the concepts are defined not exactly different but the regime is presented as either ‘needing-more-democracy’ or ‘needing-more-secularism’. Here again, the Republic Day holiday is seen as a medium through which different interpretations of the ‘state’ can be expressed. Here it is worth to remember that the reference to the state implies a reference to the nation.

Thus the themes that have been dominant in the representation of the republic Day holiday by *Cumhuriyet* are the references made to the anti-imperialistic and secular character of the regime. As it’s seen the Republic Day holiday is utilized by *Cumhuriyet* as a medium to express directly the thoughts about the characteristics for the regime and in this sense, in its attitude towards the Republic Day holiday *Cumhuriyet* not only differs from *Zaman* but is also different from *Hürriyet* in the serious mood it considers the Republic Day holiday.

In sum, the newspapers’ different attitudes towards the republic with the different common themes that they use in their evaluation of the importance of the day highlight the ways in which the Republic Day holiday is open to interpretation

¹⁵ Bursalı, Orhan. “Perşembe” in *Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1998.

¹⁶ Ertuğrul, Erol. “Yarın Cumhuriyeti İlan Edeceğiz” in *Cumhuriyet*, 28 October 1999.

by different circles. That is, different nationalistic circles emphasize the different aspects of the Republic Day holiday so that, every circle constructs another interpretation of the holiday, leading to a different interpretation of the 'nation', the 'state' and the 'regime'.

After exploring the themes that the three newspapers include in the symbolic repertoire of the national imaginary via their representation of the celebrations of the Republic Day Holidays, now the two lines of analysis that has been mentioned in the beginning of this chapter would be made. Through these two dimensions and three focuses under each dimension this study aims to provide a detailed picture of the experience of the Republic Day Holidays in the post-1997 period.

4.2 Republic Day Holiday: Reconstructing The National Imaginary

In the second chapter, commemorative activity was introduced as a sphere, an activity that forms one of the many faces of the national imagination. Whether in the initial founding period of a nation-state or in the contemporary period, nearly all nation-states have celebratory events which address the special meanings attached to national identity in each and every nation. The themes which are proposed in the commemorations might be different in different nation-states; such as 'freedom in the case of United States (Spillman, 1997), or military power in the case of Israel (Mayar, 2000). There are of course differences in the web of meanings that can be derived from the analysis of commemorative activities in different nation-states, but

still it is reasonable to argue that the logic of national imagination in different nations have some commonalities.

Although there are various functions of commemorative activity in the service of national imagination this study restricts itself to three functions which has been outlined in the second chapter. These functions are as follows. First, commemorative activity serves the national imagination with the emphasis on the simultaneity of the 'nation' across time and across geographical locations. Second, commemorative activity is a sort of invented tradition and thus serves in the institutionalization of 'the nation' as an imagined community. This characteristic of commemorative activity as sort of an invented tradition, operates through the endorsement of some nation-specific symbols such as national flags and anthems, and functions moreover as a site for the reinvention of traditions by which the individuals resituate the meanings, belongings which they develop in relation to the imagination of the nation and the corresponding national identity. Third, commemorative activity is by its definition the site where the link between memory and identity is mutually reconstructed. Remembrance of the same event by any group of people implied a collectivity, which in our case is the Turkish nation. Therefore in this section these three functions of the Republic Day holiday as a commemorative activity will be examined. Although this section is designed to analyze the clichés of commemorative activities, still there will be significant attention paid to the contestations between Islamist and Secularists groups in their struggle to attach meaning to the imagination of the 'nation' through the medium of the Republic Day holiday, approach to the nation.

4.2.1 Imagined community

In this subsection, the representations of Republic Day holidays will be analyzed to see the ways in which the ordinary features of the news articles concerning the celebrations include underlying assumptions about national imagination and include messages which serve to the construction of the national imaginary. It is evident that Anderson's notion of the nation as an 'imagined community' which addresses the centrality of image in creating a national reality is the theoretical framework in mind.

As has been explained in the second chapter, Anderson stresses the imagined aspects of the conceptualization of 'nation' and 'national identity'. The role newspapers play in developing a 'national language' and consequently a 'national identity' has been pointed out previously. To restate once more, Andersons argues that the circulation of newspapers are crucial in the narration of a nation. Similarly, the analysis of the newspapers revealed that the Republic Day holidays were utilized as a proper site to enable and foster national imagination, which were presented as if the 'nation-as-one' was participating in the celebrations. Within this context, two major points will be elaborated on. First it will be argued that the provision of lists of the celebrations of Republic Day holidays in each city acquires a deeper meaning because this provision relates to the imaginary of the nation as limited in territory. Second the emphasis on the crowdedness of the celebrations will be interpreted in relation to Anderson's conceptualization of the 'nation' as an imagined community. These two characteristics of the presentation of Republic Day holidays in Turkey are argued to be routes that the national imaginary use in the aim to reinstitutionalize the 'nation' as limited and sovereign.

4.2.1.1 Cities

In line with this argument, first the provision of the cities that have participated in the Republic Day holiday celebrations will be analyzed. Although the presentation of different activities in the different cities of Turkey is not a recently invented tradition and can also be found in the early years of the Republic, here the point is that the presentation of special information about the celebrations in different cities provides meaning to the nation, since it leads to the imagination of the nation by providing a simultaneity-across-place. This conceptualization of the nation as providing simultaneity-across place among the members of the nation, stresses the unitary nature of the state, by implying that all the cities in the country have employed similar means to celebrate the founding day of the republic. This section in the newspaper is generally similar to the ones in the early years of the Republic; even though the expression might change, the format is the same. This format is the explanation of what activity is being held in which city, and the presentation of information includes all cities which are holding an activity for the celebration of the Republic Day holiday. Here, it is interesting to note that, this presentation of information about cities who have participated in the Republic Day holiday through the various activities they had held (such as official ceremonies, balls or torchlight processions) especially hold place in *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet*, whereas *Zaman* does not present the celebrative activities around the country the same way as the other two newspapers do. The reason for the difference in the absence/presence of information stems from the difference in the nationalistic discourses these newspapers represent.

By the presentation of information about the ways in which the Republic Day has been celebrated in various cities an imagination of the 'nation' becomes possible. This imagination provides a closure to the geographical place of the nation, and at the same time the readers of the newspaper have the possibility to imagine their fellow citizens participating in similar activities across the country. Moreover, with the provision of the list of cities those have participated in the celebrative activities, the power of the state as being able to reach each and every town across the country is strengthened. When considered in association to the from-above characteristic of the Turkish nationalist project, it can be argued that these celebrations were held in the initial years of the Republic with the leadership of state elites. In the proceeding decades the celebration of the Republic Day holiday has become a tradition and in the years studied by this thesis, the institutionalization of this tradition was so obvious that it can not be argued that it was invented at any point of time in history. Thus, these lists provided in especially *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* can be thought in the broader framework of the nationalist imaginary, supporting the notion that the 'nation-as-one', as a community is showing its devotedness to the nation, to the state by its participation in the celebrative activities.

This thesis argues that the provision of a list of cities that have participated in the Republic Day celebrations serves for the feeling of 'belonging to a crowd' to reach the readers of the newspapers. the 'conationals'. With this information, the readers became aware of the number of people in various cities who have celebrated the holiday just as they have done. That is this information should be treated as an information about the places where Turkish people are aware of their nationality. In that sense, the provision of information about the territories that have celebrated the

Republic Day holiday in some cases include the Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic or the Turkic Republics, and even in the embassies in other countries. This information implies that nationhood is not just bound by territory, but that is a 'given' carried together with the national citizen even in other countries. Thus the sense of 'we' versus 'other' is strengthened and sustained by a cliché the newspapers use in informing their readers about the Republic Day holiday.

4.2.1.2 Crowdedness

In accordance with the presentation of different cities' activities to celebrate the Republic Day holiday, second the presentation of information about the ways, in which the celebrations had been crowded, deserves attention. The previous subsection argued how the provision of lists of cities participating in the Republic Day holiday celebrations implied the sense of 'togetherness' to the readers of the newspapers. Departing from the statement of Kucmanovic (1996:104): "Even when nationalists are not, in fact, objectively in a crowd, they experience themselves as part of a crowd. ... Nationalism is, so to say, a metaphor of mass ", the information provided by the newspapers about the degree of crowdedness of the celebrations are argued to be supporters for the sense of national belonging that relies upon the membership to a mass. Thus, the basic feature of the Republic Day holiday in which 'people participate enthusiastically and in great numbers in the celebrations in all the cities of the country' is a supportive representation of the national imaginary, the national imaginary which views the nation-as-this and the people-as-one. This presentation affects the reader by the sense of 'togetherness' it entails. That is the

crowdedness of the celebrations is a metaphor for the feeling of belonging to a mass in any nationalistic discourse. Kucmanovic(1996:104-107) argues that this feeling of togetherness with 'conationals' is an indispensable feature of nationalism and has features such as : the feeling of power, the lowering of mental abilities, the intensification of emotional reactions, the surfacing of the unconscious, deindividuation and equality within the group. All these features serve to the imagination of the national community and these features are supported by the newspapers by implying again on again on the crowdedness of the celebrations.

Here a distinguishing feature of the post-1997 period should be taken into consideration regarding the crowdedness of the celebrations. Whether this crowd was in a concert, in a ball, in a stadium celebration or in Anıtkabir, it ought to be considered as a metaphor utilized in emphasizing the mass phenomenon of nationalism. However there ought to be another reading of the emphasis on crowdedness. As has been mentioned before, "for the secularists and Atatürkists groups, the 1990s have been marked by the presence of the 'Islamic threat'." (Yazıcı, 2001:5) This perception of an Islamic threat was at its peak, especially in the immediate aftermath of the 28th February process. Accordingly, the 1997, 1998 and to some extent in the 1999 celebration, the 'crowdedness' of the celebrations was emphasized more in the newspapers when compared to the following years. Among many other themes that the secularist and Atatürkists utilized in the face of a perceived Islamic threat, this thesis argues that crowdedness of the organized activities was a central feature of the secularist discourse. The secularists and Atatürkists not only organized activities in the Republic Day holiday in years 1997 and 1998, actually there had been a high degree of activities organized in the 'face of

an Islamic threat' in these years. However, the Republic Day holiday and especially the 75th year of anniversary of the Republic on year 1998 provided an opportunity to be utilized in the perception of an Islamic threat.

In this conjuncture, the emphasis made on the 'crowdedness' of the celebrations and organizations for the 75th Anniversary of the Republic provided a feeling of power to the Atatürkist and secularist groups. By reasoning from the 'crowdedness' of the celebrations, these groups argued that the 'nation' was altogether struggling against the Islamic threat. That is, the crowdedness of the celebrations was attributed to a certain nationalistic discourse, which was deemed to be the only nationalistic discourse. In other words, crowdedness of the celebrations of Republic Day holidays provided a ground by which a certain nationalistic discourse draws a framework of inclusion and exclusion in the name of the nation.

Thus, this subsection argues that in especially the immediate aftermath of the 28th February process the crowdedness of the celebrations were presented as a notion addressing the nation, whereas it could also be argued that the participation in the celebrations were a notion belonging to a certain nationalistic discourse. In fact, the theme of crowdedness has been a major component of the imaginary of the nation and the crowdedness of commemorations has always been a metaphor used to address the mass phenomenon of national imagination. In each case, this thesis argues that crowdedness has been used as a metaphor to address 'national belonging' with feelings of power and equality within the group being influential themes in sustaining the national imaginary.

In this section, the ways in which the ordinary features of the representation of the Republic Day holiday can serve to the continuation of a national imaginary has been explained, with emphasis on the crowdedness of the celebrations and the provision of lists of cities that have participated in the celebrations. In the next section, the traditions that were invented and renovated in the post-1997 period will be examined in relation to the continuity of the national imagination and in the context of the Islamist threat perceived by the secularist elites.

4.2.2 Invented and Renovated Traditions

The construction of Turkish national imagination includes a series of invented traditions, through which the ‘modern’ way of life has been presented to the citizens of the state. In the context of the Republic Day holidays, the republican balls were a common practice in the initial years of the Republic, alongside the torchlight processions. In the post-1997 period, we can also observe the existence of these invented traditions. It is not argued that these two activities have maintained the same popularity throughout the years since the early Republican period, since this study does not aim to provide such a comparative perspective of Republic Day holidays. However, it is worth mentioning that, at least some of the balls are recently revitalized. e.g. *Cumhuriyet* counts the ball that was arranged in Armada hotel, Istanbul among the celebrations held for the Republic Day Holiday and writes: “The Armada Hotel, has arranged these balls since 1994 to revitalize the balls which were a common practice in the early years of the Republic.”¹⁷ The date of the move to

¹⁷*Cumhuriyet*, 31 October 2002.

revitalize these balls coincides with the date when the Welfare Party won the municipalities of Ankara and Istanbul. Just like the revitalization of the tradition of balls, torchlight processions also began to be held again in the Republic Day holiday after 1994. The significance of the year 1994 goes beyond the scope of this study, but still in the period of focus of this study, there are a number of instances where both a ball was held and a torchlight procession was carried out by a municipality or a civil society organization. These activities which began to be arranged in the celebrations of the Republic Day holiday reveal how 'traditions' can be returned to, even if their existence was forgotten for a time.

Regarding the balls, there is another point that should be noted. The news about the balls that have been organized has found more place in the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. *Hürriyet* hardly mentions these balls, whereas *Zaman* has not had a single news article about any ball throughout 1997 to 2003. It is interesting that, *Cumhuriyet* even informs its readers the first republican ball organized in Çıldır, a district of Ardahan as a success¹⁸; *Zaman* does not mention any balls that have been organized not in a small town, even a ball organized in Ankara or Istanbul. For example, on year 1997 a Republican ball was organized in Ankara, Kızılay by the Republican People's Party. Whereas *Hürriyet* presents this as if there were enormous participation in the ball¹⁹, on the other hand *Zaman* does not inform its readers about this event. The absence/presence of information of the balls certainly addresses the political position of these newspapers given the political conjuncture in the aftermath of the 28th February process. In especially years 1997 and 1998, these balls were

¹⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 01 November 2003

¹⁹ *Hürriyet*, 30 October 1997.

presented by *Cumhuriyet* and to some extent by *Hürriyet*, as ‘people claiming the Republic’.

That is these balls and torchlight processions were taken as a sign of ‘the people’ expressing their distaste with the rise of Islamism. As it will be explained more on the section about the state vs. society discourse, the revitalization of the traditions of balls and torchlight processions were presented by *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* as the society becoming aware of their satisfaction in the regime. This satisfaction in the regime was noticed because of the threat they confronted by the rise of Islamism. However, these balls and torchlight procession were not spontaneous as much as they were presented to be. That is there were always an actor who initiated these balls; such as the Istanbul Body of Lawyers,²⁰ Samsun Governorship²¹ or the Republican Women’s Association.²² Even if the actor who organized the ball has not directly been a member of the state elite, still these balls can not be argued to be a spontaneous and voluntary that is has been presented by *Cumhuriyet*.

Besides, the revitalized traditions of balls and torchlight processions in the post-1997 period, there have also been purely invented traditions such as marches and concerts. The most recent invention for the Republic Day holidays can be said to be the Republic marches and concerts which have been on the scene since 1994. The introduction of the Republic marches into the celebratory activities can be considered within a broader change in the way the Republic Day holidays have began to be celebrated. It can be argued that, concerts and marches leave a greater space for ‘the

²⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 26 October 1998

²¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 31 October 1998

²² *Cumhuriyet*, 26 October 2003

people' to participate and feel themselves as participating in the holiday, rather than watching the holiday which is being celebrated by the state. This is the ways in which these two activities, marches and concerts, which were in fact new, became a tradition inserted into the experience of Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period.

This thesis argues that; the invention of the traditions of marches and concerts are part of the attempt of the secularist elites to incorporate the civil society rhetoric onto their discourse. For this purpose marches and concerts were introduced as part of the protest that was argued to be reasoning from below in the face of the rise of Islamism. Here, the point is not why or by whom these traditions were invented, initiated or institutionalized, but that the invention of these traditions was made via the Republic Day holiday. That is the “return to Kemalism” became evident by the invention of these traditions. Therefore in this period, especially in the years proceeding the 28th February process, the Republic Day holiday has gone through a series of changes which have included both a return to the past with the revitalization of balls and torchlight processions and the invention of new traditions for the celebration of the holiday, such as marches and concerts. Although the experience of marches and concerts are mostly carried out by official nationalism which has been explained in the third chapter by using Bora's classification of nationalistic discourses, they were mostly presented as if they represented the whole nation, and this notion represents the ways in which the activities associated with the Republic Day Holiday take on themselves a meaning about and of 'the nation' and national imaginary.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that, the participation of the masses in the marches is accompanied by some shouted slogans such as; “Turkey is laic and will remain laic! Turkey is proud of you! Atatürk will not die, the motherland will not be divided”²³, “We are young, we are strong, we are Atatürkist!”²⁴, “Atatürkists are here, where are the gangs?”²⁵, “Our names are different, our surname is Turkey.”²⁶ Similarly, these marches were marked by titles such as: “We are walking, we are celebrating”²⁷, “The Republican chain”²⁸, “You too carry a torch”²⁹ “Hand in hand for the Republican Youth”³⁰. All these slogans implied some concepts that were thought to be crucial for the national imaginary. `Hand in hand`ness stresses equality and togetherness among the members of the nation in any confrontation with an exterior or interior enemy. `You too carry a torch` includes an invitation to participate in the march, which means an invitation to show performance for the cause of the nation. `Our names are different; our surname is Turkey` implies a solution for the dilemma of citizenship which has been explained in the second chapter. This solution places the belonging of a citizen to his/her state above ethnic or religious belongings.

These names of the marches and the slogans that were shouted during them can not be considered as representing all the people, nor as if the whole nation was sharing the position of those who participated in these marches, however these marches and concerts were represented in the newspapers as if they were

²³ “Cumhuriyete 75 Altın Gul”, *Cumhuriyet*, 30 October 1998.

²⁴ “79. yıl çoskusu”, *Cumhuriyet*, 30 October 2002.

²⁵ “Bayram Neşesi”, *Hürriyet*, 30 October 1997.

²⁶ “Cumhuriyet Çoskusu”, *Hürriyet*, 30 October 1997.

²⁷ “Cumhuriyet Çoskusu” *Hürriyet*, 28 October 2002.

²⁸ “Üç Nesil Bir Arada” *Hürriyet*, 30 October 1997.

²⁹ “İstanbul’da 29 Ekim”, *Cumhuriyet*, 30 October 2000.

³⁰ “İstanbul’da 29 Ekim” *Cumhuriyet*, 30 October 2000.

representing the whole of the nation. Still it is reasonable to argue that these marches and concerts were a medium for expressing the position and attitude of some of the people who constituted the nation together with the other groups. The group that claimed to be representing the whole nation was undoubtedly the secularists and Atatürkists groups, which have been argued to be using the Republic Day holiday as a medium for the purpose of expressing their unease with the rise of Islamism. That is these marches and concerts organized in the Republic Day holidays are mostly argued to be a reaction to the rise of Islamism, and that this reaction has been initialized by civil society organizations. My aim here is not to examine the ways in which these marches and concerts were organized as a reaction to the rise of Islamism, although this might be a plausible argument to be explored in another study.

This subsection presented that in the post-1997 period, the Republic Day holiday celebrations saw both inventions of new traditions, such as marches and concerts; and both the revitalization of the traditions of the early republican period: such as balls and torchlight processions. These inventions of traditions are partly serving to the continuation of the national imaginary. However these inventions of traditions ought to be thought not only in the framework of the nationalist imaginary, but also in relation to the threat perceived by the secularist elites with the rise of Islamism. In the scope of this study, the interesting point is how these marches, concerts and balls started to be included as part of the way by which the Republic Day holiday is celebrated. The Republic Day holiday celebrations came to be thought as inseparable from marches, concerts and balls.

Especially the balls which have been explained above have been used as a tool to link the past to the present. In the next section, the ways in which the ‘past’ is inserted into the practices of the Republic Day holiday will be analyzed in more detail.

4.2.3 ‘Past’ According to a Present Agenda

National history and national identity are inevitably linked such that “national ideologies present national consciousness as a discovery of historical consciousness.” (Yazıcı, 2001: 4) Similarly the ways in which the past is referred to constitute a central part of national imagination and national identity. The significance of the ‘past’ and the remembrance of the past have been analyzed in the second chapter with references to Gillis, who argues that remembrances of the past and references to the past always involve choices, choices that are affected by the present conditions. Therefore in any study concerning references to the past it is important to clarify what exactly is remembered, by which group of the society, when and for what purpose.

In the context of the Republic Day holiday, the reference to the past is so natural since the idea of a founding moment lies at the core of the celebrative activities. The Republic Day holiday, thus, by definition involves a reference to the past by creating an awareness of the time of the nation. This time-awareness reasons since that the Republic Day holiday, as any holiday addressing the founding moment of a nation-state does, resembles the birthday of the nation and the nation-state. In that sense, the

Republic Day holiday contains the idea of celebrating the very moment when the history of the nation began, a point where the nation was inserted into history.

Thus, the Republic Day holiday is in it a remembrance of the past and the reference to the past is made via an emphasis on the founding moment of the nation-state. Spillman (1997:113) argues that the idea of a founding moment is a central theme to be utilized in introducing other topics concerning national imaginary. In that sense, the Republic Day holiday is mostly celebrated by referring first to the moment when the Turkish Republic was founded. The Republic Day holiday is consequently utilized by the newspaper columnists and by the celebrative activities as an opportunity where the history of the 'nation' can be remembered, expressed and reconfigured. The link with the past generations is in accordance with Anderson's notion of horizontal time; a conception of time through which the nation has moved gradually is expressed via the celebration of the Republic Day holiday each and every year. The gesture to the past provides a link between the current citizens of the state and the previous citizens of the state who have always come together in the celebrations to show their belongingness to the nation and their share in the national imagination. However in this expression the difference between the past and present citizens of the state is blurred and the togetherness of the national subject is implied. Despite differences in the style of reference to the past in different newspapers, the common point is that the mentioning of the past in the celebrations of the Republic Day holidays involves an underlying emphasis on the nation as a homogenous entity which has moved through the history of the nation; that is, since 1923, the declaration of the Republic, the *people of the nation (we)* have been celebrating the founding moment of *their (our) state* on each 29 October.

In other words, this thesis argues that the reference made to the 'founding moment' of the nation, is an inclusive trait of the national imagination. Even if different nationalistic groups propose different features of the moment when the nation was inserted into history, "In any case, there is always an enemy from which the 'nation' is saved, at the 'founding moment', by the 'founders', for the 'people'." (Çınar, 2001: 369) The Islamist circle might label the enemy armies in Anatolia which the National Liberation War was fought against, as the enemies of the nation; whereas the secularists might label the Ottoman dynasty as the real enemy against which the National Liberation war has been won; still, these two perspectives do not actually conceal the fact that the idea of a founding moment ought to be read as a limitation to national imagination, national identity and national history. In that sense, different nationalistic discourses might refer to the founding moment of the nation in the context of the Republic Day holiday by emphasizing different aspects of the nation in accordance with differences in their national imaginary, however still the reference to national history via the Republic Day entails a time-awareness about the 'nation' on behalf of these different groups.

However the reference to past has not only brought an inclusive trait to the national imaginary in the post-1997 period. Although the celebrations of Republic Day holidays were of the 'nation' still they were claimed more by the secularist groups. Actually the past has been a highly debated issue in this period, especially between secularists and Islamists. Moreover, the invocation of history by contending forces has led history to become a terrain of contestation, a terrain where these forces resist, assert and bargain for their imagination of the nation. (Yazıcı, 2001:10) This

thesis argues that the contestation for the drawing of the boundaries of the national imagination between secularist and Islamists groups by referencing to the past, has not been made via directly using the character of the Republic Day as a founding moment, but through the reflections made through the contestation between the 10th anniversary of the Republic and by the Ottoman Day (May 29). That is while secularists and Islamists accept (or at least seem to accept) the importance of 29 October 1923 for the Turkish national imaginary, the difference in their national imaginary can be observed from the introduction of the Ottoman Day by the Islamists and the emphasis made on the 10th anniversary of the Republic by the secularists. In order to explain this contestation between Ottoman Day and the 10th anniversary of the Republic, first the inscription of the Ottoman Day by the Islamists as a day worth to be celebrated, will be explained.

The May 29 celebrations refer to the conquest of Istanbul by Fatih Sultan Mehmet in 1453. Çınar (2001: 388) argues that: “May 29 celebrations, which were widely celebrated by Islamist circles between 1994 and 1997, have been instrumental in the performance of an alternative national identity and the construction of an alternative national time that challenges official secular national history.” The celebration of the Ottoman Day involved an emphasis on an Ottoman-Islamic identity, which is presented as being continuous through history, but interrupted by the secular time of the Republic. Therefore, the Ottoman Day was a challenge to the Kemalist nationalist project, which was constructed by a certain distance to the Ottoman past and the associated backwardness. The celebrations of Ottoman Day were not widely held in the post-1997 period, although the *Mehter* Band

presentations have become a tradition invented via these celebrations and can still be observed.

It can be argued that the intensity of the Republic Day holidays especially in years 1997 and 1998 correspond to the popularity of Ottoman Day celebrations before the 28th February process, however this thesis carries this argument further and argues that the secularist groups especially referred to the 10th anniversary of the Republic while still “the secular state recognized May 29 as a day of historical significance.” (Çınar, 2001: 387) In other words, this thesis argues that the secularist groups especially referred to the 10th anniversary of the Republic, to emphasize a difference in the national imaginary in contrast to the imaginary that was implied by the Ottoman day.

The argument is made since the analysis of the newspapers; reveal a high occurrence of references to the 10th anniversary of the Republic as frequent as references to 1923, the year of the declaration of the Republic. The significance of the 10th year of the Republic in the representation of Republic Day holidays has been accompanied by the revitalization of the 10th year march which was remixed by Kenan Doğulu, a famous pop singer. The reason why the 10th anniversary of the Republic is referred this frequently many years after its celebrations are, first of all as Öztürkmen (2001: 55) argues, because it was seen as a model celebration for the Republic Day holiday.

However, not only the 10th year march was so popular since that the 10th year celebration was taken as a model celebration. When considered in the political

conjuncture of the post-1997 period, especially in the first years, the 10th year march was utilized as a symbol in the symbolic repertoire of the Turkish national imaginary. The 10th year march was the symbol of Kemalism; it was a medium for expressing the discomfort for the rise of Islamism in this period. The message given by the popular use of the 10th year march was entailing to compare the 10th year of the Republic and say the 75th year of the Republic. That is the 10th year both provided a sign to show the happiness the nation felt because of belonging to such a Republic, but it also meant that the nation ought to compare the 10th year of the Republic and the 75th year of the Republic. The popularity of the 10th year march was approached by some columnists suspiciously, for example: ‘The celebration ended with the 10th year march. What have we done since the 10th year of the Republic? What have we been able to add on in the remaining 67 years?’³¹ Whether with suspicion or with joyfulness, the 10th year resembled the successes of the Kemalist project of nationalism, especially it referred to the reforms that have been initiated for modernizing the nation.

Thus, whilst the reference to the 10th year of the Republic entailed an emphasis on the Kemalist conceptualization of the nation, the reference to the Ottoman Day entailed a national imagination which included Islam as a religion. Whereas the Ottoman Day constituted the national imaginary as being older than the secular Republican regime and as being highly related to Islam, the usage of the 10th year march meant an emphasis on the secular nature of the Republic and the aim to modernize the nation.

³¹ Sirmen, Ali. “Dunyada Bugün” in *Cumhuriyet*, 31 October 2000.

The same difference is apparent in the way the Republic Day holiday is celebrated. In the post-1997 period, Islamist groups also began to celebrate the Republic Day holiday. However, they celebrated it via the use of the *Mehter* Band presentations, whilst the secularists celebrated it via singing the 10th year march. On the part of the Islamists, celebrating the Republic Day holiday was an expression of the desire to be included in the national imaginary, however when associations of Islamist parties or deputies from those parties sang the 10th year march it was presented as a news worth to inform the readers of the newspapers. The 10th year march was symbolized against the rise of Islamism, and as a *Zaman* author Ayvazoğlu argues: it was used as a symbol of republicanists, and anyone who did not stand up and sing the march was labeled as an enemy of the Republican regime.³²

At first sight, the Republic Day holiday with a *Mehter* Band presentation and the Republic Day holiday referring to the 10th year of the Republic seem to be at opposite corners, but it should not be forgotten that they are both attempts to form an identity according to a present agenda by utilizing the 'past'. Yazıcı (2001: 11) similarly points out: "While claims for the present are contested in relation to the past between secularists and Islamists, one point seems to lie outside contestation: the nation and the nation-state as legitimate referents, however differently they may be imagined by the two social groups." That is, neither the Islamists nor the secularists have been different from each other in the way they legitimize their present activities by utilizing the past. that is, they have both attempted to legitimize their presence by referring basing their arguments within the imaginary terrain of the nation and nation-state.

³² *Zaman*, 28 October 1998.

In this subsection, the ways by which the past is referred to by secularists and Islamists in the context of the Republic Day holiday have been discussed. This thesis argues that although the Republic Day holiday was in some cases including a point of contestation between these two groups, it should be considered as a shared point in history since it addresses the founding moment of the nation-state and even if there may be different ways of referring to it, still any reference to the founding moment ought to be read as a reading of the nation. The negative or positive attitude towards the past of the Republic, the past of the nation, does not deny the fact that the republic, the nation, the state has a past, a history which might be understood independently from the past of the groups within the national community. However, the reference to the past is still in accordance to the present agendas of Islamists and secularists groups, and this thesis argues that this difference in the interpretation of national imaginary is expressed via the usage of the *Mehter* Band presentation or the 10th year march. It is interesting that the usage of these two symbols are not only restrained to the peak of contestation between Islamist and secularists groups, that is the immediate aftermath of the 28th February process, but in the consequent years they are used to express the difference in referring to the past by different nationalistic discourses. Therefore, in this subsection, this thesis argued that the 'past' has been both a point of inclusion and a matter of contestation between nationalistic discourses, especially between Islamist and secularist groups in the post-1997 period. That is while the Republic Day holiday was inclusive, the manner in which it is celebrated –whether with a 10th year march or with a *Mehter* band presentation- remained a feature to differentiate nationalistic discourses.

This section has explained the ways in which a commemorative activity, the Republic Day holiday, can be studied as an embodiment of the national imagination through three notions: first, the ways in which the commemorative activity serves in the imagination of the nation; second, the ways in which traditions are invented and renovated to support various ways of this imagination; and third, the ways in which the past is incorporated in current celebrations. In these three notions, the argument has been that the Republic Day holiday is a dynamic point, which can serve as a symbol for the terrain of Turkish national imaginary. In this section, the inclusiveness of the Republic Day holiday has been emphasized, although in some cases it has been a point of contestation between secularists and Islamists. In the next section, the Republic Day holiday will be analyzed from a more specific perspective in order to highlight the ways in which the Republic Day holiday has become a site of contestation in the post-1997 period

4.3 The Republic Day Holiday in the Specificity of Turkish Politics

In the previous section, the Republic Day holiday is taken as a site where the national imagination is embodied, fostered and strengthened through the concept of `crowdedness`; the invention and reintroduction of traditions such as balls, torchlight processions, marches and concerts; and through the remembrance of the `past` according to the present conditions. Besides attempting to understand the Republic Day holiday as an embodiment of the national imagination, this study aims to reveal the ways in which the Republic Day holiday has both been a site of contestation, intervention and negotiation in Turkey in the post-1997 period.

In the previous chapter, the political atmosphere of Turkey in the post-1997 period has been explained. In this section the objective is to trace the reflections of the political conditions in Turkey in the celebrations of the Republic Day holidays. That is contrary to the previous section the issues that will be analyzed in this section are not themes that can be generally found in commemorative activities. Rather it is argued that these themes have been an issue in the Republic Day celebrations because of certain political conditions in Turkey in the post-1997 period.

First, the participation of the military in the Republic Day holidays will be evaluated from two perspectives, in which it is argued that in the post-1997 period the participation of the military in Republic Day holiday celebrations can be distinguished from the traditional role the military has played in these celebrations. In the third chapter, the reasons behind the `headscarf` being a point of discussion in Turkish politics throughout the 90`s has been discussed. In line with this background, in this section, second the instances where the question of `headscarf` has occurred in Republic Day holiday celebrations will be explained. Third, Yashin`s state versus civil society discourse will be examined in relation to the representations of Republic Day holidays in the newspapers. in which it will be argued that in the post-1997 period the Republic Day holiday has been used by the state elites with the objective of incorporating the rhetoric of `civil-society organizations` onto to their discourse.

4.3.1 The Military

In the construction of Turkish nationalism, the military occupies a central place. The centrality of the military in the construction of Turkish nationalism has two reasons. First, the 'military' has been constituted as a central part of the Turkish nationality since it is seen as part of the civilizational progress that the Kemalist nationalist project envisioned. The emphasis on the military-nation tradition of the Turkish nation is tied to the importance given to the technological advancement of the military in the nation-state era. That is, the technological advancement of the military is seen as an indicator that sustains the place of the Turkish nation vis-à-vis the world. Moreover, the military is seen traditionally as a "most trusted institution", and this status was based on its image of being 'above politics'."(Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 321) This role bestowed upon the military as being "above politics" serves to the imagination of the military as being impersonal end eternal. Contrary to the traditional role of military, second, the military actually has intervened in the political life several times throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. Even this study's choice of research period is affected by the 28th February process in which the military engaged in a post-modern coup, because it envisaged a threat to the regime from the Islamist Welfare government. Thus, in the post-1997 period the military had a hand in the political life. But this involvement was implicit rather than being explicit, this thesis argues that, especially, the 1998 celebrations of the Republic Day holiday were participated by the military with political purposes and the Republic Day holidays were thus a suitable domain for the military to express its existence without directly involving in political matters. Now the involvements of the military in the celebrations of the Republic Day holiday in traditional ways and as an implicit political act will be explained.

First, one implication of the nationalist construction that gives the military a central place is that the Republic Day holidays contain the military in the official celebrations. This important place given to the military can be found in the early republican period celebrations of the Republic Day holiday. Since these early celebrations are taken as a model for the later celebrations, this showing off of the military personnel and equipments in the rites of passage can be seen in the celebrative activities of the post-1997 period as well as in prior celebrations. This tradition of the military participating in the rites of passage is followed by the ceremonies in the research period of this study as well. This part of the ceremony generally includes some displays performed by the military cadets together with shows performed by airplanes and helicopters. An example might be the Turk Stars which consist of seven supersonic planes which engage in acrobatic performances on Republic Day holidays and other celebrations.³³ In these celebrations there are usually Apache and Skorsky helicopters, SAT commandos, special units such as “Peace Power Company”, namely series of military personnel and equipments.

This symbolic dominance of the military in the celebrations is to a large extent an outcome of the nationalist imagination. By the participation of the military equipment and personnel in these celebrations the state shows, and consequently assesses and strengthens its power in the face of any threat. The continuity of this imagination is supported by the military’s existence in the celebrative activities. This symbolic power of military’s participation in Republic Day holiday celebrations is labeled as *Zaman* as a “public demonstration”³⁴ in 1997. *Zaman* emphasizes the point

³³ *Hürriyet*, 29 October 1997.

³⁴ *Zaman*, 30 October 1997.

that the visibility of the military in these celebrations imply power, security and an underlying threat to 'internal and external enemies'. Here it is important to emphasize that this participation of military figures in the celebrative activities does not address the 'military' as the total of the existing military officials. Rather, the military as a part of the symbolization of the nationalist construction can be thought of as a deindividuated image addressing the military as an eternal being. The participation of the military in the celebrative activities, signal the 'military' as a homogenous entity present every moment to protect the 'nation'. That is, the military is included in the national imaginary and is itself imagined the same way as the nation is imagined. The 'nation' is imagined as having an eternal existence and the 'military' is incorporated in this imagination as being part of the national imagination and simultaneously as a protector of the nation.

Second, the military's existence in the Republic Day holidays due to the specificities of the post-1997 period can be seen as the military attending these participations in line with their implicit political stance in the immediate aftermath of the post-1997 period. That is, in the post-1997 period the military can be claimed to have a closer relationship with the activities that have occurred in the Republic Day holidays: a significant example would be the printed notice that the general headquarters of the army circulated for the military personnel to participate in the marches that the 75th year organization committee arranged. The military personnel were advised to participate in the marches with their uniforms, which is a rare occurrence in Turkish political history.³⁵ Similarly, in 1999, the general headquarters also circulated another printed notice to the military offices in order to ensure that the

³⁵ *Hürriyet*, 28 October 1998.

military personnel would be present in the ceremony at Anıtkabir on the day of the holiday. These two instances, occur in the preceding two years after the 28th February process and are significant since they reveal military's will to show itself as part of the nation and to show their presence in continuum with their presence in the political scene since 1997. In these two instances the military's participation in the Republic Day holiday has been presented by newspapers by titles such as: "military and the people hand in hand".³⁶

Especially in the 75th anniversary of the Republic which was the immediate aftermath of the 28th February process, the military's presence in the Republic Day holiday attains a different meaning than an ordinary appearance in the ceremonies held for the holiday. This participation of the military in the celebrations and the organizations held to celebrate the holiday are different from the traditional role the military takes on itself in these celebrations. In this occasion, the presence of the military does not only stand for a general threat for the enemies of the Republic, but presents the military as being more concerned in the developments that occur in the political scene, namely the rise of Islamism. Bora classifies the army as the crystallized evidence of the existence, power, and manifestations of the nation-state, which has the role as the main regenerator of official nationalism. (Bora, 2003:437) In the post-1997 period, the military also manifested its power through its increasing interest in the Republic Day holidays, especially in the years proceeding the 28th February process.

³⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 25 October 1998.

Thus, the military's presence in the Republic Day holiday can be read from two perspectives: first, from the point of view of the state, representing the military as an eternal entity forever protecting the nation; and second, the participation of the military in the Republic Day holidays as an implicit political act.

This subsection argues that, the above mentioned two points about the military's participation in the Republic Day holidays, shows that the Republic Day holiday is seen as a stage where national identities can be expressed. Military's participation in the Republic Day holiday is thus in a sense an intervention, an intervention to the drawing of the national imaginary which is embodied through the Republic Day holiday.

Another specific occurrence that has been observed in the Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period and which has achieved much more interest than the military's increasing presence in the political scene has been the question of 'Headscarf', which will be explained in the next section.

4.3.2 The "Headscarf" Question

As has been argued in the third chapter, women have been bestowed upon the role of carriers of civilization in the construction of Turkish national identity. With the rise of the Islamist agenda in the post-1980 period, 'women' came to be discussed in relation to the question of 'headscarf'. With the increasing visibility of 'headscarfed women' in the public space, women began to be a point of discussion between Islamists and secularist intellectuals. Here, it is not aimed to offer an all

encompassing study of the question of the headscarf in the post-1997 period, but it is desired to show the ways in which 'woman' and 'headscarf' enter into the site of the Republic Day holidays. Thus, the ways in which 'headscarfed women' find or do not find a place in the nationalist imagination can be understood by looking the instances where this problem has coincided with the celebrative activities and their representation in newspapers.

There are four major instances where the 'headscarf' question has occurred in the context of the Republic Day holiday in the post-1997 period. First, the visibility of the headscarfed women and students in the marches performed for the celebrations together with their participation in the rites of passage has been an issue. Second, the participation of imam-hatip schools in the rites of passage has achieved attention in the representation of the Republic Day holiday celebrations in the newspapers. Third, there has been a discussion about the 'Regulations on outward appearance' regarding Anıtkabir in 1999. Fourth; in 2003, the question of headscarf was discussed largely since it led to a 'reception crisis.' In the analysis of all these four occasions, the point of argument is that the 'holiday' is a national platform endowed with public visibility, and thus the inclusion of 'headscarfed women' in the holiday has come to mean their inclusion in the national imagination. Since the 'nation' is presented as participating in the celebrations as a whole, when we look at the photographs which occur on the first page of the newspapers, we can see a difference in the national imagination that the newspapers present. That is, a photograph in *Cumhuriyet* does not include headscarfed women, whilst a photograph in *Zaman* would include them.³⁷ This difference in the photographs implies differences in the

³⁷ *Zaman*, 29 October 2003; *Hürriyet*, 29 October 2003.

national imaginations that these newspapers present as part of a certain nationalistic discourse. By ignoring or including a headscarfed women in a photograph which is printed to symbolize the `nation` in the front page of a newspaper, the boundaries of the nationalist imagination is redrawn. In other words, the symbolic repertoire of *Zaman* includes a `headscarfed` women, whereas *Cumhuriyet* ignores it. The spectrum of inclusion/ ignorance affects the conditions of the national imaginary and once again presents the symbolic power of `headscarf` in Turkish politics which represents real points of antagonism. Before elaborating more on these differences, the four occasions where the headscarf question has entered into the presentation of Republic Day holidays will be explained.

First, the participation of `headscarfed women` in the informal celebrative activities on the Republic Day holiday deserves attention. That is the participation of headscarfed women in republican marches has been focused on by columnists who have taken different attitudes towards this participation. For example, Ekşi says that “there were women, headscarfed and uncovered women in the republican march ... all these women are children of the Republic”³⁸ Thus, the participation of the headscarfed women in the marches becomes a symbol for their degree of inclusivity in the `nation`, and the attitude towards their participation reveals the perspective of the columnists, which means the reaction to the existence of headscarfed women in the celebrations reveals the level of acceptance given to them as part of the national imaginary.

³⁸ Ekşi, Oktay. *Hürriyet*, 28 October 1998.

Second, not only has ‘headscarfed women’s participation in the informal marches been an issue recurring in the newspapers, but also the participation of imam-hatip schools³⁹ has received attention. As has been mentioned before, the Republic Day holidays include rites of passage in which schools present themselves in the celebrations in the stadiums. These rites of passage reflect the earlier celebration of the Republic Day holiday in the early republican period, in which the Republic Day holiday has been presented as the holiday of the state and thus participants in the rites of passage were a part of the state, and society was watching the passage of the state’s constituent parts. Thus, the holiday in this manner, was seen as a holiday-to-be-watched, to be watched by the society. When looking at the occurrence of the ‘headscarf’ question with regard to the Republic Day holidays, one of the four instances regards the participation of imam-hatip schools in these rites of passage. Here the interesting point is that the imam-hatip schools were expected to participate in the ceremonies with the girls uncovered. Thus, while the marches were considered as a private sphere, the ceremonies held for the Republic Day holiday were seen as a public sphere. This perspective shows how the public-private distinction is inscribed into any discussion of national identity, and how certain places and events are perceived as sites of the ‘state’ because of being defined as a public sphere. That is, since the holiday is watched by the society, the state is representing itself in the rites of passage, and how it is seen, that is, with or without headscarf, becomes a question concerning national imaginary.

Third, a ‘code of dress’ was applied in 1999. The text of this printed notice announces a ‘contemporary clothing obligation’⁴⁰ for the official part of the

³⁹ Religious High Schools.

⁴⁰ “Çağdaş Kiyafet Zorunluluğu”

ceremony at Anıtkabir. Here it is important to emphasize the special event that happened in 1999, which is commonly referred to as the Merve Kavakçı event. On May 2, 1999 a confrontation had taken place when Merve Kavakçı, who was elected the previous month as a Fazilet deputy, entered the Grand National Assembly with a head scarf. Other deputies protested by beating on desktops that Kavakçı had to leave the parliament without taking the oath. In the wake of the incident it emerged that following an earlier marriage to an American, Merve Kavakçı had accepted U.S. citizenship without asking prior permission from the Turkish authorities. The Turkish Council of Ministers seized on this technical breach of Turkish law to withdraw her citizenship, and she became to be no longer able to represent her constituency in parliament.⁴¹ According to Göle (2002: 178): “It was Merve Kavakci’s physical presentation in the parliament, not her election that provoked a public dispute, a blowup.”

The press explanation ensued by the governorship of Ankara, followed these series of events and thus it was interpreted as a precaution to prevent a similar event happening in Anıtkabir. It was a precaution to prevent the physical visibility of ‘headscarfed women’ in Anıtkabir. However, the wording of this press explanation came under discussion since it could be understood as if ‘headscarfed citizens’ are not allowed to visit Anıtkabir. But, the obligation for contemporary clothing only referred to the official part of the ceremony: that is, the part when political party leaders, members of the parliament, general staff and selected teachers and students participate under the leadership of the presidency.⁴² Here the attribution of Anıtkabir is important since it is seen as a public sphere of the ‘nation’, the ‘nation’ that is

⁴¹ Nicole Pope, ‘Parliament opens amid Controversy’ TurkeyUpdate (Web publication at www. Turkey Update.com) , 3 May 1999

⁴² Özkök, Ertuğrul. *Hürriyet*, 29 October 1999.

constructed by placing a certain distance between itself and religion. However, the ‘headscarf’ has been seen by the state elites as a flag of the rise of the Islamist parties; that is, the meaning of ‘headscarf’ and its place in the national imaginary is differentially interpreted in different circles, and this differentiation becomes mostly a problem when a certain place is defined as a public sphere. However, the same point of view has not been shared by the Islamist circles that have seen the ‘headscarf’ not as a question about the regime but rather as a question about human rights. Thus, it is not surprising for a *Zaman* journalist to write: “There is not a restriction on the clothing of people who are visiting graves. Furthermore it is a tradition in all religions for people to cover themselves when they are visiting a grave.”⁴³ As seen the emphasis on Anıtkabir is made through a visit to the dead and as a visit to the grave of Atatürk, and Anıtkabir is not seen as a public sphere whose rules are prescribed by certain rules but as belonging to the nation.

The fourth of the interactions of the headscarf question within the context of the Republic Day holiday is the 2003 reception crisis which is the latest development that has happened in the coincidences between the ‘headscarf question’ and the Republic Day holiday. This tension was introduced when Ahmet Necdet Sezer behaved differently from previous years, in the invitations sent for the Republic Day holiday reception. The invitations were sent separately with a clause ‘with spouse’ or ‘without spouse’ to the invited deputies and judicial members. The reason for the invitations to be made separately derived from the same need for precaution that led to the contemporary clothing obligation being issued for the official ceremonies held in Anıtkabir in 1999.

⁴³ Gönültaş, Nuh. *Zaman*, 29 October 1999.

The 'Reception Crisis' held a center stage for two weeks and the discussion was tied to the discussion of the 'public sphere' which has actually never been absent from the 'headscarf question'. Thus, when examined in a wider perspective, the 'Reception Crisis' has different dimensions. First of all, the crisis reflects once again the traditional tension between state elites and political elites. In the previous chapter, it has been explained the ways in which the state elites in the construction of Turkish nationalism have perceived the periphery as the 'silent other' that ought to be educated by these state elites. However, with the passage to multi-party democracy it has become evident that these peripheral portions of the society were able to voice their existence. Therefore, the transformation to multi-party democracy carried with itself a tension between state elites and political elites. (Heper, 1985) This tension can also be seen from the Reception Crisis on 2003. That is, whilst the AKP government resembled the political elite of Turkish political life, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer was argued to be representing the state elite. His words, "There has been a tendency to position against the state's secular character, I wanted to prevent it"⁴⁴, show that members of the state elite still carry out their duty to protect the characteristics of the republican regime, or at least they feel that they have to protect it. Second, whilst the 'headscarf' question was previously discussed concerning the problem of university education, and whether or not female students who wear a headscarf can attend classes, with the AKP government, we see the shift of the discussions regarding the headscarf to the question of the protocol.

⁴⁴ *Zaman*, 30 October 2003.

In all these four occasions it can be seen that the headscarf question is always tied to a question about the public sphere. More importantly, the Republic Day holiday involves this public sphere within its domain of activities, causing itself to be considered as a public sphere. The question of the public sphere can be seen as one of the fault-lines of the Kemalist construction of citizenship, which is in close relation to the role bestowed upon women, as has been explained in the second chapter.

What the 'headscarfed' women confront in the names of citizenship is thus a serious demand from the private domain which is seen as the site of particularity and difference. In the Reception Crisis the visibility of the headscarfed women in the reception, which is seen as the 'summit of the state' by the state elites, questions the notion of citizenship upon which the conceptualization of Turkish secular citizen has been constructed. Actually, the headscarfed women want to be visible in the public sphere, without leaving their religious identities in the private sphere; they want to be recognized publicly and even demand some group-differentiated rights in the name of their differences from the rest of the society. However, this demand, though is a democratic right in theory, challenges openly the secular character of the Turkish Republic. And this challenge presented by headscarfed women's requests to be visible in the public sphere, can also be seen in the occurrences that has been explained in four categories above. All these reflections of the headscarf question on the Republic Day holiday show that the Republic Day holiday is seen as public sphere, within which rights of visibility and entrance can be discussed. Thus, while the Republic Day holiday and the associated public spheres of it, such as Anıtkabir and the presidency are conceived as a site where 'headscarfed women' ought not to

enter according to the Kemalist nationalistic discourse, the Islamist circle certainly opposes this view. This difference in the understanding of the public sphere has been very much evident in the discussions that have led to the Reception Crisis. Especially the difference in the invitations sent to the people invited to the reception led to accusations of discrimination, such as “It is wrong to differentiate the deputies, the judges and people working in media as ‘those whose spouse is covered’ and ‘those whose spouse is not covered’⁴⁵ and “Sezer has made an unseen discrimination against headscarfed women”⁴⁶. Conversely, the Kemalist circle represented by *Cumhuriyet* in this study, approached this crisis with an emphasis that Sezer had done the right thing to prevent headscarfed women’s visibility in a state reception.

Thus, the four instances where the question of headscarf have occurred in the context of the Republic Day holiday, all address the public-private distinction that the Kemalist project of nationalism constructed in the early Republican period, as explained in the second chapter. These instances also support the argument of this thesis, since the Headscarf question which touches upon the Republic Day holiday reveals that the Republic Day holiday is an embodiment of national identity, and in this site negotiations and interventions continue.

In the next subsection, the focus is still on revealing the specific interventions that have occurred in the post-1997 period concerning the Republic Day holiday, but the emphasis will now be on the rhetoric of ‘the people’ that has been incorporated into the discourse of the Republic Day holiday in this period.

⁴⁵ Dumanlı, Ekrem. *Zaman*, 30 October 2003.

⁴⁶ Korkmaz, Tamer. *Zaman*, 31 October 2003.

4.3.3 “The People” in the Holiday : “The People” of the Nation

In the analysis of the newspapers about the representation and experience of Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period, there has been another field of discussion of such centrality that without mentioning this discussion this study would not be complete. The rhetoric of the distinction between state and society, with an emphasis on civil society can be observed in the celebrative activities arranged around the Republic Day Holidays in the period of this study. That is, the participation of people has been represented by some as being done on their own account, while others perceived this participation as something obligatory. This difference in the views was affected by the secularists and Islamist elites having differing perceptions of the regime, of the celebration of the regime via the Republic Day holiday and towards each other. In fact a high number of civil society organizations participated in the celebrations of the Republic Day holidays in this period without direct intervention by a state official. Examples of civil society organizations that have participated in the celebration include: *Atatürkist Thought Association* (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği), *Association of Republican Women* (Cumhuriyet Kadınları Derneği), *Association for Supporting Modern Life* (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği) , Universities, and Sports Associations. At the first sight, this increase in the number of civil society organizations participating in celebrations of the Republic Day holiday, entail an opening and widening of the democratic sphere of the Turkish political scene.

However, Yashin (1998: 7-8) views this proliferation of the civil society organizations not as an expression of a better democratic environment in the public

sphere, but as an outcome of the statecraft to incorporate the rhetoric of civil society into its discourse. More clearly, she argues that both Islamist and secular bureaucrats utilized a productive discourse of the notion of 'civil society', and she points out the ways in which the discourse of 'state versus society' was appropriated in different and culturally specific ways by both Islamist and secularist bureaucrats throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

This appropriation of the notion of 'civil society' in the rhetoric of the bureaucrats can take diverse forms, but in all forms the presence of 'civil society' in the political arena is interpreted by the bureaucrats as support given to the cause by the specific political group. In the celebrations of the Republic Day holidays, the appropriation of the rhetoric of civil society can be observed as well. Yashin also points out that the 75th year celebrations of the Republic Day holiday can be analyzed along the theoretical framework that she has developed to understand the 'state-society dichotomy' that has dominated the political arena of Turkey in the 80s and 90s. By the 'state-society dichotomy' she refers to a common argument about Turkish political life in this period, that there have been undeterminable democratic openings in the public sphere, in which divergent groups have begun to demand various rights. Yashin (1998:20) questions the emphasis given to the notion of 'civil society' in the studies of this period, and argues that 'civil-society' is context-bound and contingent. In the aim to observe Yashin's (1998:21) argument about the 80s and 90s in Turkey, in which she claims that in this period 'civil society' was transformed into a symbolic ground on which legitimate state power was going to be based, this study will explore the reflections of this discussion within the context of Republic Day holidays in the post-1997 period.

Throughout the various readings of the data, it has been observed that the society versus state rhetoric alongside the notion of 'people' has been incorporated into the representation of Republic Day holidays in various forms. However, among the years of this study, 1998 is peculiar since the rhetoric of 'the people' and 'civil society' have been more evident on this year. Now, these findings will be presented. As has been pointed out before, 1998 is significant since it is the aftermath of the 28th February process and is simultaneously the 75th year of the Republic. Yashin argues that the secularist bureaucrats became aware of the power of incorporating the notion of 'people' and 'civil society' into their discourse since they had seen this as a reason for the rise of Islamism in this period. The importance given to 'the people' by the Islamist bureaucrats, has been noticed by the secularist bureaucrats and thus they have become more interested in 'the people'. More specifically, the objective of the secularist bureaucrats in this period was to present the regime, not as an imposition from above, but as being endorsed by 'the people'; that is, the regime was not a burden on the people of the state but was rather about the will of the people. (Yashin, 1998: 7) For this objective, the Republic Day holidays provided a ground since a shift in the way of celebration could be used as a powerful symbol of a shift in official nationalism. This shift can be summarized as the shift from the holiday-that-is watched and the holiday-that-is-participated in. On the one hand, the degree of the ability of the given celebrative activity to incorporate 'the people' into itself became a notion that gained importance in this period, on the other hand, who celebrated the activity more extensively and more enthusiastically became also a part of the discussion and experience of the Republic Day holiday.

The concerts held by two municipalities in Ankara in 1997 are an example of the question of who celebrated the holiday more enthusiastically. There were two ‘alternative’ concerts on the 1997 Republic Day holiday: one was held by the Çankaya Municipality in Kızılay Square, and the other was held by the Greatest Ankara Municipality in Sıhhiye Square. These two concerts were presented in the media as competing concerts for celebrating the Republic Day holiday. A columnist of the *Hürriyet* newspaper, wrote as a joke that “this year the capital city has experienced an unseen race for celebrate the Republic Day holiday, in which parties were near to fighting to celebrating the Republic Day holiday better than the other party”, and argues that the enthusiasm on the side of the Welfare Party Mayor, Melih Gökçek arises from the 28th February process.⁴⁷ As has been outlined in the second chapter, 1997 has been chosen for the beginning of this study since it was believed that this period would include some changes in how the Republic Day Holiday was perceived and presented in the Turkish political scene. As has been mentioned before, the 28th February process brought a change in the Islamist circles` perception of politics and state-society relations. They have tried to adapt themselves to the 28th February process conditions by de-Islamizing their discourse, emphasizing a discourse that avoided any societal tensions, and taking a low-profile, nonconfrontational and moderate stance. (Cizre and Çınar, 2003:323) In the light of this strategy, their enthusiasm about the Republic Day holiday can be read as part of their attempt to protect themselves from further conditions of instability by a consensus-seeking strategy. Although, this strategy was not only confined to their participation in the Republic Day holidays, the ‘holiday’ was certainly a more visible tool to express their desire to be included in the national imaginary. This event is a

⁴⁷ Çoşkun, Bekir. *Hürriyet*, 30 October 1997.

clear example of how the Republic Day holiday resembled the embodiment of the national imaginary, a pie that different groups want their share from it, by organizing concerts and various activities. But these concerts and activities have the objective of making people to participate in these activities by their own will; that is, not by an imposition from a state official. Thus, in the 1997 event of municipalities organizing alternative concerts in Ankara, 'the people' were presented as voluntarily engaging in all of the concerts. However it should not be forgotten that these concerts were arranged free for people to show themselves in the activities in relation to the Republic Day holiday. Thus, it is not easy to tell whether or not people were in the square for the concert or for the cause of the Republic Day holiday.

This emphasis on the voluntary participation of the 'people' in the celebrations can also be observed in the 1998 Republic Day Holiday, which featured headings such as "people and military together", "the people claimed the Republic", "Hundred thousands ran to their Ata"⁴⁸. This year was significant, since it was both the 75th anniversary of the Republic and was at the same time the aftermath of the 28th February process. Consequently, in the newspapers, there had been an extraordinary amount of space reserved for reporting the Republic Day holiday, either through the presentation of information about the various activities held or through various stories told by the columnists about the significance and importance of the Republic Day holiday. In all these writings of the columnists, there was a significant emphasis on how the 'people' were participating in the Republic Day holidays by their own will. Though it can neither be argued that the people were made to participate in the Republic Day holidays by force nor that they were

⁴⁸ 'Ata' is the abbreviation for Atatürk which literally means ancestor.

participating fully by their own will, still it is worth stressing that the nature of the participation of the 'people' in the Republic Day Holiday was an issue.

In 2003 the state versus society discourse can also be observed from the newspapers. In this year the newspapers presented the reception crisis as part of the 'state', whilst the celebrations were shown as being part of the 'society'. The expressions in the newspapers shared a common understanding of the intersection of the state versus society dichotomy with the Republic Day holiday, arguing that the 'state' was not able to solve the problems that have occurred because of the 'headscarf' question, but 'people' were celebrating *their* holiday peacefully.⁴⁹ Here, the emphasis was made on 'the people' as being free from problems such as the conflicts of the state bureaucrats.

Here there is another point that ought to be emphasized: that is, while the bureaucrats have been incorporating the notion of 'civil society' into their discourses, at the same time in line with the linkage between the holiday and the regime, the Republic Day holiday and the participation in it has been symbolized as an indicator of the change of the relations between state and society in Turkey. In the third chapter, the distance between state and society which has been constructed by the Kemalist nationalist project has been explained. This distance has led to certain problems in the post-1980 period. The return to 'the people' by the rhetoric of the Republic day holidays was in some cases presented as an obvious sign of people claiming the Republic. That is, whilst the state was not as efficient as it should be in employing the Kemalist nationalist project, 'the people' were fond of *their* Republic,

⁴⁹ *Hürriyet and Zaman*, 30 October 2003

and they show *their* attachment by participating in the Republic day holidays voluntarily. Thus, this increasing participation or the increase in the emphasis made on voluntary participation is presented as a solution to many problems that have occurred in Turkey.

Moreover, participation in the Republic Day holidays, neglecting any attempt to incorporate the organizations of civil society in these celebrative activities, has been symbolized as the degree to which the given group is within or without the definition of national identity. With such interpretation, the Republic Day holiday becomes once again an embodiment of national identity, such that any group which desires to be accepted as a legitimate group in political and social fields has attempted to present itself in the celebrations of the Republic Day holiday. This point about the Republic Day holiday, would add another layer to the argument of this thesis. While, using Yashin's argument, it has been argued that the Republic Day holiday has been pulled by secularist and Islamist bureaucrats from different ends in order to suit their purposes; these were not the only parties that seek legitimacy on the ground provided by the Republic Day holiday. There were other social groups which utilized the republic day holiday to infer on the legitimizing ground that the national imaginary presented. Among the other social groups, this study will examine the instances where the Kurdish problem has found a place in the context of the Republic Day holiday.

This thesis argues that the embodiment of 'Turkish national identity' in the Republic Day holiday can be better observed when news addressing

HADEP/DEHAP or PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party)⁵⁰ is analyzed. Through this analysis, it is seen that whilst news about PKK was given as a success in the context of the Republic Day holiday, news about the HADEP/DEHAP was given as a controlled attempt on behalf of the party leaders to show themselves via their participation in the Republic Day holiday. For example, in 1998 there was a terrorist attack by a PKK terrorist by hijacking an airplane. The reason for choosing the Republic Day holiday for this hijacking is obvious, since a terrorist attack on the Republic Day holiday means an attack to the Republic which is embodied in and through the Republic Day holiday. Another news event concerning terrorists occurred in 1999 when a group of 8 terrorists surrendered to the state and it is written such that this surrender had been purposefully designed to be on 29 October.⁵¹ On 1999, there is another interesting news article concerning the holiday message of Abdullah Öcalan.⁵² His message celebrating the Republic indicates the importance of the Republic Day holiday as a symbol of the 'nation', and it is interesting to note that he celebrates not the Republic Day holiday but the "democratic republic".

Another news event that has been noticed in the context of the Kurdish problem is the account arguing that DEHAP has begun an "attempt to make peace with the Republic" by participating in the 80th year celebration in all platforms.⁵³ In this attempt the argument of this thesis is once again supported since the party leaders utilize the symbolic power of the Republic Day Holiday in their attempt to

⁵⁰ Throughout the 1990's, the Kurdish problem attained a different face in Turkey. The PKK, a maoist terrorist movement that claimed to speak for the Kurds was efficient in the southeast region, and the minor war between PKK and the Turkish Army Forces was continuing up until Öcalan was caught in mid-february 1999. *Halkın Demokrasi Partisi* -HADEP (People's Democracy Party) was the initial party that was considered as the party associated with the Kurdish problem, and after its closure it was replaced by *Demokratik Halk Partisi*- DEHAP (Democratic People's Party).

⁵¹ *Zaman*, 30 October 1999.

⁵² *Cumhuriyet*, 30 October 1999.

⁵³ *Zaman*, 29 October 2003.

develop a different attitude in their relation to the regime. The example of HADEP/DEHAP making peace with the Republic by participating in the Republic Day holiday celebrations, and the holiday message of Abdullah Öcalan reveal how the Republic Day holiday is used as a platform of negotiation.

In all these examples, the state versus society discourse is obvious in the celebrations of the Republic Day holiday. In line with Yashin's argument about the incorporation of the rhetoric of civil society into the discourse of statecraft, in the case of the Republic Day holiday the holiday has been a point of competition and of belonging to the 'people'. The point argued in this subsection is that different circles claim ownership of the Republic Day holiday, and that their claim of being the representative of the 'people' that participated in the holiday is a result of the perception of the Republic Day holiday as an embodiment of the national imaginary. That is, the holiday is constructed as symbol, as a point of the embodiment of the national imaginary, such that presence and participation in the holiday becomes a sign of the degree of belongingness to the national imaginary and an attempt to be accepted as part of the national imaginary. The holiday is a site which is constitutive of the 'nation', but it is not a steady point, it is a point of transgression, a point that can be pulled in different directions. This shift of the site of 'holiday' attains a meaning since it is at the same time a shift of the boundaries of the national imaginary; that is a redrawing of the boundaries of the national imagination. Different circles attach different meanings to the holiday, but this differentiation of meanings does not deprive the holiday from its importance; on the contrary it increases its importance. By redefining the holiday and its associated activities, the

holiday can be argued as a point where the national imaginary shows itself by simultaneously constructing itself.

In the previous two sections, the emphasis has been on the ambiguous nature of the Republic Day holiday, ambiguous not in the sense that is deprived of meaning, but ambiguous as being open to modification, reconstruction and reconstitution. This openness derives from the Republic Day holiday's being seen and presented as the embodiment of the 'nation' and the best indicator of the national imaginary, such that negotiations have even been made about how to celebrate it. Not only has the Republic Day holiday been a point of contestation between secularist and Islamist bureaucrats, but it has also been a point where different circles redefine their position and place within the national imaginary.

To sum up, in this chapter the themes significant in the Republic Day holiday in the post-1997 period have been analyzed. In the first section, it has been argued that different newspapers: *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, present the Republic Day holiday in different manners by implying one theme over another since they are different in the way they frame national imaginary. In the second section, the themes which seem ordinary in representing the Republic Day holiday are argued to be significant on reconstructing national imaginary and implying togetherness. In the third section, the emphasis has been made on the ways in which the Republic Day holiday can serve as point of contestation, negotiation and intervention.

With this analysis, this thesis states two interrelated conclusive points. First the Republic Day holiday is suggested to be taken as a dynamic point in which national

With this analysis, this thesis states two interrelated conclusive points. First the Republic Day holiday is suggested to be taken as a dynamic point in which national imaginary is embodied onto, therefore different nationalistic discourses develop different ways of both celebrating and representing the Republic Day holiday. Second, the Republic Day holiday is both a point that national imaginary is embodied onto and thus is inclusive for the imaginary terrain of the nation. However at the same time, the Republic Day holiday is a site where negotiations, interventions and contestations about the definition of the “nation” and “national identity” continue. These two points will be elaborated more on the preceding chapter.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the Republic day holiday celebrations and its representations in three newspapers; *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* in the post-1997 period Turkey. Assuming that there is an inherent link between this commemorative activity and the national imaginary, this study has been carried out to reveal the various ways by which this link has been actualized.

This exploration has been carried out on three grounds. First the differences in the ways *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* have represented the Republic Day holidays have been explained. Here, it has been argued that the differences in the representation of Republic Day holidays by these three newspapers are an indicator of the different nationalistic discourses that these newspapers belong to. Second, the ordinary features of the nationalist imaginary which can be traced in the representation of Republic day holidays are explained. Here the role that the Republic Day holiday has played in the sustaining of the national imaginary, by providing temporal and spatial reference points have been emphasized. Third, the Republic day holiday has been approached from a more specific perspective in order

to reveal the reflections of the post-1997 political conjuncture in Turkey in those celebrations.

In all of these three grounds the Republic Day holiday has been taken as point, a platform, and a site which represents and reflects Turkish national imaginary. That is, not only the changes of the issues in the national imaginary can be found in the celebrations and representations of Republic Day holidays, but also groups that wish to be included in or attempt to change the terms of their integration to the national imaginary express their presence via their presence in the Republic Day holiday.

As an ideological field, the field of nationalism is made up of non-tied elements whose identity is 'open', nationalistic discourses intervene onto this 'open' sphere in order to attach meaning to the various happenings and elements in this field. This thesis argues that, the Republic Day holiday has been one of the many ways nationalistic discourses has intervened to constitute the national imaginary in the post-1997 period in Turkey. Previously celebrated as a holiday-of-the-state, with the rise of nationalistic discourses, the scope by which Republic Day holiday has been conceptualized, changed. The extent to which the transformation of the Republic Day holiday from a holiday-that-is-watched to a holiday-that-is participated has been real, is a matter of question, however it is certain that the so-called transformation has led to a divergence in the ways in which the national self participated in these celebrations in the post-1997 period. Thus, Republic Day holiday occurred as a point which has been self-referential and reflective in its relation to the national imaginary. That is, it has been a point where reflections of

the 'nation' can be seen, since it is argued to be a platform where national imagination is embodied onto; and simultaneously a point on which interventions and contestations continue, since the attitude that a certain group has developed in its relation with the Republic Day holiday referred to the attitude that it developed in relation to the national imaginary. In other words, the Republic Day holiday implied divergence as well as it implied harmony.

This thesis states that not in instances where the Republic Day holiday has been presented as straightforwardly being celebrated by 'all the nation', but more in instances where disagreement on and negotiation towards the way to celebrate the Republic Day holiday has been various, the main function of the Republic Day holiday in the nationalist ideology is realized. This means that presenting the 'nation-as-one' as participating in the celebrations without any questioning is to a large extent an illusion. Whereas when there are differences in the way to celebrate the Republic Day holiday among different groups, this situation represents the reality. But the argument made here is not a reality versus illusion comparison. To explain better, when there are differences in the way of approaching the Republic Day holiday, this means that the various groups voice their statements in the imaginary terrain of the 'nation' which is represented by the Republic Day holiday. This does not only sustain that the Republic Day holiday is 'of the nation', but that these various groups are 'of the same nation' even if their priorities are different. This is so because all groups express their positive or negative attitudes via the Republic Day holiday, thus all are referring to the same national imaginary.

In our analysis; there were cases where the harmonizing function of the Republic Day holiday have been more obvious or instances where there have been intense debates occurring around the site of the Republic Day holiday. The conclusive argument of this thesis is that; whether with harmony or with antagonism, whether by a group whose place in the national imaginary is strong or by a group which desires to be legitimately included in the national imaginary, in each circumstance the interventions to the Republic Day holiday by itself implies a series of significations. All interventions, negotiations and contestations occurring in the site of the Republic day holiday signify the 'nation' and 'national imaginary' as a legitimate referent.⁵⁴

Thus, even if there are differences in the way 'nation' and 'national imaginary' is perceived by different nationalistic groups, since all these groups express their difference via the Republic Day holiday, contrary to what it seems to be, they even sustain and strengthen the national imaginary. Though there are seemingly opposite webs of meanings attached to the 'national imaginary', this divergence does not conceal the fact that there is a 'nation' whose imaginary boundaries are constantly renegotiated to be redrawn. Thus, the Republic Day holiday has two overlapping but seemingly contradictory functions which serve to the continuation of the 'national imaginary'. It serves as a point where differences in the 'national imaginary' can be expressed, and simultaneously it serves as a limit to the expression of differences. This second point is mostly disregarded in the

⁵⁴ It should be noted that, the conclusive argument of this thesis is constrained with the newspapers explored in this study. Since *Zaman*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* are newspapers which are close to the center, their approach to the Republic Day holiday are different from newspapers whose ideological positions are extreme. For example, if this study had chosen *Akit* as the representative of the Islamist circle, than the conclusion of this thesis would have been different.

interpretations of the meaning of a commemorative activity in the 'national imaginary'.

Therefore, this thesis argues that the differences in nationalistic discourses do not entail a lessening in the importance of nationalistic belonging and 'national imaginary'. On the contrary, the differences between nationalistic discourses and various groups in their approach to the Republic Day holiday, might reveal dissimilar priorities in the imagination of a 'nation', but still it sustains that all these nationalistic discourses and various groups imagine themselves within the same 'nation', since they all voice their position via the Republic Day holiday which is 'of the nation'. Therefore, the Republic day holiday should be treated as an embodiment of the 'nation', whereas contested interventions on this site are inherently continuous.

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