

THE IMAGINARY OTTOMAN:
AN EXAMINATION OF “OTTOMANISM” AMONG THE ISLAMIC ELITES IN
TODAY’S TURKEY AS AN INTELLECTUAL BRIDGE BETWEEN THE LOCAL
AND THE GLOBAL

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Thesis Abstract

Deniz Kabağağaç, “The Imaginary Ottoman: An Examination of “Ottomanism” among the Islamic Elites in Today’s Turkey as an Intellectual Bridge Between the Local and the Global”

The aim of this work was to shed light on the emergence of the idea of the Ottoman in modern Turkey and its importance in Turkish politics. It was argued that this new idea of the Ottoman was a representation of a social imaginary for the elites and for the leadership of Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), defining the position of Turkey in a globalized world. It was also argued that the emergence of the idea of the Ottoman and the properties ascribed to it are closely related to globalization. Within this framework, a research, focusing on depicting the critical properties of the Ottoman idea, how it is imagined and how the political stances of the AKP leadership relate to it, was conducted through a review of the written sources and by way of a review of the speeches given by AKP leaders since 2007. The research revealed that this new Ottoman, the imaginary Ottoman, is portrayed as a civilization with a different time and space apprehension than the West and as an Islamic imaginary that extends to the present time with an expanded conception of nation and motherland. The imaginary Ottoman, thus, is an attempt to secure a new place with a different identity in the global world; it is a link between the global and the local. The imaginary Ottoman includes elements from the real, historical Ottoman. However, it offers a new sense of the present time, derived from the deconstruction of the past. It is portrayed as a guide of action and identity for today and as a solution to the problems of the national imaginary in the age of globalization. The research showed us that the imaginary Ottoman is a product of the encounter of the newly emerging Islamic elite in Turkey with globalization. Thus, its emergence is directly related to globalization as a historical event. AKP leadership shares the same Ottoman imaginary. The AKP leadership tries to constitute and institute the Turkish society in the way the Ottoman is imagined and projects itself as the representative of the Ottoman imaginary. The Ottoman, in its imaginary form, is not static and transforms continuously, thanks to the creative capability of imagination. Accordingly, it helps the elites and the AKP leadership to redefine and reposition themselves in a globalizing world. It helps them to introduce new ideas, in order to justify their position by selectively using certain events from the vast reservoir of Ottoman history. It also helps the AKP leadership to adopt self-contradictory positions in politics, such as being nationalist without being nationalist and being Islamist without being Islamist. The new habitus created through the imaginary Ottoman and the creative adaptation that this imaginary Ottoman facilitates provide an advantage to the AKP leadership in covering the political spectrum in Turkey and in answering the problems stemming from the Turkish national imaginary. The imaginary Ottoman is, therefore, not an aspiration to revive the historical Ottoman, which would have been a type of Ottomanism, but rather it represents the social as imagined by the Islamic elites and the AKP leadership.

Tez Özeti

Deniz Kabağa, ‘‘Tahayyül Edilen Osmanlı: Bugünkü Türkiye’de İslami Elitler Arasındaki Osmanlıcılığın Yerel ile Küresel Arasında Entelektüel Bir Köprü Olarak İncelenmesi’’

Bu çalışmanın amacı, modern Türkiye’de Osmanlı fikrinin ortaya çıkışına ve bunun Türkiye siyasetindeki önemine ışık tutmaktır. Buna bağlı olarak, bu yeni Osmanlı fikrinin, elitler ve Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) liderliği için, Türkiye’nin, küreselleşen bir dünya içindeki yerini tanımlayan toplumsal bir tahayyülü temsil ettiği ileri sürülmüştür. Aynı zamanda, Osmanlı fikrinin ortaya çıkışının ve bu tahayyüle yüklenen özelliklerin, küreselleşmeyle yakından ilişkili olduğu öne sürülmektedir. Bu çerçevede, yazılı kaynaklar ve AKP liderliğinin yaptığı konuşmalar incelenerek, bu Osmanlı fikrinin önemli özelliklerini, nasıl tahayyül edildiğini ve bu tahayyülün AKP liderliği ile ilişkisini tanımlamaya odaklanan bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Bu araştırma, söz konusu yeni Osmanlı’nın, yani bu tahayyül edilen Osmanlı’nın, Batı’dan farklı bir zaman ve mekan algısı olan bir medeniyet, genişletilmiş bir vatan ve millet anlayışı olan ve günümüze kadar uzanan bir İslami tahayyül olarak tanımlandığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu durumda, bu yeni Osmanlı tahayyülü, küreselleşen bir dünyada, yeni bir kimlikle yeni bir yer edinme teşebbüsü, küresel ile yerel arasında bir bağ önerisidir. Bu Osmanlı tahayyülü, tarihteki Osmanlı’nın unsurlarını içermekte ama, geçmişin dekonstrüksiyonu yoluyla yeni özelliklerin eklenmesi sonucunda, bize yeni bir bugün sunmakta, günümüz için bir kılavuz ve küreselleşen dünyada, ulusal tahayyüllerin yarattığı sorunlara bir çözüm olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu araştırma, bize, yukarıda tanımlanan Osmanlı tahayyülünün, Türkiye’de yeni oluşan İslami elitin küreselleşmeyle karşılaşması sonucunda ortaya çıktığını göstermiştir. Yani, bu fikrin ortaya çıkışı, tarihsel bir olgu olarak, küreselleşme ile doğrudan ilişkilidir. AKP liderliği de aynı Osmanlı tahayyülünü paylaşmakta; toplumu, Osmanlı’nın tahayyül edildiği şekilde oluşturmaya ve biçimlendirmeye gayret etmekte ve bu tahayyül edilen Osmanlı’nın temsilcisi olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Giderek, Osmanlı, bu tahayyül edilen şekliyle, statik olmayıp, hayal gücünün yaratıcılık yeteneği sayesinde, sürekli olarak değişmekte ve buna bağlı olarak da, elitlere ve AKP liderliğine, küreselleşen bir dünyada, kendilerini yeniden tanımlamak ve yeni pozisyonlar almak konusunda yardımcı olmaktadır. Elitlerin ve AKP liderliğinin, geniş bir tarihi olaylar spektrumu içinden seçim yaparak, yeni fikirler ortaya atmalarına ve kendi pozisyonlarını savunmalarına imkan yaratmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, AKP liderliğinin, milliyetçi olmadan milliyetçi olmak veya İslamcı olmadan İslamcı olmak gibi çelişkili siyasi tavırlar almalarına yardım etmektedir. Tahayyül edilen yeni Osmanlı’nın yarattığı bu yeni habitus ve tahayyül edilen Osmanlı’nın yardımıyla sağlanan bu yaratıcı uyum, AKP liderliğine, Türkiye’nin siyasal spektrumunu kapsamakta ve ulusal Türklük tahayyülünden doğan sorunlara cevap bulmak olanağını sağlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, tahayyül edilen bu Osmanlı, tarihteki Osmanlı’yı canlandırma arzusu, bir tür Osmanlılık olmayıp, elitler ve AKP liderliği tarafından tahayyül edilmiş bir toplumu temsil etmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years we have been witnessing that Ottoman, new Ottoman or Ottomanism has been increasingly used by different people to characterize or explain Turkey, Turkey's role, and AKP and its actions. We observe this trend not only in Turkey but also outside. Furthermore, we encounter the Ottoman more and more in daily life, especially within the cultural domain, with an additional emphasis that it represents the true culture of Turkey.

It seems that the Ottoman image we are accustomed to see between the lines of newspaper articles or in high school text books, often with negative connotations and as a defunct structure buried in history, is re-emerging slowly at political rallies, official ceremonies, panel discussions and on prime-time TV series in Turkish and foreign media as a reference point used to explain today's Turkey. What is striking about this new Ottoman idea is that it is not antagonistic to the Republic and the modern life it represents, as we are used to hear, but rather, it is something upon which the Republic was grounded, and is, in some cases, presented as a solution to the problems of the Republic. This new Ottoman is presented to us in Turkey as the basis of our culture and our order, an order where we can find equality, justice and human rights while in foreign sources, it is perceived as the proof and reason behind the efforts of Turkey to become a regional power.

How was it possible that the Ottoman that was trapped and isolated in textbooks, or in the emotional neighborhood meetings of Islamists, slowly but without a doubt, became a reference point in culture as well as domestic and foreign politics? Is there any significance of this re-emergence of the Ottoman? The main idea behind this thesis is to shed light on this new phenomenon: The emergence of the Ottoman in modern Turkey.

The Argument

It is obvious that AKP's repeated election victories is one of the reasons behind this re-emergence of the Ottoman because Islamists have always been connected to the Ottoman and they proudly acknowledged this in the past. However, stating that Islamists are Ottomanist because they are against the secular nature of the Republican order or that AKP is following an Ottomanist policy because it is Islamist, are misleading shortcuts. The dichotomy between the ancient and new regime or the perceived contradictions between Islam and secularism are not sufficient to explain this new phenomenon.

Within this perspective, I argue that this new Ottoman in Turkey is a representation of a social imaginary for the elites and for the leadership of AKP, linking global to local, defining their position and that of Turkey in the globalizing world, while reflecting their understanding of the present and of the society. This imaginary Ottoman has a strong connection to globalization, not only as a guide to it, but also as a product of it.

Finally, I argue that, this imaginary Ottoman is not static, it is changing and transforming.

This thesis, as mentioned above, aims specifically to understand this new-Ottomanism ascribed to AKP, within the framework of the argument presented above. Accordingly, the understanding of how the elites behind the AKP and the leadership of AKP comprehend this new Ottoman is critical for this purpose.

Ottomanism, if it is the correct term, being observed in this form, does not seek to re-institute the past. Rather than a repositioning of the “ancient regime” vis-à-vis the new one, what is being laid down before us is a new present which is presumably a continuation of a different past. From this perspective, the Ottoman for AKP leadership is neither an ideology for bringing back the Ottoman regime – an effort to revive the Ottoman – nor a political program or an aspiration in this direction. This new imaginary Ottoman is about ideals, ideas and norms rather than institutions and it does not seek to re-establish the institutions of the past. It is a different comprehension of the world; it is a representation, an imaginary itself, of the social imagined by the elites in the globalizing world. A new present and a new past, a new history by which a new identity can be nourished is presented to us through this new, imaginary, Ottoman. In this respect, this imaginary Ottoman is an answer to the ideology of the status quo - to Turkish nationalism by the newly emerging bourgeoisie and the elites clustering around it, hence by AKP leadership, in a globalized world.

Different Views

The scholarly work on the re-emergence of the Ottoman, or Ottomanism of AKP is quite limited except for the area of international politics. The review here focuses on domestic politics because the discussion on Ottomanism or the Neo-Ottomanism in foreign politics revolves around axis change and focuses on the concept of *strategic depth* of Davutoğlu (Kramer, 2010, p. 3, 29) (Aydınlı & Mathews, 2008, p. 705). These arguments, in other words, do not correlate Ottomanism, Neo-Ottomanism, with the emergence of Ottoman in domestic politics except those who claim that Ottomanism in its new form has a heavy Islamist connotation.

In the field of domestic politics it is true that there are a number of references to the Ottoman in the conception of Islamist in Turkey but these references usually stay within the bounds of defining it as another form of nationalism or at best as an ingredient of an alternative modernity project (Çınar, 2005, p. 12, 138-167) (Kardaş, 2010, p. 115).

In the area of domestic politics there are very few works focusing on the re-emergence of the Ottoman or elaborating its connectivity with the factors that gave birth

to the emergence of Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) and to its surge to power¹. This may be due to the proposition that the Ottoman in the intellectual make of AKP is a residue of early Islamists' conception of Ottoman. In other words the Ottoman is subdued under the Islam. This approach overlooks a possible transformation of the Ottoman idea. It does not take into account that this Ottoman idea of today can be different from that of earlier Islamist one. Secondly, and in conjunction with the first one, it overlooks its possible connection with the developments that gave birth to AKP, specifically to the developments that brought the separation of AKP leadership from the rest of Islamists in Turkey. In short, the Ottoman in domestic politics is perceived as a companion of the Islamist movement.

The only real exception to this approach is Yılmaz Çolak's article where he focuses on cultural pluralism in 1990. Çolak (2006) argues that "*an idea of Ottoman pluralism ... was constructed as a part of Neo-Ottomanism ... and this model was used to formulate a superior identity encompassing all Turkish citizens*" (p. 587, 588) by late president Turgut Özal. He also adds that later Islamic movements in 1990s Islamised this neo-Ottomanism (Çolak, 2006, p. 587, 588). Çolak's work is important for this study because, although his focus was different, he highlights certain points which are

¹ In fact, a short research in the electronic resources through Bosphorus University Library returns only three articles referring to Ottomanism or Ottoman & AKP in the described framework. Similarly, a review of recent books, since 2009, on Turkish politics shows that only Hakan Yavuz (2009) touches the subjects but very briefly. In all other sources, the issue is the subject of foreign politics.

elaborated and consolidated in the coming pages. The first one of these points is the recognition that there is a new perception of Ottoman, a more positive one, has been emerging in Turkey (Çolak, 2006, p. 587). Secondly, Çolak (2006) points out that Neo-Ottomanism in form of re-writing the common Ottoman past, is something occurring in the present through which the past is modified while shaping the future (p. 587). Third, he points out that this re-writing of history is both critical in the era of globalization where nation states are challenged and it is a result of this process in which new historiographies emerge (Çolak, 2006, p. 588). Çolak connects all these to the Neo-Ottomanism of late President Turgut Özal. He discusses this Neo-Ottomanism within the framework of foreign policy in general but the focus of his work is on cultural plurality in Turkey. Finally, Çolak (2006) points out that, despite its failure, both as presented by Özal and in the Islamist form, the Neo-Ottomanism poses a challenge to the nation state by raising an alternative to the cultural homogeneity, and, by recalling historical cultural diversity and plurality of the society (p. 588). Çolak's approach carries the seeds of the argument presented in this work despite it focuses on early 1990s. Today, as it will be shown in the following chapters, what he discussed relating to 1990s became more relevant and the challenges in front of the nation state, national Turkish imaginary are more apparent.

Çolak (2006), in his article, refers to Hakan Yavuz when he cites the two critical properties of Neo-Ottomanism as the re-articulation of Turkish nationalism in form of increased tolerance to diversity and as the elimination of economic borders in the

Ottoman geography (p. 588). These two points within the presentation of Çolak are intertwined with globalization. This is in line with the argument presented in this work. However, it should be also noted that Yavuz takes a different position in another occasion. In his latest book he argues, when explaining the conservative revolution, “*the transformation of Turkey’s Islamic revolution*”, that “*the conservative revolution is very much based on the Ottoman imperial dream of becoming ‘bigger’ and ‘better’ by overcoming the rigid nation-state ideology*” (Yavuz, 2009, p. 13). He also adds that this “*conservative revolution...(means) creating new cognitive spaces for different imaginings of the past and the reconstruction of the present*” (Yavuz, 2009, p. 13). However, he claims that this is not carried out by the elites but rather it is a bottom up imagining (Yavuz, 2009, p. 13). In this formulation Yavuz suggests that this Ottoman dream was already present in the society and it surfaced when AKP came to power. Here, Yavuz clearly overlooks the role of globalization in the emergence of the idea of Ottoman. Secondly, it seems the Ottoman in this formulation is a static idea as it always existed and surfaced lately as a fuel to the conservative revolution.

In the second article, Güneş Murat Tezcür (2003), explains Ottomanism as a historical consciousness, “*a central element in the conservative aspect of AKP*”, resulting from a search for authenticity in form of a feeling of a deep nostalgia. According to Tezcür, this search for authenticity is a reaction of a feeling of inferiority on the part of the Islamists and the glorious Ottoman past is the remedy to overcome such feelings. The resulting nostalgia, on the other hand, positions Europe and the West

as the “*ultimate other*” in the eyes of AKP people (p. 13). In Tezcür again we see a conviction that the Ottoman idea is static. It is what it was in the past and he overlooks that it may be changing. He does not take into account that the glorious Ottoman past is not as glorious as it seems for some critical Islamists.

Finally, we see Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, touches the subject when evaluating the minority legislation in Turkey. Grigoriadis (2007) argues that the introduction of minority right legislation in Turkey to meet the Copenhagen Criteria² can be an example of the rediscovery of Ottomanism of late Ottoman period and Ottomanism has an enduring legacy in Turkish political thought (p. 424, 432, 434). He makes a clear distinction between the Ottomanism as “*nostalgia for Ottoman grandeur, territorial expansionism and attempts to reintroduce Islam into Turkish politics*” (Grigoriadis, 2007, p. 432) and Ottomanism as a “*liberal political ideology which advocated a civic understanding of Ottoman national identity, embracing all Ottoman subjects regardless of religious and ethnic affiliation*” (Grigoriadis, 2007, p. 432). Grigoriadis, in this argument considers the Turkish political thought as a monolithic block and overlooks an important point. The minority legislation was introduced by AKP, a political party with Islamic roots. This point is critical because the Islamists until the separation from current AKP leadership were neither valuing this late Ottoman “liberal political ideology” nor

² The Copenhagen Criteria for EU membership, adopted at the Copenhagen EU Summit in June, 1993.

they had a different attitude towards the minorities in Turkey when compared to Kemalists. It seems that the minority legislation carries the traces of an idea of peaceful multiethnic coexistence but this cannot be easily explained by the legacy of Ottomanism in Turkish political thought.

Imaginary and Representations

The theoretical foundation of this work is based on the works of Cornelius Castoriadis, Benedict Anderson, Arjun Appadurai and Charles Taylor. In addition, referrals were given to certain articles of Craig Calhoun, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Jonathan Culler and Dilip P. Gaonkar, among others. The common point of all these writers is the conviction that imaginary plays an important role in the construction of reality and they all agree that human communities actualize themselves through certain imaginaries.

The term *imaginary* explains this new Ottoman better than ideology, paradigm, weltanschauung or other similar concepts because, as it will be shown below, it is more flexible, it has boundaries that are more porous and it does not require an internal coherence and logic as in the case of ideology. On the other hand, it is not as ambiguous and loose as paradigm since it certainly has boundaries and it is distinguishable.

However, *imaginary* is a contradictory concept. It is generally used in contrast to real - as illusionary; but in other cases, it is used as the basis for reason (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 551). The simple dictionary definition “*having existence only in imagination, unreal*”³ is not useful because imaginary has a connection to reality, directly or indirectly. The influence of reality in the creation of imaginary and its role in the making of reality compel us to define it in a different way, with less emphasis on its illusionary properties and with a focus on its actualization.

The Social Imaginary and Its Representations:

The Ottoman as a Representation of Social Imaginary

The definition of Taylor in this perspective is a workable one. Taylor (2007) defines the social imaginary as “*the way people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met and deeper notions and images that underlie these expectations*” (p. 23) that is, as the “*way we collectively imagine, even pre-theoretically, our social life*” (p. 50). However, this definition is not very explanatory when it comes to the manifestations of social imaginary, that is to depict social imaginaries.

³ American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.

At this point it may be helpful to look at the definition of social imaginary of Castoriadis because of his emphasis on representations of social imaginary. Castoriadis, when introducing the concept of social imaginary, argues, “*a society is created through the collective agency of social imaginary and is subject to alteration, mundane or radical, within historical time*” (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 7). For Castoriadis, society institutes itself in the imaginary that is composed of social imaginings, significations, that is representation, that have no correspondence to real or rational but through which the creativity of the society is asserted. These representations are social because they can only be instituted by the society and, therefore, they can neither be reduced to the individual nor identified with the collective consciousness of society (Naranch, 2002, p. 6).

The social imaginary, in these definitions, is certainly more than a visual presentation or a myth or a legend. It is reflected through different and deeper significations or representations. It is represented “*in and through things, objects and individuals which presentify and figure, directly or indirectly*” (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 233). These representations, which are also imaginaries, “*can exist only through their incarnation, their inscription, their presentation and figuration in and through a network of individuals and objects which they inform, individuals and objects which exist in general and are as they are only through these significations*” (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 233). In this sense, a signification, or a representation, “*is an ambiguous ensemble of indefinite referrals to things other, which themselves may or may not be significations,*

than what would be observed, heard or perceived directly” (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 151). For Castoriadis’ (2005) social imaginary uses the symbolic and its representations, not only to express itself but to exist, to pass from the virtual to anything more than this (p. 82).

A critical question emerges at this point. How do the imaginaries emerge? In Castoriadis’ framework, the emergence of the social imaginary is not dependent on the existence of certain historical conditions, but rather, the emergence of social imaginary makes the history. The new is created by the society and this “*new*” is not predetermined, it is not the result of preset external conditions by any universal logic or law but it is a result of imagination (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 6). This imaginary, social imaginary, is created by each society and it is what makes a society *a society*, what differentiates a society from another one.

For Anderson (2006), on the other hand, national imaginaries⁴ emerge within certain historical contexts and are products of the encounter of vernacular languages with print capitalism during a period where old dynastic realms and religious communities were not able to combine “*fraternity, power and time meaningfully together*” (p. 36, 46). In other words, national imaginaries emerged when “*the*

⁴ The critical element in Anderson’s analysis, his constructivist approach toward nationalism, crystallized in his claim that nationality, nationhood and nationalism are “cultural artifacts of a particular kind” (Culler, 1999, p. 20) (Anderson, 2006, p. 4). Anderson (2006) defines nations as an “imagined community” and imagined “as both inherently limited and sovereign”. (p. 6)

fundamental cultural conceptions ... [have] lost their axiomatic grip" (Anderson, 2006, p. 33, 36) on the society, and when a new apprehension of time emerged.

This imaginary of Anderson is prone to replication, re-fabrication once it emerges. In Anderson's (2006) words, the national imaginary is the result of;

Spontaneous distillation of a complex 'crossing' of discrete historical forces, which once created become 'modular', capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political or ideological constellations. (p. 4)

Thus, with Castoriadis and Anderson together, we have a more encompassing understanding of the imaginary. First, the imaginary is a phenomenon that may emerge from within the society and/or fabricated top-down by some groups in the society, though we still do not know the interaction that occurs between these two processes. Secondly, historical factors have a critical role in the emergence of imagination for Anderson while, for Castoriadis, the imaginary is the determinant of history. Finally, the social imaginary represents itself through representations, signifiers, that are more than visual and it is through these representations that it manifests itself to us – it becomes more real than real for us (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 90). The representations are also imaginaries.

The Ottoman we face today in modern Turkey is accordingly conceptualized as an imaginary, a representation which corresponds to things other than itself, other than the historical Ottoman. It is an ensemble of meanings inscribed to it. It is a

representation of an imagined social, of a social imaginary. It represents “the way people imagine themselves” and “how they fit together” in a globalizing world.

The conceptualization of the Ottoman as an imaginary, however, does not explain its emergence. As discussed above, AKP’s surge to power is critical in this respect but this does not explain the emergence of imaginary. It can, at best, highlight a correlation between the two. We have seen that Castoriadis suggests an ex-nihilo creation of the imaginaries and Anderson points out historical developments as the critical factor in explaining the emergence of imaginaries. The argument presented in this work leans toward Anderson with certain modifications.

The Critical Factor: Globalization and the Imaginary Ottoman

Castoriadis imbues the imaginary with a “*world forming and meaning bestowing creative force*” but falls short of explaining how this imaginary becomes more real than real⁵ (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 6). The actualization of the imaginary, on the other hand, is

⁵ Although the arguments of Castoriadis are critical for our understanding of imaginary, the question of how this imaginary and its representations, the symbolic, are created by the social still remains unsolved and, more importantly, how this imaginary is separated from fantasy, from the illusionary, i.e., how it became a reality – how it is actualized, is still an open subject. Castoriadis brought an extended form of Aristotelian praxis to answer this problem. The socio-historical world for Castoriadis is created ex-nihilo, subject to certain restrictions, through the imaginative praxis (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 6). Within the framework used by Castoriadis, praxis is the only way people can experience autonomy because it is not a pre-determined activity - it has no determined purpose. It is grounded in emotions, intellect, and character as well as in interest in an environment full of uncertainty and plurality (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 8). The agents tend to gravitate to praxis because only through praxis they can experience autonomy (Gaonkar, 2002, p.

critical because, without being actualized, the imaginary is not different from fantasy.

Therefore, the emergence and actualization of an imaginary should go hand by hand.

Anderson, as we saw above, highlights the historical developments as a critical factor in the emergence of imaginaries.

Appadurai offers us an insight into the contemporary factors that affects the emergence and actualization of imaginaries. The imaginary, in his framework, is neither fantasy, nor a vicious cycle, but rather is “*a form of negotiation between sites of agency and globally defined fields of possibilities*” (Appadurai, 2008, p. 31).

For him, the recent developments in the electronic media and deterritorialization of people on a global scale provide resources and ground for the working of imagination as “*the constitutive force of modern subjectivity*” (Appadurai, 2008, p. 3, 4).

Imagination, thus, according to him became “*a collective social fact*” and the role of ordinary imaginary is transformed by breaking out from its conventional forms and by

8). Praxis according to Castoriadis, carries its purpose and cannot be reduced to a mere technique, it follows a project but not as an implementation of a technique or theory but rather as anticipation (Habermas, 1987, p. 2). Finally, praxis is related to a totality (Habermas, 1987, p. 2). Castoriadis, by transcending Aristotle, argues that praxis is directed towards the other and towards the autonomy of others and is certainly future oriented (Habermas, 1987, p. 2). Praxis, because it is creative (and we can say that it is conditioned by the radical imaginary of the agent), overrides all determinations and creates the other - the new (Habermas, 1987, p. 2). However, as many point out, this formulation has its own weaknesses and does not fully explain how the social imaginary is actualized (Habermas, 1987, p. 330).

becoming “*a part of mental work of ordinary people*” (Appadurai, 2008, p. 5).

Imaginary thus turned out to be “*fuel*” or a “*ground for action*”.

This new role ascribed to imagination by Appadurai implies that the collective experiences of human communities, geared with the resources provided by the electronic media, provides new strength to the imagination – to the imaginary in the minds of people, to initiate, direct, and act by shaping daily practices, thus constructing their individual and collective biographies (Appadurai, 2008, p. 54). Accordingly, construction of the imaginary, i.e., the act of imagination, slips out of the hands of social engineering projects, out of the realm of nation- states, which excelled in top-down fabrication, and becomes the everyday practice of individuals and groups (Appadurai, 2008, p. 9).

The context of Appadurai is globalization. Globalization enables people to disembed themselves from their traditional social setting, thus provide the background for the creation of new imaginaries and the power to actualize them. In this perspective, there is an important point to be underlined. Globalization, as the historical factors affect the imagination process. However, this time, the historical development, that is, globalization, works against the national imaginaries.

This discussion establishes the theoretical foundations behind the argument that the imaginary Ottoman as a representation of a social imaginary has a strong connection to globalization. This connection is not only a one way relation as envisaged by the elites. The imaginary Ottoman is not only a guide to this global world but it is also a

product of this world. The imaginary Ottoman refers to things other than historical Ottoman, it is imaginary, and it is something new. It is a product of globalization.

Transforming Social Imaginaries: The Importance of Ottoman

Taylor, besides giving us a definition of social imaginary, also introduced the concept of transformation of imaginaries. Taylor (2007) explains this process where “*new practices, modification of old ones either developed through improvisation or else launched by elites in such a way to recruit a larger and larger base*” (p. 30). Taylor (2007) theorizes that “*what starts as theories held by a few people come to infiltrate the social imaginary, first of elites then the whole society*” ... that the social imaginary gradually extends “*below and beyond social elites*” and to “*other levels and niches of social life*” (p. 147). However, to counterbalance this top-down infiltration through theories, Taylor (2007) adds that, “*humans operated within a social imaginary well before they ever got into the business of theorizing about themselves*” (p. 26). He, in other words, stresses that the transformation of the social imaginary is not a one-sided top-down process, from elites to society, because the theories of the elites are “*schematized in the dense sphere of common practice*” (Taylor, 2007, p. 30). They are shaped by society. The antagonism between the creation by the society and the top-down fabrication by the elites disappears in this process of transformation of social imaginary. The new, emerging imaginary, according to Taylor (2007), is not superimposed on the old one but, by reinterpretation, retains its origin in it (p. 153).

Thus, with Taylor, we come to an understanding of transforming social imaginary that is shaped both by elites and/or by the everyday practices of individuals when the historical conditions permit. This social imaginary is a product of a process consisting of top-down and bottom up molding. The social is both imagined and instituted through this process. In this framework, the representations and significations of the social imaginary also transform while the imaginary is constructed and actualized. The symbolism changes form and new symbols and representations appear while the old ones either disappear or are transformed and are ascribed new meanings either by the deliberate actions of some groups, elites, or by the society through the daily acts of people. The changes in the meanings ascribed to representations are therefore critical to our understanding of the social imaginary they represent. We can observe and understand the transformation of the social imaginary by looking at the newly emerging representations such as new objects, visuals, images, acts, ways of behavior that have meanings corresponding to things other than themselves and/or by looking at changes in the meaning of certain others as they lose their signifying capacity.

The imaginary Ottoman in this framework becomes critical. First, it helps us to probe into the social imagined by the elites supporting AKP and by AKP leadership. Secondly, it helps us to understand the transformation of this social.

Methodology

The design of the research for this work focuses on how the Ottoman is imagined, on its critical properties and on the relation of AKP leadership with this imaginary. Naturally, having an understanding of how and by what means the Ottoman is imagined was the first pillar. The focus here, at the first step, was to understand the way in which the new Ottoman was imagined by the elites and the relation of this process to the concept of imagination. The second step aims at distinguishing the critical properties of this new Ottoman, differentiating it from the Ottoman of the past and from the prevalent Turkish national imaginary. Thirdly, the relation of AKP leadership with this imagination, e.g., with this new Ottoman was probed.

The books of Mustafa Armağan and Ahmet Davutoğlu were extensively used for the first step; that is, to understand the process through which this new Ottoman is imagined and to identify the carriers of the imagination process, and to relate this process to the concept of imaginary.

These two scholars were chosen because they both advanced in their careers after the second half of 1990s, after the surge of Islamic political movements in Turkey, and focused on the role and position of Turkey after the Cold War and on the meaning of the Ottoman in such a world. Armağan is a prolific writer and a popular historian who has

written several books on these subjects. He is a well-known intellectual among the elites, he has received the *Türkiye Yazarlar Birliği*⁶ award three times, and has written twenty and edited nine books related to Ottoman studies. He currently writes at the leading right-wing newspaper *Zaman*.⁷ Davutoğlu, an active politician, is the Minister of Foreign Affairs as of the date of this work and as an academician, he has written four books and numerous articles mostly focusing on Ottoman, civilization, the apprehension of history and foreign politics of Turkey in a globalized world (Wikipedi, n.d.). In this sense, both Armağan and Davutoğlu are the representatives of the elites that support the AKP leadership.

Next, an extensive review of written sources was conducted to understand what this Ottoman represents in the minds of the elites, the AKP leadership and to determine how this imagined Ottoman is different from other imaginaries. This constitutes the second step. However, making an imaginary discernible is problematic. Castoriadis points out that imaginaries are not produced by single individuals, e.g., they cannot be reduced to individuals, and they are social. What is looked for, therefore, is not the

⁶ *Türkiye Yazarlar Birliği*, Union of Turkish Writers, was founded in 1978. It is the leading association of conservative, Islamist-oriented writers in Turkey. The awards have been given since 1981, mostly to authors or poets focusing on Islam, Ottoman and on other similar subjects. Some of the recipients have been Cemil Meriç (1981), Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1982), İskender Pala (1989), İşaret Publishing House (1991), Halil İnalçık (1994), Hasan Celal Güzel (1999), Mim Kemal Öke (2002) and *Zaman Newspaper* (2008).

⁷ *Zaman* is the leading Islamist newspaper in Turkey, which is closely affiliated with the Fethullah Gülen Group.

fantasies of a group of people, but rather an imaginary that is emerging gradually in the minds of a group of people . What is important is not the ideas of this or that person but the reflection of this imaginary in peoples' minds. In other words, a puzzle should be completed to arrive to a a picture of this new Ottoman. Nevertheless, pieces of the puzzle are held by different people who are connected to each other through the puzzle itself.

A review of Islamist publications in Turkey on the subject of Ottoman since year 2000 was conducted to overcome this difficulty. The objective was to see whether specific themes, properties, related to the Ottoman surfaced during this period. This work involved an overall review of the titles and explanatory notes about books published by publishing houses focusing on Islam and on related titles. An Internet research focusing on two prominent online bookstores and queries of those titles including “*Islam*” together with the review of other books published by the same publishers were conducted and those publishing houses that focused on Islam, Islamic lifestyle or similar subjects and books written by known Islamist intellectuals were selected.⁸ The total number of titles published by them was 12,982. Approximately 80% of these books were eliminated when the books that were exclusively related to Islam, to its interpretation, its reflection in everyday life and fiction titles were excluded.

⁸ Total of one hundred and seventy-one publishing houses.

Similarly, the titles related to the general history of Ottoman Empire or biographies were eliminated and ninety-one books related to the “Ottoman” were selected. The table below shows the classification of these books according to their emphasis.

Table 1 The Classification of Books Related to the Ottoman

Classifications	Number of Books
Ottoman civilization is the central subject	12
Ottomanism in general	11
Books related to Ottomanism and Ottoman civilization as a general subject	33
Glorification of the reign of Abdulhamid II	7
Deconstruction of post-1908 period	19
Reconstruction or emphasis of certain critical periods in Ottoman or Islamic history such as “Fetret Devri,” Çanakkale War and Andalusia	3
Books related to deconstruction of Ottoman and Republican history	29
Books related to continuity of the values in the society	9
Books that have a deconstructive / constructive nature on “ <i>Vatan</i> ”	13
Unclassified Books	7

Certain subjects or themes appear on this table. These were the concept of Ottoman civilization, the deconstruction of Ottoman history, a “*Vatan*”, which is larger than Anatolia, and certain other ideas that would constitute a starting point in trying to understand the imaginary Ottoman.

A second critical question concerning the second step of the research was where to look for material. The very reason that led me to look at this subject, e.g., the Ottoman phenomenon, became a problem because the Ottoman was practically everywhere. Since the focus of this work is politics and AKP, a pool is created consisting of people around AKP who would be examined in terms of their conception of Ottoman. This pool is

defined as “*people connected to AKP*” and the books authored or to which contributions were made by these people were reviewed to comprehend, draw the boundaries, pinpoint critical properties of the Ottoman as imagined and to understand how it has been re-imagined. Within this framework, the pool included the founding members of AKP,⁹ the administrative cadres of the party,¹⁰ all the ministers of AKP governments since 2002, AKP deputies as of August 31, 2010, the University Rectors appointed by Abdullah Gül since July 2007 and the chairmen and board members of autonomous regulatory bodies or special institutions such as RTÜK,¹¹ SPK,¹² and TRT¹³ appointed either by a AKP majority in the parliament, by the AKP government or by Abdullah Gül as the president.

A research using Google Books and the two largest online bookstores in Turkish, Antoloji¹⁴ and Pandora¹⁵ was carried out to find books written or to which contributions were made by these people. This research uncovered fifty such books related to social sciences, excluding economics and business administration, of which nineteen were

⁹ Sixty-five people.

¹⁰ One hundred and forty-eight people.

¹¹ Radio Television Supreme Council.

¹² Capital Market Board.

¹³ Turkish Radio and Television, state-controlled broadcasting unit.

¹⁴ Website, <http://www.antoloji.com/>

¹⁵ Website, <http://www.pandora.com.tr/>

reviewed. These nineteen books were directly or indirectly related to the Ottoman and/or to Islam or to the position of Turkey in a globalized world. Five of remaining books are also related to the above subjects but they were neither on sale anymore nor available in nearby libraries.

When reviewing this material, the focus was on the critical properties ascribed to the Ottoman by the authors while keeping in mind the themes that were briefly listed above. Naturally, as it will be later discuss in detail, these characteristics are presented as historical realities in practically all instances, with qualifications in some cases. However, the objective of the review was not to determine whether what was presented was reality but rather, drawing a picture of the Ottoman with what was derived from different sources.

Finally, in this second step, the works of certain other conservative writers were reviewed to differentiate this new Ottoman imaginary from the earlier conceptions of Ottoman, especially with the Ottoman in the mind of earlier Islamists and conservatives. These works were those of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Nurettin Topçu, Sabri Ülgener, Mümtaz Turhan and İsmail Kara.

In the last, the third step of the research, all the speeches of Tayyip Erdoğan posted on the official AKP web-site and that mention the Ottoman were reviewed to understand how AKP is connected to this imaginary. This source was chosen because it is the official mouthpiece of the party; it covers a period of more than four years. The issues of the newspaper *Zaman*, since 2007 were also reviewed in order to follow the

discourse and actions of AKP leadership pertaining to the subject.

Zaman was briefly mentioned above but it is appropriate to provide more information about it in order to make clear why it is used. As the leading, right leaning, and Islamist-oriented newspaper, *Zaman* is the first newspaper in Turkey to have created a daily website, in 1995. The name of the newspaper is the reverse spelling of the word *Namaz* (prayer) in Turkish. It is printed in local languages in Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Turkmenistan and the United States. The parent group also owns a weekly periodical, *Aksiyon*, and a news agency, *Cihan Haber Ajansı*. Fehmi Kuru, Mümtazer Türköne, Şahin Alpay, İhsan Dağı, Ali Bulaç, Beşir Ayvazoğlu, Hilmi Yavuz, İskender Pala and similar conservative-leaning writers with Islamist backgrounds periodically publish articles in *Zaman*. In short, *Zaman's* archives were one of the richest among all newspapers in Turkey where the news related to the Ottoman in the discourse and actions of AKP leadership could be extracted and analyzed.

The last point on the methodology is about the role of individual biographies. The main source of this research was the written material produced by a group of people and the speeches of the leaders of AKP. The personal biographies, life experiences of these people have definitely a role in both the articulation and the formation of the imaginary Ottoman. If the biography of Mustafa Armağan would have been probed, we could have been able to see critical events which might hint us the ideas promoted by him today. İskender Pala for example, one of the authors that is referred, was expelled

from the Army in 1990s. The impact of this event in his psyche and its ramifications in his articulation of the Ottoman is not probed in this work. The reasons behind subtle nuances in the imaginary Ottoman portrayed by these people may lie deep in their life experiences. While the focus of Armağan is on history, for example, we understand that he is not a historian. Can this be a hint for his relentless criticism of historians? Similarly, Davutoğlu spent a part of his academic life in Malaysia when he started to write about the concept civilization. Can this have an impact in his conception of the Ottoman as an Islamic civilization center? There are many such questions. This work was not designed to answer these questions but it acknowledges that it is not possible to draw a line between these individuals, between the cultural forms in which they exist and the social characteristic of the imaginary they voice. There is a complex interaction between these points and we can neither deny nor ascribe a deterministic importance to this interaction. This is an area that has to be worked on. The only reason why the individual biographies are not probed in this work is to focus on the imaginary itself and on its importance in Turkish politics.

Concepts

Finally, before proceeding to the organization of the work, the utilization of certain concepts should be clarified.

Throughout this work, the Ottoman is used without any reference to the imaginary whenever it is referred by a third person. In all other cases, either “imaginary

Ottoman”, is utilized or a reference to its imaginary character is given.

Islam and Islamist are probably the two widely used concepts after “the Ottoman”. Islam is used as the religion instituted by the Prophet Mohammed and Muslim as the follower of this religion; similarly “*Islamism*” is used as a political ideology aiming to establish an order basing on this religion and the “*Islamist*” as the followers of this ideology or activities guided by this ideology. Third, “actualize” is used instead of “realize” for the imaginaries. Although both have similar meanings, “*make real or concrete, give reality, substance to something*”, “actualize” looks better because its meaning is narrower than “realize” as the latter also means “*become aware*”. In this context, actualization of an imaginary means that it is no more an illusion - it becomes reality or a part of the reality.

Organization of the Thesis

As noted above, this thesis is about the emerging Ottoman phenomena in Turkey and it was argued that the Ottoman is a representation of the social imagined by the newly emerging elites and shared by AKP leadership. Furthermore, it is argued that this imaginary Ottoman serves as a guide in the global world and it is a product of globalization. Within this framework, the work is organized as follows:

Chapter 2: The Ottoman as an Imaginary and the Role of History in its Imagination starts with the elaboration of the idea that the Ottoman presented to us, with various meanings ascribed to it, may not correspond to the historical Ottoman, e.g., to

reality and the difference between the imaginary and the real dimensions of the Ottoman was emphasized. The first part of this chapter is fully devoted to the distinction of real and imaginary dimensions of the Ottoman because the awareness of this difference is critical for this work. It is clear that, if we disregard the imaginary dimension of the Ottoman, we may end up in an endless discussion of what the real Ottoman is and as a result, we will hardly be able to understand the importance of the imaginary Ottoman for the newly emerging elites and AKP leadership. This is true, especially if we think that the real Ottoman is different from what has been presented to us. The separation of imaginary and real dimension of the Ottoman in this chapter, therefore, paves the way to our comprehension of it as an ensemble of symbols – as an imaginary representing an imaginary social. It also enables us to look at it critically, without being drawn into the discussion of what the real history was.

Later in this chapter, the focus shifts to the way the elites imagine the Ottoman by using the science of history. As noted above, the works of Armağan and Davutoğlu were used to show how the elites mobilize the imaginary capacity of the Ottoman, in other words, the capacity to permit seeing something that does not exist, and instill the imaginary dimension of the Ottoman with new meanings, thereby ascribing new meanings to the Ottoman. This re-imagination of the Ottoman as a representation of a social imaginary is accomplished by using the science of history. The correspondence, of how Armağan and Davutoğlu use history, and the historian to imagine a new Ottoman, to the theoretical foundations of imaginaries and its representations laid down

by Castoriadis and others is probably the strongest evidence that this Ottoman is an imaginary.

Chapter 3: The Critical Properties of the Imaginary Ottoman draws a picture of the Ottoman as imagined with the assistance of history and later establishes its first connection with globalization, with the historical factors. Seeing this picture is critical not only to understand what this imaginary Ottoman is but also to comprehend the imaginary social it represents and to differentiate it from the existing Turkish national imaginary. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first three are devoted to the different characteristics of the imagined Ottoman. The concepts of civilization, the role of Islam and the hyperreality of the Ottoman are elaborated in these sections. In these sections, we note that this imagined Ottoman presented to us is neither a defunct order nor a historical entity buried in history. This imaginary Ottoman is a civilization having a different conception of time and space than the West and it continues in the current Turkish society as the common social imaginary. Islam is at the center of this imaginary Ottoman but this Ottoman does not represent a religious order of the world. The imaginary Ottoman cannot be reduced to Anatolia; nor is it an imaginary only for speakers of Turkish language. It is a more encompassing imaginary than the national Turkish imaginary. Nevertheless, it is not an alternative to Turkish identity, but rather a cradle where a new identity can be constructed.

In the last section of this chapter, the focus was on showing how the imaginary Ottoman is portrayed as a solution to the problems of globalization, of the national

imaginaries and nations in a globalized world. Defining the current problems in this context requires the definition of the current world, which, at this point, is defined as a global multi-civilization world and a locality where the real identity of the society is replaced with a fake one. The imaginary Ottoman, however, is presented to us as a solution to the problem of nation-states both globally and locally because while it is a cradle of identity, it is global in nature, it represents an open civilization, and it has an appeal to humanity.

One aspect of the connection between the imaginary Ottoman and globalization is elaborated in this chapter. This aspect shows us only the role of the imaginary Ottoman in a globalized world as a guide and it is obviously the point of view of the elites. The elaboration of the second aspect of this relation, i.e., the role of globalization in the imagination of the Ottoman, is discussed in next chapter.

This last section, in addition to highlighting the first connection between the imagined Ottoman and globalization also shows us how the theories and views of the elites, on which their imagined social are based, find their way into daily life in the form of solutions to the problems. Taylor explains to us that these theories or views both gradually shape the world and are shaped by it. From this perspective, in this last section, we see an example of how the dual process of Taylor works at least partially.

Chapter 4: The Imaginary Ottoman and the Politics first focuses on the political scene and explore the basic, preliminary relation between AKP and the imaginary Ottoman. Later in this chapter, the case for connection between the imaginary Ottoman

and globalization is fully presented because this link with the globalization is critical for us to understand the deeper impact of the imaginary Ottoman on politics. This chapter starts with the elaboration of how and why this imaginary Ottoman pertains to politics in general and to the AKP specifically by using the concept of “social magic” of Bourdieu. Afterwards, in the first section, it is shown how in the words of Erdoğan, in his different speeches, the same Ottoman as imagined by the elites manifests itself. Second section gives examples of how the AKP leadership imposes the idea that the current society is in fact Ottoman. This section not only includes examples from the speeches of leaders but also shows how an Ottoman space is created throughout Turkey and how our culture, which is identified with Ottoman culture, is used to elaborate this argument. The third section, in turn, shows how the AKP leadership asserts that it is the representatives of this Ottoman.

In the fourth section, I attempted to demonstrate that the imaginary Ottoman is both the product of globalization and a guide in the globalized world and I emphasized the ability of the Ottoman, as an imaginary, to transform and to adapt. This is partly due to the fluid nature of globalization that gave birth to it but also due to the creative capacity of the imaginary itself as put forward by Castoriadis and by Gaonkar in form of creative adaptation. This new imaginary, is, therefore, both in the process of making, transforming, and a part of the process in making the world as a guide. In this sense, as put by Castoriadis, it is illusionary but it also partakes in rationality. Later in this section, I tried to show how this ability to change gives an important role to the imaginary

Ottoman in the intellectual make-up of AKP and why it is important in the context of Turkish politics. The concept of habitus, with some possible qualifications, is used in this chapter to explain the perceived discrepancy between the ambitions and capabilities of both the AKP leadership and Turkey and to illustrate the daily, practical, actual benefits that it offers to the AKP. Secondly, I tried to show how habitus, together with the creative capability of imagination, is critical for AKP in internalizing outside influences stemming from globalization.

CHAPTER 2

THE OTTOMAN AS AN IMAGINARY AND THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN ITS IMAGINATION

“Ottomanist” is an adjective that denotes various concepts in Turkey, ranging from Islamists to persons wanting more involvement in the Middle East. It has a negative or positive connotation depending on usually where one positions himself on the secularism debate. For example, we know that the Ottoman period or being the heir to the Ottomans has always had a positive meaning in Islamist circles.

After the electoral victory of AKP in 2002, “Ottoman” became a more politically loaded word. The secular front in Turkey started to label AKP and its policies as New/Neo-Ottomanist, hence anti-Republican and Islamist with a negative connotation despite AKP’s repeated rejection. The chorus grew with the addition of foreign commentators the more Turkish foreign policy towards Middle East became more pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli in tone.

One explanation for the increasing utilization of Ottoman, Ottomanism or New/Neo-Ottomanist is obviously related to the AKP’s successive electoral victories and in its ability to reshape both domestic and foreign policy. Ottoman, before AKP assumed power, was perceived as a distant utopia which could only be discussed in an historical or cultural context and not as part of politics. AKP’s Islamist origin and the long-standing emotional and intellectual ties of Islamists in Turkey with the Ottoman,

along with the “otherization” of the Ottoman by the secular Republic, seems, in this perspective, to have set the stage for the reconnection of the Ottoman with politics. However, this explanation is a limited one to start working on the Ottoman phenomenon that we currently observe in Turkey. It does not take the changes in the world or the transformation of the AKP leadership during the last decade of 1990s into account and, more importantly, it assumes that the Ottoman presented to us today is the same Ottoman honored by the Islamist before the 1990s. Accordingly, we have to look at other explanations for the emergence of the Ottoman in modern Turkey.

The mere fact that the Ottoman signifies so many contradictory things, e.g., good, bad, pre-modern, theocracy and empire, glory, victory, defeat, Turk, devshirme and so on is an indication of the capacity of the Ottoman to correspond to different meanings. This capacity that we observe in the daily utilization of the word “Ottoman” is a critical sign of the role that is attributed to it in this work.

These different meanings ascribed to the Ottoman may or may not correspond to the reality. In order to make this clearer, we have to see the Ottoman as a symbolic system with various, even contradictory, meanings ascribed to it. In this case, the Ottoman may correspond both to a reality that is to the historical Ottoman, but also to other meanings that have nothing to do with the historical Ottoman. This second group of correspondences of Ottoman makes up its imaginary dimension. Thus, there are two dimensions of Ottoman, its real dimension and its imaginary dimension.

It is impossible to think of the “Ottoman” without its first dimension, that is without a real component that refers to the historical Ottoman state and society. In this first dimension, the real one, what Ottoman refers to is already determined, it is “already there” in history, and we are discovering, finding it. In this dimension, we can only be questioning the link of the Ottoman with reality. Here, in its real dimension, its meaning, what it represents, can only be verified or falsified by historians (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 89, 90). We obviously cannot avoid this real dimension of the Ottoman because we cannot define it otherwise. However, a focus on the real dimension may confine us to an endless discussion of what “real” history is. Such a discussion may lead us to ignore that the Ottoman is continuously changing through the continuous ascription of different, even contradictory, meanings to it and we may bypass this transformation process.

As argued above, the Ottoman is a representation of the social imagined by the elites, of their theories and their conservative-leaning view of the social; it is an imaginary. Therefore, as a representation of the social imaginary, in its second dimension, the Ottoman is imagined by the elites. It is an imagination of a world and the meanings related to it. These meanings are not based on facts or reality but rather they are meanings ascribed to reality (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 82, 83). Similarly, the Ottoman has also meanings ascribed to it by the society, which may or may not coincide with the meanings ascribed to it by the elites. Thus, the imaginary dimension of the Ottoman is a site where different meanings become intertwined and reflected back to their creators, e.g., to the society and to the elites.

It is difficult to grasp the role of the imagining in the construction of meanings of the Ottoman. Its real dimension continuously overshadows the imaginary dimension because it is much easier to see, to understand and to draw a correspondence to the real. The imaginary in the Ottoman, whether imagined by the elites or by society, therefore, is in the mode of “*none being*” (Castoriadis, 2005, p. 90). It does not refer to anything real; it does not correspond to any reality. Naturally, we cannot observe this non-referral state because we have already observed the real dimension. However, this imaginary dimension is in the continuous process of being made. We cannot have a grasp of the Ottoman in the eyes of intellectuals, academicians and politicians without speculating about this imaginary dimension of the Ottoman.

The existence of this dimension in the Ottoman reflects the actualization of an imaginary capacity, the capacity to permit seeing something that is not, to see something in it that which is not. The Ottoman as a representation, therefore, has been attributed a capacity of being larger and different than the historical Ottoman through its imaginary dimension and this dimension is used by the elites to express their imagination of the social and to pass it from virtual to a different state. The imaginary dimension of the Ottoman is instilled or filled with new content through the repetitive attempts of the elites under the pretext of presenting new historical realities in the real dimension. However, it is critical to note that the imaginary dimension of the Ottoman, that is the repository of the meanings ascribed to Ottoman that do not correspond to reality, represents the reality for those who ascribe these meanings to the Ottoman.

Up to now I discussed that imagining of the Ottoman, despite its illusionary character, is presented to us as an effort to discover the reality. Now, I will show that the history and the historian have a critical role in this process of imagination, veiled as a process of searching for the truth. When we examine how Mustafa Armağan and Ahmet Davutoğlu conceive history, in general, and Ottoman history, in particular, we will see that the history is a tool to imagine what is Ottoman.

Armağan (2008a) argues that our history is not an addendum to the Western history (p. 88). A more academic formulation of the same idea comes from Davutoğlu (1994), in one of his earlier books where he argued that identifying world history with the history of the West not only ignored the contributions of other civilizations but, more importantly, it limited future alternatives to only those that might be produced by the West (p. 5).

History as progression along a straight line, as held by modernity theory, is rejected in this framework as the narrative of the dominant ideology, which characterizes Europe as a success story. According to Armağan (2009), while this narrative is not real, it nevertheless shapes the intellectual make-up of the defeated in such a way that history is perceived as a history of decay (p. 91). The defeated, in this case, is obliged to accept that past is past and there is nothing valuable in it. Armağan (2008b) argues that these societies are, therefore, unable to transform their past into their history and are unable to probe the past (p. 28). They fail to establish a meaningful relation with it and are unable to humanize their past. They “*fight with their histories*” endlessly and become

completely blind to their history (Armağan, 2008b, p. 28, 147). Alternatively, they live in their past continuously and lose their direction. Their history becomes either an object of desire or an object of fear (Armağan, 2008b, p. 27). Similarly, Davutoğlu (2009) underlines that societies without a historical consciousness cannot assess the interconnectivity of current realities and their historical experiences and perceive themselves as the passive agents of history and their victories and defeats as the consequences of the acts of others (p. 60). Armağan and Davutoğlu are not alone in this conception of history. Ayhan Buz (2008), in his book says, in the same vein, that we should rely on our past to be confident in the future (p. back cover).

In this perspective, Armağan (2008b) argues that history has never been and should never be objective; it has always been presented to us through the eyes of others (p. 44). Accordingly, they both argue that we should look at the past from our own perspective and make it our history – in other words, we should reject the idea that the past is past (Armağan, 2008b, p. 26, 27). We should look at history, comprehend it - not to go back to the past but to move forward (Armağan, 2008b, p. 32). In this perspective, history is transformed into an interpretation of today and to a solution for tomorrow; it is where we find the clues for arriving at the future (Armağan, 2008b, p. 32).

The reading of history, therefore, becomes a powerful tool that “*we can use to create a community of slaves or ... to ignite freedom*” (Armağan, 2008b, p. 35). “*A real historian should therefore be like a ghost hunter*”, searching for the imperceptible to make it visible (Armağan, 2009, p. 17). The role of the historian, in this context, is

similar to that of a magician who stimulates the capacity of his/her spectators of seeing something in something that is not, which is the capacity of imagining. The historian has therefore the capacity, as a person who has an access to history, to create new content in the imaginary dimension of this representation by claiming that he/she is discovering the reality.

Armağan (2009), in fact, says that history is a construction; it is continuously redefined and, in return, determines today (p. 67). It is a process in the making (Armağan, 2009, p. 88). Accordingly, if we do not reinterpret our history today, if we do not interact with our history today, if we cannot get clues from our history about the problems of today, that history will lose its meaning (Armağan, 2009, p. 88). However, if we confront history, it will gradually present itself more; in other words, it will increasingly be more discernible to us in the way we imagine (Armağan, 2009, p. 21). In other words, this imaginary will look more and more real to us the more we use our capacity to see something that is not through the meanings that we have already attributed. In this respect, Davutoğlu (2009) says, “*history is the critical element that determines the position of a society in time*” (p. 65). Therefore, “*it can be re-interpreted by the political authority as a part of strategic apprehension but it cannot be changed or disregarded*” (Davutoğlu, 2009, p. 65). This is a widespread view shared by many

intellectuals, academicians and politicians as noted in the introduction of a book, that can be considered authoritative in respect to the perception, imagination of the Ottoman by AKP (Çakır, 2006, p. v).¹⁶ The introduction suggests that history is more important today as an instrument than as a concept. It became, “*a science of future rather than a science of past*” and is a solution to the problems we face resulting from the disappearance of modern nationalism and the emergence of modern empires (Çakır, 2006, p. v).

Such a conception of history is not only important as it is presented as a tool to imagine a different world but also because it paves the way for the actualization of this world. History, as we have seen, is perceived as a source of solutions to current problems through which we can imagine our future. As a result, it is transformed into a picture of the present, providing clues for solving current problems. The new meanings of these representations, in return, are reflected to the society and shape the new social imaginary. These theories, views which are the background of the proposed solutions of

¹⁶ Six of the fourteen contributors to the book have been appointed to various critical positions since 2002. It is noteworthy that all the authors except one are prominent scholars and most of them, even those who have no direct relation to AKP, are known for their pro-Islamist views. Ahmet Davutoğlu is the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adnan Ertem was the Istanbul Regional Director of General Directorate of Foundations and later he was appointed to the position of Assistant to the Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry, Çoşkun Çakır is the president of the Board of Director of Turkish Radio and Television and also a member of Radio Television Supreme Council, Akif Aydın is a newly appointed member of The Council of Higher Education, Ömer Dinçer was the Undersecretary of the Prime Minister and later he was appointed as the Minister of State and finally Iskender Pala is one of the three jurists of the Grand Presidential Award for Culture and Art. Turgut Cansever is a prominent architect who won the Agha Khan Award for Architecture twice and he is well known for his Islamist views.

the elites to current problems, through the process, became the solutions we find in society - in its history in our case. History, in short, becomes a tool for imaging a new world and breaks away from the past and from the reality. Armağan (2009), to refute this “criticism”, argues, with a number of references to Karl-Otto Apel, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, that he is not seeking objectivity but he is open to any verification procedure (p. 33). However, this verification may never be possible because what is to be verified may have already become a part of the reality in the imagination, and become more real than real, impossible to refute. Therefore, the proposed solutions, although they may originally be based on an imaginary, may become a part of the process to actualize this imaginary.

Now that the role of the history in the imagination process is clarified, we have to look at how the Ottoman history, specifically, is perceived and constructed within this context.

Armağan (2008a), Davutoğlu and others argue that our interpretations of Ottoman history, despite the fact that we are direct descendants of the Ottoman, is either directly based on the discourse and narrative created in Europe or it is a reaction to them (p. 205-208). Erol Özvar (2006), similarly, maintains that although there are many researches on Ottoman history, the history that is written is European history (p. 124). Ahmet Sait Akçay (2009), paralleling others, states in his article, where he discusses the construction of national literature, that history writing in Turkey employs a modernist and progressive paradigm (p. 157). Davutoğlu, finally, argues that the biggest obstacle to

a proper understanding of the Ottoman is the historical succession scheme, i.e., the progressive reading of history, implanted in our minds by the dominant approach to history. Davutoğlu (2006) argues that quite a number of historians who identified the history of humanity with European history; automatically connect Ottoman history to European history (p. 3). The Ottoman, however, he continues, as the last ruler, in an area covering Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Mediterranean, deeply affected human history and, therefore, is an impediment to such readings (Davutoğlu, 2006, p. 7). In conclusion, all these writers share the view that we are alienated from the real Ottoman history.

Armağan (2008a) (2009) argues, we dehumanized it; we do not know Ottoman women, men, and children and the subjects who made the history, the Ottoman people, after Suleiman the Magnificent, are replaced by the West – by Europe (p. 239) (p. 31). Armağan (2008b) argues that in response, we should hunt for the “ghost”, stop evading ourselves, and stop replacing ourselves with the West (p. 130). Armağan warns us that in this ghost hunting, in this search for ourselves, the Ottoman is an island similar to an iceberg. It is something that is much larger and different from what we see today.

This is a call to imagine what else the Ottoman can be other than the meanings that were already ascribed to it. It is a call to fill the imaginary dimension of the Ottoman with contents produced on the real dimension with the help of the science of history. This call for the imagination is direct and explicit in the words of Armağan (2009), “*The Ottoman people no longer exist. The word Ottoman does not point out any place. There is no one who speaks Ottoman*” (p. 140). In other words, he tells us that the

Ottoman is ready to be filled in with a new content. However, he warns us that Ottoman means a core, a spirit, “*something which circulates in the veins of the society*” (Armağan, 2008b, p. 208). An attempt has been made to keep it alive – not by protecting it directly but by safeguarding its ideals.

As we have seen, the science of history became a call for the imagination and Ottoman history was transformed into a shell for the content of this imagination. The imagination of the Ottoman – the utilization of its capacity of being something other than itself, thus gives the elites an opportunity to reflect their imagination of the social and to actualize it.

It is, therefore, no wonder, that Mustafa Özel, in the opening speech of a Symposium on the Freedom of Conscience and Religion in the Ottoman Empire, stated that “*history is the tutor for the future*” (Özcan, 2000, p. 13) and İbrahim Refik (2009) in the presentation of his book wrote “*Ottoman history as a representative of culture, civilization and identity is a treasure and inheritance from which we can benefit*” (p. back cover).

CHAPTER 3

THE CRITICAL PROPERTIES OF THE IMAGINARY OTTOMAN

The detail of the content which is elaborated by the elites on the real dimension is critical for us to be able to comprehend what the imaginary Ottoman represents. This chapter aims to show that the call for the imagination of the Ottoman that was underlined in the previous chapter found a rich response in terms of the meaning ascribed to it. The first four sections go over those properties of imaginary Ottoman that show the distinctiveness of the social it represents. Later, in the last section, a second set of properties of Ottoman will be discussed. These properties constitute the basis on which the imaginary Ottoman is presented as a solution to the problems of globalization, of nation states, of national imaginaries thus shows us how the imagined Ottoman becomes a guide in the global world.

Social imaginary, Taylor (2007) says, “*is an understanding rather than a description of the social space*” (p. 25). Therefore, the imaginary cannot be observed directly. Observing it, similar to the observation of the black holes, the existence of which we can only confirm by spotting the bending of the light on their boundaries under the impact of gravitational forces and thereby looking at their difference. Accordingly, the first focus in this chapter is on certain properties of this Ottoman that enable us to see the difference of the social that it represents.

These properties are repetitively emphasized by the representatives, intellectuals, academicians and artists, of the elites supporting AKP in different writings. Naturally, the Ottoman has more properties in the eyes of these elites. However, only those that are critical in showing that it represents a different social and helping us grasp the impact it has on AKP and politics were selected rather than trying to give a complete picture.¹⁷ In fact, giving a complete picture is nearly impossible because the social imaginary and its representations are transforming continuously.

Probably, the first property of the Ottoman that should be underlined is the presentation of the imaginary Ottoman as a realm different from the West and Western Civilization. It represents a social with a peculiar time and space apprehension different than those of the West. Secondly, Islam is the central element of this imaginary Ottoman, not only as a normative component, but also as a legitimation of its claim to be the sole and the last representative of *Kadim*¹⁸ civilizations and by providing the ground on which the Ottoman plurality is constructed. Third, continuity of the Ottomans as a social is strongly defended. Finally, and in conjunction with all of the above, the

¹⁷ I cannot suggest that the boundaries of the imagined Ottoman are equally shared by everyone related to or supporting AKP. There are quite a number of dissident views who have different arguments on certain subjects. I find this natural and I do not think that the existence of these arguments materially change the picture of the Ottoman that I will try to depict when taking the overwhelming number academicians, intellectuals and politicians who share a relatively common picture into account.

¹⁸ *Kadim*, in this context, is defined as “the one that no one remembers what was prior to it” in one of the *Kanunname* (Cihan & Doğan, 2007, p. 31).

Ottoman is hyperreal in a geographical perspective and it is imagined as being different from the imaginary Turk. It is larger than the Turk but certainly embodies the Turk.

As we will see below, this imaginary Ottoman is not an identity per se, although it carries the claim that “we are all Ottoman”, it is, rather, a cradle in which the people can construct an identity. These properties do not point out a specific identity that we can denote certain people but they constitute a breeding ground for a different identity without directly contradicting the existing one. The prototype of such an identity, for example, is given by Bahadırođlu (2006) as “*being an Ottoman means, unifying the hearts in an embracing and encompassing axis of love without being part of any ethnicity*” (p. 11).

The Ottoman Civilization – Different Time and Place – Apprehension

Probably the most critical attribute of the Ottoman as imagined by the elite is its time and space apprehension that differentiate it from the West and qualify it as a different civilization.

Davutođlu (2006) argues that the Ottoman, the political and social integration of the region under the umbrella of one civilization, has been an ideal since Alexander the Great. This ideal was realized by the Ottomans through the integration of the geography of *Kadim* civilizations and by embracing the consciousness of all these civilizations (p. 12). The Ottoman in this geography, through its interaction with different civilizations, created its new original civilization (Çakır, 2006, p. 87). Davutođlu (2006) argues, the

long duration of Ottoman rule in the Afro-Eurasian region, depended upon a peculiar relationship between the Ottoman order and *Kadim*, the ancient, civilizations (p. 7). He notes that, the Ottoman power emerged after the Mongol invasion that dissolved various structures in this geography and it established an order. The background behind the gradual but continuous consolidation and expansion of Ottoman power is its position as the sole representative of the *Kadim* civilizations in the region (Davutoğlu, 2006, p. 10). Similarly, Mehmet İpşirli (2000) says the Ottoman as a *Cihan Devleti* (Global State) took over the experiences of various states created a synthesis and developed its own style (p. 162). This style, he argues, not only manifested itself administratively but also in every other sphere of life such as art, politics, bureaucracy and daily life. The Ottoman, thus, is presented as a different world, a different civilization, a continuation of the *Kadim* civilizations, and a natural inheritor of the region. The position of the Ottoman, therefore, cannot be predicated on the degree of its modernization. The difference of the Ottoman is not something that can be comprehended by determining where the Ottoman was located on the trajectory of history vis-à-vis Europe. The space of the Ottoman cannot be determined by looking at the boundaries drawn by the retreats and advances of the West but by the reach of the people who belong to this world.

As far as the apprehension of time is concerned, it is argued that the Ottomans had a self-assurance that was eternal, a conviction reflected in the official name of the state *Devlet-i Aliyye-i Ebed Müddet* (The Eternal State) (Cihan & Doğan, 2007, p. 33). According to Davutoğlu (2006), this self-assurance, together with the concept of *Kadim*,

connects the past to the future in the Ottoman realm and represents the time apprehension peculiar to it (p. 30). In this apprehension, the Ottoman does not move in the homogeneous empty time of Anderson but exists, eternally, in the simultaneity of past and future – in the instantaneous present of Anderson (Anderson, 2006, p. 24).

The West strengthened its dominance the more it loosened the time consciousness of the *Kadim* civilizations, the conviction that it is eternal, and perceived the Ottoman as the biggest obstacle in this process (Davutoğlu, 2006, p. 13). The confrontation with West, therefore, stems from the West's insistence on the superimposition of its own apprehension of space and time, its own social imaginary, on the Ottoman. The Ottoman, Davutoğlu (2006) argues, was sure about the eternity of its historical existence, about its time, as much as it was sure about its comprehension of the human accumulation, its space, thus its imagination of the world but it collapsed, under the pressure of the West, when it lost this historical consciousness, the assurance that it is eternal and universal (p. 13).

The Role of Islam

The imagined Ottoman, as a distinct civilization, has Islam as a central element. In fact, the current apprehension of Ottoman civilization is an extension of Islamic social imaginary.

We know that the *Ulema* (Muslim theologians and scholars), in the Ottoman period, conceived the word *Alem* (universe), the world, in the Islamic literature and its

extension, *Nizam-ı Alem* (Islamic world order), in a way very close to the concept of civilization (Hocaoğlu, 2003, p. 124). The Islamic world, *Alem*, in this conception means both the world of the Muslim and the world designated as Muslim world (Hocaoğlu, 2003, p. 124). In other words, this is a world in the mind, in the imagination, of the Muslim rather than being the geography of the Muslims. It represents the social imaginary of the Muslim and it exists independently from the external designations. This link between the concept of civilization and the Muslim social imaginary is a key in understanding the Islamic nature of the Ottoman civilization, in other words, the social imaginary represented by the imaginary Ottoman today.

Secondly, the Ottoman civilization, the imagined Ottoman world, was depicted as a synthesis of all the previous *Kadim* civilizations and where different groups live peacefully together under the umbrella of the Ottoman state, in the Ottoman order, in Pax Ottomanica. When we probe this world, the concepts of synthesis and Pax Ottomanica, we see how deeply they are related to Islam and see the imprints of Islamic imaginary in its core.

The arguments that the Ottoman is the sole and last representation of the *Kadim* civilization is symmetrical to the argument that Christianity and Judaism are embedded in Islam and converged in Islam as it is the last religion (Karlığa, 2000, p. 103). The argument of synthesis, amalgamation and representation of *Kadim* civilizations is therefore deeply influenced by the Quranic claim of being the last religion, encompassing and embodying the other two monistic religions. Similarly, there is the

argument that Muslims embrace the cultural accumulation of all the ancient, civilizations as well as the ideas of the Christian philosophers because all the cultures are considered as *ezeli hikmet* (eternal wisdom), which should be grasped by every Muslim according to Qur'an (Karlığa, 2000, p. 104, 105).

When, on the other hand, the multi-linguistic, multi-religious structure of the Ottoman, Pax Ottomanica is discussed, we see that the Ottoman is again perceived as an Islamic melting pot, a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multicultural civilization that existed peacefully, by respecting the rights of everybody (Pala, 2006, p. 156, 157). İpşirli (2000) states that this order could last for centuries because the Ottoman ruled according to Islamic law despite the fact that it was a Turkish state (p. 161). Within the context of Pax Ottomanica, what is permitted and not permitted in the Ottoman is determined according to Islamic principles and despite some variations in the history, the Islamic law determined the boundaries of peace and tolerance in the Ottoman order (Akgündüz, 2000, p. 63-65, 68, 69). In this respect, the Ottoman had superiority to other Islamic states, excluding the first one run by the prophet, because all Muslims in the world were considered as the equal members of Ottoman society until the *Tanzimat*¹⁹ (Akgündüz, 2000, p. 64). It is also argued that this tolerance was equally relevant for

¹⁹ *Tanzimat* refers to the introduction of new laws where the Muslims and non-Muslims had equal rights. People living in Ottoman territories were considered as equal. Muslims who lived outside the the Ottoman territories were consequently differentiated from those who lived inside.

diverse Islamic sects to whom the state was equidistant (Öz, 2000, p. 129) (Öngören, 2000, p. 135, 136) (Kurşun, 2000, p. 149). Similarly, the rights of non-Muslims were also perceived as God given and respected. Mehmet Aydın (2000), for example, points out that non-Muslims had human rights in accordance with the general framework of Islamic law (p. 121) (Akgündüz, 2000, p. 65).

Therefore, the Ottoman is perceived as the creator of a culture of divine responsibility, an ideal of world order, *Nizam-ı Alem*. It is imagined as the social of Muslims. In this imaginary Ottoman, minorities have never been oppressed as long as they complied with Islamic law (Akgündüz, 2000, p. 66, 67). Ali Müfit Gürtuna,²⁰ for example says, “*we did not segregate minorities from ourselves in our history*”. All the different elements of the Ottoman society, Gürtuna says, had a place in the construction of this glorious civilization (Aydın, 2000, p. 188). Ahmed Akgündüz (2000), at this point, notes that even a Christian slave could take an oath on a bible in the Ottoman order though in Turkey we cannot do it today (p. 67). He argues, for example, what we observe today as multi-jurisprudence is just a manifestation of the tolerance and freedom granted to the subjects of the Ottoman state (Akgündüz, 2000, p. 69).

As we see, Islamic civilization, in this perspective is transformed into Ottoman civilization or, at the very least, Ottoman civilization is perceived as an extension of

²⁰ Former Mayor of Istanbul.

Islamic civilization and the Muslim social imaginary is transformed into a social imaginary represented by imaginary Ottoman, albeit in a modified form (Şentürk, 2010, p. 84). In the same context, to explain how the Ottoman broadened the equality of Muslims to all the Muslims of the world as opposed to limiting it to those who are living in its boundaries, Akgündüz (2000) also claims that the Ottoman was the center of civilization in the Islamic world, i.e., the center of Islamic civilization (p. 64).

As we see, in these two arguments, in the synthesis and Pax Ottomanica, Islam is the core of what is Ottoman; as Ahmet Mithat Efendi²¹ says, “*The Ottoman ... had a sacral meaning*”²² (Armağan, 2008b, p. 225). This bonding of Islam with the Ottoman is the backbone what Davutoğlu calls the assurance of being *Kadim* and *Ebed-i Müdded* (eternal time/eternity), being aware that it existed since time immemorial and is eternal.

This bond between the Islam and the Ottoman was, however broken during the nineteenth century. A new understanding, of distinguishing true Islam from the existing order, emerged and was maintained through the twentieth century. What we see today, at the beginning of twenty-first century, in the imagined Ottoman, is a transformation again on the reverse direction, a re-conciliation of Islam with the Ottoman in the mind of elites.

²¹ A popular Ottoman writer and journalist (1844-1912).

²² “*Osmanlı ... bir mana-i mukaddesmiş*”.

During the late nineteenth century, an articulation of the difference between Islam and Ottoman, the prevailing order at that time became widespread. A detachment between the two had started. The Ottoman state had been retreating under the pressure of the West. There was a radical questioning of the Seljuk – Ottoman period and of the system that was already identified with Islam. However, the essence of Islam could not be criticized because of its divine nature (Kara, 2005, p. 95). Its practice was therefore the target. The criticism of the practice, however, meant criticizing the *Ulema*, the state, the existing order. This was to protect Islam from the criticism, to defend it, as maintained by Şemsettin Günaltay,²³ “*It is not Islam that prohibits our progress, but the Islamic faith that was taught to us*”²⁴ (Kara, 2005, p. 88, 89). Similarly, new ideas were introduced to save the State but these had to be internalized through religion because there was no other way to legitimize them. Pre-republican Islamists, for example, reformulated the religion and pragmatically incorporated modern concepts such as liberty, equality, and solidarity into religion under the pressure of finding a solution to the problems of a collapsing Empire (Kara, 2005, p. 52, 60-62, 64, 87). All these new ideas were contradicting with the then prevailing Ottoman order. As a result, the

²³ He is a Turkish historian, politician and former Prime Minister (1883-1961). He was a member of Ottoman Parliament from 1915 from the Committee of Union and Progress until its dissolution.

²⁴ “*Terakkimize mani olan İslamiyet değil bize öğretilen müslümanlıktır*”.

religion, Islam and the prevailing order, the Ottoman, started shifting away from each other.

At this point, a focus on true religion, which is closely correlated with apprehending the Ottoman history as decay, emerged. This position of the Islamists continued into the Republican period, with such prominent Islamists as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nurettin Topçu, while in different ways, all made a distinction between Islam and Ottoman, at least for the period after Suleiman the Magnificent. Topçu (2008), for example, mentions the greed of those who were supposed to defend religion is behind the clash of religion and science in the Ottoman period (p. 57). The target of Topçu was the Ottoman *Ulema* which was an integral part of the Ottoman order and he severely criticized the *Ulema* in his other works also (Topçu, 1978, p. 159). Kısakürek (1973) on the other hand wrote that “*the ideal that makes us the conqueror of the world shadowed more and more during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*” (p. 29). The ideal he was mentioning was obviously Islam.

Today, as shown above, this detachment ends in the minds of elites, and, not only the period before Suleiman the Magnificent, but the Ottoman in its entirety, is more and more identified with Islam once again within the concept of civilization. This, Islamic re-imagination of the Ottoman permit it to encompass the totality of the social and it is a critical element of the continuity argument that will be discussed in the next section.

In conclusion, the assurance of eternity and universality, the loss of which was the cause of dissolution, is in the process of being re-imagined in the minds of the elites through the reconciliation of the Ottoman with Islam. The imaginary Ottoman, as a representation of a social imaginary, regardless of the degree of correspondence to reality, is becoming an example of Islamic civilization, but is being referred to as Ottoman. In the next section I would argue that elites imagine the Ottoman in such a way that it becomes the “living” example of the Islamic civilization.

We Are All Ottoman

The imagined Ottoman is conceived not only as a historical entity but as if it also exists today. In fact, there is strong emphasis that the social imaginary represented by the Ottoman extends to the present; in other words, there is an argument of continuity. This continuity of the Ottoman to the present has been discussed by many scholars, such as Şerif Mardin, but what is emphasized in our case is not a background effect infiltrating the Republican structures, but an existence as a hidden identity as opposed to the presumed new fake identity (Cihan & Doğan, 2007, p. 7). İskender Pala, for example, claims that “*although we never accept, the foreigners see the Turks as the Ottomans*”. Yavuz Bahadıroğlu (2009) wrote a book on the same subject entitling, “We are Ottoman”.

The Continuity argument is important because it links the present to the past and constructs an awareness that we have all been a part of the same whole and share the social imaginary that is represented by the imaginary Ottoman (Vakkasoğlu, 2007, p. back cover). In continuity, we also see the re-emergence of the consciousness of time, being eternal, that, Davutoğlu suggests was lost. However, in order to suggest that the current society is Ottoman, we have to overcome the problem posed by the historical dissolution of the Ottoman state. The reconciliation of Ottoman with Islam is a critical step in asserting continuity but it is not enough. It is strengthened by a second critical argument: rejection of the Ottoman history as a decay and decomposition. This argument is critical because it secures the separation of the historical Ottoman from the Ottoman as an ideal or, better to say, as an imaginary and, makes projection to the present possible.

In fact, rejection of decay and the reconciliation of the Ottoman with Islam are the two sides of the same argument to re-gain the lost time and space apprehension of the Ottoman as a civilization and as a social imaginary.

The history of decay in a certain sense is the rejection of a transition narrative, which implies an absence, a lacking or incompetence vis-à-vis the other, i.e., Europe or the West (Chakrabarty, 1992, p. 4). The imagination of the Ottoman without a history of transition is new because it requires the rejection of decay and negation of modernist, progressive reading of history. The Ottoman and the Turk, over the past hundred years, have been figures symbolizing “lack” similar to that of “the Indian” which was

eloquently shown by Chakrabarty (Chakrabarty, 1992, p. 6). Today this “lack” if not completely rejected is vigorously questioned and, as a consequence, continuity can safely be defended. A number of intellectuals, academics and politicians share the view that we cannot apprehend the last centuries of our own history as decay, decomposition and degeneration (Armağan, 2008b, p. 18). In this argument, the obsession with the concept of decay is one of the major obstacles to our understanding of the Ottoman. This conception of the Ottoman as dead and no longer on the stage of history after a long period of decay is called the discourse of impotence and the psychology of defeat. This psychology of defeat, in turn, shows how we otherize the Ottoman. Through such a process, we think we are not responsible for the decay and the dissolution of the empire and turn its history into something that shows what we should not be rather than what we should be (Armağan, 2009, p. 28, 45, 115). The reclaiming of the glorious past of Ottoman history in its entirety and the rejection of decay, the psychology of defeat inevitably attacks the official history, as noted by Mehmet D. Doğan (2007) in his book “*End of the Ideology of Defeat*”, and claims that what we should be is already in the history.

It is obvious that this imagination of the Ottoman contradicts with the history of the imagined Turkish nation. However, it is striking that it also contradicts the Islamists who, similarly, referred back to *Asr-ı Saadet (Century of Happiness/Life time of the Prophet Muhammad)* and treated the Ottoman with the same severity as the Turk of today during the late nineteenth and early twenty-first centuries. Necip Fazıl for

example, who is one of the distinguished Islamic intellectuals of the Republican period and highly praised even by AKP leadership (Kurt; April 25, 2007), characterizes Ottoman history after the sixteenth century as a progress of disease. Similarly, Topçu (1978), another prominent Islamist, said “*the state power was the enemy of the people in the last centuries of the Ottoman*” (p. 198). He criticized the Ottoman as severely as Kısakürek in many occasions. He, for example says “*fitre (sedition) and taassup (fanatism) revived during the last centuries of the Ottoman and religious institutes turned into state institutions, worldly institutions disguised under the cover of religion*” (Karaman, 2010, p. 169).

Rejecting the decay, therefore, opposes both the official history of the Republic and also the perception of the Ottoman in the minds of many early Islamist intellectuals who are the forefathers of the supporters of these views today. The current imagination of the Ottoman transcends both the Republicans, which has roots in the Ittihadists, and the Islamists who followed the late-Ottoman Islamists, all of which agreed on the impotence and failure of the Ottoman. Mehmet Akif Aydın (2006), for example, on the subject of Islamic/Ottoman law, tells us that the Ottoman state was able to survive for more than six centuries because it provided its subjects an acceptable legal system and justice, and provides examples to show that the Ottoman order was not completely defunct and irrational (p. 190, 195). On the subject of the totality of legal system, in the same context, Aydın (2006) (1996), took the subject to another level and suggested that even the Kemalists wanted to preserve the old Ottoman legal system but refrained from

doing so under pressure at Lausanne (p. 221-224) (p. 310-312). In other words, he claims that the Ottoman, rather than being defunct, was a working order that we had to abandon under the pressure of West.

The Hyperreal Ottoman vs. The Turk

In the previous section, it was shown that the Ottoman is re-imagined by the elites as a representation of a social imaginary in form of a civilization with a different time and space apprehension where Islam is in its core. The rejection of Ottoman decay on the other hand, paves the way to the expansion of this imaginary Ottoman to the present. In this section, I want to probe another characteristic of the imaginary Ottoman.

The Ottoman that no longer carries the burden of its actual disappearance from the scene of history and presented as eternal through its Islamic core is also hyperreal. This term originally belongs to Jean Baudrillard and he defines it as “*the simulation of something which never really existed*”, a stimulated version of reality. Here, a modified version of the term as used by Chakrabarty is used. In this utilization, hyperreal “*refers to certain figures of imagination whose geographical referents remain somewhat indeterminate*” (Chakrabarty, 1992, p. 1) while keeping its original meaning ascribed by Baudrillard in mind. Europe for the Turk or for the Indian, for example, is hyperreal in this context. It is something that does not exist in the form it is imagined even for those who imagine it but nevertheless exists with its undetermined boundaries as an object of desire. The term is used for the Ottoman in order to underline its difference from the

Turk which already became a reality through actualization of national imaginary.

The best way to start may be to look at what Zekeriya Kurşun says about the Turk. He notes that the “*Ottoman state is a Turkish state in terms of its founders*” but “*it belongs to the Islamic world in terms of civilization*” (Kurşun, 2003, p. 161) and “*it was a universal system*” (Kurşun, 2003, p. 173), adding, that despite the Turkish identity, the Turks were only one of the Muslim communities in the empire. The Turkishness of the Ottoman is not disregarded but the Turk is only a part, though an important part, of the Ottoman while the Islamic core and its system are more central, eternal and universal.

The imaginary Ottoman is first of all Islamic in terms of civilization, in terms of the world it represents. The Turk was present but how and where? Many intellectuals and academicians have addressed this issue and it is obvious that there has been an effort to balance the Turkishness of the Ottoman. İpşirli (2000), for example, says the Ottoman state was a Turkish state, though there were other elements influential in the administration, in the economy and in daily life (p. 161). However, this Turkish state is so Islamic that it called itself *Devlet-i Islamiye* (Islamic State) (İpşirli, 2000, p. 161).

The Turkishness of the Ottoman is defended on the grounds that the Imperial court and the high Ulema have Turkish origins and the official language of the state was Turkish. İpşirli (2000), for example, continues his argument by saying that, “*in this Islamic State, Turkishness of the court and high Ulema are critical elements of the system*” (p. 185). As far as the Turkishness of the court is concerned, the discussion focus generally on two subjects. The first one is the devshirme issue and the second one

is the status of Harem and, despite various counter arguments, it is usually accepted that neither the institution of Devshirme nor the ethnic origins of the women in the Harem affects the Turkishness of the court (Tayşi, 2000, p. 176, 177) (İpşirli, 2000, p. 164, 185). On the subject of language, the argument is that there would be no modern Turkish if there had been no Ottoman. Moreover, the contradictions between the Seljuk State, also a Turkish State, and the Ottoman are said to derive from the Seljuk's use of Persian as their official language, unlike the Ottomans (İpşirli, 2000, p. 166). However, it is also noted that language has never been the subject of any policy either (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 61). In the Ottoman order, Turkish was the official language of the bureaucracy but it was not the language of the society and it was not considered a part of the identity (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 61).

These, however, are enough to preserve the central place of the Turk in this social imaginary. The Turk, as it was demonstrated, is real; it is there, but it does not have a central role in the imagining of the Ottoman world. In other words, the Turk exists but it is not a building block of the social imaginary represented by the imaginary Ottoman; it is already tainted with reality. The position of the Turk becomes more apparent when we examine two critical concepts upon which the Turkish imaginary is constructed: "*Vatan*" (motherland) and "*Millet*" (nation). Both of these concepts are expanded in the context of the imaginary Ottoman in a way incompatible with the current Turkish imaginary.

We have to note that the Turkish national imaginary lacks the spatiality of the third wave nationalism that Anderson explains. The borders of Turkish state were drawn neither by the arbitrary orders of the central powers, as in the case of Africa, or by the necessities arising from the problems of communication and transportation, as in the case of Americas. In contrast, they were determined by temporary armistices ending battles and became permanent borders after Lausanne. This is an issue that is largely exploited by the intellectuals and academicians, with Anatolia being portrayed as the point of last retreat rather than as the motherland. Accordingly, Anatolia or the borders defined by *Misak-ı Milli* (National Pact) are not definite boundaries that determine the space of the imagined social; they only point out an area where the Ottoman retreated under the pressure of the West (Gürdoğan, 2003, p. 119).

Armağan (2008b), for example, says that putting Anatolia at the core is at best losing half of Ottoman history because we cannot ignore the importance of Rumeli (p. 19). Davutoğlu (2009) reiterates the same point by saying that “*the Ottoman state had a political power base centered in Istanbul on the Anatolian-Rumeli axis*” (p. 69) and placing Anatolia at the center contradicts historical, cultural and geographical realities. This perception we have of ourselves is an anomaly produced by colonialism and by the Cold War. Therefore, we cannot, should not, construct our vision, today, as an entity reduced to Anatolia. Armağan (2008a) says that this is a drama of a generation conditioned to perceiving the world within the boundaries of *Misak-ı Milli* (p. 12). A drama, in this context, that, Davutoğlu (2009) argues, which “*is the consequence of the*

decision taken to be a regional power under the umbrella of the dominant Western civilizational realm instead of being a weak center of its own civilization” (p. 70).

Davutoğlu (2009) argues “*the new Turkish nation state accepted that it would contain itself within Misak-ı Milli borders and it would be a part of the Western axis, in line with the rejection of the political ideals and institutions of the Ottoman” (p. 69).*

Anatolia is no longer our sacred fatherland, but a castle into which we have retreated. The deconstruction of the sacred nature of Anatolia implies that our space is not limited to Anatolia. *Vatan* is therefore relieved from its *de jure* boundaries and is enlarged conceptually without being redefined. Our motherland Anatolia, which was vigorously defended by early Islamist and Republicans becomes just a location in the hyperreal Ottoman. The imaginary Ottoman is hyperreal because it is everywhere, it has no definite boundaries, it has no limits, and it just exists as it is. It is an ensemble of symbols, and a symbol itself. It is presented as reality but it lacks the geographical spatiality required to be a *Vatan*. Nevertheless, it exists. The creation of a hyperreal geographical space with the help of the imaginary Ottoman is at stark contradiction with the territorial Turkish nationalism. Clouding the existing conception of *Vatan* and enlarging it without definite boundaries, has a substantial impact on our comprehension of the present, on our understanding of where we locate ourselves within the global world. This detachment from the Kemalist territorial nationalism is critical because it represents a point of departure rather than a different place. Republic of Turkey was the only country that did not pursue a pan-nationalism among those that were created out of

ashes of the Ottoman Empire. The emergence of the imaginary Ottoman represents a clear demarcation from this point and it represents a journey in terms of defining the boundaries. It makes them porous rather than highlighting new ones. Accordingly it is a journey, the destination of which is impossible to know, due to the transforming nature of the imaginary from which it is originating.

The hyperreality of the Ottoman in terms of *Vatan* takes us back to a point highlighted by Anderson about the inherent limits of the nation as all nations implicitly accept the existence of other nations. The Turk, for example is good example of this limited imagination within the context of *Misak-ı Milli* and the Turkish language. The hyperreal imaginary Ottoman, on the other hand, has quite porous and expendable boundaries and it seems it denotes a different type of nation than the imagined communities of Anderson. In fact, Davutoğlu defines the *Millet*, nation as “*not as an eternal political unity ... but, as the consequence of a stable historical process and a togetherness formed during long historical segments...*”²⁵ *Millet* in this definition, is first of all, independent of the political structure, from the state, from which it is practically impossible to separate the Turk. This independence in return precludes that the boundaries of the state may not match with the space occupied by the *Millet*, an

²⁵ “*ezeli bir siyasi birlik ... değil, istikrarlı bir tarih sürecinin ürünü olan ve uzun tarih dilimleri içinde oluşan bir birliktelik olarak kabul edersek...*”

assumption that was already discussed above. Secondly, the nation, in this definition, is a product of common history that extends well beyond the boundaries of Turkey.

Therefore, the nation may include the Turk and the *Vatan* may include Anatolia but they certainly are not limited to them. The Ottoman, as an imaginary, is much larger, more encompassing than the Turk because the nation is separated from the state in all of its dimensions; that is politically and geographically. The Turk has an importance only in relation to the state as its founder, manager. *Millet* is envisaged as spanning well beyond the boundaries of the *Misak-ı Milli* and the *Vatan* is enlarged together with the *Millet* well beyond the boundaries of the state.

In this case, unlike the Turk, this hyperreal Ottoman denotes neither a certain group of people nor a definite geographical space. It thus replaces the connotations made by the Turk with wider and different ones. The hyperreal Ottoman is not in opposition to the Turk or Turkish because the Turk is already a part, but only a part of this imaginary. In fact, the imaginary Ottoman in this perception is not the opposite of anything; it exists by itself as an imaginary, differently from others.

The Imaginary Ottoman as a Guide in the Globalized World

How the Ottoman is re-imagined through the new content in its imaginary dimension in form of a cradle of an identity is discussed above but the imagined Ottoman is not limited to it. It is also presented as a solution to the current problems of especially nation states and national imaginaries through the meanings and content ascribed to it.

The presentation of the Ottoman, the history, as a solution is important because the implementation of the policies based on these solutions will, supposedly, be the building block of the actualization of the social imaginary that it represents. This process, that is the implementation of these solutions, implies the entry of the theories of elites into the “*dense sphere of daily life*”, where they will be modified, once more, through the dual process of Taylor. In other words, if the imaginary Ottoman were not capable of being a source of these solutions, it would have remained a fantasy rather than being an imaginary of a social on the way to actualization.

A second critical point is the nature and source of the problems addressed by the imaginary Ottoman. It is important to underline that these problems are centered on issues faced by national imaginaries- by nation-states, because of globalization. The growing inability of such structures to hold multiplicity and diversity in their domain is the primary problem addressed by the imaginary Ottoman.

However, it should be noted that the imaginary Ottoman is not presented as an answer to the inequalities or social problems such as poverty, which may equally be connected to globalization. In fact, these are not even discussed as critical issues. The justice of the Ottoman order is about the equal treatment of different identities, about the right of preserving these differences. In other words, the justice of the imaginary Ottoman is a predicament for those who suffer under the national imaginaries and not for those who suffer under the ever expanding market of globalization. This lack of interest, which is concealed under the guise of equality for all, is a reminder to us that

the Ottoman imaginary is a bourgeois imaginary aiming at guiding its owners in the turbulent waters of the global world.

This chapter will first depict the present constructed through the imagined Ottoman. Secondly, additional properties ascribed to the imaginary Ottoman by the elites, that make it a suitable candidate for providing solutions for the problems of national imaginaries will be presented.

When Hilal Görgün (2003) says, “*we should not be discouraged from discussing the future because to construct today we need an imagination of the future as much as our history*” (p. 173), we see that the present is a construction based on, both an imagined future and on history. The past, the present and the future are immersed in each other in an inseparable way. We see that there exists a present figured out with the help of the imagined Ottoman and there is no separation between the present as an external reality and the imagined Ottoman as a map to understand this present and to construct the future.

We have already discussed how the past is re-imagined through deconstruction and how continuity is asserted to prove that the same social imaginary represented by the imaginary Ottoman prevails today. This deconstruction of the past not only helps us in imagining a different “*historical*” Ottoman, but also reveals a different present through continuity. Accordingly, to understand this present, we should look at the deconstruction of the past more closely.

This deconstruction has two aspects, each having a different but conjoined understandings of the present. The first one is the rejection of the perception of world history as the history of the West and the rejection of the idea that history progresses along the trajectory drawn by modernity theories. This aspect reveals a present with a global, multi-civilization world, whose appearance or, more accurately, re-appearance, is facilitated by the collapse of the socialist system and by globalization (Çalış & Özlük, 2007, p. 153, 203).

Secondly, and intrinsically tied to the first one, is the rejection of the perception of the Ottoman history as a progression of a malaise. This aspect reveals a different, new local having a different social order that is as valid as others in this global and multi-civilization world. In this different social, society, as an imagined social, is in a historical continuum, which, however, has a fake identity based on a different and incorrect time and space apprehension (Davutoğlu, 2009, p. 59). Today, there is an antagonism because, while the political system, established by the elites who decided to annex to the historically adversary civilization, to the other social imaginary, the society still is still grounded on its historical and geo-cultural characteristics – in other words, on a different time and space apprehension of a different social imaginary (Davutoğlu, 2009, p. 83).

Therefore, what the deconstruction reveals is a present characterized by a multi-civilization global world and a local where the real identity of the society contradicts with the presumed identity, with the fake one in the words of Davutoğlu. Globalization,

a recent phenomenon, becomes critical at this point as the historical factor which provides the background not only for the emergence of new imaginaries but also as the ground for their actualization. It was already mentioned before, in the context of Anderson and Appadurai, how historical developments were critical in the emergence and actualization of imaginaries and how globalization, as a historical development, works against national imaginaries in Appadurai.

Anderson (2006), when he was explaining the process through which the national imaginaries emerged, said “*No surprise then that the search was on for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together*” (p. 36) because old ways, that is the dynastic realms and religious societies “*lost their axiomatic grip*” (p. 36) over the society. This argument, with the emergence of globalization, is transposed. In this context, Appadurai (2008) says, the new global realities make the search for certainty more and more difficult, if not impossible, and the invention of new national traditions to deal with these realities becomes more and more difficult with the existing social imaginary (p. 10). In other words, the collective habitus becomes more and more inadequate as a ground for action and decision. The existing national imaginary becomes more and more insufficient to face these issues because the images that make up the future for many individuals do not coincide with those sponsored by the state. Furthermore, the disappearance of fixed reference points as critical choices become pressing, is a serious issue not only for small groups as Appadurai shows but also for the nation-states in dealing with the problems and opportunities brought by the globalization

(Appadurai, 2008, p. 43, 44). In short, the nation-state is “*losing its role as the sole arbiter between the modernity and globalization*” and its legitimacy and its sovereignty is in question (Appadurai, 2008, p. 19).

Zeynep Dağı, an AKP deputy, similarly depicts our present world where “*national and global are crisscrossed and struggle against each other*” as one in which boundaries are becoming porous and inadequate to separate what is inside from what is outside and ideas, capital, product as well as violence and crime rampantly move around the globe. In this world, Dağı (2007) adds, “*the way to understanding politics is through comprehending the interior and exterior together*” and “*the plurality of the actors, interests and identities requires a multi-layered analysis*” (p. vii). Davutoğlu (2009), also, in the same framework, emphasizes that the present is characterized by the loss of the legitimacy of nation-states as modern ideologies lose strength (p. 16).

The new present depicted through the imaginary Ottoman is, therefore, a present in conformity with the present, characterized by globalization where national imaginaries lose ground and at the same time the fake identity of the local, that is grounded on a national imaginary, contradicts the real social imaginary of the society.

Within this framework, the imaginary Ottoman becomes a solution to the problems of national imaginaries and to nation-states, i.e., the nation. It is a solution because it can link the global to local because it provides a place for the local without rejecting the global and it has certain properties that facilitate this role as a guide. These additional properties are the global nature of the Ottoman and its ability to embrace a

multi-cultural world without homogenizing it.

First, the Ottoman is historically imagined as a global state within a context of Afro-European geography. This argument is related to positioning of the Ottoman as a civilization center but this is not only an inference and various examples from historical events have been cited in different sources. Armağan (2008a) and Davutoğlu both state, for example, that the Ottoman engaged in geo-strategic politics in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia and the political changes in the geography of *Kadim* civilizations had the effect of partial globalization which was properly managed by the Ottoman (p. 153).

Specifically, Armağan (2008a) says that if the Ottoman history is interpreted, or understood, not as the advance and retreat of a power to and from Europe, but rather in terms of its multidimensionality, within the context of the history of “*Afro-Eurasian complex*”²⁶, it can be placed within the frame of global history (p. 208). Such a contextualization will permit us, he argues, to see the Ottoman as a global power (Armağan, 2008a, p. 205). We also see the same emphasis on a “global Ottoman” in Özel when he mentions about the Turkish model in Islamic history (Özel, 2003, p. 320). Özel (2003) says there is a presumed omnipresence of the Ottoman that was manifested in the various titles of the Sultans in different languages (p. 321). Through this

²⁶ With reference to Marshall Hodgson (Armağan, 2008, p. 208).

omnipresence, the Ottoman embraced not only its current subjects but also all of the philosophies, beliefs and governing capacities of prior empires.

Second, this global player is an example of the institutionalized and modernized version of the “*open civilization*”, an acceptance of a world full of multiplicity and diversity (Şentürk, 2010, p. 32-34). Third, this Ottoman had an appeal to humanity. This appeal manifests itself first, through being the sole representative of the *Kadim*, the whole of human civilization that ever existed, thus, by embodying human accumulation and having the ability to synthesize.

Finally, the imaginary Ottoman displays itself through the concept of Pax Ottomanica, where various manifestations of these civilizations lived together and continued into the future peacefully. The Ottoman, in this sense, has a claim that it can rule better, a claim articulated Armağan, by Avni Özgürel (2005) in the “Lands Yearning for the Ottoman”²⁷, in “From the Sultanate of Provinces to the Sultanate of Virtues”²⁸ by Selim Yıldız (2003). Intellectuals and academicians who support AKP have the conviction to portray the Ottoman order as an order of peace and tolerance and a historical experiment (Karlığa, 2000, p. 100) (Özcan, 2000, p. 10) (Çetin, 2000, p. 99) (Kavas, 2000, p. 104) (İpşirli, 2000, p. 222) (Aydın, 1996, p. 236). It seems Ottoman

²⁷ *Osmanlı'ya Hasret Topraklar.*

²⁸ *Vilayetlerin Sultanlığından Faziletlerin Sultanlığına.*

society, in this sense, discovered the magic of living together and it is presented as a universal example for other societies (Çetin, 2000, p. 95). This characteristic of the imaginary Ottoman in some cases was presented in such a way that some academicians, such as Atilla Çetin (2000), even suggested that the secularism that we have tried to find in the West today in fact existed within the Ottoman structure (p. 97).

The Ottoman, thus, could sustain an order encompassing diversity because it embraced human accumulation and it had the ability to synthesize the diversity of cultures, integrate them, and allowed their existence (Davutoğlu, 2006, p. 13). In this context, the Ottoman was an interaction of different civilizations and sustained a multilingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural state for a long time (Çakır, 2006, p. 87). The success of the Ottoman order was not in keeping hundreds of sects, religious orders together but its ability to let them live and flourish (Armağan, 2008b, p. 222). The Ottoman, it is argued, made a vigorous attempt to ensure that the societies and groups that it comprised stay as they are and able to solve all their problems by themselves rather than being subject to homogenizing policies of a central administration (Armağan, 2000, p. 7). Davutoğlu (2006), in this context, describes the Ottoman as an order in which all civilizations and cultural groups had a relationship of legitimacy with the political order, a relation that was only questioned in the nineteenth century (p. 12). The Ottoman, thus, is imagined, in this framework, as a contrast to modern nation states.

Bilal Eryılmaz (2000), in elaborating this difference with the nation states, argues that we have to analyze the Ottoman not according to the current binaries of majority

and minority, the ruler and the ruled, but rather within a context where the contrasts are recognized and protected by law (p. 56). The Ottoman state, he says, unlike nation-states, and unlike colonial rulers, did not have a policy of homogenization (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 58). In this respect, it is presented as a classical example of plurality (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 56). However, he warns that this is not the kind of plurality that aims at reducing differences, as was perceived in the West after the Enlightenment (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 56). On the contrary, the Ottoman plurality has, as its goal, according to him, the preservation of those differences (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 57). In the Ottoman order, Eryılmaz (2000) claims, the groups did not lose their identity; they lived together but separately from each other (p. 56). The Ottoman state, he argued, did not coerce these groups, especially the non-Muslim groups, and left them autonomous in their internal affairs (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 59). The arrangements made by the state were primarily concerned with organizing the relationship between these groups and the state and the relations between each other (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 59). In addition to that, Eryılmaz (2000) points out that the Ottoman State never exploited the differences between the groups as a tool to provoke one against the other (p. 58). Finally, he advises us that we should not compare the Ottoman order with the modern concept of multiculturalism, which is seen as a solution to the problems of the nation-state, problems related to the minorities that are themselves creations of the nation-state (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 57).

In this framework, in the Ottoman order, the identity of the people were not defined by their languages but rather by their religion and the relations between the

central Ottoman administration and the non-Muslims were managed within the framework provided by the Islamic law and protected by the law of the Sultans (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 61). This structure was critical in the positive relations between the administration and the non-Muslim groups (Eryılmaz, 2000, p. 61). Eryılmaz (2000), within this context claims that the resulting system, the “*system of millets*”, became a *sui generis* structure and provided us a historical example on the subject of coexistence of different communities (p. 62). The Ottoman state, thus, survived because it was the representative of a great numbers of communities, languages, religions, cultural voices, *Ansar-ı Osmaniye* (Union of Ottomans), and diversities. To achieve this, the state left all its functions other than the security and judiciary to religious communities and to the foundations (Armağan, 2009, p. 165). In other words, the social fabric of the Ottoman was made up of independent cultural groups, similar to different islands, living together (Armağan, 2009, p. 38). Accordingly, the Ottoman becomes a unifying concept as opposed to national imaginaries which can only exist by otherizing the others.

The imaginary Ottoman, therefore, is presented as a response to the crises of the national imaginaries of Anderson or to the crises of the Turkish or other national imaginaries. The Ottoman is proposed as an alternative way of linking fraternity, power and time in the global multi-civilization world. Therefore, it is asserted that the Ottoman, as the synthesis of *Kadim* civilizations, as an order where multiplicity and plurality existed peacefully together, as a power who had a global reach with the experience of a prior process of globalization, is an example for us today. The imaginary Ottoman, thus,

represents both an imagined social which continues to prevail today, extending to the present, and it is a model for us to embrace globalization.

However, it is critical to note that the imaginary Ottoman represents these solutions not in the form of recreating the Ottoman ecumene of the medieval world, but, in the form of a cradle of a new identity, where localities exist side by side, as a civilization center in a multi-civilizational world with its own vision, ideals, and morals. This distinction is critical because it is the basis of the rejection of neo-Ottomanism by AKP leadership which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The appeal of the imaginary Ottoman as a solution, on the other hand, together with its claim to foster a new identity, is a call for its actualization. It is a call to solve the contradictions in between the society, political culture, and the political structure in Turkey. AKP, at this point, becomes critical because it provides the leadership; it “*connects localities and individuals to a larger political unit*” (Tuğal, 2009, p. 26, 27); it provides an authority figure through which consent for the policies is built and it strives to build political unity for the actualization of this social imaginary represented by the Ottoman. Accordingly, the next chapter focuses on how AKP shares the same imaginary, how it contributes its acceptance by the society as the social imaginary, how it lays a claim to it and on the importance of the imaginary Ottoman for the Turkish politics.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMAGINARY OTTOMAN AND POLITICS

Up to now, we have seen that there is an imaginary Ottoman and it represents a social, embodied in the concept of “our civilization” and that Islam plays a central role in this imagination of the social. This imaginary Ottoman, while emerging through the history, represents the social imaginary of the present society for the elites. The Ottoman, thus, in its imaginary form is something current, related to the existing society. This imaginary Ottoman, however, is hyperreal in the sense that, neither the boundaries of its territory nor the limits of the nation it embodies, that is, the society to which it refers, are defined. We understand that the boundaries are well beyond the boundaries of current Turkey and the nation to which it refers encompasses more than the current apprehension of the Turkish nation. We also saw that the imagination of the Ottoman also permits depicting a new present in line with globalization. The Ottoman, with its additional properties, as a cradle of identity, in this perspective, also embodies the solutions to the problems created by globalization, e.g., to the problems of nation-states.

As discussed before, the new meanings that are ascribed to the Ottoman by the elites signifies the invasion of the imaginary dimension of the Ottoman with a new content. Once such an invasion starts, a process with two moments take off. The first moment of this process is the identification of the society with the Ottoman imagined by the elites and the second moment is the identification of the elites by the society as the

representatives of this imaginary Ottoman. I call this process “*the double identification of the Ottoman*”, the actualization of the social magic of Bourdieu.²⁹

Bourdieu (2003) tells us that;

The objects of the social world can be perceived and expressed in different ways ... as historical objects they are subject to variations in time and their meaning ... is (*are*) itself in suspense, in a pending and deferred state and thus relatively indeterminate. (p. 234)

According to him, this is the reason behind the multiplicity of views and there is a constant struggle to produce meanings for the objects of social world which cannot be attributable explicitly by looking at the past or to future (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 235). To him, this struggle can be explicit, especially in politics, “*with reconstruction of a past adjusted to the needs of present and especially the future, with creative foresight associated with it ... to determine, delimit and define the ever-open meaning of the present*” (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 235).

The imagined Ottoman, which was presented in the previous chapter, has its reflection in politics, especially with respect to the argument of continuity, rejection of decay, presenting the Ottoman as a solution for the problems of the national imaginary and as the ground upon which the future can be constructed. In this context, AKP

²⁹ Social Space and Genesis of Classes of Bourdieu is used to explain the process (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 229-251).

becomes critical because political struggle as a struggle over the transformation of the social world or to preserve it by transforming or preserving the perception of the world is the domain of AKP (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 236). Moreover, AKP acquires tremendous power by bringing into existence something not yet attained as an “*objective and collective existence*” (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 236). It does this by moving the social imaginary from a virtual state into a different one. This power, political by nature, is the “*magical power of naming and bringing into existence by virtue of naming*”. According to Bourdieu (2003), a group;

can exist only by delegating power to a spokesperson who will bring it into existence by speaking it... the group is created by the person who speaks in its name, thus appearing as the source of the power that exerts over those who are the real source. (p. 249)

In this context, the double identification process is a process through which the imaginary Ottoman is *constituted* and *instituted* in the society by AKP while at the same time AKP, itself, is *constituted* and *instituted* as the representative of this Ottoman (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 248). This is the process through which the “*social magic*” works and through which the society becomes Ottoman and AKP becomes the representative of this Ottoman to the extent the process is successfully carried out.

At this point, I argue that the AKP leadership and cadres share the same imaginary and, actively take the lead in this process of dual identification by giving certain messages to the society. The following three sections aim to show these points. First section aims to show that AKP leadership shares the same imagination as the elites.

The second aims to demonstrate how the society is continuously referred to as the “Ottoman” as imagined by the leadership through the use of history, culture and by other means. Finally, in the third section, the aim is to show how AKP leadership lays claim to this Ottoman and presents itself as its representative. It is important to stress that today the production and imposition of naming is the subject of the political struggle in the field of “*cultural production*” (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 236). I will illustrate that culture, either as an integral part of the concept of civilization, in form of preserving cultural heritage, or directly, is the primary site where the double identification of the Ottoman takes place.

How the AKP Shares the Same Imaginary in the Words of Erdoğan

Erdoğan, in November 2008, when addressing to the crowd said “*we have dreams for Turkey*”³⁰ In another occasion in Istanbul, during a mass rally, he repeated the same³¹ and he is not alone in employing this rhetoric. Minister of Work and former Undersecretary of Prime Ministry, Dinçer, used the same language in Kayseri, saying “*Others phantasize for and determine the fate of those who have no visions. For this*

³⁰ “*Türkiye için hayallerimiz var*”. (Taraf; November 10, 2008).

³¹ Erdoğan: “*We have great dreams for this country*”. (Zaman; October 30, 2010).

reason, we have to have a vision for this country and create our own fate".³² The same idea that quoted in the previous chapter from Görgün is repeated over and over at different occasions, emphasizing that AKP has an imagination for Turkey. This section, thus, aims at providing an idea about how this imaginary coincides with the one that described in the previous chapter: how the imaginary Ottoman with the content that described above – that is, in the form of a cradle of an identity, is present in the discourses of AKP leadership. A review of speeches made by Erdoğan as Prime Minister, the undisputable leader of AKP, and posted on the official web site of AKP is a good source for this.³³

We note that in his various speeches, Erdoğan has been using history, particularly Ottoman history, in the same way as Armağan and Davutoğlu do and emphasizes that we cannot and should not disregard our history and we should ground our future on our history. He repeatedly ties the history, as Ottoman history, to the concept of civilization – our civilization. Islam has a central role in this civilization and certain symbols of a moral order are critical in his definition of civilization. Erdoğan asserts that contemporary society is the heir to this civilization and is, in fact, the current

³² *"Hayal kurmayanların vizyon oluşturmayanların yerine başkaları hayal kurup onların kaderlerini takdir ediyorlar. O nedenle biz bu ülkenin hayalini kurarak kendi kaderimizi oluşturmamız gerekiyor."* (Kayseri Gündem; March 14, 2010).

³³ In this section, only the speeches posted on the official website of AKP are used in order not to leave any room for any discussion on whether these represent the official views of AKP.

manifestation of this civilization. In other words, he asserts that the Ottoman extends to the present society. This society, however, the nation to which he refers, has a different definition, one that is similar to Davutoğlu's. This vague definition allows him to include ethnicities other than the Turk, even those that are not Turkish citizens and who do not speak Turkish in the nation. Finally, he contributes to the hyperreality of *Vatan* by expressing his keen interest in the Ottoman geography with the pretext that we are the heirs to the Ottoman. In his speech in May 2010, on the occasion of Foundations Week, Erdoğan said, in the same way as Armağan and as many others that I pointed out in the previous chapter;

Each person, each society may look upon history as a past time segment or turn his/its back on it. But we cannot do this. We cannot do it even if we wanted to. We cannot escape from our history or its consequences reflected in our day.

In the same speech he later added;

We have been through periods when they wanted us to forget history or when they tried to write history differently. However, we have to understand the fact that, as a country and as people, we owe our existence to our history. We have to know that those who have no history will have no future. Our future will take shape and is taking shape on the basis of our history. A tree lives from its roots. I say openly that, no matter how well educated generations are, no matter how well they are using technology, no matter how closely they are following the world, they can never build a lasting and strong future, unless they have no knowledge of Şeyh Edebali, Osman Gazi, Ali Kuşçu, Fatih, Mimar Sinan, Fuzuli and Hacı Arif Bey. Arif Nihat Asya expresses this in the most beautiful way: These books are Fatih, Selim and Süleyman. That minaret is Sinan. Come; wake up your legend (saga) that has been sleeping. (Appendix A) (Official website of AKP; May 3, 2010)

This is an articulation of an old idea and Erdoğan was actually repeating what he said years ago. AKP official web site quotes him in 2006 as saying “*We cannot build a future without laying claim to our historical heritage*”.³⁴

Similarly, in another speech, in 2006, again on the start of the Year of Foundation Civilization and the Foundations Week, he said;

We cannot build a future without laying claim to our historical heritage. We cannot talk about patriotism if we are not laying claim to our history, to our culture, with loyalty. With these feelings, we are restoring (reviving) all our historical monuments from Edirne to Şanlıurfa. While other countries and other peoples are safe guarding/protecting, as a holy deposit, every piece of stone they have taken over from their ancestors, we, unfortunately, have abandoned our symbolic monuments, from the Fortress of Ankara, Hacı Bayram, which are right beside us, to Ishak Paşa Palace on our Eastern border. Now, we are restoring/reconstructing them and bringing them to life for our country and for the world. Can you imagine this: if the descendants of a civilization that built, on a vast geography, unique monuments such as the magnificent casern in Yemen and the magnificent bridge in Mostar, disown the Seljuk and Ottoman monuments under their hand, can you talk about civilization? (Appendix B) (Official website of AKP; 2006)

In these speeches, Erdoğan underlines the importance of history – the importance of the Ottoman, our obligation to claim this history and to comprehend the meaning of this history as the basis for building the future. He emphasizes the importance of preserving the symbols of the history and he claims that this civilization and culture is an integral

³⁴ “*Tarihi mirasımıza sahip çıkmadan geleceğimizi inşa edemeyiz.*” (Official website of AKP; 2006)

part of our history. These points are the critical elements of the imaginary that was described in the previous chapter and when we look at how Erdoğan elaborates them on other occasions, we note that they are a critical part of Erdoğan's discourse.

The concept of civilization, for example, is so critical for Erdoğan that he uses it practically whenever he talks about "us" and frequently defines "us" in terms of this civilization. For example in October 26, 2010, in his speech to AKP parliamentarians at the Group Meeting, he said "*Words expressing ethnic roots, sects and different geographies are inadequate for defining us as a millet. What defines us best is our mutual history, our mutual civilization and our mutual ideologies*".³⁵ On many occasions, Erdoğan states that when he talks about civilization he means Ottoman civilization. For example, at a speech given at the opening ceremonies of an exhibition in Washington D.C., he said³⁶ "*I pay great homage to the Ottoman Empire, which left us the heritage of a supreme civilization*".³⁷ Being the representative and heir to such a civilization and its connectivity to Islam has an important place in Erdoğan's discourse,

³⁵ "*Etnik kökenleri, mezhepleri, coğrafyaları ifade eden kelime ve kavramlar bizi bir millet olarak tarif etmekte yetersiz kalır. Bizi, ortak tarihimiz en güzel şekilde tarif eder. Bizi, ortak medeniyetimiz, ortak ideallerimiz tarif eder.*" (Official website of AKP; October 26, 2010).

³⁶ Exhibition at Sabancı Museum: "The Magnificence of the Ottoman exhibited at Florantine palaces from the Medici to Savoy families." (December 22, 2003 – April 19, 2004).

³⁷ "*Bize yüce bir uygarlığı miras olarak bırakan ecdadımız Osmanlı'yı, sonsuz saygıyla anıyorum.*" (Official website of AKP; n.d., a)

especially when he visits a city having an Ottoman past. In August 2010, while delivering a speech to a crowd in Sivas, one such city, he said;

They should observe, from the example of this mosque, the kind of cultural deposit this country has not only Divriği Ulu Mosque, my highly esteemed brothers, Taşhan, Kurşunlu Hamam, Ulu Mosque and Gök Medrese, each one of these monuments is narrating our history, describing us to us. Each one of these monuments is telling us about our deep rooted history, our glorious past, our civilization of love. Each one of these monuments expresses the fact that this territory was a center of art and science. As Arif Nihat Asya says, ‘These books are Fatih, Selim and Süleyman. This niche is Sinanüddin, this minaret is Sinan. Come; wake up your legend (saga) that has been sleeping. You are the one; you are the renowned, the loved, and the exalted. He was your age, when Fatih conquered Istanbul.’

and he continues...

Limited thinking is not suitable for people with such a history. It is not suitable for a public with such historical monuments. It is nor suitable for a youth sitting on such a civilization. Therefore, we think big and, for this reason, we take big steps. We think big for Turkey and we think big for our region also. We think big for the whole world too. (Appendix C) (Official website of AKP; August 24, 2010)

Erdoğan repeats the same message also, when addressing the elites and underlines that “*we are the descendants of a profound civilization*” (Official website of AKP; December 29, 2009). Erdoğan defines this civilization as a civilization of love focusing on the human being, a civilization strongly tied to Islam (Official website of AKP; September 5, 2010 and December 17, 2009), a civilization defined by its benevolence (Official website of AKP; June 13, 2010), a civilization in search of conquering the hearths (Official website of AKP; April 14, 2010) and on the side of oppressed (Official website

of AKP; June 13, 2010) as if he is citing the critical properties of the moral order underlying the social imaginary represented by the Ottoman. In his words this civilization is;

The civilization we founded on this territory is a civilization of love, which is an example to the whole world. I underline these words. We are the descendants of people who regarded their fatherland as their honor and when necessary, ran, without hesitation to the entrenchments and fought shoulder to shoulder, sacrificing their lives in those entrenchments. But, at the same time, in times of peace, we are the followers of a culture that founded human civilizations, harmonious with the environment, living creatures, the soil, esthetics and nature.

Vakıf (foundation) civilization is based on devoting oneself to humanity, on having human beings and the living at the center of life and working for the benefit of humanity. This *vakıf* concept, considers the migratory birds, the poor and the weak, the destitute and the lost wanderer.

Features like love, fraternity, compassion, which bind us to each other, strengthened with the *vakıf* concept and gave us togetherness and oneness (*tevhid*). In fact, *Vakıf* is not a purse made up of collections from left and right. *Vakıf* is, as our ancestors defined it is a donation from the Sultan's personal money *ceb-i hümayun* (the personal riches of the Sultan) for the benefit of the needy. This continues today in a very different way.

Let the citizens live, so the state shall live.

Look, we have a state vision, which does not fall in the share of many societies in the world. There is Şeyh Edibali, who says, 'let the citizens live, so that the state shall live.' as well as Osman Gazi and Orhan Gazi, who founded a state with this vision of civilization and exalted it, and provided peace and security for this state.

This territory bred sultans such as Mevlana, Yunus, Hacı Bektaş Veli, Pir Sultan Abdal and Karacaoğlan, as well as historically renowned statesmen such as Alparslan, Melikşah, Kılıçarslan and Selahaddin Eyyubi. Mehmet the Conqueror, Suleiman the Magnificent and Yavuz Sultan Selim are great and noble personalities in our history. All the same, Ak Şemseddin, The Architect Sinan, Barbarossa, Fuzuli, Nedim and many others are,

at least, as great, as noble and as renowned as they are.
I say always that the pen comes before the sword in our civilization. We must observe carefully how the Ottoman Empire, which ruled over three continents, is described on those continents. In the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire is remembered not with its tyranny and cruelty but with the bridge of Mostar, The bridge of Drina, Karagöz Bey Mosque, the bridge of Vardar, the Stone Bridge of Kosovo, the bridge of Vidin, thousands of public fountains, inns, public baths and libraries. In the Middle East, the Ottoman is not remembered with its exploitation, abuse and imperialism but with the medium of peace and tranquility it has created in Jerusalem, the Hejaz Railroad, the Bagdad Railroad and the water channels constructed in Mescid-i Haram and in Karbala.
Likewise, in Africa, in Africa there is not an Ottoman Empire which hijacked the riches of Africa, but there is an Ottoman Empire, that built bridges, mosques, public fountains, Medresseh (Moslem theological school) and libraries. (Appendix D) (Official website of AKP; May 3, 2010)

This civilization, this social imaginary, according to Erdoğan is different because it established itself not by destroying the other civilizations but by encompassing them.

This civilization, with Islam at its center, included, synthesized, what the other, Western, civilization has (Official website of AKP; September 9, 2007). Erdoğan avoids referring to religion directly but he always points out the links between this civilization and Islam by emphasizing its symbols. How Erdoğan explains, at the Sivas meeting, the way our civilization manifests itself to us is a good example of this symbolism.

Each one of my brothers is proud of being a member of this nation, why? Because we belong to a deep-rooted history, to a great civilization and a strong state tradition. This is what this Ulu Mosque is telling us. This is what the Çifte Minareli Medrese, Gök Medrese and Şifahiye Medresesi are telling us.³⁸

This civilization, according to him, on the other hand, is our civilization; that is, we are the descendants of the Ottoman and we cannot separate ourselves from this Ottoman.

Erdoğan continuously emphasizes that the Republic was established on the civilizational ground of the Ottomans (Official website of AKP; February 13, 2009), and that we are their decedents (Official website of AKP; July 13, 2010). He expressed a summary of his ideas on the subject as;

At the beginning, the Seljuk and the Ottoman were a seed and a shoot, that the seed and the shoot grew, flourished and developed into a maple tree under the shadow of which continents freshened/resided. This is why; the Ottoman is defined as a maple tree in classical Ottoman poetry. Likewise, the Turkish Republic was sewn as a shoot and is today growing, flourishing and developing like a maple tree. However, don't you forget that the maple tree lives with its roots. If you cut the roots, if you forget them or ignore them, the maple tree will be disconnected with the soil and that maple tree will fall over. We do not and will not permit this. (Appendix E) (Official website of AKP; May 8, 2010)

³⁸ “Benim her bir kardeşim, bu ülkenin, bu milletin bir mensubu olmaktan gurur duyuyor, neden? Çünkü bizler, köklü bir tarihin, büyük bir medeniyetin, güçlü bir devlet geleneğinin mensuplarıyız. Şu Ulu Cami'nin bize anlattığı budur. Çifte Minareli Medrese'nin, Gök Medrese'nin, Şifahiye Medresesi'nin bize anlattığı budur.” (Official website of AKP; February 13, 2009).

And, in his speech in Söğüt, at the birth place of the Ottoman Empire, he says;

Our modern republic, built on the civilization and the (state) experience of the Ottoman Empire, is, today, an element of stability in its region and in the whole world. Yahya Kemal says, 'the spirit lives not without a horizon.' We have to give the young generations the horizons of Mimar Sinan and Selimiye and Süleymaniye as well the spirit of Fatih the Conqueror and the spiritual world of the War of Dardanelles, our War of Independence and of Gazi Mustafa Kemal.³⁹

This civilization, as we have seen, defines who we are. It is our social imaginary as imagined by the elites. In this sense, we also refer to our nation, and Erdoğan has a very different definition of the nation. In October 2010 Erdoğan, when he was summarizing his trip to Kosovo, explains to the deputies of AKP what is national. The following excerpt is taken from the official web site of AKP;

Streets, houses, balconies were decorated with Turkish and Kosovo flags. The people of Kosova were in their balconies and the shopkeepers were outside, in front of their shops. They were all cheering to greet our group. Naturally, at that time, we were together with the president of Kosova. Together with him, we went out and walked amidst the people. We talked to the children, to the young people, listened to their problems. When we reached the historical Şadırwan Square, we saw that, there, the excitement was much different. Passing through the square, I saw a lady in a window and a very old grandmother in the right

³⁹ "Osmanlı'nın medeniyet birikimi ve devlet tecrübesi üzerinde kurulan modern Cumhuriyetimiz, bugün bölgesinde ve dünyada bir istikrar unsurudur. Yahya Kemal, 'ruh ufuksuz yaşamaz' diyor. Bizim de genç nesillere Fatih'in ruhu kadar Çanakkale'nin, Kurtuluş Savaşı'nın, Gazi Mustafa Kemal'in ruh dünyası kadar, Mimar Sinan ve Selimiye'nin, Süleymaniye'nin ufkunu kazandırmamız gerekiyor." (Official website of AKP; October 9, 2006).

next to that one. They had tears in their eyes, they were close to weeping. I said to Mr. Tachi, 'Come, let us make a visit to a house here.' We entered the house and we were locked in a close embrace with the grandmother and the lady. They were crying their hearts out. And, how could we know? They were relatives of a columnist from our country. Egemen Bey had his telephone with him. He called this person and they talked to him. We learned that they did not have his telephone number. So, we were helpful to create such an occasion. This was a meaningful picture, with the old lady crying. She had her daughters with her and they were also old. I mean the old woman, a grandmother, an aunty, was over 90. But her affection, her love was very alive. And the people of Prizren, including their children and their young boys and girls, were here, waiting for us and the members of the Kosovo government. An old uncle came to us speaking Turkish. He told us that Şadırwan Square had not seen such a crowd and such excitement since Tito's visit.

We lay claim to these lands and we address the people directly. We fulfilled our longing with our cognates, the Kosovo people, here. Then, we went to Sinan Paşa Mosque, which was built in 1625 by Sinan Paşa and which is right next to Şadırwan Square. It is interesting that the mosque was converted to a museum in 1968. It looks deserted but we took over the renovation and restoration of this building through our TİKA Company. The renovation and restoration process is about to be completed. İnşallah, it is going to be finished by the end of the year or by the New Year. We went there and we have seen it again. Later, we addressed the people of Kosovo, together with the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Mr. Tachi. Mr. Tachi spoke in Albanian, of course and I spoke in Turkish. And both of us had perfect communication with these people. The excitement was not different from that in Turkey; we experienced the same excitement. It is not possible to describe the enthusiasm and the ecstasy. And, really, the demonstration of affection there was worth seeing.

Even if we are nationalists of the Turkish Republic, we include the citizens of Albania in our description of a nation. Now, where does this enthusiasm, all this ecstasy comes from? It comes from history, this is what makes us a nation, that culture, and those mutual values come from this. We do not have to speak the same language. As I have told you, we have seen this fusion there, with the people talking Turkish and the people

talking Albanian. (Appendix F) (Official website of AKP; November 9, 2010)

As we see, his definition of the nation is very similar to what we have discussed previously. This is not a nation limited by ethnicity or bounded by geography; it is grounded upon history, one that is embraced by a common civilization and ideals (Official website of AKP; November 9, 2010). It is, in effect, the social imaginary represented by the Ottoman. In AKP Consultation Meeting, he explains the meaning of the Turkish flag, the symbol of Turkish nationalism with his own dramatic words, as;

The crescent on our flag symbolizes independence but the star is the symbol of our martyrs.⁴⁰ There were times when star was Turkish, there were times it was Kurdish, other times it was Bosnian or Albanian and so on. People from each and all ethnic components were martyred for the sake of that crescent. So, this is the case.⁴¹

The non-ethnicity of this nationalism is so apparent (Official website of AKP; November 9, 2010) that when he was talking about the emergence of our nationalism, about how this spirit was created he says;

The War of Dardanelles is an important war. It was a prologue to our War of Independence. In addition, our doctrine of national

⁴⁰ A Muslim who has died for Islam.

⁴¹ “Ay yıldızlı bayrağımızın hilali bağımsızlığın simgesidir. Ama o yıldız şehitlerimizin simgesidir. O yıldızın zaman olmuştur Türk olmuştur, zaman olmuştur Kürt olmuştur, zaman olmuştur Boşnak olmuştur, Arnavut olmuştur, şu olmuştur bu olmuştur, tüm etnik unsurlar birer yıldız olarak o hilalin uğruna şehit olmuştur; böyle bir durum yani.” (Official website of AKP; October 16, 2010).

(millet) idealism took shape and gained an unwavering (strong) quality with this war.

Almost all ethnic components of Ottoman geography, members of all religious groups, Christians and Jews, together with Muslims, urban people together with peasants, the poor with the rich, illiterate people together with the educated, Alevi with the Sunnis, Kurds, Armenians, Gypsies, Abkhazians and whoever you can think of, together with Turks, fought side by side to protect the motherland.⁴²

Erdoğan rejects the existing notion of Turkish nationalism that is based on ethnicity. He instead prefers identifying it with the social imaginary that the Ottoman represents.

Finally, Erdoğan touches the subject of *Vatan* cautiously, without explicitly rejecting the national boundaries, but somewhat bypassing them, as he does for the nation. In his speech in Söğüt on October 9, 2006, he says;

We should know that, although our country covers 780 thousand square kilometers, our area of influence extends to a much larger territory. This comes from history and covers 22 million square meters. Jerusalem, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Hizan, Baku, Ashgabat, Sarajevo, Thessalonica and Jordan are not faraway places from Ankara. On the contrary, the distances are shorter now. Eritrea and Banda Ache are closer to Ankara now. Let us not forget, that those who thought big founded the Ottoman. (Appendix G) (Official website of AKP; October 9, 2010)

⁴² “Çanakkale, Kurtuluş Savaşımızın girizgahı olduğu kadar, millet mefkuremizin oluştuğu ve sarsılmaz nitelik kazandığı önemli bir savaştır. Osmanlı Coğrafyasında yaşayan hemen her etnik grubun, her inanç grubunun; Müslümanlarla birlikte Hristiyanların, Musevilerin; köylülerle birlikte şehirlilerin; yoksullarla zenginlerin; ümmilerle okumuşların, Alevilerle Sünnilerin, Türklerle birlikte Kürtlerin, Ermenilerin, Romanların, Abazaların, aklınıza ne gelirse, Arapların, Boşnakların, Makedonların ve daha nice etnik grubun omuz omuza vatani müdafaa ettikleri bir savaştır.” (Official website of AKP; March 19, 2010).

At this point, it should be noted that Erdoğan is not alone within the party in his critical redefinition of the nation and the Ottoman. *Zaman* quoted the Minister of Culture as saying “...*the Ottoman Empire did not discriminate between its citizens/subjects as Turk, Turcoman, Christian, Muslim, Greek, Armenian, Kurd, Alevi, Sunni but regarded them equal as citizens and deemed it her duty to protect their rights...*”⁴³ Similarly, Çelik, on a different occasion said that;

Turkey has pierced its bark. Turkey’s vision is no more the borders of the National Pact (Misak-ı Milli). Turkey has a different point of view now. You have a different point of view. You are aware of your ancestors. You are aware of Murat the First. You are aware of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. (Appendix H) (Zaman; September 6, 2009)

The Identification of the Society with the Ottoman

In the previous section, I tried to show how the Ottoman, as a representation of a social imaginary, is reflected in the words of Erdoğan. This Ottoman, as we noted, is nearly identical to the Ottoman imagined by the elites. I argue that AKP leadership, through their various acts, discourse and actions, works for the identification of the society with this imagined Ottoman, which is the first moment of the dual identification.

Accordingly, in this section, I will try to show how AKP leadership persistently

⁴³ “*Osmanlı'nın, ahalisini, Türk, Türkmen, Hıristiyan, Müslüman, Rum, Ermeni, Kürt, Alevi, Sünni diye ayırmadığını ifade ederek, Osmanlı'nın hepsini bir tuttuğunu, vatandaş saydığını, bunların haklarını korumayı kendine görev saydığını...*” (Zaman; September 13, 2009).

emphasizes, through various means, that the Republic of Turkey and the current society is the continuation of and successor to the Ottoman and that Ottoman history is our history and Ottoman culture is our culture.

However, before we move into the details of this argument, we should note that AKP leadership has always rejected any claim of revivalism or Neo-Ottomanism. President Gül, in November 2010 during a conference in London, replying to a question about the revival of Ottomanism in Turkish foreign politics, said that the Neo-Ottomanism was not realistic today (Kanal D News; November 9, 2010). Erdoğan similarly asserted that there is no Neo-Ottomanist in the Republic of Turkey (Star Gazetesi; December 9, 2009). Davutoğlu also, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that this expression, Neo-Ottomanism, was not correct (Milli Gazete; November 26, 2009).

Although this appears to conflict with the arguments in this work. This rejection is understandable because, as argued before, what the Ottoman represents is a social imaginary, it is not the historical Ottoman state with its institutions. The Ottoman, in the framework of AKP, is a representation of a social and, in this respect, represents something different than its historical itself. This imaginary is about the ideas, vision and ideals, and about a moral background upon which society stands; it is about a different apprehension of time and space. What continues today, in this framework, are the ideas, vision, ideals and moral background of an order represented by the Ottoman, but not a political regime or particular institutions? Türköne summarized this difference as recently as December 2010 in an article in *Zaman*, when he was answering the critics of

AKP's foreign policy as Neo-Ottoman;

The boundaries of Ottoman geography are superficial boundaries that were established according to divide and rule policies. The tracks queuing at Habur, at Cilvegözü, despite the abolition of [the] visa [requirement] is a concrete indicator of this superficiality. The economic and the simultaneous cultural integration of the region depend on the removal of dams in the way of the water. In this way, the people, societies will once again find their own historical path and reach stability. It is impossible and unnecessary for Turkey to have hegemony in the region as the Ottomans. The region needs peace. This peace can be established and sustained by Turkey in conformity with historical experience. The name of this peace is not the new Ottoman but Pax Ottomana, i.e., Ottoman Peace. (Appendix I) (Türköne; December 16, 2010)

If we return to our subject, we can see that AKP leadership and cadres do not hesitate to explicitly state that Turkey is the continuation of the Ottoman or that Turkey is the heir to the Ottoman in the form I described above. AKP deputy Prime Minister Cemil Çiçek, for example, said during his flight back from Russia when he was returning from a meeting of North Sea Economic Cooperation Council in November 2009, “*There is a heritage received from the Ottoman. We have had such an advantage throughout history, in the Balkans, in the Caucasus and over the Arab countries*”. Egemen Bağış,⁴⁴ at the Alpbach European Forum in September 2009 said, “*this time we came for*

⁴⁴ State Minister.

peace”⁴⁵, when referring to Turkey’s candidacy to the European Union. Minister of State Mustafa Sait Yazıcıoğlu noted, “*we are the continuation of the Empire*” (Zaman; February 1, 2008) when he was defending a new style of secularism. Erdoğan, in his speech at the Turkish-African Cooperation Summit in Istanbul, said they looked at Africa as the heirs to and descendants of a major power and the citizens of a modern Turkish state (Zaman; August 19, 2008).

On certain occasions, Erdoğan has also directly identified people as Ottoman. For example when he was referring to the teachers working in Turkish schools abroad, he said “*I see them as Ottoman raiders*”⁴⁶, or, when he was referring to people coming to his meetings, he likened them to Ottomans leaving in small villages (Zaman; October 10, 2010) for the first time.

However, AKP has other, indirect, ways of promoting the identification of the current society with the Ottoman.

First there is a continuous emphasize on the concept of “our civilization” that I argued, is strongly related to the social imaginary and to the common history. Secondly, there is a tremendous effort by AKP municipalities and by various government agencies to recreate the Ottoman space both in Turkey and abroad. Third, there is a persistent

⁴⁵ “*Bu kez barış için geldik.*” (Bozkurt; September 3, 2009)

⁴⁶ Akıncılar.

effort to identify the Ottoman culture as our culture at all levels starting from festivities in small towns up to major international events.

The leadership persistently employs the concept of civilization or the theme of common history that binds us together, which is equivalent to the social imaginary. In the previous section, examples were given from Erdoğan to explain how the AKP shares the same imaginary with the elites. Erdoğan is not alone in pointing out history and civilization. President Gül, on the occasion of 728. Anniversary of the Establishment of the Ottoman State, said that the Ottoman represents a pinnacle of civilization (Zaman; September 13, 2009). Minister Özak, at the Academy of Politics, organized by AKP, said “*Ottoman is the nation that brought civilization to the world. We are the descendants of that nation.*”⁴⁷ Minister of State Cevdet Yılmaz, in Bingöl, a small city in Eastern Turkey, at a conference on Ottoman Culture and Civilization, said:

In reality, history is not something we leave behind, something which has no relation to us. In fact, history makes up the ground we stand up on. If we are not aware of this, if we do not know our history well, we cannot take sound steps towards the future. Therefore, the research conducted on regional histories and the histories of different countries are very important. Also, it is very important that this research be made on an objective basis. We know about the distortions in historical research done in the past. This was due to various ideological reasons. We know that historical studies were used for narrow political ends (goals). (Appendix J) (Zaman; August 2, 2009)

⁴⁷ “*Dünyaya medeniyeti getiren millet Osmanlı'dır. Biz o milletin torunlarıyız.*” (Şahin; February 3, 2008)

Erdoğan, on another occasion, refers to the Ottoman as our great civilization, our history, but these are not limited to the Turkish nation or to Turkey (Zaman; April 14, 2010). For example, at an evening meal during Ramadan sponsored by the AKP Bursa party organization in September 2010, he was quoted as saying;

During history, we succeeded in climbing over these steep mountains,⁴⁸ [to] meet and embrace each other. We did this all together. The people in this region have a common history, a common culture and mutual values. For example, when you set off from Bursa and arrive in Sarajevo after travelling hundreds of kilometers, you find yourself in a city which resembles Bursa exactly. You see inns and market places called Bursa. When my fellow brother from Skopje comes here to Bursa, he does not feel at all like he is in a foreign city; on the contrary, he feels at home, like he has come to a city [in his own country]. Our cities are alike, with their minarets, bridges, inns, libraries and medresses; you see this in Pristina, Bosnia, Costansa, Kırcaali, Thessalonica, Komotini, and Manastır. Many more cities have the same architecture, the same spirit and the same essence. Our food, our culture, our songs, our folklore resemble each other. Beyond this, we share a common future, like we share a common history. We share, even a common fate. (Appendix K) (September 7, 2010)

Bursa, in fact, deserves special attention because it is the first capital of the Ottomans. AKP, it seems, pays special attention to Bursa and underlines this characteristic of the city continuously as another way to give the message that the Ottoman extends to the present by constantly reminding us that this space is Ottoman space. The governor of

⁴⁸ He was referring to Balkan Mountains.

Bursa, when speaking to Spanish guests, on the New Civilization Bridge Project, emphasized the importance of Bursa as the capital of the Ottoman, his happiness in living in such a city and underscored the common Ottoman – Turkish tradition, without separating the Ottoman and the Turk from each other (Zaman; October 11, 2010). Similarly, Bülent Arınç, Minister of State (Zaman; November 11, 2009), Ertuğrul Günay, Minister of Culture and Tourism (Zaman; September 21, 2010) and Mehmet Ali Şahin, Chairman of Turkish Grand National Assembly (Zaman; September 12, 2009), all, stressed, on different occasions, that the Ottoman is a civilization - that it is our civilization and that we have a profound history that we should always take into account. In all these instances, AKP tells society that history, our history, our civilization, is not the past, but rather extends to the present and to the future, to all times and represents a social order that has a specific moral ground. An example of this can be seen from what Erdoğan said at the opening of the Baghdad pavilion of Topkapı Palace after renovation. The following description of his speech is on *Zaman*'s website:

...He pointed out that Bağdat Köşkü (Baghdad Pavilion), open to public as of today, is one of the important parts (the restoration of which is complete) of Topkapı Palace; that they are watching from here not only Istanbul but also the present day and the future and refreshing their enthusiasm at the point of building a future with the inspiration from the past.

Erdoğan said, he told the officials to do what is necessary to enable everybody, specially the students to watch Istanbul from here. And he said:

Because I think that, a person, who has not seen this place, who was not able to look at Istanbul and Turkey from here, will be incapable of understanding Turkey's past and plan its future. I want to point out specially that there may be people who understand the level of contemporary civilizations as economic

and technical development only. We should never fall into this fallacy. Economic development that does not occur along with Enlightenment and civilization will not be a long lasting development. Mentalities which do not claim all the values that make up life, which do not perceive life as a whole, which do not approach the solution of problems from a collective perspective, cannot bring us to further heights. (Appendix L) (Zaman, February 9, 2009)

AKP gives the same message through other means and in more sophisticated forms also.

The leadership and cadres actively create an Ottoman space by renovating Ottoman artifacts, carrying out construction based on an Ottoman architecture, giving public places Ottoman names and by actively promoting Ottoman culture. All these activities serve the dual identification of the Ottoman. While the public is given the message that the Ottoman extends to the present and the present society is Ottoman, a simultaneous message that tells that AKP claims and represents this Ottoman is disseminated continuously.

In terms of creating the Ottoman space, municipalities and government agencies are all instrumental but the most important agent is the General Directorate of Foundations. There are a total of 19,825 monuments, artifacts and cultural assets, mostly from the Ottoman period, registered with General Directorate of Foundations in Turkey. Between 2002 and 2008, the Directorate renovated 3,363, or 17%, of them after AKP came to power. This is in contrast to only forty-six between 1998 and 2002 (Official Web Site of General Directorate of Foundations). The budget of the Directorate jumped to TL. 443 million in 2009 from TL. 37 million in 2002 (Zaman; May 4, 2009). AKP

leadership actively promoted and used these renovations as a tool to give the message that the Ottoman extends to the present and that the space in which we live is Ottoman space. The activities of the Directorate are highly praised by the AKP leadership and the opening ceremonies of renovated Ottoman artifacts are attended by the leadership and high-level bureaucrats. As I noted above, the high-level presence of leadership at these ceremonies serves two purposes. Leaders keep giving the message that the present society is the continuation of the Ottoman. At the same time, they show that they will do whatever is necessary to actualize this Ottoman. For example, *Zaman* reports Arınç, Assistant Prime Minister and Minister of State, at the opening of a renovated Ottoman Mosque in Beşiktaş, Istanbul, in the presence of the President Gül, Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu, the Governor and the Security Chief of Istanbul:

He reminded that fifteen days ago, a gala was held for the opening of Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi (lodge used by Mevlevi dervishes) put in footnote. The gala was attended by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and this was a symbolic celebration for the opening of 111 monumental works, the restorations of which were completed.

Arınç pointed out that, 'In seven years, almost 3,500 monumental works were restored and opened to service. It is our duty to reanimate these precious deposits which are the heirloom of our ancestors and works of vakıf civilization and we are very happy to be able to fulfill this duty.'

...

Minister Arınç noted that he took a tour in the mosque before the opening and said, 'The opening of this mosque on a Friday, after so many years, is a demonstration of the fulfillment of one of our responsibilities to our ancestors'. (Appendix M) (*Zaman*; May 21, 2010)

AKP municipalities, and certain government agencies, too, have been undertaking various projects with the aim of re-creating Ottoman quarters in the cities. The Housing and Development Administration, for example, started projects in Ankara (Zaman; June 11, 2010) and Istanbul (Zaman; December 29, 2009) having Ottoman and Seljuk architecture. Municipalities have also been active in creating an Ottoman space in their areas. Zeytinburnu (Zaman; September 6, 2010), Bağcılar (Zaman; April 11, 2008), Eyüp (Official web page of Eyüp Municipality; August 10, 2010), Esenyurt (Nethaberci; November 24, 2010), Çekmeköy (Official Web page of Esenyurt Municipality; October 10, 2010), and Fatih (Zaman; January 28, 2008) Municipalities in Istanbul and Yıldırım (Zaman; August 28, 2010) and Nizip (Zaman; August 28, 2010) Municipalities in Bursa and Gaziantep, respectively, as well as Kars (Zaman; July 14, 2007) and Ankara (Zaman; July 29, 2010), for example, have all either started or already completed projects variously characterized as “Ottoman houses”, “Ottoman neighborhoods”, and “Ottoman parks” in recent years.

Municipalities are not alone in creating the Ottoman space; the Ministry of Education, for example, actively promotes Ottoman, Seljuk and strangely enough, Hittite architecture, in school buildings all over Turkey. Several newspapers in 2007 reported that the Ministry had made a decision in this direction (Baş; July 6, 2007). The Minister of Education and Spokesman for the Government, Çelik, at the opening of the Exhibition of Architectural Project of School Buildings from Traditional to the Future (Official website of Ministry of National Education; February 2, 2005) said that public

buildings in Turkey did not represent our identity and the exhibition was an attempt to highlight national alternatives. The projects were based on Ottoman, Seljuk and Hittite architecture. This trend is not only relevant to schools but to other public buildings, as Çelik emphasized in his speech (Zaman; July 6, 2007). For example, the General Directorate of Highways replaced the names of certain bridges, tunnels and the names of some new structures along the new highway in Western Anatolia with those of Ottoman Sultans (Zaman; March 4, 2009).

Another example of bringing Ottoman to the present is the importance given to Ottoman Sultans and the Ottoman dynasty. In this section, I will give two instances of how this surfaces; a third one will be presented in the next section. The first of these is related to the creation of Ottoman space with an additional symbolic meaning while the second concerns the identification of culture with the Ottoman. Both cases serve different purposes at the same time. On the one hand, they convey the message that “we are the Ottoman”, indirectly, by naturalizing the Ottoman and creating an Ottoman space, and directly, by giving this message at opening ceremonies. On the other hand, these actions permit the leadership to show that they represent this Ottoman.

An example of this process is related to the *Turbehs* (the tombs of dignitaries and Sultans) of Ottoman Sultans. The *Turbehs* were recently reopened to the public after staying close to public for many years. The *Turbehs* in Istanbul were renovated through the partial funding provided by the 2010 Cultural Capital of Istanbul Agency. The *Turbehs* had been closed to the public since November 30, 1925 by Law no. 677

(Zaman; August 19, 2009). Atatürk, when addressing to people in Kastamonu, said as a preamble to this law that “*to expect assistance from the dead is a shame for a civilized society ... the most truthful cult is the cult of civilization*”.⁴⁹ The opening of the Turbehs in this respect has more than one meaning. While the Ottoman space is once more expanded and elaborated, we, at the same time, observe how the rules are gradually changed based on the new social imaginary. The social imaginary represented by the Ottoman, in contrast to the Kemalist social imaginary which came down hard on such elements of popular culture, nourishes itself from these cultural elements to establish a new social. Consequently, it changes the rules of life and what was accepted as scandalous and unlawful gradually becomes acceptable.⁵⁰ The Undersecretary of Tourism said, at re-opening of seven Turbehs in Hagia Sophia to the public, in the presence of the Governor of Istanbul, Turbehs;

...of our ancestors are, for us, spiritual as well as material signs
...our awareness of history and past times spread over us, partly
from these elegant Turbehs that decorate the city. The turbeh
protect the city while the city protects the turbeh.⁵¹

⁴⁹ “*Ölülerden medet ummak, medeni bir cemiyet için lekedir... En doğru hakiki tarikat, medeniyet tarikatıdır.*” (Official website of Atatürk Research Center; Atatürk’s Speeches and Declarations I-III)

⁵⁰ Taylor explains the same process, how new rules were put into effect in actualizing the ideal of civility through a transformatory agenda (Taylor, 2007, p. 41-43)

⁵¹ “*Türbelerin bizim için maddenin yanı başında mana kanutlarıydı ... Tarih ve geçmiş bilincimiz, biraz da şehri donatan o zarif türbelerden üzerimize yayılır; türbeler şehre, şehir türbelere sahip çıkar.*” (Şentürk & Tosun; September 19, 2009)

In the same ceremony the Governor of Istanbul also said that “*to lay claim to our ancestors is possible through protection of their monuments. We become more powerful as we protect these memories*”.⁵² The renovation of *Turbehs* are neither limited to Istanbul nor to Turkey. The AKP government, through various government and quasi-governmental agencies, renovated *Turbehs*, along with other Ottoman artifacts outside of Turkey and has shown high profile at their openings. Erdoğan opened the renovated Turbeh of Sultan Murat in Kosovo (Çam; November 4, 2010). Arınç participated in the opening of another *Turbehs* in Sudan and said, “*I brought you greetings from the Turkish people. We see here, the signs of the days when the Sudanese and the Turkish people lived here, together, under the same flag*”.⁵³

The second example related to the subject is related to the importance placed on the Ottoman Sultans and how they become a part of the dual identification process is from Bursa. Bursa is the first capital of the Ottomans and both the municipality and the representatives of the central government underline the Ottoman character of the city in various occasions. Arınç, as early as 2003, for example, at the opening of an old imperial mansion after its renovation, said, “*Bursa is the first capital of the Ottoman Empire,*

⁵² “*Ecdadına sahip, çıkmak onların eserlerine sahip çıkmakla olacak iştir. O hatıralara sahip çıktıkça bizler güçleniriz.*” (Şentürk & Tosun; September 19, 2009).

⁵³ “*Sizlere Türk halkının selamını ve sevgilerini getirdim. Biz burada, Sudan ve Türk halkının aynı zamanda ayrı bayrak altında özgürce birlikte yaşadığının işaretlerini görüyoruz.*” (Zaman; January 16, 2007).

which is famous for its history of 700 years, its justice, human rights and civilization...”⁵⁴ The inauguration of a major cultural center in Bursa by Erdoğan in June 2010 is a good example of how the Bursa municipality identifies the Turkish culture with the Ottoman and how this occasion is used to praise Ottoman. The Merinos Atatürk Cultural Center is a huge cultural complex in central Bursa; it covers a total area of 270,000 m², with 67,600 m² of it being covered (Official website of Arkitera; January 2007). The cultural center is a renovation of an old textile plant that was constructed during the 1930s and it has been one of the symbols of the new Republic. The center has four halls. The first is a 1,800-person capacity performance hall – the largest in Turkey. The second is an eight hundred-person capacity auditorium. The third one is multi-purpose hall that can hold five hundred people. The last one is a ballroom with a capacity of three hundred people (Zaman; June 7, 2010). These halls, which are the focal points of a cultural complex, and expected to be the most important cultural venue of Bursa, the fourth largest city in Turkey, with a metropolitan population of approximately two million, are named as the Osman Gazi Hall, Orhan Gazi Hall, Hüdevendigar hall and Yıldırım Beyazid Hall, after the first four Ottoman Sultans who lived in Bursa (Official website of Merinos Atatürk Cultural Center; n.d.).

⁵⁴ “*Bursa, 700 yıllık tarihi, adaleti, insan hakları ve medeniyetiyle ün kazanmış Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun ilk başkenti...*” (Basmacı & Karakılıç; June 1, 2003)

Bursa is not alone in promoting Ottoman culture actively. As one can expect, the Istanbul municipality is also very active in this respect. As the capital of the Ottoman, Istanbul has always been the focal point for the Islamist and has been identified with the Ottoman not only in Turkey but also throughout the world. The commemorations of the conquest of the city by the Ottomans have always been an alternative event for parties with Islamic references in Turkey and Islamic literature in Turkey is full of books, articles, objects of arts identifying the city with the Ottoman (Çınar, 2005, p. 142-148). Therefore, it is not surprising to see the Istanbul Municipality, which is controlled by AKP, focusing on the Ottoman character of the city. The municipality officially organized, for example, in November 2010, one hundred and sixty-nine cultural activities out of which sixty-nine were directly or indirectly related to the Ottoman. During the month, out of sixty-three panels and seminars held, forty-one had Ottoman subjects; of the sixty concerts held, twenty-two had Ottoman themes; and four out of the thirty-two children's plays put on had Ottoman subjects.⁵⁵

The activities of Istanbul Municipality are not restricted to local events. The activities funded by the 2010 European Cultural Capital of Istanbul Agency became another vehicle through which Ottoman culture was promoted in Istanbul. The agency is a quasi-governmental organization in whose management central government

⁵⁵ Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Newsletter of Culture and Art, November 2010.

authorities, along with the Istanbul Municipality, are heavily represented (Official web site of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency; A). To begin with, Erdoğan said, when referring to the selection of Istanbul as the cultural capital of Europe for the year 2010, “*Istanbul is the European Culture Capital of 2010 but, according to me, Istanbul has been the Culture Capital of the world since 1453*”.⁵⁶ By saying so, he identified the Ottoman, Istanbul, and culture with each other in a very strong and emotional sentence.

A close look of the activities directly funded by the Agency reveals that out of two hundred and forty-nine activities carried out in Istanbul within the framework of the program and directly funded by the agency, seventy-eight, that are 30%, are related, either directly or indirectly, to the Ottoman. Erdoğan presided over the official opening of the festivities on January 16, 2010 and various activities were organized in different parts of the city to celebrate the kick off. The Ottoman was present in these activities also through a *Mehteran* (Ottoman military music) show at the historical heart of the city: Sultanahmet (Zaman; January 16, 2010).

⁵⁶ “2010 yılı için Avrupa Kültür Başkenti kabul edilen İstanbul, bana göre 1453 yılından beri Dünya Kültür Başkenti'dir ve bundan sonra da öyle olacaktır.” (Zaman; May 29, 2010)

The activities funded by the Agency cover a wide range from exhibitions to seminars. Though it is impossible to list all such activities here, it is interesting to look at some of them, which identifies the Ottoman with the current society.

“Sultans of Poetry”⁵⁷ is an exhibition of poems written by Ottoman Sultans held at Istanbul Atatürk International airport and co-sponsored by Turkish Airlines. In his speech at the opening ceremonies, İskender Pala said, “*The Ottoman Sultans in our minds are in reality, not emperors but are people who somehow live like us*”,⁵⁸ thus answering the call of Armağan by humanizing the Ottoman and identifying the Ottoman with the present society. Another interesting activity funded by the Agency, “*A forgotten Istanbul Ritual: Teravîh-i Enderun and Public Muezzînship*”,⁵⁹ is the revival of the practice of chanting religious rhythms during the special prayers⁶⁰ in the month of Ramadan. This has been hailed in conservative newspapers as a new beginning, and as the resurgence of old Ottoman tradition.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *Şiirlerin Sultanları.*

⁵⁸ “*Zihinlerdeki Osmanlı sultanları hakikatte hükümdarlar değil, biraz bizim gibi yaşayan insanlardır.*” (Zaman; August 4, 2010)

⁵⁹ *Enderûn Usûlü Teravîh ve Cumhur Müezzînliği.*

⁶⁰ Teravîh prayer is a special prayer additionally performed during the sacred month of Ramadan by the Muslims.

⁶¹ “*Ramazân'da camilerde Osmanlı rüzgârı esecek.*” (Karabulut; August 29, 2008)

The identification of the city with the Ottoman may be no better highlighted than with the movie “Payitaht”, House of Throne. This movie was also funded by the Agency. The documentary identifies Istanbul with the Ottoman, and underscores its role as the capital of empires. It gives the messages that the city keeps the secrets of life and “*whoever lives in here, looks at the world differently*” (Official website of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency; B)

Another activity, again funded by the Agency, is the Royal Spectacle, *Sultan-ı Seyirlik*, which reenacts the festivities, shows performed for the Ottoman Sultans (Official website of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency; C). The show was performed during the holy month of Ramadan and promoted as the presentation of Ottoman life through the modern performance arts (Hürriyet; August 6, 2010).

This cultural identification of the society with the Ottoman is not restricted to major cities or to major events. Quite a number of municipalities of smaller cities and towns have been also very active in promoting the Ottoman culture as our culture. For example, the Merzifon (Özyürek; December 28, 2009), Koceaali (Hülagü; October 3, 2010), Konya (Hızlıca; November 23, 2009), Orhangazi (Zaman; August 12, 2007), Kadirli (Zaman; August 23, 2009) and Zile (Tosun; October 14, 2010) municipalities have all organized cultural activities focusing on the Ottoman.

Finally, there are sporadic activities, all around Turkey, which tear down the boundaries between the Republic and the Ottoman, between the past and present, and show that, as Erdoğan said on one occasion, the Republic and the Ottoman, together

with the Seldjuks, are the products of the same civilization (Zaman; May 4, 2009). It seems the message that the Ottoman expands into present and represents us, or the argument that we are all embraced by this civilization, is reaching the society, and the wall between the Ottoman and the Republic is gradually being torn down. A symbolic example of this process is, for example, the commemorations in Tekirdag and Bursa. In both of these events, we observe, if not the shift, the emergence, of an equally praised new founding moment⁶² for the nation. In Tekirdağ, the conquest of the city by the Ottoman was commemorated for the first time in 2007 with the presence of the Governor, Mayor and high-level military officers. These officials, after they left flowers in Atatürk monument, a representation of national Turkish imaginary, visited the newly erected monument of the conqueror of the city, the Sultan Murat, Hüdevendigar, a clear manifestation of the identification of the society with the Ottoman (Zaman; December 7, 2007). Similarly, in Bursa, the city's conquest was celebrated in 2010 in a very different form than it had been celebrated eight years earlier. Both in 2002 and 2010 the official presence was the same. The Governor of Bursa, the Mayor, high-ranking military officers, security chief were all present on both occasions. However, only a short text was read during the ceremony by a high school teacher in 2002. The activities were short, the municipality distributed rice and *ayran* during the event and there was only

⁶² An imaginary moment of conception when the history of the nation starts (Çınar, 2005, p. 142).

Mehteran music. The activities in 2010, in contrast, were completely different. First, both the Governor and the Mayor addressed the crowd. In his speech, the Governor emphasized that humanity had confronted a new civilization with the conquest of Bursa (Elitok; April 7, 2010). The Mayor, on the other hand, said “*it was their responsibility to carry the relic they inherited from their ancestors to the future*”. Secondly, the activities were not restricted to Atatürk monument as it was in 2002 (Official website of Bursa Metropolitan Municipality; April 6, 2010). The officials moved to other locations and visited the mausoleums, *Turbehs* of two Ottoman Sultans. Finally, 2010 witnessed wide range of activities under the name of “Festivities for commemoration of Osman Gazi and the Conquest of Bursa”⁶³ which lasted one week. Mayors of smaller towns around Bursa, Mayors from Bosnia-Herzegovina and some AKP deputies participated in the activities (Elitok; April 10, 2010). It looks that the apprehension of the Republic and the Ottoman in a continuous time frame that is the implicit assertion of the continuation argument, manifests itself in Bursa and Tekirdağ with the cooperation of authorities representing the central government and municipalities and with the participation of people in the festivities.

⁶³ *Osmangazi'yi Anma ve Fetih Şenlikleri.*

How the AKP Leadership Lays Claim to the Ottoman

In the previous section, I tried to show how AKP leadership persistently gives the message to the society that the Ottoman extends to the present society, how the Republic is imagined as a continuation of the Ottoman and how a new definition of the nation, if not yet *Vatan*, based on this imaginary Ottoman is asserted. This Ottoman corresponds to the imaginary Ottoman that represents the social imagined by the elites that I tried to introduce in the previous two chapters.

In this section, it is aimed to show how AKP leadership lays claim to this Ottoman - how it asserts that it represents this Ottoman.

The message that AKP represents the Ottoman, thus the nation, is also given in a variety of ways and these attempts should be read in conjunction with the conviction of AKP leadership that the Ottoman expands to the present as a social imaginary of the current society, and in conjunction with the new definition of the nation that I described above through the words of Erdoğan.

We see that the leadership and party convey this message – that they are the representative of the Ottoman, through different means, the most symbolic one being their interest in and respect for the members of the Ottoman dynasty. It was mentioned in the previous section, the importance given to the renovation and to the public visibility of the *Turbehs* of the Sultans and how AKP leadership has high profile presence at the openings of renovated *Turbehs* and artifacts. Now, I want to show how

the leadership pays respect to the dynastic family and turn their funerals into public spectacles.

Ayşe Adile, the granddaughter of Abdulhamid II, in an interview in July 2010, questions why this respect was not shown before, when she was expressing her gratitude for the keen interest of Erdoğan, of Minister of Health, of certain AKP deputies, and of the Mayor of Istanbul when her father, who had recently been hospitalized (Tokay; July 11, 2010). Osman Nabi Osmanoğlu, the grandson of Abdulhamid II, was hospitalized in Marmaris, a small summer resort in South Western Turkey, but later transferred to a prominent state hospital in Istanbul by a helicopter under special order of the Minister of Health (Zaman; July 15, 2010). When he died, a couple of days later, President Gül sent an official Presidential message of condolence (Official website of Presidency; July 15, 2010). The interest of the AKP leadership in him, however, was not limited to health matters and to a simple condescence message. Except President Gül, the entire AKP leadership was present in his funeral. The funeral was held at the Fatih Mosque in Istanbul, built and named after the conqueror of the city Sultan Mehmed, and Erdoğan, Arınç, Minister of Interior, two Ministers of State, Vice Chairman of AKP, Governor of Istanbul, Mayor of Istanbul and Security Chief of the city attended the funeral. The funeral prayer was led by the Director of Religious Affair Department in Istanbul.

Erdoğan and the ministers helped in the carriage of his coffin (Dolmacı & Yenilmez; July 18, 2010), a symbolic act in Muslim religion representing the highest level of respect for the dead person.⁶⁴ Osman Nabi was buried in the mausoleum compound of Sultan Mahmud II, where his grandfather was also entombed (Zaman; July 18, 2010), by special permission of the Council of Ministers.⁶⁵ This interest in the Ottoman dynasty is not new and Erdoğan, who could not attend an earlier funeral of a prominent member of them, visited personally in 2009. His wife, Minister of Interior, Minister of Transportation, Governor and Mayor of Istanbul, accompanied him at that visit (Bighaber; September 27, 2009). The information disseminated after this visit was the great gratification of the family, in the words of Zeynep Tarzi Osman;

God bless him; he came back from America and, as soon as they got off the plane, he and the lady visited me to express condolences. Ministers and the Mayor of Istanbul were with him. This was a great pleasure for me. Thanks to all of them.⁶⁶

President Gül also issued an official presidential condolence message at that time and he phoned the family personally (Zaman; September 25, 2009).

⁶⁴ “*Carrying the corpse on the shoulders to the grave is a sign of greatest respect and homage to the dead. Such a deed shows the honour and value of humanity.*” (Official website of General Directorate of Religious Affairs; n.d.)

⁶⁵ Law 1593, article 211 definitely forbids the burials outside of cemeteries without explicit permission from the council of ministers.

⁶⁶ “*Eksik olmasın Amerika'dan döndü, uçaktan indi ayağının tozuyla bana başsağlığı ziyaretinde bulundu hanımefendiyle birlikte. Bakanlar, İstanbul valisi, belediye başkanı ile beraber geldiler. Büyük memnuniyet duydum. Eksik olmasınlar.*” (Zaman; September 28, 2009)

The Leadership of AKP, apart from the symbolic messages, such as the one example I gave above, on some occasions, explicitly says that they are the followers of the Ottoman and they have a duty, a responsibility in this respect. Erdoğan, as the leader, is the one who utters these messages most. In May 2009, on the occasion of Foundations Week he stressed;

We have the responsibility of building a future on the legacy of our past, to cherish the ideal of ‘a future the roots of which are in the past’; like Hz. Mevlana said, hundreds of years ago, like a pair of compasses, one of our feet shall remain stable, and the other will move in the whole world.⁶⁷

In December 2009, in his speech at the distribution of the Turgut Özal⁶⁸ Awards, he stated;

We have a lot of business in the Balkans, in the Gulf and in Central Asia. We are not travelling to these places in vain. There are lots of things we have to do in these lands. Because (doing) this is the meeting of this generation with its ancestors. But, we want the future generations to meet their ancestors with us. We have to succeed in this. (Appendix N) (Zaman; December 29, 2009)

⁶⁷ “Biz geçmişin mirası üzerine geleceği inşa etmek, ‘kökü mazide olan atı’ idealini yaşatmak gibi bir sorumluluğu taşıyoruz. Hz. Mevlana’nın yüzyıllar önce söylediği gibi ‘pergel misali, bir ayağımız sabit kalacak, diğeriyle tüm dünyayı seyran edeceğiz.’” (Zaman; May 4, 2009).

⁶⁸ Turgut Özal is the first President of Turkey who does not have a military career after the 1967 coup d’etat. He is known for his pro-Islamic views and is the architect of the liberalization of Turkish economy in 1980s.

In April 2010, when he was visiting the *Turbeh* of Sultan Murat Hüdavendigâr in Kosovo, he said;

May you rest in peace. We remember with mercy, you and our ancestors who were martyred with you; we promise you here, in your presence, that we shall pass from generation to generation, the heroism, the feelings of peace, brotherhood and justice, which you bequeathed to us 600 years ago.⁶⁹

In April 2010, at the opening of the Piri Reis Exhibition in Washington DC, he said “*we are protecting our history, culture and civilization and we are bringing together our heritage, which was abandoned to its fate, to young generations and the world*”.⁷⁰

AKP’s claim on the Ottoman is conveyed to the society through other means, too; usually this message is interwoven with the claim that the Ottoman extends to the present. First, it is explicitly asserted that AKP is protecting and is reviving our culture. In the previous section, I tried to explain how culture is used to identify the current society with the Ottoman. This time, AKP is presented as the protector and promoter of this culture. This claim is defended most explicitly by disseminating information that AKP government takes care of all historical monuments and artifacts from the Ottoman period not only in Turkey but throughout all former Ottoman geography, as well.

⁶⁹ “*Ruhun şad olsun. Sen ve seninle şehit olmuş ecdadımızı rahmetle yad ediyoruz. 600 yıl öncesinden bizlere miras bıraktığın kahramanlığı, barış, kardeşlik ve adalet duygusunu nesilden nesile aktaracağımıza dair size burada, huzurunuzda söz veriyoruz.*” (Çam; November 4, 2010)

⁷⁰ “*Tarihimize, kültürümüze, medeniyetimize sahip çıkıyor, unutulmuş, kendi kaderine terkedilmiş mirasımızı yeniden genç nesillerle, dünya ile buluşturuyoruz.*” (Zaman; April 14, 2010)

Arınç, as a concluding comment to his speech at the opening of Ertuğrul Tekke Mosque in Beşiktaş, in the presence of others, as cited in the previous section, said “*The fact that this mosque is opened on a Friday, after so many years, is a demonstration of one of our duties to our ancestors being fulfilled*”.⁷¹ In fact, AKP leadership is proud of all the renovation work that has been undertaken by various government agencies and municipalities all over Turkey and in the Ottoman geography. This renovation work, re-creation of the Ottoman space is mentioned and presented as a proof of the allegiance to the history, to the ancestors that are the Ottomans. Erdoğan is especially vocal in citing the renovation work undertaken at his rallies and mass meetings. At the AKP Congress in October 2010, he cited twenty renovation, reconstruction and construction works that had been done in Turkey and abroad one by one and said, “*we claimed them*” (Zaman; October 3, 2010) in the sense that AKP protects the cultural heritage. Similarly, on the occasion of the start of the broadcasting of TRT 5 channel he said, “*We did not neglect Karatay Medresesi in Konya, Divriği Ulu Mosque in Sivas, Drina Bridge in Bosnia*

⁷¹ “*Cuma gününde bu caminin bu kadar yıl sonra açılıyor olması, ecdadımıza karşı görevlerimizden biri olarak önümüzdedir.*” (Zaman; May 21, 2010)

Herzegovina, Mostar, Ottoman cemetery in Jerusalem, the Turbeh of Murad Hüdavendigâr in Kosova".⁷²

In addition to maintaining high profile participation at the opening of Ottoman artifacts in Turkey, the leadership either visits an Ottoman artifact or participates in the opening of a cultural event related to Ottoman when they visit a foreign country. In this way, they continuously create a picture through which they are identified with the Ottoman. In the last three years, for example, Erdoğan, opened the Piri Reis Exhibition in Washington D.C. (Zaman; April 14, 2010), visited the *Turbeh* of Sultan Murat in Kosovo and opened the Ottoman Edicts Exhibition in Bosnia Herzegovina (Zaman; April 7, 2010); Minister Ömer Demir visited the Turbeh of Sultan Vahdettin in Damascus (Zaman; November 3, 2010) and Arınç participated in the opening of an Ottoman *Turbeh* in Sudan (Zaman; January 16, 2010). The General Secretary of Organization of Islamic Conference, who is supported by AKP government, visited the school opened by Abdulhamid II in China (Zaman; June 18, 2010). Davutoğlu opened the "*Türkische Cammer*" exhibition in Dresden (Zaman; March 7, 2010), Babacan visited the Ottoman artifacts in Kosovo (Zaman; January 12, 2009), Ministers of State Erken and Yazıcıoğlu visited the newly renovated Sinan Paşa Mosque in Kosovo (2008,

⁷² "Konya'da Karatay Medresesi'ni, Sivas'ta Divriği Ulu Camisini restore ederken, Bosna Hersek'te Drina köprüsünü, Mostar'tı, Kudüs'te Osmanlı mezarlığını, Kosova'da Murad Hüdavendigâr türbesini ihmal etmedik." (Zaman; October 28, 2010)

August 24), and Gül opened an exhibition related to the tolerance of the Ottoman in Romania (Zaman; March 4, 2008).

AKP leadership also claims the Ottoman by showing how people outside of Turkey, from former Ottoman geography, treat them as Ottomans. This, again, is a double-sided argument as it both shows that the Ottoman is a part of the present and AKP leaders are the representative of this Ottoman.

It is possible that these acts, gestures and actions abroad target different audiences. The officials and the public of the foreign country visited are among them. However, the information about these activities is also disseminated in Turkey. It is always cited, in an intense emotional tone, by the leaders. In the previous section, it was quoted what Erdoğan said when he was addressing AKP deputies after returning from Kosova. In another case, after visiting the *tomb* of İzzetbegoviç, the founding father of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Erdoğan when talking to a journalist, he cited his encounter with İzzetbegoviç just before he died, saying;

When I learned that the late Aliya was very ill, I changed my route and passed by Sarajevo. I went to the hospital. We had a heart to heart talk with Aliya, in private. He said, ‘You are the descendants of the Ottoman. These are Ottoman territories, protect them. I am going but you protect them. I did not sign Dayton willingly; the conditions made me do it’. We wept together. He was conscious. He pointed out Turkey’s help to Bosnia. He expressed his thanks for the help and assistance during the war. (Appendix O) (Zaman; July 13, 2010)

In this narrative, it is impossible not to notice the emotional tone of this encounter and his citation of the crying episode just after İzzetbegoviç told him that they are the heirs

of the Ottoman. Similarly, Minister of State Özak, when addressing the party members, cited an encounter of Arafat with five AKP deputies and quoted him as saying, “*Where are you, friend? What kind of Ottoman descendants are you? We are waiting for you here*”.⁷³

Another way in which AKP leaders, especially Erdoğan, lay claim to Ottoman is by way of the justification of certain policies and acts through the Ottoman. This is, once more, a double sided argument. These arguments both assert that AKP is following the Ottoman by initiating these policies and justify what has been done as the natural result of belonging to a specific social imaginary represented by the Ottoman. In a foreign policy context, Erdoğan, for example, said, “*Therefore, the off-spring of the Ottoman cannot be prisoners in Ankara. We have to unfold. We are doing what becomes us*”.⁷⁴ Erdoğan is not alone in using the Ottoman to justify certain acts and policies. Top party officials, when addressing the members of the party on different occasions, emphasize that Turkey is the continuation of the Ottoman and that AKP should bear this responsibility. Zaman reports that in his speech to party members, Minister of Work, Çelik, pointed out that, “*Turkey covered very important distances in development and*

⁷³ “*Neredesiniz kardeşim? Ne biçim Osmanlının torunlarısınız? Burada biz sizi bekliyoruz.*” (Zaman; February 28, 2010)

⁷⁴ “*Öyleyse Osmanlı'nın evlatları Ankara'ya mahkum kalmaz. Açılmak durumundayız. Biz, bize yakışanı yapıyoruz.*” (Zaman; February 7, 2010)

progress during the Ak Parti government and said that the elections on March 29 are, therefore, important". Çelik noted that, *"it can be seen how Turkey's voice rises higher when the country is stronger"*. He said, *"that is why, when our Prime Minister's voice rose in Davos, even our brothers in Bosnia had goose bumps. We have seen that the Ottoman geography rose with this rising voice. Therefore, March 29 is very important"* (Appendix P) (Zaman; March 2, 2009). More interestingly, Bağış when speaking about the membership process to the European Union, defended the process as a return to ourselves and to our values. Thus also giving the message that AKP is leading this return. He gave the institution of Ombudsman as an example of how the Europeans copied the institutions of the Ottomans (Yanatma; September 9, 2009).

Finally, AKP leadership asserts their claim to the Ottoman in other symbolic ways. Giving and accepting gifts representing the Ottoman,^{75 76 77} labeling their life style as Ottoman,⁷⁸ using visuals and symbols related to Ottoman in their private lives,^{79 80}

⁷⁵ Bursa Chamber of Cutlers gave Erdoğan an imitation of the sword of Osman Gazi, the founder of the Ottoman state when Erdoğan got sick because he is keeping the spirit of the Ottomans alive. The sword is made by the last sword master in Bursa. (Basmacı; October 24, 2006)

⁷⁶ Bilecik Governor gave a an Iznik tile with an Ottoman state emblem on it. (Zaman; September 13, 2009)

⁷⁷ Governor of Gümüşhane gave a plate showing the banknote printed in the city during the Ottoman time to State Minister and Vice Prime Minister Yazıcı. (Bayraktar; August 7, 2010)

⁷⁸ Mayor of Istanbul in an interview said his family follows an Ottoman style. (Akman; December 14, 2003)

and organizing events centered on what is Ottoman⁸¹ are all messages given to the society that the leadership represents the Ottoman.

The Impact of the Imaginary Ottoman on Turkish Politics

As we have seen, AKP leadership and the elites clustering around the newly emerging bourgeoisie share the same imaginary and strive for the identification of the society with this imaginary Ottoman, and the leadership asserts that it represents this Ottoman. In this section, the focus is on the importance of this imaginary for AKP and in Turkish politics. However, the interconnectivity of this imaginary Ottoman and globalization is a key in understanding this importance. It is already shown that the imaginary Ottoman serves the elites and AKP leadership as a guide in this globalized world. In this section, I will try to explain that the emergence of the imaginary Ottoman depends, to a great extent, on globalization. Consequently, I want to show that this imaginary, as a product of globalization, is transforming continuously while serving as a background in

⁷⁹ Emine Erdoğan wears costumes from a tailor in Kütahya who is prominent Ottoman style. (Türken; October 12, 2006)

⁸⁰ The wedding gown of Gül's daughter is embroidered by Ottoman motives. (Zaman; September 18, 2009).

⁸¹ The filioantropic association established by the wives of AKP deputies organized a fashion show in 2003 focusing on '*Osmanlı'dan Bu Yana Tesettür*'. The show was attended by the wives of Gül, Erdoğan, Arınç. (Dolmacı; May 28, 2003)

understanding the globalized world. We can say that the imaginary Ottoman is both in the process of making by the elites and AKP leadership and takes part in the making of a world by them as a guide.

The Ottoman had different roles in different periods. Historically, before 1923, it was the image of self against the other, i.e., the West, thus, it represented the framework that had to be changed to save the state, the Empire. After the establishment of the Republic, it became the “*other*” of the Kemalist modernization project. Its defamation as the “*ancient regime*” was critical for the establishment of the new regime. For the early Islamists, on the other hand, it was important to maintain the link between the present and the past but what they referred to as Ottoman was the period before Suleiman the Magnificent. The last three hundred and fifty years of the Ottoman was considered loss for both, most of the Islamists⁸² and Kemalists. However, as it was shown, the Ottoman was re-imagined in the second half of the 1990s. It looks as though the rejection of the Ottoman past by the Kemalist regime and the countervailing focus of Islamists on the early period of the Empire and on *Asr-ı Saadet* for more than eighty years gave the newly emerging elites and AKP leadership an unprecedented opportunity to stake a claim on the Ottoman through its re-imagination with a different content. This Ottoman, in its re-imagined form is neither a malaise nor it is a pre-modern order but it is rather a

⁸² Except perhaps the period of Abudulhamid II for the the Islamists.

civilization, a representation of a specific social imaginary with Islam at its core. Two transformative ideas were critical in the transformation of the Ottoman to a representation of a new social imagined by the elites where a new identity can be nourished from an Ottoman that was the culprit of these sins one generation ago. The first one of these ideas is the apprehension of the Ottoman as the center of the Islamic civilization - its reconciliation with Islam that secured a place to the Ottoman in today's multi-civilizational world and on which the claim of continuity was grounded. Second idea was the rejection of decay, which, with the assistance of the reconciliation with Islam, allows the Ottoman to expand to the present, allows the local to define itself.

It is not a coincidence that these two ideas, critical in the imagination of the new Ottoman, surfaced during the second half of the 1990s. Globalization and the end of the Cold War, as I discussed above, by delegitimizing nation-states, by directly and indirectly loosening the grasp of national imaginaries provided a ground upon which new identities could be sought. A wider space and a longer time horizon back to the history which was not limited by the founding moments of national imaginaries emerged. Imagination came on the scene again after nearly hundred and fifty years of the emergence of national imaginaries to fill this extended space in time and in geography. New imaginaries emerged once the national imaginaries had lost their ability or had become relatively inadequate to link the local to the new global in this relatively unrestrained world. The Ottoman was re-imagined using this new space and time horizon provided by globalization. It expanded itself within this space and time, which

provided it with new fields of opportunities. The disappearance of inferiority paradigm was the intellectual ground on which this expansion was possible.⁸³ Thus, we can say that the imagined Ottoman, with a different time and space apprehension, was born in the time and space that was opened up by globalization. This is the second facet of the connection between the imagined Ottoman and globalization; it shows us that the emergence of the imaginary Ottoman is strongly dependent on the historical developments of the period.

Now that we have a complete picture of the relationship between the imaginary Ottoman as the product of the encounter of the newly emerging elites of the local with the global world and as their guide in this world, we can turn back to AKP. As we have seen AKP leadership has the same imaginary; it strongly promotes the identification of the society with this Ottoman and asserts that it represents this Ottoman. This picture, although correct, is a general one. It is the first connection of imaginary Ottoman with politics. It tells us how AKP works within the framework of the social magic of

⁸³ The transformation of capitalism and the emerging post-industrial nature of western societies may also be important in the disappearance of the inferiority paradigm and, thus, in the emergence of new imagination of the Ottoman. Material superiority and capitalism, which were the ground on which the intellectual basis of the paradigm of inferiority is constructed, are no longer exclusive to the West and they became something that can be acquired, developed at any part of the globe, such as in Malaysia or in other South East Asian countries. The split of capitalism and its richness, in this perspective, from the West help in re-positioning the West not as the superior one but as the other. This apprehension of the world represents itself in the concept of multi-civilization world and in the rejection of progressive reading of history. Obviously, this is a process related to globalization and can be included in the globalization discussion. However, I prefer not to elaborate it despite its hidden potential to explain how the Islamists became a part of neo liberal global capitalism because it has to be further substantiated.

Bourdieu to get the support of the masses. However, the importance of the imaginary Ottoman for AKP and in politics is more than that. When we probe into the building blocks of this imagination process, in other words, when we look at the transformative ideas that make this imagination possible within the space provided by globalization, we see that they offer AKP leadership an Ottoman imagined by using the Ottoman history. This historical space can contribute more to AKP leadership to understand the present, and provide a better basis for action than *Asr-ı Saadet* or to the tales of Ergenekon⁸⁴ can do for Islamist or Nationalists. These two ideas open up a large repository of historical events, where the appropriate ones can be selected to imagine a new world suitable for apprehending current developments, and justifying and legitimizing certain acts, actions and policies in today's world. In other words, the Ottoman imagined through Ottoman history provides a much deeper and extended imaginary experience to those who share it to embrace the globalization. The global nature, of the imagined Ottoman, its acceptance of others, different civilizations, and its sui generis plurality, together with its expanded *Millet* and *Vatan*, are all derived, imagined by using these selected events through the science of history.

⁸⁴ The legendary story where the Turks were saved, guided by a wolf out of an valley in central Asia and started their movement to the West.

In this framework, with certain qualification, habitus can be helpful in explaining the situation. Habitus represents, “*a sort of deep structuring matrix*” (Swartz, 1997, p. 104) as well as cognitive basis of action (Swartz, 1997, p. 101). Theoretically speaking, habitus adjusts “*aspirations and expectations according to the objective probability of success and failure... for a particular behavior*” (Swartz, 1997, p. 105). The habitus, in this context, that is retreating in favor of improvisation according to Appadurai (2008) emerges in a new form in the time and space of the new imaginary and what seems improvisation may be a product of this new habitus (p. 54). This new habitus, generated through the re-imagination of the Ottoman, thus, is the ground on which the aspiration of the elites and the leadership takes shape. It is not possible to ascribe meanings to certain acts and discourse of AKP leadership without having an understanding of this habitus that has been shaped through the imagination of the Ottoman. This is why American diplomats have had problems in understanding Davutoğlu, said, “*Turkey has the targets of a Rolls Royce but the means of Rover*” (Hürriyet; November 29, 2010). The re-imagination of the Ottoman as such provides AKP with a different “*sense of one’s place*”, which is completely different from that of Islamists and Kemalists (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 235). This sense of what AKP and, consequently, Turkey can or cannot let itself do, the sense of self-limit in terms of initiating policies and taking action, is clearly

different for AKP from that of the Kemalists, nationalists and Islamists (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 235). I think that this perspective explains the “*one minute*” in Davos⁸⁵ in a better way than speculating about the mood of Erdoğan. Continuing along the same line, we note that this new structuring matrix becomes critical in three areas:

First, it helps AKP to respond quickly to the enfolding events in the short term. In other words, it conditions its reflexes in a globalized world in the appropriate way. This is not surprising because as we have seen, the imaginary Ottoman is the product of globalization. It is imagined within the realm of globalization as a guide to this realm. Accordingly, it provides the right habitus to its adherents in the globalized world; it conditions their reflexes in the right way. Behaviors, responses of AKP leadership that we are inclined to characterize as improvisation or pragmatism are in some cases the product of this new habitus.

⁸⁵ During a session on Gaza at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos last month, in which Erdoğan, Israeli President Shimon Peres, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Arab League Secretary Amr Moussa were panelists, Erdoğan stalked off the stage when a moderator, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius, cut off his remarks in response to an impassioned monologue by President Peres, who strongly defended Israel’s offensive against Gaza, which claimed the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians and injured thousands of others. When Ignatius tried to cut short Erdoğan’s remarks, saying it was past time to adjourn for dinner, the Turkish prime minister answered in frustration: “One minute... one minute... one minute... Don’t interrupt me. You are not allowing me to speak”. Erdoğan then directed harsh criticism at Peres about Israel’s present and past policies against Gaza and walked off the stage when he was interrupted again saying, “Davos is over for me from now on”. The remarks of Erdoğan, who does not speak English, were translated by an interpreter during the meeting, but asking for one minute from the moderator, he spoke in English with an angry tone of voice and a flushed face.

A recent event in Athens is a good example of this. In May 2010, when replying to a journalist asking whether he was disturbed by use of the adjective “*Ecumenical*” for the Orthodox Patriarchy in Istanbul by his Greek Counterpart, Erdoğan said, “*why should I be disturbed by something that had not disturbed my ancestors*”. The ecumenical character of the Patriarchy in Istanbul is a hot issue, largely exploited by nationalists and Islamists, in domestic politics in Turkey. Turkish state has rejected the ecumenical character of the patriarchy since 1923 on the basis of Lausanne Treaty. On the other hand, the subject is a critical one in the relations of Turkey and Greece, given the allegiance paid to the Patriarchy by a large part of Greek population. In addition, it is a subject US diplomats in Turkey follow closely. Erdoğan, in one sense, replied to the question reflexively, structured by this new habitus, which also served to placate any criticism arising from nationalists, Islamists and Kemalists, through his argument of “*ancestors*”, or, “the Ottoman”. He also satisfied his Greek counterparts and the Greek public by not rejecting the Ecumenical character of the Patriarchy. In addition to that, he gave the message not only to the domestic audience but to the world that “*we are Ottomans*”. Similarly, when he was addressing party members in the province of Kars, where the tension between Kurds, Turks and the State run high, he said;

A fatherland is made up of many ethnicities. The Ottoman gave the best example of this. There were different religions, different sects there. There were different races. Was there any trouble? No, there was not. Therefore, we should be calm and respect each other. We should love each other for the sake of Allah.
(Appendix R) (Official website of AKP; n.d., b)

In this example also, Erdoğan talks with the impetus provided by his new habitus rather than voicing the mechanical views of the State.

Secondly, this new habitus, apprehended as our history as suggested by Armağan, facilitates creative adaptation of outside influences and ideas in the long run. Creative adaptation, an extension of creativity of imagination of Castoriadis, to me, is possible because the imaginary is not as robust as ideology and coherence is not a requirement (Gaonkar, 2002, p. 12). Furthermore, the Ottoman in its re-imagined form is a product of globalization itself and this property of it makes its boundaries more porous to the influences of globalization.⁸⁶ The multi-culturality and pluralism outlined in the previous section can be considered examples of such creative adaptation of Western concepts and ideas. Another good example is Hasan Tahsin Fendoğlu. Fendoğlu was the Assistant Chairman of TRT, Chairman of National Committee of Human Rights, Head of Human Rights Department of the Prime Ministry and he was recently selected as a member of RTUK⁸⁷ by the parliament.

⁸⁶ The role of the imaginary in creative adaptation of foreign ideas is not a new subject for Turkey. Şerif Mardin, in his two books 'The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought' (Mardin, 2008a) and 'Political Ideas of Jeune Turks; 1895-1908' (Mardin, 2008b), explains in detail how the ideas originating from Europe infiltrated into Ottoman society through Islamic interpretations. Similarly, İsmail Kara in his book, '*Din ile Modernleşme*' (Kara, 2005) gives examples of how the Islamists in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries strived to use Islam to accommodate the concept of French Revolution with the Ottoman.

⁸⁷ Radio Television Supreme Council is the highest regulatory body of all television and radio broadcasting in Turkey.

In the introduction of his book, Fendođlu (2007) says;

...The concept of human rights in the dynamics of our history is a much better digested, absorbed and internalized understanding of human rights. For this reason, especially as to its theory, basics and essence, it is not at all alien to our understanding of human rights-democracy-universal values and the culture and civilization of our day.⁸⁸ (p. 23)

Other examples can be drawn from the discussions on the constitutional change that was approved by a referendum in September 2010. One of the changes introduced was the establishment of the Ombudsman as a constitutional institution. AKP tried to establish the Ombudsman before 2007 through a change of law in line with the democratization packages introduced for Turkey's accession process to the EU. This first attempt was rejected by the constitutional court on the ground that such an institution has no constitutional ground. This time, the Ombudsman was on the agenda of the constitutional change. AKP leadership defended the Ombudsman, arguing that it was originally an Ottoman institution. Erdoğan in Trabzon (Official website of AKP; August 10, 2010), State Minister Yılmaz in Malatya when he was talking to Businessmen (Zaman; August 28, 2010), Bađış in Trabzon (Yanatma; September 9, 2009), Kuzu, the

⁸⁸ "...tarihimizin dinamiklerinde grdđmz insan hakları kavramı, ok daha sindirilmiş, iselleřtirilmiş ve zmsenmiř bir insan hakları anlayıřıdır. Bu nedenle, zellikle teorisi, aslı ve z itibariyle, gnmzn insan hakları-demokrasi-evrensel deđerler anlayıřı, kltr ve medeniyetimize asla yabancı deđerdir."

Chairman of Human Rights Commission in the Parliament, as early as 2008 (Zaman; May 28, 2008), all stated that the Ombudsman was an Ottoman institution.

Creative adaptation of ideas, as we see, enables AKP leadership and elites to incorporate various concepts into their intellectual make-up, to defend and justify them, and to use them as the basis of their policies. Creative adaptation possibly serves, at the same time, as a bulwark against Islamists and nationalist ideologies in introducing new policies to adjust Turkey's position in the global world.

The social imaginary is, therefore, constantly re-created through creative adaptation, and it is also actualized and transformed as a result of modifications in policies and theories as they are implemented. This is the manifestation of the dual process of Taylor.

This imaginary is, therefore, different from the Kemalist or from early Islamist ones, not only because it has a different content, which is something obvious, but also because it has the ability to constantly change and transform itself in the globalizing world. It provides fertile ground for creative adaptation. It is, at least, a candidate to be a truly global imaginary in the sense that its eclectic nature allows it to embrace the changes brought by the globalization.

However, it should be noted that there is a difference between this argument and what the elites says. The argument of the elites is that the Ottoman embraces globalization as a historical experience. Unlike elites, who claim that the history, the real history makes the Ottoman a solution, in this thesis, it is argued that, the ability of the

imaginary Ottoman to transform, derived from its imaginary nature, enables it to embrace globalization. In other words, the imagined Ottoman is a product of globalization rather than something external to it. In this context, the imagined Ottoman enables AKP both to act on the basis of this imaginary and also to re-shape it, a characteristic that can hardly be attributable to Islamists or to the Republicans, to pre-globalization imaginaries.

For example, as opposed to the vast reservoir of events which covers the totality of the Ottoman period, Islamist and Kemalists are limited by their apprehension time. Islamists are limited because they have to go back either to the *Asr-ı Saadet* or to the period before Suleiman the Magnificent to draw inferences for today. Kemalists, on the other hand, are even more limited as their historical pool is based on a very short time, which limits their ability for creative adaptation. Furthermore, AKP finds an applicable moral order in this imaginary, which is derived from the history. The arguments of “*the last bastion of humanity against colonialism*” is the prime example of the claim of embracing the totality of humanity as a representation of a different morality. Islamists and Kemalists, on the other hand, derive the moral grounds in their respective imaginaries from the theological readings of Islam or from the positivist reading of the world inherited from the nineteenth century.

Finally, this Ottoman serves AKP in entrenching the society in its own space within the multi-civilization world. The concept of open civilization articulated by Recep Şentürk (2010) and presentation of the Ottoman as the institutionalization and

modernization of open civilization, for example, is a recent attempt to establish the foundations upon which the argument of civilizational alliance can be constructed and shows how the imaginary Ottoman is able to respond to the multi-civilization globalized world (p. 31, 32).

Ottoman history, this new habitus, thus enables AKP to quickly respond to daily events arising in both domestic and foreign politics, in the short term, in conformity with globalization. At the same time, it facilitates the continuous re-imagination of the Ottoman through the creative adaptation, thus enabling the transformation of the social imaginary through the dual process of Taylor, in the long run. In summary, the capacity to represent something larger and different from itself and the new habitus that is based on the reconciliation of Ottoman with Islam and on the rejection of decay that makes creative adaptation possible provides AKP leadership and the elites, the intellectual make-up through which the imagined social transforms continuously. This seemingly superior ability of self-transformation is critical for AKP in embracing globalization both domestically and internationally.⁸⁹ This ability to transform, when coupled with the dual identification, “*institution*” and “*constitution*” of the society as Ottoman and AKP

⁸⁹ It is important to note that the Ottoman in its imaginary form may also plays an important role in capitalizing the opportunities provided by globalization. The critical point here, is the apprehension of globalization either as a problem or as an opportunity and it seems that those two are the two sides of the same coin. This apprehension may be becoming a critical parameter for distinguishing the Islamists from the AKP. The subject is not elaborated to stay within the limits of the work.

as the representative of this Ottoman, thus of the society, on the other hand, opens new roads for AKP in domestic politics and in the actualization of the social imaginary.

In order to understand the importance of this process, how it works and the role of the Ottoman as a representation of a social imaginary in this respect, we have to look at the consequences of dual identification or to the consequences of *social magic*. On the part of the leadership of AKP, showed above, there is the self-assumed confidence in their representation of the social imaginary of the society. This is manifested by their claim that “we are all Ottoman”, “the continuation of the Ottoman” and AKP represents this Ottoman. This is something self-assured because the social imaginary represented by the Ottoman is itself an imaginary of the elites; nevertheless, the leadership claims that they represent the true values of the society, i.e., the moral order of the social imaginary represented by the Ottoman. As for society, we see the emergence of an imagined nostalgia for an Ottoman as imagined by the elites. Imagined nostalgia, a term that I borrow from Appadurai (2008), is a nostalgia “*for things that never were, it thus inverts temporal logic of fantasy*” (p. 77), which “*creates a much deeper want than simply envy, imitation or greed could by themselves invite*”, which “*may take the form of nostalgia for present, the stylized presentation of the present as if it has already slipped away*” (p. 78). This imagined nostalgia is induced by the creation of the Ottoman space, by identifying the Ottoman culture with our culture and through other means that I described in the previous section.

This mutual attachment through the Ottoman between the society and AKP leadership, a manifestation of the social magic of Bourdieu, to the degree it is achieved, is critical for AKP to be able to get consent for its policies, its ability to connect localities and individuals to the state, its presentation of itself as an authority figure and to its efforts to build political unity in Turkey within a global world. The Ottoman in this context, as a cradle of identity, becomes “*a politically effective invention of common past that was accepted by the people and became a part of their social imaginary*” (Taylor, 2007, p. 177) and provides the ground for AKP to be nationalist without being a Turkish nationalist, Islamist without being Islamist and modern without being infidel. These are alternative and contradictory positions that are usually explained either through improvisation or by pragmatism.

As far as the nationalism is concerned, the imaginary Ottoman helps AKP to oppose the nationalist ideology of the Turkish state and its variants defended by other political parties such as Republican People Party (CHP) or Nationalist People Party (MHP). At this point, a short discussion of nationalism is required. The concept of nationalism suggests that it represents, defends and promotes the interests of a monolithic nation. The monolithic nature of the nation can be secured by ethnicity, common culture, common history, territorial unity, common ideology, ideas and vision or with a combination of them. The nation state is critical in this conception because it is the one who rules the nation. This formula is represented by the rhetoric of one nation, one state, and one history (Çınar, 2005, p. 7, 8). Turkish nationalism, whether in its

official version or in its other variants defended by MHP and CHP, is a good example of this formula, which was uttered by Erdoğan, too, on some occasions.

The imaginary Ottoman, however, permits AKP to confront this nationalism without rejecting it, but, instead, by expanding it in terms of space and time. This expansion is not based on language or ethnicity but rather on the common social imaginary represented by the Ottoman without even naming it in most of the cases.⁹⁰ It is already discussed how the nation, in this framework, of the elites and the leadership, is different from the conception of the nation of Turkish State of CHP and MHP. First of all, this is a difference in terms of space. The hyperreal Ottoman surpasses the de jure boundaries of the Republic of Turkey without denying their existence. Secondly, this is a difference in apprehension of time. This nation expands further into history compared to the nation of Turkish nationalism. The founding moment goes further back than the official founding moment of October 29, 1923. This shift in the founding moment creates a larger pool of historical events that the leadership can make inferences to the present. The examples from the Bursa and Tekirdağ provinces are signs of how the founding moment has been gradually shifting back and how the wall between the Ottoman and the Republic has been fading. The Ottoman in this context is important in

⁹⁰ We already see that different meaning ascribed to the Ottoman but the symbols that represent the Ottoman are not discussed. “Our history”, “ancestors”, “the Gazi’s”, “the conqueror” are some of those words which directly and directly symbolize the Ottoman.

the politics as an alternative to Turkish ethnic nationalism, both within the party and against the other political actors. It is, therefore, no wonder that the leadership emphasizes this new conception of nation frequently not only during mass rallies but also when addressing the deputies and members of the party.

Regarding Islamism, AKP has always rejected that it has an Islamic agenda. On the scholarly front it is generally agreed that it is not an Islamist political party (Yavuz, 2009, p. 2-13), (Özbudun & Hale, 2010, p. 57, 65). However, Erdoğan's remarks concerning Islam as his main reference point is still widely quoted by its opponents in and outside of Turkey and the dispute about the hidden Islamist agenda remains. The social imaginary represented by the Ottoman and how this Ottoman is internalized in the discourse of AKP are valuable references points in this discussion. It has to be noted that the reconciliation of the Ottoman with Islam and the rejection of decay, once more, becomes critical because they represent the replacement of flawed mentality of the Ottoman society, inferior to the West, with a new social imaginary represented by the Ottoman, on equal footing with the West, and described as a civilization of love focusing on human being, a civilization strongly tied to Islam (Official website of AKP; September 5, 2010 & December 17, 2009), a civilization defined by its benevolence (Official website of AKP; June 13, 2010), one that is in search of conquering the hearths (Official website of AKP; April 14, 2010) and on the side of the oppressed. (Official website of AKP; June 13, 2010)

This re-imagination of the Ottoman facilitates the introduction of Islam without promoting Islam. In one sense, the Ottoman is sanctified and, thus, any referral to Ottoman implicitly becomes a referral to Islam. On the other hand, Islam is also secularized, as it is embedded in a worldly order, representing real people. This imagination of the Ottoman provides AKP the ability to hold both diametrically opposed positions at the same time and this ability, more than its usefulness against the secularist critics, is important for AKP to hold its conservative electorate, and to neutralize the Islamist⁹¹ criticisms of its policies. It enables it to defend its policies against the Islamic critics and at the same time represent itself as being religious to its electorate because the sanctification of Ottoman precludes a discussion on what Islam says, precludes the need for theological knowledge and, consequently, the need for *Ulema* in proposing, defending and justifying policies, actions while benefiting the support of religion. In other words AKP, through the imagined Ottoman, can refrain from using Islam to justify, promote and present ideas, policies and actions and can carry the creative adaptation process without an explicit Islamic interpretation.

⁹¹ Islamist criticism, refers to the criticism of AKP's views and policies from the perspective of Islam. All critiques made by religiously affiliated groups are not Islamist critiques. An Islamist criticism in this context would be criticizing a view, an action and policies because they are against Islam.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The starting point of this work was to explain the Ottoman phenomenon - the emergence of Ottoman in modern Turkey. How did the Ottoman, with new meanings, emerge in first decade of the 2000s? What does this phenomenon signify? Is this new Ottoman and its emergence important? These and similar questions were the driving force behind this work. Today, we observe that the Ottoman in the form that was discussed continues to expand its presence.

The main idea behind this work even before the start, was that the re-emergence of the Ottoman in Turkey could have an important meaning and it could highlight some critical factors affecting AKP and Turkish politics. Similarly, confining the emergence of the Ottoman to the Islamist-secularist, *ancient regime – new regime, modern – pre-modern* binaries did not look promising. The construction of the argument that the Ottoman is a representation of a social imagined by the elites clustering around the newly emerging bourgeoisie and by the AKP leadership was the result of these and similar ideas. This argument tells us that the elites imagined a social while trying to answer questions such as “what is our place, the place of Turkey, in this changing world”, “what kind of a society should we be in this world”.

In this framework, it was argued that the Ottoman is a representation, an imaginary itself, of a social imagined by the elites to position themselves and Turkey in

a globalizing world and it has certain properties. Furthermore, it was argued that this Ottoman is a product of globalization.

The properties of this imaginary Ottoman are neither robust and clear-cut nor totally indescribable. These are the meanings ascribed to the Ottoman by the elites – which constitute the imagination of the elites. These properties of the Ottoman, a civilization with a different time and space apprehension than the West, an Islamic imaginary, an imaginary that prevails today and an imaginary with an extended *Vatan* and *Millet*, makes the Ottoman a cradle for an identity. I say a cradle rather than an identity because the Ottoman is still representing an imaginary on the way to actualization; this imaginary and the Ottoman are continuously transforming and have not encompassed the masses completely. Whether the Ottoman will be able to become an identity, as Bahadıroğlu suggests, is still an open question.

The Ottoman, with these properties, turns out to be a claim, an attempt, to secure a new place with a different identity in the global world. In that sense, it is a link between the global and local.

This imaginary Ottoman also links the past to the present by making the past “history”. This is certainly a step towards establishing an identity but it also offers more. It offers a new history to re-define today and it presents itself as the solution to certain of today’s problems. It naturally includes the elements of the historical Ottoman but it offers something new. In other words, the emergence of the imaginary Ottoman has nothing to do with reviving the historical Ottoman. This “new”, before everything else,

is a new present, derived from the deconstruction of the past and from the construction of “our history”. This present in its most condensed form is a multi-civilization global with certain problems stemming from the national imaginaries and a local searching for its “true” identity which was overshadowed by its own national imaginary. The Ottoman as a cradle of identity and with some additional properties is portrayed as the guide. These additional properties, respect for human rights, allowing differences to co-exist and acceptance of different civilizations in the world are all conducive to the idea that the imaginary Ottoman is a solution to the problems of the nation-state and of national imaginaries in today’s globalizing world.

In summary, the Ottoman we face today is a guide to the elites and to the leadership of AKP in the global world. This relation of the Ottoman with globalization, as a guide in the global world, as a link between the local and global and between the past and present, is its first connection with the globalization. It represents the point of view of the elites and AKP leadership. This view can be summarized as “our history will show our way into the future in this new world”.

However, there is another link between globalization and the imaginary Ottoman. This is the role of globalization in its emergence. Separating the imaginary and the real dimensions of the Ottoman is once again a critical pre-requisite in understanding this role. To understand the role of globalization in the re-emergence of the imaginary Ottoman, we have to avoid discussing whether the properties ascribed to the Ottoman are the properties of the historical Ottoman. We should not compare the new Ottoman

with the historical Ottoman. We have to comprehend that the Ottoman has an imaginary dimension; it is an imaginary. If we fail to do this, there is only one answer to the question of why this new Ottoman emerged. This answer tells us that the Islamists, who have been always opposed to Republican ideals, have aspired to revive the historical Ottoman and the Ottoman we face today is this historical Ottoman. Its emergence is, therefore, a manifestation of the Islamists gaining more and more power. Afterwards, depending on where we position ourselves in Islamist-Republican, Islamist-secularist debate, we start to ask whether this Ottoman really corresponds to the historical Ottoman. However, once we accept that this Ottoman does not have to correspond to the historical Ottoman, despite the fact that it derived its name from it, we can inquire into the reasons why the Ottoman has emerged as an imaginary at a specific time, in the last decade of the 1990s, in a specific locality that is Turkey.

This work reveals that the encounter of the newly emerging Islamic bourgeoisie with globalization provided a background for the emergence of Ottoman as an imaginary. Before elaborating this critical point, it should be noted that the inability of the counter elites, the Republican elites, to position themselves and Turkey in the globalizing world and the resulting inability of the Turkish national imaginary to link Turkey to the newly establishing global is another critical factor affecting this background. This failure was not examined in this work. However, as stated before, the financial and political crises, were clear signs of the incapability of the ruling Republican elites to position themselves and Turkey in the post-Cold War period.

Globalization, by loosening the grasp of national imaginaries, was again the determining factor in confusing Republican elites in this period.

If we go back to the encounter of the newly emerging elites with globalization, we note that the two critical ideas that made the imagination of the Ottoman possible as such and that gave it its representative power, both surfaced in late 1990s. The previous conception of Ottoman, even by the current leaders of AKP today, was completely different twenty-five/thirty years ago. The Ottoman, for the role models of current AKP leadership, was a malaise and the Islam associated with the Ottoman was not the real Islam, the Ottoman state was the enemy of people. Ottoman, rather than being the representative of a new social imaginary, represented the flawed mentality of a defunct order. These two ideas, rejection of the decay and the reconciliation of Islam emerged at a specific time. This was the period when globalization opened a wider space and time and loosened the grip of national Turkish imaginary. These ideas at this specific historical juncture relieved the Ottoman from the burden of history. The rejection of decay helped the elites to ignore that the Empire, the Ottoman state, collapsed while the reconciliation with Islam made the Ottoman a potential candidate to represent the new social imagined by them.

Globalization, while making the national Turkish imaginary gradually redundant, required a new link to tie Turkey to the global and provided the ground for its emergence by widening the space and time. The electronic media, movement of people and similar developments, on the other hand, were giving more power to the imaginary.

All of these happened at a time when the newly emerging elites were trying to define their own social in response to unsuccessful attempts of counter elites to link Turkey to the world. It seems, without these two ideas the Ottoman could not establish itself as a representation of this social in the new, wider, time and space horizon provided by globalization and the end of Cold War. The Ottoman transformed to a representation of the new social imagined by the elites by the help of these two ideas. It is, therefore, in its new form, can be conceived as a product of globalization rather than being the historical Ottoman as claimed by the elites.

Having said that the imaginary Ottoman is closely related to historical developments, that is to globalization, it should be pointed out that economy is practically nowhere in this imagination. At first this looks like a contradiction because globalization, after all, is an economic development at a great extent. It is true that AKP leadership stresses a lot on the *Vakıfs* and puts great importance on its role in society in terms of supporting the poor but this subject falls short of going further. Non-existence of the economy in the imaginary Ottoman hints us that the economic order is something universal. It is not related to our history. Economy, economic order, in other words, is not a factor that distinguishes “us” from others. Although this point has not been elaborated in this work, it is clear that it is another sign of how the imaginary Ottoman conceives globalization, and its economic order, as a universal fact and as the normal order of the world. The nonexistence of economy in the Ottoman imaginary, therefore, represents the tacit approval of the economic order of globalization.

A final but critical point in understanding the imaginary Ottoman is its gender dimension. The imaginary Ottoman is clearly a male imaginary as it is nearly silent about the women. In addition to that, the contribution of female authors, intellectuals, to this imagination is very limited at best. Where do the women fit in this imaginary Ottoman is an open question. Despite the emphasis on civilization which is an all-encompassing concept and despite the emphasis on a different realm, there is no indication on the place and role of women in this imagined social and there is no contribution of women in the imagination of this social in the sources that were reviewed. This silence about the woman is disguised behind the importance given to the individual and fits very well with the existing approach of the Islamic elites to gender issues.

After having placed the Ottoman in its proper place, we can move on to the relation of AKP with it. The work done, clearly shows that AKP leadership shares the same imagination of the Ottoman. AKP, as a political agent, actively works for the identification of the society as Ottoman and the leadership strongly asserts that it represents this Ottoman. In other words, AKP leadership actively takes part in the working of the social magic of Bourdieu. AKP tries to constitute and institute the society in the way the Ottoman is imagined and projects itself as the representative of this society. This process gives political power to AKP to the extent it is successful. This is the transfer of political power from people to the AKP leadership in from of representation through naming.

This partly explains how AKP takes control of the political scene in Turkey. However, it highlights one side of the story. First, there are many factors affecting the political power of AKP and the process described above is only one of them. Secondly, the importance of the imaginary Ottoman is not limited to its utilization by the AKP leadership to increase its political power. Such a claim, a pure deliberate instrumentalization of the Ottoman by AKP leadership is too mechanical and it fails to explain the importance of the imaginary Ottoman fully.

The Ottoman, in its imaginary form, apart from assisting AKP leadership in amassing political power, helps it, and the elites, to redefine themselves, to reposition themselves through its ability to transform in today's ever-changing world. At this point, it is worthwhile to touch upon the subject of transformation of the Ottoman and the consequences of having such a capacity. The Ottoman we face is not something static; we saw that it is transforming. This capability is due to both its imaginary nature and the role of globalization in its emergence. First, it seems that the creative capability of imagination enables the Ottoman to transform continuously, facilitated by new meanings ascribed to it. The Ottoman and what it represents, its imaginaries, have porous boundaries. They are obviously related to reality but they are imaginary and, they have imagined components also. They are the product of a process of imagination process and imagination is inherently creative, not only able but prone to change. Secondly, globalization as the ground on which this imaginary emerged, carries the change within itself. It is, therefore, obvious that the imaginary Ottoman as a product of globalization

has a tremendous capacity to change and to transform. I believe, and, as my work shows, the importance of the imaginary Ottoman in politics is largely due to its capacity to change apart from the opportunity it gives AKP leadership to get political power through naming the society as Ottoman.

The question here is, of course, how in practice this change occurs and how this change affects the politics. How the meaning corresponding to the Ottoman can differentiate and new meanings can be added while some of them disappear. How, for example the Ottoman is today identified with peace whereas the last hundred years of the empire is full of blood and violent clashes. At this point, the concepts of habitus and creative adaptation are introduced. The use of the science of history for the imagination of the Ottoman to be the representative of a new social imaginary is critical at this point. The imagination of the Ottoman, in practical terms, means ascription of certain properties to it by reference to historical Ottoman by the historian. This effort is made in the real dimension of the Ottoman but it affects its imaginary dimension. The two ideas that was mentioned above, i.e., the rejection of decay and the reconciliation of Ottoman with Islam, opened the door to a large reservoir of historical events from which the appropriate ones can be selected in the process of imagination without being hampered by the historical dissolution of the empire. A new habitus emerged in the sense that a new structuring matrix, a new guide with which to position oneself and set different limits on action, surfaced through the imagination process. As this process never ends, the imaginary transforms endlessly to new forms; new ideas can be internalized and new

positions are taken and different responses can be given based on selected historical events. This is how the creative adaptation works and this how the imaginary, the creativity of imagination, surfaces.

On the political scene, this nature of the imaginary Ottoman, its link with globalization and its use of historical Ottoman without being the historical Ottoman provides tremendous flexibility to AKP leadership, both in introducing new ideas and justifying their positions.

The imaginary Ottoman helps the elites and AKP leadership in the presentation of new ideas because it offers a wide reservoir of historical events from which a selection can be made to support these views. Tolerance, human rights, universal values, ombudsman, the acceptance of ecumenical character of the Orthodox Patriarchy in Istanbul and many other ideas that have controversial nature are all introduced with the assertion that the historical Ottoman, our history, already embodied them with the qualification that our version is usually slightly different and better. This is a manifestation of the creative adaptation and it is not that different from what the New Ottomanists were trying to do in the mid-1800s with Islam. The role of the *Ulema*, or theologians, now belongs to the historian and the subject is history rather than the divine laws of the God. The Ottoman, directly, or indirectly, replaced religion, while keeping it within the cycle through sacralisation of the Ottoman as a medium through which new ideas can be internalized. The AKP leadership, through the imagination of the Ottoman, can import, internalize, and defend new ideas. In other words, it acquires the ability to

change without contradicting itself or their constituency. The Ottoman, sometimes, directly, sometimes indirectly in the form of “our history” or “our ancestors”, lays the ground for the internalization of ideas originating from the West without labeling them as Western.

On the other hand, the imaginary Ottoman helps AKP in assuming contradictory positions in politics. In fact, these positions are not even considered contradictory by the leadership; they are a part of the same whole. As Taylor points out, the new social imaginary is a transformation of the old one and carries the parts of the old within it. These seemingly opposing positions, being nationalist without being nationalist and being Islamist without being Islamist, in fact, reflect the amalgamation of pre-globalization imaginaries in the new, emerging imaginary. The positions held by AKP leadership is proof or manifestation of their inconsistencies and the untenable position of AKP for those who are ascribed to national Turkish imaginary or the Islamist imaginaries of the past. However, for the leadership, these positions are the reflections of the social they imagine. A social where the Turk is there but the critical properties that defines the Turkish nationalism, such as the language, are no longer critical for defining the nation. It is a social where Islam is already at its core; it is already here in the world, therefore, it does not need to be brought back to the world.

The ability to hold these seemingly paradoxical positions all at the same time allows AKP leadership to cover a substantial part of the political spectrum in Turkey. AKP effectively corners the pre-globalization imaginaries, Kemalist or Islamist, through

the imaginary Ottoman but this does not mean that AKP leadership instrumentalizes the Ottoman deliberately to defend their contradictory position. It cannot be said that the imaginary Ottoman is a tool for AKP leadership. It rather facilitates the internalization of their position and at the same time helps them in negating criticisms coming from nationalists and Islamists.

This Ottoman is, hence, neither a tool to be used by the leadership of AKP nor the historical Ottoman they want to revive. Instead, it is their mind set; it represents the world in their perception and a representation of the social they imagine. This social is neither limited to Anatolia nor to the people who spoke Turkish. It embraces a wider *Millet* and *Vatan* on a specific moral ground. The leadership assert that they represent this social and this is one of the keys to understand the words of Erdoğan on June 12, 2011. After his colossal electoral victory with 50% vote, just after the first results of the elections were released, Erdoğan said, “*Believe me today, Sarajevo won as much as Istanbul, Beirut won as much as İzmir, Damascus won as much as Ankara, Ramallah, Nablus, West Bank, Jerusalem, Gazze, won as much as Diyarbakır. Today, Middle East, Caucasus, Balkans, Europe won as much as Turkey. Today, peace, justice, stability won as much as democracy and freedom.*” (Appendix S) (Official website of AKP; June 12, 2011) and hinted that their victory is the victory for all the people they represent.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Başbakan Erdoğan: “Milliyetçilik Irk Esasıyla Ayrımcılığa Gitmek Değildir.”

Herkes, her toplum, tarihe geçip gitmiş bir Zaman dilimi olarak bakabilir, nostalji gözüyle bakabilir ya da geçmişe sırtını döner ama biz bunu yapamayız. Yapmak istesek de yapamayız. Tarihimizden onun bugüne taşınan eserlerinden sıyrılmayız.

Tarihin unutturulmak istendiği, tarihin yeniden ve farklı şekilde yazılmak istendiği dönemlerden geçtik. Oysa şunun idrakine varmak zorundayız: Bizi ülke ve millet olarak var eden tarihimizdir. Tarihi olmayanların geleceği olmaz bunu böyle bilmek zorundayız. Bizim geleceğimiz de tarihimizle şekillenecektir ve şekillenmektedir. Ağaç kökleriyle yaşar. Kökü olmayan ağaç olmaz. Aynı şekilde milletler de medeniyetler de kökleriyle yaşar. Açık söylüyorum; istediği kadar iyi eğitim alsın, teknolojiyi istediği kadar iyi kullansın, dünyayı istediği kadar yakından takip etsin eğer nesiller Şeyh Edebali’yi, Osman Gazi’yi, Ali Kuşçu’yu, Fatih’i, Mimar Sinan’ı, Fuzuli’yi, Hacı Arif Bey’i tanımıyorsa, onlardan ilhamını almıyorsa, alamıyorsa, asla ve asla kalıcı ve güçlü bir gelecek inşa edemez. Arif Nihat Asya bunu en güzel şekilde ifade ediyor. Bu kitaplar Fatih’tir, Selim’dir, Süleyman’dır. Şu minare Sinan’dır haydi artık uyuyan, destanını uyandır.

Appendix B: Bařbakan Erdoğan: “Kuvvetler Arasında O Birbiriyle Olan Dayanışma Gerçekleşmediđi Sürece Biz O Beklenen Sıçramayı Gerçekleřtirmekte Maalesef Gecikeceđiz. Bunu Ařmamız řart.”

Tarihimize, kültürümüze vefa duygusuyla, sadakatle sahip çıkmazsak vatanseverlikten söz edemeyiz. İřte bu düşüncelerle Edirne’den řanlıurfa’ya bütün eserlerimizi ihya ediyoruz. Bařka ülkeler, bařka milletler atalarından emanet aldıkları her tařı mukaddes bir emanet gibi korurken, yanı bařımızdaki Ankara Kalesi’nden Hacı Bayram’dan, Dođu hududumuzdaki İřhak Pařa Sarayı’na kadar maalesef sembol abidelerimizi adeta kendi bařlarına terketmiřiz. řimdi bunları yeniden imar ediyoruz, yen den ülkemize ve dünyamıza kazandırıyoruz. Düşünebiliyor musunuz, ta Yemen’in Sana řehrindeki muhteřem kışladan Mostar Köprüsü’ne kadar hudutsuz bir cođrafyada eşsiz abideler inşa etmiř bir medeniyetin, bir milletin çocukları, ellerinin altındaki Selçuklu, Osmanlı eserlerine, hatta Cumhuriyet döneminin eserlerine bile sahip çıkamazsa medeniyet iddiasından bahseder misiniz?

Appendix C: Başbakan Erdoğan Sivas'ta

Bu milletin nasıl bir kültüre, nasıl bir bilim birikimine sahip olduğunu o cami örneğinde bizzat müşahede etsinler. Sadece Divriği Ulu Cami değil, işte şurada, yanı başımızda Kale Cami, Buruciye Medresesi, Şifahiye Medresesi, Çifte Minareli Cami, değerli kardeşlerim, Taşhan, Kurşunlu Hamam, Ulu Cami, Gök Medrese bu eserlerin her biri bize tarihimizi anlatıyor, bize bizi anlatıyor aslında. Bu eserlerin her biri köklü tarihimizi, şanlı geçmişimizi, sevgi medeniyetimizi anlatıyor. Bu eserlerin her biri bu toprakların nasıl bir kültür, nasıl bir sanat ve bilim şehri olduğunu anlatıyor. Hani Arif Nihat Asya diyor ya, “bu kitaplar Fatih'tir, Selim'dir, Süleyman'dır. Şu mihrap Sinanüddin, şu minare Sinan'dır. Haydi artık uyuyan destanını uyandır. Elde sensin, dilde sen, gönüldesin baştasın, Fatih'in İstanbul'u fethettiği yaştasın”.

Böyle tarihi olan bir millete küçük düşünmek yakışmaz. Bu tarihi eserleri olan bir millete küçük düşünmek yakışmaz. Böyle bir medeniyete sahip gençlere küçük düşünmek yakışmaz. İşte onun için biz büyük düşünüyoruz, işte onun için biz büyük adımlar atıyoruz, Türkiye için de biz büyük düşünüyoruz. Bölgemizde büyük düşünüyoruz, tüm dünyada büyük düşünüyoruz.

Appendix D: Başbakan Erdoğan: “Milliyetçilik Irk Esasıyla Ayrımcılığa Gitmek Değildir.”

Bizim bu topraklar üzerine kurduğumuz ve dünyaya örnek teşkil eden medeniyet, altını çizerek ifade ediyorum; bir sevgi medeniyetidir. Biz, gerektiğinde vatanımızı savunmak noktasında hiçbir tereddüt göstermeyen, vatani namus olarak addedip, siperlere koşan ve omuz omuza o siperlerde can feda eden insanların torunlarıyız. Ama aynı zamanda bizler, barış zamanlarında insan odaklı, daha geniş manada canlı odaklı medeniyetler inşa eden, çevresiyle, canlılarla, toprakla, estetikle, tabiatla barışık bir kültürün de takipçileriyiz.

Vakıf medeniyeti, kendisini insanlığa vakfetmek, insanı ve canı hayatın merkezine alarak, insanlığın yararına çalışmak anlayışı üzerine kuruludur. Bu vakıf anlayışı, göçmen kuşlarını da düşünür, garip gurebayı, fakir fukarayı da düşünür, kimsesizi, yolda kalmış da düşünür.

Bizi birbirimize bağlayan sevgi, merhamet, dayanışma, kardeşlik gibi özellikler, vakıf anlayışıyla daha da güçlenmiş, bizi bir ve beraber yapmıştır. Onun için vakıf demek sağdan soldan toplanılarak oluşturulmuş bir kese değildir aslında. *Vakıf* denilen aslında kişinin, geçmişteki büyüklerimizin ifadesiyle, ceb-i hümayundan (padişahın kişisel parası) vermek suretiyle bir hayrı inşa etmesi demektir. Bugün bunlar çok farklı şekilde devam ediyor, süre gidiyor.

İnsanı yaşat ki devlet yaşasın.

Bakınız, dünya üzerindeki birçok topluma nasip olmayan bir medeniyet tasavvurumuz. Bu medeniyet tasavvurunda devlet kuran, o devleti yücelten, huzur ve güvenliğe kavuşturan, Osman Gazi kadar, Orhan Gazi kadar, dikkat ediniz, “*insanı yaşat ki devlet yaşasın*” diyen Şeyh Edebalı vardır.

Bu topraklar Alpaslan gibi, Melik Şah gibi, Kılıçarslan, Selahaddin Eyyubi gibi tarihe mal olmuş devlet adamları çıkarması yanında, Mevlana gibi, Yunus gibi, Hacı Bektaş Veli, Pir Sultan Abdal, Karacoğlan gibi sultanlarını da yetiştirmiş topraklardır. Bizim tarihimizde Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman ve Yavuz Sultan Selim büyüktür, ulu şahsiyetlerdir, ancak en az onlar kadar Ak Şemsettin, Mimar Sinan, Hayrettin, Fuzuli, Nedim ve daha niceleri büyüktür, uludur ve en az onlar kadar şöhretlidir.

Her zaman ifade ediyorum; bizim medeniyetimizde kalem, kılıcın önünde yer alır. 3 kıta üzerinde hüküm sürmüş Osmanlı Devleti'nin, bugün o kıtalarda nasıl anıldığına hepimiz dikkat etmek durumundayız. Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Devleti, zulüm ile baskı ile değil, Mostar Köprüsü'yle, Drina Köprüsü'yle, Karagöz Bey Camisi'yle, Vardar Köprüsü, Kosova Taş Köprüsü'yle, Vidin Köprüsü'yle, binlerce sebiliyle, han, hamam ve kütüphaneleriyle hatırlanmaktadır. Ortadoğu'da Osmanlı, sömürüyle, istismarla, emperyalizme değil, Kudüs'te tesis ettiği barış ve huzur ortamıyla, Hicaz Demiryoluyla, Bağdat Demiryoluyla, Mescid-i Haram ile Kerbela ile inşa ettiği su kanallarıyla anılmaktadır. Aynı şekilde Afrika'da, ta Ace'de Afrika'nın zenginliklerini

dıřarıya kaçıran bir Osmanlı deęil, oralara köprüler, camiler, sebiller, medrese ve kütüphaneler inşa eden bir Osmanlı vardır.

Appendix E: Bařbakan Erdoğan: “TBMM Üzerine Düşen Görevi Yaptı, Şimdi Son Sözü Millet Söyleyecek.”

Selçuklu ve Osmanlı'nın başlangıçta bir tohum ve fidan olduğunu, o tohum ve fidanın büyüdüğünü, geliştiğini, serpildiğini ve gölgesinde kıtaların serinlediği bir çınar haline dönüştüğünü anlatan Erdoğan, onun için Divan edebiyatımızda Osmanlı'yı çınarla tanımlarlar. Aynı şekilde Türkiye Cumhuriyeti de bu toprağa bir fidan olarak dikildi ve bugün o da bir çınargibi büyüyor, gelişiyor, kalkınıyor ve güzelleşiyor. Ama unutmayın, çınar kökleriyle yaşar. Kökleri keserseniz, unutursanız, ihmal ederseniz, çınarın toprakla bağlantısı kopar ve o çınar devrilir, gider. Biz buna izin vermiyoruz, vermeyeceğiz.

Appendix F: Ak Parti Grup Toplantısı

Sokaklar, evler, balkonlar, Türkiye ve Kosova bayraklarıyla donatılmış, Kosovalılar balkonlara çıkmış, esnaf dükkanının önünde, bütün bir şehir, heyetimizi büyük bir muhabbetle selamlıyordu. Biz tabi bu arada Kosova Başbakanı'yla beraberiz. Beraberce çıktık yaya olarak bütün halkın içinde de yürüdük. Oradaki o çocuklarla, gençlerle hem dert olduk. Tarihi Şadırvan Meydanı'na ulaştığımızda oradaki heyecanın çok daha farklı olduğunu gördük. Hele oraya geçerken rasgele bir camda bir hanımefendiyi, hemen onun yanındaki camda da çok çok yaşlı bir nineyi gördüm. Baktım gözleri yaşlıydı, ağlıyordu, ağlamaklıydı. Ve hemen Sayın Taçi'ye dedim ki, şöyle gel de şurada bir eve uğrayalım. Ve hemen o eve geçtik. Çıktık, o nineyle, o teyzeyle orada şöyle bir sarmaş dolaş olduk. Tabi hüngür hüngür ağlıyor. Ve nereden bilirsin, ülkemizden bir köşe yazarının da akrabası çıktılar. Ondan sonra Egemen Bey'in yanında da telefonu vardı, onlarla kendisini görüştüler. Ve onlarda da telefonu yokmuş meğerse. Böyle de bir şeye vesile olduk. Ve tabi bu anlamlı bir tabloydu, ağlıyordu. Ve yanında kızları vesaire aynı şekilde onlar da tabi yaşça çok çok yaşlanmışlar. Yani 90'nı aşkın bir yaşı olan bir teyze, bir nine. Ama muhabbeti, sevgisi aynen, aynı canlılığını koruyor. Ve Prizren halkı çocuklarıyla, gençleriyle, aynı şekilde işte yaşlılarıyla bizi ve Kosova Hükümet üyelerini karşılamak üzere meydana heyecanla bekliyordu. Ve yaşlı bir amca Türkçe olarak yanımıza sokuldu. Bize şunu söyledi: Şadırvan Meydanı, Tito'nun burayı ziyaretinden bu yana böyle bir kalabalık, böyle bir heyecan görmemiştir diyor. Oraları nasıl sahipleniyoruz ve halka doğrudan nasıl hitap ediyoruz.

Orada Kosovalılarla, soydaşlarımızla hasret giderdikten sonra, meydanın hemen yanı başındaki Sinan Paşa Camii, 1615 yılında Sinan Paşa tarafından inşa edilen bir camii. Fakat enteresandır, 1968’de o da müzeye çevrilmiş. Adeta metruk bir görüntü içindeki Sinan Paşa Camiini artık biz TİKA İdaremizle ele aldık. Renovasyon, restorasyon şu anda bitmek üzere. İnşallah bu yıl sonu veya yıl başı itibariyle bitecek. Orayıgittik, gezdik tekrar gördük. Daha sonra orada Kosova Başbakanı Sayın Taçi’yle birlikte halka hitap ettik. Sayın Taçi tabi hitabını Arnavutça yaptı, ben de hitabımı Türkçe yaptım. Ve ikimiz de o halkla çok iyi anlaştık. Heyecan Türkiye’den farklı değildi, aynı heyecanı yaşadık. Ve coşku anlatılır gibi değildi. Ve hakikaten oradaki o muhabbet görülmeye değerdi.

Ve biz Türkiye Cumhuriyeti milliyetçisi olsak da milli tanımına Arnavutluk vatandaşlarını da sokuyoruz.

Şimdi bütün bu coşku, bu aradaki bağlar, aslında nereden geliyor? İşte tarihten geliyor, işte o millilik bu, o kültür, o ortak değerler buradan geliyor. İlla aynı dili konuşmak gerekmiyor. Bakın dedim ya, Arnavutça konuşan, Türkçe konuşan, hep birlikte. Burada bu kaynaşmayı gördük.

Appendix G: 725. Ertuğrul Gazi'yi Anma Ve Söğüt Şenlikleri. Başbakan Erdoğan:
“Milletçe Birlik Ve Beraberliğimizden Asla Taviz Vermedik,
Vermeyeceğiz. Birliğimiz Ve Beraberliğimiz Üzerinde Yanlış Hesaplar
Yapanlar Bilsinler Ki, Gayretleri Boşadır.”

Bileceğiz ki, bizim vatan topraklarımız 780 bin kilometre kare olsa da etki alanımız bugün o tarihten gelen 22 milyon kilometre kareden daha geniş bir alana uzanmaktadır. Kudüs, Bağdat, Beyrut, Kahire, Hizan, Bakü, Aşkabat, Saraybosna, Selanik, Ürdün, Ankara'ya uzak mesafeler değildir. Tam aksine geçen zaman içinde mesafeler daha da kısalmıştır. Eritre'de, Ban'da, Açe'de Ankara'ya yaklaşmıştır. Unutmayalım ki, Osmanlı'yı büyük düşünenler kurmuştur.

Appendix H: Bakan elik: “Demokratik aılım partiler üstü bir meseledir.”

Türkiye artık kabuğunu delmiştir. Türkiye'nin vizyonu artık Misak-ı Milli sınırları değildir. Türkiye artık bir başka bakıyor. Sizler artık bir başka türlü bakıyorsunuz. Ecdadın farkındasınız. Birinci Murad'ın farkındasınız. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün farkındasınız.

Appendix I: Yeni Osmanlı

Osmanlı coğrafyasının bugünkü sınırları 'böl ve yönet' politikasına göre oluşturulmuş yapay sınırlar. Habur'da, vizenin kaldırılmasına rağmen Cilvegözü'nde kuyruk olan tırlar, bu yapaylığın somut göstergesi. Bölgenin önce ekonomik ve eşzamanlı biçimde kültürel entegrasyonu suyun önündeki bentlerin kaldırılmasına bağlı. Halklar böylece kendi doğal tarihî mecrasını yeniden bulacaklar ve istikrara kavuşacaklar. Türkiye'nin bölgede Osmanlı'ya benzer bir hakimiyet sağlaması imkânsız, üstelik gereksiz. Bölgenin barışa ihtiyacı var. İşte bu barış, tarihî tecrübeye uygun olarak Türkiye tarafından tesis edilip sürdürülen bir barış olabilir. Bunun adı ise Yeni Osmanlı değil, Pax Ottomanica yani Osmanlı Barışı olur.

Appendix J: Bakan Yılmaz: “Tarihimizi iyi tanımazsak geleceğe sağlıklı bir şekilde yürüyemeyiz.”

Gerçekten tarih dediğimiz şey, geride bıraktığımız, bizimle ilişkisi olmayan bir şey değildir. Tarih dediğimiz şey, aslında üzerinde durduğumuz zemini oluşturur. Biz bunun farkında olmazsak, tarihimizi iyi tanımazsak geleceğe sağlıklı bir şekilde yürüyemeyiz. Dolayısıyla gerek ülkelerin, gerek yörelerin tarihlerine ilişkin yapılan bu tür çalışmalar son derece önemlidir. Bunların objektif bir şekilde yapılması da son derece önemlidir. Geçmişte biliyoruz, şu veya bu ideolojik sebeplerle tarihe dönük çalışmalarda yapılan çarpıtmaları. Tarih çalışmalarının dar, siyasi hedeflere alet edildiğini biliyoruz.

Appendix K: Erdoğan: “İnşallah iki bayramı bir arada yaparız.”

Tarih boyunca biz bu sarp dağları aşmayı, birbirimizle buluşmayı, kucaklaşmayı hep birlikte başardık. Bu bölgedeki tüm insanların ortak tarihi, kültürleri, değerleri var. Örneğin, Bursa'dan yola çıkıp yüzlerce kilometre sonra Saraybosna'ya vardığınızda orada Bursa'ya tıpatıp benzeyen bir şehir buluyorsunuz. Adı Bursa olan hanlar, çarşılar görüyorsunuz. Üsküp'teki kardeşim buraya, Bursa'ya geldiğinde asla yabancı şehre değil, kendi şehrine, kendisinden bir şehre geldiğini hissediyor. Minareleriyle, köprüleriyle hanlarıyla, medreseleriyle, kütüphaneleriyle bizim şehirlerimiz hep birbirine benziyor. Priştine'de bunu görüyorsunuz Bosna'da, Köstence'de, Kırcaali'de, Selanik'te, Gümölcine'de, Manastır'da daha nice şehirler, aynı mimariyi, ruhu, özü taşıyor. Yemeklerimiz, kültürlerimiz şarkılarımız folklorumuz birbirine benziyor. Bunların ötesinde biz ortak tarihi paylaştığımız kadar ortak geleceği de paylaşıyoruz. Hatta ortak kaderi paylaşıyoruz.

Appendix L: Erdoğan: “İstanbul üzerinden dünyaya vereceğimiz mesajlar var.”

...Bugün açılışı yapılan Bağdat Köşkü'nün Topkapı Sarayı'nda onarımı tamamlanan önemli bölümlerden biri olduğunu belirterek, buradan sadece İstanbul'a değil, bugüne ve geleceğe baktıklarını, geçmişten aldıkları ilhamla geleceği inşa etme noktasındaki şevklerini tazelediklerini belirtti.

İstanbul'daki her bir vatandaşın, özellikle öğrencilerin buradan İstanbul'u seyredebilmeleri için ne gerekiyorsa yapılması konusunu ilgililere ilettiğini dile getiren Erdoğan, şunları kaydetti:

Çünkü burayı görmeyen, buradan İstanbul'a ve Türkiye'ye bakmayanların Türkiye'nin geçmişini anlamak ve geleceğini tasarlamak noktasında eksiklik içinde olacağını düşünüyorum. Şunu da özellikle ifade etmek istiyorum; muasır medeniyetler seviyesini sadece ekonomik olarak, sadece teknik olarak kalkınma şeklinde anlayanlar çıkabilir. Bu hataya asla düşmememiz gerekiyor. İlimle, irfanla, medeniyetle bir arada yürümeyen bir ekonomik ilerleme, kalıcı bir ilerlemeye tekabül etmeyecektir. Hayatı oluşturan bütün değerleri aynı anda sahiplenmeyen, hayatı bir bütün olarak kavramayan, sorunların çözümüne ortak bir perspektiften yaklaşmayan anlayışlar bizi daha ileri noktalara ulaştıramaz.

Appendix M: Beşiktaş'taki Ertuğrul Tekke Camisi İbadete Açıldı

15 gün önce Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın da hazır bulunduğu törende Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi'nin açılışını yaptıklarını, bu mevlevihaneye birlikte Türkiye genelinde restorasyonu biten 111 eserin de sembolik açılışını gerçekleştirdiklerini hatırlattı.

Arınç, 7 yıldan bu yana 3,500'e yakın eserin tamamlanarak hizmete açıldığını belirterek, "Ecdad yadigarı ve vakıf medeniyetinin eseri olan bu güzel birikimlerimizi tekrar ağıya kaldırmak bizim hem görevimizdir hem de yapmış olduklarımızla büyük bir mutluluk duyuyoruz" ... Açılıştan önce camiyi gezdiğini ifade eden Bakan Arınç, "Bir cuma gününde bu caminin bu kadar yıl sonra açılıyor olması, ecdadımıza karşı görevlerimizden biri olarak önümüzdedir" ifadesini kullandı.

Appendix N: Turgut Özal Ödülü aldı, onun gibi konuştu: “Allah’ın verdiği ömrü O’ndan başka alacak yoktur.”

Bizim Balkanlar’da, Körfez’de, Kafkaslar’da, Orta Asya’da çok işimiz var. Biz boşuna bu yerlere gidip gelmiyoruz. Buralarda yapmamız gereken çok şeyler var. Çünkü, bu, bu neslin ecdadıyla buluşmasıdır. Ama istiyoruz ki gelecek kuşaklar da bizlerle birlikte ecdadıyla buluşsun. Bunu başarmamız lazım.

Appendix O: Reformu 40 Maddelik Kitapla Anlatacađız

Rahmetli Aliya'nın durumunun kötü olduđunu öğrenince yolumu deđiřtirip Saraybosna'ya uđradım. Hastaneye gittim. Aliya ile bař bařa dertleřtik. "Siz Osmanlı torunusunuz. Buralar Osmanlı toprakları, emanete sahip çıkın. Ben gidiyorum ama siz sahip çıkın. Ben Dayton'u arzu ederek imzalamadım, řartlar zorladı" dedi. Karřılıklı ađlařtık. řuuru yerindeydi. Türkiye'nin Bosna'ya olan ilgi ve alakasını ısrarla ifade etti. Savař döneminde gösterilen ilgiyi anlattı, bundan dolayı řükranlarını ifade etti.

Appendix P: Çelik: “İrkçî kavgaları kaldıracađız.”

Türkiye'nin, iktidarları döneminde gelişme ve kalkınma noktasında çok önemli mesafeler katettiđini ifade ederek, bu nedenle 29 Mart yerel seçimlerinin önemli olduğunu bildirdi. Türkiye'nin, güçlenince sesinin nasıl çıktığının görüldüğünü belirten Çelik, o yüzden Davos'ta başbakanımızın sesi yükselince Bosna'daki kardeşimizin de tüyleri diken diken oldu. Osmanlı coğrafyasının bu yükselen sesle ayađa kalktığını gördük. Onun için 29 Mart çok önemlidir.

Appendix R: Ak Parti Genel Başkanı ve Başbakan Erdoğan, Kars 1. Olağan İl Kongresi'nde Konuştu

Bir vatan birçok etnik unsurdan meydana gelir. Osmanlı bunun en güzel örneğini vermiştir. Orada farklı dinler, farklı mezhepler var. Farklı ırklar var, hiç dert olmuş mu? Olmamış. Onun için rahat olacağız ve birbirimize saygılı olacağız. Birbirimizi Allah için seveceğiz.

Appendix S: Bařbakan Erdoğan'ın 12 Haziran'da Yaptığı Konuřma

İnanın bugün İstanbul kadar Saraybosna kazanmıştır; İzmir kadar Beyrut kazanmıştır; Ankara kadar Şam kazanmıştır; Diyarbakır kadar Ramallah, Nablus, Cenin, Batı Şeria, Kudüs, Gazze kazanmıştır. Bugün Türkiye kadar Orta Doęu, Kafkasya, Balkanlar, Avrupa kazanmıştır. Bugün, demokrasi kadar, özgürlük kadar, barıř, adalet, istikrar kazanmıştır.

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