

An Analysis of the Idea of State in Textbooks from Ottoman Empire to the Republic in terms of the Relation between Education and Power

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Abstract

The concept of state has a specific importance for Turkish-political culture. However, the influence of textbooks in constructing the state concept in Turkish culture from Ottoman to modern Turkish Republic has not been adequately researched. In this paper, the relation between the state perception in Turkish culture and textbooks from Ottoman to the early Republic is analyzed by employing the theories of Gramsci, Althusser and Foucault. As suggested by Gramsci, Althusser and Foucault, there is strong relationship between education and political power and reproduction and redistribution of knowledge. Moving from this point, present study also argues that the changes in state perception in textbooks should be analyzed in terms of sociological changes in the late Ottoman and the early Republican period. While justice (adalet) has been an important component of Turkish-Islamic political culture, sultan was the key element of the administration of law. Sultan was also a determining concept of Ottoman political culture and responsible for administering justice. As the new emerging elites attempted to change traditional state perception after the Tanzimat, the textbooks written under the rule of Abdulhamit II and Union and Progress Party (İttihat ve Terakki Partisi) reflect the political and social change of the Empire. As state gained further prominence in the early republican period, another concept entered into the Turkish political discourse: democracy. It is possible to trace such changes in textbooks.

Key Words

State, Ottoman-Turkish Political Culture, Political Sociology, Education, Hegemony, Textbooks.

The importance of textbooks as an academic research field has increased in recent years. For example, *Schulbuchforschung* (textbook research) has been an independent field in Germany for decades (Copeaux, 2006, p. 14). State has been considered as a sublime entity both in popular usage and official papers by the vast majority of Turkish people

(Özbudun, 2000, p. 192). Especially in the field of political sciences, there are many researches studies that have underlined this point (see; Akarlı, 1975; Barchard, 1976). For many of them, ascribing to state a sublime character, which, they argue, lies at the core of the deficiencies of Turkish democracy. Main object of this study is to contribute both to the wider theoretical discussion about the relationship between political power and education based on the theories of the work of Gramsci and Althusser, and to the more specific discussion about state in Turkish political culture by analyzing the textbook from the late Ottoman to the early Republican period. The second purpose of the study is to show the reflections of the sociological changes at the perception of state in the textbooks of these periods. In order to realize these aims, two different kinds of primary sources will be analyzed. Firstly,

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the tradition of *Nasihatname* (Advice Letters) and *Siyasetname* (Political Letters) is to be evaluated. Then the definitions of the state in the textbooks of the periods of Abdulhamid II, Union and Progress and early Republic areas to be discussed in terms of the relation between power and education.

Education and Power

Every educational system aims at legitimizing some values by using symbols and ideologies (İnal, 2004, p. 55). The concept of ideology, if defined in general terms, implies thoughts, symbols and meanings related to social life (Parlak, 2005, p. 23). The legitimizing function of ideology is not a modern phenomenon. As pointed by Turan (1977, p. 34), an important function of political culture in Europe in the Middle Age and also in the Ottoman Empire was to legitimize the power. However, ideological character and function of education became more visible and important in modern times. Likewise, after the proclamation of the Tanzimat, education became an important ideological tool for the ruling elite in the Ottoman Empire. This was also valid for the periods of Abdulhamid II, Union and Progress and early Republican periods (Somel, 2010).

Gramsci's approach related to the function of ideology has attracted a great concern among social scientists. For Gramsci, the failure of communist revolution was a consequence of the ideological hegemony of ruling class. The ruling class, according to Gramsci, has established hegemony using civil society, law, bureaucracy, religious institutions, media and education for its own interests (Gramsci, 2003, p. 365-368). For him hegemony is a phenomenon which provides the consent of the people without using state violence (Parlak, 2005, p. 45-46). Another influential thinker whose ideas have been applied to analyze the relation between power and education is Louis Althusser. In his book 'Lenin and Philosophy' (1971) Althusser attempts to develop the ideas of Gramsci to make a more clear analysis of the influence of power on education. According to Althusser, state uses ideological and repressive apparatus in order to reproduce the conditions of production (Hawkes, 2007, p. 118). In Althusser's framework, because of the fact that ideological apparatus reflects the interests of the ruling class, main function of ideological apparatus such as media, family and especially schools is to legitimize the ideology of ruling class (Althusser, 2008, p. 55-58). Althusser argues that media and educational systems are very important in shaping of individuals in accordance with

the state ideology (Parlak, 2005, p. 54-57). These ideas of Gramsci and Althusser have been applied in sociology of education in the last decades (See; Robinson, 1981). On the other hand, theory of Michel Foucault, related to the relations between knowledge and power, is another theoretical background of this article. According to Foucault, in any society, there are manifold relations of power which shape and characterize the social body and there relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse (Foucault, 1980, p. 93).

In this article, employing the theories of Gramsci, Althusser and Foucault, the state concept, which has an exceptional importance in Turkish political culture, is to be analyzed by looking at the textbooks of the late Ottoman Empire and early Republic. Secondly, the influence of sociological changes on the concept of state in the textbooks is to be evaluated.

State in Early Islamic Culture

Islamic and Ottoman political culture is not based on one source only. On the contrary, it has been influenced by many factors, such as Ancient Greek Culture, Iran, Byzantium and Mongol political traditions (Brown, 2000, p. 49). The thoughts of Plato have influenced both eastern and western political culture, which can easily be observed in the political texts written both in the east and west. In Plato, the key to be a good statesman is justice. Plato argues that without a good state, there would be no good society. The influence of his idea can be clearly seen in the middle age, from the clerics to the lawyers. However, the idea of justice was strictly related to God in the middle age (Cassirer, 2005, p. 273-299), which was also valid for Islam and Judaism. Besides Plato himself, neo-platonics such as Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus had also influence the Islamic political thought (Rosenthal, 1958, p. 14-114).

However, it would be not true to suggest that the notion of justice in Islamic and Ottoman culture arise only from Platonism. In fact, there was a strong emphasis in the foundational sources of Islam from the beginning (Black, 2010, p. 35). Actually, the term had a crucial importance for Iranian and Ottoman political culture (İnalçık, 2003, pp. 66-67).

State in *Siyasetname* (Political Letters) and *Nasihatname* (Advice Letters)

Although first modern textbook was written after Tanzimat (Kreiser, 1992, p. 28), there are many important sources that provide information to understand classical Ottoman political culture. The best examples of such sources come from Iranian-Indian culture's *Nasihatname* and *Siyasetname* tradition. Kelile and Dimne of Ibn Mukaffa, *Kitabü't-Tac* of Cahız and *Kabusname* of Keykavus are among these genres of political literature (Uğur, 1987, p. 15-19). *Kabusname*, written by a member of a Turkish dynasty in Persia, has been one of the books influenced Turkish political culture (Vogt, 1999). The main advices given to Sultan in *Kabusname* are to be just when governing, and to establish good relationship between people and Sultan (Keykavus, 1974, p. 301-302). Although Nizamü'l Mülk was a Persian, he served for Turkish sultans Alp Arslan (1063-1072) and Melikşah (1072-1092) nearly 30 years. He suggested that sultan has been chosen by God, and advised that sultan should stand for justice. In his thought legitimacy of government is based on religion. On the other hand, he warns the sultan suggesting that the sultan should be aware of this blessing and act justly (Nizamü'l Mülk, 1999, p. 1-8).

Islamic scholars such as Al Ghazali and Al Mawardi also wrote advice books for the sultans. Like the above mentioned scholars, Al Ghazali also suggests that political actions should be based on Qur'an and Sunna, and that Sultan should act justly for his people. According to Al Ghazali, sultan has been chosen by God and should be authoritarian (Gazali, 2004, p. 23-44). Al Mawardi also stated the same ideas (el-Maverdi, 2004, p. 47-70). Kutadgu Bilig of Yusuf Has Hacib (1085-?) has been also one of the important books which influenced on Turkish political culture. In his opinion, duties of sultans are to assure the people's wealth, to ensure order, to maintain justice and preserve fineness of coin. On the other hand, he emphasized that one of the duties of the subjects is to obey to sultan (Erdoğan, 2006, p. 218, 219; İnalçık, 2000, pp. 12-13).

State in Ottoman Classical Texts

Political texts of classical Ottoman period generally relied on Islamic principles to provide legitimacy to power and government. One of the books studied in the madrasas of 16. Century suggested that one should not utter curses on the sultan because he was chosen by God (Sakalioğlu, 2003, p. 22). These ideas were also defended by many scholars of this age

such as Tursun Bey, the chronicler of Mehmed II. According to Tursun Bey, one of the duties of sultan was to maintain justice and solidarity of people, and this was possible only by existence of a sultan. Because of that it was a religious practice to obey the Sultan (Tursun Bey, 2003, p. 7). About a century after, Lütü Pasha (1488-1563), another Ottoman politician and scholar, suggested the same points in his *Asafname*. According to Lütü Pasha, loyalty to the Ottoman sultans was a religious duty on the ground that they were the protector of religion, and holy cities. On the other hand, sultans should not confiscate property of people. This could cause collapse of the state, so that sultan should have acted justly (Lütü Paşa, 1982, p. 3-15). Similar ideas emphasized by other scholars in Ottoman classical age such as, Naima (1655-1716) and Kınalızade (1511-1584). It is especially interesting that Naima defines the relationship between sultan and his subjects as the relationship between father and his son (Palabıyık, 2001, p. 181-186). Another important Ottoman scholar Katip Çelebi (1609-1657) considered sultans as God-chosen men with specific duties. However, he strongly expressed that peace and wealth in the world could be maintained only by justice. According to Katip Çelebi, oppressive sultans' reign would not last long (Gündoğdu, 2010, p. 241-247).

There were some noticeable changes about the state perception in the minds of Ottoman scholars and bureaucrats in the 18th Century. Defterdar Mehmet Pasha, in his book '*Nesayihü'l-vüzera ve'lümera*' (1714-1717), specified another important issue, which was a more solid one comparing the others. As a member of bureaucracy class, he recommended that confiscation would cause to collapse of the state (Defterdar Sarı Mehmet Paşa, 1987). As well known, abolition of confiscation right owned by Ottoman bureaucrats would become one of the most important aspects of the Tanzimat reforms a century later. Another important point here is that the problem of "saving the empire" becomes an important question to be answered in the thoughts of the 18th Century Ottoman statesmen (Aksan, 1993, p. 54-63). This sentiment will strongly affects the perception of state of the Ottoman intellectuals and statesmen especially in the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century. Due to the experiences of Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals, European political institutions and culture obtained a positive image in the eyes of many Ottoman bureaucrats (Findley, 2006, p. 341-366). As a consequence, Ottoman bureaucrats played a crucial role in reshaping the perception of state in the Ottoman Empire (Findley, 1996).

Education during Ottoman Reform Period

The 19th century Ottoman statesmen attributed education a task to support the resistance against Western supremacy. For this reason, Ottomans reorganized and centralized the education system and aimed at creating a new type of citizen; in other words, they tried to create a nation (Fortna, 2002, p. 32–70). In French case, we can also see the same perception of education (Üstel, 2004, p. 13). In the first years of Ottoman education reforms, Ottoman statesmen concentrated on military school in order to resist Western military progress. However, a half century later, especially after the Tanzimat, Ottomans began to reform civil schools too. One of the aims of the reforms was to teach the students the notion of fatherland and an abstract idea of state which they should obey and save (Somel, 2010, p. 36-43). This process caused the collapse of traditional Madrasas, while new schools become more important (Ünal, 2008, p. XI). Another consequence of this process was the importance of the content of the textbooks of new schools.

State Perception in the Textbooks of Abdülhamid II Era

Before the Tanzimat, there were not any textbooks in modern sense. After the Tanzimat, new textbooks were written for the curriculum of the new schools. During the reign of the Abdülhamid II this became established procedure and the content of the textbooks was controlled strictly (Somel, 2010, p. 228–238). In the regulations made in 1892, it was suggested that students should be educated as respectful and obedient to the state and as a patriot (Çakır, 2001, p. 35). Especially during the reign of Abdülhamid II, sultan gained a great importance as a topic at the textbooks. These textbooks presented Abdülhamid II as the most just sovereign and God chosen leader of all Muslims (Doğan, 1994, p. 27-71). For example, Ayşe Sıdika's 'Usul-ü Talim ve Terbiye' (1313) and Abdurrahman Şeref's 'Coğrafya-yı Umumi' (1323) stress the position of Sultan. And in the textbooks written during the reign of Abdülhamid II, sultan and state were legitimized especially by a religious discourse, suggesting that the existence of state and Islam depends on each other's entity. Besides, Ottoman Empire represented as the defender of Islam and successor of Islamic states in the history (Çakır, 2001, p. 39–41). On the other hand, progressive ideas were also promoted in the textbooks (Somel, 2010, p. 253) while the democratic thoughts defended by Young Ottomans became invisible at all.

State Perception in Textbooks during the Reign of Union and Progress

One of the aims of Union and Progress was to generalize public education and to bring it under the full control of the government to unite all Ottoman subjects under the Ottoman identity. Prussian experience was especially important for the party headmen (Gencer, 2003, p. 87-93). Union and progress gave special importance to the elementary schools and "Malumat-i Medeniye" (knowledge of civilization) courses to make more obedient citizens (Üstel, 2004, p. 49-50). Furthermore, government of the Union and Progress changed the content of textbooks, promoted capitalism, extracted glowing sentences for sultans and religious discourse (Doğan, 1994, p. 70–79). This can be interpreted as a sign of secular and progressive ideology of Union and Progress. It is important to mention that individualization and private enterprise were promoted at this time, and civil service employment, which traditionally was the best job for an Ottoman, was decried.

During the first years of the Second Constitution, textbooks promoted liberal political ideas, humanism and cosmopolitan Ottomanism. For example, in his 'Malumat-ı Medeniye' Dr. Hazık supported democratic ideas and humanism and criticized past authoritarian Ottoman governments, especially the regime of Abdülhamid II. (Doktor Hazık, 1324, p. 15-17). But there is no homogeneity in the content of the textbooks of this era. Müstecibzade İsmet's book (1325) supported Ottomanism on the one hand, and promoted sanctity of Ottoman fatherland on the other. Although Hüseyin Hıfzı defends the political values of the Second Constitution, he does not criticize Abdülhamid II and his regime. However, he stresses the importance of the constitution for the development of Ottoman Empire (Hüseyin Hıfzı, 1326, p. 5-6). Promotion of political values of the Second Constitution was common feature of the textbook of this era. Like others, Hakkı Behiç also defines the nation more active against the state (Hakkı Behiç, 1327, p. 12-13). Another textbook writer Ahmed Cevad also suggests that, if state does not abide the rules, the nation has the right to withstand the force of the state (Ahmed Cevad, 1328, p. 159-161).

However, after the defeat of Balkan Wars and capturing the power by Union and Progress, Ottomanism as a state ideology (aimed at unifying all Ottoman subjects under the identity of Ottoman) collapsed. Gradually, Turkish nationalism, whose roots can be traced to the reign of Abdülhamid

II, became more accepted among the elites. Some notions such as social duties, social solidarity, responsibilities, fatherland and nation gained more importance in the textbooks (Ali Seydi, 1329, p. 28-45). M. Adil, a textbook writer, defends similar ideas. He underlined especially the glory of dying for fatherland and the Turkish origin of the Ottoman Empire (M. Adil 1334 (1918). Although national sovereignty and rule of people were promoted during reign of Union and Progress and Second Constitutional period, obedience to the state was another important subject. Textbooks represented citizenship as membership of a family, and depicted Turkish nation as a military nation (Üstel, 2004, p. 73-104).

Perception of the State in the Textbooks of the Early Republican Period

New Elites of the republic tried to modernize Turkey and society making radical reforms. All textbooks were rewritten, and the new ideology of the republic, Kemalism, was promoted. They combined nationalism and western political values. However, their view of citizenship was not a pluralistic approach. Because the aim was to create a new and unified nation Kemalism had some authoritarian characteristics (İnal, 2004, p. 12-28).

New historical researches about Turkish history increased after the proclamation of the republic. Besides, one of the purposes of the new textbooks was to define Turkish nationalism in order to underpin government (Behar, 1992, p. 99). This was realized by a committee of ministry of education (Üstel, 2004, p. 129). After the proclamation of the republic, notions such as nation, republic, civilization and progress gained more importance (Çakır, 2001, p. 129-130). For example, Orhan Fuad defines the fatherland as the place at which a nation has the right to rule. In his book, 'Turkishness' has been presented as the most important element of the country. Besides, he gives to the nation a more passive role beside the state (Orhan Fuad, 1924, p. 14-19). We can find similar motives in the books of Mitat Sadullah and Doktor Ali Ridvan. According to the writers, nation is a constitutive element of a fatherland. In their views, patriotism is the most important value of the humans. On the other hand, they promoted new political values of the republic, such as sovereignty of people (Mitat Sadullah-Doktor Ali Ridvan, 1341, p. 3-12).

One of the purposes of the new courses such as "Yurt Bilgisi" (Knowledge of the Country) was to

teach children social solidarity and make them obedient and respectful to the state (Üstel, 2004, p. 132-133). For example, Muslihiddin Adil stresses the importance of the role of the state in political and social controversies and disagreements. On the other hand, he defines the state as a political apparatus which govern the citizens (Muslihiddin Adil, 1926, p. 3-4). Gölpinarlı also suggests, using a nationalist discourse, that a Turkish citizen should be ready to die to defend the country. He defended republican regimes on the ground that it gave many rights to the people. On the other hand, according to Gölpinarlı, the interest of the country was the most important thing, which could necessitate restrictions on the rights of people (Gölpinarlı, 2007, p. 46). Besides, promoting secularization was among one of the main characteristics of the new textbooks (see. Abdülbaki, 1928, p. 1-18). The importance of the military is another notable theme of the textbooks of this era. For example, Ali Kami asserts that physical training courses are a preparation for the military (Ali Kami, 1929, p. 8-10). In the second decade of the Republic, a strong anti-liberal discourse became more visible. Textbooks considered citizenship not as a political relationship between individual and state, but underlined the notions such as obedience and devotion (Üstel, 2004, p. 134-142). Economic etatism of this era also affected this perception (see. Tör, 1933, p. 15-20).

The textbooks for 'Civil Knowledge for Citizens' course were written by important members of the Kemalist elite. Afet İnan and Recep Peker underpinned strongly a corporatist and nationalist ideology (Peker, 1931, Introduction). And state was represented as an entity for which citizens should, if necessary, die. Their perception of state was mostly affected by military defeats in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. According to İnan, for example, state should have a power over the nation and individual in order to protect people and country (İnan, 1933, p. 21). In another book, written in 1939, a more statist, nationalist and even racist discourse was used. On the other hand, state was represented as a sacred entity (Danışman, 1939, p. 1-25).

Conclusion

The ideal of state that Ottomans inherited was a mix of Ancient Greek, Islamic, Iranian and Byzantium culture. While justice was the most important component of it, subjects were seen as people paying taxes. In the first centuries of the Ottoman Empire, there was no clear abstract idea of state, which mostly meant dynasty. However, in the sec-

ond half of the 18th century, this began to change. Especially new emerging bureaucracy class was one of the causes that created an abstract idea of state in Ottoman mind. As remarked by Mardin, the powers in the Western countries which restrained the state were different from the powers in the Ottoman Empire. According to Mardin, there were no conflicts between feudals and king or between proletariat and bourgeoisie in the Ottoman Empire. The conflict was between center and periphery in the Ottoman soil (Mardin, 2000, p. 80). However, after the proclamation of the Tanzimat Edict, new bureaucratic class and new prosperous people, who became visible after the penetration of capitalism into the Ottoman Empire, tried to secure their rights. European ideas were another source of democratization requests. On the contrary to these developments, heavy military defeats against the West brought about a trauma in the mind of Turkish intellectuals and civil and military bureaucrats. The fear was dissolution of the Turkish and Muslim state and vanishing of the nation. Because of that, it is not surprising that while there were some democratic developments in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, it was also the case that the notion of the state became more and more important.

Emphasizing obedience to state is the common point of the textbooks of these three periods. As mentioned above, the trauma caused by the military defeats was the main reason for this. Yet, there were some important differences between these periods. For example, while the textbooks Abdülhamid II era legitimized the power of sultan mostly with religious discourse, the textbooks of Union and Progress period used more secular and nationalist language and put the notion of fatherland forward. Besides, using the notions of nation and state together, they were trying to create a modern nation state, especially after the Balkan Wars. One can also identify a clear difference and change in the discourse of the textbooks written after the proclamation of the republic, where democracy, populism, and freedom were among the most frequently used notions in the textbooks. However, there was no substantial change in terms of the relations between citizen and state from Ottoman to the Republican period in textbooks (Kaplan, 1999, p. 161). In this sense, the Republic inherited the Ottoman heritage (Gellner, 1998, p. 116-117). But, it should be added that democracy and populism became an important part of political culture of Turkey through the textbooks written in this era. The changes in the perception of state in the text-

books show that the theories of Gramsci, Althusser and Foucault are relevant and explanatory to some extent for the problem of this research. Obviously, the textbooks have been used as an ideological apparatus in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. On the other hand, sociological changes in the Ottoman Empire and early Turkey also influenced the perception of the state in the textbooks. This article also suggests that, textbooks have been influential in shaping of the state perception of Turkish people. To study the presentation and definition of state in textbooks and state perception of Turkish people after the early republican period to the present day would suggest relevant and interesting conclusions. This is also important in terms of development of Turkish democracy.

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