IME

Identities and Modernities in Europe
Contract No: SSH-CT-2009-215949

Work Package 7
Citizens and Modernities: Between National and European Paths in Turkey

Ayhan Kaya and Ayşe Tecmen
Istanbul Bilgi University

March 2011

1. Introduction

This report studies how citizens, private individuals of different backgrounds, construct their identities in regard to their view of themselves as nationals, Europeans and modern subjects. In accordance with our WP6 report, in which we interviewed various professional and collective actors to uncover the notions of Turkishness, Europeanness, Europe and modernity have been accommodated in the field of education, this report will focus on the following themes: a) Immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship; b) Liberalism and globalisation (i.e. essentially illustrated in the market driven/ competition driven reforms put forward by the Bologna Process); c) History education reforms as indicator of national identity construction debates; and d) the representation of religion and secularisation in education sector.

In order to provide a broader perspective on the ways in which citizens perceive Turkishness, Europeanness, and place Turkey and Europe within the framework of modernity/modernization, we will draw upon our findings in the WP6 report and the interviews we conducted with students, professionals in the field of education, as adults with an invested interest such as parents, and adults without invested interest in the field of education such as retirees.

Primarily, our findings support the notion of growing EUscepticism, rather than Euroscepticism, which we also underlined in the WP6 Report. As we have discussed in the previous report, our interlocutors indicated that Europe and the EU are two different concepts in the habitats of meaning of the Turkish citizens. The interlocutors have implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, referred to the distinction between the two, favouring the former (Europe). Europeanization is perceived as a long standing transformation process on the societal level *vis-a-vis* the transformation of values while the Europeanization initiated by the EU or as Alper Kaliber (2002) notes "*EUization*", refers to the technical and structural transformation of the political and legal systems vis-a-vis the implementation of the *acquis*. One could explain their reservation about the latter through the rising wave of *EUscepticisim* since 2005, which marks the end of the *virtuous cycle* (1999 and 2005) and the beginning of the *vicious cycle*. This turn of events can be attributed to the nationalist revivals embraced by the large number of Turkish citizens, particularly by middle-class and upper middle-class groups. In the meantime, Öniş argues that Euroscepticism within the state elite is to be founded on the "Sevres Syndrome", which is based on a fear deriving from the post-World War I era characterized with a popular belief regarding the risk of the break-up of the Ottoman-Turkish state by the colonial western powers (Öniş, 2004: 12). In this framework, we observe that Europeanization is often perceived as a long-term process while EUization is often associated with the reformation process in the post-Helsinki period. EUization is often unwelcome by the interlocutors as they question the sustainability and the motivations behind the EU.

This report will provide an analysis of private persons' attitudes towards the field of education through an investigation of how they perceive the current education system in Turkey and comparatively the system in Europe. Subsequently drawing upon our findings we will provide an analysis of how individuals perceive Turkishness and Europeanness as well as their perceptions towards Europe and the EU.

2. Research Design

In line with our findings in our WP6 report, we chose the following four topics as subject matters for our interviews: a) Education in one's mother language particularly education in Kurdish and the boycotts that occurred in September 2010; b) The Bologna Process, which aims for the Europeanization of higher education and criticisms regarding its neoliberal motivations; c) History education in Turkish high schools and the way in which neighbouring countries, for instance Greece and Armenia and European countries are portrayed in the text books; and d) The headscarf ban at Turkish Universities and the student protests. We wanted to choose topics that were well publicized by the media, thus referring to a wider interview base while we made sure that they would be considered as conflictual.

The first issue (education in mother language, Kurdish in particular) has been a well-publicized issue since 2008. While we did not ask any direct question about education in mother language in the WP6 report, it was referenced in our question regarding the accommodation of migrants, minorities and multiculturalism in education. It is also necessary to state that while we addressed this issue under multiculturalism, it became an even more important question in and of itself during our research. On 24 December 2010, Minister of Interior Beşir Atalay stated that the official language of the country is Turkish, while the state is in the process of accommodating the other languages spoken in Turkey, "the unitary state, and one flag, one language" ideal of the Turkish nation is not open to discussion (*Cumhuriyet Daily*, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/, 24.12.2010). Therefore, considering the intensifying debates surrounding this issue, we chose education in one's mother language as a relevant subject matter.

The second subject matter (Bologna Process) was identified as a reform/turning point in our WP5 report; in fact we identified it as the latest turning point thus placing emphasis on the Bologna process in the context of Turkey's Europeanization efforts. We were also able to observe that the number of research on this issue was limited and the available scholarly work focused on the structural reforms that the process necessitated such as the quality management systems and accreditation (Mızıkacı 2003 and 2005; Erçetin 2006). In light of our previous findings from WP5 and WP6 reports, we chose the Bologna Process, its neoliberal motivations and the skill-based aspect of the Process *vis-a-vis* market orientation as a valid subject matter.

The third issue (history education) was identified as a problem via the WP6 expert interviews, and valuable data were collected on the history education and the type of citizen it anticipates to generate. In light of the critical views on the subject matter, we chose to integrate this subject into our study. More importantly, we anticipate that history education and the ways in which European countries are referenced is likely to provide critical information about the ways in which interlocutors perceive European countries. This question was particularly important in identifying whether individuals believe in the negative imageries of neighbouring countries and European countries, or whether they perceive these discourses as a shortcoming of the system, thus approach these discourses critically.

The fourth topic, which is the headscarf ban at higher education, has been a politically critical issue argued to be polarizing public opinion. Our WP6 interviews revealed that this issue is debated in reference to the *laicist* nature of the Turkish state and Constitution, and with reference to politicization. In line with these arguments, for this report we focused on the

headscarf ban and subsequent student protests.[1] This issue was also chosen as an important issue to reference the religious revival in the past decade, which we will analyze in the framework of Turkish identity construction.

In doing so, we conducted 20 in-depth interviews, in which we utilized snowball sampling. In selecting the interlocutors, we placed emphasis on diversifying ethnic, religious and educational backgrounds of the interlocutors to ensure diversification of opinions. On the other hand, the interlocutors who participated in the field-work were predominantly of middle-class background with high levels of educational background. This is in part attributable to the fact that the four themes we selected were about higher education in Turkey.

Furthermore, the interviews lasted between 50 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes. All interviews were recorded with the interlocutors' consent and the recordings were transcribed. Subsequently, these interviews were analyzed through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method (Wodak, 2010).

Sample distribution by Gender

Female	11
Male	9

Sample distribution by Age: 20-40 and 40-65

20-40 age	13
40-65 age	6
65-70 age	1

Sample distribution by marital status:

Married	8
Single	12

Sample distribution by Religious beliefs

Islam [2]	9
No response	7
Christian	3
Agnostic	1

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[1]It is important to note that our WP6 report provided information on the way in which headscarf ban was discussed in various levels of education while this report will exclusively focus on higher education.
[2] In terms of religion and religious beliefs, majority of the interlocutors stated Islam, but a considerable number also emphasized that they are stating what is written in their national identification card.

Sample distribution by Ethnic background[3]

Turkish	6
German-Turk	1
Caucasian	1
Kurdish	1
Turkish-German	1
Alevi	2
Assyrian	1
No response	7

Sample distribution by Socio-economical background

Low	4
Middle	12
High	4

Sample distribution by Educational Background

Studying at undergraduate level	8
Studying at graduate level	3
Holds a BA degree	3
Holds an MA degree	2
Holds a PhD degree	4

Furthermore, in order to harmonize our field study with our fellow partners, we have formulated our questions as follows:

- Do you consider this issue an important? Is there a "real issue" that is behind this debate?
- What is your own opinion about the matter?
- Do you know if similar issues occur in other European countries as well? When you think about those issues, do you feel that there is something in common that citizens of Turkey and citizens of European countries share?
- Is it possible to adopt a common solution with Europe? (See Annex A for detailed questionnaire)

In reference to the interview questions, we should indicate that these questions were not referenced by the interviewers in the form of the "European Union". Such that the last two questions, though relevant on these issues, were not welcome and evaded by the majority interlocutors. Furthermore, most interlocutors preferred to address European countries in reference to "foreign countries" and/or "foreign powers".

3. **Analysis and Findings**

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[3] Some of the interlocutors who did not wish to respond to the question of ethnicity also indicated that they do not understand the relevance of this question. In that regard, particularly interviewees in their 20s were hesitant to provide an answer. This indicates that ethnic identities are not still explicitly outspoken by individuals due to the prevailing stereotypes and republican myth of homogeneity. For further discussion see Kaya (2011).)

We will now analyse our findings starting with the education in mother language, and then following with the Bologna Process, history education in high schools, and eventually the headscarf ban at universities in Turkey.

Education in mother language

The interlocutors approached and discussed the issue of education in Kurdish in two distinct ways: as a *human rights issue* and as a *politicized issue,* which is believed to mask separatist motivations. In that regard, we observe that while both views are present, majority of the interlocutors are not supportive of education in Kurdish due to legal and/or practical reasons. Majority of the interlocutors indicated that while all individuals should in theory have the right to education in their mother language, they *need* to learn Turkish in order to be able to communicate with the majority of the society. To that effect, AK noted that:

> "There cannot be various languages in education. Turkey is not a federal state; there is a given language, which is the language that we communicate in (WP7/3)."

While there has been a general discomfort when we explored the possibility of a solution, VA also argued that:

> "It is hard to find a common solution on this issue with Europe; I think Europe is politicizing this issue. This should be approached in a practical way... I think it is being exaggerated (WP7/17)."

VA's approach is a widespread one in the sense that quite a number of people in Turkey with a EUsceptic view believe that the EU is trying to divide Turkey through publicizing minority claims (Öniş, 2004; and Kaya, 2011).). AB (WP7/10), on the other hand, noted that the main problem with this issue is the way in which it is carried out in reference to Turkish citizenship *shaped by* ethnicity rather than by human rights. While some interlocutors indicated that ethnic based definition of Turkish citizenship is problematic, majority seemed to agree with SÖ who noted that:

> "since they [Kurds] are citizens of Turkey, they should know the language of the majority to live in this geography. It is unnerving to even discuss this (WP7/14)."

In that regard, once again we can infer that there is confusion in private persons' minds regarding the definition of Turkish citizenship and what it entails (Kirişçi 2000; Yeğen 2004; Kadıoğlu 2007; and Üstel 2004).

In coherence with our findings from the WP6 expert interviews, MY (WP7/13), EI (WP7/15), CS (WP7/6) and PB (WP7/2) noted that they are not comfortable with the way in which education in mother language has been exclusively associated with the Kurdish community and language. PB, as a Greek origin Turkish citizen (Rum), indicated that she has learned both Turkish and Greek in school, and argued that:

> "I think people should study in their mother tongue, but they should also know the language of the country they live in. In terms of television broadcasts, now they have a television channel in Kurdish, then they should have channels in Armenian and Greek as well. You cannot just single out the Kurds (WP7/2)."

To that effect, MY further argued that all minority languages in Turkey should be approached with the same level of respect and stated that:

> "In Turkey, Kurdish is not the only language spoken by the families, there are also Arabic, Laz, Abkhazian languages. Why do we refer to the mother language issue with respect to Kurdish only? In order to prevent separatism and maintain the unity in Turkey, we should approach all these languages with the same respect. We can learn from the USA in this sense (WP7/13)."

In line with this argument SÖ (WP7/14) and BK (WP7/16) argued that education in Kurdish should also be viewed as an enrichment of the Turkish culture. UA was the only interlocutor who addressed the heterogeneity of the Kurdish population and noted that

> "There are many different dialects, for example is Zaza a different dialect or a different language from the Kirmanchi dialect of the Kurdish language (WP7/9)."

UA's intervention correspond to the fact that there is recently a growing consciousness among the Zaza speaking Kurds with *Alevi* background about their distinctiveness vis-a-vis the Kirmanchi peaking Kurds with *Sunni* background (Romano, 2006).

When asked if they are aware of similar cases in Europe, the majority of the interlocutors indicated that that they are aware of the Catalans in Spain as a similar debate in Europe. However, those who refer to Catalans also stated that they have a concern that Kurds might also further their demands for education to a separate state. The armed conflicts between the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and the Turkish armed forces were also brought up in reference to this topic. Some interlocutors indicated that education in Kurdish might lead to separatist movements and strengthen the influence of the PKK. Nevertheless, CY argued that:

> "I know that there are some PKK members who are not Kurdish but French or Russian. I think this is supported by international sources. Separatist movements have always been around (WP7/7)."

BB, on the other hand, maintained that his perception of right to education in Kurdish is associated with separatist efforts, and indicated that Kurdish broadcasting channel was obtained by PKK efforts and that the Kurdish community can also ask for an independent state. MY, on the other hand, argued that this is a hollow issue, and that it has been exploited by the media. She elaborated that:

> "The real issue is that people don't question why we focus on Kurdish so much, and why it is depicted as Kurdish nationalism. Maybe they sincerely want education but there is the unresolved PKK issue. Perhaps, we should look at this issue with reference to history education (WP7/13)."

Securitization of ethno-cultural and political claims of the Kurds in Turkey has always been the issue ever since the late 19th century; and it has become even more so after the 1980 military coup (Romano, 2006). Nevertheless, AA, who has openly identified himself as being Kurdish, noted that being a Kurd is not necessarily difficult for those living in Eastern and South-Eastern Turkey. He noted that his opinions on education in Kurdish are correlated to his experiences in Istanbul. He argued that:

> "When I came to Istanbul for high school, there were tall buildings, it was of a different kind from what we called modern back home. My surrounding was different. It was a clash of cultures. I was subjected to government brutality at a young age but it wasn't when I was in my home town. In Istanbul if you are dark skinned then you are considered a potential criminal by the police. Such discriminations are made then people are called terrorists and separatists. They tried to make us live their way of life, it was imposed upon us. This is why we have this problem now (WP7/5)."

His argument is also reflective of our argument in our WP6 report regarding the ways in which internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants from the South Eastern parts of Turkey have not been accommodated in the field of education. Corresponding to AA's (WP7/5) argument, Çelik (2005) argues that Kurds living in Western cities, such as Istanbul face social, economic and political difficulties, and she notes that residents of Kurdish ghettos are often perceived as potential criminals. Furthermore, Mills argues that:

> "In the urban spaces of everyday life, and in cultural representations of the city, Istanbul is a boundary space. Its contours and margins are continually retraced through negotiation with the paradox-of being distinctively Turkish and yet of Europe, of being secular and modern and yet denying those who are not Muslim and Turkish full inclusion-that lies at the core of Turkish nationalism (Mills, 2005: 445)."

Mills' argument provides insight into AA (WP7/5)'s argument, and the social dynamics of the city. Structural outsiderism is what ethnic Kurds face in the urban space in the sense that they constitute a kind of ethno-class, whose members mainly get involved in manual labour intensive jobs, and face a kind of institutional discrimination in everyday life.

In terms of the boycotts, which occurred in September 2010, majority of the interlocutors stated that they are aware of them, but AÖ (WP7/18) and ÖG (WP7/20) were the only interlocutors who directly indicated their opinions. AÖ noted that:

> "Education in one's mother language is a right guaranteed by democracy. However, the boycotts, which restrict students in primary schools from going to school, are wrong. These boycotts are a form of child abuse for political purposes (WP7/18)."

ÖG, on the other hand, noted that although he was not very informed about the boycotts, he believes that all non-violent protests should be supported (WP7/20). The low number of students expressing their opinion about the student protests indicates that the Higher Education Council's regulations have indeed worked out in the sense that it has produced an apolitical university environment in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup.

Furthermore, interestingly, AK (WP7/3), EI (WP7/15), AB (WP7/10), and MY (WP7/13) referenced the way in which English has come to complement Turkish at the secondary and higher education levels. AK (WP7/3) argued that "education in Turkey is hardly in Turkish, we learn everything in English." BB (WP7/8) criticized the use of English in higher education and noted that "Why is everything in English? And we are not talking about England; we are talking about the USA." ÇH (WP7/12), who argued that the official language of education in Turkey can only be Turkish, also referenced this matter and noted that the way English is not taught properly is a problem for most students and professionals, thereby noting that English is a significant part of education in Turkey. UA (WP7/9), for instance, noted that English is an important quality for employment and that in engineering; fluency in English is a means to

assure employment. She further elaborated that "in order to establish common grounds, students should learn Turkish and English."

In terms of the issue of education in Kurdish we see that the interlocutors are divided, nevertheless we cannot establish a common socio-demographic characteristic that is valid in these differences of opinion. On this issue, "*official language*" is a phrase that has been used by the majority of the interlocutors, while *bilingual education* is not referenced (except for EA (WP7/19)), which is indicative of the way in which the media has been influential in forming the opinions of the interlocutors. As such, as previously indicated, as of November 2010 most of the media coverage has focused on this issue with reference to Turkish as being the "official language" of the Turkish state. However, the interlocutors who referenced the "practical" aspect of education in Kurdish, or in minority languages have indicated that they are not knowledgeable about the way in which education in Kurdish is to be implemented.

The Bologna Process and skill-based education

The interviews indicated that among all the subject matters that we have chosen, the Bologna Process is the least known subject, which correlates with our findings in the WP6 report. In that regard, the majority of our interlocutors have asked for a clarification about the Process and what it entails. In comparison to other subjects there was not a lot of data collected on this issue because the majority of the interlocutors indicated their reluctance to provide uninformed answers. Those who knew about the Process indicated that they know of it as a standardization process initiated by the EU for the European countries, thereby excluding non-European countries. Interestingly, when asked about the Bologna Process, many interlocutors straightforwardly referred to the Erasmus student exchange program. Our WP5 and WP6 reports have indicated in detail that the Process was approached cautiously and thus framed as "internationalization" to prevent backlash.

Nevertheless, as we indicated in the WP6 report, Turkey is still in the process of implementing and internalizing the structural requirements of the Bologna Process, and in that sense the media attention directed to this issue has been very limited. BK (WP7/16), who professionally has an invested interest in higher education, similarly noted that the Process has not taken root in Turkey, and that most individuals are not aware of it. Consequently, when interlocutors were informed about the Process, most of them exhibited signs of discomfort and unwillingness to comment on this subject particularly with regards to the existence or lack of discussion on this matter in European countries.[4]

The lack of information on the Bologna Process contributes to the way in which the interlocutors were unable to comment on the correlation between the Process and the notions of modernity and modernization. However, after describing the Process with particular emphasis on much criticized skill-based orientation *vis-a-vis* the market-orientation of the Process, it is possible to argue that those who have an educational or professional background in engineering (forestry, metallurgy, agriculture and the like) have analyzed skill-based education as a positive feature. UA (WP7/9) argued that she perceived the Process and market-orientation to be positive and argued that in general the high level of unemployment in certain sectors is due to the graduates' lack of skills. She further noted that: "theory and practice has to go hand in hand" to improve the graduates' skills thereby increasing their employment levels. Similarly, HFÇ argued that:

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[4] We should also note that while explaining the Bologna Process, it was necessary to reference the EU and European countries thereby nullifying the last two questions of the questionnaire.

> "It is like occupational high schools that serve their chosen industries. For example, I study at the Metallurgy and Product Engineering department, and it would be to my advantage to have a specific expertise under this department, so I do not have to compete with all the graduates of the department (WP7/4)."

BY correspondingly argued that: "It [skill based education] might be a positive thing since it aims to educate more qualified individuals (WP7/11)." On the other hand, some other interlocutors took a critical position *vis-a-vis* the skill-based characteristics of the Bologna Process. BB framed this Process within the realm of capitalist motivations and the interests of companies, and stated that:

> "I think this is about capitalism; they want a productive individual rather than a thinking one. It is about profits. For example with ABET[5], the courses are emptied out. A worker on a ship knows more than I do. Our system is based on memorization, we don't get to practice. I am an engineer but I have no practice (WP7/8)."

There were also arguments, which criticized the ways in which this Process might hinder individuals' outlooks on the world. These individuals were mainly in the 40-65 age brackets and with background in social studies. MY stated that:

> "...I think an engineer with no understanding of the world is not a good engineer. Skill based education is acceptable for vocational schools, but a person should be equipped to face the world when they grade from a University (WP7/13)."

To that effect, SÖ who indicated that culture is indeed a must for all individuals, referred to the lack of skills in Turkish higher education system, and argued that:

> "I think this is a luxurious question for Turkey. There is a deficiency in terms of skill-based education in Turkey. I highly value skills.... I think providing a student with skills is very positive, skills mean being useful, being productive (WP7/14)."

As previously noted, disciplinary backgrounds of interlocutors are influential factors in determining their perception of and attitude towards the Bologna Process and its emphasis on skills. In that framework, the purpose of higher education is perceived either as the establishment of an efficient labour force, and for the interlocutors competition, or cultivate the critical faculties of individuals.

While we specifically focused on the Bologna Process as a Process initiated by the EU, there have been some concerns indicated directly BB (WP7/8) and CY (WP7/7) throughout the interviews about the capitalist motivations and a general distrust in the USA. Most significantly, they also defined the standardization of education as a process stimulated by the USA. BB argued that the EU, is in and of itself,

> "a product of capitalism; they do not want minorities to be happy either. European countries do not act independently from the USA; I think the EU is also a USA guided

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[5]Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) provides institutional accreditation and specialized accreditation for specific programs based on the quality standards established by professionals. There are various ABET accredited programs in Turkey.

project (WP7/8)."

While we were looking to find alternative discourses on modernity or modernization in the field of education in the framework of the Bologna Process, one interlocutor, MY directly stated that:

> "We always look to foreign countries for solutions, in education and in other fields. If the Universities are autonomous and the Rectors are chosen by faculty rather than being appointed, a solution to these problems can be found. If we implement these, then a solution with Europe or with the USA can be attained (WP7/13)."

Accordingly, as it was indicated in the WP6 reports, autonomy of higher education institutions is a serious concern in terms of education and the establishment of quality education, while the American model of education still constitutes to be the preferable model for some interlocutors. As Erçetin indicates "private universities [in Turkey] can enjoy administrative and financial autonomy, while state universities cannot (2005: 25)", which is also addressed in terms of the Bologna Process reforms. In that framework, and in line with the observations of the interlocutors, it is possible to argue that individuals are supportive of financially and administratively autonomous higher education institutions, which are not under the authority of the central system.

On account of our interviews, it is visible that there are various approaches to the standardization of education within the framework of the Bologna Process. Interlocutors have indicated that they have a general distrust in the higher education system with particular references to the quality of education. The interviews conducted for the WP6 report led to similar findings. Furthermore, we should also draw attention to the fact that some of the interlocutors acknowledged the need for higher standardization on the basis of globalization. Nevertheless, VA indicated: "When there are so many sources there is a problem with quality and standardization (WP7/17)." In that regard his argument was based on the proliferation of educational systems in accordance with communications technologies, such as online education. He further argued that "in the light of the advances in information technology such as online education, there is a need for universal standards (WP7/17)".

The interlocutors indicated that they have a general distrust in the current higher education system *vis-a-vis* the YÖK's (Higher Education Council) top-down approach and the reformation process. BK (WP7/16) argued that the system is "overwhelmed with reforms" and the "rationale" of the Bologna Process has been omitted in relaying the necessary reforms. Nevertheless, in terms of the higher education system our findings have not yielded sufficient information to generalize private individuals' perceptions towards the notions of modernization in terms of the Bologna Process.

As previously indicated, there is a general lack of knowledge, save the Erasmus program which in and of itself is problematically known as an exchange program without any references to Europeanization or the Bologna Process, it is possible to observe that while domestic issue such as the headscarf ban, history education and bilingual education are very well known, this Process has been left out of the political and social agenda. The reference to the USA, on the other hand, are a reflection of what we have argued in our WP6 and WP7 reports which is that the Turkish higher education system was built upon the American Model via American founded Universities in the 1950s. In that sense, we can state that the USA

positively or negatively still constitutes to be the basis of individuals' understanding of Turkish higher education system.

History education in Turkish high schools: Portrayal of Neighbouring and European Countries

As it was the case in the WP6 report, this subject matter was in fact the most criticized issue throughout our interviews. In correlation with our findings in the WP6 report, all interlocutors indicated discomfort with the ways in which history education portrays neighbouring countries as well as the European countries. VA, on the other hand, was the only interlocutor who was rather more optimistic and indicated that:

> "We see that Turkey is coming to terms with her past. History is being rediscovered and transformed from one-sided history into a more pluralist one. These [national history] are parts of the puzzle of the World history (WP7/17)."

His argument was noticeably different from other interlocutors in that he perceived history within the realm of technological advances and the proliferation of available resources. It is possible to infer that his perception was based on a confidence in the role of individuals who can approach information critically. While majority of the interlocutors indicated that human agency is an important element of critical thinking, ÖG noted that in most cases individuals (students) tend to think that "if it is in the textbook, than it must be true (WP7/20)."

Although the interlocutors maintained their dissatisfaction with the current textbooks, majority of the interlocutors stated that they find the system justifiable on the grounds that this is a common means of nation-state building in European countries. In that sense, the majority of the interlocutors indicated that the history curriculum has been conceived to unify the Turkish state, and create a national consciousness in order to establish a unitary state. Our WP5 and WP6 reports maintained that nationalist discourse is a significant part of the education system, and particularly history education; and in this case the reference to European countries is a means to justify this discourse with Western references. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the interlocutors did not tend to question this phenomenon which is a reflection of the success of the curriculum in maintaining the nationalist discourse.

Some interlocutors made references to the Ottoman Empire and preferred to discuss history education with regards to the ways in which the Ottoman Empire is glorified in history textbooks. For instance, CY argued that he does not like the "infatuation" with the Ottoman Empire and the predacious government image and stated that:

> "I think this [focus on the Ottoman history] is the foundation of nationalism. I think it also shows some admiration for the Ottoman Empire. As the Empire was very strong at that time, there is also a yearning for that kind of power. It also relates to the fact that there is a militaristic tradition in Turkey. I think the way history is taught aims to prohibit reasonable thinking (WP7/7)."

Similarly, AK noted that:

> "I think the reason that European countries have such a negative image is due to our feeling of inferiority to the West. There isn't any national identity until the Ottoman Empire. So history education focuses on the Ottoman identity first, then religious

identity and then Turkishness (WP7/3)."

In parallel to AK (WP7/3), MY also argued that:

> "There is an inferiority complex with regards to the Ottoman Empire, the books state that Arabs stabbed us in the back, and that Europe is an enemy. History education emphasizes that we were deceived by the neighbours and the Europeans. I have not read anything objective really (WP7/13)."

Drawing upon our WP6 report and the work of Çayır and Gürkaynak (2008), we should note that Turkish history education was criticized for not focusing on recent history while there were also concerns that history textbooks identified internal and external enemies to maintain the unity of Turkish citizens. As AK (WP7/3) noted, the "feeling of inferiority to the West" is a common theme in academic works. To that effect, Metin Heper notes that this feeling of "inferiority" is indeed a reaction to Europe, and argues that:

> "The rationale behind their [the Turks who used the word "Turk" in its ethnic sense] acting in this manner was to regain their self-confidence and do away with the inferiority complex that they had begun developing as a consequence of having continuously lost against their European adversaries from the late sixteenth century onward." (Heper, 2004: 16)

In terms of modernity, as AK noted the extensive focus on the Ottoman Empire is perhaps a claim to modernity *vis-a-vis* Empire's contributions to the West. However, her observations also follow that history education and the way in which Turkey is portrayed as "alone", "in danger" is confusing for young individuals. Subsequently, she notes that:

> "you are taught that you are neither western nor eastern. You learn that everyone is against you. For example, we want to become a member of the EU, but we also talk about Muslim brotherhood *(İslam Kardeşliği)* (WP7/3)."

Furthermore, while the Ottoman history has been a key word in the majority of our interviews, Kemal Ataturk has also been mentioned various times. As our WP5 and WP6 reports indicated, the National Assembly accepted the in accordance with the Basic Law on National Education No. 1739 dated 14 June 1973, Turkish education system, primary, secondary and higher education, is founded on Ataturk's principles. PB (WP7/2) mentioned that history courses were also carried out in reference to Ataturk and his principles while she also noted that her history teachers' personal views on Ataturk were also a factor in the way they framed neighbouring and European countries.

To that effect, MY (WP7/13) also argued that "Ataturk is idealized, portrayed as untouchable and there are no criticisms. The outlook seems like worshipping Ataturk, as a deity. But we do not protect the system. It is based on memorizing, and it is hollow." Furthermore, BK (WP7/16) indicated the confusion that the overabundance of themes on Ataturk, in primary education. Furthermore, she elaborated that geography education is also problematic, which focuses on Turkey and omitting other countries and continents. In that regard, geography education has also been problematic in Turkish education, because it focuses on Turkey and to some extent surrounding countries, which in combination with history education does not

yield sufficient knowledge of world history and geography.[6]

In order to maintain unity, glorifying the Ottoman history and later early Republican history *vis-à-vis* the identification of enemies is also perceived as the fundamental means to introduce Turkish nationalism via history education (SÖ (WP7/14), MY (WP7/13)). However, as previously mentioned, some interlocutors also find this justifiable; as such AA stated that:

> "The images portray Turkey positively. In social sciences books, Turkish nationalism is imposed on students. It is mostly based on memorization. The portrayals are defensive. It states that "they" [foreign countries] attacked us. The portrayals of events are not objective... I don't think this [negative discourses on foreign states] is not exclusive to Turkey, all states do this. This is about governmentality (WP7/5)."

In terms of similar cases in other European countries, it is possible to note that while majority of the interlocutors indicated that they are not informed about the system in other European countries, they find it likely. For instance, UA mentioned that based on her observations from a common project with Greece: "There were similar problems in Greece and the contributions of the Ottoman Empire to Europe are often omitted (WP7/9)." Furthermore, SÖ noted that "Greek history textbooks have similar prejudices about Turks and there are visuals against the Ottoman Empire (WP7/14)." In parallel, CY noted that "I don't know if similar issues occur in Europe but it probably happens in Germany. I think this is partially about the EU (WP7/7)." ÇH indicated that: "Of course there are similar debates, maybe even more than our case. The social make-up is more cosmopolitan, more mixed (WP7/12)."

A common solution is very much supported based on the establishment of objective history telling in general. ÇH for instance, argued that "Europe fought for centuries, but they forgot about those wars and established friendly relations. Maybe this was the aim of the EU (WP7/12)." Thereby, his perception of the EU as a peace project was visible. Similarly, BY argued: "We absolutely can and should find a common solution [with other European countries]. I think EU membership can help us in this issue and we need EU membership to see a positive influence on history education (WP7/11)."

In terms of a possible solution to the negative imagery, BY (WP7/11) stated that inquisitive history education can be a valid solution. SÖ further argued that a common solution can be in the form of establishing certain common principles and noted that: "If history education was based on certain principles, then humanism wouldn't be just an expression. History is not a science but it can be more objective (WP7/14)." HFÇ also noted that "perhaps history education in Europe encourages inquiry-based learning... We need to learn the consciousness to interpret history (WP7/4)."

This is the only issue where various interlocutors made a direct reference to the EU and its consolidative element. EA (WP7/19) also argued that the countries which have this type of history telling are in fact counties that have been harmed by the WWII. In light of such views, we see that in the case of history telling *vis-a-vis* history education, interlocutors feel that the EU is a unifying entity.

In light of the interviews, history education and the way in which neighbouring and European countries have been portrayed is the only issue where we see that majority of interlocutors

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[6] For an extensive discussion on the role of geography in the construction of the nation see Anderson (1983) and Hooson (1994).

perceive as a fundamental problem in the Turkish education system. Interlocutors have been very critical about this issue but as previously argued these criticisms are often met with the belief that negative discourses are a common means to maintain unity. Majority of the interlocutors indicate that although they do not have direct information/knowledge on history education in European states, they feel comfortable arguing that it is a common problem. Nonetheless, it is possible to observe that the lack of critical thinking, inquisitiveness, and the way in which individuals are expected to memorize historical events constitutes an even more problematic issue. Interlocutors indicate that, again we should note that majority does not have direct knowledge about history education in European countries; the system in Europe is likely to support inquisitiveness, and causality thereby placing historical events in a rather more realistic structure. Therefore, we can argue that interlocutors are critical of the static understanding of history education in Turkey while their perception of history education in Europe is seemingly more dynamic.

The Headscarf Debate and subsequent student protests

Headscarf issue has been one of those issues, which have always attracted a great popular attention in Turkey, as it has become a symbolic fault line epitomizing the ongoing debate between seculars and Muslims, modernists and traditionalists, and Europeans and Eurosceptics etc. (Göle, 2003; Toprak and Çarkoğlu, 2006; Saktanber, 2002). As it was the case in boycotts in the case of Kurdish language education, while the questions were formulated in the framework of student protests, there have been only two interlocutors who directly referenced these protests. To that effect, EI argued that:

> "They [students wearing the headscarf] already enter Universities, and I support that they should. I don't have extensive information about the student protests but I suppose they were successful since students wearing the headscarf enter Universities (WP7/15)."

NK (WP7/1) also argued that she learned about the conflictual nature of this issue three years ago via the rise of student protests which she attributes to the increasing awareness of students as well as to the increasing demand for religious representation. She appreciates the student demonstrations, and she perceived them as a sign of political participation, which corresponds to the views of Nilüfer Göle who has written on the role of women's willingness to wear the headscarf and on their role in modernity (Göle, 2002; and 2003). In line with Göle's argument, NK (WP7/1) contended that there are certain behavioural expectations from the public and certain behaviours are repressed for the sake of standardization (*tek tipleştirme*), a notion which she underlined various times. She noted that these expectations are not confined to the headscarf issue, and that there are rules for everything in Turkey. In light of the lack of references to student protests, although it was provided in the question, we can infer that these protests were overshadowed by the debates on the legal aspects of this issue.

Fuat Keyman argues that Turkish modernity has been transformed as Islamic identity claims became more (1) politicized, (2) economically grounded, and (3) culturally loaded recognition demands such as the headscarf debate (Keyman, 2007: 216). He further argues that:

> "Islamic identity claims and their plural and multi-dimensional nature do not constitute an anti-modern discourse about religious self, but rather a politics of identity operating within modernity and demanding recognition. Today, it is not possible to think of Turkish modernity without reference to Islam. Nor is it possible to think of Turkish secularism as uncontested. In fact, the changing nature of Turkish modernity

has been marked, to a large extent, by the crisis of Turkish secularism (Keyman, 2007:217).”

In that regard, it is possible to observe that while the headscarf debate as a symbol of the religious-secular divide is highly politicized thereby leading to differences of opinion, academic works indicate that Islamic identity claims such as the headscarf are indeed reflections of modernity, the need for recognition vis-a-vis the contestation of the status-quo.

Furthermore, In terms of similar debates in other European countries, we observe that the debates in France and in some cases the decision of the ECHR in Leyla Sahin v. Turkey case is given as an example. Nonetheless, in this case it is possible to observe that there has been an emphasis on the French case in the Turkish media as it was correlated with the political debates in Turkey (see *interalia*, *Sabah Daily*, http://www.sabah.com.tr/, 24.11.2010). The role of the media is apparent in terms of this subject matter, since all interlocutors noted that they have heard and followed this debate from the media. The headscarf issue is a significant reflection of the media’s central role in forming and shaping public opinion.

As noted by NK (WP7/1) that there has been a recent attempt to standardize the Turkish community, which has resulted in the polarization of the Turkish society. AB similarly argued that:

> “the real issue is about polarization in society due to the fundamentalist ideas *via-a-vis* Islam and secularism. This polarization has led the people to identify themselves in terms of political parties (WP7/10).”

Nevertheless, some interlocutors argued that the debate surrounding the headscarf should be discussed within the realms of the Turkish Constitution. For instance, ÇH (WP7/12) indicated that the Turkish dress code has been written into the Constitution, thus this issue can only be debated with reference to the Constitution and noted that the politicization of the headscarf debate is an unsettling matter. Concurrently, HFÇ (WP7/4), AK (WP7/3), MY (WP7/13), AA (WP7/5), BY (WP7/11), BK (WP7/16) identified that this issue is in fact *politicized* by certain groups to promote and pursue political interest. EA, on the other hand, attributed this debate to economics, and argued that “the fundamental issue is the economic deficit (WP7/19).” Nevertheless, the majority of the interlocutors consented that the headscarf debate is a key factor in the religious-secular divide.

When the interlocutors were requested to opine on the debates in European countries, some interlocutors noted the religious demographics of Turkey and argued that debates in Europe are not as intense as they are in Turkey because they experience Islam as a minority religion while the Turkish society is predominantly Muslim. This argument often constituted the foundations for the interlocutors’ arguments of the possibility of a common solution. To that effect, AK noted that:

> “Since our Constitution is inspired from Europe, we are a laicist country but the composition of the society is considerably different from European societies. The country is predominantly Muslim, and a considerable portion of the society wears the headscarf. In comparison to Europe, perhaps France, Muslims are a minority and this issue is not so important since they are not as visible as they are in Turkey (WP7/3).”

Similarly, EI (WP7/15) noted that a common solution with the European countries on this

issue cannot be found since "the experiences are different, the real issue is about Islam and there are different perceptions of Islam." AÖ, on the other hand argued that:

> "there shouldn't be any religious symbol in education however, if a student wearing the headscarf cannot enter University premises then a student wearing the crucifix should not be allowed either... This creates a predicament (WP7/18)."

AÖ's (WP7/18) argument was indeed based on the perception that the headscarf is being singled out as a religious symbol. ÖG (WP7/20) similarly argued that he doesn't think the headscarf would constitute a handicap at Universities and that in thinking about this issue the kippah and the crucifix should also be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the interlocutors have also maintained their discomfort with regards to the rise of Islamophobia in Europe. For example, AB argued that:

> "As Islam became a threat in Europe, similar debates have been initiated. There are students with the headscarf at my University in Germany and they are welcome. However, there are people who see this as a threat as well. These people criticize the women wearing the headscarf for being backwards, and unable to go along with modernity and German culture. It is very saddening to see these arguments at the university level (WP7/10)."

While AB (WP7/10) drew upon his experiences and observations in his country of residence (Germany), when asked if there are similar debates in other European countries, MY (WP7/13) also argued that the debates have not been carried out in the framework of religious symbols but exclusively in terms of the headscarf. Nevertheless, we should note that several interlocutors have expressed that the way in which the headscarf is being considered as a symbol for Islam in Turkey and in European countries is a source of concern for some of the interlocutors. Their concern stems from the way in which the headscarf has been utilized as a symbol of religious belief while religious symbols such as the kippah and the crucifix were excluded from this debate. As it was the case in terms of education in Kurdish, interlocutors indicated that religious symbols should not be debated exclusively in terms of the headscarf. As our WP6 report discussed this issue is highly controversial in terms of the religious-secular divide and our interviews indicate that the interlocutors are not fond of the politicization of this issue and the use of the headscarf as a symbol in Turkey. We should also note that some interlocutors also discussed this issue with reference to Islamophobia in Europe, which accounts for their concerns towards the debates in European countries. Significantly, ÖG (WP7/20) further argued that "Islamophobia exists in Turkey as well" which he later Furthermore, we also observed that a few interlocutors perceive way in which the headscarf has become synonymous with Islam as a means of standardization without any acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of the women wearing the headscarf.

One particular interlocutor stated that his views on the headscarf contradicts with his understanding of modernity, BB stated that:

> "the headscarf is unnecessary. There are more important issues. It is visual pollution; it is not very nice to see women with the chador. It is not modern. I think is backward. This issue is being politically manipulated (WP7/8)."

In correlation with the identification of the headscarf with backwardness, some female interlocutors (AK (WP7/3), SÖ (WP7/14), UA (WP7/9)) also indicated that the way in which

this debate has been reduced to women constitutes a problem since men who have similar Islamic beliefs and in some cases more "dangerous" (as stated by UA (WP7/9)) beliefs are undetected. In that regard, SÖ contributed this occurrence to the patriachal structure of the society and argued that "All men, whether they support the left-right wing come together under this structure (WP7/14)."

Furthermore, majority of the interlocutors indicated that the headscarf ban should be lifted on the basis of human rights and women's right to education. Nonetheless, most interlocutors who support lifting the headscarf ban question the motives behind the headscarf. To that effect, there is a general consensus that if women wear the headscarf on their own volition then they should be able to do so. Nonetheless, the interlocutors note that community and family pressures still exist in this issue therefore the motives behind the headscarf are impossible to distinguish.

While most interlocutors have criticized the way in which the headscarf ban has become very politicized and consequently contributed to the polarization of the society, it is possible to observe that in terms of the existence of similar debates in Europe, France is the most well-known case, and the UK is the second most referenced case. Nevertheless, throughout the interviews we observed that the majority of the interlocutors have been hesitant in referring to other European countries. In reference to the alternative discourses that are present in European countries, we observe that the interlocutors have attributed the different nature of these debates to the perceptions, experiences and the number of Muslim minorities in European countries.

4. Concluding Remarks

The findings from our field research indicate that the interlocutors are very critical of the ways in which the issues discussed in this report are approached by the Turkish state and the media. The most important finding of our research is that the interlocutors' opinions indicate a general preference to "modernize" the educational system. The interlocutors and the framework in which they preferred to discuss the identified subject matters are indeed reflective of a general criticism of the status quo. It is possible to observe that there is a general criticism towards the past and current governments for politicization of the selected issues in the field of education. Nonetheless, since these issues were reflections of general contestations in the Turkish politics and society, the interlocutors often referenced the implications of these issues in matter beyond the field of education. In doing so, their responses were critical of both the current government and the opposition and in some cases it transcended into a criticism of the Turkish mindset and public opinion. Critical attitudes of the interlocutors as well as their reflexivity on the issues presented to them are in line with the definition/understanding of modernity as a belief in human agency, self-reflexivity and critical attitude. Humanism is another important feature of the individuals' understanding of modernity in the sense that the interlocutors express their conviction in human agency.

It is possible to observe that modern education and/or modernization of education is often discussed with references to the USA by the interlocutors between the 20-45 age bracket. As previously indicated these references appear to be both positive and negative. Nonetheless, concurrent with our WP5 and WP6 reports, the American model introduces in the 1950s still constitutes an important element if individuals' opinions towards the higher education system in Turkey. In line with our previous reports, we can also argue that the way in which the Bologna Process as the most comprehensive and recent attempt to Europeanize the system is

framed as "internationalization" contributes to the lack of information on the influence of Europe *vis-a-vis* modernity. In that regard, while our previous reports maintained that Westernization and Europeanization can be used interchangeably to refer to the modernization of Turkey, we find that "Americanization" as a source of standardization is also an important element of the Turkish education system.

In regards to national identity, it is important to note that national identity (Turkishness) is not essentialized by the interlocutors. Furthermore, while interlocutors did not reference Turkish nationalism, we observe that they maintain their anxiety about minority nationalism, particularly Kurdish nationalism, which is perceived as a threat to the unity of the state. Additionally, the interlocutors support religious and ethnic diversity so long as diversity does not lead to claims that would constitute as separatism and a threat for the Turkish state. It is important to note that the interviews indicate that interlocutors in general perceive nationalism as a strategy and a tactic which aims to maintain the unitary state. In light of this information, we observe that while the interlocutors perceive nationalism as a tactic to maintain the unitary state and approach it critically to embrace diversity, diversity in and of itself is accepted as long as it doesn't threaten the unity of the Turkish state.

While there was a certain level of consensus with regards to the interlocutors' perceptions on modernity and national identity, perceptions towards Europe and Europeanization are more diverse. In some cases modernity is directly referenced by the interlocutors but it is possible to say that the EU does not represent modernity for the majority of individuals while Europe as a synonym for West does. Furthermore, the interlocutors often evaded questions about the EU, and preferred to frame their answers as Europe. This can be attributed to the fact that the media attention to the EU has been in the decline since 2005, and as it was the case in the Bologna Process, the EU is perceived to be problematic due to its top-down approach in the reformation process. In that regard, the EU as an entity and the EU harmonization efforts have not been internalized in Turkey, while Europe and Europeanness as a cultural phenomenon is indeed relevant for the individuals. Throughout the interviews, the interlocutors discussed Europe as modernity, a synonym for the West, the sourse of reason, a meta-identity, a transformatory power, a union based on diversity and freedom, a challenge, an economic and cultural power, and the other.[7]

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[7] See the Annex III for the statements of the interlocutors regarding these definitions.

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