

# Discourse of a Civics Textbook in Nation Schools: A Step Towards the Establishment of the Turkish Nation

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*This article examines the perception of citizenship conveyed through the textbook Civics for Nation Schools and the Public, a key resource used in the Nation Schools which opened in Turkey in 1928. A mixed methods approach is used to examine the content of the text, and the meanings embedded in the language used. It is argued that this text supported the creation of Turkish national identity in the Nation Schools through notions of enmity, exclusion and threats. The study provides an historical background from which to understand issues related to the role of textbooks in citizenship education, still on the agenda in Turkey today.<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction

Turkey aims to become a full member of European Union. In the process, Turkey must meet conditions defined by the Maastricht Criteria, Copenhagen Criteria and Nice Criteria which provide the basis for the realisation of humane living conditions, security of democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental rights and freedoms. Thus, raising youth respectful of human rights and who will adopt European identity, a supranational consciousness based on a multicultural existence, is an objective Turkey has to fulfil (Topsakal & Hesapçioğlu, 2001). Being obligatory reading material and able to transmit national and universal values and attitudes, textbooks have power to meet this objective (van Dijk, 1989: 18-59). However, studies indicate that textbooks in Turkey present a biased and limited point of view on which to bring up young people respectful of human rights and differences (e.g. Çotuksöken, Erzan & Silier, 2003).

Acknowledging that the curriculum and textbooks were inappropriate if Turkey were to be suitably prepared for membership of the EU and for the new information age, The Ministry of National Education (MEB) was able to rationalise a comprehensive school curriculum and textbook reform in 2005 (MEB, 2004). However, according to Çayır (2009a, 2009b), despite the appearance of a number of progressive claims in the policy statements framing the curriculum reform, the old official knowledge and content have been retained and presented in a new form. The new textbooks are still imbued with exclusive and essentialist nationalist precepts, a difference-blind concept of nationhood and a duty-based notion of citizenship. Ethnic, gender or language-related differences still receive no mention in the new textbooks. This is the outcome of a long-prevailing perception of citizenship education in Turkey.

During the Ottoman Empire period, Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism identities were intertwined with one another. When the Turkish state was established in 1922, the newly founded parliament abolished the Sultanate (1922) and the Caliphate (1924), thus breaking cultural and historical ties with Islamism and Ottomanism. Turkish ethnic identity and Turkish nationalism were nurtured (Karpas, 2004a). Turkishness, militarist nationalism, modernity, and secularism have therefore been emphasised since the early years of the Republic. Education, especially school textbooks, was an indispensable source of political socialisation and indoctrination. Locating the origin of the Turkish Republic in the early

Turkish states of Central Asia rather than Islam, Russia's hostility and the sultans' betrayals began to take a central place in textbooks, while ethnic or religious differences were sometimes denied or defined as threats (Alkan, 2004).

Also important were the Nation Schools introduced for adults in the early years of the Republic. Developing citizenship was one of the objectives of these schools. Civics courses which aimed "to ensure that the student achieves the necessary minimum knowledge about the country and the rights and duties of citizens" (Maarif Vekâleti, 1929: 18), were fundamental to this objective. A text, *Civics for Nation Schools and the Public - Millet Mekteplerine ve Halka Mahsus Yurt Bilgisi* (Hilmi, 1931) was prepared to be used in this course. This book bears great importance in terms of presenting the type of citizenship aimed at through public education in the Early Republican state.

The purpose of this article is to identify the perception of citizenship taught through this textbook in the Nation Schools. It aims to provide an historical background from which to understand problems related to citizenship education today. In order to fulfil this objective, results achieved through content analysis and discourse analysis of the book *Civics for Nation Schools and the Public* used in the Civics courses in Nation Schools are evaluated. The article also aims to address a lacuna in the literature, as no such studies have yet been carried out on popular education texts in Turkey.

### **The context for the study**

In a comprehensive study of civic education edited by Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo (1999), it was demonstrated that textbooks often convey narrowly essentialist notions of nationalism. In the case of Greece for instance, Makrinioti and Solomon (1999) showed that representations of the Greek nation that appear in the textbooks emphasise its uniform and homogeneous character through time, neglecting to mention internal differentiations, such as the existence of minorities. Similarly in the case of Czech state textbooks, items related to education for tolerance, anti-racism and co-existence with minorities are not mentioned (Válková & Kalous, 1999). Studies focusing on the role of school textbooks in creating a social and national identity within different historical contexts in Turkey similarly identify a narrow definition of nationalism and citizenship (e.g. Alkan, 2004; İnal, 2004; Parlak, 2005; Copeaux, 2006).

Recent extensive research from the History Foundation of Turkey highlights a continuing essentialist view that glorifies absolute state authority and dying for the motherland. Texts are also seen to be based heavily upon the transfer of information (Gök, 2004). Concepts such as human rights, secularism, and democracy are narrowly conceived, distorting meanings that are passed on to students. For instance democracy is reduced to multipartite elections while developing consciousness of participation is neglected. The existence of different voices and ideas is presented as negative, and getting to know different cultures is presented as a problematic kind of relationship (Çayır, 2004: 101). These studies focus on school textbooks, however, but popular education played an important role in civic education in the early years of the Republic of Turkey.

In 1928, Turkey abolished the Arabic alphabet which had been used for hundreds of years by the Ottoman and embraced the Latin alphabet (Resmi Gazete, 1928). In the same year, Nation Schools were opened in many corners of the country in order to introduce the Latin alphabet to people aged between 16 and 45. Although the information on the population of the early republican era in Turkey is imprecise, the number of people aged between 16 and 45 in

1928 is estimated to be six million (Sakaoğlu, 2003: 192), about half of the population. It was obligatory for all citizens aged between 16 and 45, male or female, to attend to these schools (Maarif Vekâleti, 1929: article 7–8). What is meant by ‘obligatory’ indicated in the letter of instruction becomes clear when newspapers of the era are overviewed. According to the most important of these, an inquiry was held against people who did not attend the Nation Schools for not complying with the orders of the government and names of the nonattendants were given to police stations. Officers of districts and boards of aldermen were responsible for identifying these people and reporting them to the police (Cumhuriyet, 18 February 1929; Cumhuriyet, 2 April 1929). As a consequence, the literacy rate rose from an estimated 10% before the Alphabet Reform to 25% in 1936.<sup>2</sup>

Nation Schools were made up of A and B classes. Illiterate people were accepted into A classes and were taught to read and write. People who successfully completed their courses in A classes were accepted into B classes where they took two hours of reading and writing courses, calculation courses and one hour of health and civics courses a week (Maarif Vekâleti, 1929: 12). Courses were done largely in the evenings. People finishing these four-month schools were awarded the text of Constitutional Charter (Akyüz, 2006). As is understood from the courses in the curriculum and the award of Constitutional Charter, teaching reading and writing was not the only objective of the Nation Schools. Nation Schools undertook a great role in ensuring the perception of citizenship in the early years of the Republic through educating the masses in a short period of time.

In assessing the role of the text *Civics for Nation Schools and the Public* in education for citizenship at this time, the following questions served as the basis of the analysis conducted: What type of consciousness was given through the book in the Nation Schools of Turkey? On which concepts was the identity of citizenship built and what are the features and characteristics that are attributed to Turks? What kind of relationship is there between the government and the citizen in terms of rights and duties? How are different governments, ethnic and religious groups defined in making distinctions such as *us* and the *others*?

### **Method**

In this study, the textbook *Civics for Nation Schools and the Public* (Hilmi, 1931) was evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. First, in a content analysis, the ways concepts were used to convey perceptions of citizenship were identified systematically and quantitatively. Similar data were brought together in terms of specific themes and concepts and evaluations made (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003: 162). While making this analysis, words were used as record units and sentences were the context units, used to determine attitudes and opinions towards a particular government or a group. The direction of bias was classified as positive or negative according to the value set on the concept in the sentence. While digitising the data, each word was taken as a unit and given one point. Thus, the frequency of usage of each word or theme was displayed. If a word was used more than once in a sentence, it was regarded as being used once.

Words and themes were defined after the book had been read several times by the researcher. The researcher also benefitted from similar studies carried out in Turkey to define words and themes (e.g. Çotuksöken, Erzan, & Silier, 2003; Parlak, 2005). It was also considered advantageous to link words or themes expressed by more than one word or expression in order to increase the reliability of the analysis (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001). Expressions such as equity and equality were coded as *equality*; words such as election, elect and to be elected were coded as *to elect-to be elected*. The expression *surpassing* was created by gathering

discourse that suggested some values or features that could be attributed to Turkish people only. *Glorifying death* was associated with conditions where death was presented in a positive way through concepts such as self sacrifice for the favour of the country, martyrdom and man of honour. *Nation>Individual* indicated expressions which suggested the nation comes before the individual, and that the individual should consider nation over self.

Data achieved through content analysis may not always be very explanatory. Thus, discourse analysis, to identify the dominant ideology and implied meanings expressed through the book was performed to support the quantitative data. Through discourse analysis the discourse modality dominant in the text in terms of mode indicators in the book, the lexicalisation strategies, semantic structures of the sentences and metaphors were examined.

### **Findings and comments**

Research questions served as the basis for the analysis. Findings and comments achieved through content analysis and discourse analysis were gathered under three headings: Concepts that form citizen identity and features attributed to Turks; the relationship between government and citizen; the distinction between *us* and *others*.

### **Citizen Identity and Attributes of Turks**

Concepts on which the perception of citizenship is built, and the level of importance given to these concepts, indicate that citizenship is linked with Turkish national identity. The Turks and Turkish nation are the most repeated expressions in the book (185). General/universal representations of the Turkish citizen appear less often than concepts of the Turkish nation which highlights ethnic identity (21). In this text where national identity is understood to be based on being a Turk, it is also important how being a Turk is defined. 'Race' is used when defining the Turk (6), and being a Turk is defined as the basis for race and root. What is not written in the text is also important (Huckin, 1997: 82). For example, different ethnic groups living in Anatolia such as Kurdish, Circassian and Laz people do not get a mention. Ethnic differences are disregarded, reflecting a similar fiction of an ethnically defined nation to that which had been radically presented in school textbooks for a long time.<sup>3</sup>

Studies conducted in Turkey today show that an ethnically defined characterisation of the Turkish nation is giving way to one based on socio-cultural factors in textbooks. However, the same studies suggest that passages and metaphors in these texts display a strong representation of ethno-cultural attitude (e.g. Ertürk, 2006; Bora, 2004). Moreover, there is research showing that patriotism and national values in textbooks of Civil and Human Rights Education courses present a non-universal approach through an ethnically defined concept of being a Turk (e.g. Gök, 2004).

Features attributed to Turks in *Civics for Nation Schools and the Public* demonstrate how citizens are expected to be. It is frequently highlighted that Turks love their fatherland (19), nation (9) and flag (2) as well as notifying their being heroes (10) and innate soldiers (10). Being a soldier is reflected as a requirement for being a good citizen and person. Moreover, among the duties of citizens there is a separate section in the book reserved for army service. Adjectives such as obedient, brave, altruistic, respectful, hard working, patient, manful, warm hearted, strong and honourable are used to define Turks. These are seen as very positive characteristics. It is also noteworthy that the words brave and obedient are used together in the text. Being obedient to laws, and soldiers obeying orders, are especially highlighted.

Table 1: Citizen Identity and Attributes of Turks

<b><i>Concepts used for the formation of citizen identity and attributes of Turks</i></b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Turks, Turkish nation	185
Turkish citizen	21
Turkish race, root	6
Loves his homeland/fatherland	19
Hero	10
Innate soldier, likes war	10
Loves/admires his nation	9
Obedient	9
Courageous/brave	7
Altruistic	6
Courteous/respectful	6
Hard working	6
Patient, permanent, dauntless, tolerant	5
Righteous, manful	5
Warm hearted/humane	3
Strong/powerful	2
Civilized	2
Loves his flag	2
Honourable	2
Came from Central Asia	3
Reigned over vast lands	4
Establishers of governments all along	22
Surpassing	6
Homeland	62
Motherland	28
Fatherland	17
Turkey	47
Country	8
Flag	21
National Festivals	19
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk	27
Glorification of death	9
Nation>Individual	3

Furthermore, in several places it is stated that Turks “came from Central Asia”, “reigned over vast lands and established many governments” (Hilmi, 1931: 13, 17). In this way, the Turkish nation, which demonstrates many positive features, is separated from the negatively characterised Ottoman government, its historical background being taken back to an older era, to Central Asia. Former Turkish governments are frequently mentioned (22) and the way they established and maintained governments are foregrounded. In addition, the superiority of the current Turkish government is emphasised in expressions such as: “Among them, the new Turkish Republic founded by Mustafa Kemal is the most honourable of all”; “is more fundamental” (Hilmi, 1931: 21). Thus, the previous history of the Turkish government is emphasised and the superiority of the Turkish Republic is established.

It is mentioned openly six times that some features could be attributed to Turkish people only and that Turkish people are superior beings on particular matters. Expressions of questionable scientific and factual account appear, such as: “Turkish nation is capable of showing its strength ten times more than other nations” and “Turkish flag is more favourable and superior than flags of other nations” (Hilmi, 1931: 5, 9, 10, 15). According to Parlak, (2005: 250), such expressions might have been intended to rebuild the confidence of people who had witnessed the many ways their country had fallen behind since the late Ottoman Empire era, and who were now living under the pressure and demands of ‘civilised’ and developed European countries.

The nature of the relationship between the individual and the citizen in the book is conveyed through the way the Turkish nation names the land it inhabits. Mostly the concept of homeland (62) is used, with fewer instances of motherland (28), fatherland (17) and Turkey (14). However the concept ‘country’ is never applied to Turkey; although it is used eight times in the text as a general concept. In discourse analysis, the process by which a word expresses a concept, namely lexicalisation, is significant because of the impression it makes on the reader. According to van Dijk (1995: 25), “lexicalization is a major and well-known domain of ideological expression and persuasion”. There are usually several words that language users can choose from to refer to people, objects or issues within particular discourse genres or contexts. Many of these contexts are ideologically based. Van Dijk’s (1995) insights are conceptually useful when examining meanings conveyed through the selection and repetition of words used in *Civics for Nation Schools and the Public*. The words ‘homeland’, ‘fatherland’, ‘motherland’ are more valuable words when compared to ‘country’. ‘Homeland’ suggests a more transcendental and sacred place to which there is an ethnical and historical dimension, where people build up emotional ties and where their forebears lived from past to present (Üstel, 2004: 159), whereas ‘country’, due to its being used as a geographical term for lands on which other people on earth live, is a more technical and general concept. The concept of country may indicate a voluntary identity that is not based on ethnical origin (Ertürk, 2006: 136). Using the word ‘homeland’ therefore emphasises participation within an ethnically defined nation.

Leaders, symbols and festivals have great importance in citizenship education. Leaders and symbols are sanctified through festivals and rituals. Thus, it is ensured that citizens will build emotional ties with their countries through national festivals. School textbooks are notable in the way they contribute to this process with the adjectives and epic expressions they use for leaders and symbols (Meşeci, 2007). Similarly, *Civics for Nation Schools and the Public* conveys Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the leader of the salvation of Turkish people. He is mentioned frequently in the book (27 times) as the leader who “brought independence, liberty and civilization to Turkish people”, who “saved the reputation of Turkish armed forces”, who

“eliminated the enemies from Anatolia”, who “demolished the regime of regality” and who “opened new horizons for Turkish people” (Hilmi, 1931: 44, 46). Moreover, his importance in terms of citizenship is emphasised through a full page portrait and other photographs in the book. The most important symbol of citizenship identity is the national flag. Expressions such as “Each Turk feels a light in his eyes and a warmth in his body when he looks at his flag” and “his heart beats fast, tears fill his eyes and his whole body trembles when he sees the flag of the crescent and star” (Hilmi, 1931: 6), are used in order to build emotional ties with the Turkish flag. Epic expressions like, “Turkish flag is unfurled within the colour of pink and hauled down and kept within the redness of the evening’s burning sun” (Hilmi, 1931: 6) were used for the construction of the flag’s holiness.

Nation>Individual phrase shown in Table 1 relates to expressions which convey the view that the interest of the nation is more important than the interest of the individual. Such expressions are used in three different places in the book. “Putting the interest of the nation before our interests and making sacrifices for the benefit of it” (Hilmi, 1931: 87) is defined as love of nation. The power of this sentiment is such that individuals will sacrifice their lives willingly for their nation. Glorification of death in terms of the self-sacrifice of the individual for the collective is emphasised in the book. In this discourse of citizenship, self-sacrifice and being ‘honourable’ are regarded as synonymous, glorified and imposed as civil duties as in the expressions such as, “Sacrificing our lives for our flag is the greatest honour”; “Turkish people regard sacrificing their lives in battlefields a great honour”; Turkish soldiers “if need be, do not refrain from self-sacrifice”; each Turk “regards sacrificing their lives for the nation a great honour” (Hilmi, 1931: 6, 13, 87). Through imposing terms that contain descriptive meanings, the obligation to accept them is stated (Alatl, 2001: 104). It can be said that the discourse here is designed to display a citizen’s obligation to accept sacrificing his life through the conception of ‘self-sacrifice as an honour’

### **Relationships between government and citizen**

Table 2: Relationships between government and citizen

<b><i>Government, rights and duties</i></b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Turkish state/government	75
State/government as a concept	44
Duties, debts of citizens to government	40
Rights of citizens	18
‘Rights’ as a concept	12
Duty as a concept	11
Freedom/being free	52
Justice	9
Equality	6

The relationship built between citizen and government in terms of rights and duties make up an important part of citizenship education. Expressions such as Turkish state/government are frequently used in the book (75). State and government are separately defined within the text, but at times they are represented as one. This is probably a reflection of the single-

party period from 1923 until 1946, when Turkey was ruled by the single Republican People's Party. In the book, the needs of the government are stated as prior to the rights and duties of citizens. In this way, the existence of the state is legitimised for the nation "to protect its own existence and language", to "maintain the order and system", "secure lives and assets" and not to "be interfused with other nations" (Hilmi, 1931: 15). It is highlighted that the government has to be powerful to conduct these duties it has undertaken. To rationalise the existence of the state and to legitimise its power, the following hypothesis is presented, using bold type to emphasise the importance of the state/power relationship.

**Power** is needed to reign over a nation and not to let the enemy enter the **state**. Indeed it is! If there is not a source of power to enforce obedience and obedience to the orders among the inhabitants of a community, how can a government arise from that community! (Hilmi, 1931: 16, original emphasis).

Embedded in the family metaphor, government, as head of a nation of families, is compared to the head of a family. The necessity for government is legitimised in the text.

As how the head of a family provides the lives, income and control of its members, a nation made up of many families needs a government to maintain order and system, secure lives and assets of people and not to give opportunity to chaos (Hilmi, 1931: 15).

Metaphor, especially the family metaphor plays an important role in the formation of citizenship morality because moral thinking is imaginative and it depends fundamentally on metaphorical understanding. In political terms, defining the government with the parent metaphor and defining citizens as children that are under the parent's authority and protection is very common. In this way, conservative family moral values are turned into conservative political moral values and conservative policies arise (Lakoff, 1995; Hayden, 2003).

In terms of rights and duties, the quantitative data demonstrates that the rights of citizens (18) are mentioned fewer times than their duties to the government (40). Voting, freedom, equality, domiciliary inviolability, and liberty of conscience are defined as corner stones of citizen rights. Voting, love of the homeland, military service and tax paying are regarded as important citizen duties. As it can be seen here, voting is both a right and a duty. When discussing duties, the 'protective father' image of government is replaced metaphorically by that of a machine that is freed from emotions. It is highlighted that "taxes are needed for the machine to run" (Hilmi, 1931: 75). It is also notified that "assets and properties of citizens who do not pay their tax debts will be auctioned and citizens who do not own assets will be put in prison" (Hilmi, 1931: 76). With the expression "Therefore citizens should differentiate it from eating and drinking and pay their taxes" (Hilmi, 1931: 76), the appropriate behaviour for citizens is implied. The other important citizen duty is military service. For those who quit the ranks "punishment will be smart". It is regarded as "high treason" and the assumption is that "no one has the courage" to do such a thing (Hilmi, 1931: 79). With these expressions it is stated that 'citizens' who do not serve in the army would be 'non-citizens', or *other*.

Suggestions that "a good Turk continues to love his homeland even if he is living in the most severe climate, the most desolated village in his motherland" and that "he gladly sacrifices his life for the benefit and integrity of his homeland" (Hilmi, 1931: 87) are reflective of many that propose the kind of citizens Turkish people should be. Thus, features attributed to Turkish people are imposed as duties on citizens and the ones who do not fulfil their duties or the ones who complain about them are, according to the style of the sentence, regarded as the *other*, an outcast from the expectation of a good Turk.



Concerning the modality of the discourse in the textbook, the kind of relationship built between the government (the writer) and the citizen (the reader) can be traced in a clearer way. As Huckin (1997: 84) notes, discourse modality of a text is developed through certainty and competence (mode) levels that are delivered by specific words. The user of a language may also use mode indicators for avoiding criticism (Oktar & Değer, 2002: 74). It is observed that indicative mood, expressions emphasising certainty, clarity and an authoritarian, didactic attitude are frequently used in the overviewed text: 'is required', 'is indebted', 'is bound to' are among the most frequently used expressions. Thus, a discourse style that avoids criticism and that regards itself the authority in terms of accuracy and certainty of hypothesis is developed. The concept of democracy is never mentioned in the book, but the concept of freedom, closely related to democracy, appears quite frequently (52). Concepts of electing-being elected that point out the will power of citizens are also emphasised (35). Justice (9) and equality (6) are mentioned, but other important democratic values, such as clemency and participation do not occur.

### ***Us and the others***

Table 3: Us and the others

<b><i>The Distinction of Us and the Others</i></b>	<b><i>Negative f</i></b>	<b><i>Positive f</i></b>	<b><i>Neutral f</i></b>
Ottoman	3	3	1
Sultan caliphate regality	18		
Ittihadists	10	1	
Fanatic adherents	1		
Greeks (Rum)	2		
Minorities, subjects	2		
Christians/Jews	1		
Armenians	1		1
Albanians	1		
Greece/Greeks	21		2
France	12		
England	10		
Tsarist Russia, Russia	10		
Balkan States	5		
Germany	5		1
Italy	5		
USA	4		
Bulgaria/Bulgarians	3		2
The Allies	3		
China	2		
Austria	2		1
European countries	2		1
Foreign countries	2		4
Belgium	1		
Romania	1		
Serbia	1		
Arabs	1		1

Feeling identity is before all else a capability of identifying one's self as original and different from other people and to distinguish between what is similar or *the other* to that self (Woodward, 2000: 6-7). The way different states, ethnic and religious groups are defined may be useful for us to understand the discrimination of *us* and the *others* in the process of the development of citizen identity. In the book, while developing the Turkish citizen identity, first the features of Turks are highlighted and later *others* are determined. First, the Ottoman government is othered so as to separate the Turkish nation from the Ottoman. This othering is not against the Ottoman state, its institutions or the society, but against the sultans. Negative experiences during the Ottoman era are presented as being the fault or failure of Ottoman sultans rather than the government or institutions. Parallel to this, Ottoman armed forces are notified as Turkish armed forces in terms of victories gained in battles, and evaluated within the context of *us*. Thus accomplishments in the Ottoman era are attributed to the Turkish nation and failures to the Ottoman dynasty and sultans. Sultans are remembered as being lawless, unjust, despotic, lavish, traitors, stateless and pestilent—who wronged, harmed and tortured the public and governed the state arbitrarily, who stripped people of their possessions and intimidated them. An internationally recognised Turkish historian, Kemal Karpat (2004b), indicates that in the early years of the Republic, the negative perspective against Ottoman was not limited to textbooks. Until recently, historians were free to use the word 'Ottoman', but if positive references to Ottoman were being made, the adjective 'Turkish' had to be used. This was because progressive secular radicals perceived Ottoman to be conservative because of the relationship with Islam. People belonging to different religious or ethnic groups are also regarded as the *other*. Some expressions are capable of inciting prejudice in the reader's mind. The following quotations from the text include examples of disclaimers (Van Dijk, 1995) in which semantic constructions of oppositional underlying attitudes about Turks and *others* are presented.

frenzies of Christians and Jews who have been living among us for centuries have disillusioned the Turks and each Turk has realised no one else but only Turks may be of help to him and that no one helps when you fall;

Turks are disillusioned after being stricken by terrible experiences because these rebellious people were reckoned as the Ottoman up to that time;

When one said Ottoman it included Arabs, Albanians, Greeks, Armenians and Jews. However, they were always fostering their nationalities. Turks have come to their senses at last (Hilmi, 1931: 34, 29).

Turks are shown in a positive way as tolerant people and *others* are shown in a negative way as the abusers of this tolerance. Nothing positive is attributed to people of different religions and ethnic backgrounds; they are considered as internal enemies, domestic threat factors—as *other* to the Turk.

External enemies are mostly the European countries. There are no positive comments about European countries, and most are negative. Greece, Russia, France and England are featured as enemies in terms of the Turkish Independence War and the Balkan War. While it is understandable that there would be concerns to keep the people of a nation that had recently emerged from war alert and aware of the nation's enemies, this apprehension has come to stay. Research indicates that keeping the reader alert to the fear of an enemy persists in today's textbooks. Yet, some enemy states are now defined through objective expressions, and reasons for the threat are linked to geopolitical position and land riches (Bora, 2004). Moreover, without giving names, an assertion that some countries supported terrorist organisations

in Turkey is put forward, resulting in feelings of enmity towards other nations (Gök, 2004).

Thus, the Ottoman dynasty, minorities, European countries, ones that do not belong to the description of a good Turk (Turkish people who do not sacrifice their lives, pay taxes on time, love their country or evade military service) are regarded as the *other*. There are no negative expressions about *us* or *us Turks*. As van Dijk (1993: 105) states, emphasising *our* positive features and negative features of the *others* is the most common strategy in terms of discourses about minorities, other races and enemies. In this book, every positive thing about *us* is attributed to Turks whereas negative value judgements are attributed to the *other*.

The book presents an essentialist philosophical approach to understanding Turkish identity which remains resilient up to the present day. According to Çotuksöken (2003: 127) essentialism is the belief that there are features that are acquired naturally by birth, that are never affected by external factors and never change. Such an approach would either ignore change that may occur through the participation and interaction of citizens, or deem it a corruption, a loss of self and essence. A normative perspective dominates. Thus “Turkish homeland is always merry”; “Turkish people are very courageous and obedient”; “every Turk loves his homeland as he loves his parents”; a “republican government is the most favourable regime” (Hilmi, 1931: 86, 89, 87, 46). Information, comments, opinions and desires are all intermingled. Complimenting, or instilling a particular perception rather than giving information is privileged. In Turkey, 190 up-to-date textbooks have been scanned in 13 different studies. These studies have demonstrated an essentialist approach is adopted in all textbooks of today’s Turkish educational system (Çotuksöken, Erzan, & Silier, 2003). This approach has been developed on foundations laid in the early Republican era. This article suggests that increasing awareness of the foundations of problems relating to citizenship education in today’s textbooks may accelerate the process of coming up with a solution.

### **Conclusion**

This study, which aims at analysing the perception of citizenship developed in Nation Schools, shows that the problematic notion of citizenship which is dominant in school textbooks today had its beginnings in the early Republican era. Nation Schools aimed at developing an understanding of citizenship that linked ethnic origin and national identity. In the book, ethnic differences are ignored whilst people of different religious and ethnic groups are regarded as threats. Thus, one can say that national identity is created in part through enmity, exclusion and threats. There is a hierarchical relationship built between the nation, government and the individual. The government’s position is strong in determining rights and duties. Nation comes before the individual; the individual dissolves within the nation. Interests of the nation are regarded as more fundamental than the interests of an individual.

Today, opinions and expressions in textbooks for Civics and Human Rights Education that are contrary to the principles stated in international human rights records are still in evidence. Thus, the problem of textbooks in terms of citizenship education remains on the agenda in Turkey. One positive development is that people are beginning talk about and study this problem. The problems Turkey faces cannot be solved by ignoring the disunity between human rights attitudes and criteria and the nationalistic point of view. They require informed thinking over the problematic issues. Adoption of an inclusive notion of citizenship may be the first step in reaching a solution.

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## Notes

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2. According to 1928-1933 National Schools Activity Statistics (Millet Mektepleri Faaliyeti İstatistiği 1928-1933, 1934: 44-45) in 1928, 597010 people received certificates from 20489 courses. In 1929 the number of courses was 12887 and the number of people who received certificates was 262433. In the following year these numbers dropped rapidly. In the 1950s there were 1424 people in 27 courses. After 1960 the number of courses began to increase; with 81450 people studying in 1378 courses. Between 1928 and 1980, 2560436 people received certificates from 165807 courses. National Schools were called Evening Schools in 1942 and Public Schoolrooms in 1950 (Binbaşıoğlu, 2005: 288).
3. For information about how the fiction of ethnically defined nation was handled in textbooks between 1928 and 1950 in Turkey, see Parlak (2005). For information about how the fiction of ethnically defined nation was created, see Ersanlı Behar (1992). For a more extensive historical analysis, see Üstel (2004).