

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2015.019.044](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2015.019.044)

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SYMBOLS IN THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY: EVALUATION ON TURKEY IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD

Abstract:

This study is on the formation of the Turkish national identity throughout the historical process defined as the Early Republican Period and function of the symbols in this formation process. In this study Early Republican Period is used to define the time slice between the years 1923 and 1938 in Turkey. Distinguishing feature of the period in question is redefinition of the state and society. In this redefinition process, symbols such as religion, Ottoman, sultan, flag, Islamic ummah, cult, madrasah, Quran, sharia, rayah, imamah, which are the elements of the symbol repertoire of the Ottoman society and constitute a meaningful whole, are replaced with Republic, nation, civilization, homeland, flag, Turk, hat, citizen, school. In line with the nationalization, civilizing and secularization principles, Republican discourse tried to reform both the symbols, which are the content of the cultural behavior, and the context, in which these symbols are formed and given meaning. In Turkish literature, opposition of the Kemalist nation formation process to the Islam and its symbols is frequently stated. In this study, it will be argued that Islam has played a key role in the formation of the Turkish national identity contrary to the general opinion and that flag and national anthem of the nation state are nourished by the Islamic references.

Keywords:

Symbols, National Identity, Turkey