

NATION-BUILDING AMONG FIVE RINGS: NATIONALISM AND OLYMPICS  
IN EARLY REPUBLICAN TURKEY

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **NATION-BUILDING AMONG FIVE RINGS: NATIONALISM AND OLYMPICS IN EARLY REPUBLICAN TURKEY**

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The main objective of this research is to explore the role of international sports during the nation-building process of the early years of Republican Turkey. Sports, due to their competitive and emotive characteristics, provide suitable platforms for the revealing of nationalist sentiments. While sport is a modern construct, it is possible to trace references to pre-modern leisure activities in terms of the creation of narratives around sports. International sports events establish spaces of encounter for different identities and therefore, they are important subjects of analysis in terms of the imagination and reimagination of national identities. In other words, it is possible to trace the dialogical formation of national identity within the context of international sports events, as they help creating such sporting narratives. Republican Turkey made extensive use of international sports contacts in its early years, which served to create nationalist aspirations around them. This study examines the relationship between the formation of the Turkish national identity and the international sporting contacts within the context of the Olympic Games. By looking at the first Olympic Games that Turkey took part in during the years from 1923 to 1950, this research aims to uncover how they were integrated into the nation-building process, through the lenses of nationalism theories.

**Keywords:** Sport history, Sociology of sport, Olympic Games, National identity, Early Republican Turkey

## ÖZ

### BEŞ HALKA ARASINDA ULUS-İNŞASI: ERKEN CUMHURİYET TÜRKİYESİ'NDE MİLLİYETÇİLİK VE OLİMPİYATLAR

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı erken cumhuriyet Türkiye'sindeki ulus inşası sürecinde uluslararası sporun rolünü incelemektir. Spor karşılaşmaları, rekabetçi ve duygulanımlara açık karakterleri dolayısıyla milliyetçi hislerin açığa çıkması için uygun platformlar teşkil ederler. Spor modern bir inşa olmakla birlikte, etrafında oluşan anlatı içerisinde modern-öncesi boş zaman aktivitelerine referanslar bulmak da mümkündür. Uluslararası spor organizasyonları farklı kimliklerin karşılaştığı mekânlar oluşturur ve bu, onları ulusal kimliklerin tahayyülü ve yeniden tahayyülünü incelemek için önemli araştırma konuları haline getirir. Bir diğer deyişle, bu gibi sportif anlatıların oluşumuna yardımcı oldukları için uluslararası spor organizasyonları bağlamında ulusal kimliklerin diyalojik oluşumunu takip etmek mümkündür. Cumhuriyet Türkiye'si, etraflarında oluşan milliyetçi duygulardan ötürü erken dönemde uluslararası spor organizasyonlarını yoğunlukla araçsallaştırmıştır. Bu çalışma Türkiye'de ulusal kimliğin kuruluşuyla uluslararası spor temasları arasındaki ilişkiyi Olimpiyat Oyunları bağlamında incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada 1923'ten 1950'ye Türkiye'nin ilk katıldığı Olimpiyat Oyunları'na bakılarak, milliyetçilik teorilerinin bakış açısıyla bunların ulus-inşasına nasıl entegre edildiğinin ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır.



**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Spor tarihi, Spor sosyolojisi, Olimpiyat Oyunları, Ulusal kimlik, Erken Cumhuriyet Türkiye

*To the memory of Shavarsh Krissian*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- BSK: Beogradski Sport Klub  
CUP: Committee of Union and Progress  
DGPE: Directorate General of Physical Education  
FIFA: Fédération Internationale de Football Association  
GAA: Gaelic Athletics Association  
IOC: International Olympic Committee  
IRA: Irish Republican Army  
NOC: National Olympic Committee  
RPP: Republican People's Party  
SRFU: Scottish Rugby Football Union  
TOC: Turkish Olympic Committee  
TSI: Turkish Sports Institution  
UTSC: Union of Turkish Sports Clubs  
YMCA: Young Male Christians Association

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study explores the part played by sports in the building of Turkish national identity during the early Republican period in Turkey (1923–1950). Building on the previous literature regarding the policies of the governments of the early Republican era on domestic sporting activities and physical education, I explore how international sporting events as a demonstrative platform was used for constructing Turkish national identity during the same period. In other words, the main inquiry is about the ways through which Turkey used international sporting events as a means of constructing a novel national identity by consolidating its domestic population and presenting a novel Self in the international sphere, as a new.

A very common understanding of the emergence of nationalism always refers to the construction of a common identity in the absence of face-to-face contact among members of a group through ‘imagination’. Anderson defines the concept of ‘nation’ as an imagined community, insofar as the concept denotes an imaginary ‘communion’ in the minds of its members.<sup>1</sup> Such an abstract bond relating to national identity among group members is constructed and maintained through different cultural elements. Within this framework, sport, in general, plays an important role in the process of national identity construction. As Bairner argues, it has the capacity of enabling national solidarity through representation, i.e., through national teams or athletes competing at the international arena.<sup>2</sup>

The relationship between sports and national identity formation is an understudied area in Turkey, which has many multifaceted elements including a

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, Benedict (1983), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Bairner, Alan (2001), *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, p. 164.



number of cultural aspects of life, from music,<sup>3</sup> to radio,<sup>4</sup> to education,<sup>5</sup> and to architecture.<sup>6</sup>

The main pursuit of this study is to inquire ways in which Turkish national identity was constructed through sports during the years between 1923 and 1950 in Turkey by relying on institutional documents and media texts of the period. Differing from the works of Akin<sup>7</sup> and Krawietz,<sup>8</sup> which focus on the role of sports policy, traditional sports and physical education in the early Republican period, the distinctiveness of this study stems from its focus on sports in the international arena during the same period. Mega-events such as World Fairs and Olympic Games can be counted among the most clearly visible international sites for enabling national aspirations, through the symbolic and political significance that come along with them during the competitions and the opening -where the Parade of Nations take place- and medals ceremonies.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, Olympic Games constitute an important venue for

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<sup>3</sup> Değirmenci, Koray (2006), On the Pursuit of a Nation: The Construction of Folk and Folk Music in the Founding Decades of the Turkish Republic, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol: 37, No: 1, pp. 47 – 65.

<sup>4</sup> Ahıska, Meltem (2010), *Occidentalism in Turkey: Questions of Modernity and National Identity in Turkish Radio Broadcasting*, London: I. B. Tauris.

<sup>5</sup> Alkan, Mehmet Ö., (2000), Modernization from Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism, in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.) *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 47 – 132.

<sup>6</sup> Bozdoğan, Sibel (2001), *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

<sup>7</sup> Akin, Yiğit (2004), “Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar” *Erken Cumhuriyet’te Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, İstanbul: İletişim.

<sup>8</sup> Krawietz, Birgit (2014), Sport and Nationalism in the Republic of Turkey, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 31, No: 3, pp 336 – 346.

<sup>9</sup> Roche, Maurice (2000), *Mega-Events and Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 3.

encounters between different nations, who instrumentalise them as ‘cultural markers’.<sup>10</sup>

When using the Olympic Games as a way of addressing the domestic population, the symbolic power of mega sporting events was utilized to manifest Turkish national identity at the international stages. This symbolic power, feeding nation-states, comes in two shapes. One of them is the merit of recognition through participation and the other is the display of power through hosting mega sporting events or achieving sporting victories in these events.<sup>11</sup> To better comprehend the nationalist atmosphere encircling Turkey’s participation in the Olympic Games, this study will focus on the first Winter and Summer Olympic Games that young Republican Turkey took part in, the games between 1924 and 1948. Therefore, the main interest of this study is to demonstrate the nationalist case of Turkey during these years, as put forward through the Olympic Games.

The emergence of international mega-events, such as the Olympic Games and the World’s Fairs, overlaps with that of modernity and the ‘nation-state consciousness’.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, the participation of the Republican Turkey in the Olympic Games is analysed through the lens of nationalism theories. The Olympic Games, due to their European-centred -since the modern Games were founded upon their Greek heritage and by a French pioneer, Baron Pierre de Coubertin- and international characteristic, became lieus of national assertion particularly with the rise of nation-states following the end of the First World War and the collapse of major European empires such as the Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire. Therefore, it is important to comprehend the emergence of Turkish nationalism with reference to the existing literature on nationalism and nation building literature.

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<sup>10</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Allison, Lincoln & Monnington, Terry (2003), *Sport, Prestige and International Relations, Government and Opposition*, Vol: 37, No: 1, pp. 106 – 134.

<sup>12</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 6.

Relevant literature includes confusions about and refrains from providing a comprehensive definition of nationalism. The conceptual framework of nationalism operates in a way that it covers a broad range of concepts from ethnic groups to nation states. One of the best phrases that briefly explain this confusion when it comes to defining what a nation is, would be the one provided by Walter Bagehot. In his words, “We know what it is when you do not ask us. But we cannot very quickly explain or define it”.<sup>13</sup> However, this lack of definition leads to difficulties in detecting the origins of nationalism in time with precision.<sup>14</sup> Hence, different explanations emerge from different approaches. These explanations tend to discuss the emergence of nations with reference to different time spans that coincides with this phenomenon. Most general assumptions propose that the nation is either universal or a very recent identification.<sup>15</sup> In this sense, to get a clearer overview of mainstream approaches, chunk of the literature on nationalism can be viewed revolving around a basic distinction between two forms of nationalism, which are classified based on the chronological ordering of the emergence of nations and nationalisms, namely, whether nationalism occurred before the emergence of nations or vice versa.

A prominent school of thought is composed of those who contend that nations are a phenomenon that emerged prior to nationalism. This view on the emergence of nationalism holds that the roots of a nation can be dated back to ancient ages and that the nation is rather a ‘perennial’ or ‘natural’ phenomenon as movements resembling modern nationalism can be traced in ancient times by referring to past ethnic kinship ties.<sup>16</sup> The primordialist approach on nationalism which holds that nations are a natural

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<sup>13</sup> Bagehot, Walter (1887), *Physics and Politics*, London as cited in Hobsbawm, Eric (1990), *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Greenfeld, Liah (1991), The Emergence of Nationalism in England and France, *Political Sociology*, Vol: 5, pp. 333 – 370.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, Anthony D. (1986), *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, pp. 12 – 13.

phenomenon and the ethno-symbolist theory which seeks the roots of nationalism in the ethnic origins of nations, can be counted among the theories which contend that ethnic ties have been bonding human groups together long before the emergence of nationalist movements.

The role of ethnicity in nation formation constitutes a central role in the primordialist theory on nationalism. The degree of this role differs in alternative approaches in the primordialist theory. For instance, naturalist understandings view ethnicity as a natural part of one's existence and as the denominator of the 'natural' boundaries of nations, whereas ethnosymbolist views merely argue that ethnicity is a phenomenon that dates back to ancient ages.<sup>17</sup> Such theories contend that the basis for the formation of a nation is rooted in the ethnic identities of human groups which is an ancient phenomenon. However, according to this view, although nations have existed long before nationalist movements, they were in a 'dormant' condition,<sup>18</sup> and needed the initiating power of nationalism. Therefore, the role assigned to nationalism by the primordialist theory is the one that initiates the formation of a national identity through the political expression of ethnicity. Another dominant theory on nationalism, on the other hand, examines nations in relation to modernity and views the emergence of nationalism as an outcome of modernization processes.

Modernist views on nationalism refer to the elements of modernization that establish and reveal bondage among the members of a national group. According to the modernist understanding, nationalism is a product of the changes that follow the developments during the modernization processes such as industrialization, centralization, urbanization and secularization.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, there is a 'distinctively modern' element in the discourse of nationalism.<sup>20</sup> Different scholars of the modernist

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<sup>17</sup> Armstrong, John Alexander (1982), *Nations Before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, Anthony D. (1995), *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Gellner, Ernest (1983), *Nations & Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> Calhoun, Craig (1993), Nationalism and Ethnicity, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol: 19, pp. 211 – 239.

school of nationalism underline different modernization processes which paved the way for the emergence of the conditions suitable for building national identities. The establishment of standardized education is an example in the sense that education as a modern institution is expanded to public level, creating a standardized culture, which is a result of industrialization, as nationalism is the form that establishes homogeneity in the industrial society.<sup>21</sup> In this sense, Gellner also demonstrates the specified conditions of the Industrial Revolution that necessitated the emergence of national consciousness. For Anderson, as a further example, the development of printing machine, as another outcome of industrialization, played a very important role in the building of national identity, due to the extended market for printed publications and expansion of the languages these very publications were printed in.<sup>22</sup> That is, from a thin-stratum of Latin readers to a wider range of vernaculars. These factors led to changes in the character of the Latin language, the Protestant Reformation by the printing and disseminating of Martin Luther's Bible, and the function of vernaculars as means of administrative centralization by the monarchs.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, modernist nationalism theories focus on the construction of group identity when modernity, especially with rapid urbanization, intensified secondary relations in societies. To this end, the ability of different technological, cultural and political products of modernity to facilitate the sense of belonging to a larger group was under the focus of nationalism scholars.

In the case of Turkish nationalism, an important constitutive factor was the confrontation with Europe in the regression period of the Ottoman Empire. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ottoman modernization efforts looked up to the West as a model. Military and civilian bureaucrats who set out to Europe for a way out of the crisis the Empire found itself in, brought back not only administrative reforms but also

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<sup>21</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*, pp. 27 – 28.

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 37 – 40.

a wide set of modernizing efforts.<sup>24</sup> Nationalist views took root in the minds of the Turkish modernists through these confrontations as well, which included the encounter of the leading members of the Turkish intelligentsia, who were sent to Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the nationalist movements in Europe, which led them to embrace nationalist views.<sup>25</sup> There were internal confrontations, too, on the other hand, which came to pass with the emergence of nationalist movements claiming independent status first among different groups of Eastern Europe and Balkans and then in the Middle East, which caused several national uprisings in the respective geographies.<sup>26</sup> These encounters added to the emergence of a consciousness of a distinct Turkish national identity.

These bureaucrats, while conversing with the prominent European social theorists of the time, sought ways of applying the ideas they encountered to a wider rescue plan for the Ottoman Empire in decay and created the backbone of the rising Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The CUP was in an alliance with Armenian political parties as a part of its pursuit for ‘Ottomanism’ based on equality among different ethnic and religious groups.<sup>27</sup> However, in the aftermath of several political and economic interventions of European states, which hindered unification efforts taking place in areas such as language of education or the formation of *Düyun-u Umumiye İdaresi* (The Ottoman Public Debt Administration), which controlled approximately one-third of the national income due to enormous external debt, the CUP abandoned its Ottomanist views and turned against the non-Muslim communities of the Empire, perceiving them as an extension of ‘social heterogeneity’, i.e., the co-

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<sup>24</sup> İnalçık, Halil (2006), *Turkey and Europe in History*, İstanbul: Eren Publishing, pp. 83 – 85.

<sup>25</sup> İnalçık, Halil (1969), The Nature of Traditional Society: Turkey, in Robert E. Ward & Dankwart A. Rustow (eds.), *Political Modernization in Turkey and Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, pp. 23, 106.

<sup>27</sup> Keyder, Çağlar (1989), *Türkiye’de Devlet ve Sınıflar*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 78.

existence of non-Muslim communities of Anatolia.<sup>28</sup> This led to a rise in the nationalist aspirations held by the CUP members.

In the building of Turkish national identity, (self-) perception vis-à-vis the West plays a constitutive role. According to Ahıska, any effort to define, construct, and distinguish Turkish national identity is shaped around an imagined ‘Westernness’ or on a Western gaze.<sup>29</sup> The imagination of the Turkish national identity in a sense explained by Anderson above includes imagining of ‘Easternness’ and ‘Westernness’ alike. This imagination attempts to give a localized meaning to the notion of ‘the West’ in the course of its escape from the ‘Easternness’; however, while doing so, it redefines the notion of ‘the East’ each time it tries to distance itself from the West. Therefore, a crucial paradox emerges out of the question of the meaning to be attributed to ‘the West’. The West, as a phenomenon, comes to existence in the mind-set of Turkish national identity both internally and externally. The imagination of a modern nationality designates the will to be the same with and distinct from the West at the same time. The emergence of nationalist views out of the encounters of Ottoman military and bureaucracy elite who resided in Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century should be perceived according to this understanding of the notion of distinctiveness in the face of the East and the West. In this sense, different cultural elements are also instrumentalised by the ruling classes to disseminate the dominant narrative of the nation building project amongst the members of the imagined national group. Sports is one of these elements.

Selim Sırrı Tarcan, the pioneer of modern sports in Turkey, was one of the forerunners of the Turkish modernization movement and a leading figure in the Committee of Union and Progress. Educated in the *Lycée de Galatasaray* and Military School of Engineering -opening of which was one of the first Ottoman modernist reforms since modernization efforts began first in the army-, Selim Sırrı became

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<sup>28</sup> Keyder, *Türkiye’de Devlet ve Sınıflar*, p. 80.

<sup>29</sup> Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, pp. 25 – 27.

involved with the Young Turk movement.<sup>30</sup> The Young Turk movement was a result of the modernization of education which created an educated generation of bureaucrats, officers and doctors. United in their opposition to the rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II, they formed a thin centred network around Europe, where they were appointed or forced out of their posts in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>31</sup> Selim Sırrı became an army officer after graduating in 1896 and was appointed to İzmir, where he first began to write articles on physical education. He gradually increased his contact with the circle of the Young Turks, which eventually led to his subscription to the Unionists in 1907. However, following the 1908 Revolution, Selim Sırrı felt drifted apart from the political circles of Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and started to seek ways of going to Sweden, where he would learn about Swedish gymnastics, which was highly promoted by Philippe Auguste Tissié, a neuropsychiatrist whose writings on physical education highly influenced him.

Selim Sırrı, who wrote a book on the principles of Swedish gymnastics<sup>32</sup> after his education in Sweden's Royal Institute for Physical Education during 1908 – 1910, undertook the role of creating a school curriculum which would include physical education, a role which was executed by Tissié in France, alongside Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of modern Olympic Games.<sup>33</sup> Pierre de Coubertin met Selim Sırrı during his global expedition for seeking new members for the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which was founded in 1894. Despite not being able to

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<sup>30</sup> Lüküslü, Demet & Dinçşahin, Şakir (2013), Shaping Bodies Shaping Minds: Selim Sırrı Tarcan and the Origins of Modern Physical Education in Turkey, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 30, No: 3, pp. 195 – 209.

<sup>31</sup> Shaw, Stanford J. & Shaw, Ezel Kural (1977), *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume II: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808 – 1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 255.

<sup>32</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı (1910), *İsveç Usulü Jimnatik Terbiye-i Bedeniyye*, İstanbul: Kütübhaneye-i Askeri.

<sup>33</sup> Lüküslü & Dinçşahin, Shaping Bodies Shaping Minds.



form the Ottoman Olympic Committee due to the ongoing period of suppression under Abdulhamid II, Selim Sırrı became a representative of the IOC.<sup>34</sup>

Selim Sırrı's conception of sports provides a very clear manifestation of the paradox of Turkish national identity building. On one side of the coin, Selim Sırrı is a pioneer of modern sports in Turkey, by adapting the Swedish model. His efforts of applying the physical education techniques he borrowed from Sweden were greatly praised by Niyazi Berkes, who contended that the efforts of Selim Sırrı on introducing Turkey with physical education brought mobility to a people who were 'rendered immobile during the period of suppression'.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, for Berkes, Selim Sırrı's campaign to apply modern physical education techniques was a struggle for modernization.<sup>36</sup>

Until 1908, sitting was regarded not only as a most natural but also the most respectable posture of man. To stand and to stand erect was a sign of disrespect, arrogance, or rebellion –son bowed before father, wife before husband, peasant before urbanite, the people before the effendi (master), the entire nation before the *Padişah*. The ex-army officer Selim Sırrı fought against this custom. He brought to education the habit of teaching people to stand up and walk erect.

Berkes particularly hails the inclusion of gymnastics to the curricula of *medreses*, the religious schools, stating that in these institutions, "sitting was the only remaining vestige of scholastic life".<sup>37</sup> This way, Selim Sırrı, by adapting the Swedish model of physical education in Turkey, carries out his modernizing role however, the integration of the Ottoman Empire also creates a zone of contention with the West for him. This became explicitly manifest in 1912 when the Ottoman Empire was

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<sup>34</sup> TMOK (n. d.), "*Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Komitesi Tarihçesi*", available on <https://www.olimpiyatkomitesi.org.tr/Detay/Hakkimizda/Tarihce/46/1>, accessed on 23 April 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Berkes, Niyazi (1964), *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Montréal: McGill University Press, p. 402 as cited in Akın, "*Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*", p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 402.

<sup>37</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 402.

represented in the Olympic Games for the first time by two Armenian athletes, Vahram Papazian and Mıgırđıç Mıgırıyan. In a newspaper article, Selim Sırrı wrote, “Elite children of 26 different countries were present; only we were absent”.<sup>38</sup> This neglect of the two Armenian athletes representing the Ottoman Empire by Selim Sırrı reflects the mindset insofar that the absence of ethnically Turkish athletes in the Olympics deprives the state of national assertion among other ‘elite’ participants.

It is possible from other products of modernity that sport serves as a means for asserting national identity. In the case of newly emerging nationalist movements, sports can provide a setting for building their national identity both at the international level vis-à-vis other national states and towards the domestic population through bolstering national pride. In this sense, the Olympic Games can be considered as a fitting case study where both dimensions of national identity building are involved. However, to comprehend the sociological significance of modern Olympic Games, emergence of sports as a modern institution should be comprehended.

Even though the modern, competitive form of sports emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sport-like games were played and multisport organizations as predecessors of the Olympic Games were held beginning from antiquity. However, most social theorists of sports agree that there is a rupture between the practice of antique, medieval and classic forms of sports.<sup>39</sup> The emergence of modern sports is highly linked with the social classes that emerged in England during the Industrial Revolution. With the mass movement from rural areas to urban spaces during the industrialization period, leisure activities of rural communities, including games, were displaced as well. In the more temporally and spatially organized sphere of industrialized cities, games were transformed into sports with rules and limitations. First modern athletes in this sense were the physically strong workers, employed in mines, factories, and elsewhere. However, the time they spared for sporting activities

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<sup>38</sup> Koptaş, Rober (2012, July 26), Olimpiyat Tarihinin Gayri Resmi Sayfası, *AGOS Gazetesi*, available on <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/2048/olimpiyat-tarihinin-gayri-resmi-sayfasi>, accessed on 23 April 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Defrance, Jacques (1995), *Sociologie du Sport*, Paris: La Découverte, p. 13.

were used at the expense of their working time, which meant a reduction in production and, this way, in their salaries. Henceforth, the urban upper middle class who made gains on betting sports events started to pay the athletes who compete for them, in order to compensate for their working time and salary lost during competitions.<sup>40</sup> This is how modern, professional and competitive sports became conventional.

Furthermore, in the global spread of sports in its modern sense, one important factor that gave the spread pace and continuity was the British colonies. Most sports, including football, rugby, cricket, athletics, and tennis found their way into the different parts of the world through the expansion of the British Empire. For instance, in the case of swimming, an activity that exists for centuries, Britain introduced its colonies a competitive form of it, which measured through pace.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, Britain not only exported a certain branch of sports but also a way of conducting it, making sports as a modern institution widespread.

The global spread of competitive sporting activities turned sports into a field of identity building. Sporting events create an opportunity for the members of a group to express both solidarity (amongst each other) and adversity (against the rival group represented in the form of an athlete or a sporting team) at the same time. Most of the time, this expression comes in symbols, such as national flags waved around the stadia or heartfelt renditions of national anthems. Therefore, sporting fields become spaces of construction of identities through these two dimensions, asserting the self both inwards and outwards. As Kellas observes, the outburst of emotions by masses while supporting their national athlete or team makes sports ‘the most popular form of nationalist behaviour’.<sup>42</sup> This makes sports one of the most important cultural elements in national identity building.

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<sup>40</sup> Defrance, *Sociologie du Sport*, p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> Defrance, *Sociologie du Sport*, p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> Kellas, James G. (1991), *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, p. 21.

One of the best examples of expressive nationalism revealed through sports can be the matches between British teams and teams of British colonies, which became zones for competing identities. Indigenous peoples of the British Empire took up the sports introduced to them by the colonizing power, mastered them, and turned them into a component of their anti-imperialist resistance.<sup>43</sup> Interest in cricket in India and in the Caribbean and embracing of rugby union by Afrikaaners of South Africa, New Zealanders and Australians can be counted among many other examples. One of the most symbolic manifestations of this form of resistance through integrating national identity with sports was observed in 1999, when Australia won the Rugby World Cup held in Wales, on the same day as the Australian republic referendum took place. As the republican vote was defeated, the Queen handed the trophy to the Australian team captain John Eales, one of the foremost Republican activists of the country.

Other forms of anti-imperialist resistance through merging sports with national identity included resistance towards British sports in general, by refusing to embrace them and/or by adopting transformed or entirely different versions. In the United States, for example, British games were altered in a way that would create a distinct culture of sports activities, whereas in Ireland a whole set of new sports were adopted as national sports, such as Gaelic football, handball, and traditional hurling.<sup>44</sup> In this sense, the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA), founded in 1884 on Irish nationalist grounds, can be viewed as one of the best examples of the interrelatedness between politics and modern sports.<sup>45</sup> Foundations of building national identity through sports have a two-faceted relationship between the British Empire and its colonies.

The best explanation of nationalism theories in response to the sports' relationship with the building of national identity is provided by the conception of 'imaginedness' by Anderson, as mentioned earlier. The lack of face-to-face contact

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<sup>43</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 13.

<sup>44</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> Holt, Richard (1989), *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 240.

among members of a nation becomes nullified through enabling nationalist sentiments by sporting competitions among teams or athletes representing different nations. As Bairner contends, 'Except in times of war, seldom is the communion between members of the nation, who might otherwise be classed as total strangers, as strongly felt as during major international events.'<sup>46</sup> The collective enthusiasm emerged around a sporting event makes national aspirations stronger by reiterating the power of belonging to a group as a member. In this sense, major international sports organizations such as the Olympic Games provide striking cases of asserting national identity.

National or international mega events, such as the Olympic Games are crucial ways of creating public cultures. They are major providers of spaces of expression for both the masses and the elite. As Roche contends, they are capable of providing powerful media as well as opportunities where the elite class can diffuse 'hegemonic and official ideologies' towards the masses.<sup>47</sup> They also act as mediums for the masses to gather in crowds and create a public culture through 'information overload, mixed messages, selective readings, message failures and creative responses'.<sup>48</sup> Creation of a public culture served to the need of 'winning the hearts and minds' of the newly forming working class for the envisioned projects of economic growth and nation building.<sup>49</sup> This marks the significance of mega events at the turn of modernity, such as sports organizations, national ceremonies, Olympic Games or Exhibitions.

Mega events such as the Olympic Games served as reference points for promoting notions of national identity. They are both spaces of consolidating the members of the defined national group, especially for the hosts, and a site for

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<sup>46</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*; Smith, Anthony D. (1998), *Nationalism and Modernism*, London: Routledge, as cited in Roche, p. 34.

nationalist movements to learn about the forms of reiterating nationhood in the international sphere.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the Olympic Games are venues for national identity construction in a manifestative way of bolstering national pride by hosting the event or by obtaining successful results against other national athletes or teams, and expressing a claim of recognition among international interlocutors through a self-definition. Through these functions, the Olympic Games can be analysed as useful tools for nationalists in their project of nation building, as well as a site for the masses to experience the common grounds for national identity, despite the lack of direct and enduring contact with other members of the national group.

The cultural significance of global sports events as the Olympic Games appears most explicitly in the presentation of national identity while athletes and teams representing their countries compete against others. However, emotive the competitions are for the spectators present at the stadia flashing out nationalist aspirations, other elements of the spectacle such as the opening, closing, and medal ceremonies are equally manifesting in terms of exposing national sentiments. For instance, in the Intercalated Games in 1906, marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first modern Olympic Games, fifteen years before the establishment of the Irish Free State, Irish athletes expressed their wish to represent Ireland. However, since Ireland was still under British rule and hence, did not have its National Olympic Committee (NOC), their wish to represent Ireland was denied. In the opening ceremony, Irish athletes who had to compete for Great Britain wore green blazers and golden shamrocks during the opening ceremony. Peter O'Connor, an Irish track athlete and a staunch nationalist, was one of these Irish athletes who went on to win the silver medal in the long jump. However, during the medal ceremony, as the flag of Great Britain was being hoisted, O'Connor jumped on the flagpole, lowered the Union Jack, and unfurled a green flag with a golden harp and the words, *Erin Go Bragh* (Ireland Forever) on it.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 73.

<sup>51</sup> Boykoff, Jules (2016), *Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics*, London: Verso, pp. 38 – 39.

In this sense, such sports events also have the capacity of playing a constitutive role in the emergence of nationalist aspirations, alongside their manifestative ability, particularly for the late-comer nation-states. Therefore, these can be categorized as ‘mass-producing traditions’, which flourished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in the sense that they provide venues for novel enablers of expressing social cohesion and identity.<sup>52</sup> Many occasions like public holidays and ceremonies these invented traditions are outcomes of mass politics that emerged after 1870.<sup>53</sup> The invention of such traditions can either be the product of states or nationalist movements seeking status.<sup>54</sup> Sports events such as annual test matches between Scotland and England help assert national consciousness.<sup>55</sup> The significance of sports organizations as a device for the bolstering of nationalist aspirations applies to Turkey as well, as the early Republican ruling class viewed sports as an instrument for ‘physical and spiritual development of the masses’ which also held an ability to create solidarity and a feeling of unity.<sup>56</sup>

Modern sports were imported by the Ottoman upper class and were played in port cities such as Thessaloniki, İzmir, and İstanbul; they became thoroughly integrated with the cultural and political relations of Turkey vis-à-vis the West. The symbolic significance of modern sports in its early spread in Turkey can be examined in two periods. From the introduction of modern sports in Anatolian regions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the Independence War (end of 1922), sports was a means for bolstering national pride against Western countries and the clubs of non-Muslim

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<sup>52</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric (1983), *Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870 – 1914*, in Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 263 – 307.

<sup>53</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, p. 268.

<sup>54</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, p. 283.

<sup>55</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, p. 143.

<sup>56</sup> Gökaçtı, Mehmet Ali (2008), *Bizim İçin Oyna: Türkiye’de Futbol ve Siyaset*, İstanbul: İletişim, p. 112.

communities in the face of the decline the Ottoman Empire was facing. However, from the end of the Independence War onwards, sports became a ‘membership ID card’ to the political positioning in the world where Turkey wanted to engage itself in, i. e., the Western bloc.<sup>57</sup>

The first multisport event in Anatolia was held by the Greek community in Izmir, under the name of Panionian Games in 1896. These Games, inspired by the ancient Olympic Games, constitute a critical role in the Greek nationalist movement, as participation was open only to Greek athletes.<sup>58</sup> Muslim communities’ sporting activities, on the contrary, faced restrictions under the rule of Abdulhamid II since any social occasion that had the potential to offer spaces for gatherings was perceived as a political threat from the opposition. However, the Committee of Union and Progress was particularly interested in gymnastics, as they related it with physical health, an important aspect of modernity.<sup>59</sup> Another crucial sporting element of this first period was football matches played between the teams of the invading forces following the end of the First World War. In fact, football was so influential in boosting nationalist aspirations that *Fenerbahçe*, which won 41 of the total 50 matches played against the teams of the invading forces but was shut down in 1920 due to “nesting hostile sentiments against Allied Forces”.<sup>60</sup>

When the Independence War was over and the Republic of Turkey was declared, the state sought to align itself with the West in search of a peaceful period of reform. This alignment appeared in the sports fields as well. In the eyes of the

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<sup>57</sup> Irak, Dağhan (2013b), *From Battlefields to Football Fields: Turkish Sports Diplomacy in the Post Second World War Period*, in Cangül Örnek and Çağdaş Üngör (eds.) *Turkey and the Cold War: Ideology and Culture*, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 159.

<sup>58</sup> Irak, Dağhan (2013a), *Hükmen Yenik: Türkiye’de ve İngiltere’de Futbolun Sosyo-Politikliği*, İstanbul: Evrensel, pp. 28 – 30.

<sup>59</sup> Akın, “*Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*”, p. 52.

<sup>60</sup> Bora, Tanıl & Erdoğan, Necmi (1993), “*Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye*” Türk Milletinin Milli Sporu Olarak Futbol in Roman Horak, Wolfgang Reiter and Tanıl Bora (eds.) *Futbol ve Kültürü: Takımlar, Taraftarlar, Endüstri ve Efsaneler*, İstanbul: İletişim, p. 225.



Republican politicians, sports, as a denominator of physical health, was a useful instrument in erasing the Ottoman image of “sick man of Europe”.<sup>61</sup> Also, as the rise of national aspirations and the corresponding increase in the importance given to mass sports such as football as a tool of international propaganda,<sup>62</sup> sporting contacts with Europe has become one of the main priorities for Republican Turkey.<sup>63</sup> This policy reflected in Turkey’s willingness to participate in international sporting events as well. As mentioned earlier, Turkey’s nation building process is highly related to the encounters Turkish nationalists had with other nationalist ideas. Global sports events provide very suitable lieus for such encounters. Therefore, in the building of Turkish national identity, sports and participation in global sports events such as the Olympic Games, becomes an important topic of study.

In summary, this study aims to locate how the international dimension of sports was instrumentalized in the process of nation building of early Republican Turkey, with a focus on Turkey’s participation in the Olympic Games of 1924 in Paris, 1928 in Amsterdam, 1936 in Garmisch-Partenkirshcen and Berlin, and 1948 in St. Moritz and London. In Chapter Two, I provide a general overview of nationalism theories in the first place, where I examine the relationship between nationalism, ethnicity and modernity.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the modernization and the nation building processes in Turkey with regard to encounters with nationalist ideas that led to the emergence of a Turkish national consciousness on Turkish national identity. While doing so, in addition to providing a historical continuum from late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman bureaucrats to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Republican rulers’ understandings of nation building, I also provide a brief literature review of the studies about different cultural elements that were instrumentalized in the process of the nation building in Turkey.

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<sup>61</sup> Lüküslü & Dinçşahin, *Shaping Bodies Shaping Minds*.

<sup>62</sup> Giulianotti, Richard (1999), *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> Şenyuva, Özgehan & Tunç, Sevecen (2015), Turkey and the Europe of Football, *Sport in History*, Vol: 35, No: 4, pp. 567 – 579.

In Chapter Four, I analyse the relationship between sports and national identity while providing an overview of the theoretical intersection between nationalism studies and the sociology of sport, with specific examples of sports' role in national identity construction. In this context, I discuss how global sports events like the Olympic Games are instrumentalized in nation building projects.

In Chapter Five, I discuss the role of sports in general during the process of nation building in Turkey, with reference to the discussions on the governance of sports, international and national sporting competitions, and the place of physical education in school curricula. I also analyse the history of Turkey's Olympic journey, starting from the commencement of the Olympic movement in the Ottoman Empire.

In Chapter Six, I analyse how Turkey's participation in the Olympic Games was a part of the construction of Turkish national identity. While doing so, I particularly focus on the first Olympic Games that the Republic of Turkey took part in from 1924 to 1948, which correspond to six Summer and Winter Olympics in total. I choose the 1948 London as a demarcation line since after 1950, sports in Turkey was mostly professionalized, paving the way for a retreat of direct state politics from sports and an incursion of private enterprises in this field. In this research, I mostly rely on archival sources, such as the Parliamentary minutes, documents from the archives of the Turkish National Olympic Committee (TOC), the State Archives, memoirs, print publications retrieved from the periodicals archive of the National Library of Turkey and Gallica, the digital library of the Bibliothèque Nationale Française. In the concluding chapter, I discuss my key findings and provide a brief discussion of the outcomes of my research. I aim to demonstrate how international sports were instrumentalised for the nation-building process in the formation of the new state. To that aim, I argue that Turkey's integration of international sports in its nation formation policies during the given period can be explained by using both modernist and primordial tracks of nationalism theories. Olympic participation serves as a suitable platform for the consolidation of the national identity in that direction.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORIES OF NATIONALISM AND NATION-BUILDING

The conceptualization of nationalism includes a broad range of components and meanings which create a debate around the understanding of the concept through different lenses. Despite the concept of nationalism denotes a -be it cultural, political or discursive- view originating from belonging to a certain identity based on a given 'national' background, in a great part of the literature on nationalism, writers have refrained from clarifying exact operationalizations on how they define the 'nation'.<sup>64</sup> However, a nation can be loosely defined as a form of collectivity that is constructed through the emphasis on the particularity of a national identity. The operationalization of this particularity through numerous features and elements such as history, origins, language, religion, lifestyle gives a more distinct place in the group-building processes than that of other sub-identities.

According to Greenfeld, nationalism places this particularity within a certain 'people' and all the individuals that submit to this collective construct their identities through membership to the 'nation'.<sup>65</sup> There are various institutions and tools that are utilized in the nationalist movements' efforts to emphasize the particularity and distinctiveness of their groups. Through these, the claims to uniqueness are produced and reproduced in the minds of the members of the national group in an attempt to facilitate the imagining of the given collectivity as a nation. These cultural, political and discursive elements are adopted to underline and reproduce certain qualities that establish imaginary bondages among the members of the group, consolidating them among one another and defining the distinctiveness of the group vis-à-vis the outsiders.

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<sup>64</sup> Rustow, Dankwart A., (1968) Nation, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol: 11, Michigan: Macmillan Reference USA, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> Greenfeld, Liah (1992), *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 3.

As the members of the national group associate themselves with the qualities attributed to the group itself and make attempts to uphold them, various features emerge to define the characteristics of specific forms of nationalism. That is the reason the theorists of nationalism tend to provide working definitions that fall short of providing general meanings. The main underlying reason behind this is that the word is a highly politically loaded one and any definition, which includes some elements and excludes others, draws lines of political legitimation.<sup>66</sup> This creates debates revolving around the characteristics, origins and frameworks of nationalism.

### **2.1. Nationalism as Culture or Politics?**

One of the main debates on the characteristics of nationalism is on the issue of the framework around which the literature handles the concept. Some scholars contend that nationalism should be studied as a cultural form, an element that can be understood in cultural terms. Proponents of this view hold that the nation should be conceived as a cultural entity. According to this view, national claims correspond to demands for cultural distinctiveness and therefore, they are not equal to political sovereignty claims.<sup>67</sup> In other words, claims to nationhood are not merely those of achieving the establishment of a sovereign political entity -in fact they may not at all be political claims- they are rather comprised by the claims to realise the cultural traits around which the nation is imagined.<sup>68</sup>

According to the cultural understanding of nationalism, demands and realization of cultural rights can solely occur within a certain collectivity sharing similar features. Hence, membership of such a collectivity as that of a national group enables the claims of cultural distinctiveness.<sup>69</sup> Proponents of the cultural approach to

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<sup>66</sup> Calhoun, Nationalism and Ethnicity.

<sup>67</sup> Tamir, Yuli (1993), *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 57.

<sup>68</sup> Connor, Walker (1994), *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 82.

<sup>69</sup> Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, p. 42.

nationalism contend that the current tension between transnationality in political, social and economic concerns and the issue of conservation of national uniqueness can be most efficiently explained in this way.<sup>70</sup> However, critics of this position argue that a cultural approach to nationalism undermines the political ideas, demands and organizations that shape nationalist movements. Gellner argues that nationalism is “primarily a political principle”.<sup>71</sup> For others who contend that nationalism is about politics, the idea of nation, underlining the bond between a group of people in terms of cultural commonality notwithstanding, took up political connotations during its struggles with and amongst states and on the issue of state-building.<sup>72</sup> As Cohen puts it, “People do not kill each other because their customs are different.” and therefore, nationalism is mainly a political phenomenon whereas cultural characteristics are but instruments for political alignments.<sup>73</sup>

Conversely, to better comprehend and explain the characteristics of nationalism, a way of understanding that is not exclusive to one particular trait should be adopted. This means, a dual approach in explaining nationalism in both cultural and political terms at the same time proves more effective in studying nationalism comprehensively. No matter how the consolidation and formation of a national identity is regarded as a component within a broader cultural context of a society, its cultural impact and political demands, as well as its consequences are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary they effectively influence one another. As Delanty and O’Mahony contend:

The concentration on processes of cultural innovation and institutionalization in the national lifeworld does not mean that this style of scholarship eschews political questions entirely. No

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<sup>70</sup> Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, p. 58.

<sup>71</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Calhoun, *Nationalism and Ethnicity*.

<sup>73</sup> Cohen, Abner (1969), *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 200.

plausible account of nationalism could in fact do so. All traditions of scholarship accept that nationalism is located somewhere in the interstices between the culture of the lifeworld and the cultural foundations of the political sphere, where either or both of these dimensions of culture and politics can be regarded as stable or volatile depending on theoretical and normative orientation.<sup>74</sup>

The underlying principle to be adopted in this thesis on the understanding of nationalism brings together cultural, political and discursive elements of national identity formation, treating the utilization of culture as a part of the political instruments of nationalisms and politics as an intrinsic element to the cultural process of different branches alike. Yet, to better form a comprehensive understanding of nationalism, the historical process of the nationalism theories which outline numerous typologies should be discussed.

## **2.2. Types of Nationalism**

Another major debate on nationalism is the one on identifying different types. Discussions on the types of nationalism can be traced back to the Second World War years when Hans Kohn, in his book, entitled *History of Nationalism* argues that there are ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ forms of nationalism.<sup>75</sup> Western nationalism in this distinction was characterized with a rational association of citizens around a common law system that has jurisdiction defined within a shared territory. Eastern nationalism, on the other hand, has its roots in a shared ethnic origin, is not necessarily bound by a legal system but rather by cultural features and transcends borders. Kohn’s categorization is based on the formation of classes, which refers to whether there exists a class of bourgeoisie to rally citizens around a national identity. If the answer is yes, it would be far easier for citizens to be bound together around a national legal system, but if the answer is no, the nation is more likely to be conceived in organic terms.

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<sup>74</sup> Delanty, Gerard & O’Mahony, Patrick (2002), *Nationalism and Social Theory: Modernity and the Recalcitrance of the Nation*, London: Sage Publications, p. 82.

<sup>75</sup> Smith, Anthony D. (2002), *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology and History*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 42 – 43.

This distinction finds its way into the classifications of ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ nationalisms. Civic nationalism is associated with the voluntary subscription of people to a set of political values established by a national group. The main denominator in this category is the bond of citizenship that links citizens to the political creed through legally defined rights.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, in the civic categorization of nationalism, the formation of nations is a political process where people come together around the bond of citizenship to a state, set by a reciprocal contract of laws. This denotes that a higher level of individualistic conception of a national group, the voluntaristic aspect of which turns the nationhood to a decision that needs to be affirmed by an everyday ‘plebiscite’.<sup>77</sup>

Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, refers to a more organic and collective type of construction of nationhood.<sup>78</sup> Its foundations lie in common ethnic and cultural descents of the members of the national group. Rather than the legal system that binds together the people around a common national identity, ancestral heritages of language, religion and traditions play a greater role in the construction of the identity. The voluntaristic aspect cited in the processes of civic nationalism is absent in the category of ethnic nationalism as in this formation the tie between the members of the national group is more organically-knit and the identity is conceived to be acquired through blood. Hence, ethnic nationalism is based on more objective aspects and features rather than the subjective characteristics attributed to civic nationalism.

In general, the respective distinctions of ‘Western and Eastern nationalisms’ and ‘civic and ethnic nationalisms’ are morally and rationally problematic in the sense that they succumb to a reductive dualism. Utilizing this distinction based on premises of ‘civility’ and ‘ethnicity’ brings along the risks unfairly crediting/discrediting different nationalisms and hence distancing the analysis from scientific method by

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<sup>76</sup> Ignatieff, Michael (1994), *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, London: Vintage, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Renan, Ernest (1882), *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?* Lecture given at the Sorbonne University on 11 March 1882.

<sup>78</sup> Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, p. 4.

reproducing discriminating stereotypes and relations of inequality. Therefore, several factors that blur the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalisms can be mentioned in order to lay the groundwork for an analysis of more recently brought up mainstream and modern nationalism theories. Firstly, the proposition that civic nationalism is based on a more voluntaristic and hence inclusive premise in terms of group affiliation simply contradicts with national groups' claims to distinctiveness. National identity receives its appeal from a claim to particularity,<sup>79</sup> which requires the creation of boundaries between those included and excluded. The self-definitions based on a 'unique place in history' proposed by nationalist movements in the construction of their identity make an exclusionary characteristic inherent to their nature.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, these claims to a particular historical significance are mostly supported with common cultural features, which reinforce the national group identity through various objective elements. The nationalist emphasis on common cultural traits also blurs the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalisms.<sup>81</sup>

The state-centric characteristic with a stress on the citizenship bond through a legal system is also impossible to be attributed solely on the category of civic nationalism. According to Brubaker, in the 'state-framed' nationalisms where the nation is perceived as embedded in the state, subject to its capacity of territorially and institutionally defining the nation, states do not necessarily obtain the characteristic of including their citizens through a legal-democratic system. States might as well promote the national identity through ethnic or organic references. Contrarily on the other hand, 'counter-state' nationalisms can also carry 'civic' characteristics rather

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<sup>79</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> Özkırıklı, Umut (2005), *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 24.

<sup>81</sup> Brubaker, Rogers (1998), Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism, in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Study of Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 299; Gans, Chaim (2003), *The Limits of Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 12.



than ethnic standpoints.<sup>82</sup> In this sense, more mainstream typologies of nationalism based on the temporal aspect in the formation of national characteristics and nationalist movements themselves were put forward.

### **2.3. Mainstream Nationalism Theories**

Nationalism, both as a political conceptualization and subject of research emerged in the modern era; however, among the scholarly output on nationalism, there is a divergence on the temporal relationship between nationalism, and the nation itself. While some theorists of nationalism such as Armstrong (1982),<sup>83</sup> Smith (1986)<sup>84</sup> and Hutchinson (2005)<sup>85</sup> hold that national identity is preceded by a common ethnic background, whereas others like Anderson (1983),<sup>86</sup> Gellner (1983)<sup>87</sup> and Hobsbawm (1990)<sup>88</sup> contend that the emergence of nations is a result of the emergence of nationalisms and nationalist movements. Out of these different understandings on the question of temporality between nations and nationalisms emerge different theories of nationalism and nation-building.

#### **2.3.1. Perennialist Nationalism Theories**

The debate on the chronological relationship between nations and nationalisms dominantly revolve around the question that which emerged first but there is very little

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<sup>82</sup> Brubaker, *Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism*, pp. 300 – 301.

<sup>83</sup> Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*.

<sup>84</sup> Smith, Anthony D. (1986), *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell.

<sup>85</sup> Hutchinson, John (2005), *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, London: Sage Publications.

<sup>86</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>87</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*.

<sup>88</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*.

contradiction on the argument that the term nation is a modern concept. However, there are certain scholars of nationalism who contend that nation in itself is ahistorical and existed in every period of history.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, it is useful to explore this outlier view in advance before discussing primordialist, ethnosymbolist and modernist nationalism theories. This point of view is called perennialism and it holds that although nationalist thought is an output of novel ideologies brought up with modernity, a nation as a group status was existent throughout history. This theory is in line with the understanding that equates 'race' and 'nation' with each other which was dominant until 1940s.

Perennialist theory on nationalism can be divided into two categories in itself. The first one, 'continuous perennialism', is based on the view that particular nations can trace their origins back to the Middle Ages or antiquity. The proponents of continuous perennialism contend that the continuity in the history of nations - according to the discontinuities and ruptures in it- is sustained by the slow rhythm of common cultural identity.<sup>90</sup> Second form of perennialism is called 'recurrent perennialism' and it holds that 'nation' as a human association category, is ahistorical as it ubiquitously reappears in every period of human history with the same type of collective identity.<sup>91</sup> In this sense, perennialist nationalism theory places the nation as a universal and ahistorical category and holds that characteristics of nationhood can be attributed to every cultural and political category throughout history.

### **2.3.2. Primordialist Nationalism Theories**

Primordialism places the nation at an original position. This means that the nation existed 'in the first order'. Therefore, primordialism has a more 'naturalistic' conception of nationhood. The form of primordialism with more biological references,

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<sup>89</sup> Smith, *Nationalism*, p. 53.

<sup>90</sup> Smith, *Nationalism*, p. 54.

<sup>91</sup> Smith, *Nationalism*, p. 54.

known as sociobiological primordialism, hold that ethnic and national characteristics can be traced through gene pools that extend throughout the scope of the ethnic kin.<sup>92</sup> According to more culturalist views of primordialism, group identity is sustained by primordial ties. Primordial, here, refers to anything that is conceived as ‘given’ in the social existence.<sup>93</sup> These include kinship bonds, common ethnic or religious belongings, common languages and more. These elements of ‘social existence’, from the virtue of being ‘given’ denote the naturalness of the identity. As Geertz contends,

The general strength of such primordial bonds, and the types of them that are important, differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time. But for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural-some would say spiritual-affinity than from social interaction.<sup>94</sup>

Edward Shils, likewise, stresses the importance of the ‘tie of blood’ in the relations of kinship or family, stating that such attachments can only be described as primordial.<sup>95</sup> For both of these scholars, primordial ties persisted among the civil ties of industrial societies. However, primordialist views on nationhood were widely critiqued by instrumentalists who argue that leaders of ethnic groups viewed ethnicity as useful cultural mass mobilizers -more useful than social classes- in their quests for political power.<sup>96</sup> There are other theories of nationalism that place stress on the

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<sup>92</sup> Smith, *Nationalism*, pp. 55 – 56.

<sup>93</sup> Geertz, Clifford (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, p. 259.

<sup>94</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 59 – 60.

<sup>95</sup> Shils, Edward (1957), Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations on the Relationships of Sociological Research and Theory, *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol: 8, No: 2, pp. 130 – 145.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, *Nationalism*, pp. 56 -59.

mythical and symbolic elements of ethnic origins -rather than genetic or naturalistic explanations- that have the capacity to establish group ties, such as Ethnosymbolism.

### **2.3.3. Ethnosymbolist Nationalism Theories**

Ethnosymbolism in nationalism studies is also an endeavour to explain nationhood and nationalism through pre-existing ethnic ties. However, unlike perennialism and primordialism, ethnosymbolism bases its foundations of ethnic ties upon myths and symbols that are transmitted throughout generations, rather than biological or genetic links. Ethnosymbolists derive their analysis of nationhood from the *longue durée* approach of the Annales School in order to explain the influences of ethnic experiences over long periods of time.<sup>97</sup> In this view, myths of an ancient past serve present purposes and/or future goals for nations. This purpose is to awaken nations out of their ages-long ‘slumber’ by reminding them who they are (ethnically) and rallying the members around nationhood.<sup>98</sup> The stress on this function of ethnicity is a reference to the symbolic capacity of ethnic origins in nation building.

At the foundation of ethnosymbolism lies an understanding that defines ethnic groups as a cultural collectivity. The path of this collectivity to nationhood is paved with shared myths, symbols, and historical memory that conceal them. Therefore, they lay the basis for a narrative of common ancestry around which the members of the ethnic group can unite. According to Armstrong, these myths and symbols serve the purpose of delineating the frontiers of an ethnicity, through which the group defines itself by excluding the strangers.<sup>99</sup> These frontiers are guarded by certain mechanisms, which are primarily linguistic. They both serve as warning signs for outsiders to the group and elements of in-group cohesion. Symbols are institutionalized and transmitted through generations and therefore, symbolic interaction should be

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<sup>97</sup> Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, p. 4.

<sup>98</sup> Smith, Anthony D. (1991), *National Identity*, London: Penguin Books, pp. 19 – 20.

<sup>99</sup> Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, pp. 7 – 9.

conceived as a form of communication. Myths, furthermore, help condensing the group members through raising “an intense awareness among the group members of their common fate”.<sup>100</sup> In this sense, myths serve as a way of enhancing a group’s solidarity against external threats, by reproducing the perceptions of ethnic frontiers through references to events or narratives from an ancient past.

Ethnosymbolists face severe objections from scholars of nationalism who contend that ethnosymbolist approach to nationalism downplays the different aspects between earlier ethnic communities and modern nations. Main criticisms of ethnosymbolism include the arguments that the ethnic communities did not possess the awareness to define the cultural traits as peculiar to themselves and use them as ways of self-distinction from others. As it stands, these groups have not yet undergone the political processes to sustain the institutionalization necessary to develop a common national identity.<sup>101</sup> In other words, nationhood requires a new set of institutes and political alignment. For an important chunk of nationalism scholars, the toolset necessary for national identity formation is brought by modernity.

#### **2.3.4. Modernist Nationalism Theories**

As stated above, the conceptualization of the nation and nationalism for modernists is related to the political processes of institutionalization and state formation. According to this view, nations and nationalisms emerge as a part of processes like the rise of the capitalist mode of production, secularization, urbanization and centralization which are brought by modernity. The earlier ages lacked the political, economic and social tools to realize the nation formation processes. In this sense, modernists form their explanations on the emergence of nations and nationalisms with regards to processes and other phenomena brought by the modernity. For them, simply, “Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the

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<sup>100</sup> Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> Calhoun, *Nationalism and Ethnicity*; Breuilly, John (1996) *Approaches to Nationalism*, in Gopal Baraknishnan (ed.) *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, p. 150.

other way around”.<sup>102</sup> This way, in the debate on the temporality relation between nations and nationalisms, modernists differ from perennialists, primordialists, and ethnosymbolists. However, there are multiple pathways in the modernist school as well, starting from different standpoints based on modernity.

These pathways, stemming from the common starting point of modernity, arrive at their nationalism theories by references to different transformations of modernity. Marxists and Neo-Marxists, for instance, explain the emergence of nations and nationalism with relation to capitalist transformation and industrialization. According to the classical Marxist perspective, nationalism should be understood with regards to the dynamics of class conflict. Nationalism serves the class interests of the bourgeoisie and will be eliminated as an antagonism following a socialist revolution.<sup>103</sup> Neo-Marxists; however, differ in their view on nationalism that it should not be conceived merely on the grounds of class conflict, but that various other factors are influential in the emergence of nations and nationalisms.

Neo-Marxist understanding of nationalism expands the class perspective of classical Marxism by remedying from the contributions of dependency school outlined in the works of Wallerstein<sup>104</sup> and Gunder-Frank,<sup>105</sup> explaining capitalism in the international system. An example to this view can be the work of Nairn, where he outlines the view of capitalist ‘uneven development’ as an influential force in the emergence of nationalism.<sup>106</sup> Uneven development view builds on the centre and

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<sup>102</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> Löwy, Michael (1976), Marxists and the National Question, *New Left Review*, issue: 96, pp. 81 – 100; Nimni, Ephraim (1989), Marx, Engels and the National Question, *Science and Society*, Vol: 53, No: 3, pp. 297 – 326.

<sup>104</sup> Wallerstein, Immanuel (2004), *World Systems: An Introduction*, Durham: Duke University Press.

<sup>105</sup> Gunder-Frank, Andre (1966), The Development of Underdevelopment, *Monthly Review*, Vol: 18, No: 4, pp. 17 – 31.

<sup>106</sup> Nairn, Tom (1981), *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, London: Verso, p. xviii.

periphery relations of world systems analysis and argues that the differences in the development levels between the centre and periphery countries lead to the emergence of nationalist views in periphery countries which find their way into the centre. Therefore, uneven development is a dialectical process where all parties force change upon each other.

Another point of view in the modernist pathway to nationalism focuses on the role of political transformations in the nation formation processes. This understanding views nationalism as a result of the political transformations, or transformations in power in a society. These transformations are highly related to modern-era politics, particularly with the state formation processes and centralization. Breuilly, for example analyses nationalism “as a form of politics”.<sup>107</sup> According to this view, politics is related to the question of power, which is equated with obtaining state power. In this sense, nationalism refers to political movements “seeking or exercising state power” with a political doctrine explicitly underlining unique characteristic of the nation, its interests and values, and its sovereignty. Sovereignty here is mostly associated with state sovereignty, and the emergence of sovereign states are key to Breuilly’s understanding of nationalism.<sup>108</sup> With the increased division of labour throughout modernity, the distinction between public and private emerged, where the state controlled a large part of the public institutions, and market forces were more influential in the private sphere. Nationalism, in this atmosphere, emerged as a way of mitigating between these two realms. In order to address to the more individualistic nature of the private realm, nationalist politics utilized citizenship, a legal bond to the state and for the establishment of a link between the members of the nation and the state, it stressed the collectivity aspect of nationhood. Therefore, nationalistic politics can be said to be about the formation of a national identity through a modern state framework.

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<sup>107</sup> Breuilly, John (1993), *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>108</sup> Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, pp. 369 – 372.

The last perspective of modernist nationalism theories focuses on the social/cultural transformations to a great extent, in its analysis of the emergence of nations and nationalisms. According to this view, the transformations in cultural aspects of a society that were brought along with modernity lead to the emergence of national identities. The proponents of this framework stress the unifying and identifying functions of common cultures in modern societies. Gellner, for instance, argues that in agrarian societies, ruling classes of military, administrative, clerical and commercial groups used culture as a way of differentiating themselves from the rest of the agrarian communities.<sup>109</sup> In this sense, culture serves merely to reproduce the distinction and the vantage point of ruling classes. In industrial societies; however, there is a dominant ‘high culture’ through which the entire society is defined and maintained through the political institutions.<sup>110</sup> Education and universal literacy are crucial for sustaining this high culture, with a training system deliberately designed to provide a basic training to all. Gellner contends that,

Industrial society may by most criteria be the most highly specialized society ever; but its educational system is unquestionably the least specialized, the most universally standardized, that has ever existed. (...) For the large majority of the population the distinctive skills involved in working life are superimposed on the basic training, either on the job or as part of a much less prolonged supplementary training; and the assumption is that anyone who has completed the generic training common to the entire population can be re-trained for most other jobs without too much difficulty.<sup>111</sup>

In this sense, the maintenance of a high culture reinforces commonalities and sharedness among societies, which is key to nationalism. Anderson makes a similar reference to the significance of culture over the emergence of nationalism. Anderson defines nations as ‘imagined communities’, referring to the group bondage in the

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<sup>109</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*, p. 18.

<sup>111</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*, pp. 27 – 28.



absence of face-to-face interaction. This absence gives nationhood its ‘imagined’ character and the imagining of a ‘deep, horizontal comradeship’.<sup>112</sup> With the decline of religious and dynastical group ties, several cultural traits of modernity were influential in the emergence of nations. One is the emergence of a homogenous understanding of time. According to Anderson, a collectivity, observing the same calendrical system is the ‘precise analogue of the idea of the nation’.<sup>113</sup> Another cultural development of modernity leading to the emergence of national consciousness is related to the print industry. Anderson contends that book, is the first “modern-style, mass-produced industrial commodity”.<sup>114</sup> The emerging market of books and newspapers paved the way for a standardized vernacular at the mass level, which not only paved the ground for unification but also discredited the old languages of power, opening the path to a break from older administrative vernaculars. It also provided the language with a new fixity which, in the long run, helped nations build an image of antiquity.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, what Anderson calls ‘print capitalism’ play a key role in the imagining of national collectivities and a formative role in the emergence of nations. In any case, it is not easy to trace clear-cut distinctions between these different nationalism theories. These different approaches to the understanding of nationalism from primordialism to modernism, requires an extended study of nations and nationalism by handling all of the transformations mentioned above in a comprehensive manner.

#### **2.4. Culture and Nationalism: Symbols, Rituals and Invented Traditions**

This thesis analyses the nation building process with reference to all the transformations outlined above. Economic, political and cultural transformations of

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<sup>112</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 6 – 7.

<sup>113</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 26.

<sup>114</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 34.

<sup>115</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 44 – 45.

modernisation go hand-in-hand in the nation building processes and these aspects of nation-building are mostly intertwined. Nationalist politics mostly instrumentalize cultural aspects in their nation building policies. An important method of bringing a collective of people together in order to rally around a common national identity is through a set of practices or rituals. Hobsbawm calls these as ‘Invented Traditions’.<sup>116</sup> Tradition, by nature, reflects a continuity with the past, which is an essential assertion for nationalist movements. The invention of traditions refers to a set of practices and rituals, which claim to have a link with the imagined national group’s past; however, were ‘invented’ in a historical framework envisioned by the nationalist politics itself, in order to sustain group cohesion with reference to history as a legitimator. Therefore, inventing traditions is a process of ‘formalization and ritualization characterized by reference to the past’.<sup>117</sup>

Invented traditions help develop the sense of belonging to a national community by fortifying the ‘imaginedness’ aspect of the nation which Anderson underlines. After all, a nation comes to life when it is represented as an idea in the minds of its members.<sup>118</sup> In this sense, an important condition for the existence of nations is its members’ common feeling of belonging to the same community and recognizing each other as fellow group members.<sup>119</sup> Invented traditions act as important mediums and milieus; therefore, for establishing group bondages among the members of the nation and creating attachment to the nation-state.

The emergence and formation processes of nation-states required novel tools of ensuring social cohesion. Furthermore, the older practices of administration on the

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<sup>116</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric (1983), Introduction: Inventing Traditions in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>117</sup> Hobsbawm, Introduction: Inventing Traditions, p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> Tyrrell, Martin (1996), Nation-States and States of Mind: Nationalism as Psychology, *Critical Review*, Vol: 10, No: 2, pp. 233 – 250.

<sup>119</sup> Miller, David (1995), *On Nationality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 22.

part of states were rendered inefficient. The transformations in both levels, state and citizens made it necessary to create new devices of establishing links of belonging. One of the challenging dynamics between human masses and states surfaced when the political activities that may contest the legitimacy of the system were institutionalized and another emerged when the newly founded states failed to operationalize the formerly existing bonds of loyalty with its citizens.<sup>120</sup> Out of these conditions emerged the invented traditions, establishing new attachments to the national identity and to the nation-state overseeing it. Invented traditions can be loosely evaluated under ‘political’ and ‘social’ categories, the former emerged under the control of political entities and organizations and the latter organized by social groups.<sup>121</sup> Efforts for the organization of such traditions were enhanced in the half-century prior to the First World War.<sup>122</sup> In this period, as citizens were committed to the state through standardization of administration and legal systems, politics came to be mostly defined with ‘nation-wide politics’ and state emerged as the most prominent entity defining the cultural stage its citizens were put forward.<sup>123</sup> The traditions invented at this period, hence, took many shapes and forms.

Some of the most prolific examples related to the invented traditions were provided by Third Republic in France.<sup>124</sup> One of them was the sustaining of compulsory primary education, a secular counterpart of the church, which disseminated the republican principles through formal training. Another was the invention public ceremonies, primarily with the celebration of the Bastille Day that marked the revolution in 1789 with a mass participation. Final example of the invented

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<sup>120</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, pp. 265 – 266.

<sup>121</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, p. 263.

<sup>122</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, p. 263.

<sup>123</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, p. 264.

<sup>124</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, pp. 270 – 271.

traditions in the Third Republic in France was related to the erection of public monuments that asserted the presence of the state and the bondage of national identity by placing memorials and statues at different parts of public sphere. Inventing traditions is not confined to state practices, as is the case with the May Day gatherings organized by socialist labour movements; social organizations can invent traditions as well.<sup>125</sup>

These views on the emergence of nationalism are in some cases categorized under the category of constructivist theories. Constructivist understanding of nationalism is tightly interlinked with state institutions or political bodies that orchestrate the relationship of different actors with identities. Constructivist theories of nationalism kick off their analysis from the premise that nationalist demands are shaped by different surrounding elements and social conditions, as they cannot be defined in fixed terms. In this sense, national groups are seen as ‘constructed, contingent and fluctuating’.<sup>126</sup> For instance, one of the views of nationalism in this regard can be exemplified with Bieber, who contends that nationalist claims depend on the ‘will of imagined communities’.<sup>127</sup>

Brubaker critiques the aforementioned theories of nationalism, claiming that they evaluate national groups as ‘real entities’ proposing to treat the nations as ‘contingent events’ instead.<sup>128</sup> In order to achieve such a grasp of national groups, the main inquiry should focus on the institutionalization of nationhood as political and cultural forms in the context of the state. According to this view, perspectives of nationalisms focusing on nations should be replaced by those focusing on political

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<sup>125</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, p. 283.

<sup>126</sup> Brubaker, Rogers (1996), *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 13.

<sup>127</sup> Bieber, Florian (2018), Is Nationalism on the Rise, Assessing Global Trends, *Ethnopolitics*, Vol: 17, No: 5, pp. 519 – 540.

<sup>128</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 16.

fields.<sup>129</sup> This requires an emphasis on nation as a ‘category of practice’ which refers to a distinction from the subject matter of the analysis, and nationhood as an ‘institutionalised cultural or political form’ for which the most helpful tools of analysis would be contingent events.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, to understand nationhood as cultural political forms, it would be useful to analyse cultural elements inherent in nation-formation processes.

A further critique of the constructivist approach is related to the point of view in these studies towards nation formation. For example, Hobsbawm contends that nation formation is often narrated from the perspectives of the leaders of nationalist elites, intellectuals, bureaucratic classes, and institutions.<sup>131</sup> One of the main reasons for this is that uncovering the response to nation formation processes from below is naturally far more difficult. However, this brings along the risk of omitting the responses of the masses to the nation formation bids instigated by these classes. In order to avoid overlooking the mass perspective in nation formation, some call for employing everyday nationalism, i.e., the impact of daily phenomena engaging a mass population on the nation formation process.<sup>132</sup> Goode & Stroup recount several shortcomings of the constructivist nationalism theories and how they can be overcome by including an account of the masses.<sup>133</sup> For instance, they contend that one important pitfall in the constructivist understanding of nation formation is the focus on the nationalist aims of self-determination, and sovereignty obscuring the deploying of nationalist politics as a means of maintaining legitimacy. In other words, a significant

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<sup>129</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 17.

<sup>130</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 21.

<sup>131</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, pp. 10 – 11.

<sup>132</sup> Edensor, Tim (2002), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Oxford & New York: Berg; Goode, James P. & Stroup, David R. (2015) *Everyday Nationalism: Constructivism for the Masses*, *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol: 96, No: 3, pp. 717 – 739.

<sup>133</sup> Goode & Stroup, *Everyday Nationalism*.

chunk of the constructivist literature on nationalism directs its lenses over mobilization for independence but stop short in focusing on legitimation. Another critique is related to the predominantly institutionalist approach of the constructivist understanding of nationalism. The dominant focus on institutionalism manifests itself in earlier studies of constructivist nationalist theories and later, ‘new institutionalist’ studies alike, from Anderson’s<sup>134</sup> analyses on census and museums to studies on nationalism in Europe during the post-Soviet and post-Yugoslav era.<sup>135</sup> These limit the scope of constructivist nationalism theories and lead to an obscured view on the change in nationalist politics and sentiments.

Enhancing the focus of nationalism studies with a constructivist point of view towards everyday aspects of national identity formation can be useful in avoiding the shortcomings of conventional constructivist nationalism theories. Goode and Stroup contend that analysing everyday practices allows a wider perspective extending beyond the nationalist politics during cycles of mobilization for self-determination or independence.<sup>136</sup> To that end, the ways in which different official nationalist assertions seep through to the everyday life of people are identified in the first place. Then, the examination turns to how people adopt these everyday practices and what meanings are attributed to them. This way, nationalism studies with a perspective on everyday practices can expand the focus of constructivist theories in a manner that includes often neglected areas such as how economic interests and cultural traits reciprocally influence and shift one another. In this sense, it is important to include everyday cultural practices such as symbols, space, media and -the focal point of this thesis, sports.

Throughout the discussion on theories of nationalism, there have been numerous emphases on sharedness, be it that of the myths and symbols or that of the

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<sup>134</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>135</sup> Brubaker, Rogers (1998), Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism, in John A. Hall (ed.) *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 272 – 306.

<sup>136</sup> Goode & Stroup, *Everyday Nationalism*.

qualifications. In other words, while locating the cultural elements in the analysis of nation-formation it is important to shed light on the ways the sharedness is reflected. Hall contends that culture is about 'shared meanings'.<sup>137</sup> In this sense, culture constitutes an essential part of group identification, but the scope of this identification is understood differently by different scholars. For instance, Woodward focuses on the relationship between culture and group identity, belonging and the role of culture in establishing intra-group, and inter-group relations.<sup>138</sup> Thompson employs culture in his class analysis locating it in the notion of relationship.<sup>139</sup> He examines culture as a significant determinant in the formation of class consciousness, which materializes in 'traditions, value systems, ideas, and institutional forms'.<sup>140</sup> From a historical point of view, Thompson focuses on how a social organization is formed:

(...) a culture is also a pool of diverse resources, in which traffic passes between the literate and the oral, the superordinate and the subordinate, the village and the metropolis; it is an arena of conflictual elements, which requires some compelling pressure - as, for example, nationalism or prevalent religious orthodoxy or class consciousness - to take form as "system" . (...) At this point generalisations as to the universals of "popular culture" become empty unless they are placed firmly within specific historical contexts.<sup>141</sup>

Hall, on the other hand, lays emphasis on the use of language as a signifier, constituting the sharedness among group members, stemming from the premise that

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<sup>137</sup> Hall, Stuart (1997), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London: Sage, p. 1.

<sup>138</sup> Woodward, Kathryn (1997), *Identity and Difference*, London: Sage.

<sup>139</sup> Thompson, Edward P. (1963), *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Vintage Books, p. 9.

<sup>140</sup> Thompson, Edward P., *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 10.

<sup>141</sup> Thompson, Edward P. (1993), *Customs in Common*, London: Penguin Press, p. 6.

culture is a set of practices, rather than material things.<sup>142</sup> These practices are defined by an exchange of meanings, for which the common medium is language. However, this medium cannot merely be defined by language. Hall contends that,

(...) turning up at football matches with banners and slogans, with faces and bodies painted in certain colours or inscribed with certain symbols, can also be thought of as 'like a language'- in so far as it is a symbolic practice which gives meaning or expression to the idea of belonging to a national culture, or identification with one's local community.<sup>143</sup>

This view has a connection with the social constructivist approach, which holds that representations are constructed through cultural processes. According to this understanding, identities are not fixed, and they are in the making throughout time. Social subjects obtain differing positions in different practices and discourses. In this sense, subjects appear as narratives and discourses which socially produced in relation with Others. Hall applies language into the constructivist analysis through semiotics, which refers to 'how language produces meaning' and discursive formations, which is concerned with the 'politics' of language.<sup>144</sup>

The main focus of this thesis is rested more on state-related nationalist policy practices since Turkey's sports politics that paved the way for participating in the Olympics was realized as part of a political outset, which was largely dominated by state and public institutions. Multinational sporting events like the Olympic Games can be included in the cluster of invented traditions as well since they are also a product of modernity, which is used as a platform by nations to assert and consolidate their existence. They not only serve to the end of bolstering national pride through achieving success in participations or exposing grandeur with hosting these events, but they also help national groups define themselves in relation to other national groups, competing in the same events. In this sense, a two-way consolidation of the national identity takes

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<sup>142</sup> Hall, *Representation*, pp. 5 – 6.

<sup>143</sup> Hall, *Representation*, p. 5.

<sup>144</sup> Hall, *Representation*, p. 6.



place in the sports mega-events. Invented traditions rely on repetition. Be it constant signifiers like monuments and memorials that are permanent or periodic, such as the yearly public ceremonies or the Olympic Games which are held every four years, they infiltrate the everyday lives of the members of the national group. Drawing boundaries by identifying in-group similarities and differences from strangers utilize popular symbols, images, rituals, and sites, which means an important chunk of its source comes from the culture.<sup>145</sup> This means that hoisting or waving flags during sports mega-events such as the Olympic Games crosses national boundaries as well.<sup>146</sup> However, Billig's conceptualisation of banal nationalism rests the emphasis more on the role of day-to-day symbols and practices in national identity formation, whereas Skey (2006) holds that events and organisations which are held periodically and disturb and alter the daily routine of the city or country where they are held deserve a separate examination than the banal production and reproduction of national identity.<sup>147</sup> Either way, these make Olympic Games relevant for an analysis of nation-building processes and culture; however, the Olympic must be examined from a wider perspective covering the relationship between sports and nationalism.

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<sup>145</sup> Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, p. 25.

<sup>146</sup> Billig, Michael (1995), *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage Publications, p. 122.

<sup>147</sup> Skey, Michael (2006) 'Carnivals of Surplus Emotion?' Towards an Understanding of the Significance of Ecstatic Nationalism in a Globalising World, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol: 6, No: 2, pp. 143 – 161.

## CHAPTER 3

### SPORTS AND NATIONALISM

In 2007, at the beginning of Ireland's Six Nations match against England in the historic stadium of Croke Park in Dublin, an Irish rugby player, John Hayes, was in tears during the rendition of the Irish hymn, 'Ireland's Call'.<sup>148</sup> The match was significantly loaded in numerous ways. It was the first rugby match to be played in a stadium owned by the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) after the abolition of Rule 42 from the Association's charter, prohibiting the use of GAA stadia for matches of 'non-Gaelic games. Rule 42 was a remnant of the nationalist foundations of the GAA, an association formed to preserve the Gaelic sporting culture in Ireland.<sup>149</sup> The Rule's abolition was a result of the peace process in the island that began with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, and the opening of GAA's flagship stadium, the Croke Park, was a significant landmark in that direction. The Croke Park, the third biggest stadium in Europe, was also the site of the 'Bloody Sunday' of 1920 when British soldiers killed thirteen fans watching the Gaelic football match between Dublin and Tipperary in response to the killing of a group of police officers on the same day. The hymn, to which Hayes was shedding tears, is not the national anthem of the Republic of Ireland. Ireland's Call is sung in the matches of Ireland's national rugby union team, which, unlike the separate association football teams of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, represents the entire island. With the division on the island, conflictual past and current politics all squeezed into one match, such expressive outbursts were inevitable.

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<sup>148</sup> "8 years ago today the Bull's tears inspired a nation", *The 42*, 24 February 2015, available on <https://www.the42.ie/ireland-england-croke-park-2007-1956817-Feb2015/>, accessed on 27 January 2020.

<sup>149</sup> Hassan, David & McGuire, Andrew (2015), The GAA and revolutionary Irish politics in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland, *Sport in Society*, Vol: 19, No: 1, pp. 51 – 61.

Sports have the capacity to integrate social and political dynamics, and it acts as a medium for the reflections and reactions in these matters. As one of the most influential phenomena of social collectivity and outburst of common feelings and reactions, sports have a mutually constitutive relationship with the society.<sup>150</sup> Sports, with the fandom, competition, and heroism intrinsic to its nature, have a reciprocally influential relationship with the societies within which it operates. In this sense, it both influences the socio-political dynamics of a society, and it is reciprocally influenced by social conflicts and social inequalities. Sports field; therefore, is a field of combatting ideologies and it is in a direct and constant relationship with the political atmosphere which the athletes, teams, and fans respire.

According to Donnelly, the relationship of sports with the surrounding political setting, together with the social inequalities, can be analysed from the lenses of three perspectives.<sup>151</sup> The first one of these is the 'reflection' thesis; the structural functionalist view, which holds that sports reflect society just like a mirror. In this sense, depending on the researcher's position in the society, sport serves as a means of socialization for people into both approved dominant values and unacceptable ones. The second perspective, developed in the 1970s, is the 'reproduction' thesis, which contends that sport is a platform for maintaining the status quo that produces and reproduces the inequalities, where powerful groups exert dominance over subordinate groups. This thesis, contrary to the reflection perspective, gives sports a more active role in the maintaining of social order through generations. Starting from the early 1980s, with a focus on the feminist and neo-Marxist critiques to sport, a third perspective, 'resistance' made its way into the sociology of sport. According to this view, sport is seen as a 'contested terrain', and actors partaking in it are self-reflexive agents who have the ability to challenge the conditions under which the sport is practised. The development and the evolution of these perspectives demonstrate the need for a comprehensive and critical approach to the relation of sport with the social, political, and economic realms surrounding it.

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<sup>150</sup> Donnelly, Peter (1996), Approaches to Social Inequality in the Sociology of Sport, *Quest*, Vol: 48, No: 2, pp. 221 – 242.

<sup>151</sup> Donnelly, Approaches to Social Inequality in the Sociology of Sport.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a framework for the social analysis of the intersection of sports and nationalism. To this end, this chapter begins with an analysis of the relationship between sports and modernity, followed by further analysis of sports, nationalism, and the construction of national identity. The final section of this chapter sets a scene for the analysis of the intertwining encounters of sports mega-events and nationalism, with a particular emphasis on the Olympic Games.

### **3.1. Sports and Modernity**

Sport is a social product of modernity. With other transformations brought by modernity such as mass migrations from rural areas to cities, the emergence of regulated work shifts more than ever, and a working class alongside, every aspect that plays a determinant role in social relations underwent drastic transformations as well. In this sense, the games played as a leisure activity in the Middle Ages were codified and standardized with rules, acquiring the characteristics of a sport.<sup>152</sup> There are multiple perspectives on the understanding of sport as a social phenomenon. Weberian understanding views sport as a part of the ongoing rationalization of the world under the influence of Protestantism.<sup>153</sup> According to this view, just like economic activities, daily life and activities intrinsic to it is also related to Protestant ethics.<sup>154</sup> Physical activities become objects of measure, as well as economic activities, and sports represent a more ‘empirical, experimental and mathematic vision’ of the world.<sup>155</sup> On the other hand, Marxist understanding interprets the political economy of sports differently.

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<sup>152</sup> Elias, Norbert & Dunning, Eric (1986), *Quest for Excitement*, Dublin: University College Dublin Press, p. 5.

<sup>153</sup> Guttman, Allen (1978), *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>154</sup> Defrance, *Sociologie du Sport*, p. 18.

<sup>155</sup> Defrance, *Sociologie du Sport*, p. 19.

Classical Marxist understanding defines sport with its bourgeois characteristic, particularly because it was the bourgeoisie who paved the path to professional sports. They betted on the matches and paid working class athletes they betted on in order to compensate for the worktime they spent on the tracks, fields, and boxing rings. In this sense, for classical Marxists, sports was seen as a way of profit maximizing through gains from matches and competitions, disillusioning the working class from pursuing their class interests. Sports was perceived as a way for the dominant classes to uphold their ideology and pacifying the revolutionary aspiration.<sup>156</sup> As Karl Kautsky, one of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century's prominent Marxist scholars put it, "it is football, boxing, horse-racing and opportunities of gambling which move [the working class] the deepest and to which their entire leisure time, their individual powers, and their material means are devoted."<sup>157</sup>

Particularly following the Second World War, socialist countries like Yugoslavia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) took up sports as an influential political instrument. Marxist understanding of sports started to transform as well with a bigger focus on its mass effects, on the ideology embedded in the sporting spectacle, and the political awareness of the sporting fans.<sup>158</sup> Practices of fandom, in this sense, have the potential to create influential sets of counter-hegemonic discourses challenging the corporate domination over the realm of sports.<sup>159</sup> The main alteration in this view was put as the transformation capacity of sports in the hands of oppressed classes. This became particularly influential during the post-Second World War world marked by decolonization and the Cold War turbulence that reflected in the field of

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<sup>156</sup> Carrington, Ben (2008), Sport without final guarantees: Cultural studies/Marxism/sport in Ben Carrington & Ian McDonald (eds.), *Marxism, Cultural Studies and Sport*, London: Routledge, p. 21.

<sup>157</sup> Kautsky, Karl (1902), *The Social Revoluton*, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, p. 102.

<sup>158</sup> Brohm, Jean-Marie (1976), *Sociologie politique du sport*, Paris: Delarge-éditions universitaires, p. 26 as cited in Defrance, *Sociologie du Sport*, pp. 17 – 18.

<sup>159</sup> Carrington, Sport without final guarantees, p. 24.

sports through Olympic boycotts in 1980 and 1984. One of the most influential explanations of it was put forward by C.L.R. James on the subject of the adaptation and development of cricket in the West Indies and overturning of its function as the sport of the colonizer.<sup>160</sup>

This turn in the Marxist thought acknowledged differing aspects of inequality and oppression alongside the economic aspects of the commodification of athlete labour, spectacle, and competition.<sup>161</sup> These included a wider and more interconnected perspective on gender and race issues in sport. McDonald puts forward a two-way perspective for the Marxist understanding of sports, challenging the structures of power intrinsic to sports.<sup>162</sup> The first one stems from a paradoxical element embedded in sports, which is about the possibility of carrying the revolutionary potential in an extensively regulated structure. Therefore, according to this, sports must be simultaneously “preserved” [due to the very paradoxical criticality inherent to it] and “overcome” [the reproduction of the established political order by it]. The second perspective focuses more on the distant overreach of sports towards wider political questions and the potential to inflict or initiate awareness and change.

Pierre Bourdieu, on the other hand, focuses on the role of the education system in the transformation from ‘games’ to modern ‘sports’.<sup>163</sup> According to this view, the games of the past were transformed at the hands of the children of the bourgeoisie, who attended the public schools of Britain. The rationale behind this view of transformation is that the practices of the members of the upper bourgeois class differ from the common social practices that attached social functions to the traditional

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<sup>160</sup> James, C.L.R. (1963), *Beyond a Boundary*, London: Hutchinson.

<sup>161</sup> McDonald, Ian (2008), One-dimensional sport: Revolutionary Marxism and the critique of sport in Ben Carrington & Ian McDonald (eds.), *Marxism, Cultural Studies and Sport*, London: Routledge, p. 43.

<sup>162</sup> McDonald, One-dimensional sport, pp. 44 – 45.

<sup>163</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre (1978), Sport and Social Class, *Social Science Information*, translated by Richard Nice, Vol: 17, No: 6, pp. 819 – 840.

games. In the schoolyards, traditional games were transformed into ‘bodily exercises’ regulated around a calendar and detached from the social functions embedded in them. This way, sports came to acquire a character as the signifier of aristocratic virtues, with functions as ‘character building’ attributed to it. In this sense, the social gathering and ritualized aspect of traditional games transformed into an extensively regularized set of physical activities meant to signify values and esteemed characteristics for the generations of upper classes. The reason behind this is that the generations that are taught in the public schools develop a more ‘distant and neutralizing’ relationship with the social world, just like the bourgeoisie does, with the intent of raising the future leaders with values appropriate for them.

Elias and Dunning put an emphasis on the transformation of the violent confrontations of the Middle Ages into codified sporting events.<sup>164</sup> In this sense, sports came to obtain a more significant symbolic value, that which represents a non-violent form of competition. Adopting a developmentalist approach, they contend that the emergence of modern sports is quite related to the codification of social relations in England.<sup>165</sup> The ‘cycles of violence’ that encircled the English political and social life for the most part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century gradually settled with the increasing unity among the upper classes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Declining administrative power of the king vis-à-vis that of the landed classes and the increased commercialization and the growth of wealth that followed facilitated a transition to a more institutionalized form of contest to political power. The transformations of the early periods of industrialization in the social, economic, and political life both in rural and urban areas led the two prominent classes of nobility, the landowning aristocracy and hereditary gentry, to transfer their contestations into an institutionalized level of parliamentary competition through the political parties of Whigs and Tories respectively. This paved the way for non-violent means of dispute settling to be more thoroughly instituted, replacing the violent

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<sup>164</sup> Elias & Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*.

<sup>165</sup> Elias & Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*, p. 8.

conflicts.<sup>166</sup> It also included a common understanding between landed classes to a non-violent contest for political power according to a set of rules accepted by both parties. This is highly related to the state formation processes regarding the emergence of parliamentary regimes in England, particularly with the landed classes viewing the Parliament as lieu to realize their plight to political power against the King. This transformed the estate assemblies, where the landed class exerted political decision-making earlier, into the House of Commons and the House of Lords, giving the members of upper classes a novel platform of political struggle.<sup>167</sup> Elias and Dunning call this as ‘sportisation’ which refers to a novel form of rivalry that envisages transparent, non-violent means regulated around a code book rather than military action.<sup>168</sup>

The institutionalization of conflicts trickled down to other areas than parliamentary democracy and paved the way for a more codified and regularized rhythm of social life. Leisure activities, or ‘pastimes’ as preferred by Elias and Dunning, were highly influenced by these processes of institutionalization and codification. All kinds of pastimes from urban festivities to sporting events underwent these transformations. Sports, in this sense, emerged as a modern form of competition, and many branches of sports were diffused to the world originating from Britain. One of the most significant initializers of the development and spread of modern sports were the sports clubs.<sup>169</sup> These clubs played a significant role in the standardization of the code of play. They developed rules that are agreed upon and instituted by the notables who play the games, and they appointed supervisors who would enforce the rules. With all these developments, England became the origin of most sports codes that diffused around the world.

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<sup>166</sup> Elias & Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*, p. 15.

<sup>167</sup> Elias & Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*, p. 20.

<sup>168</sup> Elias & Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*, p. 17.

<sup>169</sup> Elias & Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*, p. 21.



The modern sports is generally institutionalized and diffused by the hand of the administrative elite of colonially expanding countries. Civil society plays a significant role as well, as can be seen in the role of Touring Club de France, which played a crucial role in the spread of alpine skiing from the north into France.<sup>170</sup> However, the diffusion of modern sports around the world is mostly related to the colonisation processes primarily dominated by the English and the French. Elias and Dunning emphasize the complementary effect of sports over industrialized societies, through its physical aspect of transforming the sedentary lives of the population into more active ones and its emotive aspect that reflects itself through the outbursts of emotions and reactions towards what is happening on tracks, fields, and rings.<sup>171</sup> During the emergence of modern sports, sporting competitions obtained a national characteristic, which worked in two ways. Firstly, it was instrumentalized by the states as a way of uniformity in the national sense and as disciplining the population. Secondly, sports came to be a way of resistance as well as a way of exerting power. In this sense, it is important to focus on sports as a field where nationalism is overtly expressed and instrumentalised.

### **3.2. Sporting Nationalism**

Sports and nationalism are often two issues that go hand-in-hand since the emergence of modern sports is highly interconnected with the rise of modern nation-states. With the extensive international calendar intrinsic to sporting events, sport provides a wide lieu for national aspirations to be disseminated; thus, nation-states instrumentalize this field for the aim of underlining ‘the nation’. Sporting fields facilitate the imagining of a national collective by members who do not have comprehensive and everyday contact with one another. In this sense, for the most part, the most common form of nationalist outburst is expressed in sports through the

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<sup>170</sup> Defrance, *Sociologie du Sport*, p. 23.

<sup>171</sup> Elias & Dunning, *Quest for Excitement*, pp. 23 – 24.

supporters of national teams and athletes.<sup>172</sup> Therefore, particularly in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, newly consolidating nation-states effectively exploited the sporting field in favour of putting forward the nationhood that gives it a unique character.

In the analysis of sporting events and nationalist politics, sportive and non-sportive usually go hand-in-hand in different national contexts.<sup>173</sup> The meaning of sporting events for nation-states may be comprised of a number of different components such as prestige, legitimacy, and international rivalries.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, success in the fields is often translated into national pride and serves to assert national identity. Furthermore, sport can also have the potential to undermine the nationalism promoted by nation-states themselves and challenge them through exposing different nationalisms other than the one officially propagated.<sup>175</sup> According to Allison & Monnington, national prestige can be extracted from sports in two ways.<sup>176</sup> These are being recognized by taking part in sports events or displaying power through hosting the events or winning honours in them. According to Bairner, the link between national identity and sports can be formed through the adoption of a certain code as 'national sport', which may refer to a sport invented or developed in a nation or one with which a nation strongly identifies itself.<sup>177</sup> These ways of establishing links between sports and national identity have been widely utilized by the newly emerging nation-states.

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<sup>172</sup> Kellas, James G. (1991), *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, p. 21.

<sup>173</sup> Hoberman, John Milton (1993), Sport and Ideology in the Post-Communist Age in Lincoln Allison (ed.), *The Politics of Sport*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 18.

<sup>174</sup> Hargreaves, John (1992), Olympism and Nationalism: Some Preliminary Considerations, *International Review for Sociology of Sport*, Vol: 27, No: 1, pp. 119 – 135.

<sup>175</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 18.

<sup>176</sup> Allison & Monnington, *Sport, Prestige and International Relations*.

<sup>177</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, pp. 18 – 19.

Sporting fields are not merely fields of competition for athletes and teams; they are also contested terrains on a number of other levels. Class struggle manifests itself through ownership of sporting companies, commercialization of fandom, and commodification of athlete labour. Equal participation, representation, and working conditions have been at the centre of gender equality struggle in sports. Race and ethnicity have also been a part of this terrain through both oppressive practices and resistance adopted in sports fields. In this sense, the type of ‘contested’ness changes depending on the level and type of attributions attached to the elements of sporting events. In the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of nation-states, national identity came to be the defining terrain of contestation.

In this period of the simultaneous rise of modern sports and nation-states, several trends of instrumentalization of sports by nationalist politics can be traced. One is regarding the role of sports in places like Catalonia or Taiwan, where it serves as a way of obtaining cultural autonomy.<sup>178</sup> People in these places assert their national identities through establishing attachment to certain branches of sports of clubs like Barcelona. Another one is established by national groups who are seceding from a dominating or colonising state during the nation formation processes. One of the clearest examples for this may be the case of Ireland in the process of independence from the United Kingdom and the instrumentalization of sports through the GAA. Founded in 1884 by Michael Cusack, an Irish nationalist, the GAA was poised to take a nationalist stance in order to establish credibility in the eyes of the Irish public opinion.<sup>179</sup> In charge of affairs related to traditional Irish sports like hurling and Gaelic football, the GAA attracted the attention of the Gaelic League, a nationalist organization focusing on national revival through an emphasis on cultural elements, most importantly, the Irish language.<sup>180</sup> Many of those affiliated with the Gaelic

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<sup>178</sup> Jarvie, Grant (2003), Internationalism and Sport in the Making of Nations, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, Vol: 10, No: 4, pp. 537 – 551.

<sup>179</sup> Hassan & McGuire, The GAA and revolutionary Irish politics in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland.

<sup>180</sup> Billings, Cathal (2017), Speaking Irish with hurley sticks: Gaelic sports, the Irish language and national identity in revival Ireland, *Sport in History*, Vol: 37, No: 1, pp. 25 – 50.

League became members of the GAA and, in turn, the GAA published its leaflets and rulebooks in Irish.

The GAA transformed traditional Irish sports into ways of consolidating the Irish nationhood at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most significant examples was the Gaelic Sunday on 4 August 1918 when the GAA held simultaneous games of Gaelic sports across the island of Ireland. In response to a decree by the British rulers requiring everyone who wished to take part in Gaelic sports to register at the law enforcement authorities, the GAA organized approximately 1500 hurling, camogie, and Gaelic football matches throughout Ireland, drawing more than 45.000 athletes and over 100.000 spectators.<sup>181</sup> By enabling the practising of traditional sports, the GAA played a crucial part in patching the members of a national group together. However, traditional sports are not the only link establishing nationhood in terms of sporting activities. Taking up a sport that is attributed to the culture of a colonizing country as a way of challenging the colonizer can be a form of national resistance as well just as in the case of West Indies and cricket as accounted by James.<sup>182</sup> Another trend is participation in sporting events which can play a consolidating role in nation formation. Following the Irish example, Irish athletes' participation in the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens, a sports event marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the modern Olympic Games, can set an example to this.<sup>183</sup> When denied competing under the Irish flag as Ireland was not an independent country with a National Olympic Committee of its own, Irish athletes participated in the Games with the British delegation; however, they wore green blazers with golden shamrocks on them. When one of the athletes, Peter O'Connor, won the silver medal in the long jump, during the medal ceremony, he and a fellow Irish athlete Con Leahy took down the British flag

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<sup>181</sup> McGuire, Andrew & Hassan, David (2012), Cultural Nationalism, Gaelic Sunday and the Gaelic Athletic Association in Early Twentieth Century Ireland, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 29, No: 6, pp. 912 – 923.

<sup>182</sup> James, C.L.R. (1963), *Beyond a Boundary*, London: Hutchinson.

<sup>183</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, pp. 37 – 39.

and hoisted the Irish flag instead of it. In this sense, sportive participation has a significant impact on nation formation, both in terms of consolidating the national group by virtually bringing the members together and by demonstrating the nation before other nations and seeking recognition. To this end, nationalist movements employ different ways of linking sports to their political agenda.

Bairner contends that sport provides a two-fold opportunity for consolidation of national identity, one is for the expression of national identity, and the other is for a concrete representation of the signs of “a nation’s very existence”.<sup>184</sup> In this sense, there are different focal points among the scholars of sportive nationalism regarding the constitutive elements of nationalism in sports. Hoberman, for instance, extends his focus on the promotion of nationalist sentiments through high-performance and the techniques that are employed to attain it.<sup>185</sup> This perspective was particularly effective in the analysis of the instrumentalization of sports in the context of nation-state formation. However, this view was criticised as to its potential to undermine or overlook other forms of nationalisms not necessarily state-centred or linked with state institutions, embedded in sports.<sup>186</sup> National groups that are not organized within the form of a state also use sports to express nationalist sentiments.

Sporting events of stateless nations domestically and in international organizations or matches can serve as a means for asserting the national identity, both in terms of consolidating the national group in a way its members can ‘imagine’ themselves as part of the nation, underlining the nation’s distinctiveness vis-à-vis other nations. Scotland, the nation which obtains a number of administrative institutions but

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<sup>184</sup> Bairner, Alan (1996), Sportive Nationalism and Nationalist Politics: A Comparative Analysis of Scotland, the Republic of Ireland and Sweden, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, Vol: 20, No: 3, pp. 314 – 334.

<sup>185</sup> Hoberman, Sport and Ideology in the Post-Communist Age, p. 15.

<sup>186</sup> Hargreaves, Olympism and Nationalism; Kidd, Bruce (1992), The Culture Wars of the Montreal Olympics, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol: 27, No: 2, pp. 151 – 164.

is not a state, can provide a clarifying example.<sup>187</sup> Internally, the ensuing competition between Rangers and Celtic, the two major teams of the city of Glasgow, presents a good example of how sporting nationalism is reflected in domestic events. This rivalry, called the Old Firm, is most visibly defined on sectarian terms, which define the national attachments of the two teams.<sup>188</sup> The contention between two teams, defined on religious and ethnic terms, become contentious from time to time.<sup>189</sup> The Rangers is associated with the Protestant community of Scotland which embraces a strong British identity and allegiance to the integrity of the United Kingdom. Rangers fans, dominantly Protestants, express these sentiments with Union Jack flags and loyalist chants such as Rule Britannia during matches. Celtic, on the other hand, mostly inherits its Irish Catholic origins which lie in the immigrants from Ireland who arrived in Scotland during the famines of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Celtic fans, as opposed to the loyalist views of their Rangers counterparts, lean towards more Republican and secessionist views. Therefore, unfurling banners praising the members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or chanting in favour of Scottish independence from the UK is not an uncommon site to see in Celtic matches. Therefore, Celtic can be said to have created a 'nationalist sub-culture'.<sup>190</sup> Finn contends that the fact that Irish-Scottish clubs dominantly took up football rather than bringing along Gaelic Games demonstrated a willingness to appeal to the Scottish

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<sup>187</sup> McCrone, David (1992), *Understanding Scotland: The sociology of a stateless nation*, London: Routledge as cited in Bairner, Sportive Nationalism and Nationalist Politics.

<sup>188</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 55.

<sup>189</sup> "Rangers make history out of chaos", *BBC News*, 3 May 1999, available on [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/sport/football/scottish\\_premier/334094.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/sport/football/scottish_premier/334094.stm), accessed on 27 March 2020.

<sup>190</sup> Bradley, Joseph M. (1995), *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland*, Aldershot, UK: Avebury, p. 167.

identity.<sup>191</sup> Therefore, symbols and prominent figures of Scottish independence struggle such as William Wallace also can be found on banners of the Celtic fans alongside Irish Republican chants and banners.<sup>192</sup> In this sense, domestic competitions, events and rivalries appear to demonstrate a very significant role in the formation of nationalist politics.

Yugoslavia in its socialist era and its organization of sports during the formation of the socialist republican regime with the reflections of the rising nationalist sentiments on sports, during the dismantlement of the regime, can provide an important example to the relationship of nationalism and sport as well. After the Second World War, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia ceased to exist and the Communist Party led by the partisan leader Josip Broz Tito, the head of the triumphant struggle against the Nazi invasion, immediately took up the formation of a novel, socialist federation. This wholesale reorganization sought a complete break with the country's monarchical past, and sport underwent a drastic change as well.<sup>193</sup> This overhaul did not have a particularly nationalistic aim as the Communist Party deemed all sorts of nationalism as deplorable.<sup>194</sup> The efforts were rather aimed at the formation of an overarching Yugoslav identity establishing the link between the federal republics, each hosting diverse ethnic groups. At the heart of this bonding of Yugoslav identity was the common struggle of different peoples against the Nazi invasion and therefore, the

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<sup>191</sup> Finn, Gerry T. P. (1994), Faith, Hope and Bigotry: Case Studies of Anti-Catholic Prejudice in Scottish Soccer and Society in Grant Jarvie and Graham Walker (eds.), *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?* Leicester: Leicester University Press, p. 91.

<sup>192</sup> "Celtic set to find out disciplinary decision later today regarding Green Brigade's Bobby Sands banner", *Independent*, 13 December 2013, available on <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/scottish/celtic-set-to-find-out-disciplinary-decision-later-today-regarding-green-brigades-bobby-sands-banner-9002497.html>, accessed on 27 March 2020.

<sup>193</sup> Mills, Richard (2018), *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State*, London, New York: I. B. Tauris, p. 74.

<sup>194</sup> Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State*, p. 75.

sporting overhaul of the socialist regime took into consideration the activities of sports organizations during the occupation.

Sports, particularly team sports like football, basketball, handball, and water polo, were key in the state-building process. Sports organizations and teams, with very few exceptions, were mostly scrapped as remnants of the old regime due to their continued activities during the Nazi invasion, which were regarded as the legitimization of the occupation. Only exceptions were teams like *Hajduk Split* and their wartime activities alongside the partisans helped them survive the post-war closures.<sup>195</sup> Teams like *Beogradski Sport Klub*, Belgrade Sports Club (BSK); however, were eradicated due to their wartime activities alongside occupiers due to being regarded as symbols of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>196</sup> The BSK, for instance, allegedly expelled its Jewish players in 1941 which was considered as aligning with the Nazis in the Yugoslav part of the Holocaust. Furthermore, the BSK took part in a tournament, Dragi Jovanovic Cup, organized in honour of Belgrade's mayor during the Second World War. All these associated the club with the racism of the war period and made it inevitable for the BSK to be closed after the war.

Socialist Yugoslavia, willing to replace the nationalist sentiments embedded in sports with the socialist camaraderie, encouraged the formation of workers' sports clubs which included athletes from different ethnic backgrounds. As an example, *Metalaca* (Metalworker), with Tito as its honorary president replaced the BSK as a football club of Belgrade, the federal capital of socialist Yugoslavia. Furthermore, post-war Yugoslavia also sought a rapid reconciliation among the federal republics, in this sense, novel sports clubs welcomed former members who served during the Kingdom or during the occupation, so long as expressed willingness to take part in the new regime. To that end, many of the former members of the BSK became members of *Metalaca*.<sup>197</sup> Ethnic diversity in sports teams was promoted in socialist Yugoslavia,

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<sup>195</sup> Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State* p. 71.

<sup>196</sup> Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State* pp. 74 – 75.

<sup>197</sup> Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State* p. 77.



and teams like *Velez Mostar* received praise from Tito for it.<sup>198</sup> This sports policy gained Yugoslavia international recognition, particularly with successes in team sports like basketball.<sup>199</sup> Sport, insofar as it was instrumentalized in the forming periods of socialist Yugoslavia, was equally influential during its dissolution. In the formation of the socialist regime, football was essential in designating the territorial boundaries of cities and federal republics.<sup>200</sup> During the war and in its preamble, sports clubs became the flag bearers of ethnic and territorial claims of the federal republics they were aligned with. Fan groups started gradually to come under the control of nationalist figures, such as Zeljko Raznatovic or *Arkan*, an influential ex-amateur football player who had close ties with Serbian nationalist leader Slobodan Milosevic, taking over the terraces of *Crvena Zvezda* of Belgrade.<sup>201</sup> For many, the beginning of the civil war in Yugoslavia can be marked by a football match between *Dinamo Zagreb* and *Crvena Zvezda* on 13 May 1990 in Zagreb, where the Croat and Serbian fans clashed which was the beginning of the demise of Yugoslav First League and the Maksimir stadium in Zagreb eventually came to be called as the ‘tomb of Yugoslavia’.<sup>202</sup> However essential in the literature on sport and nationalism, a detailed analysis of the reflections of Yugoslavian ethnic tensions on sports does not fall within the scope of this thesis. Both from a temporal point of view, being in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and with the merit of being the formative stage of the state of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the developments in the Yugoslavian sport in the period of 1945-48 as briefly summarized above is more related to the analysis of the early Republican era

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<sup>198</sup> Mills, Richard (2010), *Velež Mostar Football Club and the Demise of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ in Yugoslavia, 1922-2009*, *Europe – Asia Studies*, Vol: 62, No: 7, pp. 1107 – 1133.

<sup>199</sup> Perica, Vjekoslav (2001), *United they stood, divided they fell: Nationalism and the Yugoslav school of basketball*, *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Vol: 29, No: 2, pp. 267 – 291.

<sup>200</sup> Mills, *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State* p. 72.

<sup>201</sup> Trégourès, Loïc (2019), *Le Football dans le chaos yougoslave*, Paris: Non Lieu, p. 41.

<sup>202</sup> Trégourès, *Le Football dans le chaos yougoslave*, p. 51.

in Turkey and with the role of sports in its nationalist politics. The example of the organization of domestic sports in the socialist Yugoslavia particularly proves useful in the discussion of how Turkey organized domestic sports clubs in Chapter 5. However, in order to obtain a full understanding of the relationship between sports and nationalist politics and the main focus of this thesis, discussing the ties between nationalist politics with international sports is essential.

International sports provide a very useful platform for nationalist politics to put forward their case. Through sports, nationalist politics finds an opportunity to define who they are and in certain cases who they are not. Following the Scottish case, where the most visible characteristic of sporting nationalism is anti-Englishness,<sup>203</sup> international context of sporting events can be proved quite relevant with nationalism. Since sports like football or rugby are of English origin and their spread throughout the world because of Britain's colonial ties, the fixtures between England and Scotland often provide the first regular and codified examples of international sporting events. Annual fixtures between Scotland and England national football teams, for around 100 years from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gave the Scottish the opportunity to root for the national team just as if they are in a battle with the 'Auld Enemy'.<sup>204</sup> When the fixture was scrapped in 1989, rugby union replaced football with the annual Calcutta Cup, another oldest international fixture in rugby union, played during the Six Nations Championships and the Rugby World Cup matches. The Scottish Rugby Football Union's (SRFU) adoption of *Flower of Scotland* as the team's anthem, a nationalist song about the Battle of Bannockburn, the last battle where Scots beat the English army, indicates rugby's centrality in the expression of nationalist sentiments. According to Forsyth, the very emotional rendition of *Flower of Scotland* before the Five Nations Championship match in Edinburgh in 1990 presents a significant change by a profoundly conservative institution.<sup>205</sup> Loud terraces of the

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<sup>203</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 65.

<sup>204</sup> Bairner, *Sportive Nationalism and Nationalist Politics*.

<sup>205</sup> Forsyth, Roddy (1992), *Sport*, in Magnus Linklater & Robin Denniston (eds.) *Anatomy of Scotland*, Edinburgh: Chambers, pp. 334 – 353 as cited in Bairner, *Sportive Nationalism and Nationalist Politics*.

Murrayfield stadium that day expressed anti-English sentiments clearly as they represented the Scottish discontent against the ‘poll tax’ recently introduced in Scotland by Margaret Thatcher government.<sup>206</sup> International fixtures; therefore, provide extremely suitable grounds for the revealing of nationalist sentiments.

Traditional sports like the Irish hurling or the Scottish shinty can prove useful for underlining the Irishness or Scottishness respectively. However, international sporting events make ground for a wider definition of the national group with a wider appeal, due to the extensive overreach of the codes they are played by. For sports like baseball, which is the most traditional American national sport,<sup>207</sup> and American football, which is most dominantly played in the United States, their appeal comes from providing lieus asserting American supremacy. As Bairner suggests, “‘Playing with themselves’ genuinely amounts to world-class sporting action”.<sup>208</sup> This is the underlying reason why the championship game of the Major League Baseball is called the World Series and the champions are called World Champions. For Canadians, on the other hand, the significance of the national sport of ice hockey is determined by the success in the international arena, because of its wider international appeal. For that reason, international sporting events such as the Olympic Games or even those on a smaller scale like the Commonwealth Games are of much bigger significance for Canadians.<sup>209</sup> This requires a larger focus on the international sporting events as significant terrains for nationalist politics.

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<sup>206</sup> Maguire, Joseph & Tuck, Jason (1998), Global Sports and Patriot Games: Rugby Union and National Identity in a United Sporting Kingdom since 1945, *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol: 17, No: 1, pp. 103 – 126.

<sup>207</sup> Zirin, Dave (2008), *A People’s History of Sports in the United States: 250 Years of Politics, Protest, People and Play*, New York: The New Press, p. 30.

<sup>208</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, pp. 167 – 168.

<sup>209</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 168.

### 3.3. Mega Sports Events and Nationalism

Tomlinson and Young define a mega-event as “an event that has come to involve the majority of the nations around the world, that is transmitted globally, that foregrounds the sculptured and commodified body and orchestrates a physical display of the body politic, and that attracts large and regular followings of on-site spectators for the live contest or event”.<sup>210</sup> These cultural, political, and commercial aspects form the basis of the modern Olympic project. Roche, furthermore, defines mega-events as “large-scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance”.<sup>211</sup> The World’s Fairs, to mention an example, have been a very influential ground for the participant states to demonstrate their position on political, economic, and cultural terms by displaying technological advancements or other cultural aspects in an international platform.<sup>212</sup> Indeed, John MacAloon stresses the influence of international expos on the formation of the modern Olympic Games.<sup>213</sup> Sporting events form a unique cluster among mega-events with those like the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cups forming the biggest of them.<sup>214</sup> A significant number of large-scale sporting events are organized in multi-annual cycles, such as four-year periods, throughout which massive cultural, political, social, and economic sets of output are

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<sup>210</sup> Tomlinson, Alan & Young, Christopher (2006), Culture, Politics and Spectacle in the Global Sports Event -An Introduction in Alan Tomlinson & Christopher Young (eds.), *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the World Cup*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 3.

<sup>211</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 1.

<sup>212</sup> Çelik, Zeynep (1992), *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth Century World’s Fairs*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 3.

<sup>213</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 91.

<sup>214</sup> “Olympics and World Cup are the biggest, but what comes next?”, *BBC*, 04 December 2014, available on <https://www.bbc.com/sport/30326825>, accessed on 03 April 2020.

generated. High level of attraction that sports mega-events draw in terms of athlete participation, fan attendance, economic activities related to them, and through media attention, sports mega-events gained a status of crucial platforms for states and non-state entities.

Roche contends that there are at least four reasons that bring mega-events into the focus of social sciences.<sup>215</sup> He lists them at the personal, national historical, cultural-historical and general sociological levels. The personal level corresponds to the significance of memorable great public events in biographies and identities of people living in modern societies. These events could well be wars or other major political changes; however, changes in fashion -just as Simmel underlines their unifying and segregating functions in terms of social class formations- step forward as major cultural markers in people's biographies.<sup>216</sup> However, instead of underlining the peculiarities of the fashion in certain eras, people tend to respond to these changes around them by referencing to mega-events, which make the Olympic Games or World's Fairs relevant at the personal level. The national historical level, on the other hand, is related to the contemporality between the emergence of mega-events and the emergence of nation-states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Greenhalgh holds, due to the political and economic circumstances being suitable for the expansion and shaping of mega-events such as exhibitions, that was the most accurate period for their emergence.<sup>217</sup> At this level, the biggest significance of mega-events is their relation to the 'story of a nation' since through the mega-events nations obtain opportunities to form and present their own images 'in the eyes of the world'.<sup>218</sup> Mega-events serve the

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<sup>215</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 5.

<sup>216</sup> Simmel, Georg (1957), *Fashion*, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol: 62, No: 6, pp. 541 – 558, a reprint of Simmel, Georg (1904), *Fashion*, *International Quarterly* (New York), X (October, 1904), pp. 130 – 155.

<sup>217</sup> Greenhalgh, Paul (1988), *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 27.

<sup>218</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 6.

purpose of ‘inventing and imagining’ the national past, present, and future.<sup>219</sup> At the cultural-historical level, the main focus on mega-events revolves around their ability to bring together the advancements in the areas of Western high-culture such as technology, art and architecture, and mass popular attraction, both domestic and international. In this way, mega-events served to cultivate mass cultural interest. Finally, the general sociological importance of mega-events come from their ‘movements’ and their networks’ capacity to disseminate information and values.<sup>220</sup> Mega-events can be considered as functional social rituals, which give them the capacity to structure the temporal and spatial dimensions of modernity, both at national and international levels.

In a world which is arguably becoming culturally homogenized and in which places are becoming interchangeable, they create transitory uniqueness, difference and localisation in space and time. Sociologically they offer concrete, if transient, versions and visions of symbolic and participatory community.<sup>221</sup>

Social rituals at a grand scale which transcend or change temporal boundaries can be traced way back from modernity. Fairs, for instance, were a very significant component of the Medieval economic structure.<sup>222</sup> However, the mega-events that were formed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as the World’s Fairs and the Olympic Games are modern by characteristic as they were formed around ideologies and principles such as techno-rationalism, capitalism and urbanism which are all attached to modernism. On the other hand, they contain elements that correspond to modernity’s past and its future as well.<sup>223</sup> Furthermore, they include national and international

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<sup>219</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 6.

<sup>220</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 7.

<sup>221</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 7.

<sup>222</sup> Pirenne, Henri (1937), *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, trans., Ivy, E. Clegg, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, p. 96.

<sup>223</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 9.

dimensions at the same time, with nationalist politics using platforms involving global participation for disseminating new hegemonic and/or official ideologies towards the masses.<sup>224</sup> Mega-events; therefore, are among the most important platforms of political conflicts.

An important bulk of the literature on sports mega-events and national identity is based on the nationalist displays of the host nation. However, for nationalist politics to utilise sports organizations, such events neither have to be hosted by them nor have to be at an international scale. Since the focus of this thesis is on international -and, hence, mega- sports events, organizations that are at a national scale are not discussed in detail. However, national sports events are significant as well in the process of nation-formation. An example of this can be the Tailteann Games of Ireland, comprised of competitions of traditional Irish games.<sup>225</sup> Tailteann Games have, just like the Olympic Games, ancient roots with the last edition being held in 1168 AD, a year before the Norman invasion of Ireland. After the Irish Free State was founded in 1921, efforts to revive the Games began as a way of demonstrating to the world that Ireland was no longer a colony. The first modern Tailteann Games were organized in 1924, appealing both to the inhabitant Irish population on the island of Ireland and Irish émigré(e)s overseas. More than 5,000 athletes took part in the games, and an important number of them were from Irish emigrant countries. The Games also attracted participation from non-Irish athletes; therefore, they also had an international character to a certain extent. The epicentre of the Games was the Croke Park in Dublin, the significance of which for Irish sports was discussed earlier. The GAA was given extra funds for the renovation of the Croke Park to be used at the Games, both for competitions and ceremonies. Most of the sports were modern sports including

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<sup>224</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 9.; Cornelissen, Scarlett, (2004), It's Africa's Turn! The Narratives and Legitimations Surrounding the Moroccan and South African Bids for the 2006 and 2010 FIFA Finals, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol: 25, No: 7, pp. 1293 – 1309; Cornelissen, Scarlett & Swart, Kamilla, (2006), The 2010 Football World Cup as a political construct: the challenge of making good on an African promise, *Sociological Review*, Vol: 54, No: 2, pp. 108 – 123.

<sup>225</sup> Cronin, Mike & Duncan, Mark & Rouse, Paul (2014), *The GAA: A People's History*, Cork: The Collins Press, pp. 158 – 159.

motorbike, sidecar and aeroplane races which attracted an audience of 50,000 to the Phoenix Park in Dublin. However, Irish national sports of Gaelic football and hurling were also among the biggest events of the Games. The Games, besides including Gaelic football and hurling competitions, made heavy references to the Irish ancestral traditions such as mythical figures from Irish past accompanying the athletes at the opening ceremony parade. In this sense, the Tailteann Games were a reinvention of ancient Irish tradition.<sup>226</sup> Therefore, the modern Tailteann Games present a significant example of consolidating national identity through references to ancestral roots of Irish heritage. The Tailteann Games were held two more subsequent times in 1928 and 1932.

Sports in this sense is one of the most significant social practices for the imagining of national identity. According to Hobsbawm, sports in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century is marked by several changes which included those in the former versions of dissemination, the invention of novel forms, and institutionalization of sports on national and international levels.<sup>227</sup> This institutionalization extended the public overreach of sports, paving the way for wider access to practices which were once confined to the bourgeoisie and included the middle class. Furthermore, they served to the bringing together of people that obtained equal social status and lacked any other means of organic link and they provided a novel role to the bourgeois women, as public figures. While discussing the social and political dimensions of the invention of sporting traditions, Hobsbawm emphasizes the upper and middle class character of institutionalized sports with its efforts to replace the aristocratic order and its praise of amateurism, drawing the class line against working classes.<sup>228</sup> However, the novel form of sports remedied the division on class lines by providing a medium for national identification. Sporting events were useful for this aim in two ways. One is through

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<sup>226</sup> Cronin, Mike (2003), Projecting the Nation through Sport and Culture: Ireland, Aonach Tailteann and the Irish Free State, 1924-32, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol: 38, No: 3, pp. 395 – 411.

<sup>227</sup> Hobsbawm, Mass-Producing Traditions, pp. 298 – 299.

<sup>228</sup> Hobsbawm, Mass-Producing Traditions, p. 300.



displaying the links that bound together all inhabitants of a nation-state. This can be exemplified by two of the Grand Tours of cycling, Tour de France and Giro d'Italia, respectively. Both commenced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1903 and 1909), these tours were designed to allow the racers to travel around the country through stages. Both of these cycling races were primarily commercial endeavours for newspapers (*L'Auto* for Tour de France and *Gazzetta dello Sport* for Giro d'Italia) seeking publicity. However, they also served to the imagining and inventing of French and Italian national identities. Thinking back to Anderson's conceptualizations of 'print capitalism' and 'imagined communities', it was only suitable for this to be achieved by these two newspapers.<sup>229</sup> First editions of the Tour de France, for instance, served as means for integrating knowledge and values held at local landscapes into a larger, national scale.<sup>230</sup> Giro d'Italia, as another example, was by tapping into the 'cultural currents' of Italian everyday life, such as the physical challenges faced by the working class, cycling's identification with industrial advancements and its appeal to educated upper and middle classes served to this end.<sup>231</sup> These events with all the economic and commercial phenomena revolving around them had also such political impacts. The other one is at the international level, which at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to a great extent represented by the Olympic Games, and which have been dominantly a middle class phenomenon.<sup>232</sup> As this period coincided with the emergence and consolidation of nation-states, particularly in Europe, nationalist politics and the Olympic Games at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were now mostly intertwined.

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<sup>229</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>230</sup> Campos, Christophe (2003), Beating the bounds: The Tour de France and national identity, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 20, No: 2, pp. 149 – 174.

<sup>231</sup> Cardoza, Anthony (2010), 'Making Italians'? Cycling and national identity in Italy: 1900–1950, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol: 15, No: 3, pp. 354 – 377.

<sup>232</sup> Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions*, p. 301.

International sports mega-events, such as the FIFA Men's World Cup, help bring out the nationalist sentiments of the participant nations as well. Skey, for instance, observes the sporting cycle of 2002, 2004 and 2006 when England's football team competed in two FIFA Men's World Cups (2002 Japan & South Korea and 2006 Germany), and the travel of Team Great Britain to Athens for the Summer Olympics of 2004.<sup>233</sup> Drawing on Billig's conceptualization of 'banal nationalism', Skey points to the extensive presence of national flags during this cycle, which overlapped with Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee in 2002, and defines such events as 'ecstatic nationalism' where the nation is formed and concretised with the help of these events defining, disseminating and challenging the daily enactment of banal national identities. Building on Billig's analysis of how daily elements such as symbols, political speeches or mass media texts serve to the sustaining and upholding of national identities, Skey contends that public events like national day ceremonies or international mega-events such as the Olympic Games facilitate the imagining of the nation by its members. Unfurling flags, gathering to follow matches and competitions, and the topic of these competitions being at the higher ranks of the daily agenda of the wider population establish an imagined contact amongst national group members through day-to-day activities. However, contrary to Bilig's concept of banal nationalism which stems from the very daily activities that serve to maintain and sustain the national identity, ecstatic nationalism refers to the particular public occasions that are designed to celebrate a specific national community on a mass scale. Ecstatic events are pre-planned, and they are organised with reference to symbols and assumptions seeping through the everyday life of nations. In this sense, they may appeal to nations without states as well as nations defined with a nation-state. They hinder the daily life and routines of the cities or countries where they take place by using everyday symbols such as flags and through different media outlets, seeping through both the public and private spheres. The Olympic Games, a quadrennial event with the participation of a great number of states and altering the life in the city they are held in greatly, provide a significant opportunity for the nations to invent and imagine national identity.

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<sup>233</sup> Skey, 'Carnivals of Surplus Emotion?'

The revival of the Olympic Games was extensively interlinked with the event's roots dating back to the Ancient Greek version, which was held from 776 B.C. to 261 A.D.<sup>234</sup> The person who pursued and actualized the revival was Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who was quite intimate with the European aristocracy, derived inspiration from the Hellenic cultural tradition in seeking to rejuvenate the Olympic Games. This project aimed at bringing together the nations of the world in sports. Coubertin, in this sense, sought to integrate the aristocratic values with the turn-of-the-century cosmopolitanism. Coubertin coined this project as 'Olympism' which, to him, was about an aristocratic elite.<sup>235</sup> Coubertin derived an almost religious doctrine out of Olympism, making the Olympic Games a stage where athletes performed the likes of a religious ritual by taking part in the Games with 'effort' and 'eurythmy' which denoted the balanced harmony of art and athletics, bringing together sports and aesthetics at the same time.<sup>236</sup> Indeed, the Olympic Games for Coubertin was a way of promoting modernist art.<sup>237</sup> Between the Olympics of 1912 Stockholm and 1948 London, art competitions in categories like literature, sculpture, and music took place. Coubertin's doctrine of Olympism proclaimed to have been built on the premises of peace, and this was highly related to the ancient roots of the Olympic Games. One of the traditions of the Ancient Olympic Games was the Olympic Truce, ensuring the host city-state would not be attacked during the Games and the athletes could travel safely.<sup>238</sup> Therefore, Coubertin contended that "to celebrate the Olympic Games is to

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<sup>234</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 11.

<sup>235</sup> Coubertin, Pierre de (2000), *Olympism: Selected Writings*, N. Müller (ed.), Lausanne, International Olympic Committee as cited in Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 13.

<sup>236</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, pp. 13 – 14.

<sup>237</sup> Brown, Douglas (2001), Modern Sport, Modernism and the Cultural Manifesto: De Coubertin's *Revue Olympique*, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 18, No: 2, pp. 78 – 109.

<sup>238</sup> "The History of the Olympic Truce", *IOC*, 13 November 2017, available on <https://www.olympic.org/news/the-history-of-the-olympic-truce>, accessed on 14 April 2020.

appeal to history” and history “is the only genuine foundation for a genuine peace”.<sup>239</sup> In this sense, Coubertin firmly believed in the ability of sports to suppress political conflicts. However, shaped mostly by the memory of Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 which ended with a heavy French defeat, Coubertin’s conception of the Olympics included an important chunk of nationalism as well. Just as Greenfeld<sup>240</sup> underlines the French *ressentiment* for the British advancements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century being a driving force for the rise of French nationalism, Baron Pierre de Coubertin also looked up to education and athletics systems of Britain, which to him, carried to necessary means for the revival of the French nation, by being better prepared for warfare as well as being relieved from the physical idleness.<sup>241</sup> Coubertin proclaimed that all nationalist sentiments should be suspended during the Olympic Games; however, did not refrain from sowing colonialist and racists seeds at the foundation of the project.<sup>242</sup> While advocating for the inclusion of African countries in the Olympic Movement, he argued that such inclusion would serve to appease dissent towards colonizers and discipline the indigenous peoples.<sup>243</sup> Coubertin’s view of Olympic inclusion generally rested on the premise of social control. He wanted the aristocracy to adapt to the modern turn the world started to take as well as aiming to stamp down class conflict by being a staunch supporter of the working class inclusion in the Olympics, without of course, giving up on the principle of amateurism.<sup>244</sup> The only exception to the

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<sup>239</sup> Coubertin, Pierre de (1967), *The Olympic Idea: Discourses and Essays*, Schorndorf, Germany: Druckerei and Verlag Karl Hoffmann, p. 134 as cited in Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 14.

<sup>240</sup> Greenfeld, *The Emergence of Nationalism in England and France*.

<sup>241</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, pp. 15 – 16.

<sup>242</sup> Coubertin, *The Olympic Idea*, p. 132 as cited in Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 16.

<sup>243</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, pp. 18 – 19.

<sup>244</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 21.

inclusiveness Coubertin put forward for the Olympics was about the inclusion of women. He proclaimed to find women's athleticism as "impractical, uninteresting, ungainly, (...) and, improper" and opposed the participation of female athletes in the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896.<sup>245</sup> With all this mindset behind it, the foundations for the modern Olympic Games were laid.

Roche contends that ritualistic and symbolic elements inherent to the Olympic tradition turn the Olympic stadia, where opening and closing ceremonies, track and field events, marathon finishes, and medal ceremonies take place, into a "diplomatic territory".<sup>246</sup> This territory is marked by the presence of Olympic symbols, namely the flame and the five-ring flag, and the flags of the participant nations. Indeed, the national significance of stadia, be it at the domestic level<sup>247</sup> or the international level<sup>248</sup> has been the focus of scholars of the sociology of sport. The production of space in the Olympic stadia is mostly the product of the interwar period at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was marked by the emergence of nation-states following the dissolution of three major empires after World War I.

An anthropological line of thought regarding the analysis of games associates sports events with a Durkheimian understanding of rituals. For instance, Huizinga attributes a constitutive role to the games in the making of human civilizations. In this sense, games and play are *methetic* (denoting a group, collectively and culturally producing what is sacred), rather than *mimetic* (a group impersonating what is deemed sacred).<sup>249</sup> Although it should be noted that when Huizinga wrote *Homo Ludens* in

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<sup>245</sup> Coubertin, *Olympism*, pp. 711, 713 as cited in Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 17.

<sup>246</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 98.

<sup>247</sup> Bairner, Alan (2007), From Sands to Sanchez: The Making of a National Sports Stadium for Northern Ireland, *Entertainment and Sports Law Journal*, Vol: 5, No: 1, pp. 1 – 9.

<sup>248</sup> Kiuri, Miranda & Teller, Jacques (2015), Olympic Stadiums and Cultural Heritage: On the Nature and Status of Heritage Values in Large Sport Facilities, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 32, No: 5, pp. 684 – 707.

<sup>249</sup> Huizinga, Johan (1980), *Homo Ludens*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 15.

1938, he aimed to counter the Olympic movement which visited Nazi Germany two years earlier, which, according to him, damaged the civilizational characteristic of sports. Huizinga's view on the role of playing and games is significant in the sense that it overturns the general notion associating these two with frivolity and *folie*, as opposed to seriousness and sense. These 'great categorical antitheses' are significant in the sense that overturning the mainstream understanding that merely categorizes the play in the realm of the sacred which is celebrated through rituals.<sup>250</sup> Huizinga's views of play shows parallelisms with Durkheimian understanding of sports which equate it with rituals. This anthropological approach to sports events associates the Durkheimian concept of *collective effervescence* with the nationalist aspirations manifesting themselves in the Olympics. However, a more recent approach in the anthropology of sport disagrees with this understanding and holds that games (and in contemporary analyses, sporting events) are not to be confused with religious rituals.

Gluckman and Gluckman contend that, unlike the religious rituals, athletic contests do not indicate a community operating in mechanical terms in the Durkheimian sense of the concept; rather, they indicate a form of organic solidarity.<sup>251</sup> While the conduct of sports is also regulated through rules and *ethos*, breaking them are not sanctioned by a complete exclusion; it is solely condemned. With regards to this difference, they can be categorised as ceremonies, but not rituals. Turner argues for a distinction between ceremonies and rituals as well, arguing that rituals, as opposed to ceremonies, evoke multiple senses and feelings at the same time and collectively.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, while rituals create equality among community members in a sensual experience, ceremonies reproduce and reiterate the hierarchies and inequalities. In this sense, rituals stand on the edge of the community they are a part

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<sup>250</sup> Huizinga, Johan (1980), *Homo Ludens*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 6.

<sup>251</sup> Gluckman, Max & Gluckman, Mary (1977), On Drama, and Games and Athletic Contests in Sally F. Moore & Barbara G. Myerhoff (eds.), *Secular Ritual*, Assen/Amsterdam: Von Gorcum, p. 239.

<sup>252</sup> Turner, Victor (1982), *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York: Performing Arts Journals Publications, p. 81.

of, and Turner calls this *liminality*.<sup>253</sup> According to this, an ambiguity of social positions and ordinary hierarchies reign during these rituals. Moreover, these rituals create a binary condition insofar as they are both an integral part of the daily life of the communities where they take place, and at the same time they suspend that very everyday life.

Turner's understanding in relation to ceremonies and rituals have become quite influential in the realm of the anthropology of sporting events. MacAloon, for instance, argues that with the increasing role of a number of newly emerging elements such as the nationalist politics revolving around the Olympic Games, new anthropological tools need to be brought in for a better comprehension of the sporting events.<sup>254</sup> While conceding the significance of liminality and being intrinsic to everyday life in the analysis of sports events, MacAloon contends that liminality and ordinariness are having a lesser impact.<sup>255</sup> Furthermore, participation has a larger diversity in sports events such as the Olympics, and it is voluntary, rather than compulsory. The only sense commonly shared by participants is sight; therefore, the Olympics should be analysed in the form of a spectacle.<sup>256</sup>

MacAloon analyses the rituals embedded in the Olympic Games as *rites de passage*.<sup>257</sup> With the introduction of the Olympic flag at the 1920 Antwerp, the Olympic flame at the 1928 Amsterdam and the torch relay -which MacAloon regards

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<sup>253</sup> Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre*, p. 84.

<sup>254</sup> MacAloon, John (1984), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsal Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Philadelphia, Publication of the Institute of Human Issues, p. 258.

<sup>255</sup> MacAloon, *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle*, p. 263.

<sup>256</sup> MacAloon, *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle*, p. 270.

<sup>257</sup> MacAloon, John J. (2006), *The Theory of Spectacle: Reviewing Olympic Ethnography*, Introduction in Alan Tomlinson & Christopher Young (eds.), *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the World Cup*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 19.

as a mega-event in itself<sup>258</sup>- during the 1936 Berlin games, the Olympic Games attempted to institute itself as a supranational terrain; however, with the coinciding rise of ultranationalist ideologies of fascism and Nazism, the Games were largely shaped by the ensuing political conflicts.<sup>259</sup> The arena of sporting nationalism, which was to a great extent confined to the Olympic Games before the First World War, expanded to other multinational sports organizations. For instance, football came to be perceived as a way of propagating national sentiments in the international arena<sup>260</sup> such as the FIFA (Men's) World Cup, which was introduced in 1930, or the Balkan Athletics Championships which was first held in 1929; however, the prominence of the Olympics for the political environment endured and thrived during the interwar period.<sup>261</sup> The Olympic Games were so significant for political causes of the interwar period that it generated its protest alternatives, such as the Women's World Games which were staged for the first time in 1926 in Gothenberg in response to the exclusion of women from the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 and once again in 1912, after taking part in unofficial demonstration events in 1900 Paris, 1904 St. Louis and 1908 London games, which were all integrated with the international expositions.<sup>262</sup> With all these taken into consideration, the modern Olympic Games became the primary lieus for the expression of political causes, and nationalist politics exploited it immensely, particularly in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Hargreaves holds that the critics of Olympic Movement who take on the exploitation of the Games by the dominant classes, despite standing on solid

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<sup>258</sup> MacAloon, *The Theory of Spectacle*, p. 27.

<sup>259</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, p. 99.

<sup>260</sup> Giulianotti, Richard (1999), *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 33.

<sup>261</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, pp. 108 – 109.

<sup>262</sup> Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity*, pp. 107 – 108.



foundations, tend to take the concepts and phenomena they focus on for granted.<sup>263</sup> While some of them isolate the Olympics from their political, cultural and economic contexts, some others take off from the assumption that the Games are merely the products of these contexts. This holds prevalent in the analyses of the relationship between Olympism and nationalism as well. However, the required approach is one that takes the interlinked dimensions of cultural and political elements intrinsic to Olympism and nationalism into consideration in an interconnected manner. Olympic Games, although built on the premises of internationalism, particularly with the National Olympic Committees becoming the primary units of participation, nationalism became inherent in the Games. Participation as part of a national team became mandatory in 1912 Stockholm Games; however, way before then, national elements have been essential in the formation of the Olympic project, with Baron Pierre de Coubertin seeking the support of prestigious national figures who associated themselves with the framework. Furthermore, the increasingly accumulating symbolic elements in the Games came to be profoundly interlocked with nationalism. One of the most important elements in this regard was the opening ceremony, which included the Parade of Nations which is the ceremonial marching of all delegations participating in the Olympic Games. Mandell's concept of 'Olympic paradox' which holds that competitions in the Olympics paves the way for more intensified forms of nationalism while endorsing an international setting, can prove explanatory for explaining the immense presence of nationalist display in the Olympic Games.<sup>264</sup> A number of phenomena intrinsic to the Olympics may serve to the making of the nationalist politics during the Games. One can be the media which not only serve to the revenue-making during the Games, which may work both for the government and -perhaps more- for the corporate sponsors- but also to the dissemination of a narrative boosting the national pride emerging out of the atmosphere encircling the epicentre of the Olympic Games. For instance, during the London 2012 Olympic Games, early criticisms on the public expenditures and security concerns appearing on the British media were

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<sup>263</sup> Hargreaves, *Olympism and Nationalism*.

<sup>264</sup> Mandell, Richard D. (1976), *The First Modern Olympics*, California: University of California Press, p. 72.

replaced by stories underlining the successes of the Team Great Britain athletes and served to the reinvention and reimagining of Britishness.<sup>265</sup> Alongside the visual elements such as the flags and national uniforms born and worn by athletes of every national delegation, opening ceremonies give the host a unique opportunity to put on a nationalist display on a massive scale. All these may serve for different ends for nation-states, such as Greece, using the opportunity of holding the first modern Olympic Games to stress its modernity and to quell domestic conflicts.<sup>266</sup> Another example can be the 1936 Berlin games, where the Hitler government displayed Nazi Germany to the entire world which served an extremely distinctive purpose. On the other hand, the 1960 Rome and 1964 Tokyo games helped Italy and Japan to demonstrate to the world that they have put behind their fascist pasts and were ready to be back in the international community, hence a very inclusive agenda. Contrary to the nation-state agendas prevalent in the earlier examples, national groups which are not organised in the formation of a state can exploit the Olympic Games in their own favour, just as Canada's French-speaking community used the discontent with the extreme amount of public cost of the 1976 Montréal games to obtain power in the Quebec region.<sup>267</sup> The significance of the Olympic Games in terms of nationalist politics is often discussed from the points of view host states; however, as can be seen in the examples discussed earlier such as the Irish and Quebecois ones during the 1906 Intercalated Games and 1976 Olympics respectively, the capacity of exposing nationalism during the Olympics is not confined to the host nation-state.

The first Olympic Games, up until 1912 Stockholm which was the final Games before the First World War hiatus, were marked by the efforts of upholding the internationalism inherent in the aristocratic imagining of the Olympics. The first editions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were held in the company of -and were sometimes

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<sup>265</sup> Vincent, John; Hill, John S.; Billings, Andrew; Harris, John; Massey, C. Dwayne (2017), "We are GREAT Britain": British newspaper narratives during the London 2012 Olympic Games, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol: 53, No: 8, pp. 1 – 29.

<sup>266</sup> Tomlinson & Young, Culture, Politics and Spectacle in the Global Sports Event, p. 1.

<sup>267</sup> Hargreaves, Olympism and Nationalism.

overshadowed by- the international expositions. In this sense, the 1912 Stockholm games are regarded as the first time the Olympics were established as a “top-tier international event”.<sup>268</sup> However, right after individual participation was barred and National Olympic Committees became the primary unit of participation in 1912, First World War broke out which caused the annulation of the 1916 Olympics and ended in a period marked by the emergence of nation-states. This way, asserting national identities, national contentions, and national figures became central to the politics of the Olympics. The cosmopolitan inclusiveness claim of the modern Olympics generally aimed at appeasing political tensions such as colonial contentions and class conflicts; however, this appeasing strategy, in the end, served to the amplification of dominant and oppressive politics, which also include nationalist politics. 1936 Summer Olympics, although Adolf Hitler was never really interested in the Olympic Games, with Josef Goebbels’s convincing about the propaganda opportunities brought by the Games, were held in Berlin, with the backing of the International Olympic Committee president of the time, Avery Brundage.<sup>269</sup> However, the oppression manifested in the Olympics paved the way for resistance, which can clearly be seen in the Women’s World Games example earlier, which was established in response to the exclusion of women from the Olympics. 1936 Berlin games, furthermore, paved way for the 1936 People’s Olympiad in Barcelona which was held in protest of the Olympic Games in Berlin (Summer) and Garmisch-Partenkirschen (Winter) under the tutelage of Nazi regime. In this sense, politics have always been quite intrinsic to the Olympic Games, which makes the Olympics a valid focus point in the analysis of the relationship between sports and nationalism.

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<sup>268</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, pp. 43 – 44.

<sup>269</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 69.

## CHAPTER 4

### MODERNIZATION AND NATION FORMATION IN TURKEY

Modernization includes social transformations such as urbanization, industrialization, secularization, and capitalist transformations in the economies. Contemporary views on modernity change across a wide range of perspectives from conservative traditionalisms, kicking back into the views of simulated realities. Discussions on Turkey's modernization, on the other hand, have dynamics of their own. Bozdoğan and Kasaba put forward a three-fold periodisation for studying Turkish modernization.<sup>270</sup> The first is the post-Second World War set of studies that view the history of modernization ranging from late 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman reforms to the nation-state formation of Republican Turkey as an exemplary case, as can be seen in the works of Daniel Lerner<sup>271</sup> and Bernard Lewis.<sup>272</sup> The emphasis in this line of scholarship is on an elite-driven process based on consensus, which resulted in the successful building of modern social institutions. The second phase was set in the second half of the 1960s, with the influence of the Marxist and developmentalist thinking of modernity finding their way into the scholarship in Turkey. This view centred around the ongoing decolonialization struggles and saw the Independence War waged in Turkey as a precursor to them. The Marxist critic of modernity was involved in the scholarly output of this period on modernity in Turkey as well, with a more antagonistic point of view being employed rather than the celebration of the consensus among social classes. In this sense, this perspective took a class-conflict approach in

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<sup>270</sup> Bozdoğan, Sibel & Kasaba, Reşat (1997), Introduction in Sibel Bozdoğan & Reşat Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, pp. 4 – 5.

<sup>271</sup> Lerner, Daniel (1958), *The Passing of Traditional Society*, New York: Macmillan.

<sup>272</sup> Lewis, Bernard (1961), *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

its criticism of modernity. These critics were largely directed at the late Ottoman, and the early republican military and administrative bureaucracy.

Contemporary studies on modernization in Turkey is dominated by more wholesale criticisms of the process, directed at its top-down approach and homogenising projects in national, religious, and a number of other terms. These criticisms came in parallel with, if not nourished upon, the increased emphasis on the social, political, and economic aspects of globalization defined by novel media technologies, non-state actors and easier movement of goods, labour, and capital in the globalizing market. Late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century research on the modernization of Turkey is marked by this trend; however, these premises tend to downplay the cultural and institutional influence of the modernization experience in Turkey from its true extent. Furthermore, the analyses defining the modernization process in Turkey tend to be trapped in the pitfall of relativism by taking sides around it, with a lack of a comprehensive perspective. In this sense, modernity analysis should be undertaken without being trapped in reductivist definitions:

Just as we need to distinguish between modernity as a potentially liberating historical condition and its instrumentalization for a political project of domination, we also need to distinguish between the democratic implications of the recent postmodern critique, on the one hand, and its self-closure into a new form of orthodoxy, on the other.<sup>273</sup>

As mentioned earlier, culture is about ‘shared meanings’ among a community.<sup>274</sup> In this sense, while discussing the formation of Turkish nationalism, it is important to focus on the traits that construct the sharedness. Thus, this chapter aims to position the cultural elements during the process of nation-building in Turkey. These elements operate in different political fields, and their relationships with the nation-formation processes prove integral in terms of defining the (changing) boundaries of the national group. In line with Brubaker’s suggestion that nationhood is best

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<sup>273</sup> Bozdoğan & Kasaba, Introduction, p. 6.

<sup>274</sup> Hall, *Representation*, p. 1.

understood by focusing on its political and cultural forms, this chapter focuses on the nation formation in Turkey from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>275</sup> Although the state building process is also taken into account, the main focus of this chapter rests on nation building through different cultural elements, which make it easier to imagine nationhood. The processes of adopting and developing these cultural traits put in historical context provide valuable insight of nation-formation processes.

During the formation processes of nation-states, the shaping of the nationalist views and movements bear utmost importance. In the Turkish case, the emergence of nationalist views was highly influenced by the fact that the forerunners of these views were worried the Ottoman State was lagging behind in the modernization efforts already realised by the European states. In this sense, the self-presentation of Turkish nationalism primarily consists of a narrative of keeping up.<sup>276</sup> This is in line with some of its contemporary nationalist movements; however, in the emergence phase of Turkish nationalism, there was considerable emphasis on the concerned prospect of losing the independence rather than gaining it, which was more prominent in the nationalist views of other late-coming nationalisms in Western Europe. Therefore, a significant component of the emerging Turkish nationalist views and movements in the late-Ottoman era was the concern of threat against the continuation of existence. In this context, the focus of this chapter is this aspect of Turkish nationalism, commencing by forming a continuum of the development of nationalist thought from the late-Ottoman era towards the early Republican period, during the formation of the nation-state. The emergence and practical implementations of Turkish nationalism from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was built upon a modernization process through the adoption of modern institutions, laws, and modern cultural forms. However, due to the lack of overreach of these modern developments and unanimity around them, they were backed with references to ancestral roots and ethnicity in the early periods of Republican Turkey. While doing so, different cultural

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<sup>275</sup> Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 16.

<sup>276</sup> Bora, Tanıl (2017), *Cereyanlar: Türkiye’de Siyasi İdeolojiler*, İstanbul: İletişim, pp. 195 – 196.

elements were employed to reach out to the perceived national group by the military-administrative class of early Republican Turkey.

Different areas such as print and auditory media, ceremonial acts, urban space and sports & leisure activities have been instrumental in the attempt to establish the imagined bond among the members of the national group. While these were mainly products of the processes related to modernity, such as industrialization and urbanization, they were integrated with the nationalist politics of early Republican Turkey in a manner that establishes the link between modernity and its roots in ancestral Turkish history. In other words, the products of modernity were employed with an emphasis on the primordial ties based on ethnicity. This chapter seeks to put this phenomenon in historical context from the late-Ottoman period to early Republican Turkey.

The first section of this chapter outlines the social, political, and economic conditions at the turn of the century up until the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and different political attempts in the face of the demise of the Ottoman Empire leading to the adoption of nationalism as a dominant ideology in the formation of the nation-state. The second section is about the understanding of Turkish nationalism in the state formation process of the Republic of Turkey and its various aspects. This is followed by an analysis of in what ways the national identity formation was undertaken in Turkey by consolidating the nation both domestically and externally, for the purpose of locating and demarcating Turkish national identity in the newly established nation-state.

#### **4.1. Emergence of Nationalist Thought in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Empire**

Modernization in the Ottoman Empire, in its military-bureaucratic sense at least, started to take roots in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century when territorial losses in wars began.<sup>277</sup> Initially, these losses led to attempts seeking to consolidate the political power internally, and these attempts were embodied in the reforms undertaken by

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<sup>277</sup> Keyder, Çağlar (1987), *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development*, London: Verso, pp. 27 – 28.

Mahmud II in the first place.<sup>278</sup> These reforms aimed at the integration of the administrative and economically upper classes in order to consolidate political power in Istanbul. One of the most important landmarks of these attempts was the signing of *Sened-i İttifak* (Document of Agreement) which was signed in 1808 among the Sultan, notables, and provincial governors. The ensuing provisions of the Document ensured the first steps in the formation of modern state institutions such as local municipalities and the police force, and the consolidation of the political power in Istanbul. These political and military reforms were primarily efforts for preventing losses of territory, but a further impact of this period was for the implementation of diplomatic tools which were previously undermined. Furthermore, the first foreign diplomatic missions started to be established in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This way, diplomatic bureaucrats began to diverge from the religious administrative officials. Military and civilian bureaucrats and diplomats, who set out to Europe for a way out of the crisis the Empire found itself in, brought back a wide range of modernizing efforts, predominantly the military and administrative ones.<sup>279</sup> The integration of the Ottoman Empire into the European political system went hand-in-hand with the integration of the state into the European economic system. Ottoman Empire was also dealing with internal conflicts and one of the most striking of which came with the rising of Mohammad Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt. Subsequent suppression of the rising with the British support brought the 1838 trade agreement with Britain.<sup>280</sup> With significant trading privileges provided to British merchants and the expanding market share of West European goods in Ottoman ports not only put foreign tradespeople in a more advantageous position but also led to an increase and diversified encounters between the Ottomans and Europeans. In this sense, one of the many things that hit

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<sup>278</sup> Shaw, Stanford J. & Shaw, Ezel Kural (1977), *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume II: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808 – 1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 2 – 3.

<sup>279</sup> İnalçık, Halil (2006), *Turkey and Europe in History*, İstanbul: Eren Publishing, pp. 83 – 85.

<sup>280</sup> Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, p. 29.



the Ottoman shores in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the nationalist trends which earlier led to the rise of nation-states in Europe.

In general, the bearings of modernization exceeded far beyond the scope of the economy. With novel educational institutions and further interactions with European states came novel ideologies. These developments brought about a military-bureaucratic and intellectual class who became the forerunners of different ideologies in the Ottoman Empire of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. Nationalist ideology, although not the only one to hit the shores of the Ottoman Empire, became the most dominant one in time due to the ongoing decline. As Özdalga contends, “the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire not only meant that their territory shrank, but also that the range of ideologies narrowed”.<sup>281</sup> This means that in the first period of the proliferation of modern ideologies, there were contenders to Turkish nationalism such as Islamism and Ottomanism, however in the end, nationalism emerged to be the prevalent one. One of the most important milestones of modernization in the Ottoman Empire was the declaration of a new reform era called the *Tanzimat* in 1839. *Tanzimat* reforms were particularly crucial in the making of the aforementioned class.

The *Tanzimat* reforms provided a new set of legislation that would secure “the life, honor and property of all subjects”.<sup>282</sup> These provisions were important in the sense that they were aimed at ensuring a level of equality to Muslim and non-Muslim *millets* before the law. Hence, distinctions among confessional communities became less visible. This equality was an attempt to curb the nationalist movements taking root in particularly among the non-Muslim communities between whom nationalist views became widespread to a wider and a faster extent. Since members of non-Muslim communities were historically excluded from administrative posts, they leaned more towards trade businesses and being more in contact with international streams, they

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<sup>281</sup> Özdalga, Elisabeth (2005), Introduction in Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.) *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 1.

<sup>282</sup> İnalçık, Halil (1964), “The nature of traditional society: Turkey.” in *Political modernization in Turkey and Japan*, Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (eds.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 56.

became the first to encounter novel political views originating from Western Europe, including nationalism. The scope of nationalist views and other novel political views then reached across the Empire. However, the early *Tanzimat* period underlined a distinct effort of uniting the subjects of the Empire under an Ottoman identity. Particularly following the French Revolution of 1789, the idea of national groups having their own states was becoming widespread particularly in the Balkans and furthermore, the non-Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire was demanding equal rights and freedom. In this atmosphere, the declaration of *Tanzimat* reforms was the embodiment of the efforts of holding the multinational social structure together.<sup>283</sup> This led to efforts of creating manifestations of a collective Ottoman culture, such as the establishment of the first Ottoman museum in İstanbul in 1846.<sup>284</sup>

One of the most important developments that led different ideologies to become widespread among the military-bureaucratic class and the intellectuals was the proliferation of the publishing industry. It is important to note that the publications of the time were the product of communities at a wide array. Although nationalist publications were not the sole category among the output of the flourishing publishing sector, they were one of the most important mediums in the route of nationalist politics to be the defining ideology of the turn of the century in Turkey. Printing was first used by non-Muslim communities, and they owned the majority of the printing presses up until the First World War. In line with the Ottomanism of the time, which entailed bonding the population of the Empire together under the umbrella of a comprehensive Ottoman identity, the first printing office of the Empire, *matbaa-i amire*, started employing people from different ethnic backgrounds after the *Tanzimat*.<sup>285</sup> However, the provisions of the period of reforms were not adequately embraced by either the

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<sup>283</sup> Ünlü, Barış (2018) *Türklük Sözleşmesi: Oluşumu, İşleyişi ve Krizi*, Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, pp. 83 – 84.

<sup>284</sup> Öztürkmen, Arzu (1998), *Türkiye’de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, İstanbul: İletişim, p. 28.

<sup>285</sup> Strauss, Johann (2005), *Kütüp ve Resail-i Mevkute: Printing and publishing in a multiethnic society in Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.) Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 229.

state or the people. The Muslim population was generally indifferent to these novel conditions and the *ayans*, *ağas*, and clerics, namely the traditional notables prevalent in the countryside resisted to these changes.<sup>286</sup> In this sense, the modernization efforts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were generally rendered inefficient by the religious structure of traditional society and its institutions. They were largely inefficient in hindering the nationalist turn amongst different ethnic groups composing the population of the empire. In fact, it could be argued that the nationalist aspirations were fuelled by the developments in the printing press. For instance, the establishment of the modern Armenian literature is, to a great extent, the product of the secession from the classical Armenian language by the Armenian print press in Istanbul during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>287</sup>

The ongoing process of state-building in the Ottoman Empire simultaneously proved useful for Turkish nationalism to gain ground as the first Turkish printing presses were founded after the administrative reform of *vilayets* (provinces) in 1864.<sup>288</sup> Parallelisms can be drawn from Anderson's conception of print capitalism as an enabler of imagining nationhood towards the flourishing of Turkish print presses in the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>289</sup> Strauss contends that the significance of the role of the press was crucial for the Ottoman Turks in the development of the Turkish language.<sup>290</sup> For instance, Said Pasha, an Ottoman state official who is well known for his works on the print press, underlines the role of newspapers in standardizing the language. This view on the standardization of the

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<sup>286</sup> İnalçık, Halil (1964), "The nature of traditional society: Turkey." in *Political modernization in Turkey and Japan*, Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (eds.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 63.

<sup>287</sup> Strauss, *Kütüp ve Resail-i Mevkute*, p. 234.

<sup>288</sup> Strauss, *Kütüp ve Resail-i Mevkute*, p. 234.

<sup>289</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 33 – 35.

<sup>290</sup> Strauss, *Kütüp ve Resail-i Mevkute*, p. 234.

language manifested itself in literary outputs of the Tanzimat era as well with writers such as Şinasi and Ziya Pasha advocating for a more simplified and standardized language in order to facilitate the spread of new political ideologies.<sup>291</sup>

The encounters between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, which began to be established on diplomatic grounds in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resonated in the newly forming modern Turkish literary field as well. As the literary figures of the era of Abdulhamid II adopted modern forms of literature, they used them to offer observations and solutions about the decay of the Empire.<sup>292</sup> Furthermore, the duality between traditionalism and a European culture taking root in the everyday lives of people, particularly in Istanbul, was among the dominant themes at the turn of the century. In the literary outputs of this period, such as novels and poems, a strict dichotomy was put to display between the virtuous traditional Ottoman characters and those who lead a European lifestyle, who eventually fall prey to their hedonistic ambitions. For instance, while Tevfik Fikret describes a “moral decay” in Istanbul in his poem *Sis* (Fog, 1902), Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil handles the decline of the Ottoman Empire in his *Aşk-ı Memnu* (Forbidden Love, 1900) in an allegorical manner.<sup>293</sup>

Bonding the population of the Empire together under the umbrella of a comprehensive Ottoman identity was the dominant idea at the time leading to the Declaration of *Tanzimat* and this went on until 1876 when the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire, the *Kanun-u Esasi* was accepted. Ottomanism gradually declined in the face of newly emerging nationalist movements, which also included those within the Ottoman Empire, such as Armenian and Arab nationalisms.<sup>294</sup> For a period at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire resorted to another option which was an

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<sup>291</sup> Öztürkmen, *Türkiye’de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 27.

<sup>292</sup> Hanioglu, Şükrü (2008), *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, p. 140.

<sup>293</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 140.

<sup>294</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, pp. 105 – 106.

attempt at uniting the Muslim population. Abdulhamid II, who was the Sultan during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, shut down the parliament which was opened with the constitution of 1876, citing wartime conditions. Under the same pretext, the constitution was suspended as well, putting an end to the Ottoman-wide unity project. According to Karpaz, following the defeat of the Ottoman-Russian War in 1878 due to the possibility of disintegration emerging from the Balkans, Ottoman Muslims developed a “new awareness of themselves” which was so strong and drastic that “made the Muslims in even the remotest corners of the Empire aware of their position in society and in the world at large”.<sup>295</sup> This novel condition manifested itself as resentment on the part of the Muslim communities, particularly Turks and Kurds, directed at the non-Muslim communities. Although a number of ideologies enjoyed platforms such as newspapers and magazines during the *Tanzimat* period; however, Islamist intellectual production relatively lagged behind. Abdulhamid II, albeit a staunch Islamist, feared that the cultural dominance of the religious *ulema* (religious clergy) could pose a strong challenge to his rule.<sup>296</sup> This forced a great number of the Islamist opposition into exile, where they worked with the Young Turks at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Young Turk movement was mainly a result of the modernization of education which created an educated generation of bureaucrats, officers, and doctors. United in their opposition to the rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II, they formed a thin centred network around Europe, where they were appointed or were forced out of their posts in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>297</sup> The early members of the Young Turks were not homogenous either in terms of their ethnic origins or in terms of their political views. Their initial response to avert a possible demise facing the Empire was addressed at an all-Ottoman level. In the first congress of the Young Turks convened in Paris in

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<sup>295</sup> Karpaz, Kemal (2001), *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, p. 125.

<sup>296</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 140.

<sup>297</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, p. 255.

1902, the reforms which were expected by non-Muslim communities were promised countrywide and for all Ottomans.<sup>298</sup> These people, while conversing with the prominent European social theorists of the time, sought ways of applying the ideas they encountered to a wider rescue plan for the Ottoman Empire in decay, and created the backbone of the rising *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress, CUP henceforth), which seized the political power to a great extent by 1909. However, the Balkan Wars of 1912 led to a wholesale drift in the CUP policy from Ottomanism towards Turkish nationalism.

The defeat in the Balkan Wars and the loss of territory marked the end of the Ottomanist approach, and the ruling class turned to Turkish nationalism. Developments such as the proliferation of the publishing sector among non-Muslim communities between 1908-1914 paved the way for a more widespread imagination of nationhood by these peoples, and nationalist currents began to take a hold. In the face of the growing involvement of Western states in the Ottoman economy, the CUP began to see non-Muslim peoples in the Empire, who made up an important part of the trading class, as the extensions of foreign political influence in the Empire and began to lean towards Turkish nationalism.<sup>299</sup> There were two foremost trends in the Turkish nationalist politics of the time one advocated a grand Turkic empire bringing together Turks from the Ottoman Empire, Russia, and Central Asia whereas the other sought to bring together Muslims in Anatolia under the Turkish national identity. Nationalist intellectuals who wrote in periodicals like *Genç Kalemler* (Young Pencils) and *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish-Homeland) were particularly influential during this era.<sup>300</sup> The primary task of the nationalist politics of the Ottoman Empire at the time was to find ways of imagining a national identity; that is, establishing a bond of nationhood among the people who had very little, if any, of a nation in the modern sense. Since one of

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<sup>298</sup> Hanioglu, Şükrü (1995), *The Young Turks in Opposition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 190 – 194.

<sup>299</sup> Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, pp. 57 – 58.

<sup>300</sup> Ünlü, *Türklük Sözleşmesi*, pp. 121 – 122.

the most important steps in defining a national group is who the members of the group are not, as much as who they are, non-Muslim communities of Anatolia were chosen by Turkish nationalists as the excluded people from the national group.

One of the most significant writers of the time who drew the path for nationalist politics was Ziya Gökalp. He penned a number of articles in journals like *Türk Yurdu* and *İslam* (Islam) which were brought together under the title of *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (Turkification, Islamization and Modernization). Gökalp, influenced by the Durkheimian philosophy, argued that culture could contribute to civilization in a wider sense by maintaining its authenticity. According to him, since the Turks were at the centre of the Ottoman Empire, they were the first to rely on an all-Ottoman politics to save the Empire from its demise while in the meantime, all other ethnic groups were developing national identities. For that reason, Turkish national identity lagged behind in its development compared to other groups in the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, the dominant idea among the ranks of the CUP was to consolidate the Turkish national identity through the bond of Islam. However, they advocated a more modern interpretation of Islam, which would provide the Turkish nation with a seat among other modern national groups of the Western civilization, just as argued by Gökalp. In other words, a modern reinterpretation of Islam is employed by the Turkish nationalists in order to ‘rally religion to the national cause’.<sup>301</sup> However, this project failed during the First World War, particularly as a result of the rebellions in the Middle East. The beginning of the First World War caused the transition to nationalist thinking faster than the CUP anticipated. The CUP viewed the war as an opportunity to restore the territorial and economic losses of the Empire, in the meantime exploiting the war conditions to instate the Turks as the dominant ethnic group in Turkey. This was largely carried out through the atrocities committed against Armenians in Anatolia, which began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but intensified to a massive scale during the First World War. These actions almost entirely changed the demographics and replaced the capital-ownership in favour of the

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<sup>301</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, pp. 186 – 187.

Muslim population, primarily the Turks and the Kurds.<sup>302</sup> They also marked the completion of the turn towards Turkish nationalism as the primary political current directing the Ottoman Empire in its final decade, which can be traced in the intellectual output of the era as well.

One of the most significant developments in the intellectual field regarding the growing prominence of nationalist politics was an enhanced focus on the material culture of the people. Following the defeats in the Balkan Wars, studies on folklore began to gain ground.<sup>303</sup> Those who studied folklore at the time were particularly keen on gathering elements of people's material culture as they established a link with the national identity. For instance, Ziya Gökalp makes a distinction between official civilization and popular civilization and argues that in the Ottoman Empire, the two are very far apart, with the former embracing Western values, while the latter is maintaining the essence of Turkish identity.<sup>304</sup> In this sense, people's material culture is essential in terms of the formation of a common national identity, which was Turkish nationalists' principal proposal in the face of the decay of the Empire. Extracting the common elements in a national culture from popular practices became popular through folklore studies. Selim Sırrı, for example, held that folklore is "a science that maintains the past of a nation", while Köprülüzade Mehmet Fuad furthered the nationalist claims in favour of folklore studies and argued that these studies would provide political administrations with useful information about the people.<sup>305</sup> These marked the initial steps of a wider policy of employing cultural elements that have ties to the ethnic roots of Turkish identity during the process of nation-building in a modern sense, which would extend to the Republican era.

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<sup>302</sup> Ünlü, *Türklük Sözleşmesi*, p. 147.

<sup>303</sup> Öztürkmen, *Türkiye'de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 29.

<sup>304</sup> Öztürkmen, *Türkiye'de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 30.

<sup>305</sup> Öztürkmen, *Türkiye'de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, pp. 35 – 37.



## 4.2. National Identity Formation in Early Republican Turkey

Nationalist movements that undertake the nation-state formation processes facilitate the imagination of the national group by defining the content of the nationhood. Within the context of ethnicity and nationalism studies, one of the most prolific fields focusing extensively on the relationship between self and the Other has been cultural anthropology.<sup>306</sup> One of the primary anthropological predicaments regarding ethnicity is that it is about cultural differentiation. Culturally constructing the distinction between ‘self’ and ‘other’ is a widespread social characteristic. This includes defining who the members of the national group are, as well as who they are not. Deriving from Bakhtin’s conception of self-appraisal through others’ gaze, San Juan Jr. contends that the initial step for nationalist politics of overcoming the tutelage of a colonial power and gain a certain degree of independence is to label “the nation” as a resistant force against the colonizers.<sup>307</sup> This way, the distinction between self and other is attained through distinguishing the national group from ‘others’ which can be identified by different categorizations. In this sense, this is a dialogical process of attribution and self-attribution.

In terms of self-identification, despite the fact that those who dwelled in Anatolia at the time when the Republic of Turkey was declared were mostly ethnic Turks, there was not a sense of modern nationhood; therefore, means for people to perceive and imagine themselves as Turks were required. Furthermore, the question of how the nation is related to the elements of ‘the Other’ at operational and discursive levels during the formation of Turkish national identity has to be considered as well, since the context can vary in spatial and temporal terms.<sup>308</sup> For instance, the history of

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<sup>306</sup> Jenkins, Richard (1996), Ethnicity etcetera: Social anthropological points of view, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol: 19, No: 4, pp. 807 – 822.

<sup>307</sup> Bakhtin, Mikhail (1984), *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. xxx as cited in San Juan Jr., Epifanio (2000), Bakhtin: Uttering the (Into)nation of the Nation/People in Barry A. Brown, et al (eds.) *Bakhtin and the Nation*, Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, p. 124.

<sup>308</sup> San Juan Jr., Bakhtin, p. 124.

the Ottoman Empire lacks a colonial power in its territory, on the contrary, the history involves an imperial characteristic that the Republican regime wished to dissociate with. Moreover, the Turkish nationalist thought of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was developed with a sense of latecoming, since in most parts of Europe sense of nationhood had already begun to be developed. For that reason, the nationalist leaders of early Republican Turkey sought ways of reconciling the rupture from the Ottoman past with a national history that could overcome the sense of latecoming vis-à-vis the European states.

In this sense, a complicated relationship with the West shaped Turkish nationalism in its formative years. Zürcher contends that one of the foremost characteristics of Turkish nationalism is a *double-jeu* in its relationship with the West that entails both admiring modern Europe and feeling threatened by it.<sup>309</sup> Indeed, while acknowledging the need for an intensified interaction with the West, there were divisions among the ruling class of early Republican Turkey with regards to whether this would bring an infiltration of Western hegemony. As a result, the distinct characteristic of the Turkish case became this dilemma of how to establish a relationship with the West and how to incorporate the imperial heritage into the novel regime and the novel national identity. In order to achieve this, while modern institutions were being set up, they were employed in the quest to emphasize ethnic Turkishness as a bond holding the national group together.

The formation of Turkish nationalism is a process blending together different dynamics and understandings adopted through different classes and social dynamics by including, excluding, or transforming them. In this sense, several elements corresponding to different tracks of emergence discussed by nationalism theorists can be traced in the process of Turkish nation formation. Rebellions, particularly following the abolishing of the Caliphate, played an important role in determining the course of state and nation formation in Turkey, as they demonstrated the influence of Muslim identity as a force of mass-mobilization against the newly established regime. These dissident movements not only became factors in the establishment of modern state

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<sup>309</sup> Zürcher, Erik Jan (2004), *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd edition, New York: IB Tauris, p. 191.

institutions such as the courts where the participants were tried, but they also directed the novel regime to seek other ways of forming nationhood than a legal-political bond of citizenship.<sup>310</sup>

In this sense, one of the strongest theoretical influences on the forming of Turkish nationalism is made by Ziya Gökalp, a late-Ottoman sociologist who was a student of Durkheimian sociological school. His proposition of a duality between ‘civilization’ and ‘culture’ which claimed that civilization is defined more as a common achievement of multiple groups whereas culture belongs to a particular national group, created the premise of the merger of the two in laying the groundwork for a claim to uniqueness in the Turkish conceptualization of nationalism. According to Gökalp, civilizations create their own traditions, while cultures rely on ‘mores’. International traditions and national mores merge through institutions that nations create.<sup>311</sup> While creating modern institutions for the newly established republican regime, such as schools and courts as well as laws accompanying them and creating the framework of binding the people to the nation-state in citizenship, the novel regime utilized cultural elements in underlining the ethnic identity. These were efforts at emphasizing the embeddedness of the ethnic group of Turks in the history of world civilization. Some accounts went as far as claiming that the Ancient Hittites formed the basis of the Hellenic civilization, which inspired the European modernist movements.<sup>312</sup> Supporting these claims were at the centre of the early Republican academic output in areas such as anthropology and ethnology, together with physical anthropological studies conducted in Anatolia, through the institutions like Turkish

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<sup>310</sup> Hunt, Alan & Tokluoğlu Ceylan (2002), State formation from Below: the Turkish Case, *The Social Science Journal*, Vol: 39, No: 4, pp. 617 – 624.

<sup>311</sup> Berkes, Niyazi (1936), Sociology in Turkey, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol: 42, No: 2, pp. 238 – 246.

<sup>312</sup> Engin, Saffet (1938), *Kemalizm İnkılabının Prensipleri*, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, p. 55 as cited in Bora, Tanıl (1998), *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik, Muhafazakarlık, İslamcılık*, İstanbul: İletişim, p. 25.

Anthropological Institute or the Faculty of Languages and History-Geography.<sup>313</sup> With this claim of being at the origin of Western modernization and all other nations around the world, namely the *Türk Tarih Tezi* (Turkish History Thesis), Republican Turkey sought to equalize the modern reforms imported from Western countries as moves of a return to the essence of ethnic Turkish identity.<sup>314</sup> One reflection of this policy appeared in the field of language, through the *Güneş-Dil Teorisi* (Sun-Language Theory). This theory, which was promoted during the 1930s, claimed that all languages originated from the ancient Turkish spoken in Central Asia. These were the ways the Kemalist regime sought to establish national unity.<sup>315</sup> This had dire implications in the economy as well, with several laws that were enacted requiring the employees working in numerous job posts such as public offices, insurance companies, and pharmaceuticals to be ethnic Turks.<sup>316</sup> In 1942, during the Second World War, a Wealth Tax was inaugurated disproportionately targeting the non-Muslim population of the country and those who could not pay the tax were sent to camps. This also facilitated the Turkification of capital owning class which began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>317</sup>

This merger of modern legal-political framework delineating the national group alongside facilitating the imagination of nationhood can be visibly seen in many social, political, and economic aspects of political change in the early Republican period, such as politics of gender. In this sense, the suffrage rights which were enacted

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<sup>313</sup> Maksudyan, Nazan (2005), *Türklüğü Ölçmek: Bilimkurgusal Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Irkçı Çehresi*, İstanbul: Metis; Münüsoğlu, Hasan (2017), *Irk Lekesi*, Ankara: Heretik.

<sup>314</sup> Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali*, p. 26.

<sup>315</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp. 190 – 191.

<sup>316</sup> Yıldız, Ahmet (2001), *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene: Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)*, İstanbul: İletişim, pp. 234 – 235.

<sup>317</sup> Ağır, Seven & Artunç, Cihan (2019), The Wealth Tax of 1942 and the Disappearance of Non-Muslim Enterprises in Turkey, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol: 79, No: 1, pp. 201 – 243.

in the early 1930s were made in the name of demonstrating the commitment to modernisation and ‘Westernization’.<sup>318</sup> The entrance of women into the political discourse is also a result of the different political pursuits in the face of the Ottoman Empire’s decline. The prolific print media of the *Tanzimat* period provided platforms for the appearance of women in the literary domain -though dominantly penned by male authors-. Female characters were present in the dual narratives of modern and conservative, of the period’s literary output. Following the commencement of the Second Constitutional Period, women started to become more and more active in welfare jobs such as being nurses or volunteering, particularly during wars. Demands started to be raised more loudly by feminists as well, in publications like *Mahasin*, and *Women*, both of which started to be published in 1908.<sup>319</sup> These demands addressed to right to education and freedom from harassment in streets and workplace. Following the First World War and the Independence War, in the context of nation-state formation of early Republican Turkey, adoption of modern civil codes was explained with a narrative of ancestral and “pre-Islamic Turkish egalitarianism” with regards to gender.<sup>320</sup> While these legal reforms in principle facilitated the access of women to public institutions and hence widened the scope of the encounters of the nation-state with the population, it is important to note that in the rural parts of the country, women were still left dependent on men for this access.<sup>321</sup>

The identification of Turkishness with the underlying principles of modernity originating from the West facilitated Republican Turkey’s formation of diplomatic links with European countries; however, firmly sealed the scope of Turkish national

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<sup>318</sup> Kandiyoti, Deniz (1989), *Women and the Turkish State: Political Actors or Symbolic Pawns?*, in Nira Yuval-Davis & Floya Anthias (eds.), *Woman-Nation-State*, London: Macmillan, p. 126.

<sup>319</sup> Kandiyoti, *Women and the Turkish State*, p. 137.

<sup>320</sup> Kandiyoti, Deniz (1997), *Gendering The Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity* in Introduction in Sibel Bozdoğan & Reşat Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, pp. 124 – 125.

<sup>321</sup> Kandiyoti, *Gendering the Modern*, pp. 124 – 125.

identity. The international interest was limited to the presence and visibility of Turkish national identity. In this sense, while identifying Turkishness with the Western civilization, and therefore, branding the newly established nation-state as compatible with modernity, early Republican Turkey did not identify clear external Others. On the other hand, the biggest image of the Other in the mindset of Republican Turkey is the old regime.<sup>322</sup> Particularly the secular image of the new regime was threatened by the religious aspects of the Ottoman Empire, as the abolishing of the Caliphate following the declaration of the Republic sparked dissidence and contentions in certain parts of Anatolia. One of the most visible Otherizations of the nation formation process of early Republican Turkey, for that matter, is the association of Arabs with the Ottoman practices of Islamic rule. These contentions largely fed on the Arab nationalist movements during the First World War that turned the Middle East on the belligerent Ottoman Empire and the issue of Hatay between Turkey and Syria in the 1930s. Other ethnic groups such as Kurds or Circassians are hardly ever taken into account.

The identification of Turkish national identity with Westernness brought about the expulsion of aspects that are attributed to all that is to the East of Turkey. This was reflected in the mystification of the land of Anatolia as a bridge connecting East and West, bearing the uniqueness of Turkish national identity through being geographically in between. This became such a mission that scholarly efforts were made to mark Anatolia as being historically inhabited by the Turks. This was even consolidated with an Orientalist perception of the social, political, and economic structure of the Eastern Anatolia.<sup>323</sup> Ahıska argues that:

The external border that separates Turkey from its East — that is, the Middle East — has been translated into an inner border that symbolically separates the West of Turkey from the ‘backward’ East, contaminated by Arabic, Kurdish and other cultures. One must also note that boundary management is not solely an internal affair,

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<sup>322</sup> Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali*, pp. 41 – 42.

<sup>323</sup> Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali*, p. 46 – 48.

but resonates with the depictions of the Orientalist discourse that has positioned Turkey as a bridge between East and West.<sup>324</sup>

The sense of latecoming in the processes such as modernization and capitalism reflected itself in two ways, first is the aforementioned *double-jeu*, which puts the European countries in a position where they are envied and seen as threatening at the same time. The feeling of threat is overcome through an understanding placing the culture and practices of Ancient Turks at the foundation of the Western civilization, whereas the envy is overcome through identifying the elements that are deemed unfit for the image of modern Turkey, namely the cultures of the non-Turkish Muslim ethnic groups, such as the Kurds and the Arabs.<sup>325</sup> In this sense, the nation formation process in Turkey was an intensified effort of putting the country and the national group populating its territory on the map. The determining of this location is marked by the orientation of the Republican regime leaning towards the West in terms of establishing secular and modern institutions. However, as a way of underlining uniqueness, in addition to legal-political and modern definitions of nationhood, early Republican politics resorted to ethnic definitions as well. Ancestral Turkishness was defined as the origin of Western civilization and central to modernity. The Republican ideology was identified as a reminder of the national qualities of the Turks to the Turkish nation itself.<sup>326</sup> The formation process of the nation-state was marked by a break from the old regime, and the newly adopted modern cultural forms were employed as tools for delineating the novel national identity in accordance with these principles.

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<sup>324</sup> Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 15.

<sup>325</sup> Şen, Sebahattin (2019), *Gemideki Hayalet: Türk Sinemasında Kürtlüğün ve Türklüğün Kuruluşu*, İstanbul: Metis, p. 54.

<sup>326</sup> Yashin, Yael-Navaro (2002), *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 11.

### 4.3. Locating the Nation at the International Level

In the formation of national identity, locating and defining the national group vis-à-vis a figure of Other is essential.<sup>327</sup> This way, nationalist politics define not only who the national group are, but at the same time they define who they are not, locating nationhood while simultaneously substantiating the group's claim to distinctiveness. Self-definition in the face of another and has come to be a crucial tool in the facilitation of the imagining of nationhood by its presumed members. The Otherization in the identity building had been at the centre of modernization of Europe and the emergence of modern nation-states. Said contends that the Orient is “one of the most recurring images of the Other” which makes it an integral part of the European material culture.<sup>328</sup> In the case of nation formation in the early days of Republican Turkey, one of the most important factors affecting this process was the identification of the new state in the same league with its European counterparts.

The reason most of the developments of Turkish modernization are categorised as ‘Westernization’ is that the intellectual and political forerunners of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20 centuries made their encounters with these ideas in Europe. The military-bureaucratic class that shaped the early Republican political landscape in Turkey inherited these views from their political predecessors, the officials of the CUP. Furthermore, the identification of modernity with the West, in general, is highly linked to the colonialism exerted by European countries.<sup>329</sup> Increasing industrialization and its spread in wider geographies brought a modern form of social organization and the establishment of modern social institutions. In this sense, in a period where the emergence of nation-states was a dominant current in world politics, tools of modernity became integral to the social, political, and economic transformation at the

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<sup>327</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 7.

<sup>328</sup> Said, Edward W. (1979), *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, New York: Vintage Books, pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>329</sup> Osborne, Peter (1995), *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, London: Verso, p. 13.



turn of the century. The lack of a colonial past and relative latecoming in the face of other nationalist movements in Eastern Europe led to the development of a rather complicated understanding of the relationship with the West.

Ahiska contends that by being at the intersection of East and West, Turkey has easier access to both “the essential identity of the nation and the modernity of the West”.<sup>330</sup> This way, Turkey, in its search for distinctiveness through the formation of a novel nation-state, used modern forms to define and locate its national identity. Ahiska demonstrates the functions of radio broadcasts in creating a sense of unity of the national group and enable lines of communication with the Western gaze.<sup>331</sup> Talking in radio broadcasts was regarded by the regime as a way of addressing the masses, and at the same time, presenting an image of the newly forming nationhood. This two-way line is manifested in the different broadcasts of Turkish Public Radio and the Turkish broadcasting service of BBC World Radio. The broadcasts of the Turkish-language service BBC World radio create a dialogical relationship through radio waves, allowed the nationalist actors to develop an understanding and react to the European conception of the nation-formation process.<sup>332</sup> The broadcasts of the public radio through radio theatres and other programs communicate a set of practices addressing to the audience to be adopted as members of a nation.<sup>333</sup> In this sense radio, as the most common mean of communication of the time, presents a significant example of a reciprocal relationship in terms of establishing communication of nationalist politics in Republican Turkey both towards the domestic population - through various radio programmes and broadcasts that facilitate the imagination of nationhood and demarcate the distinctness of the national group- and at the

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<sup>330</sup> Ahiska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 17.

<sup>331</sup> Ahiska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 184.

<sup>332</sup> Ahiska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 127.

<sup>333</sup> Ahiska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, pp. 132, 161.

international level -by establishing a dialogical relationship with the international broadcasts addressed towards Turkey-.

Ambitions to reflect Turkey's integration into the modern social, economic, and political systems while demonstrating a distinct national culture can be observed in other cultural forms such as architecture. According to Bozdoğan (2001, p. 7), the reconciliation of the "modern" with the "national" has been at the top of the agenda of the early Republican architectural culture in Turkey.<sup>334</sup> Some architects held that the Modern Movement emerging in architecture and city planning was, in fact, national as it was contextually the most appropriate response to the developments of the time. Others, on the other hand, argued that what was traditional Turkish architecture actually lied in the modern. In this sense modernity in architecture, just as in other social and cultural aspects, reflected the ambition on the part of non-European cultures to define themselves as subjects that possessed the entitlements on their own histories. Aspirations of tracing the roots of Turkish nationhood in antiquity and marking Anatolia as the ancient homeland of Turks can be observed in the architecture of the early Republican period as well.<sup>335</sup> Placement of the giant Hittite sun course at the intersection of Ankara's Kızılay and Sıhhiye districts, delineating the old and new city of the Republican capital, can be an example that these architectural structures which people encounter in their everyday lives serve as constant reminders of nationhood. The main positions on the architectural culture of early Republican Turkey contended that the Turkish architecture had a distinct character that separated it from Islamic and Middle Eastern counterparts. Some lines of thought went as far as claiming the superiority of Turkish art over these cultures. This was in line with the relationship that Renan<sup>336</sup> established between national identity and memory, demonstrating the selective amnesia on the part of early Republican culture in Turkey by overlooking the

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<sup>334</sup> Bozdoğan, Sibel (2001), *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 7.

<sup>335</sup> Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, p. 244.

<sup>336</sup> Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*

traces of the Ottoman past on architecture. Furthermore, Turkish architectural culture was identified as being in close connection with Western art.

Sports and other leisure activities as cultural forms are also influenced by the nationalist transformation. With the pioneering of Selim Sırrı Tarcan, a prominent figure in Turkish sports and Olympic history, a national dance called ‘zeybek’ emerged.<sup>337</sup> Tarcan, during his time in Sweden, observes physical activities such as sports and dancing as integral parts of popular commitment to national identity. For Tarcan, by leaving no room for improvisation through pre-designated sets of rules and moves, national dances create the ideal atmosphere for the outburst of national aspirations around common rituals. Furthermore, different cities from different regions of Turkey demonstrate their own *zeybeks* in Ankara, the capital, on national holidays and special occasions, renewing nationwide commitment and aiming to establish a sense of belonging to a common culture across the country. Sports also has a similar meaning in terms of its integral position to national identity for Tarcan. With the potential to stir enthusiasm and its nationwide practice alongside international visibility in a competitive framework, sports provide the perfect environment for nationalist politics to facilitate the imagination of nationhood and defining the distinctiveness of national identity.

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<sup>337</sup> Öztürkmen, *Türkiye’de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, pp. 216 – 217.

## CHAPTER 5

### SPORTING NATIONALISM IN EARLY REPUBLICAN TURKEY

The emergence of modern sports in Turkey date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, corresponding to the simultaneous spread of different codes of sport originating from Britain and its colonies. The earliest forms of modern sporting competitions and events were held amongst the non-Muslim communities residing in regions that are in close proximity to the ports and, hence, that had higher contact with the trade ships and tradespeople coming from Europe and introducing novel forms of culture and leisure. As part of the processes of modernization of different Ottoman communities, the practicing of modern sports facilitated the emergence and consolidation of national identities as well.

The latecoming mentality of modernization manifests itself in the conception of modern Turkish sports as well. Whilst the competition in the fields introduced different communities code and conduct, it also brought along means for imagining nationhood. According to Irak, the imported characteristic of modern sports in Turkey, shared with other aspects of modernity, makes nationalism a definitive element in the organization of sporting culture.<sup>338</sup> Contrary to the British example where the social conflicts and the changes in the ownership of means production were the most effective factors in the formation of social and cultural activities such as sports, in the Turkish experience where modernization was conducted as a political project of the military-bureaucratic class, sporting activities became intrinsic to the formation of the nation-state. Therefore, while denominational ties or syndicate organizations play a key role in the organization of British sports clubs, nationalism emerges as a glue holding together the sports organizations in Turkey. Furthermore, sports is generally seen as a way of rallying people behind a national cause through instigating a

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<sup>338</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, pp. 26 – 27.

perception of threat directed against the nation and organizing reactions against it in the fields and in the stadium stands.

This chapter explores the relationship between sports and Turkish nationalism during the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the formative era of the Republican Turkey. The first section focuses on the emergence of modern sports in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire, starting from non-Muslim communities, with its impacts on the nationalist political actors whose effects on the formation of Turkish nationalist ideology seeped through the early Republican era. A special part is allocated to the story of Selim Sırrı Tarcan, the pioneer of the Turkish Olympic movement. In the second section, sports in the period between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Independence War is taken into account, in terms of the effects of the Allied occupation and sporting relations with the occupying forces, over the nation-formation process in Turkey. In the last section, sports policies and events in the early Republican Turkey is analysed within the context of nation-state formation. All of these sections discuss the relationship between sports and nationalism at national and international levels.

### **5.1. Emergence of Modern Sports in Late-19<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Empire**

There have been ancient forms of games such organized in different part of the Empire from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The *Pehlivan tekkeleri* opened by the *Bektaşî* were crucial in the spread of wrestling in the Middle East and North Africa. The encounters between the Turks and the Greeks during the previous centuries led to the Turkish wrestling style to resemble more to the Greco-Roman style; however, the wrestling in the *Pehlivan tekkeleri* was a conduct which was revised according to the religious tradition. Moreover, they served to the Turkification and Islamization of the lands conquered by the Ottoman Empire.<sup>339</sup> They served to military ends as well, by being stationed in uninhabited wastelands and acting as outposts and as a prevention mechanism against bandits.<sup>340</sup> However, the social and political functions of the

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<sup>339</sup> Civralı, Selim Rumi (2020), *Atletik Politika*, İstanbul: İletişim, p. 41.

<sup>340</sup> Civralı, *Atletik Politika*, p. 43.

*Pehlivan tekkeleri* notwithstanding, their conduct was not akin to modern sports; therefore, does not fall into the scope of this thesis. The arrival of modern sports in the Ottoman Empire occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Modern sports first hit the shores of coastal cities of the Ottoman Empire that have ports, such as İzmir and Thessaloniki on the Aegean coast. Trading relations in these cities led to the sporting encounters between the local folks and the crews of British vessels. Sporting activities of the Greek communities in these coastal cities set a crucial example in terms of organizing sports events in a modern manner. Although every city that harboured ports and trading communities have the potential to host the first games of British-origin sports such as football, there is a consensus among sports historians that a great extent of the origins of modern sports in Anatolia lies in İzmir.<sup>341</sup> For instance, Irak recounts the sports events and organization practices of the Greek communities of İzmir in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>342</sup> The first sports club of Anatolia was founded in İzmir, for that matter, by the name of *Apollon* in 1891, and the emergence of modern sports paved the way for the consolidation of national identities as well. Multisports events bringing together athletes from different locations where Greek communities resided began to flourish simultaneously.<sup>343</sup> *Panionia* Games, an Olympics-like event first held in 1896 in İzmir by the *Gymnasio* club (later to be named Panionios), can be viewed as one of the very early examples of sports organizations aiming to unite national groups, since it aimed to unite Greeks in all of Ionia region. This was followed by the Apollonia Games organised by the Apollon club in 1904, the same year İzmir clubs adopted the international sporting measurement units. Apollonia Games adopted some important rituals used in multisports organizations, such as the opening parade, which started from Basmane and ended in Bella Vista. These two organizations attracted Greek athletes from

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<sup>341</sup> Yüce, Mehmet (2014), *Osmanlı Melekleri: Futbol Tarihimizin Kadim Devreleri*, İstanbul: İletişim, p. 22.

<sup>342</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, pp. 30 – 34.

<sup>343</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, pp. 31 – 32.

Istanbul and inner Anatolia as well and became significant in terms of creating ways of imagining Greek nationhood. Sports persisted to become such an integral part of Greek national identity during the final era of the Ottoman Empire that by the end of the Balkan Wars, most of the Greek teams were wearing blue-and-white jerseys manifesting the colours of the Greek flag. In 1913, for instance, Greek team Strugglers withdrew from the league, protesting a ruling by the İstanbul Football Union demanding a change in team colours.<sup>344</sup>

The reason for the absence of Turkish athletes in the meantime was the period of oppression under the rule of Abdulhamid II.<sup>345</sup> Sports, like other forms of organizations and gatherings that carry the potential to generate political collectivities, were banned for the Muslim communities<sup>346</sup>. Starting from 1897 onwards, teams from İzmir began to travel to İstanbul, introducing the sport to the capital. However, as sports like football, rugby and cricket found their way to the capital, Istanbul, they began to pose significant alternatives to the traditional games practised by the Turkish such as wrestling.<sup>347</sup> Sports clubs, particularly football teams started to be formed by the Greek communities of Istanbul and the British who were in the city for trade purposes or as part of diplomatic or military missions. For instance, the first tennis matches were played by the British officers and their spouses who were in Istanbul for the Crimean War.<sup>348</sup> Sporting competitions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had a limited

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<sup>344</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, "Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye", p. 227.

<sup>345</sup> Okay, Cüneyd (2003), Sport and Nation Building: Gymnastics and Sport in the Ottoman State and the Committee of Union and Progress, 1908-18, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 20, No: 1, pp. 152 – 156.

<sup>346</sup> However, it should also be noted that in line with the global trend, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire, physical exercises and bodily health were associated with social wellbeing and material health. Therefore clubs like *Beşiktaş Jimnastik Kulübü* (Beşiktaş Gymnastics Club, founded in 1903) were established within the knowledge of the Palace during this period.

<sup>347</sup> Krawietz, Sport and Nationalism in the Republic of Turkey.

<sup>348</sup> Yüce, *Osmanlı Melekleri*, p. 35.

presence of Turkish athletes. Flourishing sports club paved the way for the emergence of the first football league in İstanbul in 1905, and the first champion was the team of Imogene, composed of the crew of a yacht by the same name, belonging to the British embassy.<sup>349</sup> As 1908, the year that marked the end of Abdulhamid's rule, sports organizations and participations began to vary. Participation of a collective of athletes from İzmir and Thessaloniki to the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens can be named as an example.<sup>350</sup> In the meantime, Turkish sports teams began to be established. The first Turkish football club, Black Stocking (original name in English), was formed in 1901 for a lifespan of one single match before its activities were halted due to the political atmosphere of the time.<sup>351</sup> However, *Galatasaray* and *Fenerbahçe*, two of İstanbul's longest standing football clubs, joined the *İstanbul Kulüpler Ligi* (League of İstanbul Clubs) in 1906 and 1907, respectively.

The case of *Galatasaray* joining the league can provide a clue about how the tight grip of the rule of Abdulhamid II over sports was overridden.<sup>352</sup> *Galatasaray* was founded as the sports club of the *Galatasaray Sultanisi* (*Galatasaray High School*), and the curriculum adopted was from the French educational system, where most of its teaching staff were French. The dominant code of this club is football and its athletes at that period were also the members of the *Galatasaray High School*. The High School was founded in 1868 as part of the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire, which slowly began to undergo with an aim to raise the military and bureaucratic officials to the administrative ranks that most recently suffered a defeat in the Crimean War of 1856. The European-style education in the school introduced the students with novel political views as well, and the strongest one among them was nationalism. Furthermore, in physical education classes, modern sports were taught,

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<sup>349</sup> Okay, *Sport and Nation Building*.

<sup>350</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 25.

<sup>351</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 37.

<sup>352</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 30 – 32.



and students were encouraged to practice. Ali Sami (Yen) was a student who enrolled in the High School in 1902. After being an enthusiast of the sport during his school years, Ali Sami founded the team of *Galatasaray* and registered it to the league as the first Muslim-Turkish club to join.<sup>353</sup> In order to avoid the fate of the Black Stocking, *Galatasaray* participated in the league competition anonymously and was coined as *Another Team* in the fixtures.<sup>354</sup> However, they were not subjected to intense surveillance like the Black Stocking. This was mostly due to the increasing role of nationalist views among the political actors vis-à-vis the rapidly declining power of Abdulhamid II. The looming end of the period of oppression, combined with the reputation of the High School at the eyes of the Palace due to its bureaucratic role in the education.<sup>355</sup> The increasingly influential nationalist ideas began to manifest themselves in the realm of sports, and the officials of the Palace did not want to confront them, given their already diminishing power. *Galatasaray* was not immune to these nationalist views, as Ali Sami Bey coined the founding mission of the club as “...to play in a collective way like English, to signify a certain colour and a name and to beat non-Turkish teams”<sup>356</sup>. Under these circumstances, other Turkish clubs followed *Galatasaray* towards the league.

The rule of Abdulhamid II ended when the *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress, CUP henceforth) took over in 1908. As most of the modernist officials of the CUP were European-trained, they were aware of the role of sports in nation-state building processes. Turkish nationalism; therefore, became an integral part of the sporting activities that gradually became widespread among the Turkish population. The CUP laid great stress on physical education and gymnastics

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<sup>353</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 38.

<sup>354</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 33.

<sup>355</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 33 – 35.

<sup>356</sup> “Story of Our Foundation”, *Galatasaray Sports Club*, available on <https://www.galatasaray.org/en/s/galatasaray-spor-kulubu-1905/3>, accessed on 24 June 2020.

and led efforts for the launching of organizations promoting these activities. Ottoman Gymnastics Club *Beşiktaş* became the first registered Ottoman sports club in 1910.<sup>357</sup> Organizations of sports and physical activities opened with the direct influence of the CUP included *Türk Gücü Cemiyeti* (Turkish Power Association), founded in 1913 with a paramilitary structure, aiming at increasing the physical wellbeing of Turks through teaching traditional sports like horse riding, archery, and wrestling, as well as *Osmanlı Güç Dernekleri* (Ottoman Power Associations) in 1914, founders of which included one of the most prominent ideologues of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp.<sup>358</sup> These indicate that physical strength was viewed as an important component of national identity, demonstrating the compatibility of the national group among the international sphere.

The influence of the CUP over sports began to take football into its grasp as well, while the sport increased its mass appeal by the day. Galatasaray garnered a great amount of attraction by the merit of being the first Turkish club to compete in the İstanbul league; however, it had a quite exclusive structure, and participation to the organizational body was limited to the High School members. For this reason, attention of the CUP turned to Fenerbahçe and many members of the new military-bureaucratic class of the era of *İkinci Meşrutiyet* (Second Constitutional Monarchy) became members of the club.<sup>359</sup> Particularly due to the rising nationalist sentiments following the Balkan War in 1912, the CUP sought different ways of increasing its base, and sport was one of the most effective elements of this program. *Fenerbahçe* took its roots from a quarter in İstanbul, and therefore, was more appealing to the officials of the CUP. Ünaydın contends that the city represented a cluster containing people from all walks of life in the eyes of the CUP and therefore *Fenerbahçe* caught

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<sup>357</sup> Krawietz, Sport and Nationalism in the Republic of Turkey.

<sup>358</sup> Okay, Sport and Nation Building.

<sup>359</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 39.

the attention of the Committee more than *Galatasaray*.<sup>360</sup> *Fenerbahçe*, in turn, welcomed this support as it lacked the finances that *Galatasaray* had easier through access due to its High School ties. However, *Fenerbahçe* successfully managed to read the political atmosphere and keep the CUP at a safe distance and did not have to rely on the Committee to continue its existence.

The unofficial support from the ruling class that *Fenerbahçe* enjoyed attracted some members of the *Galatasaray* team. Combined with the resentment towards the multicultural demography of the High School, a schism occurred in 1911 by a group of players that were also discontent about being benched during the matches.<sup>361</sup> This team, showing no effort to disguise its ties to the CUP, was named Progress (*Terakki* -original name in English). Unlike *Fenerbahçe*, that managed to keep a certain distance from the CUP despite the heavy presence of the Committee officials in the team, Progress never hid its links with the CUP and came under its direct influence.<sup>362</sup> As the team began to compete in the Sunday League in the 1911-1912 season, it became the main contender for the title against *Fenerbahçe*, as the rivalry between the two clubs came to represent a struggle for power between the fractions among the Committee members. Muslim teams began to play their matches in the Friday leagues (holy day for Muslims) apart from the Sunday leagues of the non-Muslim communities (holy day for Christians), as of 1910.<sup>363</sup> This showed the increasing role of ethnic identity in Ottoman sports. As the First World War was looming, Progress, under the influence of Turkish nationalist views, changed its name to *Altınordu* (Golden

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<sup>360</sup> Ünaydın, Ruşen Eşref (1957), *Galatasaray ve Futbol-Hatıralar*, İstanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, pp. 120 – 121 as cited in Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 47.

<sup>361</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 52 – 53.

<sup>362</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 42.

<sup>363</sup> Okay, *Sport and Nation Building*.

Horde)<sup>364</sup>, in reference to a Turkicized khanate formed in Central Asia, therefore reflecting the adoption of the roots of ethnic Turkish identity and a longing for ‘motherland’.<sup>365</sup> The club was composed of Turkish members only, and it adopted red and blue as its official colours reflecting blood (a reference to the ancestral roots of Turkishness, identified with characteristics related to warfare), and steel (a reference to modernization and industrialization). In this sense, *Altınordu* was a direct outcome of the Turkish nationalist views that began to get a hold on the administration of the Ottoman Empire by merging modernization efforts with references to ethnic Turkish identity for the purpose of facilitating the imagination of nationhood. As the mindset behind the adoption of its colours showed, the understanding of sporting nationalism during the late-Ottoman era demonstrates the first clues of the ideological framework of Turkish nationalism, which attempts to consolidate the steps taken towards modernization by deploying references to ethnic roots in order to gain wider appeal in the population. However, *Altınordu*’s ties with the CUP worked against it during the war years, and as the power of the CUP declined, so did the team, and eventually it merged with its greatest rival, Fenerbahçe, and ceased to exist.

The political atmosphere around the Balkan Wars led to a rise in the nationalist sentiments among the Turkish community in İzmir as well, and a group of footballers applied to the CUP for funding in order to establish a team to compete against the teams of non-Muslim communities.<sup>366</sup> This team, founded in 1912, was *Karşıyaka SK* (*Karşıyaka* Sports Club), and it adopted green (with reference to Islam) and red (with reference to Turkishness), reflecting the political mindset of the time. In accordance with the founding ideological basis of the team, the matches played against the teams of non-Muslim communities of the city were regarded as part of a national struggle,

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<sup>364</sup> Altınordu should not be confused with the İzmir team, founded with the same name and colours in 1923. Altınordu of İzmir is presently active and is known for avoiding non-Turkish players in its roster.

<sup>365</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 53 – 54.

<sup>366</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 58 – 59.

leading to most of them ending with brawls. In 1914 the officials of the CUP in İzmir directly involved in the founding of another club, *Altay*. This team, just like *Altınordu*, was named with reference to the ancient motherland of ethnic Turks, Altay Mountains in Central Asia. These clubs helped to mobilize nationalist sentiment among the Muslim-Turkish population in their cities, and the CUP took active use of this function of the sports.

The spread of sports to other Anatolian cities was quite dependent on the port cities and the initial spillover was experienced in their hinterlands. Although in cities like Trabzon, where the Greek community began to play football earlier, sports, in general, started to be practised by the Muslim-Turkish community during the time of the Balkan Wars in correlation with the rising nationalist views, the density of fixtures, and matches did not match those in İstanbul and İzmir.<sup>367</sup> During the First World War, as the CUP tightened its grip over the wartime politics, teams and clubs of non-Muslim communities and British diplomatic and trade missions began to retreat from the fields, which led to an increased level of competition and rivalry among the clubs of the Turkish population.<sup>368</sup> The enduring rivalries among the three biggest clubs of İstanbul (*Beşiktaş*, *Fenerbahçe*, and *Galatasaray*) is a result of this period. The period between the end of the First World War in 1918 and the establishment of the Republican regime in 1923 stages some of the most significant international competitions between Turkish teams and the teams of the Allied armed forces, which helped fuelling Turkish nationalism during the Independence War. Before discussing these sporting events, it would be useful to allocate a section to Selim Sırrı Tarcan, a former member of the Young Turks, and a key actor in the establishment of Republican Turkey's physical education curriculum, sports administration and Olympic movement.

#### **5.1.1. Selim Sırrı Tarcan and Modern Turkish Sports**

Selim Sırrı (Tarcan) belonged to the military-bureaucratic class of the late-Ottoman era who was educated in schools that adopted Western-style curricula. Selim

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<sup>367</sup> Tunç, Sevecen (2011b), *Trabzon'da Futbolun Toplumsal Tarihi: Mektepliler, Münevverler, Meraklılar*, İstanbul: İletişim, pp. 30 – 31.

<sup>368</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 71.

Sırrı himself was a student in the Galatasaray High School for two years, where many athletes of the last years of the Empire were introduced to the modern sports and physical education exercises. The physical education teacher of Selim Sırrı in Galatasaray was Faik Ali [Üstünidman], the first Muslim physical education instructor of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>369</sup> Selim Sırrı did not graduate from the Galatasaray High School due to financial reasons, and he enrolled in the *Mühendishane-i Berri Hümayun* (Military School of Engineering) in the late 1890s. He met the Young Turks there and subscribed to their publication, *Meşveret* (Consultation), and occasionally wrote to the Young Turks headquarters in Paris. He became a member of the CUP in 1907, while working as an officer in İstanbul. He and Rıza Tevfik, also a physical education aficionado, became significant officials after the CUP came to power in 1908. However, Selim Sırrı felt that there was a growing rift between him and certain political groups close to the Palace and sought ways of going abroad. He began teaching physical education, and afterwards, being inspired by the writings of Dr. Philippe Tissié, a French neuropsychiatrist, who founded the French education system of teaching sports and physical education, he decided to move to Sweden to meet him and learn more about Swedish gymnastics. There, he studied the Swedish gymnastics, which became more favourable to him than its widely practised German counterpart due to its physical health strengthening qualities over the latter's competitive attributes.<sup>370</sup> These endeavours led to the development of the Turkish folk dance, *zeybek*, as discussed earlier.

After 1911, Selim Sırrı resigned from the army and following that he took up a role in the education system which continued through the early years of Republican Turkey, and later became the *Terbiye-i Bedeniye Müfettişi* (Inspector of Physical Education). He was assigned the duty of preparing a curriculum for physical education courses in civilian schools.<sup>371</sup> In the Republican era, this turned into a mass physical

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<sup>369</sup> Lüküslü & Dinçşahin, *Shaping Bodies, Shaping Minds*.

<sup>370</sup> Akın, "*Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*", p. 178.

<sup>371</sup> Lüküslü & Dinçşahin, *Shaping Bodies, Shaping Minds*.

education mobilization that spread into schools, factories, and villages. By 1930s, the sports clubs and teams began to be encouraged in schools. As team sports were deemed to be promoting polarisation and division, emphasis was laid on individual sports such as gymnastics and athletics, in line with the Republican regime's efforts of promoting solidarity and unification around national identity. Just as many other social theorists laying the groundwork of Republican regime's nation formation process, Selim Sırrı was also influenced by Durkheimian sociology and put emphasis on social solidarity in preparing his physical education system. In this sense, Selim Sırrı found Swedish gymnastics more suitable for a physical education program, embracing the harmonious movement of bodily organs and groups of people. Furthermore, Selim Sırrı's primary conception of physical education was related to health, as the medical system of the Republican regime prioritized pre-emptive wellbeing over treatment-based healthcare.<sup>372</sup> Selim Sırrı's efforts were praised by the intellectuals of the time, such as Niyazi Berkes, who called Selim Sırrı's physical education program as "tireless war against physical immobility", since the sedentary way of life was associated with kneeling before the Sultan in the Republican mindset.<sup>373</sup>

Another significant impact on the physical education network of Republican Turkey is the system's spread towards women.<sup>374</sup> Selim Sırrı's physical education program began to be expanded towards the girls' schools, and after the declaration of the Republican regime, he wrote to the Institute in Sweden to request a female gymnastics instructor and the daughter of the Director of the Institute, Inge Nerman, arrived to educate Turkish female gymnastics instructors and teach Swedish folk dances. The Republican regime stressed great importance to the reproductive capacity of women for the state, and the physical health of women was emphasized accordingly. Selim Sırrı, in radio programs broadcasted starting from the early 1930s, allocated

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<sup>372</sup> Akın, "Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar", p. 101 – 102.

<sup>373</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 402.

<sup>374</sup> Lüküslü & Dinçşahin, *Shaping Bodies, Shaping Minds*.

significant airtime to the topic of women and emphasized motherhood.<sup>375</sup> In the newly established Republican regime, the policies towards women were both based on their emancipation through participation in modern civic life and the reproductive capacity of the female body for the continuation of the national group. Selim Sırrı contended that “Women cannot rid themselves of the duty and responsibility of motherhood”, while at the same time advocating for women’s education to become good mothers and teachers.<sup>376</sup> This demonstrates the gender perspective of early Republican Turkey’s physical education system and Selim Sırrı’s program.

Radio programs of Selim Sırrı provide an important outlook to his views on a number of topics from education to gender roles and sports is inevitably one of them. In these programs, Selim Sırrı occasionally discusses his trips to European countries and extracts experiences and communicates policy proposals on different subjects while other programs include his views and ideas. Selim Sırrı’s foreign trips gave him the opportunity to observe sporting practices in the countries he visited, and he sought ways of adapting them to Turkey. Selim Sırrı’s views on modern sports reflect the dominant understanding of nationalism by the founders of the Republic, which can be seen in Gökalp’s adaptation of Durkheimian sociology. According to this view, unique cultures must seek ways of harmonizing with larger civilizations to survive while preserving their identity. As for Selim Sırrı, for instance, in a program on the Sokol Festival of gymnastics in Prague, he praises the harmony visible in the event from the movements of the gymnasts to the organization of the audiences, calling ‘order and harmony’ as the two forces that help nations achieve success.<sup>377</sup> Sokol was a nationalist Czech organization that was primarily preoccupied with mass gymnastics and one of the most important modern sports organizations promoting Pan-Slavism.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 141.

<sup>376</sup> Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, pp. 141, 142.

<sup>377</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı (1934), *Radyo Konferanslarım: İkinci Kitap*, İstanbul: Ülkü Matbaası, pp. 62 – 63.

<sup>378</sup> Nolte, Claire E. (2003), *The Sokol in the Czech lands to 1914: Training for Nation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, p. 5.



In another program, Selim Sırrı talks about archery and wrestling as part of the physical training of ancestral Turks.<sup>379</sup> After telling a brief history of archery and wrestling in ancient Turks, Selim Sırrı goes on to talk about the participation of Turkish athletes in international wrestling events and glorifies the success of Turkish wrestlers in the Wrestling in Paris event held in 1895.<sup>380</sup> Selim Sırrı praises not only the sporting success of Turkish wrestlers, but he also finds glory in their competitive virtue by mentioning a story about Kara Ahmet, a Turkish wrestler refusing money in exchange for losing a match: “It is apparent that in the veins of these hardworking young *pehlivans* (wrestlers), who protect themselves from all sorts of abuses by practising in an orderly fashion, lie the blood of our ancestors”.<sup>381</sup> In other words, Selim Sırrı not only encourages participation in modern sporting organizations, but he also expresses happiness from identifying the attitudes of participant athletes with characteristic attributes to Turkishness. Another overlapping aspect of Selim Sırrı’s views on sport with the formative characteristics of the Turkish nationalism is the framing of the Ottoman past as a part of history to be severed from. In a radio broadcast on sports and youth, he complains about the oppressive regime during the reign of Abdulhamid II.

When I was young, there was a very strict rule of discipline. The youth was living under a harder, tougher moral surveillance. Young boys and girls were subjected to constant oversight and control. (...) Cheer, joy, success, entrepreneurship, in short, all sorts of freedom were frowned upon. Contrary to this, maturity, timidity and silence were highly appreciated manners.<sup>382</sup>

Following these statements, Selim Sırrı complains about how this idleness led to the demise of the Empire, arguing that intellectual and sporting successes should go

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<sup>379</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı, *Radyo Konferanslarım: İkinci Kitap*, p. 64.

<sup>380</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı, *Radyo Konferanslarım: İkinci Kitap*, pp. 70 – 72.

<sup>381</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı, *Radyo Konferanslarım: İkinci Kitap*, p. 71.

<sup>382</sup> Tarcan, Selim Sırrı (1935), *Radyo Konferanslarım: Üçüncü Kitap*, İstanbul: Ülkü Matbaası, p. 63.

hand in hand for a nation to thrive. While ending the broadcast, he advises the youth of Republican Turkey to compare themselves to their parents and take pride. These comparisons, as proposed by Selim Sırrı, have very secular and Republican connotations, since they should denounce religious fatalism, sedentary lifestyle, and constitutional monarchy while praising mundaneness, physical wellbeing, and the Republic.<sup>383</sup>

Selim Sırrı played a crucial role in the invention of sports related traditions of the newly established Republican regime.<sup>384</sup> He led the adoption of the first Gymnastics Festivals of the Ottoman Empire in 1916 into the Republican era, the first edition of which was held in 1928. They continued to be held on May 19 every year as the Commemorating Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, marking the arrival of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Samsun, a northern Anatolian city which is regarded as the commencement of the War of Independence of Turkey. Selim Sırrı viewed youth as an important component of the nation due to the physical vitality, dynamism, and symbol of the peak level of health in the lifetime of human beings.<sup>385</sup> In this sense, while demonstrating a secular understanding of life, these events aimed to facilitate the imagination of nationhood through physical activities and sports in the context of a modern nation-state.

In a radio broadcast, Selim Sırrı tells about a dream he had had watching the Sokol festival.<sup>386</sup> According to this, with the participation of members of parliament, cabinet ministers, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a mega sports event, with young men and women of the new Republic as participants, would be held in Ankara, the capital of the newly established Republic of Turkey. The opening ceremony to this event would include a parade of villagers entering the capital as well, denoting the national

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<sup>383</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı, *Radyo Konferanslarım: Üçüncü Kitap*, pp. 68 – 69.

<sup>384</sup> Lüküslü & Dinçşahin, *Shaping Bodies, Shaping Minds*.

<sup>385</sup> Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, pp. 145 – 146.

<sup>386</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı, *Radyo Konferanslarım: Üçüncü Kitap*, pp. 31 – 32.

integration by a joining of the bureaucratic urban class and rural population. The sports events in this organization would include modern sports like gymnastics and traditional Turkish games like archery, wrestling, and horse-riding alike, which demonstrates the adoption of modern national signifiers while simultaneously including references to ethnic identity once again. These practices aimed at achieving the formation of a modern nation-state while at the same time successfully communicating it to the masses by references to ethnic ancestry. Selim Sırrı's dream of hosting such an event is rooted in his passion for the Olympic Games, as he led the Ottoman Empire's inclusion in the Olympic Movement, as well as becoming the first chair of the Turkish National Olympic Committee after the founding of the Republic of Turkey.

Selim Sırrı met with Baron Pierre de Coubertin in İstanbul in 1907, and founded the Ottoman Olympic Committee in 1908, after forming organizations was allowed with the commencement of the second Constitutional Monarchy.<sup>387</sup> His first contact with the board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) happened in 1909 when he visited Berlin during an IOC meeting before arriving in Sweden. There, he met Baron Pierre de Coubertin and other delegates of the IOC.<sup>388</sup> He attended the 1912 Summer Olympics in Stockholm; however, after the end of the First World War, Ottoman Empire was excluded from the Olympics alongside Germany, having been accused of causing the War by the Allied Forces and denied membership to the League of Nations. Selim Sırrı's acquaintance with Pierre de Coubertin helped reinstating the Ottoman Olympic Committee to the IOC in 1921. This decision preceded the signing of a peace deal, and Pierre de Coubertin himself lobbied for the Ottoman readmission.<sup>389</sup> Selim Sırrı continued to chair the National Olympic Committee to the

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<sup>387</sup> Atabeyoğlu, Cem (2001), *Sporda Devlet mi? Devlette Spor mu?*, İstanbul: TMOK Yayınları, p. 8.

<sup>388</sup> Atabeyoğlu, Cem (2000), *Kurucumuz Selim Sırrı Tarcan*, İstanbul: TMOK Yayınları, p. 16.

<sup>389</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Kurucumuz Selim Sırrı Tarcan*, pp. 22 – 23.

establishment of the Republican regime; however, the turbulent years of the War of Independence brought novel international encounters to the Turkish sports world.

## 5.2. Sports in Post-First World War Ottoman Empire

Following the end of the First World War, an important part of the Ottoman territory in Anatolia was invaded by the Allied forces, whereas the territories of the Empire in the Middle East seceded under mandates of Britain and France. The occupation, while marked a milestone in the demise of the Empire, it paved the way for new kinds of international encounters. The military and civilian officials of the occupying forces roaming Anatolian cities led the local people to encounter a figure of Other for the first time to a large extent. This compulsory cohabitation led to confrontations that fuelled nationalist sentiments among the Turkish people. Sports was among these confrontations as teams comprised of the soldiers of the Allied armies -primarily British ones- occasionally played against Turkish teams. These matches, in terms of boosting morale and nationalist sentiments, were regarded as part of the War of Independence.<sup>390</sup> The First World War and the subsequent period of occupation make up an important part of the nationalist history writing in Turkish sports, as *Galatasaray's* history include players who fought in the Battle of Gallipoli while *Fenerbahçe* takes pride in the matches that the team won against the teams of Allied Forces in İstanbul and *Beşiktaş* regularly commemorates its players who died in the War of Independence.<sup>391</sup> Furthermore, matches between Turkish teams and teams of Ottoman Greek and Armenian communities provided ground for another form of contention as well, since these teams were associated with the occupation forces. For instance, in matches between Turkish teams *Fenerbahçe* and Union Club (later named *İttihatspor*) and popular Greek team *Pera* (Greek name for the famous İstanbul quarter Beyoğlu) in İstanbul, Turkish fans burnt the flag of the Greek battleship *Kilkış* which anchored in the shores of İstanbul, as Greek fans chanted “*Zito Venizelos!*” (Long live Venizelos!) in favour of the Prime Minister of Greece at the time. In İzmir, where the matches of Turkish teams in this period were mostly with the

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<sup>390</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, “Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye, p. 225.

<sup>391</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 79.

local Greek and Armenian clubs, and thus the competition had an ethno-religious character; *İdman Yurdu* wore red-and-white jerseys against *Apollon*, who wore blue-and-white.<sup>392</sup> These matches created a paradoxical context in terms of the status of the occupation forces in Turkey.<sup>393</sup> While they helping to imagine nationhood among a people territorially divided through occupation, playing in the tournaments organized by occupying forces and admitting them as rivals in the field also enabled the legitimation of their presence in a way.

Following the defeat in the First World War and the occupation, and the subsequent downfall of the CUP from the government led to a deterioration in the material conditions of the Turkish sports clubs, particularly in İstanbul. The biggest teams of the city such as Galatasaray and Beşiktaş were using facilities seized from non-Muslims and foreigners, but they had to leave these sites following the arrival of the Allied Forces. *Beşiktaş*'s facilities in Moda were assaulted, and the chair of *Fenerbahçe* Sabri (Toprak) Bey was sent to exile in Malta as he was a member of the parliament.<sup>394</sup> In the meantime, international sporting contacts began to surface, as Galatasaray went on a Europe tour in the fall of 1921, playing seventeen matches mostly in Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>395</sup> While there are no official records of the funding of this tour, it may well be the case that the Ottoman government in İstanbul sent the team on a propaganda tour, as the countries where the tour mostly took place are the Empire's allies in the First World War.

Matches between Turkish teams and the teams of Allied forces became such an attraction for the locals of İstanbul by generating intense nationalist sentiments they became lieus for expressing public discontent with the occupation. After the Allied Forces retreated from İstanbul, Refet (Bele) Pasha, a commander in the War of Independence, told a group of athletes that "while we fought against the enemy in

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<sup>392</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, "Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye", p. 225.

<sup>393</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, pp. 44 – 45.

<sup>394</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 74.

<sup>395</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 77.

Anatolia, you raised the morale of the people of İstanbul with the matches you played”.<sup>396</sup> *Fenerbahçe* players were even recruited during the War, to smuggle weapons to Anatolia.<sup>397</sup> Furthermore, *Fenerbahçe*, the team that had the most match wins against the Allied Forces’ teams (41 wins in 50 matches in total), was temporarily shut down in 1920 due to “nesting hostile emotions against the Allied Forces”.<sup>398</sup> Indeed, the most significant narrative around the victories of Turkish teams against military teams of the Allied Forces is the victory of *Fenerbahçe* in the Harrington Cup, organized in June 1923 in honour of Commander Sir Charles Harrington.<sup>399</sup> This match was organized during the ongoing negotiations in Lausanne, and *Fenerbahçe* won with a single goal scored by Zeki Rıza (Sporel). This match holds such a significant place in the nationalist narrative of Turkish sports history, the fact that *Fenerbahçe* was comprised of a team of well-trained football players who won the previous season of the Friday League by losing a single match while the opposing team was mostly made up of soldiers who have been away from their homes for five years and only four of them were actual footballers is generally omitted.<sup>400</sup> However unequal were the conditions they were played under; these matches played a key role in creating mass mobilization around Turkish national identity.

An important turning point in sports-related international encounters in the Occupied İstanbul was the unofficial *İstanbul Olimpiyat Oyunları* (İstanbul Olympiad) held in 1922. This was a tournament comprised of a series of matches, organized by the teams and schools of non-Muslim communities, Allied Forces, and the Young

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<sup>396</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 75.

<sup>397</sup> Keddie, Patrick (2018), *The Passion: Football and the Story of Modern Turkey*, London & New York: I. B. Tauris, p. 19.

<sup>398</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, “Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye”, p. 225.

<sup>399</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 44.

<sup>400</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 45.

Male Christians Association (YMCA) in İstanbul.<sup>401</sup> The only Turkish club to participate was the Union Club that justified its participation by the claim of being a worthy challenge for other teams by the merit of being the last champion of the Sunday League. The chair of the team, Aydınoğlu Raşid Bey, even invited Selim Sırrı, the IOC representative to the Ottoman Empire, to attend the matches the Union Club was scheduled to play.<sup>402</sup> The team played only a single match with the Joint Team of the Armenian community, which ended in a tie, but withdrew from the tournament right after due to the pressures from the Turkish community. As the end of the War of Independence drew closer, feelings of hostility and animosity towards the Allied Forces and the non-Muslim communities, who were occasionally being subjected to violence in different parts of Anatolia, began to be manifested more and more openly. This hostility surfaced in the İstanbul Olympiad as well, with the decision of the Turkish clubs to boycott the tournament. The newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar* claimed in a very angry and spiteful tone that ‘the sole reason’ for the Turkish boycott of the tournament was the ‘despise and abstention from competing with Greeks who massacre their brothers and burn houses [of Turks] in Anatolia’.<sup>403</sup> However, despite the angry tone in the op-ed in *Tasvir-i Efkar* and the boycott, it would be wrong to assume that the Olympiad took place in a violent environment; on the contrary, it was extensively covered by the İstanbul press, and İstanbulites from all religious and ethnic backgrounds followed the event closely. In any case, the İstanbul Olympiad demonstrates a very clear manifestation of the nationalist sentiments prevailing in the international sports events. This period was a time when the defeated Ottoman Empire was excluded from international sports federations and events such as the 1920 Antwerp Olympics due to the role of the Central Powers in the First World War. Even in states of exclusion or in the debates of boycotting, factors of national contentions

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<sup>401</sup> Yüce, Mehmet (2020), *Esir Şehirde Spor*, İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi: Kültür A.Ş, p. 305.

<sup>402</sup> Yüce, *Esir Şehirde Spor*, p. 307.

<sup>403</sup> Yüce, *Esir Şehirde Spor*, p. 309.

and consolidating national identities through international sports events are clearly visible.

Sports in Turkey during 1920s witnessed a spillover of sporting events in Anatolia. Sports teams in different provinces flourished during this period, and organizations began to vary. Trabzon was an example of this which was under Russian occupation at the beginning of the decade. Süleyman Rıza (Kuğu), one of the most famous athletes of Trabzon in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, wrote a book on football in 1922, detailing the rules of football and the state of sport in Turkey. In this book, Süleyman Rıza calls for financial sport from İstanbul to sports clubs of Trabzon, naming it a ‘national cause’.<sup>404</sup> Indeed, a number of new teams and clubs started to be established, and they needed financial support due to the blockade on the ports during the occupation. Local competitions came alive with the establishment of *İdmanocağı* and *İdmangrubu* clubs, as the first match between the two was played in 1921.<sup>405</sup> These teams shouldered national significance as well, while Kazım Karabekir, a commander during the War of Independence, was the honorary president of the former, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk carried the same title for the latter. This flourishing of teams and inter club competitions necessitated the formation of an overarching entity to oversee the growing sporting operations. Bora and Erdoğan contend that as the sporting organizations of most countries were first established by the British forces, forming national organizations and leagues by eliminating the foreigners played an important role in the development of national consciousness.<sup>406</sup> Furthermore, creating a national league help designating territorial integrity with determining the inclusion and exclusion of teams, as well as building a national market through controlling the mobility of capital and labour revolving around matches and events.

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<sup>404</sup> (Kuğu), Süleyman Rıza (1922), *Asoseyşin [Association] Futbol*, Trabzon: Serasi Matbaası, p. 62.

<sup>405</sup> Tunç, *Mektepliler, Münevverler, Meraklılar*, p. 37.

<sup>406</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, “Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye”, p. 227.



The first attempt to realize such a governing body was in 1921 when *İdman İttifakı Heyet-i Muvakkatesi* (Interim Council of Sports Union) was founded.<sup>407</sup> Contrary to its successors, *İdman İttifakı Heyet-i Muvakkatesi* included teams and clubs of all sports codes. It not only organized sporting events but also took up the mission of rationalizing sporting activities with a scientific framework and encouraging all kinds of physical activities. The Interim Council became permanent in May 1922, and the first centralized sports organization of Turkey was established under the name of *Türkiye İdman Cemiyetleri İttifakı* (Union of Turkish Sports Club, UTSC). While the Interim Council was an interclub organization coordinating fixtures, fields, and appointing referees, UTSC emerged as a semi-independent body that oversaw the entire sports-related businesses around the country from the end of the War of Independence onwards.<sup>408</sup> UTSC became an entity determining the rules and principles of the sports practices in the entire country by translating rulebooks and applying for memberships to international federations. UTSC, after being taken over by the newly established Republican regime, became the epicentre of debates around the relationship between sports and the nation-state with its structure, accomplishments, and failures.

### **5.3. Sports and Nationalism in Early Republican Turkey**

Sports and state relations in the early Republican period of Turkish history is generally analysed under two periods defined by the establishment of the UTSC in 1922 and its replacement by the Turkish Sports Institution (*Türk Spor Kurumu, TSI*) in 1936. The first period marked by the governance of the UTSC is generally regarded by some sports historians as a more liberal era -in line with the economic principles underlining the importance of private enterprises declared in the 1923 Economy Congress in İzmir- due to its semi-autonomous structure and relative distance of the

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<sup>407</sup> Akın, "Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar", p. 56.

<sup>408</sup> Akın, "Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar", pp. 57 – 58.

state to the Union.<sup>409</sup> The establishment of the TSI, on the other hand, is viewed as a turning point in the state control over sports. Şenyuva and Tunç contend that this analysis lacks accuracy as there has always been a close-knit relationship between sports and the state, while the newly established Republic of Turkey always intervened in sports administration to impose policies and directions in line with the nation formation process and there was hardly any disagreement over the understanding of sports in the early Republican politics in Turkey.<sup>410</sup>

The UTSC became the primary executioner of the government's sports policies. Sports was an effective way to build a healthy image of Republican Turkey against the Ottoman image of the 'sick man of Europe' that led the new regime to develop a substantial interest in the UTSC. In 1924, a government decree declared the UTSC a public benefit organization, and the relationship between the state and the Union became official.<sup>411</sup> The 1920s were a period when the nation-state prioritized nationalizing the stadia, clubs and laying the territorial claim to the realm of sports in Turkey.<sup>412</sup> Gazi Cup began to be organized in 1928 in honour of Atatürk, and the ownership of the Taksim Stadium that hosted the İstanbul Olympiad of 1922 was transferred to the Treasury to that end. Despite these close ties, the UTSC was not an organic part of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, RPP), which caused discontent among the party officials. Following the failures of the Turkish team in the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam, the RPP began to seek formulas of replacing the UTSC with a body that is a more organic part of the state structure.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Fişek, Kurthan (1983), *Devlet Politikası ve Toplumsal Yapıyla İlişkileri Açısından Spor Yönetimi: Dünyada ve Türkiye'de*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, p. 309.

<sup>410</sup> Şenyuva & Tunç, Turkey and the Europe of football.

<sup>411</sup> Akın, "Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar", p. 60.

<sup>412</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 97 – 99.

<sup>413</sup> Akın, "Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar", pp. 61 – 62.

According to Zürcher, a double-jeu of both looking up to and standing up to the West is a fundamental characteristic of Turkish nationalism.<sup>414</sup> This aspect was reflected on the Early Republican sports policy as well, as sports were regarded as a means of both being included in the European cluster and claiming physical and moral superiority. Promoting ‘the healthy, young body’ has been adapted as a way of performatively joining the Western civilization.<sup>415</sup> Conversely, the nationalist theories developed in the fields of history and linguistics claiming that claiming Turkish identity and Turkish language lie in the roots of all nations and that languages in the world spilled over to sports as well, gave way to a claim that all modern sports were first practised by the Turks.<sup>416</sup> For instance, there was a widespread theory that football stemmed from an ancient Turkish game called *tepük*.<sup>417</sup> Amidst growing contempt towards the UTSC with the view that its organization was no longer sufficient for the realization of sports policy and meeting the demands of the nationalist policies of the state due to its distant structure, the RPP sought changes in its sporting policies.

Employing international contacts was one important attempt in search for change and for this, Turkey turned to its longest enduring alliance in 20<sup>th</sup> century continental Europe, Germany. In the 1930s, Turkey was heavily within the political trajectory of Germany, and sports was influenced by that as well, contrary to Selim Sırrı’s earlier wishes. Dr. Goenther was invited to Turkey to modernize mountaineering and Hermann Altröck from Leipzig University to prepare a report for a plan to establish a Physical Education Institute (*Beden Terbiyesi Enstitüsü*) in Ankara.<sup>418</sup> However, the foremost invité of the time was Carl Diem, who was one of

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<sup>414</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 191.

<sup>415</sup> Krawietz, *Sport and Nationalism in the Republic of Turkey*.

<sup>416</sup> Akın, “*Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*”, pp. 65 – 66.

<sup>417</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, “*Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye*”, p. 223.

<sup>418</sup> Akın, “*Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*”, p. 70.

the most prominent sports figures of pre-World War II Germany.<sup>419</sup> Diem's agenda was a rather military-oriented one, in line with the regime's interest in physical education and sports. The headings in Diem's report included forming a youth organization and modernization of sports and physical education training. Creating a youth branch called the *Gazi-Jugend* (resembling the *Hitlerjugend*) and appointing *Sport-Valis* (sports-governors) to nine regions in the country were among Diem's proposals.<sup>420</sup> Although the proposals in Diem's report were not fully actualized, they were important in revealing the biopolitics inherent in the sports policy of early Republican Turkey. Furthermore, a significant outcome was the establishment of the TSI.

The establishment of the TSI was a result of the desire for tighter control over sports and a direct influence over teams and athletes by the Party. One of the underlying reasons for the ambition to have a stricter grip over sports was the growing realization of the competitive element in sporting fields. Although this help consolidating identity and rally the national group together in the international context, domestic competition among teams and clubs lead to rivalries and contentions that spread over to fans as well. Moreover, there were increasing calls from the actors of sports management of the time to professionalise. The transformations in sports under these conditions led to a rethink of state involvement in the field. The case of the club *Ateş-Güneş* (Fire-Sun) sets a clear example to those circumstances.

*Ateş-Güneş* was a team that separated from *Galatasaray* over debates of professionalisation. One of the most heated debates in the sports publications of the early 1930s was about professionalization, and the Turkish sports magazine *Olimpiyat* was the flag-bearer of the cause for professionalization.<sup>421</sup> In the opinion pieces

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<sup>419</sup> Carl Diem was the Secretary General of the State Committee for Physical Exercise during 1913-1933, later to become the top executive of the international sports affairs in Nazi Germany, including holding the role of Secretary General of the Organizing Committee of the 1936 Olympics (Akin, 2004, p. 70). Diem even initiated the Olympic torch relay, inventing one of the most important Olympic traditions (Boykoff, 206, p. 72).

<sup>420</sup> Akin, "Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar", p. 71.

<sup>421</sup> Tunç, Sevecen (2011a), *Ateş-Güneş Kulübü 1933-1938, Tarih ve Toplum – Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, No: 13, pp. 159 – 175.

published in *Olimpiyat*, the main supporting argument for a transition to professional sports was that the lack of payment to officials in the sports management and to athletes led to failed representation in the international competitions. Increased payment would facilitate better training for international events, building facilities and complexes to better host events, and attract spectators and arranging matches. Since domestic competition among clubs were regarded as a threat to national unity, most arguments employed in making sports-related cases made international references. In addition to that, as the number of international contacts diminished amidst the Great Depression, those who made these appeals hoped that the possibility of more international competitions would attract attention to their cause.<sup>422</sup>

Ali Sami and other managers of *Galatasaray* who had to resign from their posts due to pressures from the Allied Forces during occupation years returned after the declaration of Republic, and a generational conflict emerged with those who took over the team when Ali Sami Bey left. In the meantime, defeats in the league deepened the conflict, which resulted in the (in)voluntary expulsions of the members of the new generation. In turn, the expelled members of *Galatasaray* decided to form a new team, which would open up try-outs for footballers from not just İstanbul, but from every city in Turkey. Moreover, this new team would offer jobs and education to its players, meaning that it would employ athletes professionally.<sup>423</sup> The team took the name of *Ateş-Güneş* (Fire-Sun) in reference to *Galatarasay*'s colours (yellow and red) but later changed its name to *Güneş* (Sun) upon direct request of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Atatürk wanted the change as the former name led to pejorative calls stemming from phonetic resemblances in Turkish, but furthermore, this was also a sign of the complicated position of the team in state-sports relations. Atatürk had very close ties with the team, in fact; the commemoration of Atatürk was added to the 19 May celebrations upon request of *Güneş*. Most of the founders of *Ateş-Güneş* were members of the *İş Bankası* (İş Bank), which reflected the professional-leaning liberal

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<sup>422</sup> Tunç, *Ateş-Güneş Kulübü*.

<sup>423</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 128.

character of the club.<sup>424</sup> However, as the foundation of the team coincided with the tightened state control over sports, they had to come to terms with the étatist policies of the time. In order to reconcile with the nationalist ideology, the charter of *Ateş-Güneş* included a famous 2<sup>nd</sup> article which pledged the usage of *Öztürkçe* (a purist form of Turkish) in its operations and stated that the main aim of the club was to ‘prepare the youth for national defence’ and to that end, ‘prioritize sports like shooting, mountaineering, equestrian gymnastics, archery and athletics that develop combat and defence skills’.<sup>425</sup> Accordingly, *Ateş-Güneş* gained the support of Atatürk.

*Ateş-Güneş* began to form international contacts and to arrange matches with (Eastern) European teams immediately and, with its rising form, became the primary Turkish contender with *Fenerbahçe*, in the international arena.<sup>426</sup> *Güneş* was not only active in football, as the organization of a demonstration event with a wrestling team from Czechoslovakia was awarded to *Güneş* Club by the Wrestling Federation, in 1937. With its rising form, the *Güneş* football team became champions in the İstanbul League in the 1937-1938 season. The team was so in shape that there were rumours that the national team would be solely comprised of *Güneş* and *Fenerbahçe* players in an international test match against Yugoslavia in 1937. However, with the sharp decline of Galatasaray, the rivalry became more fierce than ever, and -despite constant rumours about a merger between the two teams- two matches that witnessed brawls in 1935 and 1937 led to a swift withdrawal of the support of the RPP. *Güneş*, despite its sporting successes, failed to attract mass support, as Galatasaray fans had basically no reason to switch allegiance with the establishment of *Ateş-Güneş*.<sup>427</sup> As Atatürk’s

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<sup>424</sup> Tunç, *Ateş-Güneş Kulübü*.

<sup>425</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 127.

<sup>426</sup> Tunç, *Ateş-Güneş Kulübü*.

<sup>427</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 51.

health deteriorated in 1938, so did the political support of *Güneş* and in the fall of the same year they halted nearly all their operations and ceased to exist by 1940.<sup>428</sup>

*Güneş*'s decline and closure coincided with the total control of the state over the realm of sports, which most clearly visible in the investigations opened against the Bank members involved in the founding of the club.<sup>429</sup> Although the founders of the Republican regime prioritized sports like gymnastics and athletics that promoted national solidarity and enhanced military skills, they were not unaware of the social impact of football. The contention between *Galatasaray* and *Güneş* was perceived as a threat against national unity, thusly. The prevention of domestic rivalries led to the merger of clubs in İzmir since, in the absence of the teams of foreign nationals and non-Muslim communities, local teams began to turn on each other. However, as a result of the boycott of the people of İzmir, this policy was abandoned in 1939.<sup>430</sup> In other places, rivalries turned into conflicts such as in Ayvalık, where disputes due to the Turkish teams' ambitions of confiscating the deserted properties and facilities of the expelled non-Muslim communities led to hostilities. This resulted in the RPP involvement that led to the closure of two teams, *İdmanyurdu Kulübü* and *Akınspor*, which would be replaced by a team whose colour and logo would be determined by the Party.<sup>431</sup> All these eventually paved the way for the establishment of a novel body to oversee sports, namely the TSI. TSI was founded in 1936 and in 1938, it became the *Beden Terbiyesi Genel Müdürlüğü* (Directorate General of Physical Education, DGPE).

One of the first steps taken by the TSI was to ensure the membership of all athletes to the Republican People's Party, calling them 'Kemalism's own children'.<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 143 – 144.

<sup>429</sup> Tunç, *Ateş-Güneş Kulübü*.

<sup>430</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 147.

<sup>431</sup> Akın, *Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*", pp. 203 – 204.

<sup>432</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet mi? Devlette Spor mu?*, p. 24.

On 29 October 1936, the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration of the Republic, all athletes in every city of Turkey gathered in the provincial offices of the RPP and registered to the Party, and a ceremony was held which included a parade where all the registered athletes marched with national flags and party flags. Another related decision appointed all provincial chairs of the RPP as the heads of regional sports administrations, which came into effect in 1937.<sup>433</sup> However, in the fifteen years that past following the declaration of the Republic, the Party rule and authority was exhausted and however identified with the state organization, the sports administration was worried that Party affiliation alone would not be sufficient in the eyes of the public. The DGPE was formed under the premises that a body placed directly within the state organization scheme, with a Physical Education Law enacted in 1938.<sup>434</sup> *Gençlik Kulüpleri* (Youth Clubs) were formed under the Directorate General. Under the Republican mindset that prioritized body health for national defence, the aims of teams and clubs were redefined in terms of bolstering nationalist sentiments and increasing physical activities of the society. The military factor was so influential in the DGPE that the first Director of the institution was a Brigadier General.<sup>435</sup> Sports clubs were formed in factories and schools, and physical training sessions were integrated into curricula and work schedules.

Sports policies of the Early Republican era towards women, in line with the body health perspective, is based on (and limited to) the reproductive skills. In the sports publications of the time, there was a heavy discourse stressing the weakness of the female body, advising women to undertake lighter sports such as tennis, volleyball, and swimming.<sup>436</sup> Sports in the nation-formation processes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was implicitly related to masculinity. As discussed earlier, the

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<sup>433</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet mi? Devlette Spor mu?*, p. 27.

<sup>434</sup> Akın, *Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*”, p. 77.

<sup>435</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet mi? Devlette Spor mu?*, p. 36.

<sup>436</sup> Akın, *Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*”, p. 121.



pioneers of the Olympic movement were quite distant to the idea of women taking part in sports. In fact, the notion of gender and sports at the time was mostly based on the “male identification with and access to, and female estrangement and exclusion from, the culture of the national community”.<sup>437</sup> The first years of the Republican Turkey witnessed a rhetoric that emphasized the increased participation of women in public life, albeit without abandoning traditional gender paradigm.<sup>438</sup> While this view made the women the face of the modern Turkey -for instance by increasing the number of female teachers who carried the Republican ideal around the country- it was also shaped around a conception that women should also live up to the traditional gender roles revolving around their duties in a nucleus family. According to this understanding, the roots of the modernist views such as feminism lied in the practices of Ancient Turks. Ziya Gökalp, for instance, went to great lengths in advocating this view, claiming that “the reason why the Turkists are both populist and feminist is not simply because these ideals are valued in this century; the fact that democracy and feminism were the two main principles of ancient Turkish life is a major factor in this respect”.<sup>439</sup> This is in line with the Turkish nationalist view placing the Ancient Turkish culture at the foundation of the modern Europe of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sports, on the other hand, was viewed as a distraction for women from their social and civic duties during the first years of Republican Turkey. The two main restrictions before women in terms of participation to sports were class-based, meaning that sporting activities were mostly open to women from upper-classes, and policy-based, referring to the fact that the state deemed certain sports appropriate and others not appropriate for women. However, it should be noted that there were women

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<sup>437</sup> Andrews, David (1996), ‘Sport and the Masculine Hegemony of the Modern Nation: Welsh Rugby, Culture and Society, 1890-1914’ in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, John Nauright & Timothy J. L. Chandler (eds.), London: Frank Cass & Co., p. 50.

<sup>438</sup> Kandiyoti, Deniz (2003), ‘End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey’ in Reina Lewis & Sara Mills (eds.), *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, New York: Routledge, p. 274.

<sup>439</sup> Gökalp, Ziya (1978), *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, İstanbul: İnkılap ve Aka Kitapevleri, p. 148 as cited in Kandiyoti, End of Empire, p. 274.

who defied these restrictions and voiced opposition.<sup>440</sup> The latter restriction was largely related to the roles attributed to women by the state. These were a reproductive role (giving birth to healthy members of the nation) and a representative role (being the face of modern Turkey in the international sporting arena).<sup>441</sup> In line with the second aspect, it was only in 1926 when a short-term nationwide course of nine months was established with the aim of raising female athletes, and those who completed the course with success were sent to European countries for further training.<sup>442</sup> The 1930s proved more fruitful for the flourishing of women's sports in Turkey, with the rise in programs to include women in the national physical education policy. The sanitary element of sports was associated with healthy maternity. Selim Sırrı's radio broadcasts began to include instructions of physical exercises for pregnancy. Furthermore, this had military undernotes as well, since maternity was also associated with raising future soldiers. Selim Sırrı, in this sense, argued that "Raising a generation which is capable of defending the nation is the duty of Turkish women. Therefore, we are preparing Turkish women for giving birth to generations who will grow to defend our nation".<sup>443</sup> This understanding gave way to increased visibility of female athletes. In 1932, two Turkish female tennis players took part in a tournament in the Soviet Union.<sup>444</sup> In 1937, Physical Education Department of the *Gazi Orta Muallim Mektebi ve Terbiye Enstitüsü* (Gazi Middle School Teacher Training School and Education Institute) began accepting female students.<sup>445</sup> Women's participation in international sports

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<sup>440</sup> Pfister, Gertrud & Hacisoftaoğlu, İlknur (2016), Women's Sport as a Symbol of Modernity: A Case Study in Turkey, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 33, No: 13, pp. 1470 – 1482.

<sup>441</sup> Pfister & Hacisoftaoğlu, Women's Sport as a Symbol of Modernity.

<sup>442</sup> Civralı, *Atletik Politika*, p. 121.

<sup>443</sup> (Tarcan), Selim Sırrı (1932), *Beden Terbiyesi: Oyun-Jimnastik-Spor*, İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, pp. 430 – 432.

<sup>444</sup> Civralı, *Atletik Politika*, p. 126.

<sup>445</sup> Civralı, *Atletik Politika*, p. 126.

increased as well, during this period. In a way, the women's participation in the field of sports was a manner of increasing bodily health, adopting the Western aesthetic standards through physical exercise, and demonstrating the traits of the modern Turkey all at the same time. However, it should be kept in mind that female participation to sports was not immune from constraints, and most of the prominent athletes who represented Turkey in the international competitions were relatives of the bureaucratic elite.<sup>446</sup> In 1936, first female Olympic athletes competed for Turkey, which is discussed thoroughly in the next chapter. In this sense, female athletes began to move towards the forefront of the Turkish sports as a part of the Republican project in Turkey.

The 1940s in Turkish sports were defined by two elements: de facto professionalism and increased international contact with other (national) sports teams. As the historical ties with Germany were all but deceased after the Second World War, Turkish sports became part of the liberal welfare economic system prevalent in Western Europe and the United States. This political integration led to increased sporting contact with Western European teams, which Turkey had not been able to afford before the war.<sup>447</sup> As sports have come to be an integral part of Turkish nationalist display in the international sphere, it would be useful to provide an overview of Turkish sports in the international arena during the early Republican period. The next section discusses the international contacts of the Turkish sports in the early Republican era, with the exception of the Olympic Games, since they are the subject of the following chapter.

#### **5.4. International Sports in Early Republican Turkey**

Early Republican regime in Turkey viewed international sporting events as ways of introducing the newly established nation-state in the international society.

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<sup>446</sup> Hacısofuoğlu, İlnur (2017), Sports: Turkey: 19<sup>th</sup> to Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, in Suad Joseph (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures, Volume 3: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, Brill Online.

<sup>447</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 54.

Alongside the introductory functions of these events that served Turkey to forge its novel national identity placed around a Western modernist onset, the Republican elite was aware of the nationalist sentiments that can be generated during the matches. Therefore, international sports events were seen as platforms for both introducing Republican Turkey to other states and consolidating the national group. In other words, the outward function of sports for Turkey was the demonstration of how the nation-state merges Turkish culture with the Western civilization, while the inward function aimed to rally the presumed national group around nationalist aspirations.

The Ankara government, which a few months ago abolished the Sultanate, began to work for a membership to the FIFA, with the aim of being able to participate in international football events and the 1924 Olympics. The membership was officialised months before the declaration of the Republican regime, on 21 May 1923.<sup>448</sup> The first national team was composed of athletes from İstanbul teams, with Fenerbahçe contributing the most players. Turkish national team played its first match three days before the declaration of the Republic of Turkey, on 26 October 1923 against Romania.<sup>449</sup> *Galatasaray* and *Fenerbahçe* also played the Romanian national team, with the former one played a day earlier and the latter one a day after the declaration of the Republic.<sup>450</sup> A football stadium was also built in Ankara, the capital, immediately after the declaration of the Republic. Apart from the football matches of the national team, European football, athletics, and wrestling teams also visited Turkey to compete with Turkish teams. The determination of sporting contacts was generally based on economic and ideological premises. Economically, the travels must have been affordable. Ideologically, Turkey chose to contact countries that seemed sympathetic to Turkey's foreign policy. For instance, Turkey was aiming to develop good relationships with the Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union (USSR).

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<sup>448</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 88.

<sup>449</sup> Yüce, *Esir Şehirde Spor*, p. 275.

<sup>450</sup> Yüce, *Esir Şehirde Spor*, p. 349.

For instance, the USSR was just as new a country as Turkey was, and the Turkish national football team was the only one in Europe that was willing to play against its Soviet counterpart, with a special FIFA permit.<sup>451</sup> In 1925, the national football team of the USSR visited Turkey, and contrary to the dominant trend in other matches of the period, the match was played in Ankara, instead of İstanbul.<sup>452</sup> This was an attempt of demonstrating the modern capital of the nation-state to the outside world. Accordingly, eighteen out of the twenty-two friendly matches the Turkish national team played until 1939 were against Eastern European countries.<sup>453</sup> These contacts began in December 1923, when Hungarian team *Ferencvaros* and Czech team Slavia Prague toured İstanbul, playing *Fenerbahçe*, *Galatasaray*, *Altınordu* and a joint team of *Fenerbahçe* and *Galatasaray*. Slavia's tour was in fact funded jointly by *Fenerbahçe*, *Galatasaray* and *Altınordu*.<sup>454</sup> Although the best result in these matches was a tie between Galatasaray and *Ferencvaros*, the significance of seeing these teams in İstanbul was unmatched. Despite *Fenerbahçe*'s loss to Slavia Prague 10-1, the single goal scored by *Fenerbahçe* caused great jubilation.<sup>455</sup> In this sense, national pride was also an important element of the sports competitions of this period. In 1925, a *muhtelit* (joint team) of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe players beat the Prague team 5-2, which sparked a day of celebrations in Beyoğlu.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Şenyuva & Tunç, Turkey and the Europe of football.

<sup>452</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 103.

<sup>453</sup> Şenyuva & Tunç, Turkey and the Europe of football.

<sup>454</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 54.

<sup>455</sup> Atabeyoğlu, Cem (1991), *1453-1991 Türk Spor Tarihi Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Fotospor.

<sup>456</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 97.

Irak contends that sports for Turkey serve as a ‘membership ID card’ denoting the political bloc to which the country belongs.<sup>457</sup> The two decades after the declaration of the Republic were also a period when Turkey was trying to prove its position as a Western state. Therefore, relations with Great Britain were highly revered, and there were efforts to show that the new Turkey put behind its past grievances. A tour to Egypt -which was under the heavy political influence of Britain- by the joint team of *Fenerbahçe* and *Galatasaray* in 1926 and the Egyptian team *Al-Ittihad*’s visit to Turkey in 1927 can be named among the instances sporting relations were established in this direction.<sup>458</sup> Greece was another example, which showed that Turkey was now a peace-loving country that was ready to take its place among European states. Despite a mild level of hostility remnant from the war, Greece was a frequent contact in sporting terms as well as diplomatic ones. The upkeeping of the diplomatic relations with Greece was so important that in a match between *Fenerbahçe* and *Olympiakos* in 1931, an army officer punched the goalkeeper of the Greek team, and *Fenerbahçe*’s players were interrogated at the garrison for days. This match was extra significant as it was held during a state visit by the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos. When the officer was identified, he was appointed to the east of Turkey, which was considered as a punishment for wrongdoing.<sup>459</sup> This had, without doubt, economic underpinnings as well, since the Great Depression of 1929 made it impossible to make long international voyages and hence, geographically closer countries made more frequent international sporting contacts. For instance, with Atatürk’s direct request as it would have the potential to generate trade relations, Turkey took part in the 1931 Balkan Games.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Irak, *From Battlefields to Football Fields*, p. 159.

<sup>458</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 103.

<sup>459</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 104 – 105.

<sup>460</sup> Kissoudi, Penelope (2003), *Antidote to War: The Balkan Games*, in J. A. Mangan (ed.) *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War Without Weapons*, London: Routledge, p. 158.

Balkan Athletic Championships (or Balkan Games) were a particular case for the international sporting environment of the early Republican Turkey. Balkan Games began as an initiative for the amelioration of the relationships among the regional countries who had historical contentions between them. The Games were aimed at softening the tensions among the Balkan countries. Furthermore, such an organization could have provided ground for the legitimation of the regimes formed in the aftermath of the First World War. The first Balkan Games, which was held in Athens in 1929, was organized upon these common grounds. The aim of forming a common “Balkan identity” was sustained through a reference to the Ottoman past of the participating nations, namely, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia. This was a negative commemoration of the years under the Ottoman rule, as the chief of the organization committee, Mihail Rinopulos, began his remarks with saying that the Balkan nations came together to compete in peace and goodwill, “for the first time following the emancipation from Turkish tutelage”.<sup>461</sup> In this sense, the first Games served to the establishment of a national narrative for the participating nations, through pointing towards an Other. These remarks drew reaction from the Turkish press, with *Milliyet* claiming that the reason Turkey was not invited to the Games was most probably out of the fear from the strength of Turkish athletes.<sup>462</sup> However, the relations between these countries immediately grew closer and Turkey began frequenting the Balkan Athletics Championships. In 1932, Turkey hosted the Balkan Wrestling Championships and in 1936, a Balkan Festival was held in Istanbul where Mustafa Kemal Atatürk participated himself and performed the *zeybek*, which was in the course of being established as the national dance of Turkey at the time.<sup>463</sup> Towards the end of the 1930s, the Balkan Games were to a great extent defined by the atmosphere in the

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<sup>461</sup> Civralı, *Atletik Politika*, p. 164.

<sup>462</sup> Civralı, *Atletik Politika*, p. 164.

<sup>463</sup> Civralı, *Atletik Politika*, p. 174.

run up to the Second World War and the 1936 Games were the last one to be held until after the War.

During the Second World War, Turkey's neutral position toward the belligerent parties sparked intense diplomatic efforts to pull Turkey into the war. While Turkey could not afford to engage in another War with having been done with the last -and rather devastating- one only seventeen years ago, it needed to give the impression that entering the war was not off the table in order to preserve aid from European countries.<sup>464</sup> This was reflected in sports with propaganda teams touring Turkey during the war years. The first propaganda team to arrive in Turkey was a British army team called Wanderers in 1941 when Nazi Germany was expanding its campaign towards the Balkans.<sup>465</sup> Wanderers played matches in the capital Ankara as well as Istanbul, therefore signalling a political message. However, the government in Turkey - particularly the Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu, who was also the chair of Fenerbahçe- was more sympathetic to Nazi Germany at the time and for that, a year later, Turkey invited Austrian team *Admira*, which was known as Hitler's propaganda team.<sup>466</sup> The *Admira* delegation was led by a familiar face, Carl Diem. Unlike the Wanderers, *Admira* only played in Istanbul; therefore, it could be argued that this was no more than a publicity event. When the Axis front began to lose ground, Turkey started to lean towards the Allied camp and accordingly, a group of Turkish army officers visited Britain, attending a match between London teams, Arsenal and Tottenham.

The immediate aftermath of World War II marked Turkey's alignment to the Western bloc, with memberships to the United Nations (1945) and Council of Europe (1949) and with becoming a recipient of the Marshall Aid from the United States (1948), which would effectively block any potential Soviet influence over the

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<sup>464</sup> Hale, William (2003), *Türk Dış Politikası 1774-2000*, translated by Petek Demir, İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat, p. 102.

<sup>465</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 169.

<sup>466</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 170 – 171.



country.<sup>467</sup> Sporting contacts in this period were reflections of this alignment. On 15 September 1945, *HMS Ajax*, a British navy cruiser, which had participated in the D-Day landings, came to Istanbul and its crew played against *Fenerbahçe* and the Turkish Army's team, while some mariners took part in swimming competitions against Turkish navy's *Yavuz*.<sup>468</sup> During this period, Greece was the primary sporting rival of Turkey, with football and athletics teams occasionally visiting each other, as they were the two Eastern European countries that were seen as a barrier against a possible Soviet incursion.<sup>469</sup> Indeed, the interest of the capitalist bloc towards Turkey increased to such a high level that Queen's Park Rangers became the first British professional football club to visit Turkey, something almost unthinkable before the Second World War.<sup>470</sup>

International sporting events and competition came to be an essential signifier for Turkish national identity. Sports is a way of both demonstrating political positioning and challenging others in claims of superiority. Bora and Erdoğan contend that explaining defeats in international sporting events through external factors is a way of ensuring there is no doubt about the superior skills of the nation.<sup>471</sup> Indeed, participating in international sports events helps demonstrate the identification of the national identity with certain political camps while at the same time bolstering nationalist sentiments and national pride through the competitive element intrinsic to these events. Turkey made extensive use of this in the nation formation process of the early Republican era, and the Olympics provide a useful stage to trace this type of nationalist politics.

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<sup>467</sup> Hale, William (2003), *Türk Dış Politikası 1774-2000*, translated by Petek Demir, İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat, p. 116.

<sup>468</sup> Irak, *From Battlefields to Football Fields*, p. 160.

<sup>469</sup> Irak, *From Battlefields to Football Fields*, p. 161.

<sup>470</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, p. 174.

<sup>471</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, "Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye", p. 230.

## CHAPTER 6

### TURKEY'S OLYMPIC JOURNEY DURING THE NATION-BUILDING PROCESS

Politics have always been an intrinsic part of the Olympic Games and in the early stages of the modern edition, nationalist politics dominated the Olympic landscape. Nation-states took their national contentions to the Olympic stage and used the Games as a platform of bolstering national pride through achieving success in competitions and demonstrating the physical health of the nation. Countries with the most advantageous position in this regard were the host countries, which use the opportunity to display power and grandeur through spectacular ceremonies and designing the public space through relevant urban developments.<sup>472</sup> Hosting numerous other countries is seen as a way of demonstrating the industrial advancements, as well as national symbols; a display of power aimed at both domestic audience and international visitors. Another crucial element of international sports that translate into political function is participation. According to Allison and Monnington, participation in international sports event serve 'to sell themselves and enhance their image and to penalize international behaviour of which they disapprove'.<sup>473</sup> Alongside hosting, mere showing up in the international events can demonstrate how a nation makes sense of itself, positions itself, and differentiates itself. This is established not only by appearing and succeeding in the competitions and demonstrating a capable and healthy nation, but also through not appearing, as can be seen in the major Olympic boycotts of 1976, 1980, and 1984.

As the nation-states began to assume the role of primary administrative units in Europe after the First World War, national sentiments gained increasing importance

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<sup>472</sup> Chalkley, Brian & Essex, Stephen (1999), Urban development through hosting international events: a history of the Olympic Games, *Planning Perspectives*, Vol: 14, No: 4, pp. 369 – 394.

<sup>473</sup> Allison & Monnington, Sport, Prestige and International Relations.

in the making of international sports. Nationalist movements saw an opportunity to peacefully enhance their politics through underlining their image and boosting national pride. The Olympic Games Turkey participated in the early years of the Republican regime present examples of how nationalist politics instrumentalized the Games as a stage of national consolidation. As discussed in the previous chapter, the literature on sports in Turkey during the early Republican era focus extensively on the domestic sports policies. The research on Turkey's participation in international sports, on the other hand, mostly deals with sporting contacts within the framework of diplomacy. Studies on Turkey's participation in the Olympic Games during the early Republican era largely emphasize the international context as well.<sup>474</sup> Other researches focus on the Olympic participation within the framework of the relations between sporting institutions of Republican Turkey during the early years and the state.<sup>475</sup> While these studies present comprehensive approaches, they do not extend to the nation formation process while linking the state-sports relations in the formative years of the state. There exists a gap in the literature with regards to research connecting international sporting contacts of early Republican Turkey to the nation building process. This study aims to contribute to this void by looking into international sports matches and events which Turkey took part in during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the lenses of nationalism theories. Secondly, it focuses on how it corresponds to different tracks in understandings on nations and nationalisms, without excluding the dimension of diplomacy as it was integral to the sports policy of this period. Although there are references to nation building in these studies, they fall short of acknowledging the Olympics as places of encounter and their role in definition and self-definition. In this sense, I aim to include an analysis of how positioning the imagined nationhood vis-à-vis (both internal and external) 'others' serve to the end of nation building and how the encounters at the Olympics played out in this direction for Turkey. Moreover,

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<sup>474</sup> Özdemir, Nuray (2013), Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin katıldığı ilk Uluslararası Organizasyon: 1924 Paris Olimpiyatları, *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, no: 51, pp. 717 – 744.

<sup>475</sup> As, Efdal (2016), İktidar-Spor Kurumları İlişkileri Bağlamında İki Dünya Savaşı Arasında Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Katıldığı Olimpiyatlar (1924 Paris, 1928 Amsterdam, 1936 Berlin), *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol: 12, No: 24, pp. 156 – 204.

contrary to As's study, this thesis includes the 1948 Winter and Summer Olympics as well as it is important to take the post-World War II transformation into account while discussing the nation formation in Turkey. While Turkey was aiming to integrate with the Western bloc in the aftermath of the Second World War, it ramped up international sporting contacts for diplomatic purposes, which makes it significant to consider how a self-presentation in this atmosphere played out within the context of the Olympic Games. Furthermore, as it stands, the 1948 London Olympics has been one of the most successful Games for the Turkish delegations, with six gold medals and twelve medals in total. This success, with its links to bolstering national pride, makes the 1948 Summer Olympics a valid subject of research focusing on the link between nationalist aspirations and the Olympic Games. Also, since the professionalization in sports has not been officialised until 1950, the Olympic Games that Turkey took part in up until that point constitute the subject matter of this research. In fact, the first Winter Olympics that Turkey took part in are generally omitted, and perhaps rightfully so as Turkey failed to leave a considerable mark. However, they represent important reference points for the following Summer Olympics, as can be seen in 1936. Therefore, I include the 1936 and 1948 Winter Olympics in this research as well.

The Olympic Games were the perfect stage for Turkey in order to fulfil the aim of establishing the newly born country's place in the international society, as well as the building of the Turkish national identity. That is the reason Turkey decided to spare funding to send athletes to the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, two years after the end of the War of Independence and only one year after the declaration of the Republican regime. This chapter discusses how Turkey employed the Olympic participation in its nationalist agenda during its foundational years by looking at the first Summer and Winter Olympic Games the country took part in. The aim of this discussion is to locate Turkey's Olympic journey in the framework of the nation formation process and international sports. In this context, the following section provides an overview of the field of sports history-writing and how it provides a useful methodology for the analysis of nationalism in Olympic history.

## 6.1. Methodology and Data Collection

This thesis draws on the materials extracted mostly from archives, such as the Parliamentary minutes, documents from the archives of the Turkish National Olympic Committee (TOC), the State Archives, memoirs, print publications retrieved from the periodicals archive of the National Library of Turkey and Gallica, the digital library of the *Bibliothèque Nationale Française*. One of the most important limitations while collecting data has been the restriction of access due to the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore I had to rely on digitalized materials to a large extent. The translation of these documents, from Ottoman Turkish and Turkish to English, were done by me. An inevitable fact to bear in mind while conducting research through archival documents is that they are socially produced.<sup>476</sup> In this sense, they reflect certain ideas and principles around which they are created. Therefore, it is crucial to include a thorough review of the social context of the documents that are subjected to analyses. In this study, official documents were used to uncover the official policy revolving around participation in the Olympic Games through the lenses of the atmosphere of nation-building in the formation of the nation in Turkey.

While the documents from the state institutions present the place of the official policy towards the Olympics, within the processes of nation-formation and the related decision-making, it is possible to trace the reaction of the sports movement in Turkey from the hebdomadal magazines and daily newspapers of the era. While using these documents, I aim to establish connections between the evidence and the theories which were discussed earlier.<sup>477</sup> As Johnes contends, print press has been a more frequently used source by sports historians compared to traditional archives as they reflect the local and national sporting cultures, people's sporting experiences, and perceptions.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Macdonald, Keith (2008), Using Documents in Nigel Gilbert (ed.), *Researching Social Life*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London: Sage, p. 287.

<sup>477</sup> Maguire, Joseph A. (2011), Studying sport through the lens of historical sociology and/or sociological history, *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media and Politics*, Vol: 14, No: 7-8, pp. 872 – 882.

<sup>478</sup> Johnes, Martin (2015), Archives and Historians of Sport, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol: 32, No: 15, pp. 1784 – 1798.

For a period when the motion picture sources are quite limited to rely on, newspapers provide useful to examine altering perspectives. A popular conception of the relationship between authoritarian regimes and sports relies on the formation of a ‘culture of consent’, which indicates the tools that create the illusion that these regimes are beneficial for the society.<sup>479</sup> Akin contends that this understanding is problematic as it tends to put the recipients of the culture of consent in a passive position, as well as citing the lack of means for opting for such a culture in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods in the history of Turkey.<sup>480</sup> In this sense, Akin opts for an explanation based on the disciplinary biopolitical role of sports policy.<sup>481</sup> While I agree with the shortcomings of the culture of consent understanding, it should be noted that it is quite difficult to measure how the Olympic campaigns at the given time resonated in the wider public. Therefore, I tried to trace these implications through the print press of the time, which in fact, gave a substantially subjective view of the actors of the sports movement of the time. In this sense, while looking at these, I aimed at finding out how the Olympic participation was perceived within the context of nation building by different layers of the subjects and executioners of the sports policy at the time. However, in order to avoid being too reliant on the press and to avoid overlooking archival material, this study also draws on documents from the aforementioned institutions as well. It should be noted beforehand that while the documents from the state archives and parliamentary minutes are the primary sources of this research, news pieces and op-eds often serve as primary sources as well. While the news pieces are generally held to be self-evident, occasionally through being held to cross-check with other sources such as the foreign press, the opinion pieces or memoirs penned by different actors of the sports movement of the early Republican period are heavily subjective. While some anecdotes that are recounted by these writers cannot be verified, such as the retrospective account of Burhan Felek written in 1936 on the 1924

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<sup>479</sup> Akin, “Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar”, p. 30.

<sup>480</sup> Akin, “Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar”, pp. 33 – 35.

<sup>481</sup> Akin, “Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar”, pp. 36 – 37.

Olympics, they were employed in the analysis since they reflect the perception of the Olympic Games within the context of national identity and nationhood. Furthermore, the press at the time often hired the members of the delegations from Turkey as correspondents and writers, therefore an inevitable conflict of interest should be borne in mind. Moreover, I sometimes used French newspapers to go through how the propagation of a novel image for a newly established nation state resonated in Europe. While the choice for French sources for such an examination was mostly based on opportunities for access, they do not take up a significant proportion in the analysis as my focus is predominantly on the nation-building policy of Turkey itself. However, coverage of Turkey's performances in the Olympics by the foreign press was thoroughly scrutinized by the state and the Turkish sports press. These can be seen in the examples of the compiled reports from the Dutch press in 1928 and the German press after the 1936 Winter Olympics. I did not verify such accounts, which are later to be discussed in the relevant sections, as I do not know these languages. It should be acknowledged here that the young Turkish state was utterly cruel in the face of criticism and extremely generous when praised. In this sense, I employed these accounts as a way of understanding the self-reflection of the builders of the state in terms of how the novel image they aimed to introduce Turkey in the Olympics resonated. Therefore, the analysis of these materials should be read through these lenses.

The print press has come to be one of the most prominent sources for sports historians as modern sports temporally overlaps with the development of mass-produced newspapers. However, it would be important to bear in mind that the early publications in Turkey were tied to the RPP to a great extent, which requires a critical approach in their analysis. They were also heavily loaded with opinions as they are written from particular perspectives, for particular purposes, and aimed at particular readers.<sup>482</sup> Therefore, the documents subject to analysis in this study provide useful information for tracing the disagreements and differing views within the Party, as well

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<sup>482</sup> Gomm, Roger (2004), *Social Research Methodology: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 268.

as its official policies. In this sense, tracking down the Olympics-related news and op-eds in the newspapers and magazines of the early Republican period is useful in the sense that it gives the researcher a glimpse of the public debate on the subject, without forgetting the archives' function as sites of power.<sup>483</sup> In other words, archives contain as much as they omit, either for political or practical reasons. As Mbembe contends, archiving is a matter of 'discrimination and selection' since the documents are stored with regards to the space allocated for them, as well as the ideological grounds of the archiving entity.<sup>484</sup> In this sense, the analysis of the archival material is conducted through 'inferring and reading between the lines'.<sup>485</sup>

This study; therefore, relies on a critical analysis of the aforementioned official and press documents on the first Olympic Games the Republic of Turkey took part in. The reason for picking the 1948 Summer Olympics as the threshold is that with the liberal welfare regime taking over in the Western bloc countries following the Second World War, the state grip over sports in Turkey loosened, giving way to an enhanced influence of the private sector and officially recognized professionalization after 1950. The baseline is the 1924 Summer Olympics, the first Olympic Games where the Republic of Turkey participated, and all the Games Turkey attended until 1948 are covered. While the Olympic Games were not held in 1940 and 1944 due to the Second World War, Turkey did not participate in the 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, as the TNOc was not able to afford to send a delegation halfway around the world in the post-Great Depression economic conditions. In this study Turkey's participation in the Olympic art competitions are not included as the main focus of this study is on the sporting events. Before beginning the discussion on the relationship between nationalism and the Olympic Games Turkey took part in during the early Republican

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<sup>483</sup> Booth, Douglas (2006), Sites of Truth or Metaphors of Power? Refiguring the Archive, *Sport in History*, Vol: 26, No: 1, pp. 91 – 109.

<sup>484</sup> Mbembe, Achille (2002), The Power of the Archive and its Limits in Carolyn Hamilton, et. al. (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive*, Cape Town: David Philip, p. 20.

<sup>485</sup> Johnes, Archives and Historians of Sport.



period, the next section provides a brief overview of the Olympic Games in the late-Ottoman era.

## 6.2. Ottoman Empire in the Olympic Games

A common story recounts that four Ottoman wrestlers, Kara Ahmet, Madralı Ahmet, Osman, and Koç Mehmet applied to take part in the first Olympic Games in Athens in 1896; however, they were denied entry on the grounds that they were not amateur athletes.<sup>486</sup> Although the evidence to support this is very limited, it could be extrapolated from this account that the onset of the Olympic journey of the Ottoman Empire begins in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As mentioned earlier, the forerunner of the Olympic movement in the Ottoman Empire was Selim Sırrı, who founded the National Olympic Committee (NOC) in 1908. However, it was not certified by the Ottoman Empire until 1914. According to Selim Sırrı, *Dahiliye Nazırı* (Interior Officer) of the Empire rejected the formation of an Olympic Committee on the premises that “The Games take place in Athens and they are the Greek’s making which makes the circumstances of the era unsuitable for such things”<sup>487,488</sup> It can be inferred from this statement that existing contentions with Greece take their toll on the approach of the Ottoman Empire towards the Olympic Games. On the other hand, in terms of athletes who took part in the Olympics, Alekos Moulos was the first Ottoman athlete to participate in the Olympics.<sup>489</sup> Moulos was a Greek gymnast studying in the *Galatasaray* High School when Baron Pierre de Coubertin visited Istanbul in 1907.

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<sup>486</sup> Selim Sırrı, *Radyo Konferanslarım: İkinci Kitap*, pp. 72 – 73.

<sup>487</sup> Selim Sırrı, *Eski Olimpiyadların Bir Tarihçesi*, *Vatan*, 19 October 1923, p. 4.

<sup>488</sup> As cited in Mutlu, Mustafa (2019), A leading name in sports and education from the second constitutional monarchy to the Turkish republic period: Selim Sırrı Tarcan, unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara University Institute of Turkish Revolution History, p. 79.

<sup>489</sup> This is relatively new information, uncovered by Olympedia, dismissing the earlier understanding that the Ottoman Empire first took part in the Olympics in 1912 in Stockholm. According to the report of French sports publication *Les Jeunes*, dated 08 August 1908, Moulos equaled 67th place with 154.5 points in men’s artistic individual all-around event. *Les Jeunes*, 08 August 1908, p. 2.

There he acted as the interpreter for Baron de Coubertin, which earned him a special invitation to the 1908 Summer Olympic Games in London.<sup>490</sup> However, in 1908 athletes were not obliged to register for the Games under an NOC, hence, they could participate individually. In 1912, the Olympic Games were held in Sweden's capital, Stockholm, and taking part under an NOC was made compulsory for athletes. This was the first time the Ottoman NOC was represented in the Olympics.

Two Armenian athletes competed under the Ottoman flag at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. These were Mıgırdıç Mıgıryan, a pentathlete, and Vahram Papazian, a middle-distance runner.<sup>491</sup> However, it would be difficult to frame this as a specific Ottoman policy to participate since there was no funding allocated for the athletes' participation. In fact, it was a sports journalist, Shavarsh Krissian who facilitated the participation of the two athletes. Mıgıryan had the financial opportunity to cover the expenses, but it was not the case for Papazian. To fund their travel, *Ardavazt Club*, a football club of the Armenian community of İstanbul, located in Kuruçeşme, put a play on stage, which was advertised by Krissian's *Marmnamarz* (Physical Education) magazine. Papazian took part in the play as well and with the donations of the Armenian community, they set out for the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm. The Ottoman flag was sewed on their jerseys by the wife of an Ottoman ambassador to Stockholm; however, the mission's negligence on the Games reflected that of the government's. Papazian, in his memoirs, reflected on his frustration upon the lack of Ottoman flags in Stockholm, where the flags of other participating nations were hoisted. Papazian recalls telling the ambassador that 'he could not respire the air of Stockholm, having an urgent wish to go back to İstanbul'.<sup>492</sup> Within hours, Ottoman flags were raised.

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<sup>490</sup> Fişek, Kurthan (1985) *100 Soruda Türk Spor Tarihi*, İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, p. 103.

<sup>491</sup> TMOK (1997), *Olimpiyat Oyunlarının 100 Yılında Türkiye*, İstanbul, TMOK Yayınları, pp. 35 – 37.

<sup>492</sup> Koptaş, Rober (26 July 2012), "Olimpiyat Tarihinin Gayri Resmi Sayfası", *AGOS Gazetesi*, available on <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/2048/olimpiyat-tarihinin-gayri-resmi-sayfasi>, accessed on 06 August 2020.

Participation of the two Armenian athletes at the 1912 Olympic Games was omitted in the nationalist history-writing, in line with Renan's understanding of the relationship between nationhood and memory. When Selim Sırrı wrote about the 1912 Olympics, he complained that the Ottoman athletes were absent from the competition, purposefully overlooking Papazian and Mıgıryan.<sup>493</sup> Koptaş recounts an article penned by Krissian in *Marmnamarz* in response:

We feel hurt by Selim Sırrı's efforts to drive a wedge between Ottoman Christians and Ottoman Turks. (...) In brief, two Armenians went to Stockholm with the money of their own and of some of the Armenian community, but not as Armenians, as Ottomans... Their jerseys were decorated with the Ottoman crescent. They competed so that the Ottoman sports may be known in Europe. They received applause as Ottoman athletes, yet still Selim Sırrı dares to shed crocodile tears over the absence of Turks in Stockholm, without mentioning the two Ottomans. (...) There is no need to play with words. Equality, Liberty and Freedom are not simple words. They create nations and secure the future of nations. If here, in this country, these words are only used to deceive us, we would like to acknowledge that we do not consent to the altering of the meaning of these words and do not want to comply with it.<sup>494</sup>

Ottoman Empire was represented by its non-Muslim athletes in the Olympic Games; however, nationalist tensions of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century resonated in the competition. As discussed earlier, it is possible to trace the national divides surfacing in the Empire at the onset of the First World War, through sports and the Olympics have been a significant stage in this regard. Furthermore, Selim Sırrı's omission of two Armenian athletes carries references to the relationship between the formation of the national identity and memory in the sense that the atrocities against the Armenians have been the subject of national amnesia during the nation formation process. As Ünlü contends, violence unites through forgetting and omitting as much as it does through repetition and remembrance.<sup>495</sup> While omission and the legitimization of the

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<sup>493</sup> BOA, MF.MKT., H-09-06-1332/1197-49, 05-05-1914.

<sup>494</sup> Koptaş, *Olimpiyat Tarihinin Gayrı Resmi Sayfası*.

<sup>495</sup> Ünlü, *Türklük Sözleşmesi*, pp. 160 – 161.

war against Armenians constitute the two ends of a pendulum in the narrative revolving around the Turkish national identity, neglecting the participation of two Armenian athletes in the 1912 Olympics can be understood as a part of the mentality of excluding the non-Muslim peoples from the perceived national group. While the atrocities and acts of violence against Armenians began in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, they peaked in 1915, and Shavarsh Krissian was among the more than 200 Armenian intellectuals who were arrested on 24 April and was eventually killed in Ankara.<sup>496</sup> In this sense, the policy of denial of the atrocities committed against the Armenians found its way through the national narrative on sports as well.

In 1920, the Ottoman Empire was excluded from the Olympics in Antwerp alongside Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, having been on the losing side of the First World War. In 1921, *Milli Olimpiyat Cemiyeti* (National Olympic Committee) of the Ottoman Empire was reinstated to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Baron Pierre de Coubertin communicated the decision to elect Selim Sırrı as a member of the IOC with the following letter:

My esteemed colleague,

The International Olympic Committee, during its latest convention, decided that you retake your post as the delegate of Turkey in our assembly and deployed me the duty to deliver this decision to you. Circumstances kept you away from us for some time. Nonetheless, all of us kept nesting quite amicable memories in your person.

I would like to extend my cordial sentiments.

Chief of International Olympic Committee

Baron Pierre de Coubertin<sup>497</sup>

Although the Olympic Games have not been at the top of the agenda of the Ottoman government amidst the political turmoil, the Republic of Turkey saw it as a

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<sup>496</sup> Koptaş, Rober (27 April 2013), "1915'in Robert Kolejli kurbanları", *Agos*, available on <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/4908/1915in-robert-kolejli-kurbanlari>, accessed on 19 April 2021.

<sup>497</sup> Sporcu Türk Gençlerine Mühim Bir Tebşir (July 1921), *Spor Alemi*, No: 10/34, p. 3.

way of consolidating the nationhood through promoting nationalist sentiments. The reinstating of the *Milli Olimpiyat Cemiyeti* to the IOC came at a time when the War of Independence was looming and therefore Selim Sırrı's did not immediately take part in the activities of the IOC. Instead, he spearheaded the founding of the *Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Cemiyeti* (Turkish Olympic Committee). After the decision to rejoin the IOC as a member, he led the formation of *Milli Olimpiyad Cemiyeti Yerine Kaim Cihan Müsabakalarına Hazırlanma Cemiyeti* (Global Competitions Preparation Committee in National Olympic Committee's Stead). Following the founding of the Union of Turkish Sports Clubs (UTSC) in 1922, the Preparation Committee was abolished and Selim Sırrı extended Ali Sami Bey, the head of the UTSC, a membership seat at the National Olympic Committee.<sup>498</sup> With this new step, the Turkish Olympic Committee was founded in 1922. The Olympic Games have gained importance in the sports segment of the nationalist politics of early Republican Turkey as an opportunity of consolidating nationhood and demarcating the national identity in the international sphere. To that end, a year after the declaration of the Republican regime, Turkey took part in the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris.

### **6.3. Turkey at the 1924 Olympics: An Introduction**

Summer Olympics of 1924 were held in Paris as a tribute to Baron Pierre de Coubertin who had announced that he would retire from the Presidency of the IOC following the VIII. Olympiad. The spillover effects of the First World War were present and affecting the organization of the Games, as France sent troops to Germany in 1923 to enforce disarmament measures provided by the Versailles Treaty.<sup>499</sup> While concerns of a conflict increased, the city of Paris only allocated 1 million francs, 1 ten per cent of the expected budget. Germany was not offered an invitation to the Games, missing out on its second consecutive Olympics. Newly emerging nation-states following the War and the subsequent rise in nationalism all over Europe took their

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<sup>498</sup> San, Haluk (1985), *Belgeleri ile Türk Spor Tarihinde: Olimpizm veya Olimpik Hareket* vol. 2, İstanbul: Hürriyet Ofset Matbaacılık, p. 34.

<sup>499</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 52.

toll on the Games, as athletes competing in different events took more time than usual complaining about results, expressing discontent over unfair treatment by judges based on their nationality. For instance, following a challenging fencing match between France and Italy, a disappointed Italian squad left the venue chanting the anthem of the newly rising Fascist Party.<sup>500</sup> While three great Empires vanished after the First World War, giving way to inaugurating nation-states in their territories, Britain began to feel threatened by the novel international political trend and demanded an 'empire system' in the Parade of the Nations at the opening ceremony.<sup>501</sup> According to this system, instead of the alphabetic order of the parade (save Greece, which historically marches first as a tribute to the ancient origins of the Olympic Games), Great Britain would precede its dominions such as Canada and Australia. This demonstrates how the new political order in the world witnessed the increasing prevalence of nation-states after the First World War. Under these circumstances, the Republic of Turkey took part in the 1924 Summer Olympics as a newly established nation-state, escaping the doom of Germany. For the war-ridden new country, sparing expenditures for a journey to Paris would be a substantial financial burden; however, it was viewed as an important way of demonstrating the newly established Republic of Turkey at an international platform. In fact, there was a substantial willingness among the late-Ottoman sports movement for taking part in the Olympics. While in this period this willingness was not particularly related to Republican ideals or with the objectives of the nation-state -both of which were yet to be established- it still carried the wish to make a political statement at the international level, especially following the transformations in Turkey following two wars. The sense of being a losing belligerent in the First World War as well as being neglected following the Independence War due to the changing political landscape in Europe and the transitional period of the regime in Turkey, led the intellectuals of the country to seek ways of recognition and reassertion. In the field of sports, Olympic Games provided a suitable setting. The

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<sup>500</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 53.

<sup>501</sup> "British Want Empire System Used in Parade at Olympics", *New York Times*, 13 April 1924, p. 3.

words of Ahmed İzzet in 1922 published in the *Spor Alemi* (World of Sports)<sup>502</sup>, magazine summarize this view accurately: “We should not miss the opportunity [of 1924 Olympics] to make the Western nations, who do not even want to see the Turks on the map, appreciate our presence”.<sup>503</sup> In 1923, an official invitation was sent to Selim Sırrı by the IOC:

To Selim Sırrı, member of International Olympic Committee

Dear sir,

As the International Olympic Committee reached the decision to celebrate the VIII. Olympiad in Paris, the committee appointed for the preparation and organization of the 1924 Olympics is proudly honoured to extend you this invitation to competitions which are to take place in Paris. From May 3 to May 19 rugby, from May 15 to June 19 football, from June 21 to June 29 shooting, and from July 5 to July 27 other competitions included in the Olympic schedule will be organized.

I would like to extend my strongest sentiments,

Chief Count Clary<sup>504</sup>

Following deliberations between Selim Sırrı and Ali Sami Bey, the heads of the TOC and the UTSC, the two organizations leading the Olympic movement in Turkey decided to ask the government the government for funding the preparations and the trip to Paris.<sup>505</sup> This indicates that the TOC had already recognized the legitimacy of the Ankara government, as this meeting between the UTSC and the TOC was held on 03 November 1923, only four days after the establishment of the Republic. This alignment with the novel regime was extended through appointing İsmet Pasha,

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<sup>502</sup> *Spor Alemi* was a prominent sports magazine during the transitional years from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. For a detailed analysis of the magazine, see Erođul, 2010.

<sup>503</sup> Ahmed İzzet (1922), “Olimpik Müsabakalar”, *Spor Alemi*, No:47/9, p. 12.

<sup>504</sup> Selim Sırrı, “1924 Olimpiyatları ve Lozan Mukarreratı”, *Spor Alemi*, 8 March 1923, No: 23/35, p. 5.

<sup>505</sup> Atabeyođlu, *Sporda Devlet mi? Devlette Spor mu?*, p. 9.

one of the highest-ranked figures of the military-bureaucratic class that would go on to establish the Republic, as the Honorary President of the TOC in April 1924,<sup>506</sup> a post previously held by Şehzade Abdürrahim Efendi, son of former Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II.<sup>507</sup> This way, the Olympic movement in Turkey integrated with the newly established nation-state and engaged in operating within the Republican regime. The meeting in November 1923 resulted in the demand made by the sports institutions for financial support to fund the Olympic campaign. According to the estimates of the TOC, 27.200 Liras was needed to wage preparation efforts and to participate in the Games. A further request from the government was permission for military members to take part in the Olympics, in events such as shooting and equestrian, for “participation worthy of the national pride of Turkish athletes”.<sup>508</sup> This request was partially granted by the Council of Ministers, who decided to give 17.000 Liras to the UTSC in early 1924.

It is obligatory for the sporting organizations among the Turkish youth to have close contact with European athletes and to benefit from European experts with regards to the ordering of sporting activities in alignment with scientific bases. Union of Turkish Sports Club was extended an invitation to the Olympic competitions which were decided to inaugurate in Paris in May 1924. It would be in Turkey’s interest to take part in this competition. The progress and spread of sports in Turkey are indeed directed at participation in international competitions such as this. Henceforth, immediately necessary seventeen thousand Liras from the covert appropriation is decided to be allocated to the headquarters of the Union of Turkish Sports Clubs in order for the invitation experts from Europe needed for the training and preparation of the Turkish youth to the level of participating in international competitions, and the procurement of the participation causes of Turkish athletes to the aforementioned Olympic competitions.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-34-7, 03 April 1924.

<sup>507</sup> Özdemir, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin katıldığı ilk Uluslararası Organizasyon.

<sup>508</sup> Burhaneddin, “Hükümetin Spora Karşı Şayan-ı Şükran Alakası”, *Spor Alemi*, 13 January 1924, No: 121/8-9, p. 3.

<sup>509</sup> BCA, 30-18-1-1/8-46-5, 16 January 1924.



This decision was approved by the parliament without any debates or any member of the parliament taking the despatch stand.<sup>510</sup> Fifty thousand Liras for “sports organization and expenses for participation in international competitions” was allocated to *Maarif Vekâleti* (Ministry of Education) under the budget of the year 1924.<sup>511</sup> This may very well be due to the appreciation of sporting skills for military purposes held among the members of the parliament, which was founded in the aftermath of two wars.<sup>512</sup> However, certain divisions of opinion with regards to taking part in the 1924 Olympics surfaced in the press. For instance, some critiques suggested that the Olympic campaign was “in vain” and merely a sightseeing tour for certain people.<sup>513</sup> Moreover, a newspaper article titled *Olimpiyata Behemehal Gitmeli Miyiz, Gitmesek Ne Kaybederiz?* (Should we take part in the Olympics under any circumstances, what would we lose otherwise?) penned by Ali Naci in early 1924,<sup>514</sup> caused more severe criticisms, suggesting that Turkey was not at a position to “hoist the Turkish flag with honour in the Olympics”. As mentioned earlier, the primary objective of waging a journey to Paris and attending the Olympic Games was putting the newly established Republic of Turkey on the map by introducing it in an international organization. Selim Sırrı even wrote a letter<sup>515</sup> to the Prime Minister İsmet Pasha indicating the value of attending the Olympic Games and the necessity of

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<sup>510</sup> BCA,30-10-0-0/144-34-11, 22 May 1924; TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: 2, Cilt: 8, İçtima: 40, 17 April 1924, p. 835.

<sup>511</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: 2, Cilt: 7, İçtima: 12, 15 March 1924, p. 37.

<sup>512</sup> Özdemir, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin katıldığı ilk Uluslararası Organizasyon.

<sup>513</sup> Yusuf Ziya, “Olimpiyat Oyunlarına Nasıl Gidiyoruz?”, *Vakit*, 29 February 1924, p. 3.

<sup>514</sup> Ali Naci, “Olimpiyata Behemehal Gitmeli Miyiz, Gitmesek Ne Kaybederiz?”, *Akşam*, 6 February 1924, p. 3 as cited in Özdemir, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin katıldığı ilk Uluslararası Organizasyon.

<sup>515</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-34-12, 22 May 1924.

keeping the expectations of success at a moderately low level with the following words:

Being absent among the forty-four nations that take part in the international Olympic competitions, which were restored in 1896 by the French and organized in different capitals every four years, was a shame especially for a nation that earlier acquired fame for its strength. All things aside, the fact that around fifty young Greek people were lined up behind the Greek flag whereas none were present behind ours was deeply humiliating for us at a great ceremony held before several thousand people. (...) It is impossible (...) to take the first place among nations such as America, England, Sweden, Finland who make a national principle out of sports, not this year or four years later in the 1928 Olympics in The Hague.

As can be understood from this extract, wartime contentions with Greece continued to take a hold on the mindset of the ruling class of early Republican Turkey, which spilled over to the field of sports as a means of peaceful competition. However, for Ali Naci, this presented a further risk of compromising the image of Turkey in the eyes of Europe:

For propaganda purposes, we must go [to the Olympics] when it is evident that the force that we are going to demonstrate is capable of making an impact. Otherwise, it would be in detriment of us, not in favour. For our victories [on the battlefield], we are regarded as a very powerful nation. If our weaknesses show because of our lack of preparation (...), would not they contend that they had been wrong about their opinion on us, and we were, in fact, not powerful at all?<sup>516</sup>

Ali Naci then suggests that the money allocated for the Olympics should be given to sports clubs for their development. With this objection, he raises a different point from that of the leading figures of the sports movement in early Republican Turkey. While the main justification for the participation brought forward by the ruling institutions of Turkish sports was that it would serve as a way of making the country's place known at an international platform. However, from Ali Naci's point of view, the cost of defeat is far greater than the benefit of introducing the country to the world

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<sup>516</sup> Ali Naci, "Olimpiyata Behemehal Gitmeli Miyiz, Gitmesek Ne Kaybederiz?", *Akşam*, 6 February 1924, p. 3 as cited in Özdemir, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin katıldığı ilk Uluslararası Organizasyon.

since it carries the risk of leading to an external definition of what the new nation-state does not want itself to be identified with: a nation that lacks power. The idea that there is a deficiency in Turkey that becomes an impediment in the route to being at the same level with European countries is quite definitive on the mindset of early Republican Turkey. This deficiency is generally defined in cultural terms such as in the literary field.<sup>517</sup> Sports, in this sense, is not an exception. This concern of being defined by something other than power and the recent victories on the battlefield is a component of drawing the boundaries of the national identity through the Other's gaze. This is a way of excluding the attributes that are viewed as incompatible with the perceived national identity. The response to these criticisms from the sports movement highlighted the nation formation process as strength in itself. The head of the Turkish Athletics Federation at the time, Ali Seyfi,<sup>518</sup> responded to the reluctance to take part in the Olympics.

Without doubt, there is no such thing as those who come first are honourable, and those who come seventh are not. We are a nation that is deceased and came back to life. We made this vital move with our ambition to live. It is this move that will toss us into the Olympics. (...) Because we are a nation as well.

Here, representation in the Olympics is regarded as a way of introducing the novel nation-state as an interlocutor of its European counterparts. As discussed earlier, the emergence of the modern Olympics coincided with the transformation of the political landscape in Europe, and the Games became platforms where contentions among countries were transferred to, as a means of peaceful competition. Following the end of the First World War, with the dissolution of empires in Europe, the Olympic Games became a platform dominated by the sporting delegations of nation-states. This way, nation-states found an opportunity to present their strengths to others through successes and medals gained at competitions. For the host nations, this included the opportunity of demonstrating the level of development of their country as well.

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<sup>517</sup> Gürbilek, Nurdan (2001), *Kötü Çocuk Türk*, İstanbul: Metis, p. 94.

<sup>518</sup> Ali Seyfi, "Olimpiyatlara Niçin Gidiyoruz?", *Vakit*, 9 February 1924, p. 4 as cited in Özdemir, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin katıldığı ilk Uluslararası Organizasyon.

Moreover, gaining success in competitions also helped boost national pride and consolidate the members of the perceived national group. The leading figures of the sports movement in early Republican Turkey did not view this as a realistic prospect; however, taking part in the Olympics and lining up athletes behind the Turkish flag meant the introduction of Republican Turkey as a modern nation-state, which would be an important step, en route to the aim of marking its place among other European nation-states. This aspect of Olympic participation weighed heavier on the scale of uncertainty, and the first Olympic campaign of Republican Turkey began.

A series of qualification events and a training camp for athletes was set up in Eskişehir, Turkey. Athletes from different cities of Turkey came to Eskişehir, and discounts on train tickets were made for these athletes.<sup>519</sup> After the try-outs in Eskişehir, the athletes who were qualified to take part in the Olympics travelled to İstanbul for further training. Some student athletes from several schools such as *Mekteb-i Bahriye* (Navy School), a military school and *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* (Faculty of Political Science), and an administrative school were granted permits to attend the camp in İstanbul.<sup>520</sup> Among the athletes in İstanbul, who were set to participate in the 1924 Olympics, there was Süleyman Rıza, a pole vaulter from Trabzon, who provides a detailed account of the atmosphere in the İstanbul camp and en route to Paris, in his memoir reprinted in 2002.<sup>521</sup> Süleyman Rıza views the Olympic journey as a patriotic duty and states that “I will fight alone for my homeland. (...) The road is rocky, love of Hearth is my guide and God is my protector. Victory lies ahead, but I shall be desperate if the result is a failure”.<sup>522</sup> Moreover, he calls the Olympic participation as

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<sup>519</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-34-5, 17 March 1924.

<sup>520</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-34-8, 13 April 1924.

<sup>521</sup> (Kuğu) Süleyman Rıza (2002), *Trabzon-Paris: 1924 Olimpiyatlarına Yolculuk*, İstanbul: Trabzon Araştırmaları Merkezi Vakfı.

<sup>522</sup> (Kuğu), p. 27.

a “national and sacred job”.<sup>523</sup> Here, it can be inferred that athletes attribute nationalistic meanings to representing Turkey in the Olympics, and they expect success to a higher degree than the sports officials of the country; however, this can be expected from any athlete taking part in an Olympic event. The enthusiasm of Süleyman Rıza can be read through the lines where he describes trying to learn the result of the Turkish national football team’s match at the Olympics in Samsun with the governor of the city, where he stayed on his way to İstanbul<sup>524</sup> (as the competitions in the 1924 Olympics were spread to three months from May to July, the football team arrived in Paris earlier than the rest of the delegation). Accordingly, these sentiments were also shared by the officials, as Şükrü Naili Pasha, a military commander who took an active part in the Independence War, states that success in the Olympics would give him “the same joy as the news of a victory in battle”<sup>525</sup> during a dinner party thrown in honour of the Olympic athletes.

The camp in İstanbul, placed within the compound of *Kadıköy İttihat Sports Club*, was set up for the training and qualification competitions of the Olympic athletes through the budget and other aids, such as the Red Crescent, providing the bunker beds.<sup>526</sup> While describing the qualifying competitions, Süleyman Rıza describes the lack of interest by the people of İstanbul and the low turnout at the stands with regret, probably regarding it as a misfit to his enthusiasm of taking part in the Olympics.<sup>527</sup> For Süleyman Rıza, defeating athletes of Greek origin at the camp was another target. In fact, competition among Turkish and Greek athletes at the camp is explicit in these accounts. For instance, while recording the results of the competitions in his memoir,

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<sup>523</sup> (Kuğu), p. 101.

<sup>524</sup> (Kuğu), p. 35.

<sup>525</sup> (Kuğu), p. 85.

<sup>526</sup> (Kuğu), p. 81.

<sup>527</sup> (Kuğu), p. 39.

Süleyman Rıza argues that the Greek athletes aim to break the Turkish athletics records, and the miscalculation of results led to renewed records in this direction.<sup>528</sup> Later, he recounts how he works hard with the aim of breaking the record renewed by a Greek athlete and then how he equalizes the height at which the record stands (despite calling the records fake).<sup>529</sup> This is yet another indication that the wartime contentions between Greece are transferred to a more peaceful ground, in the form of sporting competitions and; therefore, leads to the outbursts of nationalist sentiments.

Encounters with Greeks prove defining in Turkey's Olympic campaign in 1924. For instance, during the journey on a train to Paris, he provides a thorough description of his sentiments while the train crosses through Greece. He finds it strange to hear Greek people in one of the stations speaking Turkish, who were probably sent to Greece during the population exchange in 1923.<sup>530</sup> In the accounts of Süleyman Rıza on Greece, it is easy to trace both envy and contention, which is characterized by the concept of *double-jeu* with the West, described by Zürcher, as mentioned earlier. The envy towards the West is evident in Süleyman Rıza's description of everyday life in Greece, where he states that "(...) it would not be correct to compare life within our borders and here. It is evident, by the looks of people, that it is livelier here. One cannot help but feel sorrow in the face of this bitter truth".<sup>531</sup> This envy surfaces in other cities during the journey as well, such as when in Ljubljana of Yugoslavia, Süleyman Rıza expresses his wish to one day see a similar infrastructure in Anatolia.<sup>532</sup> The remnants of the wartime contentions with Greece, on the other hand, also manifest themselves in the account of this encounter. For instance, while crossing Bulgaria, Süleyman Rıza

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<sup>528</sup> (Kuğu), p. 47.

<sup>529</sup> (Kuğu), pp. 49-51, 55.

<sup>530</sup> (Kuğu), p. 89.

<sup>531</sup> (Kuğu), p. 89.

<sup>532</sup> (Kuğu), p. 108.

states that he does not “feel the unfriendliness that he feels towards the Greeks” and that he “does not find Bulgarians as alien as Greeks”.<sup>533</sup> He also makes direct references to the Independence War, saying that the Greeks “are thankfully not in a position to challenge us, as they were heavily beaten down in the last battle”<sup>534</sup> and “were left in a desperate state in [the battle of] Sakarya”.<sup>535</sup>

Another example of this occurs upon the arrival of Turkey’s national football team in the Olympic village in Paris. When the team arrives in their housing complex at the Olympic village, they see a flag of blue-and-white next door and angrily complain to Burhaneddin Bey, the head of that proportion of the delegation.<sup>536</sup> They claim that they could not be neighbours with the representative athletes of a country that Turkey had been at war with as late as two years ago and that it would lead to tensions in the village.<sup>537</sup> In the end, they found out that the flag belonged to Uruguay. A tacit competition is also present among the delegations outside of the tracks and fields. For example, Selim Sırrı, while responding to criticism on the expenses made for the 1924 Olympics, argues that it would not be appropriate for him to voyage in a second-class cabin on the steamship, while it is most likely that the Greek delegates would voyage in first-class:<sup>538</sup>

The youngsters purchased a second-class ticket for me in order to save money. I thought, if the steamship stopped in Piraeus and the Greek delegate gets on board, they would certainly voyage in first-class. Having held the honour and dignity of my nation above all

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<sup>533</sup> (Kuğu), p. 93.

<sup>534</sup> (Kuğu), p. 89.

<sup>535</sup> (Kuğu), p. 112.

<sup>536</sup> Felek, Burhan, “İlk Olimpiyadlara Nasıl Girdik – 4”, *Yeni Gün*, 5 August 1939, No: 22, pp. 16, 32.

<sup>537</sup> Atabeyoğlu, Cem (2004), *Olimpiyatlarda Türk Sporcuları: Anılar-Olaylar-Rakamlar*, İstanbul: TMOK Yayınları, pp. 17 – 18.

<sup>538</sup> Selim Sırrı, “Paris Tenzihinin İç Yüzü”, *Cumhuriyet*, 12 May 1924, p. 4.

else, I added forty-one Liras from my own pocket and converted my ticket to a first-class one.

It can be inferred from these accounts that even at the beginning of the journey to Paris, the encounters abroad give the athletes a sense of national identity. This occurs not only as a process of self-identification vis-à-vis other European countries in terms of the memories of the past and the prospects for the future but also as a process of self-presentation. For instance, Süleyman Rıza recounts the feeling of a necessity to act in a manner “worthy of being a Turk” in the presence of foreign passengers on the train.<sup>539</sup> Moreover, Süleyman Rıza cites conversations with other passengers such as Italian and American ones, where he and other members of the delegation “corrected the wrong conceptions that they held about Turks”.<sup>540</sup> In this sense, the Olympic movement in Turkey viewed the journey to the 1924 Olympics as a way of influencing their image on an international platform.

As mentioned earlier, due to the fact that the Games were spread to a three-month time span, teams for different events travelled at separate times for the Olympics. In line with the earlier expectations of the delegation, the athletes from Turkey did not obtain significant results in the events.<sup>541</sup> Furthermore, the inexperience of the newly-born Republic in international sports events led to certain organizational mistakes that caused several athletes to miss out on the competitions. Several athletes, including Süleyman Rıza, could not take part in the athletics competitions because they were not registered to the events by the Federation. Cyclists, moreover, were left out of the race as they did not have proper race bikes.<sup>542</sup> This way, the Turkish delegation turned to out-of-schedule activities to attract attention. One of these was the

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<sup>539</sup> (Kuğu), p. 108.

<sup>540</sup> (Kuğu), pp. 112, 115.

<sup>541</sup> Felek, Burhan, “İlk Olimpiyadlara Nasıl Girdik – 7”, *Yeni Gün*, 26 August 1939, No: 25, p. 33.

<sup>542</sup> “Olimpiyad Müsabakalarına Nasıl Gittik ve Ne Derece Muvaffak Olduk?”, *Spor Alemi*, (undated), No:137/25, pp. 19 – 21.



opening ceremony. Süleyman Rıza accounts a contention among athletes in the delegation, based on memberships to different sports clubs and contends that “these should be dismissed in a national duty”.<sup>543</sup> While recounting the opening ceremony, he also states that “nothing serves to propaganda purposes better than sports”.<sup>544</sup> Encounters on the streets of Paris constituted another portion of these out-of-schedule activities, where the delegation from Turkey obtained an opportunity to introduce itself. For instance, as mentioned earlier, Republican Turkey was making immense efforts to prove that the Turks were a ‘European’ nation, and a significant chunk of these efforts were sustained by anthropological studies (Maksudyan, 2005).<sup>545</sup> This mentality reflected itself in the encounters the Turkish delegation had on their Olympic journey to Paris. Burhaneddin (Felek) Bey recounts an encounter with two Belgians and their Romanian-French friend in a restaurant, where one of the Belgians expresses surprise over the skin colours of the members of the delegation from Turkey. Burhaneddin Bey responds by claiming that “All of the Turks are whites. There are no coloured Turks”. This does not only reflect the Republican will to be identified as a European nation, but it also demonstrates the general understanding of race at the time. Furthermore, when someone among the group states that they had visited Turkey and each man there had eight or ten wives, Burhaneddin Bey gives a fierce reply, calling him ignorant.<sup>546</sup> This can be understood as a reaction to being associated with the practices prevalent in the Ottoman era, as Burhaneddin Bey estimates that the visit mentioned by his interlocutor must have had taken place during the *Tanzimat* era. In this sense, the attitude of Turkey’s Olympic delegation can be seen as a part of the Republican objective of detaching with the Ottoman past.

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<sup>543</sup> (Kuğu), p. 139.

<sup>544</sup> (Kuğu), p. 139.

<sup>545</sup> Maksudyan, *Türklüğü Ölçmek*.

<sup>546</sup> Felek, Burhan, “İlk Olimpiyadlara Nasıl Girdik – 7”, *Yeni Gün*, 26 August 1939, No: 25, p. 9.

Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, the formation of nationalist movements and the nation-states in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had a strong connection with masculinity and masculine performances, and sports was one of the fields where this was most overtly manifested.<sup>547</sup> Athletes from Turkey -all male- who took part in the 1924 Olympics presented such performances in Paris. For instance, Gülleci Cemal (Erçman), an athlete who took part in men's featherweight weightlifting and shot put competitions, took a challenge to draw a hand-bow in a sports shop in Paris, the owner of which claimed that there were only a handful of people who could do that. While this gained admiration from the bystanders at the shop, Burhaneddin (Felek) Bey contends that the effort cost Gülleci Cemal success at the shot put event.<sup>548</sup>

In short, the 1924 Olympic campaign was waged with the aim of introducing Republican Turkey to the international society as a modern state. This included both efforts to highlight Turkey's modern transformation and reactions to assert a place for Turkey in Europe. Taking part in a modern international sports event and engaging with the European public was a part of these efforts. Moreover, Turkey aimed to assert a rupture with its Ottoman past, defining the boundaries of the national identity. An article published in the *Cumhuriyet*, the official newspaper of the ruling Republican People's Party (RPP), underlines this aim:<sup>549</sup>

The immediate success of the Turks who left their *nargiles* (waterpipes) and began chasing after a (foot)ball which requires activating the mind and the physical strength at the same time, became the most honourable propaganda for our country, which has been oppressed and remained oppressed for a long time.

The success in this text refers to the first round defeat of the Turkish national football team, against Czechoslovakia with a score of 5-2, in which, according to the reports of Burhaneddin (Felek) Bey, the second half game of the Turkish side was met

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<sup>547</sup> Andrews, Sport and the Masculine Hegemony of the Modern Nation.

<sup>548</sup> Felek, Burhan, "İlk Olimpiyadlara Nasıl Girdik – 7", *Yeni Gün*, 26 August 1939, No: 25, pp. 9, 33.

<sup>549</sup> "Olimpiyadlara İştirak Etmekle Ne Kazandık?", *Cumhuriyet*, 24 June 1924, p. 3.

with appreciation.<sup>550</sup> The press reports from the 1924 Olympics relied heavily on the points of view of the delegation, as different newspapers assigned the delegation members for regular reports from Paris. For instance, the head of the Football Federation, Yusuf Ziya Bey, was published regularly in the *Vakit* newspaper.<sup>551</sup> In this sense, they are heavily loaded with the official view on the Olympic journey; however, they give an important sense of how the Olympics were conceived by the ruling class of Republican Turkey. The text above, mentioning the quitting of *nargiles* (waterpipes, or the statement that “(...) that the Turks are not the men in *şalvar* (baggy trousers common in Anatolian villages) feeling too lazy to move (...); on the contrary, they have a young population interested in civilised sports” indicate that the Republican Turkey wishes to distance itself from its rural traits that are seen as ‘backwards’ in Ahıska’s words, mentioned earlier as an effort to secede from its Ottoman past.<sup>552</sup>

There have been mixed receptions on the outcome of the Games; while some argued that the initial purpose of participation had been served, others pointed out to the inadequacies. For instance, while an article in the *Spor Alemi* magazine states that the “propaganda in Paris was not that good”,<sup>553</sup> in a series of interviews with the athletes and other members of the delegation conducted by the *Spor Alemi* correspondent Ali Sami Bey, the head of the UTSC, it was evaluated as an “influential and powerful propaganda”.<sup>554</sup> All in all, the 1924 Olympics was a significant milestone

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<sup>550</sup> Felek, Burhan, “İlk Olimpiyadlara Nasıl Girdik – 5”, *Yeni Gün*, 12 August 1939, No: 23, p. 23.

<sup>551</sup> “Olimpiyad Oyuncuları Dün Hareket Etdiler”, *Vakit*, 9 May 1924, p. 1.

<sup>552</sup> Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 15.

<sup>553</sup> “Olimpiyad Müsabakalarına Nasıl Gittik ve Ne Derece Muvaffak Olduk?”, *Spor Alemi*, (undated), No:137/25, pp. 19 – 21.

<sup>554</sup> “Reis Ali Sami Beyin Seyahat Hakkındaki Metalihati”, *Spor Alemi*, (undated), No:137/25, pp. 51 – 53.

in the nation formation process of the early periods of Republican Turkey, and it raised expectations for more sporting success in the coming Games.

#### **6.4. Turkey at the 1928 Olympics: A Footballing Disaster**

The period in the run up to the 1928 Summer Olympics witnessed two important names stepping down from their posts, marking two milestones in the Olympic history and the history of Turkey's Olympic journey. Firstly, Baron Pierre de Coubertin has stepped down in 1925 as the chair of the IOC and was replaced by Henri Baillet-Latour. Pierre de Coubertin had already announced that he would leave his post after the 1924 Olympics in Paris, as criticisms calling his administration an 'Olympic monarchy' were mounting.<sup>555</sup> While Baillet-Latour's IOC did not differ from his predecessor to significant lengths,<sup>556</sup> one significant improvement in the immediate aftermath has been the increase in the number of female athletes, which has doubled to almost 300 hundred in Amsterdam in 1928; however, they were denied entry to certain events, such as the 800-meter race.<sup>557</sup>

In Turkey, the change came with Selim Sırrı stepping down as the head of the National Olympic Committee. After he criticized the tendencies towards professionalism among athletes during a speech in İzmir, Cevat Sefa Bey, the representative of the army in the Olympic Committee, asked for a formal condemnation of Selim Sırrı, which was executed in a UTSC meeting in October 1926.<sup>558</sup> Amateurism in sports was a pertinent debate at the time, particularly during the Olympic Congress of 1925 which took place in Prague.<sup>559</sup> The biggest rift among

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<sup>555</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 51.

<sup>556</sup> Guttmann, Allen (1992), *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*, Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, p. 45.

<sup>557</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, pp. 53 – 54.

<sup>558</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Kurucumuz Selim Sırrı Tarcan*, pp. 32 – 33.

<sup>559</sup> Guttmann, *The Olympics*, p. 44.

the Committee members was about whether the lost wages of athletes that took time from their jobs would be compensated. In the end, a partial reimbursement was accepted, and the definition of amateurism was amended in a way that defined the earnings from sports as merely “means of existence” which fall within the scope of professionalism. While this definition exceeded the scope of previous conceptions on amateurism and professionalism, it still maintained and safeguarded the privileged position of upper classes. However, public funding for athlete practices was strongly dismissed from the definition of amateurism. These debates spilled over to the realm of sports in Turkey and cost Selim Sırrı his seat as the chair of the TOC. Selim Sırrı stopped attending the meetings of the TOC and eventually left his post in 1927 when he was replaced by Ali Sami Bey, the head of the UTSC. It should also be noted that Selim Sırrı kept his position as Turkey’s representative in the IOC.

The 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam also marked significant developments in terms of the budgetary aspects of the Games, with Coca-Cola stepping in as a sponsor, which remained influential in the finances of the Olympics to this day. With the debates in the parliament, which withheld public funding for the Games, it can be argued that the toll of hosting the Olympics began to ring ever more hollow for the government budget (it should also be recorded that another reason for the reluctance of the parliament was related to the hesitancy to play matches on Sabbath day). The necessary budget was met through a loan from the Amsterdam Municipal Council and different banks.<sup>560</sup>

Meanwhile, in Turkey, there was a certain level of confusion among the sports circles regarding the participation in the 1928 Olympics in the run up to the event. Apart from the articles in the press criticizing the lack of training on the part of Turkish athletes, there was even a small level of doubt about the whereabouts of the upcoming Olympics.<sup>561</sup> Moreover, lack of preparation was also criticized by the press. For

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<sup>560</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 54.

<sup>561</sup> For the correspondence on whether Paris will hold Olympic competitions in May 1928, see: BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-1, 01 April 1928.

instance, in April, approximately a month before the beginning of the Olympics, the Turkish national football team began its journey to Prague to play a series of friendly matches, which would also serve as try-outs for the Games. This decision was criticised on the grounds of being insufficient and too late.<sup>562</sup> In a report submitted by the Football Federation, it is highlighted that “what we are looking for from these competitions is not wins or losses, but an ambition from our players”.<sup>563</sup> Moreover, against the criticisms of holding the training and friendly matches in Prague instead of Turkey, the report provided an explanation in defence of the decision, citing the benefits of playing matches against Czech teams which are comprised of “the most sacred players in the word”.<sup>564</sup>

Grim prospects were also present in the preparations of other federations. For instance, in a report filed by the Fencing Federation, it was stated that,

Eleven years of fighting, unfortunately, led to a decline in the sport. (...) Considering that it is not easy to establish this sport in a country those working in the sport should be given more time to bring long-term benefits.<sup>565</sup>

The Wrestling Federation informed the government with similar remarks, with preparatory competitions providing discouraging results:

As the Federation is undertaking these competitions only for the sake of providing experience and a training course to the wrestlers, whatever the result may be, it would be important to pre-emptively underline that there is not much place for hope.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> “Her Millet Futbol için Olimpiyadlara Son Hazırlıklarını İkmal Etmiş İken Biz Bin Patırtı Arasında Daha Yeni Faaliyete Başlıyoruz ve Takımımızı İstanbul’dan Ayıramadığımızdan Başka Memleketlerdeki Muallimlerin Fikirlerine Müracaat İçin Kafile Gönderiyoruz”, *Spor Alemi*, 12 April 1928, No: 14, p. 2.

<sup>563</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-5, 26 May 1928.

<sup>564</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-5, 26 May 1928.

<sup>565</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-5, 26 May 1928.

<sup>566</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-5, 26 May 1928.

It can be inferred from these reports that the administration of sports does not have high expectations from the athletes. However, this is not true for football, as the appeal of the sport in Turkey, as well as the expensive training tour in Central Europe, raised the hopes for a successful Olympic campaign. It is possible to find statements in newspaper articles that rest a particular value on the footballers among other athletes.<sup>567</sup> However, the national football team's defeat in the 1928 Olympics became the highlight of the Games for the delegation of Turkey.

Turkey took part in the 1928 Summer Olympics in Amsterdam with 31 athletes -an all-male squad once again- competing in six sports events and completed the Games without winning a medal.<sup>568</sup> Perhaps the most significant event in the 1928 Olympics for the Turkish delegation is the national football team's Round of 16 defeat against Egypt with a score of 7-1.<sup>569</sup> The stakes for the Turkish national football team were already high, with an unsuccessful preparation campaign in Prague.<sup>570</sup> Egypt, on the other hand, came to Amsterdam with more to prove as they were under the spotlight after making the quarter-finals in the 1924 Olympics in Paris.<sup>571</sup> There were mixed reviews in the international press, with the French calling the Turkish side "a good, well-trained team",<sup>572</sup> while there were harsher reviews in Dutch newspapers. The defeat and the criticism in the international media that followed suit, had a dire effect in Turkey, which was faced with national humiliation while seeking to boost national

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<sup>567</sup> "Mağlubiyet Değil Hezimet", *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1928, p. 4.

<sup>568</sup> Turkey at the 1928 Summer Olympics, *Olympedia*, available on <https://www.olympedia.org/countries/TUR/editions/9>, accessed on 02 June 2021.

<sup>569</sup> "Une nette victoire des Egyptiens", *L'Auto-vélo*, 29 May 1928, p. 5.

<sup>570</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-5, 26 May 1928.

<sup>571</sup> *L'Écho des sports*, 29 May 1928, p. 1.

<sup>572</sup> *L'Écho des sports*, 29 May 1928, p. 1.

pride. Translations of the commentary pieces that appeared in the Dutch newspapers were sent to the Prime Ministry by the *Maarif Vekaleti*.<sup>573</sup> As mentioned earlier, these pieces contained some severe statements about the Turkish national football team, with one of them claiming that Turkey was too easy a challenge for the Egyptian national team, as the Turkish side would have easily fallen prey to a “second-class Dutch team” and there was “very little to appreciate in the way Turks played”. Another commentator argued that some of the experienced Turkish football players were so useless that they might as well have been left in İstanbul. In the *De Telegraaf* newspaper, the writer of the Egypt-Turkey match discussed the motives of the Olympic campaign of the national team, saying that,

Turkey showed that it was not ready to compete in the Olympic football tournament just yet. (...) But we found out that the Turks came to Amsterdam solely for learning, if that’s true, they must have benefited from this journey, even though it was a bit expensive.

The expensive trip organized for the Olympic tour of the national football team of Turkey drew criticism from the Turkish press as well. Çelebizade Said Tevfik began his editorial with the following remark: “Our footballers roamed around Europe, they travelled and eventually returned with no success.”<sup>574</sup> A similar criticism appeared in the RPP affiliated *Cumhuriyet* newspaper as well, denoting that the athletes of Turkey are not capable of competing with other countries’ teams and that Turkey “should know its place and not waste its money on travels and tours, and instead spend money on home soil”.<sup>575</sup> The trip to Prague became so notorious that in 1936, sports writer and former athlete Ömer Besim Koşalay described it as the “Age of Tulip”<sup>576</sup> of

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<sup>573</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-7, 11 July 1928.

<sup>574</sup> Çelebizade Said Tevfik, “Futbolcularımızın Son Yaptıkları Turne ile Türk Futbolunun Berbatlığı İlan Olunmuştur. Bu Kıymetli Sporumuzu Felaketten Kurtarmak İçin Yeniden Faaliyete Geçmek Lazım Gelir”, *Spor Alemi*, 21 June 1928, No: 19, p. 4.

<sup>575</sup> “Mesuller Futbol İşlerini İdare Edeceğiz Diye Yüzlerine Gözlerine Bulaştıranlardır”, *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1928, p. 1.

<sup>576</sup> Ömer Besim, “Berlin Olimpiyatlarına Niçin İştirak Ediyoruz?”, *Son Posta*, 14 February 1936, p. 8.



Turkish football, referring to the age of relative welfare and extravaganza in 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire.<sup>577</sup> More importantly, the frustration in the press reflected the expectations on the manner Turkey was being represented in the Olympics. Çelebizade, in the same article, complained that this defeat “completely eradicated the hard-earned presence in Europe”.<sup>578</sup> Here, we see the meaning attributed to the Olympic Games, which is about marking Turkey’s place in Europe. This attribution is so powerful that in the eyes of Çelebizade, a defeat costs Turkey a place in the modern world. Obviously, the power of Çelebizade’s enthusiastic reaction can be attributed to the fact that he is a sportswriter. An article in *Cumhuriyet* titled *Mağlubiyet Değil Hezimet* (Not a Defeat, A Destruction); however, validates the importance of the Olympics in the Republican mindset in terms of establishing a national image. In this article, the question of whether succumbing to such a heavy defeat for introducing Turkey relieved of its “*şalvars* and *kavuks* (a round hat often worn by religious men)” is an honour.<sup>579</sup> This demonstrates the continued will to secede the novel identity of Republican Turkey from the Ottoman past, but moreover, it is now possible to identify a willingness to return with success in competitions as well. Unlike in 1924, when the primary intention was to introduce the Republic of Turkey as a modern nation-state in the same category as its European counterparts, this time, the expectations for success are more pertinent.

The defeat had further ramifications on the national football team, which faced an investigation before the *Haysiyet Divanı* (Disciplinary Committee). Some players were banned from representing Turkey in international competitions due to “not fulfilling their duties and not comprehending the responsibility and honour they

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<sup>577</sup> Boyar, Ebru & Fleet, Kate (2010), *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 3.

<sup>578</sup> Çelebizade Said Tefik, “Futbolcularımızın Son Yaptıkları Turne ile Türk Futbolunun Berbatlığı İlan Olunmuştur. Bu Kıymetli Sporumuzu Felaketten Kurtarmak İçin Yeniden Faaliyete Geçmek Lazım Gelir”, *Spor Alemi*, 21 June 1928, No: 19, p. 4.

<sup>579</sup> “Mağlubiyet Değil Hezimet”, *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1928, p. 4.

bore”.<sup>580</sup> The example of the football team demonstrates the nationalist attributes rested on the Olympics in Turkey during the early Republican era. This attribution was so powerful that a heavy defeat in football served as a bitter reminder of national humiliation. The earlier remark of losing presence within Europe made by Çelebizade can be read as a reflection of this sentiment, which also recalls the objections to the Olympic campaign in 1924 when one of the most prominent opposing views was that it would lead to the loss of the wartime conception of Turkey as a powerful nation in the eyes of European countries. In this sense, it could be argued that the defeat against Egypt led to concerns of a threat against the novel national identity in the making, and therefore met with such consequences.

Starting from the 1928 Olympics, an expectation of success came to the agenda of the sports movement in Turkey. The fourth place of Tayyar Yalaz in Greco-Roman lightweight wrestling became the biggest Olympic success until then. Atabeyoğlu underlines the nationalist outburst during matches of Yalaz and Muhuttin Okyavuz, who represented Turkey in fencing’s men’s sabre event against Greek opponents.<sup>581</sup> This also demonstrates the prevailing adversity between Turkey and Greece manifesting itself in sports fields. Nonetheless, the long-expected medals in the Olympics came after an eight-year hiatus of Turkey’s Olympic campaign with significant changes in the world and in sports in Turkey in-between.

### **6.5. Turkey at the 1936 Olympics: Journey to the Nazi Olympics**

Turkey did not participate in the sporting events of the 1932 Summer Olympics with the dire effects of the economic meltdown in 1929 rendering it impossible to finance a trip to Los Angeles, USA, which made 1936 Games the next destination in the Olympic journey of early Republican Turkey. In 1931, the 1936 Games were awarded to Germany, with the Winter Olympics to be held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the Summer Olympics to be organized in Berlin. In 1930, Berlin hosted the IX Olympic Congress and the officials used this as an opportunity to make a good impression of the city’s Olympic bid, which paid off with Berlin, securing the

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<sup>580</sup> BCA, 30-10-0-0/144-36-12, 13 December 1928.

<sup>581</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Olimpiyatlarda Türk Sporcuları*, pp. 33 – 35.

title of the host city of the 1936 Olympics in 1931 by beating Barcelona in the vote.<sup>582</sup> However, in 1933, the Nazi Party took over, which took a drastic toll on the 1936 Games. Initially, the Games did not rank high on Adolf Hitler's agenda; in fact, he called them as a "plot against the Aryan race by the Freemasons and the Jews".<sup>583</sup> However, Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda minister, urged the Nazi regime to hold the event and use it as a political tool to raise the image of their rule internationally. At the same time, anti-Jewish laws were being enacted in Germany, which led to serious discussions of a boycott, particularly in the United States, Canada, and France.<sup>584</sup> These boycott initiatives were averted when the head of the American Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, a move that earned him the seat of the president of the IOC.<sup>585</sup> The anti-Semite signs were removed from the streets of Berlin only after the then-president of the IOC, Henri Baillet-Latour, threatened the cancellation of the Games. Even the Nazi-affiliated newspaper *Der Stürmer* was scrapped from the streets during the course of the Games.<sup>586</sup>

Conversely, the Nazi regime did not fall short of fully excavating the 1936 Olympics gold mine, using the games as a way of demonstrating the Third Reich in its infrastructural grandeur. Hitler envisaged an Olympic site that would serve as a cultural centre to propagate the Nazi ideology, as well as hosting the delegations and competitions with the party flag hanging around everywhere.<sup>587</sup> The 1936 Games also inaugurated certain invented traditions of the Olympics, such as the torch relay, which

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<sup>582</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, p. 53.

<sup>583</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 69.

<sup>584</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, p. 59.

<sup>585</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 77.

<sup>586</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, pp. 69, 72 – 73.

<sup>587</sup> Chalkley & Essex, Urban development through hosting international events.

was spearheaded by a familiar name, Carl Diem.<sup>588</sup> Moreover, a movie director, Leni Riefenstahl, was commissioned to record the grandeur of Nazi Berlin and the Games, which resulted in the famous movie, *Olympia*.<sup>589</sup> In this sense, with the enabling of the IOC, the 1936 Olympics gave the Nazi regime the perfect opportunity to make propaganda.

Apart from the anti-Semite character of the regime, one other concern of discrimination was about the African-American athletes. Gestapo, the secret police of the Nazi Party, followed African-American male athletes to make sure they did not engage with German women, and around fifty women were cited for conversing with the athletes.<sup>590</sup> In all this atmosphere, a black athlete, Jesse Owens from the USA, made the highlight of the Games by winning four gold medals in 100 metre, 200 metre, and 4x100 relay race, as well as in long jump. He left such a mark on the Games dominated by the Nazi regime that, in *Olympia*, Leni Riefenstahl, who shot one of the most notorious Hitler propagandas, the *Triumph of the Will*, exclusively used the footage of Jesse Owens.<sup>591</sup> The 1936 Games, which were held in Berlin under Hitler's rule, sparked even a protest Games, namely the Workers' Olympiad, as mentioned earlier. While the 1936 Games, which left maybe the most significant mark on the history of the relationship between the national identity formation and the Olympics, Turkey was preparing for an Olympic journey carrying many firsts, through drastic changes in the realm of sports.

Criticisms over the UTSC's handling of sports mounted after the unsuccessful Olympic campaign in 1928. There had been criticism that the UTSC was not capable

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<sup>588</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 72.

<sup>589</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 74.

<sup>590</sup> Boykoff, *Power Games*, p. 75.

<sup>591</sup> Guttmann, *The Olympics*, p. 68.

of allocating resources for training to different branches equally<sup>592</sup> and that it was mostly football oriented.<sup>593</sup> Following the defeats in the foreign tour of the Turkish national football team, including the one against Egypt in Amsterdam, led to calls for change in the administration of sports in Turkey. After the Carl Diem report, the UTSC was abolished to give way to a more centralised institution, which will govern sports, and which would be named the *Türk Spor Kurumu* (Turkish Sports Institution, TSI). The TSI was founded in 1936, simultaneously with the wholesale convergence of the party and the state. One of the most significant indicators of this aspect of the TSI was underlined with the amendment in its charter that removed the ban on “*siyasetle iştigal* (engaging with politics)”.<sup>594</sup> The Republican People’s Party was the only political party in the 1930s, with a three-month hiatus in 1930 which ended with the closure of the *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Free Republican Party), and in 1936 the state and the party formally converged.<sup>595</sup> In the realm of sports, this resulted in the membership of all athletes in Turkey to the RPP, and the registration ceremony took place on Republican Day, 29 October 1936.<sup>596</sup> With this transformation, the Turkish Olympic Committee was placed under the reign of the TSI as well, despite such a relationship with the state being against Olympic Rules.<sup>597</sup> In the political atmosphere of the

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<sup>592</sup> “Reis Ali Sami Beyin Seyahat Hakkındaki Metalihati”, *Spor Alemi*, (undated), No:137/25, pp. 51 – 53.

<sup>593</sup> Tunç, Sevecen (2019), *A Game of Two Halves: The Making of Professional Football in Turkey, 1949-1965*, unpublished PhD thesis, Boğaziçi University Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, p. 33.

<sup>594</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet Mi? Devlette Spor Mu?*, pp. 20 – 21.

<sup>595</sup> Zürcher, Erik Jan (2007), The Ottoman Legacy of the Kemalist Republic in Touraj Atabaki (ed.) *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, State and the Society in Turkey and Iran*, London & New York: IB Tauris, pp. 105 – 106.

<sup>596</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet Mi? Devlette Spor Mu?*, p. 24.

<sup>597</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet Mi? Devlette Spor Mu?*, p. 22.

decade, where authoritarian governments were on the rise all around Europe, it did not create a grave problem for participation.

The 1936 Winter Olympics held in the city of Garmisch-Partenkirchen had been the first Winter Olympics where a delegation from Turkey participated. The delegation consisted of six athletes who competed in Alpine skiing and cross-country skiing.<sup>598</sup> The mentality of “here to learn, not win” was also present in this first Winter Olympics of Turkey.<sup>599</sup> It should also be noted that this does not necessarily mean that there was no disappointment, with writers such as Ömer Besim Koşalay complaining that a nation who “only remembers skiing on holidays is destined for this result”.<sup>600</sup> The fact that winter sports have only begun to be practiced in Turkey a couple of years ago is heavily emphasized. The athletes, who have merely several years of experience in the respective sports they are competing in, were trained for the Olympics for a maximum of ten days in Uludağ, Bursa. While there were reasonably low expectations, the decision to compete in men’s 4x10 cross-country relay race without being ready was criticized in the press.<sup>601</sup> The criticism towards Turkey’s athletes at the Winter Olympics that appeared in the European press had been the subject of a heated debate during the convention of the TSI, with one member claiming that they were the outcome of ‘political reasons’.<sup>602</sup> While this argument could be evaluated as another reflection of Republican Turkey’s contentious love affair with Europe, it is far more plausible to read it as the outcome of defeat fatigue and longing for sporting success.

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<sup>598</sup> “Turkey at the 1936 Winter Olympics”, *Olympedia*, available on <https://www.olympedia.org/countries/TUR/editions/32>, accessed on 07 June 2021.

<sup>599</sup> *Akşam*, 10 February 1936, p. 6.

<sup>600</sup> Ömer Besim, “Kış Olimpiyatlarında Aldığımız Acıklı Netice”, *Son Posta*, p. 12.

<sup>601</sup> “Olimpiyada gitmek kararını yeniden tetkik etmeliyiz”, *Akşam*, 19 February, 1936, p. 10.

<sup>602</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 17 April 1936, p. 8.

There was very little further public discussion on the Winter Olympics; however, the results from the Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen sparked yet another debate on Turkey's participation in the Summer Olympics in Berlin. An article in the daily *Akşam* suggested that Turkey needed to rethink its decision to take part in the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, in order not to be the target of "ugly ridicules" similar to those of some European journalists who were not aware of the recency of the development of winter sports in Turkey.<sup>603</sup> Ömer Besim Koşalay responded to this idea by arguing that the benefits of participating, observing, and learning during the Olympics outweighed such risks.<sup>604</sup> The debate on going to the Olympics continued until there was nearly a-month-and-a-half left until the opening ceremony; however, it remained limited to particular branches of sports such as football.<sup>605</sup> The head of the Union of Sports Club, Ali Hikmet, responded by saying "these ideas are under the influence of the terrible coverage of our ski racers who took part in the Winter Olympics in Germany".<sup>606</sup>

Another significant characteristic of the public debate on the Olympics in 1936 is that there has been increased coverage of the preparations for the Olympics, particularly compared to the two previous Olympic campaigns. This can be explained by the rising expectations for success at the Olympics, as well as better results obtained in the preparatory competitions in different branches of sport. Instead of tours abroad such as the one to Prague in 1928, this time there have been visits by different sports teams to Turkey, such as the visit of Finnish<sup>607</sup> and German<sup>608</sup> wrestling teams, and

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<sup>603</sup> *Akşam*, 19 February, 1936, p. 10.

<sup>604</sup> Ömer Besim, "Berlin Olimpiyatları ve Sporcularımız", *Son Posta*, 12 February 1936, p. 8.

<sup>605</sup> Cihat Hikmet, "Futbolcuları Berlin'e görüp öğrenmeleri için göndereceğiz!" diyor... *Son Posta*, 17 June 1936, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>606</sup> Ali Hikmet, "Olimpiyatlar ve İdman Cemiyetleri İttifakı", *Son Posta*, 21 June 1936, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>607</sup> BCA, 30-18-1-2/65-48-12, 06 June 1936.

<sup>608</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 27 May 1936, p. 6.

the football teams of First Vienna FC.<sup>609</sup> Turkish wrestlers and football teams (joint teams of İzmir, İstanbul, and Ankara) managed to defeat these teams and wrestlers on a number of occasions, which led to jubilation in the press.<sup>610</sup> However, what is important to note during this period of preparation for the Games is the divisions among the sports movement in Turkey. For instance, the football administration in İstanbul came under heavy fire by the press, particularly -but not limited to- *Cumhuriyet* newspaper affiliated with the RPP for overlooking certain players in favour of the interests of certain clubs in their roster selection.<sup>611</sup> This resulted in the resignation of Zeki Rıza (Sporel) from the selection committee of the national football team.<sup>612</sup> This is significant as it demonstrates the fault lines of fandom and club interests that cut across the national sentiments, as well as unveiling the disparities among the sports movement in Turkey. This is, in fact, a characteristic inherent to sports, with club affiliations carrying the potential of transcending and overcutting national sentiments that the politics aim to extract from the competitions. While these clashes tend to appear more before and after the sports events rather than during them, this is an example demonstrating how divisions can emerge within the administration of sports in the context of an Olympic body, where nationalist aspirations are thought to be more prevalent compared to other fields.

It is difficult to measure the popular reaction towards the Olympic campaigns of Turkey at the time; however, it is possible to find a piece in the *Son Posta* newspaper that gives a glimpse of the public opinion on whether Turkey should attend the Olympics or not in the run up to the 1936 Berlin Games.<sup>613</sup> Six people were

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<sup>609</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 27 May 1936, p. 6.

<sup>610</sup> *Son Posta*, 07 June 1936, p. 11.

<sup>611</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 08 June 1936, p. 6.

<sup>612</sup> *Akşam*, 11 June 1936, p. 11.

<sup>613</sup> *Son Posta*, 14 June 1936, p. 7.



interviewed for this piece, one woman and five men, and they overwhelmingly supported taking part in the Olympics, with only one person raising objection to participation. However, other interviewees' answers raise questions about the participation of the football team, which leads to the conclusion that there is a chance *Son Posta* might have picked opinions that are in line with the editorial views that previously appeared on its pages. Here it should be noted that shortly before the coverage of the 1936 Olympics, *Son Posta* used to be a newspaper that is critical of the RPP's politics, which changed after the resignation of Zekeriya Sertel, a famed journalist who faced charges during the single-party rule and left *Son Posta* in 1934 due to the rift between the political views of Sertel and other editors-in-chief.<sup>614</sup> After this, *Son Posta* became a less controversial newspaper in the eyes of the regime; therefore, it would be more accurate to associate the opposition to the Olympic journey more with the common differences of opinions among different segments involved in sports.

With the growing hopes of having successful results at the Olympics and increased interest in participation, it is also possible to find diverse references to the national identity associated with sports and the Olympics. Before, it was only possible to trace emphases on the merits of participation, self-introduction, as a modern nation relieved of its former cultural identifiers which were associated with pre-modernity and putting the country on the European map. Element of competition was only visible with the spillover of wartime contentions with Greece during the 1924 Olympics, and in 1928, the defeats were at the top of the agenda. In 1936, on the other hand, a discourse of linking the Olympic campaign to the national identity was more visible. For instance, news pieces on the preparations of the cavalry soldiers for the equestrian event include ethnic references to the Turks' cohabitation with horses in the nomadic era. As an example, *Cumhuriyet* cites a German newspaper in the following extract:

Turks have long been a rider nation, roaming half of the world on horseback; however, they have never been engaged with the jumping that requires an entirely different riding training. Now,

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<sup>614</sup> Öztekin, Hülya (2016), *Tan: Serteller Yönetiminde Muhallif Bir Gazete*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, pp. 103 – 104.

embracing this sport rapidly and learning it just as immediately proves that they possess a bright ability and power of learning.<sup>615</sup>

This is a reference to the primordial elements of national identity, which are put in correlation with modern aspects of national attributes, that is, being good at equestrian. A similar attribution was at play for wrestling as well, with news pieces claiming that the wrestlers were training with the “energy and courage inherent to our race”<sup>616</sup> and they would “prove the idiom of ‘Strong as a Turk’ once more to the world”.<sup>617</sup> Therefore, it is possible to trace another dimension of the bondage between the nation formation process and sports within the context of the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. Under these circumstances, the delegation from Turkey set out to its fourth Olympic campaign, in Germany under the Nazi regime.

The beginning of the journey to the Summer Olympics of 1936 overlapped with the signing of the Montreux Convention giving the control of the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles to Turkey, which gave a morale boost to the athletes sailing to Berlin.<sup>618</sup> One of the highlights of the opening ceremony was that the athletes from the Turkish delegation wore the emblem of the RPP on their coats, another reflection of the overlapping of the party and the state in the field of sports.<sup>619</sup> The biggest public interest was rested on the football team, which lost to Norway in the first round by conceding four goals and scoring none. Given the earlier uncertainty over the participation of the football team in the Olympics, a significant criticism in the press ensued; however, there was not the staunch consensus over the failure of the team that was visible in the 1928 Summer Olympics. For instance, *Cumhuriyet*

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<sup>615</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 16 July 1936, p. 6.

<sup>616</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 17 July 1936, p. 6.

<sup>617</sup> *Son Posta*, 24 June 1936, p. 8.

<sup>618</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 25 July 1936, p.6.

<sup>619</sup> TMOK (2008), *TMOK'un 100 Yılı*, İstanbul: TMOK Yayınları, p. 26.

newspaper, acknowledging the fact that Norway finished the tournament in third place and citing the praises towards the Turkish national football team that appeared in the German press,<sup>620</sup> found consolation in defeat. In the meantime, *Son Posta* newspaper, which earlier raised criticism over the participation of the Turkish national football team, was harsher in its review of the match, claiming that “no national team in our footballing history has ever put on such an awful display as the one that took the field in Berlin”.<sup>621</sup> The sense of national humiliation and associating the defeat with a lack of allegiance to the national group was also prevalent in the press, with *Akşam* claiming that the defeat was “an insult to Turkishness”.<sup>622</sup>

The other branch of sports that made the headline was wrestling, as the wrestlers brought Turkey its first ever Olympic medals, one of them being gold. First (Mersinli) Ahmet Kireççi won a bronze medal in the men’s freestyle middleweight event, which was Turkey’s first Olympic medal. This was hailed in the press as being the first time “the Turkish flag was hoisted in the global field of contest (*er meydanı*)”.<sup>623</sup> Bigger jubilation followed when Yaşar Erkan won the men’s Greco-Roman featherweight event, obtaining the first gold medal of the Olympic history of Turkey. This inevitably led to the biggest nationalist outburst in the Turkish press within the context of Olympic events. One piece in *Cumhuriyet* associated the wrestling style of Yaşar Erkan to the “divine might of the Turks and Turkishness”.<sup>624</sup> The hoisting of the flag of Turkey and the playing of the national anthem during the medal ceremony were extensively covered as a booster of national pride. The same piece in *Cumhuriyet* also claims that this was the first time ever when “a hundred

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<sup>620</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 17 August 1936, p. 6.

<sup>621</sup> *Son Posta*, 04 August 1936, p. 1.

<sup>622</sup> *Akşam*, 08 August 1936, p. 3.

<sup>623</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 07 August 1936, p. 3.

<sup>624</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 10 August 1936, p. 3.

thousand people saluted the Turkish flag and national anthem at the same time”. In this sense, the Nazi salute of the spectators in the stands during the ceremony was also hailed with pride.<sup>625</sup> Perhaps only the *Tan* newspaper was reluctant to join the celebrations, which could be associated with its opposing stance to the RPP rule. One piece by Ahmet Emin Yalman<sup>626</sup> argued, “we should not find consolation in this [the gold medal of Yaşar Erkan]” and claimed that Yaşar Erkan’s success was an exception in Turkey’s defeat in the Olympics. Burhan Felek, again in *Tan*, claimed that Yaşar Erkan was lucky in the competition.<sup>627</sup> Whether such luck existed or not falls out of the scope of this analysis, however the mention of it in *Tan* and omittance in other newspapers such as *Cumhuriyet* provides an insight to the reflection of the political rift between the two to the field of sports. In any case, Yaşar Erkan was hailed as a “national hero” and was presented with an apartment building in İstanbul.<sup>628</sup>

Another highlight of the Olympics for Turkey was the participation of two female fencers, Halet Çambel, and Suat Fetgeri Aşeni. They were the first female athletes to take part in an Olympics, representing a country where the majority of the population were Muslims. Interestingly, there was extremely little media coverage of Çambel and Aşeni, almost none in the mainstream media except for their results.<sup>629</sup> This is significant because this is an image that Republican Turkey exactly would prefer to show at the Olympics. Halet Çambel was an archaeology professor who also took part in fencing competitions. This was a clear example of the educated and healthy woman that Republican Turkey envisioned. Furthermore, this was an

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<sup>625</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 15 August 1936, p. 1.

<sup>626</sup> Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Tecrübeden Ders*, *Tan*, 11 August 1936, p. 1.

<sup>627</sup> Burhan Felek, “Basketbol takımında her nedense kat’î bir disiplin elde edilememiştir”, *Tan*, 12 August 1936, p. 5.

<sup>628</sup> Atabeyoğlu, Cem (2003a), *Olimpiyatlardaki İlk “Altın Adamımız”: Yaşar Erkan*, İstanbul: TMOK Yayınları, pp. 79 – 81.

<sup>629</sup> *Akşam*, 09 August 1936, p. 9.

indication of the mostly upper-class character of the allocation of sports resources in Turkey at the time.<sup>630</sup> One reason that immediately comes to mind as to why this was not emphasized is Republican Turkey's wish to distance itself from a religiously-defined identity; however, this still fails to explain the reason why they did not receive more coverage as the representatives of the women of Republican Turkey. Some research into this; however, reveals that the true reason was sheer ignorance, as during the 1948 Summer Olympics Abidin Daver, wrongly writes that the sprinter Üner Teoman is the first female athlete to represent Turkey in the Olympics. Afterwards, Suat Fetgeri Aşeni pens a letter to Daver explaining the participation of herself and Halet Çambel "in the name of Turkishness and Turkish women" as well as expressing remorse over the neglect.<sup>631</sup> Another remarkable characteristic of the participation of Çambel and Aşeni was that they refused to meet Adolf Hitler in a reception. Çambel later said that when their assigned German official asked them to meet Hitler they refused to do so as they did not approve of the Nazi regime: "We said that we would never have come to Berlin if our government had not told us to do so. When the official asked us to go up and introduce ourselves to Hitler, we firmly rejected her offer."<sup>632</sup>

In conclusion, the 1936 Summer Olympics left a significant mark on the nation formation process in Turkey. While the debates prior to the Games and up until the bronze medal of Ahmet Kireççi resonate a resemblance to the public discussion during the 1924 and 1928 Olympics due to the defeats, from that moment onwards, the Games became an instrument of boosting the national pride. This was integrated into nationalist politics with both modern emphases and references to ethnicity. The former was heavily influenced by the diplomatic relations of the time, namely, the signing of the Montreaux Convention. Peyami Safa, for instance, draws a parallelism between Montreaux and the Olympics, claiming that the former demonstrates the Turkey of

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<sup>630</sup> Pfister & Hacisoftaoğlu, *Women's Sport as a Symbol of Modernity*.

<sup>631</sup> Abidin Daver, "Olimpiyatlara iştirak eden ilk Türk kızları", *Cumhuriyet*, 09 August 1948, p. 2.

<sup>632</sup> "Pioneering Olympian Halet Cambel, who snubbed Hitler", *BBC*, 12 August 2012, available on <https://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/19224181>, accessed on 20 June 2021.

peace and politics, whereas the latter is a display of the Turkey of muscle and power.<sup>633</sup> While Peyami Safa uses the metaphor of “peace-loving as a Turk”, the dominant narrative around the medals Turkey won in wrestling is decorated with the metaphor of “strong as a Turk”.<sup>634</sup> Moreover, once again, an attempt to distinguish Republican Turkey from the Ottoman past and the culture associated with the Middle East is present in the 1936 Olympics. Ahmed Ihsan, in *Cumhuriyet*, argues that with the Olympic journey in Berlin, presented what Turkey is, and what is worn in Turkey, to the IOC who “cannot distinguish Turkey and (fez-wearing team of) Egypt”.<sup>635</sup> This is another clear demonstration of defining the national group vis-à-vis designating Others. References to the ethnic past, on the other hand, are made through the activities-turned-Olympic sports that could be traced down in the history of ancient Turks, such as equestrian and wrestling. For example, while contemplating on the medals in wrestling, Yunus Nadi contends that “It is known that the *pehlivanhood* (...) of the Turk has a historical reputation”.<sup>636</sup> Therefore, it could be argued that the Olympics is another reflection of the characteristic of adhering to the modern understanding of nation by emphasizing the particularity of Turkish nationhood through historical references to ethnicity. This amalgamation undertaken during the nation formation process can best be traced in the publication of the TSI, where Behçet Kemal Çağlar writes that Yaşar Erkan “combines the Turkish capability with modern technique”.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Peyami Safa, “İki İmtihan”, *Cumhuriyet*, 02 August 1936, p. 3.

<sup>634</sup> Yunus Nadi, “Bütün Dünyaya Mal Olmuş Söz: Türk Gibi Kuvvetli!”, *Cumhuriyet*, 11 August 1936, p. 1.

<sup>635</sup> Ahmed Ihsan, “Bedbinlere cevap: Aldığımız neticelerden memnun olmalıyız”, *Cumhuriyet*, 18 August, 1936, p. 6.

<sup>636</sup> Yunus Nadi, “Bütün Dünyaya Mal Olmuş Söz: Türk Gibi Kuvvetli!”, *Cumhuriyet*, 11 August 1936, p. 1.

<sup>637</sup> Behçet Kemal Çağlar, “Yaşar’ın Zaferi ve Spor Telakkimiz”, *Türk Spor Kurumu Dergisi*, 17 August 1936, no: 8, p. 2.

As discussed earlier, the 1930s were a period when the emphasis on race and racial superiority was prevalent. The Nazi regime itself was built on these premises, and the debates revolving around the 1936 Olympics were dominated by the anti-Semitic character of the host country's regime. However, discussions on this topic were almost non-existent in the sports media in Turkey. A reason for this is the possibility of Republican Turkey viewing itself isolated from a debate on anti-Semitism. For example, a piece in the *Son Posta* newspaper in Turkey on the World Jewish Congress -which was taking place in Geneva simultaneously with the Summer Olympics in Berlin- somehow threateningly contends that the Jewish people in Turkey were distant to the concerns of hostility directed towards them as, "taking part in such a Congress would not even cross the minds of the Jewish people in Turkey".<sup>638</sup> Although the argument that the Jewish community of Turkey is immune from a threat of hostility given the pogrom in the Thrace region in 1934,<sup>639</sup> this piece provides evidence on the dominant mindset on anti-Semitism in Turkey. However, racism still manifested itself in the Turkish delegation that took part in the Summer Olympics in Berlin with Vahap Özaltay, a black footballer, being kept out of the national team because of the colour of his skin.<sup>640</sup> Racial references were also present in the public debate around the Olympics. As mentioned earlier, with the *Türk Tarih Tezi* and the *Güneş-Dil Teorisi*, the Republican regime sought to establish a way of imagining nationhood by promoting the idea that all the nations derived from the ancient Turks and all the languages in the world have originated from the ancient Turkish. The 1930s were the peak of the promotion of these theories. For instance, the Third Language Convention where the Sun-Language Theory was the prime topic on the agenda was scheduled to begin in late August, shortly after the end of the Summer Olympics<sup>641</sup> (it

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<sup>638</sup> Ömer Rıza Doğrul, "Yahudilerin Şikayeti", *Son Posta*, 16 Ağustos 1936, p. 3.

<sup>639</sup> Bali, Rifat (2012), *1934 Trakya Olayları*, İstanbul: Libra.

<sup>640</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 05 August 1936, p. 6.

<sup>641</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 26 August 1936, p. 1.

should be noted that this juxtaposition does not imply a correlation or a causation). This ideology reflected in the Olympic journey of Turkey in 1936 through racial references of success. Apart from the references that were mentioned earlier -which highlighted the superiority of the Turkish race through the competitions of the Turkish athletes- it is possible to trace references to the Turkish History Thesis. For instance, a piece in *Cumhuriyet* argues that the reason Hungarian and Finnish athletes fared so well in the Olympics was that they belonged to the *Turanî* (Turkic) race.<sup>642</sup> Abidin Daver, the writer of the piece, holds that:

Both nations rest a great significance to sports and train regularly, but are French, Japanese, and English nations, which are incomparably larger than these nations in terms of population less sportive than the Hungarians and the Finnish? Of course not; perhaps they excel in that field as well... In that case, the might that put Hungary and Finland above great nations cannot be traced down in their population, the excellence of their sporting organizations, and the wealth of their countries. In my opinion, what took them to first place in the field of contest is the *Turanî* blood running in their veins.

Daver later goes on to argue that since the Turkish people have the same blood in their veins, a similar success in the years to come is inevitable. Although this piece does not represent the official view directly, it does so indirectly as *Cumhuriyet* has close ties with the regime; it is a very clear demonstration of the mentality of the era. All in all, the 1936 Summer Olympics directly reflected the political atmosphere of its time, and the Nazi regime's propaganda tool overlapped with the nation formation process in Turkey, bringing it to a novel dimension. Earlier aspects of nation formation in Turkey became intertwined with the racist zeitgeist of the era, and this merger became influential in shaping the characteristics of the nationalist ideology of the Republican regime in the 1930s. This influenced the public debates revolving around the Olympics thoroughly. However, the Second World War led to a twelve-year-hiatus in the Olympic calendar which made it impossible to trace how Turkey's policies towards international sports in terms of nation formation followed through. The following section includes a discussion on how the nation formation process was

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<sup>642</sup> Abidin Daver, "Sporcu Millet Kanı", *Cumhuriyet*, 19 August 1936, p. 3.



transformed in the post-Second World War, in the context of the 1948 Summer Olympics.

#### **6.6. Turkey at the 1948 Olympics: Sports in Post-War World**

Olympic Games in 1940 were due to be held in Japan with Sapporo to host the Winter Olympics and Tokyo to organize Winter Olympics. Even before the commencement of the Second World War, there was opposition to Japan hosting the Olympics due to its regional aggressions, which led to the invasion of China in 1937 and sparked the Second Sino-Japanese War. As the pressure from the international society mounted, Japan decided that holding the Olympics would be too costly and dropped the Games in the summer of 1938. The IOC then moved the Summer Games to Helsinki and the Winter Games to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, proving that it had no problem whatsoever with the Olympics being held under the Nazi regime in 1936. When the Soviet Union invaded Finland in 1939, the possibility of holding the Summer Olympics in Helsinki was effectively rendered void, and when in response, Germany withdrew its invitation for the Winter Olympics, it became evident that the 1940 Olympics would not be staged.<sup>643</sup> With the death of Henri Baillet-Latour in 1942, Sigfrid Edström of Sweden assumed the office of the president of the IOC, which he would hold until 1952, with Avery Brundage as -initially Second, then First- Vice President, owing to his efforts of staging the 1936 Olympics. While the 1944 Olympics were awarded to London, they could not be held due to the war. What marked the years during the Second World War was the Hitler regime's proposition of making Germany the constant home of the Olympics with a giant Olympic stadium named "*Deutsches Stadion*" in Nürnberg.<sup>644</sup> When the war was over -and the Deusches Stadion was never built- the IOC convened in 1946 to determine the host of the next Olympics, along with other points of interest, and the Winter Olympics were awarded to St. Moritz,

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<sup>643</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, pp. 73 – 74.

<sup>644</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, p. 75.

Switzerland, whereas London was set to host the Summer Olympics it did not have the chance to in 1944.

The IOC ruled to extend invitations to Germany and Italy for the Olympics, as well as keeping its German members who had been involved with the Nazi regime. One significant event that marked the period prior to the Winter Olympics was the inclusion of the American Hockey Association, an ice hockey body formed by a group of athletes expelled from the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States on the grounds of professionalism. Despite the protest from the *Ligue Internationale de Hockey sur Glace* -which went as far as threatening to withdraw from the Olympic tournament- and Avery Brundage, they were admitted to the Winter Olympics with the efforts of Swiss officials.<sup>645</sup> This is significant for giving a glimpse of the post-war liberal order that was set to dominate the Europe of the Western bloc.

Turkey did not enter the Second World War until the very last days; only when entering would earn it a seat at the founders' table of the United Nations. In the words of Oran, instead of engaging in relations with the belligerent countries during the war, Turkey built a relationship with the war itself, which means adjusting both domestic and foreign politics according to the day-to-day conditions of the war.<sup>646</sup> This proved effective in keeping Turkey out of the war, even though the atrocities against Jewish people taking place in Europe seeped through via the Wealth Tax imposed on non-Muslim communities, as mentioned earlier. However, this pushed Turkey into a diplomatic solitude in the aftermath of the war. During this period, Turkey sought to integrate with the capitalist camp of the emerging Cold War, which influenced all political, economic, and social aspects, leading to a divergence from the relative autonomy in the foreign policy in the earlier years of the Republic.<sup>647</sup> The biggest political impact of this transformation became the transition to democratic order with

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<sup>645</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, pp. 80 – 81.

<sup>646</sup> Oran, Baskın (2001), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşı'ndan Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar – Cilt I (1919-1980)*, p. 398.

<sup>647</sup> Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası – Cilt I*, p. 498.

a lasting multi-party system. This was a promise of President İsmet İnönü, in the aftermath of the Second World War, as part of Turkey's attempts of attachment to the Western alliance.<sup>648</sup> This resulted in the formation of the Democrat Party in 1946 by a group of breakaways from the RPP, which would eventually come to power in 1950.

Sports, inevitably, was not immune from this new era. As discussed earlier, sporting contacts in this period served as a membership ID card at the international level.<sup>649</sup> These sporting contacts were of such high importance that in 1947, the İstanbul Cup final was not played as *Beşiktaş* and *Fenerbahçe*, both sides of the final, opted for playing with the Hungarian team MTK Budapest which was touring in the city.<sup>650</sup> Moreover, these were the years when professionalism began to sneak into the realm of sports undercover, which gives another sense of the economically liberalizing inclinations of the era.<sup>651</sup> The governing body of sports had changed earlier, before the Second World War, as in 1938 the TSI was replaced by the *Beden Terbiyesi Genel Müdürlüğü* (Directorate General of Physical Education, DGPE), and the Olympic campaigns began to be regulated under the supervision of this institution.

Switzerland did not face the destruction of the Second World War like the rest of the Europe, and St. Moritz became the host of the 1948 Winter Olympics. Relatedly, the participant athletes mostly came from countries that were unscarred by the war.<sup>652</sup> Turkey was one of them. After the 1936 Winter Olympics, Turkey began to attribute more importance to winter sports, associating them with the military and defence. As

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<sup>648</sup> Hale, William (2000), *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, Third Edition, London & New York: Routledge, p. 79.

<sup>649</sup> Irak, *From Battlefields to Football Fields*, p. 159.

<sup>650</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 57.

<sup>651</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, p. 52.

<sup>652</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, p. 81.

the Interior minister Şükrü Kaya argued during the hearings on the formation of the DGPE in the parliament:

We are surrounded by mountains (...) turning our backs to mountains is not right for the Turkish nation. Mountaineering, skiing, swimming, and sailing are branches of sports that we need to deal with. That is what national defence requires. It is not difficult to predict and designate that the wars in the future will be winter battles. Whoever is better equipped for winter will win the battle and protect themselves in that regard.<sup>653</sup>

In this sense, Turkey took part in the 1948 Winter Olympics in St. Moritz with four athletes who took part in the Alpine Skiing events.<sup>654</sup> In fact, the TOC was rather hesitant to send athletes to St. Moritz as the memories of the criticism in the foreign press during the 1936 Winter Olympics were still haunting the administrators of the winter sports in Turkey.<sup>655</sup> In the official magazine of the *Halkevleri*, named *Ülkü*, it was argued that taking part in the 1936 Winter Olympics was an “imprudence”.<sup>656</sup> However, hopes were still relatively higher in this Winter Olympics.<sup>657</sup> The head of the DGPE even claimed that “it is possible [for the ski racers] to obtain places on the podium” and that “it is impossible that they [the ski racers] will be humiliated”.<sup>658</sup> Although none of the athletes from Turkey managed to win medals, they finished among the first 100 athletes in downhill and slalom races.<sup>659</sup> This was met with

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<sup>653</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: 5, Cilt: 26, İçtima: 23, 29 June 1938, p. 485.

<sup>654</sup> “Turkey at the 1948 Winter Olympics”, Olympedia, available on <https://www.olympedia.org/countries/TUR/editions/33>, accessed on 25 June 2021.

<sup>655</sup> *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 13 October 1947, No: 472, pp. 2, 7.

<sup>656</sup> *Ülkü*, February 1948, Vol: 2, No: 14, p. 44.

<sup>657</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 01 February 1948, p. 1.

<sup>658</sup> *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 22 December 1947, No: 482, p. 3.

<sup>659</sup> TMOK (2018), *Kış Olimpiyatları Tarihimize Kısa Bir Bakış*, İstanbul: TMOK Yayınları.

positive sentiments in Turkey.<sup>660</sup> This attitude was largely a result of the comparative success of the athletes as opposed to those who took part in the 1936 Games.<sup>661</sup> In *Ülkü*, the Olympic journey to St. Moritz was hailed as a way of introducing Turkey to the world, a mentality that seems like a result of this being only the second Winter Games that Turkey took part in:

(...) We had the opportunity to demonstrate our existence and compatibility with every positive development in the world. Perhaps, we gave those who consider getting to know us a burden a chance to correctly introduce the Turk as opposed to misinformation and hearsay. (...) This was also a way of introducing the geography of our country; hence, the benefits are incalculable.<sup>662</sup>

The statement of “They [the athletes] did not get on the medal podium, but they were not humiliated after all” in the same article provides an insight to the general understanding of the athlete performances in the Games. The complaints on the seeding system and the critical press coverage abroad are also present in the piece and they give a glimpse of the continuity of the contentious relationship of early Republican Turkey with the West. In this sense the second Winter Olympics that Turkey took part in carries similarities to the nationalist aspirations of the first Summer Olympics in the history of Republican Turkey. Following the end of the Winter Olympics in St. Moritz, preparations for the Summer Olympics in London gained pace.

The two pressing issues of the time, professionalism and establishing international sporting contacts, were at the top of the agenda of Turkey’s Olympic campaign in 1948. As previously discussed, amateurism was mostly advocated by the upper classes that viewed professionalism as a way for lower classes to dethrone them in their ruling position in the governing of sports. In this line of argument, the case for amateurism is put forward by attributing aristocratic values to sports and arguing that professionalism reduces the activities to their exchange value. This can also be traced

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<sup>660</sup> *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 16 February 1948, No: 490, p. 2.

<sup>661</sup> Haluk San, “Basketbol takımımızı Londra olimpiyadına mutlaka göndermeliyiz”, *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 09 February 1948, No: 489, pp. 2, 7.

<sup>662</sup> *Ülkü*, March 1948, Vol: 2, No: 15, p. 40.

in the post-Second World War sporting environment in Turkey, with the older actors of the sports movement directing heavy criticism towards the athletes who were inclined to turn professional. Such criticisms surface this very tendency in the public debates in the run up to the 1948 Summer Olympics. In the sports magazine *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, for instance, Ömer Besim Koşalay draws a parallelism between the inclination towards professionalism and the irregularization and disorder of practices and training.<sup>663</sup> Through tracing such discontent among the sporting elite, it is possible to observe the impact of the rising inclination towards professionalism in Turkey in the context of the increasingly capitalist order of the post-War world.

Another trend that left its mark on Turkey's preparations for the 1948 Summer Olympics was the international sporting contacts. As mentioned earlier, Turkey ramped up international sporting contacts after the Second World War as part of an effort to politically integrate with the capitalist bloc of the Cold War schism. In the parliamentary debates related to the budget to be allocated to the DGPE for the Olympics, it is underlined that most of the participant countries were members of the United Nations -formation of which became very influential in determining Turkey's foreign policy in the final years of the war- which made it more important to "hoist the Turkish flag in its honourable place".<sup>664</sup> Preparation for the Olympics increased the relevance of competing against foreign teams with the objective of obtaining international experience. Different branches of sports expressed willingness to compete against foreign teams and athletes as part of their training for the Olympics. For example, Ömer Besim Koşalay cites a fencer who argues that the sport needs foreign competitions rather than foreign trainers.<sup>665</sup> In football, M. Ali Oral argued that there should only be external contacts as domestic selection competitions would be a waste of time.<sup>666</sup> This demonstrates a clear divergence from the 1936 mentality

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<sup>663</sup> Ömer Besim, "Zor Günler", *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 29 September 1947, No: 470, p. 2.

<sup>664</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Dönem: 8, Cilt: 12, Birleşim: 2, p. 1693.

<sup>665</sup> Ömer Besim, "Olempiyat umumi katıplığıne", *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 05 April 1948, No: 497, p. 2.

<sup>666</sup> M. Ali Oral, "İçeride temas yok!", *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 29 March 1948, No: 496, pp. 3, 7.

that was largely feeding on the footballing defeats of 1928, which demonstrates how the international order in the aftermath of the Second World War trickles down to other areas such as sports. Moreover, there were increased calls for hiring international coaches for the preparations.<sup>667</sup> These international encounters often lead to questioning about national sentiments as well. This is clearly observable when a British football coach who was brought in to oversee the training of the national team for the Olympics shared his rather pejorative observations. When they were met with pushback from the administrators of football, Rasim Adasal of *Kırmızı-Beyaz* penned the following in order to quell the dispute:

We will demonstrate our footballing skills in the homeland of the man who criticise us and in front of hundreds of thousands of spectators who will see us through the same lenses as him. We should demonstrate our real might and superiority to this hard-appreciating man through serious training, national sacrifice, and humility, and send a national armada to the Olympics by tolerating the criticism of this foreigner as local ideas and counsels are hardly ever taken into account here.<sup>668</sup>

This clearly depicts the mindset of the era that diverges from the more nationalist overtone of early Republican Turkey until the 1936 Olympics. This is mostly tied to the international political atmosphere that does not condone nationalist sentiments to the extent that it did before the war. Moreover, the liberal order of Western Europe and North America that Turkey wished to align with required enhanced international cooperation in order to integrate with the capitalist economic system, which also carries the possibility of deflating the tone in the sports circles of Turkey in the face of international encounters. However, this does not mean that nationalist sentiments and overtones were completely absent from the public discourse in the run up to the 1948 Summer Olympics. The previous understanding of “participating and learning” largely ceased to exist in 1948.<sup>669</sup> Burhan Felek’s

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<sup>667</sup> Kerim Kerimkol, “Futbolumuz Olimpiyadda Ne Yapabilir?”, *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 27 October 1947, No: 474, pp. 3, 8.

<sup>668</sup> Rasim Adasal, “Hoşlanmadığımız tenkid”, *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 02 February 1948, No: 488, p. 2, 7.

<sup>669</sup> Ömer Besim, “Zor Günler”, *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 29 September 1947, No: 470, p. 2.

argument likening Turkey's Olympic campaign to warfare can be an example to this. He contends that the Olympic journey of the Republican Turkey is "a struggle waged in the name of Turkishness" and that the athletes are going to "a fight in the name of the Turkish people".<sup>670</sup> Moreover, he declares aiming to silence the criticism in the Turkish press towards the athletes from Turkey by claiming that "there can be no criticism during wartime".<sup>671</sup> In this sense, if anything, the increased level of international sporting contacts and the ensuing results raised the expectations from the Olympic delegation of Turkey.<sup>672</sup> For instance, Egypt's decline of a friendly football match was speculated in the press as stemming from the fear of a *revanche* of the match in the 1928 Olympics, due to the improved performance of the Turkish national team.<sup>673</sup> References to the ethnic roots of nationality through wrestling and equestrian were also inevitably present in the public discourse revolving around the preparations for the 1948 Summer Olympics.<sup>674</sup> These were the circumstances with which the Olympic delegation of Turkey set sail for London.

Turkey took part in the 1948 Summer Olympics with 57 athletes.<sup>675</sup> Üner Teoman, a sprinter who participated in the women's 100m race became the third woman athlete to represent Turkey in the Olympics.<sup>676</sup> The media coverage of Üner Teoman was relatively higher compared to when Halet Çambel and Suat Fetgeri

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<sup>670</sup> Burhan Felek, "Gaziler Yolu", *Cumhuriyet*, 26 July 1948, p. 3.

<sup>671</sup> Burhan Felek, "Gelelim Manol efendiye", *Cumhuriyet*, 13 August 1948, p. 2.

<sup>672</sup> *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 16 February 1948, No: 481, p. 6.

<sup>673</sup> *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 19 April 1948, No: 499, p. 3.

<sup>674</sup> *Ülkü*, June 1948, Vol: 2, No: 18, p. 37; *Kırmızı-Beyaz*, 17 November 1947, No: 477, p. 2.

<sup>675</sup> "Turkey at the 1948 Summer Olympics", *Olympedia*, available on <https://www.olympedia.org/countries/TUR/editions/12>, accessed on 09 July 2021.

<sup>676</sup> Haluk Durukan & Ömer Besim, "Bizim çocuklarla bir arada", *Cumhuriyet*, 26 July 1948, p. 4.



competed in the 1936 Summer Olympics, with several writers acknowledging her participation. For instance, Burhan Felek contended that the way Üner Teoman walked amongst the delegation from Turkey during the opening ceremony, that is between two military officers -who most probably are due to take part in the equestrian event- reflected the way military is “defending the motherland”.<sup>677</sup> This demonstrates a belated reflection of the perception of women and gender roles with an emphasis on motherhood in the nation building of early Republican Turkey over the Olympic participation. Moreover, *Cumhuriyet* opens up a contest for hiring a writer to cover the Olympics in London in cooperation with the *World Sports* magazine, and Jale Günay, a woman writer won the contest and travelled to London. In one of her pieces, Günay contends that a notable from New Zealand she met during a party asking about the changes for women in Turkey after the changes under the Kemalist rule, and arguing that they could not imagine a Turkish woman “resembling women in other countries” is the happiest moment for her.<sup>678</sup> This way, it could be inferred that the Olympics became a way of propagating a new image of the recently established nation-state and, as demonstrated earlier, women held an integral part in this.

The football team eventually obtained the long-awaited victory by scoring four goals against China<sup>679</sup> before losing to Yugoslavia in the quarterfinals. The quarterfinal match was marred by a brawl on the pitch initiated by Turkish footballers, which led to expressions of disappointment in the press on the grounds that it harmed a hard-earned national image.<sup>680</sup> Moreover, it was regarded as a nationalist outburst by the non-Turkish press. For example, *L'Équipe* of France contended that “It is a shame that most of the nations that engage in the Olympic tournament are not sportive enough

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<sup>677</sup> Burhan Felek, “Tatlı bir sefalet”, *Cumhuriyet*, 07 August 1948, p. 2.

<sup>678</sup> “Jale Günayın Londradan yolladığı ilk mektub”, *Cumhuriyet*, 29 July 1948, p. 3.

<sup>679</sup> *Akşam*, 03 August 1948, p. 1.

<sup>680</sup> Burhan Felek, “Yugoslav maçı ve Greko-Romen ikinciliği”, *Cumhuriyet*, 11 August 1948, p. 2.

to avoid turning a football match into a nationalist manifestation”.<sup>681</sup> This is a clear demonstration of the disdain held towards nationalism in Europe in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second World War.

The biggest impact on the competitions; however, were made by the wrestlers on the part of Turkey. The wrestling team recorded eleven of the twelve total medals won by Turkey, and six of which were gold medals. This led to jubilation in the press, with a celebratory piece in *Akşam* hailing the gold medallists through heavy references to ethnic roots and arguing that these successes are not surprising due to the difficulties that the Turks faced throughout the ages and that these victories would “raise the confidence to our nation and race”.<sup>682</sup> Playing of the national anthem and hoisting of the flag at the medal ceremonies were once again recurring themes.<sup>683</sup> The medals obtained by the wrestling team in the 1948 Summer Olympics was the biggest sporting achievement of early Republican Turkey and it played out as a way of displaying nationalist sentiments. The news pieces often cited their impact on uplifting Turkey’s national image, as Şazi Tezcan in *Akşam*, contended that “the propaganda that a handful of Turkish youth obtained in our nation’s favour” was bigger than the expenses made for the promotion of the country internationally.<sup>684</sup> The other medal was a bronze from Ruhi Sarialp in the triple jump event, which became Turkey’s first ever Olympic medal in athletics.<sup>685</sup> Ironically, the race was held simultaneously with Turkey’s football match against China, and no journalist from Turkey was present to see Sarialp win the bronze.<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> *L’Équipe*, 06 August 1948, p. 3.

<sup>682</sup> *Akşam*, 03 August, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>683</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 04 August 1948, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>684</sup> Şazi Tezcan, “Güreşçilerimizin zaferi karşısında vazifelerimiz”, *Akşam*, 07 August 1948, p. 6.

<sup>685</sup> *Türkspor*, 16 August 1948, Vol: 3, No: 68, p. 19.

<sup>686</sup> Atabeyoğlu, Cem (2003b), *Türk Atletizminde İlk ve Tek Adam: Ruhi Sarialp*, İstanbul: TMOK Yayınları, p. 36.

Overall, Winter and Summer Olympics in 1948 were significant for marking Turkey's place in the post-war international order. This was the main objective of taking part in the Olympics, as was the case in most, if not all, sporting contacts at the time. The Summer Olympics in London became the most successful international sporting event that Turkey took part in in the early Republican era, particularly with the medals won by the wrestlers. This led to an outburst of national pride in the public discourse on the Olympics, with remarks like "Turks pinning the shoulders of the world to the ground"<sup>687</sup> or "[the wrestlers] did not need to do much, the name of the Turk was enough to bring them [the opponents] on their knees"<sup>688</sup> became widespread. In this sense, the political atmosphere in the aftermath of the Second World War did not hinder the nationalist aspirations attributed to the Games in the face of success. Moreover, as can be seen through the presence of women on track and in media, the instrumentalization of the Olympics for introducing the newly established nation-state continues through the 1948 Summer Olympics. However, Turkey was undergoing political changes at the time as well, with the introduction of another political party as opposition to the rule of the RPP. This opposition was reflected in the field of the Olympic participation as well, with an MP from the Democrat Party criticizing the government for lacking in national propaganda efforts after the wrestling team of Turkey was not featured in the film records of the 1948 Summer Olympics.<sup>689</sup> Despite the fact that even this opposition was not immune to the nationalist atmosphere surrounding early Republican Turkey, the political atmosphere was entering a phase of transition, which makes the following Olympics that Turkey took part in the subject of analysis through different lenses.

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<sup>687</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 06 August 1948, p. 6.

<sup>688</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 24 August 1948, p. 1.

<sup>689</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Dönem: 8, Cilt: 16, Toplantı: 3, p. 431.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION**

The revival of the ancient Olympics has come to pass as a project of modernity, which made the Games open to heavy influence from the social, political, and economic transformations brought about by the modernity. One of the most significant ones, in this regard, was the emergence of nationalist movements and the nation-states. With the nation-state becoming the primary mode of state organization in Europe at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, national identity became central to the political and social sphere of the time, and the competitive environment of the Olympic Games was not immune from this. The Olympics did not only become a platform where the contentions between countries were transferred to a non-violent milieu, but they also served as a stage where the national identity could be asserted, consolidated, and propagated. The fact that the emergence of the modern Olympics went hand-in-hand with the emergence of nation-states validates the integration of the debates on the emergence of nationalisms. Thus, the main focus is on the role of the Olympic Games in the nation-building process in the early Republican Turkey. Foreign interactions, particularly those with Europe, played an integral role in the nation-formation process of early Republican Turkey. They served to both ends of putting Turkey on the same map with modern nation-states, as well as consolidating the newly-forming national identity domestically. Sports, due to its competitive and increasingly international character, held a key place in this policy. In other words, Turkey used international sporting contacts to both propagate the image of the newly-established Republic and boost national pride to the perceived national group. Therefore, I handled the questions of sports and nation formation in an interconnected manner with a case study of the Olympic Games that Turkey took part in during the early Republican era. In order to discuss these issues, it is important to locate these issues within the framework of nationalism theories.

Different debates focus on different aspects of the emergence of nationalisms. A pertinent dichotomy is whether to analyse nationalism through the lenses of culture or politics. Proponents of the latter contend that the main objectives of nationalist movements are defined within the context of achieving political sovereignty.<sup>690</sup> On the other hand, the advocates of a cultural understanding of nationalism argue that the sense of nationhood is established through the bonds of cultural traits and customary ties.<sup>691</sup> Thus, the appropriate path to take is adopting a combined approach that brings both cultural and political dimensions into account. This means that while the Olympic participation was in itself a political decision in the early years of the Republic of Turkey, it was thoroughly surrounded by cultural overtones, which determined the direction to which the nation-building process headed. In order to get a better grasp of this, it is important to take a brief look at differing views on the emergence of nationalisms.

The debate on the emergence of nationalism tends to focus on the origins at which the sense of nationhood lies. Differing views demonstrate different tracks of nationalism theories. Perennialist nationalism theories, on the one hand, argue that nationhood can be traced throughout the entire history.<sup>692</sup> Primordialist nationalism theories rest the emphasis on bonds such as kinship, ethnic or religious ones, and the proponents of this view argue that nationhood is sustained by the ties that are taken for granted in the social existence.<sup>693</sup> Ethno-symbolism, on the other hand, understands nationhood through pre-existing ethnic ties.<sup>694</sup> The tie among the members of the national group, in this sense, is established through myths and symbols that are derived

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<sup>690</sup> see Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*.

<sup>691</sup> see Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*.

<sup>692</sup> Smith, *Nationalism*, p. 53.

<sup>693</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

<sup>694</sup> Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*.

from the ethnic past. Therefore, according to this view, national identity is built upon references to ancestral ties.

The nationalism theories that are mentioned up to now trace nationhood in the ancestral bonds that can be tracked way down in history. However, modernist nationalism theories seek the origin of nationalism at the political, economic, and social transformations brought by modernity. For Gellner, for instance, the transformation in the field of education is among the chief novelties of modernity that was brought by the political driving force behind nationalism.<sup>695</sup> Because education standardised the skills and training obtained by the wider population, it facilitated rallying the people around a national identity with a doctrination in that direction. For Anderson, the flourishing of the print industry paved the way for a collective imagining of a common identity.<sup>696</sup> In other words, with the print publications being widespread and more available for the general public, it became easier for the members of a perceived national group to feel a sense of collectivity even in the absence of face-to-face contact. In that sense, different transformations identified with modernity provided nationalist politics with tools to establish a sense of nationhood. Within the context of this research, it is useful to call both pathways into account on an occasional basis. Because while the Olympics are a modern construct and the period in question is a modernization era for Turkey, the nationalist politics at the time occasionally resort to ancestral and ethnic roots.

On the question of contemporary Olympic Games as modern constructs, some useful concepts to employ include the invention of tradition.<sup>697</sup> Traditions are inherently tied with a past and inventing traditions, as a modern characteristic of nationalist movements, they help to link the perceived national group to a collective root, as well as to facilitate the imagination of a collectivity. All these discussions

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<sup>695</sup> Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism*, p. 27.

<sup>696</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>697</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric & Ranger, Terence (eds.) (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

demonstrate the significance of ‘shared meanings’, the term that Hall uses to describe culture, for the establishment of the link between culture and national identity.<sup>698</sup> Although the Olympics in themselves are exclusively tied to the Greek national past, the variety of events within the Olympics can help establish such bonds for different countries, a characteristic which Turkey frequently resorts to in the early Republican era. To obtain a better understanding of the different nationalisms intrinsic to the Olympic Games, it is useful to take a closer look at the relationship between sports and national identity.

Sports can be counted as a product of modernity through the reorganization of work, time, and leisure activities. The premodern games that the communities engaged in for pastime turned into sports through the establishment of rules. One of the most important elements that enabled this codification was the industrialization. As the urban areas increasingly received migration which created the working class, the daily hours were arranged according to the changing work relations. This had a direct impact on the nature of the games, which were carried from rural to urban areas. They were codified and temporally as well as spatially limited. The duration of matches was arranged in accordance with the work hours of the worker-athletes who were increasingly taking part in the field of sports, and the spaces of sports were specifically demarcated in the city. Therefore, sports have a direct relation with the modernity, and it has been directly affected from the transformations brought about in the wake of the modernity. The emergence of nationalism was one of them.

Sports, due to the competitive element intrinsic to it, has come to be a significant field of extracting national pride. Bairner contends that a national group can identify itself with a certain branch of sports and then use it to consolidate the national identity.<sup>699</sup> Moreover, sports serve to the ends of “expression of national identity” and “representing the very existence of the nation”.<sup>700</sup> In other words, sports

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<sup>698</sup> Hall, *Representation*, p. 1.

<sup>699</sup> Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*, p. 18.

<sup>700</sup> Bairner, *Sportive Nationalism and Nationalist Politics*.

are instrumentalized for defining the borders of the national identity, both in inclusive and exclusive terms. This means that sports enable nationalist politics to propagate what the perceived national identity entails and what it does not entail. Sports have always been a platform for expressing nationalist outbursts and nationalist movements made use of this aspect of sports extensively. One of the most common faces of sporting nationalism that arises is the emphasis on national identity that is made through sports by the irredentist movements such as those in Catalonia and Taiwan. It is also possible to observe a transformation in such a movement as well, as one can clearly be seen in the case of Ireland. The sports movement in Ireland emerged as a way of advancing the cause for independence in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century; however, it was transformed into the cause for unification with the north of the island following the establishment of the Republic of Ireland. The case of Turkey, on the other hand, represents a different example from these, since the sports were used as a way of nation-building by the state. Although there were nationalist elements intrinsic to sports during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, it was not until after the founding of the Republic that sports were attributed a particular interest in terms of consolidating the national identity, which makes it a relevant subject of study.

The international aspect of sports also facilitates this propagation to be two-way, both towards the domestic population and towards the international community. In terms of international sports, the mega-events such as the Olympics make their presence known in the cities and countries where they are held and for the countries and teams that take part in them. This way, they become inevitable for the expected audience to miss, which makes them suitable to be utilized for the aforementioned political purposes. Michael Skey conceptualizes this as ‘ecstatic nationalism’ which refers to the concretization of nationhood through such events that take place in particular periods of time and hinder the everyday life of their interlocutors.<sup>701</sup> The national images that are displayed and disseminated during these periods facilitate the imagination of nationhood. Although this works better in the analysis of the events where the country of the national group in question is the host, participant nations also instrumentalize such organizations for concretizing the nationhood in the minds of the

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<sup>701</sup> Skey, ‘Carnivals of Surplus Emotion?’.



national group. Therefore, it is possible to validate the analysis of the relationship between nation building in Turkey during the early years of the republic and Olympic participation. Before that, it is important to take a glance at the general framework of national identity formation in Turkey at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The definition of Turkish national identity, as per virtually all national identities, is shaped by the process of determination in relation to Others. In other words, while defining who the members of the perceived national group are and who they are not, it is a common practice to delineate the inclusive and exclusive boundaries vis-à-vis Others. In case of Turkey, perhaps the most significant relationship in this regard was the one with Europe, though a rather contentious one, stuck between envy and resentment. This state of aiming to adopt administrative, economic and social traits of modern Europe while at the same time viewing them as a threat to the nationhood is best defined by the concept of *double-jeu* by Erik Jan Zürcher.<sup>702</sup> Another relationship in this regard was with the Muslim communities such as Kurds or Arabs. One of the foremost reasons for that was associating them with the Ottoman past from which the Republican Turkey was seeking a rupture from in formulating a novel national identity. Ahıska argues that the exclusionary attitudes towards these peoples stem from the will to secede from all components of the national group which are seen unsuitable for the modern national image that is being built.<sup>703</sup>

The nation-building process in Turkey during the early period of the Republic, albeit a modern one with establishing modern state institutions, included references to ancestral roots of ancient Turks to claim the uniqueness of Turkish national identity. References to ethnicity and primordial ties were underlined to put forward claims about the historical roots of Turkish national identity and the centralness of Turkish identity for European civilisation alike. This policy was inspired by the writings of Ziya Gökalp, who advocated that cultures should be integrated into the civilizations

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<sup>702</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 191.

<sup>703</sup> Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*.

by preserving their uniqueness.<sup>704</sup> The nation-building process in Turkey in its formation years was extensively shaped in this direction, with scholarly output such as Sun-Language and Sun-Nation theories claiming that the languages and nations around the world all originated from the Turkish language and the Turkish nation. This way, Turkey sought to earn a place as a modern state by reiterating the transformation it underwent through ethnic references. This requires the analysis of nationalism in Turkey to be an amalgamation of modernist explanations and theories that focus on pre-modern elements of nationalism. International contacts were crucial in asserting this and both putting the newly established nation-state on the European map and consolidating the perceived national group. Sports, in this sense, was a very influential way of propagating this novel national identity; therefore, Turkey made immense use of international sports events and competitions for this aim.

Sports made their way into the Ottoman Empire through trade relations of non-Muslim communities, who began to practice the first organized form of modern sports. As the emergence of nationalist sentiments in these communities went hand-in-hand with the spread of sports, the bureaucratic class of the Empire came to realize the mass-producing importance of sporting activities.<sup>705</sup> While the CUP began developing affiliations with several sports teams to widen its mass support, bureaucrats such as Selim Sırrı emerged as the forerunners of the sporting movement of the late-Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey. As the leagues that teams composed of Muslim footballers began to be established, sporting adversities became more crucial in the nationalist movement. While these teams began engaging modern branches of sports such as football and gymnastics, they also increasingly adopted symbols that carried direct ethnic references.<sup>706</sup> These indicate the sports' journey to being a central component of the nation formation process.

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<sup>704</sup> Berkes, *Sociology in Turkey*.

<sup>705</sup> Irak, *Hükmen Yenik!*, pp. 31 – 32.

<sup>706</sup> Gökaçtı, *Bizim İçin Oyna*, pp. 53 – 54.

In the aftermath of the First World War, the matches and competitions of Turkish teams with the teams of the Allied forces became crucial in rallying support for the Independence War. At the same time, matches of Turkish teams against the teams of Greek and Armenian communities also became spaces of nationalist outburst since these communities were associated with the occupying forces as well.<sup>707</sup> While the sporting competitions went on, primarily in cities like İstanbul and İzmir, they helped build the Turkish national narrative, which was adopted particularly by these teams. Moreover, they sowed the seeds of the role international sporting contacts played for the formation of Turkish national identity.

Physical education and sports were an integral part of the population policy of early Republican Turkey. Akin demonstrates the disciplinary role of physical education in the nation-building process in Turkey.<sup>708</sup> According to this, sport is instrumentalized to establish an effective form of governance over the population that Republican Turkey inherited. This way, Akin effectively shows the role of sports in establishing a centralized state structure and the ways in which the biopolitics is used for surveillance and militarization of the population. Moreover, individual sports like athletics and gymnastics were also encouraged over team sports such as football, as the sports administrations at the time held a certain dislike for the latter because they thought that team sports carried a divisive potential.

Sports were also highly related to the policy towards women during the period in question, while the central perspective on women focused not only on the reproductive roles of women but also adopted sports as an integral part of bodily health; thus, women also took the stage as faces of modern Turkey through international sports. In this sense, the female athletes were sent to international competitions as a way of demonstrating the participation of women in public life in the newly-established state. This political atmosphere paved the way for three women to take part in the Olympics in 1936 and 1948.

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<sup>707</sup> Bora & Erdoğan, "Dur Tarih, Vur Türkiye".

<sup>708</sup> Akin, "Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar".

The transformation of sports administrations at the time also reflected the process of nation-building. While there is a general tendency in the historiography of Turkish sports to characterize the period of the Union of Turkish Sports Clubs (UTSC) as a more liberal era where the state's intervention in sports was rather limited, as Şenyuva and Tunç contend, sports in Turkey have never been immune from politics.<sup>709</sup> In this sense, it is perhaps more accurate to talk about a far stricter control of the state over sports due to the increasingly authoritarian zeitgeist of the 1930s. This became materialized in the establishment of the Turkish Sports Institution (TSI), which reflected the enhanced integration of the Republican People's Party with the state apparatus. This shows that it is possible to trace the nation building policies of the emergent state through sports as the two have been integrally connected.

Conversely, international sports had a different role in the nation building process at the time. As mentioned earlier, the state used international sporting contacts as an indicator of the country's international alignment.<sup>710</sup> Taking part in international sports events was seen as a way of signalling the international alliances that the country wanted to build, as well as an opportunity to showcase the novel nation-state, with its modern transformation. Moreover, the competitive element of sporting encounters was deployed to rally the perceived national group around the national identity, which was taking shape. This thesis analysed this aspect of nation building with a particular focus on the Olympics.

Based on an archival research, this study focuses on how the Olympic participation was instrumentalised during the process of nation formation in Turkey. To that end, I analysed the first Olympic Games that the Republic of Turkey took part in from 1924 to 1948, which correspond to six Summer and Winter Olympics in total. The reason that I chose the 1948 Olympics as the threshold is that the official professionalization of sports in Turkey in 1950 transformed the relations of sports and state, and before this mark, it is easier to trace the integratedness of sports in the nation-building. In 1924, for example, a year after the declaration of the Republic, a special

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<sup>709</sup> Şenyuva & Tunç, Turkey and the Europe of football.

<sup>710</sup> Irak, *From Battlefields to Football Fields*, p. 159.

budget was spared for Olympic participation. This alone is a good indicator of how important international sporting contacts are for introducing the newly established country. The public debate on whether to take part in the Olympics reflected the concern about Turkey's new national image, as well as validated the inseparable relationship between creating a new national identity and international sports. In this sense, both the competitive and manifestative elements of Olympic participation were integrated with the nation building process. While the remnants of the wartime contentions with Greece were also transferred to Olympic competitions, Turkey had also expressed eagerness -which is visible in the public debate surrounding the Olympics- to show the new face of the country. These transformations have been identified to underline the rupture of the novel nation-state from its Ottoman past, as well as to maintain the cultural elements that the Republican elite viewed as their heritage, such as waterpipes and *shalvars*. Moreover, through sports such as equestrian and wrestling, Turkey also utilized the Olympics as a way of integrating references from the ethnic past of the Turks to its modernized national identity. Gradually, the results in the competitions made their way to become a crucial aspect of the national pride derived from the Games, and just as can be seen in 1928, a defeat can lead to a disciplinary hearing under the heavy sentiments of humiliation.

In the 1930s; however, the political atmosphere at the time heavily influenced the meanings attributed to the Olympic participation. The Olympic participation began to be understood increasingly militarist terms while racial overtones dominated the public debate on the Olympics. Turkey took part in the Winter Olympics for the first time in 1936 in Gramisch-Partenkirchen, and the Summer Olympics in Berlin took the central stage in the Nazi regime's international propaganda. As the 1930s marked the rise of authoritarian governments all around the world and the racist thought they heavily influenced the public discourse revolving around the Olympics. In Turkey, the sports administration was transformed, putting the RPP in full control of Olympic participation. The 1936 Summer Olympics also overlapped with the advancement of racial language and history policies in Turkey; therefore, it is possible to see numerous references to the claim of the supremacy of the Turkish race. Moreover, the 1936 Berlin Olympics witnessed the first Olympic medals won by athletes from Turkey, which added to this narrative. The 1936 Summer Olympics was also the first time that

two female athletes were in the Turkish delegation; however, they did not get much attention as their participation largely went unknown.

Winter and Summer Olympics in 1948, on the contrary, were held in a completely different world. After the Second World War, Turkey used international sporting contacts as a way of asserting its alignment with the capitalist bloc. The decisions to send athletes to the Olympic Games held that year were taken with the same motive. When the wrestling team of Turkey fared unexpectedly well in the Summer Olympics in London, it led to an outburst of nationalist aspirations in the press. Links to the practices of ancient Turks were established with the wrestling team while their medals were used to derive national pride. Furthermore, the 1948 London Olympics was also the first time that the participation of women was publicly manifest. Besides Üner Teoman, the sprinter who took part in women's 100m race, there was also a female journalist who covered the Olympics for *Cumhuriyet*. These were also deployed for showcasing the modern nation-state in an international setting. All in all, participation in the Olympics played a crucial role in shaping the sports policies of the state and nation builders of Turkey during the early republican period.

Turkey's participation in the Olympic Games can be analysed in multiple terms, from a gender perspective to anthropological approaches, as well as from diplomatic angles to a political science point of view. In this research, I analysed this phenomenon through the lenses of nationalism theories and the sociology of sport. In this sense, the versatile characteristic of this field holds the possibility to pave the way for different tracks of research on the question of national identity and the Olympic Games.

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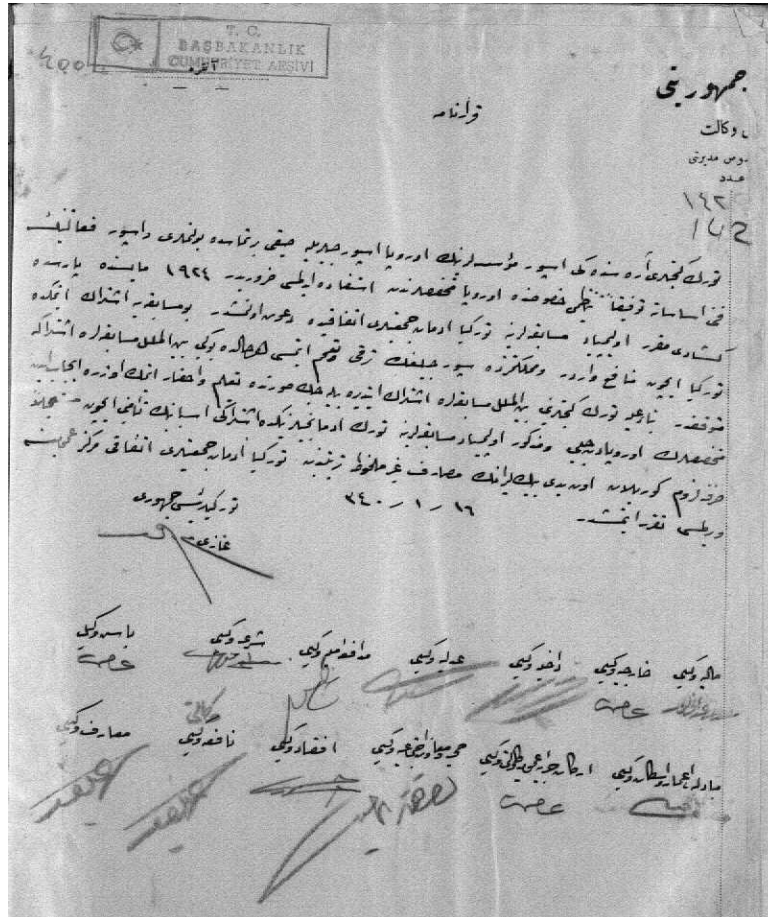
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APPENDICES

A. CABINET DECISION TO ALLOCATE MONEY TO TAKE PART IN THE 1924 SUMMER OLYMPICS



BCA, 30-18-1-1/8-46-5

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Bu çalışma temel olarak erken cumhuriyet döneminde Türkiye’de ulus inşası süreci ile spor arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Spor sosyolojisi alanında sportif etkinliklerin milliyetçi hareketler ve ulusal kimliklerle ilişkisine dair çalışmalar yaygın olmakla birlikte, ilgili yaklaşımlar zaman zaman değişiklik göstermektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’de bahsi geçen periyoda dair spor ve ulusal kimlik alanında yapılan çalışmaların oluşturduğu literatüre, uluslararası spor temaslarının milliyetçilik ve ulus inşasındaki rolüne ilişkin bir araştırma ile katkıda bulunmaktır. Uluslararası spor karşılaşmaları, özellikle erken-modern dönemde, yeni oluşan ulus-devletlerin hem kendilerini dünyada göstermelerine ve tanımlamalarına hem de sporun rekabetçi yapısı sayesinde katılım veya başarı aracılığıyla tahayyül edilen ulusal grubu konsolide etmelerine yardımcı olmuştur. Bu da Olimpiyat Oyunları, Dünya Kupaları gibi organizasyonları önemli araştırma konuları haline getirmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın temel araştırma sorusu erken Cumhuriyet Türkiye’sinin uluslararası spor karşılaşmalarını ve organizasyonlarını ulusal kimlik inşası için nasıl araçsallaştırdığıdır. Bu çalışmada bu soruya yanıt bulmak için Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin 1923-1950 yıllarında katıldığı ilk Olimpiyat Oyunları incelenmiştir. İlgili döneme ait çeşitli arşiv belgeleri ile Türkiye’nin erken 20. yüzyıl Avrupası’nı dikkate alarak diyalojik bir ilişki içerisinde ulusal kimliğin sınırlarını tanımlama şekillerini ortaya çıkarmak amaçlanmıştır. Bu yapılırken, spor sosyolojisinin kavramsal araçları ve farklı milliyetçilik teorilerinin bakış açıları kullanılmıştır. Tez boyunca ilk aşamada milliyetçiliğin ortaya çıkışına ilişkin farklı teorilerin tartışıldığı ve spor sosyolojisinde milliyetçiliğin yerine dair yaklaşımların ele alındığı bir kuramsal çerçeve çizilmiştir. Bunun ardından Türkiye’de ulusal kimliğin inşasına ilişkin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun son döneminden erken Cumhuriyet dönemine kadarki periyodu kapsayan tartışmaların ele alındığı ve aynı dönemde modern sporun ortaya çıkışı ve sportif faaliyetlerin toplumsal ve siyasal hayatın içine dahil edilmesini de içeren bir tarihsel çerçeve oluşturulmuştur. Son olarak ise Türkiye’nin tartışılan dönemde uluslararası spor temaslarının ulusal kimliğin oluşumuna etkisi, katılan ilk 4 Yaz

Olimpiyatı (1924 Paris, 1928 Amsterdam, 1936 Berlin ve 1948) ile 2 Kış Olimpiyatı (1936 Garmisch-Partenkirschen ve 1948 St. Moritz) bağlamında ele alınmıştır.

Milliyetçiliğin ortaya çıkışına ilişkin tartışmalar çok boyutludur ve milliyetçilik çalışmalarının her bir boyutu içinde farklı yaklaşımları barındırır. Ulusal kimlik birbirleriyle çok sınırlı doğrudan teması olan insanları birbirine bağlayan bir kavramdır ve bu nedenle bu bağın tahayyülünün nasıl sağlandığı ve/veya bu tahayyülün nasıl anlaşılması gerektiğine ilişkin farklı görüşler öne sürülmüştür. Bu tartışmalardan bir tanesi, örneğin, milliyetçiliğin siyasal olarak mı kültürel olarak mı anlaşılması gerektiğine ilişkindir. Milliyetçiliğin siyasal olarak anlaşılması gerektiğini savunanlar milliyetçilik ve devlet inşası arasındaki ilişkiye vurgu yaparlar. Buna göre ulusal kimliklerin oluşumundaki temel itici güç, siyasal egemenlik kazanma motivasyonudur. Bu yaklaşımda ulus-devletlerin oluşumuna özel bir önem atfedilir. Öte yandan, milliyetçiliğin kültürel olarak anlaşılması gerektiğini öne sürenler öngörülen ulusal grubun ortak kimliğinin oluşmasında geleneklerin ve kültürel unsurların ön planda olduğunu savunur ve devlet gibi politik egemenlik araçlarının bunlar kadar önemli olmadığını iddia eder. Bu tezdeki yaklaşım, bu iki bakış açısından birini dışlamanın yanlış olduğu ve milliyetçiliğin anlaşılması için hem kültürel analizlerin hem de siyasal analizlerin birlikte işletilmesi gerektiği yönündedir. Buna göre ulusal kimliğin oluşmasındaki politik motivasyonlar, belli başlı kültürel unsurlar tarafından destekleniyor olabilir ya da bir başka deyişle kültürel bağlar ulus-devletlerin oluşumu için araçsallaştırılabilir. Bu nedenle milliyetçiliğin oluşumunda politik ve kültürel unsurları aynı anda ve birbirleriyle ilişki halinde ele almak doğru olacaktır.

Milliyetçilik teorileri disiplinindeki yaygın bir diğer tartışma ise milliyetçiliğin oluşumuna ve kökenlerine ilişkindir. Buradaki yaklaşımların bazıları milliyetçiliğin modernite öncesi kökenlerine vurgu yaparken bazıları ise milliyetçiliği modernleşmenin bir ürünü olarak açıklamaktadır. Milliyetçiliğin kökenlerinin modernite öncesi bağlarla ilişkili olduğunu savunan görüşlerden biri, örneğin, pereniyal teoridir. Bu teori milliyetçiliğe ahistorik bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşır ve milliyetçiliğe çeşitli formlarda tarihin her döneminde rastlanabileceğini savunur. Buna göre antik dönemdeki etnik kandaşlık ilişkileri milliyetçiliğin modernite öncesi bir formu olarak ele alınabilir. Öte yandan ilkçi yaklaşım da kandaşlık, etnik ve dini bağlara referansla milliyetçiliğin modernite öncesi izlerini sürse de ahistorik vurgunun

eksikliğiyle pereniyal yaklaşımdan ayrışır. Etnosembolcü yaklaşım ise önceden var olan etnik bağlara odaklanır ve bu bağların ve grup içerisindeki birlikteliğin kuşaktan kuşağa aktarılan mitler ve semboller aracılığıyla tesis edildiğini savunur. Ele alış biçimleri bakımından farklılaşsalar da bu üç milliyetçilik teorisi de ulusal kimliklerin izini modernite öncesinde ve antik dönemde sürmeleriyle ortaklaşır. Buna karşın, milliyetçilik teorilerinde farkı bazı yaygın açıklamalar ise milliyetçiliğin ve ulusal kimliklerin oluşumu ile modernleşmenin getirdiği dönüşümler arasında bağ kurar.

Modernist milliyetçilik teorilerine göre, milliyetçilik ve ulusal kimlikler 18. yüzyılın sonundan itibaren yaygınlaşmaya başlayan kentleşme, sekülerleşme, kapitalistleşme gibi dönüşümlerle birlikte oluşmaya başlamıştır. Çeşitli teorisyenler modernleşmenin çeşitli özelliklerine atıfla milliyetçiliğin ortaya çıkışını tartışmaktadır. Örneğin bazıları eğitimin standardizasyonu ve yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte benzer becerilere sahip olarak yetişen insanların kendilerini belli bir ulusal grubun üyesi olarak tanımlamasının daha kolay olduğunu öne sürer. Benedict Anderson gibi başkaları ise matbaanın yaygınlaşmasının ve yayıncılığın kilise veya devlet gibi otoritelerin tekellerinden ayrışıp özelleşmesinin kullanılan dilin standardize olmasına yardımcı olduğunu ve bundan ulusal kimliğin tahayyülünü kolaylaştırdığını öne sürer. Buna göre mensuplarının her biri arasında gündelik yüz yüze temasın neredeyse imkânsız olduğu grupların bir kimlik etrafında birleşmesi, bu kimliğin basılı yayınlar gibi araçlar yoluyla tahayyülüyle olabilir. Modernitenin bir ürünü olan spor da ulusal tahayyülü kolaylaştıran faktörler arasında gösterilebilir. Sporun rekabetçi yapısı, karşılaşmaların önemli kısmına içkin ulusal sembolizm ve duygulanımlar ulusal kimliğin tahayyülünü sağlayan etkenler arasındadır. Ancak bunu açıklamak için modernist milliyetçilik teorileri tek başına yeterli olmayacaktır. Bunun için daha çağdaş milliyetçilik teorileri faydalı araçlar olabilir. Örneğin Eric Hobsbawm ve Terence Ranger'ın önerdiği 'geleneğin icadı' kavramı düzenli aralıklarla düzenlenen spor organizasyonlarının milliyetçi hareketler için bir ulusal entegrasyon aracı olarak kullanılabilmesine açıklama getirebilir. Ya da Michael Skey'in 'ekstatik milliyetçilik' kavramı milliyetçi hareketlerin, bu organizasyonların bir çeşit istisna hali yaratarak etraflarında oluşturduğu coşkulu atmosferi nasıl insanları ulusal kimliğin etrafında birleştirmek için kullandığını açıklar. Bunları daha iyi anlayabilmek için spor ve milliyetçilik arasındaki ilişkiye daha yakından bakmakta fayda var.



Sporun bir modernite ürünü olduğuna dair spor sosyologları ve tarihçileri arasında genellikle fikir birliği olsa da modernitenin sporun oluşumundaki etkisine dair farklı görüşler vardır. Bazı teorisyenler sporun modernite ile bağımlı Weber’ci ‘Protestan etik’ kavramı ile açıklarken Bourdieu ise sporun bir aristokrasi habitusu olarak modern eğitimle birlikte okullarda yaygınlaştığından bahseder. Bunlardan birincisi spora içkin istatistik tutma ve skor tutma gibi pratiklerin rasyonelleşme ile ilişkisini kurarken ikincisi spora atfedilen anlamların sınıfsal bir ayrışma pratiği olduğunu öne sürer. Bütün bunlarla birlikte sporun modernitenin getirdiği dönüşümlerle ilişkisi en geniş anlamda sanayileşme ile birlikte köylerden kentlere yoğun göçlerin başlamasıyla modernite öncesinin boş zaman aktivitelerinin, oyunlarının zamansal ve mekânsal olarak sınırlandırılması ve kurallara bağlanmasıyla açıklanabilir. Maçların süreleri yeni oluşmakta olan işçi sınıfının mesai saatlerine göre düzenlenmiş, kentlerin belli bölümleri sportif faaliyetlere ev sahipliği yapacak şekilde düzenlenmiştir. Öte yandan ulus-devletlerin oluşumu da bu dönüşümlerle eş zamanlı meydana geldiği için spor milliyetçi hareketler için de işlevsel bir araç oldu.

Spor ulusal gururun açığa çıkartılması ve yaygınlaştırılması için önemli bir enstrüman olagelmıştır. Spor yoluyla ulusal kimlik inşası birden fazla şekilde gerçekleşebilir. Bunlardan biri beden terbiyesi yoluyla nüfusu disipline etmenin bir yolu olarak bir biyopolitika programı çerçevesinde olabilir. Öte yandan bir ulusal grup adına o grupta özdeşleşecek bir spor dalı belirlenip bunun tarihsel kökenlerine atıfla ulusun tarihselliği vurgulanabilir. Uluslararası spor organizasyonları bağlamında ise bu organizasyonlara katılarak orada kendini gösterme veya başarılar elde ederek bunu ulusal gururu pekiştirme için kullanmak da bunun bir başka yöntemi olabilir. Spor ve milliyetçilik arasındaki ilişkinin yaygın bir başka dışavurumu da uluslararası spor organizasyonlarına ev sahipliği yapmak yoluyla ülkeyi uluslararası bir platformda sahneye koymaktır. Bütün bunlarla birlikte Olimpiyat Oyunları hem birden fazla spor dalında müsabakaların yapıldığı hem de geniş katılımlı bir organizasyon olması dolayısıyla milliyetçiliğin bu farklı dışavurumlarının en iyi izlenebileceği yerlerden biridir.

Modern Olimpiyat Oyunları’nın ortaya çıkışı ulus-devletlerin ortaya çıkışıyla eş zamanlı gerçekleşmiştir. Her ne kadar modern Olimpiyat Oyunları’nın kurucusu Baron Pierre de Coubertin’in hayalindeki Olimpiyat daha aristokratik değerlere

yaslanıyor olsa da Oyunlar hiçbir zaman düzenlendiği dönemin politik atmosferinden azade olmamış ve dünyadaki çeşitli dönüşümlerden etkilenmiştir. Bunun geç-19. ve erken-20. yüzyıldaki yansımaları da yükselmekte olan ulus-devletler tarafından şekillendirilmiştir. Sözelimi 1912'den itibaren atletlerin Olimpiyat Oyunları'na katılmaları için bir Ulusal Olimpiyat Komitesi'ne üye olmaları şart koşulmuştur. Bu da ulus-devletlere Olimpiyat Oyunları'nın işleyişinde merkezi bir önem atfetmiştir. Bu bir yandan İrlanda gibi halklar için Oyunlar'da kendi kimliği ile yer alma hakkından yoksun kalmak anlamına gelse de diğer taraftan da Oyunlar'da yer almak ulus-devlet olmanın önemli bir aşaması olarak görülmeye başlanmıştır. Öte yandan bu çalışma bağlamında Olimpiyat Oyunları, ulusal kimlik oluşumunda bir karşılaşma alanı yaratması nedeniyle önemli bulunmaktadır. Buna göre Olimpiyat Oyunları'ndaki karşılaşmalar ulusal kimliğin tanımlanmasına ve yeniden tanımlanmasına, sınırlarının çizilmesine ve kimi içerip kimi dışladığının belirlenmesini sağlar. Bu açıdan yeni kurulan ulus-devleti uluslararası bir sahnede göstermek ve içe dönük olarak da öngörülen ulusal grubu konsolide etmek için Türkiye'nin cumhuriyetin ilanından sonra Olimpiyat Oyunları'na atfettiği önem kayda değer bir araştırma konusu teşkil etmektedir. Bunun için Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son yıllarından erken cumhuriyet dönemine ulusal kimliğin oluşumuna ilişkin çalışmalara göz atmakta fayda var.

Türkiye'de Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son dönemlerinden itibaren milliyetçiliğin oluşmasındaki en önemli faktörlerden biri Avrupa ile karşılaşmalardır. 18. yüzyılın sonlarında ve 19. yüzyılın başlarında, imparatorluğun gerilemesi devam ederken bir yandan da Müslüman olmayan halklar Avrupa'daki politik gelişmelerin de etkisiyle milliyetçilik ideolojisiyle tanışıyor ve uluslaşma süreçlerini başlatıyordu. Öte yandan imparatorluğun askeri-bürokratik sınıfı da Batı'ya imparatorluğun gerilemesi karşısında bir model olarak bakmaya başlamışlardı. Bu dönemde Avrupa ülkelerine giden askerler ve bürokratlar oradaki siyasal düşüncelerle imparatorluğun gerilemesine karşı çeşitli çözüm fikirleri geliştirmeye başladılar. Bunlar arasında denenen Osmanlıcılık ve İslamcılık yerlerini Türkçülüğe bıraktı ve milliyetçilik gittikçe yönetici sınıfın hakim ideolojisi olmaya başladı. Bunda İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin dönüşümünün ve iktidardaki rolünün büyük önemi vardı.

İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin belkemiğini, Avrupa'da bulunmuş askeri-bürokratik sınıf oluşturuyordu ve oradayken kurdukları Jön Türkler hareketi

Cemiyet'in öncülü durumundaydı, bu nedenle İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti bahsi geçen ideolojik dönüşümlerin merkezinde yer alıyordu. Osmanlıcılığın baskın olduğu bir dönem Ermeni partileriyle ittifak yapan İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, Osmanlıcılığı terk etti ve Müslüman halkları ortak bir kimlik etrafında birleştirmeyi hedefleyen yeni bir ideolojiyi benimsedi. Balkan Savaşları ile bağımsızlıklarını kazanan ülkelerin ulus-devletler kurması ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Orta Doğu'daki ayaklanmalar ve Arap halklarının da kademeli olarak Osmanlı'dan ayrılmalarıyla birlikte Türk milliyetçiliği gittikçe daha da baskın bir ideolojiye dönüştü ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin bir ulus-devlet olarak kuruluşunda da ulusal kimlik inşası sürecini şekillendirdi.

Cumhuriyetin erken dönemlerinde ulusal kimliğin tahayyülünde Avrupa'da oluşan ulus-devletlerin model alınmasının büyük etkisi olmuştur. Uluslaşma sürecinin Avrupa'ya kıyasla nispeten daha sonra başladığı Türkiye, bir geç kalmışlık hissi içerisinde ulusal kimlik inşası sürecini ilerletti. Burada Ziya Gökalp'in yazdıkları da bu sürecin düşünsel altyapısı için önemli olmuştur. Gökalp'in 'medeniyet' ve 'kültür' kavramları arasında kurduğu ilişki ile kültürlerin daha geniş medeniyetler içinde kendi özgüllükleriyle var olması gerektiği savunusu Türkiye'nin erken dönem milliyetçi düşüncesini oldukça etkilemiştir. Bir yandan bu geç kalmışlık hissi içerisinde Türkiye, ulusal kimliğin inşasında bir yandan yeni kurulan ulus-devleti modern Batı haritasına yerleştirmeyi amaçlarken bir yandan da oluşturmak istediği ulusal kimliğin özgüllüğüne vurgu yapmak istiyordu. Bunu da bir yandan modernitenin unsurlarıyla entegre olmaya çaba göstererek, diğer yandan da bu unsurların Türklerin tarihiyle etnik bağlarını kurarak yapıyordu. Bu anlamda Türkiye ve Avrupa arasında o dönemki ilişkinin hem özenme hem de bundan bir tehdit hissetme şeklinde aynı anda iki ayrı yüzü olduğu söylenebilir. Bunun örnekleri mimariden dansa çeşitli alanlarda görülebiliyordu. En önemli akademik örnekler ise sırasıyla bütün dillerin ve bütün milletlerin Türk dilinden ve Türk milletinden türediğini öne süren Güneş-Dil ve Güneş-Millet teorileriydi. Buna göre Batı medeniyetinin kökenini Türkler oluşturuyordu. Bunu doğrulayacak çok az kanıt olsa da bunların ciddi bir şekilde tartışılması ve yönetim tarafından benimsenmesi dönemin ulus inşasına ilişkin fikir vermektedir. Buna göre Avrupa karşısındaki geç kalmışlık, halihazırda orada olma iddiasıyla telafi ediliyordu. Erken cumhuriyet döneminde ulusal kimliğin oluşumunda belirleyici bir başka özellik de bu kimliğin sınırlarının belirlenmesi ile ilgiliydi. Ulusal

kimliğin oluşturulurken bunun kapsadığı kimselerin kim olduğu kadar kim olmadığının da tanımlanması gerekiyordu ve bu nedenle ulusal kimlik belirlenen Ötekiler ile diyalojik bir ilişki içerisinde oluşturuluyordu. Bu çeşitli şekillerde oluşturuluyordu, örneğin Yunanistan ile savaş zamanından kalma çekişmeler ülkeyi bu Ötekilerden biri yapıyordu. Öte yandan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde sayıları zaten geçmişe kıyasla az kalmış olan Müslüman olmayan halklar da bunlar arasındaydı. Ülkedeki Kürtler ve Araplar gibi Türk olmayan Müslüman halklar da imparatorluk geçmişiyle bağını koparmak isteyen cumhuriyet için geçmişi temsil ediyordu ve bu nedenle Ötekiler arasında yer alıyorlardı. Bu nedenle erken cumhuriyet döneminin ulus inşasının bu özellikleri dönemin toplumsal, kültürel, politik ve ekonomik unsurlarını da etkiliyordu. Spor da bunlardan biriydi.

Spor, Osmanlı'ya liman kentlerinden geldi. Modern sporun Avrupa'da yaygınlaşmasının ardından özellikle pek çok sporun ilk yapılmaya başladığı yer olan Britanya ile ticaret ilişkileri bulunan liman kentleri futbol, ragbi gibi sporlarla ilk tanışan yerler oldu. Bu ticaret ilişkilerini yürüten Rum, Ermeni ve Yahudi halkları Anadolu'da bu sporları yapan ilk insanlar oldular. Hatta sporlar bu halkların uluslaşma süreçlerinde de kilit rol oynadı, öyle ki, örneğin İzmir'de 19. yüzyılın sonunda Yunan atletleri bir araya getiren Panionios Oyunlar isminde Olimpiyat benzeri bir organizasyon yapılıyordu. Açılış töreni yürüyüşü gibi ritüellerle birlikte bu oyunlar Yunan ulusal tahayyülü için önemli bir unsur olmuştu. Bununla birlikte Müslümanların spor aktivitelerine katılımı II. Abdülhamit'in istibdat rejimi altında kitleliliği teşvik edecek aktivitelerin yasaklanması veya sıkı gözetim altında tutulması nedeniyle sınırlı olsa da 20. yüzyılın başından itibaren takımlar kurulmaya ve ligde yer almaya başlamışlardı. Bu esnada spor askeri-bürokratik sınıfın da ilgisini çekmeye başlamıştı. Öyle ki İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti de çeşitli zamanlarda çeşitli takımlara doğrudan veya dolaylı destekler vererek siyasi destek arayışında bulunuyordu. Bu esnada Osmanlı sporundaki en önemli figürlerden biri de Selim Sırrı'ydı.

Selim Sırrı Bey, İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin önde gelen isimlerindendi. Öncesinde Avrupa'daki Jön Türkler ile yazışarak harekete angaje olan Selim Sırrı, bir yandan da Avrupa'daki spor hareketiyle tanışmış ve beden terbiyesi ekollerini öğrenmeye başlamıştı. 1908'den sonra İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ile mesafelenerek

İsveç'e yerleşen Selim Sırrı, burada hem İsveç jimnastiği ile tanıştı hem de Uluslararası Olimpiyat Komitesi ile ilişkiler geliştirerek sporla iç içe olmaya başladı. Cumhuriyet'in kurulmasının ardından da yine yönetici sınıfın içerisinde yer alan Selim Sırrı, sadece beden terbiyesi programlarını hazırlamakla kalmadı, 19 Mayıs kutlamaları gibi geleneklerin icadında da kilit rol oynadı. Bu nedenle Selim Sırrı erken cumhuriyet döneminde ulus-inşasının sporla ilişkisinde merkezi öneme sahiptir. Bir yandan modern sporu ve beden eğitimi Türkiye'ye getirip adapte ederken diğer yandan ise folklor dansı geliştirmek gibi çalışmalarla Türkiye'ye özgü bir spor ve beden terbiyesi programı ortaya çıkarmaya çalışıyordu. Ancak Selim Sırrı'nın spordaki en önemli rolü Olimpiyat Oyunları çerçevesinde oldu. Bundan önce cumhuriyetin ilan öncesi ve sonrasında sporun durumuna bakmakta fayda var.

Özellikle Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası dönemde Müttefik Kuvvetler'in takımlarıyla özellikle İstanbul ve İzmir'deki Türk takımlarının yaptıkları maçlar milliyetçi hislerin ortaya çıkmasında önemli rol üstlendi. Öyle ki hem Rum takımlarıyla hem de Müttefik Kuvvetler'in takımlarıyla Türk takımları arasındaki maçlar bir ölçüde sağladıkları kitlesellikle özellikle Kurtuluş Savaşı koşullarında milliyetçi dışavurumlara ortam hazırlıyordu. Cumhuriyetin ilanından sonra ise modern sporu yöneten kurumlar daha da önem kazanmaya başladı.

1922'de kurulan Türkiye İdman Cemiyetleri İttifakı cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında sporu yöneten başlıca kurumdu. Bu dönemde uluslararası spor temasları yeni kurulan devleti haritaya yerleştirmek açısından önemliydi. Türkiyeli spor tarihçileri arasında bu dönemde sporun devlet etkisinden daha bağımsız olduğuna dair yaygın bir görüş olsa da son yıllarda yapılan çalışmalar Türkiye'de sporun siyasetin doğrudan etkisinden hiçbir zaman bağımsız olmadığını daha da net bir şekilde göstermiştir. Öte yandan bunun en açık göstergesi 1936'da Türk Spor Kurumu'nun kurulmasıdır. Avrupa'da yükselen otoriter rejimlerle eşzamanlı olarak Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi ve devlet organlarının iyice birleştiği bir döneme denk gelen bu gelişmeyle birlikte Türkiye'deki spor hareketinin özerkliğe açılan kapılar iyiden iyiye kapandı. Aynı esnada bütün sporcular da Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi üyesi oldu ve bu durum perçinlendi. İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası ise dönemin liberal atmosferi Türkiye sporunda egemendi. Türkiye uluslararası spor temasları aracılığıyla Batı Bloku'ndaki yerini perçinlemek istiyordu. Öte yandan gittikçe artan sporda profesyonelleşme de

ciddi bir tartışma konusu oluyordu. Bütün bunlar esnasında uluslararası spor, Türkiye'deki spor gündeminin başlarında yer alıyordu. Bu nedenle bu çalışmanın konusu olan Olimpiyat Oyunları'na katılım buna dair önemli bir araştırma konusu oluşturuyor.

Bu araştırmada arşiv belgelerinden yararlanarak Türkiye'nin katıldığı ilk Olimpiyat Oyunları'nın ulus-inşası sürecinde nasıl araçsallaştırıldığı sorusuna yanıt aradım. Bunu yaparken 1923-1950 yıllarında Türkiye'nin katıldığı Olimpiyat Oyunları'nı baz aldım. Bu periyodlandırmanın sebebi 1950'de Türkiye'de sporda profesyonelliğin resmen tanınmasından dolayı devlet etkisinin nispeten daha azalmasıdır. Osmanlı adına bir atlet ilk kez 1908'de Londra'daki Olimpiyat Oyunları'na katılsa da bu bireysel bir katılımıdır. Osmanlı döneminde kamusal tartışmanın konusu olan ilk Olimpiyat macerası 1912'de iki Ermeni atlet, Vahram Papazyan ve Mıgırdiç Mıgıryan'ın Stockholm'e yaptığı seyahattir. Ancak Selim Sırrı'nın daha sonra 1912 Stockholm Olimpiyatı hakkında yazarken Papazyan ve Mıgıryan'dan bahsetmemesi Ermeni halkından tepkilere sebep oldu. Bu aynı zamanda ulusal kimlik inşasının önemli unsurlarından biri olan unutma veya ihmal etmeyi de göstermektedir. Renan'a göre milliyetçilik hatırlamak olduğu kadar unutmaktır da ve burada Selim Sırrı'nın Papazyan ve Mıgıryan'ın katılımını Olimpiyat anlatısının dışında bırakması aslında ulusal kimliğin sınırlarını da göstermektedir.

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin katıldığı ilk Olimpiyat Oyunları 1924 Paris Yaz Olimpiyat Oyunları'dır. Bunun için kabineden Türkiye İdman Cemiyetleri İttifakı'na özel bir ödenek ayrılmıştır. 1924 Paris Olimpiyatı'na katılmak konusunda bazı görüş ayrılıkları yaşanmıştır, örneğin Oyunlar'a katılmamayı savunan Ali Naci Bey, savaştan galip ayrılan Türkiye'nin ulusal imgesine Olimpiyat'ta olabilecek potansiyel bir başarısızlığın zarar verebileceğini öne sürmektedir. Buna karşılık Ali Seyfi Bey ise Türkiye'nin 'yeniden dirilmiş bir millet' olduğunu öne sürerek ülkeyi haritaya yerleştirmek için Olimpiyat Oyunları'na katılmanın önemli bir yol olduğunu savunmuştur. Sportif anlamda başarı beklentisi yoktur, hatta Selim Sırrı hükümete bunu açıklayan bir telgraf yazar. Ancak bu beklentinin yokluğunda dahi Yunanistan ile savaş zamanında kalma gerilimler sportif rekabet yoluyla ortaya çıkmıştır. Türkiyeli atletler madalya kazanamasa da Olimpiyat Oyunları'na ilişkin kamusal tartışma seyahatin propaganda için gerekli olduğu yönünde olmuştur. Öyle ki dönemin

medyasında çıkan yazılarda böyle bir spor etkinliğine katılmakla Türkiye'nin hareketsizlik imgesinden kurtulduğu ve artık Avrupa'nın gözünde 'şalvar' ve 'nargile' gibi eski rejimle özdeşleştirilen kültürel öğelerle birlikte anılmayacağı yazılmıştır. Bu, ulusal kimlik inşasının daha önce belirtilen unsurlarının 1924 Paris Olimpiyatı ile nasıl örtüştüğü görülmektedir.

1928 Amsterdam Yaz Olimpiyat Oyunları'na ise Mısır'a karşı futbolda alınan 7-1'lik ağır mağlubiyet damga vurmuştur. Bunun üzerine oyuncular Haysiyet Divanı'nda soruşturma geçirmiş, bazıları milli takımda oynamaktan men edilmiştir. Bu da mağlubiyetin getirdiği aşağılanma duygusunun ulusal kimlik inşası için ne kadar zedeleyici olabileceğini göstermektedir.

1936'da ise Türkiye tarihine ilk kez Kış Olimpiyatları'na katılmıştır. Avrupa'da Nazizm ve Faşizm yükselirken Almanya'da düzenlenen Kış ve Yaz Olimpiyat Oyunları da Nazi rejiminin propagandasına dönüşmüştür. Savaşın yaklaştığını tahmin eden Türkiye, Olimpiyat gündemiyle çakışan Montreaux Boğazlar Sözleşmesi gibi politik olaylarla spor arasında ilişki kurmuş, medyada birincinin savaşa hazır Türkiye'yi temsil ettiği ikincinin ise politik çözüme hazır Türkiye'yi temsil ettiği savunulmuştur. Türkiye, Garmisch-Partnekirschen'de düzenlenen Kış Olimpiyatı'nda kaydadeğer bir derece elde edememiş, Avrupa basınında çıkan eleştirel haberler Yaz Olimpiyatı'na katılma hakkında şüphelere sebep olmuştur. Ancak Türkiye Berlin'deki Yaz Olimpiyatı'na katılmış ve tarihindeki ilk madalyaları almıştır. Güreşte alınan bir altın ve bir bronz madalyanın ardından yazılı basında "Olimpiyat Stadyumu'nda bayrağı göndere çekirme ve İstiklal Marşı'nı okutma" etrafında dönen oldukça yoğun bir ulusal gurur anlatısına yol açmıştır. Öte yandan dönemin politik atmosferiyle uyumlu olarak ırkla ilgili referanslar da yaygın olarak görülmekte, Türk ırkının üstünlüğüne dair iddialar yaygın olarak dillendirilmektedir. Ayrıca 1936 Yaz Olimpiyat Oyunları Türkiye'den kadın atletlerin katıldığı ilk Oyunlar olmuştur. Halet Çambel ve Suat Fetgeri Aşeni eskrim dalında Olimpiyat'a katılmışlardır. Bu bir anlamda modern Türkiye'nin uluslararası bir platformda yüzü olarak kadın atletlerin katılmasına önem verildiğini düşündürürken, dönemin medyasının bilgi eksikliği nedeniyle kamusal tartışmada bu fazla yer almamıştır.

1948'deki Olimpiyat Oyunları ise savaş sonrası atmosferde düzenlenmiştir. Türkiye'nin bunlara katılmak için başlıca motivasyonu İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası

dünyadaki yerini işaretlemektir. Türkiye gittikçe ilerleyen Soğuk Savaş atmosferinde Batı Bloku'nda yer almak isterken bu yönde uluslararası spor temasları kurmuştur. Olimpiyat Oyunları da bunun için uygun bir platform sağlamıştır. 1948'de St. Moritz'te düzenlenen Kış Olimpiyat Oyunları'na katılan Türkiye madalya alamasa da bir önceki Kış Olimpiyatı'na kıyasla daha iyi sonuçlar elde etmiştir. Londra'da düzenlenen Yaz Olimpiyat Oyunları ise Türkiye'nin o zamana kadar katıldığı en başarılı uluslararası spor organizasyonu olmuştur. Türkiye'nin, güreş takımının yedisi altın olmak üzere toplam on bir madalyasına ek olarak atletizmde gelen ilk madalya ile toplam on iki madalya kazanması büyük bir coşkuya neden olmuştur. Öte yandan 1948 Londra Olimpiyatı'na kadınların katılımı da kamusal alanda daha çok yer bulmuştur. Örneğin sprinter Üner Teoman'ın açılış töreninde iki subayın arasında yürümesi 'anavatanın müdafaası' ile sembolik bir seviyede ilişkilendirilmiştir. Gazeteci Jale Günay ise Londra'da Olimpiyat Oyunları'nı takip etmiş, cumhuriyet Türkiye'si'ni resepsiyonlarda tanıtmış ve BBC radyosunda bir konuşma yapmıştır. Bütün bunlar uluslararası sporun ve Olimpiyat Oyunları'nın Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilk yıllarındaki ulus-inşası sürecindeki yerini göstermektedir.



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