

THE INTERMEDIARY INSTITUTION OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION: PEOPLE'S HOUSES

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Abstract

Political socialization is a lifelong process by which people form their ideas about politics and acquire political values. These values and ideas gain by ways of family, educational system, peer groups, and the mass media. Besides these instruments, there are institutions which have assumed the function of political socialization and which contribute to this process. These institutions are formulated by political powers to ensure the political socialization process especially in the newly founded regimes in conformity with social acceptance/legitimacy, and to erase other values belonging to past from the social memory.

People's Houses were established due to the need of an institutional structure that will make the people adopt the principles and values of the new political regime founded as a result of the Struggle for Independence in Turkey, as well, light the way for the society on the path of modernization, and accomplish the political socialization. Upon examination of the similar institutions in the countries such as Hungary and Russia, institutional structure and activities of the People's Houses were set out by a statute, and various institutions in service across the country were united and put into service under the roof of People's Houses. This project which has come into reality initially with 14 houses on February 19th, 1932 has further expanded year by year due to the intense interest shown by people in their "houses", and has been organized by city by city. People's Houses have carried out their targeted activities through nine branches. Having stayed in service for a total of 18 years, People's Houses have contributed to the process of Turkish modernization and political socialization through the factors such as striving to teach principles and values of the Republic to the people, to turn the individuals into a community of citizens focuses on a common target in line with the goal of creating conscious citizens, to prepare the society for a radical transformation in political, social and cultural terms, to minimize the difference between the urban and village people, educated and illiterate people. This study seeks to analyze the role of People's Houses in the political socialization by examining institutional structure and activities of People's Houses.

Key Word: Political socialization, Republic of Turkey, People's Houses

Introduction

As of their birth, individuals start to learn some kinds of values on social environments due to the connection they have with their parents at first. Later on, they continue to accept the thought and values that the society set forth by learning social values, norms and beliefs and practicing these together with agents such as educational life, social environments. Being a specific and undividable part of this process, that is called as Socialization; political socialization also contributes to initiation of individuals to political system and political culture.

Political socialization process of the societies is closely related with political cultures. Some societies determine political socialization process as the reflection of political cultures as a result of historical and cultural factors; while political culture in some societies occur as a result of political socialization that covers entire values, rules and principles of political elites. The process of political socialization is an attempt to creation of political culture; especially it is presented in states that adopt a new regime as Turkey of Republic.

Founder team of Republic established institutions that would teach a regime to which the community is strange and its values, and also that make community adopt those, and furthermore, that would train citizens, families who are principle agents of political socialization by being aware of the deficiencies of mechanisms and finally that integrate next generations with the values of Republic. One of those is People's Houses that were

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active during 1932-1950. People's Houses also undertook some political purposes such as making community adopt Kemalist principles and values, providing the legality of the regime, gaining citizenship culture with political education activities and providing political recruitment etc. as well as cultural purposes like introducing Turkish society with Western lifestyle by preserving their self culture, arising level of education of the society. Sensibility of the period when the People's Houses were active, specific features of them, attempts on institutionalization of the regime made People's Houses mean of political socialization rather than public education centers. In this research, organizational structure of People's Houses and their activities will be focused on and effect of People's Houses on political socialization process will be tried to be analyzed.

Political socialization

Political systems need the transfer to and be adopted the desired political values, beliefs and behaviors by the members that involve political community for some purposes as continue its existence, adopting community to political values by directing them to political institutions and providing the legality of the system etc. aforementioned deficiency is eliminated by way of political socialization. This concept that is also called as political socialization is defined as adaptation of political beliefs, values and behaviors by individuals or the process of teaching these by community to individuals. (Kıslalı,2003:118).

The main purpose of the political socialization is to engage the individual that is member of society into political culture and political system. Thus, every political power, whether institutionalize its regimes or not, focus on institutions such as family, school, mass media, ideological culture and education centers, political parties that are capable to affect deeply the economic, cultural and social relationships of the society in compliance with the interactive, dynamic, eristic and ideological structure of the political socialization. However, the aim of creation of citizens loyal to state and new system (Türkkahraman,2000:23) in young nation-states has applied intermediary institutions that would make political socialization more important.

In political sociology, even there is a consensus on that family, school, social environment and media are the agents that contribute political socialization (Gökce and Göksu, 2013), it is also crystal-clear fact that there are not any other institutions in political education and socialization besides these. One of these is public education centers historic grounds of which date back to Ancient Greek. Shaped in the hands of concerning political powers, in these centers the contribution of individuals to system is maximized with the help of basic values of political culture and regime and intensified education programs, individuals are made adopt the ideology of dominant classes in most efficient way (Türkkahraman,2000:23-24,Alkan,1979:86), social control mechanism is actualized, the adaptation of collective identity that is tried to be formed is provided and the symbols of previous regime(s)/period(s) are erased from social memory. The basic object of these attempts is to make individuals that live under the shadow of past and have deficit notion on new political system become citizens loyal and obedient to new regime. Functioning as a machine that supervise society with Foucauldian perspective, make it hierarchical and discipline in a sense, these centers include individuals in political culture and political system by transforming complicated, useless or dangerous crowds (!) into living pictures in settled majorities form (Gökce and Göksu,2013:128).

People's Houses

Defining the basic principle of reaching contemporary civilization's level as reforms and intending to establish a new social structure in consideration of these reforms, Republican People's Party (RPP) elites needed a modernist and revisionist institution that would gather all material and moral powers of the country and guide these in the same direction, and that protect Republic against the dangers come out inside and outside of the country, that would be "missionary of reforms", and that clear the way between new state and citizens, and that would help the adaptation of revolutions as national identity. This issue was discusses in the RPP Third Ordinary Congress in which six arrows that defines ideological identity of RPP was included in program of party (Tuncay,2012:475) and establishment of such an institution was decided unanimously in 17.5.1931 dated session (CHP,1931:279-280). Despite the decision of establishment, there is not any clarity on which the structural and functional features these centers would have and what these would cover. For this reason, benefitting from the

samples throughout the world² was preferred, and it was decided to send a committee to Europe for analyze of these and to implement the system to be established in right way (Karaömerlioğlu,1998:69). Evaluating the reports prepared as a result of the analyses in abroad investigations, Mustafa Kemal decided that People's Houses would be established in four provinces on 19 February 1932 (Ergün,1997:186). In next periods, RPP instituted City Centers to meet party identity and ideology with citizens living in countryside and villages People's rooms that are auxiliary institutions of People's Houses established in large districts. People's Houses and People's rooms were closed by Democratic Party that came to power in 1950 elections as only RPP members could be administrators of People's Houses and People's rooms by by-laws; and these institutions worked for the benefit of RPP and spread the ideology of it as well as their being supported by state.

Institutional structure and activities of People's Houses

Established depending on RPP, not having a legal status, maintaining their practices with volunteer involvements, and focusing on collective education, People's Houses maintained their activities via nine branches. These branches are respectively, Language and Literature Branch; Fine Arts Branch; Drama Branch; Sport Branch; Social Aid Branch; Public Training Centers and Courses Branch; Library and Publication Branch; Peasantry Branch; History, Museums and Exhibition Branch (CHF,1940)

Language and Literature Branch, which was the first one of concerning branches, had became one of the active branches involved in political socialization process after the acceptance of Latin alphabet which is an obvious indicator of breaking off Ottoman heritage and adaptation with West. When the activities of this branch is analyzed with the main lines, it helped teaching³ of new letters to community as soon as possible by telling them that the old writing could not serve the necessities of modern age; and this branch organized conferences in which member of parliaments and People's Houses' chairmen participated to rise national consciousness and interdependence and to tell people the necessity of new reforms; made researches on pure Turkish words in the regions of their activity and anonymous works to contribute to the development of national language and complied folkloric idioms; made studies on publication of the works dealing with the success and heroism shown in Liberty War; organized ceremonies that is about the personalities and works of people lived in past that contributed to Turkish culture and history and conducted patronage of People's Houses' journals that publish within the direction of main lines of official party ideology (Çavdar,1983: 882,CHP, 1940:6-8). This branch especially contributed to the settlement of national culture and values with the cultural studies it performed.

Another branch was Fine Arts Branch. This branch brought Turkish people together with understanding of modern art of west by organizing classical music concerts and courses, (CHP,1940:10-11) and helped arrangement of Turkish music as per western music technique and provided teachers' coming from abroad for the teaching of modern dances; on the other hand, compiled Turkish folk songs and marches on Turkish culture, held painting exhibitions on national culture and heroism in Turkish National anthem, and contributed to the preserving of national dances. In this respect, this branch both affected the development of national consciousness and growing idealized individuals within the direction of Republic and establishment of modern mental structure that would render service to Turkish reforms with its activities.

The branch that contributed to political socialization most is Drama Branch. It had an efficient role in adaptation of reforms by community whose rate of literacy was low, with official ideologies. Because the targets

²Institutions that are accepted as prototypes of People's Houses are in German provinces "Citizen Houses" or "nursing house", in villages "community houses"; In Hungary, Hungarian National Culture Association, Urania Association, Workers' Jimnaz, Peasant Associations; In Czechoslovakia, Mozarih and Sokol; In Italy, Dopolavaro, "Balilla" for boys and "Piccole" for girls; In England, Public Training Association and in Soviet Russia, raising in the beginning of 20th cc. NarodniDom that occur as a result of Narodic movement aim of which is to raise awareness and means Populism. Besides these, It is also stated that Jacoben Clubs that served as bridge between revolutionaries and intelligentsia who played efficient role in French Revolution and also trained public about revolution also mirrored Mustafa Kemal. For Detail Yavuz Özdemir ve Elif Aktaş "Halkevleri (1932'den-1951'e)", *A.Ü.Türkiyat Arastirmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi [TAED]*, Sayı: 45, Erzurum,2011, s. 248-249.

³ Despite the fact that this whirl from ancient writing to new writing was conducted for the adaptation of the values of new regime and erase of old symbols from the memories of community, this case also caused damage in collective memory and weakness of the connection between past and next generations of the community.

that were tried to be infused into, were tried to be reached with the help of plays, cinema and shows rather than written culture due to the low rate of literacy (Doğaner,2005:389). Activities of theatre generally covered the plays⁴ that increase national unity and patriotism and that tell the necessity of reforms. These plays that attracted the attention of public are divided into four kinds as national plays, tragicomic, didactic-pastoral plays and non-political plays. National plays tell the reforms that occurred during and after Republic, lasting impressions of Turkish history and winning War of Liberation. Artistic and literal features come in the second row of importance for national plays. These plays were performed to strengthen Turkishness consciousness, to set forth national thesis, to interiorize the reforms and to spread Kemalist principles. After 1940, the plays that tell Second World War and negative aspects of it would be performed besides aforementioned ones and it was tried to set forth the rightfulness of not participating to this war. The second kind of play is French farces, melodrama and tragic-comedies that are about social life and woman-man relationships and communication inside-family needed by society (Şimşek, 2002:194). The third one of plays is didactic-pastoral plays. Didactic plays that increase self-confidence of society and provide having confidence about future fed with this reality. As for pastoral plays, these meet ideal form of rural life by telling village life and villages. The last one of these plays is non-political plays in which plays of famous writers such as Moliere, Shakespeare who direct the art of theater.

Another field that Drama Branch paid attention is cinema. The materials of the branch are films that RPP Headquarter obtain (CHP,1940:14-15) and records in which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk took place. Furthermore, puppets and Hacivat-Karagöz plays were also took places besides theatre and cinema activities not to forget the past. Themes and characters of the plays were adapted in a way that these would transfer the messages of Republic. Being rude and illiterate in old plays, Karagöz was then a Turkish villager who was hardworking and open to innovations, Hacivat was an intellectual integrated with modernization (Güven,2008:81). The function of the Performance Branch needs to be analyzed as transfer of regime into practical life rather than meeting society with theatre. Because, the doctrine of party targeted educating people in cultural and political sense with the performance of these plays that tell reforms and Turkish history thesis, that struggles superstitions, primitive beliefs and traditions, and that tried to tempt people to modern or contemporary life rather than just entertaining society.

The founders of People's Houses that thought of sport as national movement anticipated the young people who would be protectors of reforms would be physically and mentally powerful while rendering their aforementioned duties. While providing spiritual, mental and physical development of people were provided with other branches, sport branched were established to provide physical training that would strengthen national unity and having youth's discipline and morals (CHF,1940:16-17). Sport branches were active in various fields as per the regions of People's Houses. But generally, football, tennis, horse-riding, volleyball and hunting teams were established in each People's Houses. Apart from the modern sport branches, ancestor sport wrestle and javelin were concentrated on to preserve national identity. When these activities are analyzed, it can be understood that People's Houses both controlled people by gathering people and massified sport and used sport as a mean of raising healthy and moral individuals in compliance with features of regime.

Another branch of People's Houses is social aid branch. This branch helped the development of charities such as Turkish Red Crescent and Society for Protection of Children by contributing their studies(Zeyrek,2006:70), brought service to the places that these charities could not reach, and organized some activities together with these on public health. In this respect, the activities of this branch largely contributed to the establishment of the society targeted within the direction of populism principle with the development of social unity and providing sensitive and liking one another community rather than just crowds of people in the society that had had economical difficulties until People's Houses.

A great deal of significance was given to mass education for obtaining modern qualification of Republic. Public Training Centers and Courses Branch has an active role in spread of this way of thinking and public

⁴ Another feature of these plays is that a radical step was taken o visibility and place of woman in public sphere by paving the way for women's having role in these plays in spite of the conditions of that period and social values.

education. The object of this branch of People's Houses was to provide development of people by improving literacy, to provide physical sciences courses, to teach artistic and practical life knowledge and raise the level of culture. All these were actualized by virtue of courses given by volunteer teachers free of charge. What kinds of courses would be given was determined as per the features of the region, level of development, climate conditions and needs. The courses opened in People's Houses were generally crafts, sport and professionals oriented to Turkish and foreign language, positive sciences, school, fine arts, practical life fields (CHP,1940:22-23). Being established to make community have professions that allow them to subsist in social system, this branch also made efforts on intellectuals-public socializations.

One of the most important branches of People's Houses' activities was Library and Publication Branch. This branch rendered services on Turkish's getting over the effect of Arabic and Persian words and supplied and published books to raise knowledge level of community. The content of the books in People's Houses' library or reading room were related to the values of Republic. More clearly, these books needed to include national emotions, to transfer official ideology of state and reforms, particularly the Nutuk, to be in compliance with Turkish reforms and ideology, not to define foreign regimes and not to incentive reactionism and caliphate (CHP,1940:25, Gürallar Yeşilkaya,2003:103-104). Thus, this branch tried to actualize the desire for intellectual and reading society targeted country-wide and guided Turkish people to take place in modern world.

Building Republic on solid basis and adoption of reforms and party's principles depend on not being limited to city-centers. For this reason, new life style and mental structure brought together with countryside and activities of development villages/villagers was paid attention with motto of "Villager is master of all people". Creation of rich and clean villagers was targeted to achieve this by telling people new laws, learning reforms, reaching knowledge that villagers need on agriculture, husbandry, health and social issues (Çavdar,1983:881). Thus, Peasantry Branch came up in People's Houses. Tours were organized to villages to provide villagers information on health and social issues, reading and writing courses were opened and conferences were organized that tell patriotism, importance of reforms and principles' of party. Teachers, ordinary members of People's Houses and elected representatives (İnan,2000:8) participated in these activities and these helped establishment of relationship between village and People's Houses. Moreover, this branch contributed to political socialization process on meeting official ideology of state and providing communication between village-state.

Realizing the fact that more organized studies were required for building of national history on solid basis (Halkevleri,1935:14), RPP administrators established History, Museum and Exhibition Branch. The national and local activities of concerning branch focused on history, museology and exhibition arrangements and continued its studies working hand in glove with Turkish Historical Society (THS) established by Atatürk. The duties of this branch were to provide contribution to history by making archeological studies that would enlighten Turkish history; to make researches and publications on the events that are related to Turkish history such as Armenian matter, Greek cypriot atrocities; to determine and protect historical artifacts; to establish museums to exhibit these found artifacts, if there are not any museum, to send these to closest museums; to make collections of Hittite, Phrygian, Seljukian Turks and Ottoman State; to meet religious registries, annual, endowments, epigraphs and manuscripts of that region with people by issuing these; to inform state on the newly-found ruins; to compile materials on national culture that are undividable parts of Turkish culture for centuries such as bindings, ornamentations, collected poems, miniatures, tiles, carpets, embroideries, national costumes etc. and to repair if necessary and to exhibit those; to organize memorial days for important people for Turkish history and culture, to research local history by organizing historical tours (CHP,1940:29-30 Arık,1947:111, Ergün,1997: 206, Çavdar,1983:881). Undertaking significant roles in enlightenment of people with the museums it established and folkloric and historical publications, this branch was involved in activities on national culture and education of public. It especially helped THS on prove of official history thesis and enlightening historical events that may give harm to national unity.

Conclusion

Founder team of Republic established new institutions to create the society that they imagine in their minds, to bring society under their control within the direction of their ideologies, to provide the achieving of continuity of the system via individuals in comply with the values of party, and to spread their symbols and signs to its members with political socialization process. Being one of the institutions in question, People's Houses has become an important tool of political socialization in the year of establishment of Turkish Republic from the point of socialization of intellectuals-villager, raising ideal citizens that engage in positivist idea needed by new state with positive sciences, to league of the community together in every sense, to enroot reforms and development of national culture, to provide adults' adoption of party values and reforms by teaching them, to transform values of Republic into a lifestyle by collating with Turkish culture. In other words, acting in the manner of "Nation-State Establishment", People's Houses' played a significant role in placement of party identity in the minds of society together with single party management by being active as subsidiary of RPP in spread of Atatürk's reforms in Republic of Turkey in the soonest time and providing integration of public-state with party-public embrace.

Brief Biography

Rukiye Saygılı, was born in Konya/Turkey in 1986. She graduated from Selcuk University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations in 2009. She finished her master education that was about political leaders' image at Department of Public Administration. She started her academic career as research assistance at Selcuk University, at Department of Public Administration in 2010 also and still a research assistance. She is also now at doctorate degree.

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