

# Examining National Identity Building From a Network Analysis Perspective The Semantic Structure of Kemalist Journal *Ülkü*

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# *Ulusal Kimlik İnşasınının Ağ Analizi Perspektifinden İncelenmesi*

## *Kemalist Dergi Ülkü'nün Anlamsal Yapısı*

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## Abstract

This study focuses on *Ülkü*, the official journal of the People's Houses (Halkevleri), which was designed to create an ideology for the modern Turkish state as opposed to Ottomanism. It is aimed to examine the semantic structure of *Ülkü* version of Kemalist modernism through holistic approach. This allows us to examine the whole by inquiring the relationship between the words in the selected articles instead of looking at the content of the journal to search for previously determined themes. Unveiling latent meaning of *Ülkü* can have important consequences for communication literature in terms of building national identity. The findings contribute to our grasping of identity building communication practices. The study also demonstrates the utility and contribution of semantic network analysis for understanding of *Ülkü*, as a vehicle for replacing the traditional even 'archaic' Ottoman-Muslim identity with the new modern-western identity. The initial findings of research demonstrate six permanent items (history, big, nation, year, homeland, Turkish), addressing embedded ideological latent meanings related to the modern national identity.

**Keywords:** *Ülkü*, Kemalism, National Identity, Strategic Communication, Semantic Network Analysis.

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## Öz

Modern Türk devletinin ideolojisini halka yayma çabalarının en önemlilerinden biri Halkevlerinin kurulması ve Halkevleri dergilerinin yayınlanmasıdır. Bu yayınların en önemlisi kuşkusuz Ankara Halkevi'nin çıkardığı *Ülkü* dergisidir. *Ülkü*'nün iki temel amacı olduğu söylenebilir; birincisi Osmanlılık yerine Türklük bilincini geliştirmeye çalışmak, ikincisi de modern (Batı) düşünce yapısının halka benimsetilmesine katkıda bulunmak. Nihai hedef ise Batılı modern Türk kimliğinin oluşturulmasıdır. Çalışmamızın temel amacı da semantik ağ analizi ile bütüncül bir yaklaşım gözeterek Kemalist modernleşmenin önemli bir iletişim aracı olan *Ülkü* dergisini analiz etmektir. Bu, önceden belirlenmiş temaları keşfetmek için derginin içeriğine bakmak yerine, seçilen makalelerdeki kelimeler arasındaki ilişkiyi sorgulayarak bütünü incelememizi sağlamıştır. Araştırmamız, *Ülkü* dergisinin içerdiği yazıların örtük anlamının ortaya çıkarılması, ulusal kimliğin inşasında iletişimin rolünün daha iyi anlaşılmasına hizmet ederek, bu alandaki literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bulgularımız, geleneksel hatta 'arkaik' Osmanlı-Müslüman kimliğinin yerini alması istenilen modern-batılı kimlik oluşturma sürecinin bir aracı olarak *Ülkü*'nün rolünün daha iyi anlaşılması için anlamsal ağ analizinin faydasını ve katkısını da ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırmanın ilk bulguları, modern ulusal kimliğe ilişkin gömülü ideolojik örtük anlamları ele alan altı kalıcı öğeyi (tarih, büyük, ulus, yıl, vatan, Türk) göstermiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Ülkü*, Kemalizm, Ulusal Kimlik, Stratejik İletişim, Semantik Ağ Analizi.

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This study aims to unveil the holistic structure of *Ülkü* version of Kemalist modernism through a semantic network analysis demonstrating the contribution of the approach for understanding the journal, as a medium for replacing the traditional even 'archaic' Ottoman-Muslim identity with the new modern-western identity. The publication of Ankara People House, *Ülkü* (1933-1950) has been the centre of attention of academic research since its establishment, which predominantly focuses on the importance of the magazine in the Turkish modernization process (Mardin 1981; Tunçay 1981; Ahmad 1993; Dağtaş and Tazegül 2005). Others locate *Ülkü* in the political and social dynamics in the founding years of the new republic (Tunçay 1981; Ahmad 1993; Zürcher 1993).

There is still an ongoing research interest in the historical significance of the magazine; Erdal (2011) deals with *Ülkü* in relation to the population policy in the early republican period and Onbaşı (2011) concerns with the debates on peasantry and rural life in the early republican period while Otaç (2019), Uyar (1997) and Aydın (2004) examine the ideological function of the magazine and its contribution to Turkish Enlightenment. *Ülkü* perfectly illustrates the role of communication in legitimizing ideology in the process of modernization and nation-state building, which largely explains its popularity in academic research.

People's Houses magazines took on the task of cultural transformation efforts that left their mark on the 1930s. The goal of the cultural reforms was to create a modern western citizen loyal to republican values. *Ülkü* played the pioneering role in teaching the young generations purposes of the reforms to create a collective consciousness to disseminate the nationalist ideology among the masses. It was part of a great cultural effort of the republican elite to communicate republican ideals to people, especially youth, who are equipped with national consciousness and modern knowledge, would ensure the continuity of the Kemalist modernization project. The western-educated republican elite<sup>1</sup>, who strongly believed in science and progress, set out a cultural transformation project through People's Houses (1932) and their publications, to ensure legitimacy and citizens' obedience. Committed to Kemalist ideals, *Ülkü* writers have produced some of the most original texts on Turkey's language, folklore, archaeology, music and geography.

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1 Elite refers to high ranking social groups. Ruling elite is used to refer to the political elite whose power resided in controlling the administration and military force. Instead of 'ruling class', 'ruling elite' is used because the power of the ruling elite was not based on ownership of property although they were active in economic field during the high tide of statism in the late 1930s and 1940s.

Semantic network analysis, utilized research approach of this study, allows us to reveal the extraordinary purposeful effort of these intellectuals to raise the national consciousness of the people, to teach them republican ideals and western knowledge through one of the most remarkable magazines of the time. Our research is a contribution to the above-mentioned literature, since it focuses on the themes related to modernity and nation building processes. The value of our research is that we have the chance to look at *Ülkü* more holistically with semantic network analysis and identify issues that have not been addressed before. The unique contribution of network analysis is to alter the analytical emphasis from individual attributes to the holistic relational patterns revealing common meanings (Salpeteur et al. 2017). In that vein, this study illustrates the indicators of national identity conveyed through *Ülkü*.

The hidden links between the various articulations of Kemalist modernization and the processes of nation-building are revealed providing us to see the rationale that determined the 96 *Ülkü* articles on a wide range of topics, from agriculture to education, from population growth to modernity, from village life to archaeology, and to the virtues of republican reforms.

The article is organized in the following manner: the first section examines the historical context, consisting of People's Houses, People's Houses publications, and *Ülkü*. The second section, methodology, provides data gathering and analysis procedures and semantic network concepts. The next section presents findings of the study utilizing the analytic procedure stated above along with the conclusion section in which the results are discussed in a detailed manner.

## Historical Context

The Ottoman Empire lost the First World War (1914-1918); the Mudros Armistice of October 31, 1918 marked the end of the Ottoman Empire. The Republic was proclaimed in 1923 after the National Liberation War against the British, French, Italian and Greek armies between 1919-1922. The War was won under the leadership of modernist military-bureaucratic-intellectual elites, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Kemalism, named after the founding father of the modern Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was an ideology based on homogenization of an ethnically and religiously diverse population, aiming ultimately to create a modern westernised state and society.

The leading members of the elite saw homogenisation as vital to the survival and consolidation of the nation state, since they believed that the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was the result of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure of the Ottoman state system (Isyar 2005).

In 1912, just before the First World War, the population of the Ottoman Empire consisted of Muslims (Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Bosnians, Laz and others), Christians (Greeks, Armenians and the others), Jews and Circassian. Non-Muslims made up of 20 per cent of the population. After the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the First World War and the Population exchange between Greece and Turkey (1923), the non-Muslim population dropped to just under 3 per cent in the early 1920s (Okutan 2004), and was 2.64 per cent in 1927 census.

Kemalists invited both the Muslims and the remaining non-Muslims to become Turkish, for this, a common language was essential. Non-Muslims<sup>2</sup> were often the target of 'Citizen Speak Turkish' campaigns in the 1930s but so too were Muslims, especially Kurds and Arabs.

Kemalism consolidated its power as a mono-party regime during the 1930s and the ethnic tone of the nationalist discourse increased dramatically. Any resistance to Turkification policies were labelled as reaction incited by the remnants of the ancient regime. This rhetoric was adopted by the elites

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- 2 The creation of the nation-state in Turkey, involving the imposition of a standard citizenship, aimed to achieve this. Kemalists believed that citizenship would provide people with an identity powerful enough to replace the old loyalties and the idea of citizenship was developed to ensure that the individuals tied to the state and nation with membership involving both legal status and 'feeling of belongingness' (Üstel 1997, 126-128). The legal definition (1924) of citizenship was read, as "The people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race would, in terms of citizenship, be called Turkish." There did not seem to be any problem in the legal definition, the problem arose when belonging to the 'nationhood' was defined in terms of common language -Turkish- and cultural values were connoted as Islamic values. According to Özbudun (1997) this meant "to accept the citizenship rights of the minorities but not recognising them as Turks socially" (66) or as Wimmer (2002) put it, the legal acknowledgement of the non-Muslims' citizenship did not entail social acknowledgement as the criteria of belonging to the nation. Kemalist nationalism became increasingly discriminatory against ethnic and religious claims towards the end of the 1920s. Keyder (1989) however, argues that this was not a consistent characteristic of Kemalist nationalism, but neither was it a minor one. The elite were not, however, resolute defenders of the ethnic origin, for example, Atatürk emphasised the ethnic component of citizenship at the same time he argued that minorities would become part of the Turkish nationhood if they genuinely adopted Turkish culture and become 'truly Turks' (Kadıoğlu 2001).

against the Kurds throughout the 1930s, and indeed, throughout the history of the Republic. Turkishness and Turkish culture, as defined by the ruling elite, were emphasised as one of the most important ingredients of the republican state and society.

Secularism was another important task of Kemalist modernisation. Secularisation policies, involving the prohibition of religious instruction, and the secularisation of education, required the annihilation of traditional religious practices in society.

During the National War of Independence (1919-1922) and during the consolidation of the nation state in the 1920s and 1930s, the Kemalists adopted an Islamic discourse to mobilise the masses and secure the alliance of influential religious leaders. However, Mustafa Kemal made a careful distinction between regressive and progressive Islam<sup>3</sup>, promoting the latter as compatible with modernization (Çınar and Duran 2008).

Some of the initial reforms carried out in the first two decades after the establishment of the Republic (1923) were the abolition of the Caliphate (1924), closure of religious orders and madrasas, in which education was based on the teaching of Quran, and the introduction of a unified education system (1924). These reforms created a secular education system, disempowered the ulema (religious scholars) and ultimately, de-emphasized Islam, and disassociated it from the regime of the Turkish republic. The main objective of the Kemalist regime was to bring under its control all autonomous Islamic political and civic activities, and promote an acceptable state Islam (Çınar and Duran 2008). Religion was controlled through the Directorate of Religious Affairs (1924).

Thus, until the 1950 general election, the first multiparty election in the history of republic, the ruling Republican People's Party (CHP) imposed a strict control on Islamic political and civil activities to prevent a threat to the

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3 The state adopted different strategies towards Islam; when the Sufi orders threatened the regime, namely the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925) and Kubilay Incident (Lieutenant Kubilay was behaded by Naqshbandi Sufi protesters in 1930) Mustafa Kemal reacted with utmost determination saying that "The Turkish republic cannot be a country of sheikhs, dervishes, devotees, and lunatics." In his opinion "the truest and the most authentic order is that of civilization." Thus, Kemalism distinguished between Islam as "artificial and consisting of superstitions" and Islam as "mild and rationalist, which does not oppose to progress" (Sakallıoğlu 1996, 235-236).

secular republic by what the Kemalists believed was a backward-looking and reactionary force (Akan 2015). While secularism has been a strong reference for a significant section of the middle class and civil-military bureaucracy, most Turkish people continue to identify themselves with reference to Islamic culture.

Kemalist reformists' task of modernisation and creation of a western type of nation state required disowning the Ottoman past. To this end, they replaced the Arabic script with Latin script in 1928 and formed the Turkish History Institute and Turkish Language Institute. The former produced a 'Turkish History Thesis', which 'proved' that Ottoman past was an unwanted accident in the course of Turks' long and glorious history, while the latter lent support to this thesis with the 'Sun Language Theory', which asserted that all languages, and therefore all civilisations, originate from Turkish.

Although the claims of ethnic, linguistic, religious or class recognition were suppressed, either by force or through legal means, the ruling elite were aware that force alone would not ensure compliance, and sought citizens' consent. In other words, the question of legitimacy, i.e., the state's ability to establish citizens' loyalty and obedience was a serious issue for the republican elite, who faced challenges from diverse groups competing for loyalty.

As well as political changes, the state was actively involved in economic and social change, which had been lacking until then. The western-educated middle-class ruling elite adopted an outlook dominated by positivism and science, in an attempt to reach the levels of Western civilisation. In the absence of economic development, they introduced reforms in superstructure, and in legal and cultural fields, which would, they believed, bring about changes in economic and social structure. These reforms included the standardisation of the school system, abolishment of the pious trusts, adopting Gregorian calendar and solar clock in place of the lunar calendar (1926), adopting a secular code (1926), annulment of the Sharia courts (1926), replacement of the Arabic alphabet with Latin alphabet (1928) and the foundation of the Turkish Language Research Society (1932) and introduction of Turkish History Thesis (1930). They contributed to the reproduction and dissemination of the ideology of nationalism, and the idea of the Turkish republican citizenship.

One of the primary functions of the education reforms was to teach citizens new values, such as the love of the motherland, which meant learning to be 'useful' for the nation. Atatürk was actively engaged in the process of cre-



ating new citizens through various civic education courses under the names of *Information about Motherland* in 1924, and the *Main Principles of Citizenship* in 1927 (İçduygu et al. 2000). These interventions in the education processes “gives the state the possibility of shaping and supporting the image of the nation” (Blackkisrud and Nozimova 2010, 173).

The republican elite saw language as fundamental part of the national identity. The Sun Language theory was a step further in the direction of creating a national consciousness. Its main claim was that Turkish was the source of all major languages (Çagaptay 2004). Despite the unfounded nature of these claims, it served well in the creation of a national identity and source of pride for Turks (Çagaptay 2004). Language reform was part of the modernisation process aiming to break ties with the Islamic past, and adopt modern western secular values. These reforms introduced by the republican elite aimed at creating a homogenous nation-state, in which people would ‘imagine’ (Anderson 1991) themselves as part of the community. The language and education reforms were significant steps in efforts to build a collective consciousness among the citizens, who would unite around a common culture, and imagine themselves as sharing the same ideal. The ideological intervention of the nationalist elite continued in the 1930s, initiating research into ancient Turkish history as an attempt to construct a common past for the Turks, involving an ‘invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm 1983). The Turkish History Thesis was developed to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Turkish civilisation and deconstruct the past to suit the needs of the republican ideals. Particular attention was paid to the pre-Islamic period of Turkish history. One of the most important contributions of the History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory was to project a national identity endowed with superior qualities, rooted in the ancient world. The purpose was to create strong admiration for the motherland and a history that would inspire loyalty (Ayдын 2004).

The dominant ideology needs communication channels to obtain the consent of the people. Although the dominant ideology is imposed with force, it also needs consent for the reforms to be internalized and rooted. Kemalism, as an elitist project, developed the institution known as ‘People’s Houses’ as an important communication tool to contribute to the formation of national identity and modern citizens.

### **People’s Houses**

People’s Houses were planned precisely for the purpose described above in February 19, 1932. When they were closed on August 11, 1951, the total num-

ber of Houses was 4780. Vildan Aşir, who proposed the People's Houses model, was inspired by the Sokol model from Czechoslovakia. Aşir described the People's Houses project in the following words; "these should be the homes of the people, not a school, but should teach science, culture, art, literature, music, sports, and the values of the people that make a nation a civilized nation. There would be no place for any kind of bigotry in these houses" (Arıkan 1999, 267-268). As underlined and emphasized, in this statement, education, in the broadest sense of the word, was at the forefront. However, it may be more realistic to say that the priority was the political purpose.

In his speech in the opening ceremony of the People's Houses, Reşit Galip, who became the Minister of National Education shortly after taking on the task of establishing People's Houses, said "Islamism or Ottomanism cannot be the guiding principles for the modern Turkey. Throughout history, Turks established the highest civilisations wherever they inhabited. It is time now to gain confidence and remember to past glories and go forward. The only way to recover the glorious days is through nationalism" (Çeçen 1990, 115-116). The mission of the People's Houses was to disseminate the nationalist ideology among the masses to teach them the meaning and purpose of the reforms, and how to be model citizens for the new republic. The elite was aware that force alone was not enough in getting people accept the reforms, they had to be convinced that the reforms were to their benefit. İnönü said 'I believe People's Houses are going to be more effective than the military force in achieving the national unity' (Çeçen 1990, 107).

It was hoped that participants in the training and cultural activities would reach a level of consciousness that would enable them to appreciate the reforms. It seems that the Kemalist elite had a strong belief in education for a modern secular life. The activities of the People's Houses were designed to transform cultural life, and ultimately, to create a modern republican citizen. These activities were classified into different areas: language, history, literature, fine arts, acting, sports, social aid courses, libraries and publishing, village life, and history and museums. Active participation of the public was required for these different branches to fulfil their functions, and resources were made available for promoting the Turkish language, literature and history among local people; conducting ethnographic research on surrounding villages and their inhabitants; finding and preserving historical artefacts; encouraging fine arts and theatre; promoting sports activities; and providing the poor and sick with healthcare and assistance (Kılınc 2017).

The 1935 People's Houses annual report shows the extraordinary effort made to realize these activities: 782 plays were attended by 294 thousand people, 776 concerts, by 137 thousand, 636 film screenings, by 296 thousand, 1503 conferences by 322 thousand, 23 exhibitions by 34 thousand, 36 national products day by 224 thousand, 1867 sports days by 48 thousand, 564 trips by 31 thousand, 1370 night outs by 398 thousand, 187 balls by 28 thousand, 295 festivals by 40 thousand, also, 625 thousand used the libraries, and 240 wedding ceremonies and 211 tea parties were organised (Çeçen 1990). This list clearly demonstrates that the objective of the People's Houses extended well beyond the role of agents for conveying the official ideology to people, and became a cultural transformation project, ultimately aiming to transform people into productive, cultured and engaged individuals. This accelerated the cultural transformation process by enabling people to encounter republican ideology in their daily interactions.

Radio was an important medium utilized to spread state ideology (Kocabaşoğlu 2010). The question may arise as to why there was a need for the People's Houses, when the government controlled the radio and the press, through the strict 1931 press law. However, People's Houses fulfilled a gap of communication caused by the low literacy rate, which meant the lack of access to the press, and low incomes, which prevented many from obtaining radio sets. Moreover, with their multitude of activities, these institutions were invaluable in providing a space where the elite and the villagers could engage in face-to-face communication. Thus, the People's Houses were designed as a meeting point in order to create a sense of unity and the consciousness of 'us'.

### **People's Houses Publications**

Publicising People's Houses' activities was necessary to achieve their multiple goals; to serve this purpose, publication branch of the organisation was established. This branch was responsible for publishing a house magazine, books and articles based on research by other branches, responsible for language, literature, history and ethnography. The publishing branch was also involved with the establishment of libraries, and inviting speakers on various topics to deliver talks to town and city audiences (Karpaz 1974, 71).

The total of 58 People's Houses magazines were published in 30 locations. 80% of magazines were published between 1932-1940 (Güz 1995). The authors of these journals were teachers, doctors, lawyers, judges and engineers from the regions where the local People's Houses magazines were published. Local literate people, as well as talented high school students, were also encouraged

to contribute to these periodicals. The authors were volunteers and received no payment.

People's Houses magazines were published under one-party rule, when the opposition press and political activities were silenced. This helped to create a collective consciousness that played an important role in the formation of national identity. One of the most important duty of the People's Houses publications was to inform and teach the public about Republic's cultural goals, encouraging the intellectual development of rural and urban youth in accordance with national culture and modern scientific developments. The local youth were encouraged to contribute to these publications in order to root the cultural reforms among the masses (Güz 1995).

The editors of the People's Houses periodicals advised their writers to use simple language, in line with the republican elite's vision for the education of the rural population. In fact, a great variety of books and pamphlets published were on social and practical issues (Karpat 1974). These publications helped to establish a communication bridge between the elite and the countryside. Through strategic communication efforts, these government sponsored publications contributed to the nation building process (Taylor and Kent 2006).

### *Ülkü*

*Ülkü* was a journal published by the Ankara People's House, the capital city of Turkey, for 17 years between 1933 and 1950, with 272 issues in total. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself chose the name *Ülkü*, meaning *Ideal*. The journal assumed the task of educating the masses based on western ideas, habits and tastes. It created a rich resource in folklore, literature and social research. *Ülkü* also acted as a training ground for the next generations of intellectuals (Güz 1995).

The pages of *Ülkü* were open to all writings that served to expand Kemalist revolution. It was a leading example of, and a theoretical guide for, propaganda and revolutionary printing, and demonstrated the methods of covering revolutionary issues to scholars and House journals across the country.

In the first issue, the Secretary General of the ruling Republican People's Party, Recep Peker, explained the purpose of the magazine as follows: "We publish *Ülkü* to nourish the excitement of the new generation that moves towards an honourable and bright future by leaving the dark ages behind and

to establish unity of mind, unity of heart and movement among those who join this great road" (Peker 1933, 1).

He further stated that the journal would follow an editorial policy serving the national language, national history, national art and culture. The writers of *Ülkü* were expected to be idealists, as in the name of the magazine. Peker and the Kemalist elite's high expectations of the writers are striking: "The greatest pleasure of those who are sincere believers in revolutionary ideals is to let their ideas be known to others without any financial profit. He, who is a perfect philosopher, is the one who gives from himself to society, expects no reward. In fact, the true philosopher sacrifices himself for the ideal when necessary" (Peker 1933, 1-2).

*Ülkü* constituted the communication pillar of the People's Houses project, and served the purpose of raising the general cultural level so that the Kemalist revolution would be appreciated and adopted by the people. Its content has been edited to serve this purpose. The content analysis of *Ülkü* has shown that the most emphasised topics were celebrations of national days; language and history; village life and education; and motherland Anatolia and national culture.

In almost every issue, *Ülkü* featured a government official's speech, mostly by leading members of the ruling party on anniversary celebrations (Independence Day, anniversary of the proclamation of the republic, the anniversary of the opening of the Grand National Assembly, liberation days of towns and cities, and anniversaries of reforms [e.g., adoption of the Latin Alphabet, of western dress, and of western education]). The frequent grand celebrations functioned as 'flagging' or 'reminders' of nationhood, and citizens' sense of belonging (Billig 1995). Ultimately, the purpose of all these rituals was to make individuals proud of their national identity<sup>4</sup>.

Kemalists believed that a modern nation state required unity between language and consciousness of history, reflected in many *Ülkü* articles. A significant number of articles focus on the purification of the Turkish language and the removal of foreign roots, which is seen necessary for the establishment of its own identity.

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4 Recep Peker, "Kubilay Abidesinin Açılması" [Opening of the Kubilay Monument], *Ülkü*, Issue 23, January 1935, 374-376; Ferit C. Güven, "Utkular Ayı Ağustos" [August, the Month of Victory], *Ülkü*, Issue 31, September 1935, 1-4; F. Celal Güven, "Kubilay Günü" [Kubilay Day], *Ülkü*, Issue 35, January 1936, 366-368.

*Ülkü* conducted a survey to search for suitable Turkish equivalents to borrowed Arabic and Persian words widely used in the Ottoman written language (Küçüka 1934). Another issue that concerned the writers was the use of other languages in public places. The following words are from an *Ülkü* writer who is uncomfortable with the use of Kurdish in the east and south-east: "...majority of the people in the east and the southeast of Turkey did not speak Turkish. The last census has taught us many things about our country. Among these is one of the most important issues in our country. Statistics tell us that more than fifty percent of people in the east and southeast of Anatolia do not speak pure Turkish. In the past, almost all the people spoke pure Turkish and, as the history documents show, these people, who were of Turkish origin, lost their native language and acquired foreign languages."<sup>5</sup> As stated before, the new regime has made a great effort to avoid being identified with the Ottomans. Therefore, a large number of *Ülkü* articles on history cover the pre-Ottoman history of Turks. These consist of analysis of Turks from central Asia, who according to the Turkish History Thesis, were the origins of all civilisations.<sup>6</sup>

Central Asia has always been an indispensable reference because of the deep-rooted history of Turks from this region. However, Anatolia, which is

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- 5 Kadri Kemal, "Anadolu'nun Doğusunda Dil Meselesi" [Language Issue in the East of Anatolia], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 404-407; "Dil Seferberliği" [Language Mobilisation], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 408-410. Hasan Ali, "Dil İnkılabımızın Karakteri" [The Character of Our Language Revolution], *Ülkü*, Issue 22, December 1934, 255-257; "Türk Dili Araştırma Kurumunun Bildirisi" [Declaration of the Turkish Language Institute], *Ülkü*, Issue 26, April 1935, 85-87; "Türk Dili Araştırma Kurumu Adına Verilen Ayta" [Speech on Behalf of the Turkish Language Research Institution], *Ülkü*, Issue 32, November 1935, 81-86; "Ankarada Dil Bayramı" [Language Festival in Ankara], *Ülkü*, Issue 32, November 1935, 87-88; İ. Necmi Dilmen, "Güneş-Dil Teorisinin Ana Kanunları ve Analiz Yolları" [Main Principles and Analysis Techniques of Sun-Language Theory], *Ülkü*, Issue 38, April 1936, 88-95. Hasan Fehmi Turgal, "Anadolu Tarihinde Neticelenmemiş Bir Türkçecilik Hareketi" [An Incomplete Turkish Language Movement in Anatolian History], *Ülkü*, Issue 40, June 1936, 257-260.
- 6 Aydoslu Sait, "Ölü ve Diri Tarih" [Dead and Alive History], *Ülkü*, Issue 1, February 1933, 18-20; Mehmet Saffet, "Anadolu'da En Eski Türk Medeniyeti ve Cihan Medeniyetlerine Hakimiyeti" [The Oldest Turkish Civilization in Anatolia and Its Domination of World Civilizations], *Ülkü*, Issue 16, June 1934, 263-267; Hüseyin Namık Orkun, "Oğuzlara Dair" [About Oghuzs], *Ülkü*, Issue 26, April 1935, 102-110; Abdurrahman Aygün, "Kubilya ve Marko Polo" [Kubilya and Marco Polo], *Ülkü*, Issue 26, April 1935, 111-116; "Türk Tarihi Araştırma Kurumunun Programı" [Program of the Turkish History Research Institution], *Ülkü*, Issue 31, September 1935, 8-12; Enver Behnan Şapolyo, "Anadolu Kumuklar Tarihi" [Kumuks History in Anatolia], *Ülkü*, Issue 31, September 1935, 66-69.

accepted as the last and true homeland of the Turks, was perhaps the most emphasized word. In *Ülkü* (as in both official and popular discourse), Anadolu was a unique place in terms of its resources and previous civilizations. Among the subjects covered in *Ülkü* are the cultural values, music and folklore of Anatolia, as well as its archaeological remains and natural beauty.<sup>7</sup>

Village issues, rural workers and education are the most frequent topics in *Ülkü*. After the world economic crisis of 1929, the republican cadre adopted the statist economic model, believing that development could best be promoted through a corporatist solidarity model. The aim of the People's Houses was to create a production network in accordance with this economic model, and to instil national and modern values in the rural population, who were considered to be the group least influenced by modern republican values.

Turkey was then an agricultural country. According to the 1927 census, 75.8% lived in villages and 24.2% in cities, -out of a total population of 13,648,270. This population ratio had changed little by 1935; 12,400,952 (76.5%) out of 16,200,695 (1935 report p. 14) lived in villages. *Ülkü* reports that out of 40000 villages, 37000 lacked a school, post office, and shop. 11 million lived in these forty thousand villages (Köymen 1933).

The village studies branches of People's Houses organised various educational courses, such as reading, natural sciences, history, accounting, foreign languages, painting, music, photography, needlecraft, floriculture and

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7 Mehmet Saffet, "Kültür İnkılabımız" [Our Cultural Revolution], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 351-354; Ali Sami, "Sanat Varlığımızda Resmin Yeri" [The Place of Painting In Our Art Life], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 396-399; Mehmet Saffet, Anadolu'da en eski Türk medeniyeti (Eti İmparatorluğu), [The oldest Turkish civilization in Anatolia (Hittites Empire)], 323-328. *Ülkü*, Issue 23, November 1935, 323-328; Avni Candar, "Anadolu'da Türk Bölüklerinin Hükümet Kurma Teşebbüsleri" [Government Attempts of Turks in Anatolia], *Ülkü*, Issue 32, October 1935, 113-119; Türk Medeniyet Tarihine aid mühim bir keşif" [An important discovery belonging to the Turkish Civilization History], *Ülkü*, Issue 25, March 1935, 24-31; Hasan Hallet, "Anadolu'da Su Kuvvetleri", [Water Forces in Anatolia], *Ülkü*, Issue 22, December 1934, 272-275; H. Namık Orkun, "Anadolu'da Oğuz Boyları" [Oghuz Tribes in Anatolia], *Ülkü*, Issue 27, Mayıs 1935, 189-199; Mehmet Saffet, "Anadolu'da Yeni Bir Eti Hükümdar Mezarı ve Hazinesi" [A New Hittite King Tomb and Treasure in Anatolia], *Ülkü*, Issue 34, December 1935, 259-266. C. E. "Alacahöyük kazısı hakkında Bayan Afetin Söylevi" [Speech of the Mrs Afet about Alacahöyük excavation], *Ülkü*, Issue 39, May 1936, 171-174; Miraç, "Anadolu" [Anatolia] *Ülkü*, Issue 37, Mart 1936, 32-33; Enver Behnan Şapolyo, "Anadolu'da Kumluklar Tarihi" [Kumluk's History in Anatolia], *Ülkü*, Issue 31, September 1935, 66-69.

beekeeping.<sup>8</sup> A large number of articles on the peasantry appeared in *Ülkü*.<sup>9</sup> Köymen wrote extensively on rural life, believing that “villages were the places where the pure culture of the nation was preserved” (Karaömerlioğlu 1998, 52-53).

However, the elite had an ambivalent attitude towards the rural areas; on the one hand, the peasantry was seen as a resource that represented purity, and authentic Turkish culture, but on the other, they were considered as a culturally and economically deficient mass in need of guidance and education.

The discussion above demonstrates that *Ülkü*, as the flagship of People’s Houses publications, made extraordinary contributions to the adoption of the Kemalist modernization project. However, in 1927, the literacy rate was 8.16 %, and a quarter of this number were non-Muslims and speakers of other languages. Thus, only around 6 percent were literate, 30% in the cities, and around 6% in the villages (Tongul 2004). By 1935, the rate had increased to 37% (Kara 2020).

Naturally, the target audience were the literates; teachers, students, civil servants and bureaucrats, who became the main bearers of the Kemalist ideology in the 1930s and in the coming decades. *Ülkü*’s appeal to these cadres, and its legacy, clearly show the vital importance of communication in spreading Kemalist ideology to the masses. *Ülkü*, prepared with considerable awareness and strategic determination, is a typical example of mediation as a reflection of the two-step flow of communication model. In order to evaluate the nation identity creation efforts of the period, the content and ideas presented in the journal deserves a thorough examination.

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- 8 Nusret Kemal, “Köy Seferberliğine Doğru” [Towards Village Mobilisation], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 355-361; “Köy Anketi” [Village Survey], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 362-364.; Kerim Ömer, “Bizde Köy Mefhumu ve Köy Kanunu” [Village Concept and Village Law], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 365-370; Abdullah Ziya, “Köy Mimarisi” [Village Architecture], *Ülkü*, Issue 5, June 1933, 370-374; Abdullah Ziya, “Gün Geçiminde Kerpiç Köy Yapısı” [Mudbrick Village Building], *Ülkü*, Issue 13, March 1934, 66-71; Salahattin Kandemir, “Coğrafya Bakımından Köy” [Village in terms of Geography], *Ülkü*, Issue 14, April 1934, 153-160.
- 9 Selahattin Kandemir, “Köycülüğümüz” [Our Peasantry], *Ülkü*, Issue 31, September 1935, 32-36; Nusret Köymen, “Köycülük Programına Giriş” [Introduction to Peasantry Program], *Ülkü*, Issue 26, April 1935, 132-141; Bahadır R. Dülger, “Köyün Gücü” [Power of the Village], *Ülkü*, Issue 37, March 1936, 52-54; Hilmi, “Köyümde Gördüklerim” [What I saw in my village], *Ülkü*, Issue 37, March 1936, 58-63; “Köy Öğretmen ve Eğitimci Yetiştirme İşleri” [Rural Teacher and Trainer Training Work], *Ülkü*, Issue 46, December 1936, 259-267.



## Methodology

In order to uncover semantic structure of *Ülkü*, this study utilized a computerized content analysis by using network analytic techniques - with words of written text as nodes. In line with the purpose of this study, the following research question is formulated: What is the semantic content of the text sentences in *Ülkü* embedded within a set of assumptions about the aim of communication?

In contrast to traditional content analysis performed by human raters, computerized technique provides advantages such as higher reliability (Kwon, Barnett, and Chen 2009), and better representation without a presumptive category determined by previous research (Rice and Danowski 1993). Independent categorizations derived from data enables to obtain precise measurement. Semantic network analysis (SNA) is an influential method that allows uncovering “hidden meaning of texts” (Shim, Park, and Wilding 2015). Despite its increasing popularity among particularly studies on public opinion (Huang, Kong, and Cheng 2018), SNA has an important drawback. Since SNA deals with-relationships and co-occurrences of words, the question of how to associate them with theory arises (van Atteveldt 2008). As the main objective of the study was to explore the purposive use of *Ülkü* (as a tool to build national identity) rather than developing a model to examine communication effects, we believe that it is still appropriate, hence the implicit meaning used to convey the ideology can be captured through hidden structures in the text.

### Data Gathering and Analysis Procedures

The period selected for data analysis was from February 1933 to August 1936 as the “*Ülkü* elite is dominant during this particular period” (Aydın 2004, 64). A total of 26 out of all published 43 issues within this period were examined. Data collection took place during the peak Covid-19 pandemic period between April and May 2020. Examined issues were purchased from online used book sellers. This resulted in a sample size of 60.4% of the total issues available.

In order to ensure data integrity, announcements such as opening ceremonies, sport events were excluded from the sample, as they reflect daily life circumstances rather than ideological motivations. Additionally, serials were also omitted from the dataset, because, although used for enculturation purposes, these are fictional and do not directly lead readers to a particular ideological standpoint.

The first two sentences of 270 articles meeting aforementioned criteria were subject to analysis. All words except stop words (i.e. pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions) were used for the input data. Rationales can be summarized as follows: Generally, the first sentences of a paragraph contain the main idea (Hare, Rabinowitz, and Schieble 1989) or, at least, the key terms (Ohtake et al. 2001). Moreover, it is also accepted as an extraction technique of content analysis that its roots lay in journalistic practices (Dolan et al. 2004). Consequently, in our opinion, it was an adequate representation of the universe of all texts.

Two coders (out of four authors) independently coded 6523 text segments (words) and met online regularly to resolve disagreements in coding. Words that were listed as different nouns (for example *inkılap*, *inkılab*, *inkilab*, meaning revolution or reform) due to different letter preferences were combined and all synonyms were replaced by single words, based on the agreement of coders. For an explicit interpretation, all words were converted to nouns or infinitives. In the final stage before the data analysis, the coder decided to make further omissions from the data set. Accordingly, the words that had no independent meaning, i.e. years, numbers, adverbs, abbreviations, interrogative words, and auxiliary verbs, were excluded, and punctuation was removed.

### **Semantic Network Concepts**

Based on graph theory, semantic network mainly involves network concepts, also known as indices or statics, such as nodes, lines, network density, and average degree centrality. *Node* represents the smallest unit of a network and is the “salient information from a body of text, and concepts” (Shim, Park, and Wilding 2015, 58). *Lines* are the ties between word pairs that demonstrate the relation in the graph. *Density*, indicates level of network connectedness, where low density demonstrates a sparse network with weak ties, and high-density network, a dense network with strong ties (Levine and Kurzban 2006). *Centrality* measures quantify the importance of nodes. Depending on the centrality index utilized, the position of a node within a network is calculated in one of three different ways, namely degree, closeness, and betweenness. The node degree is the number of links that a given node is connected to, the number of received links to focal node is called as in-degree centrality, and the number of departing connections refers to out-degree centrality (Opsahl, Agneessens, and Skvoretz 2010).

Figure 1. High density network

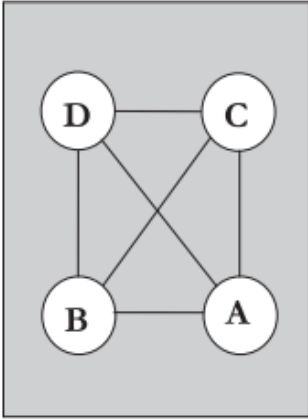
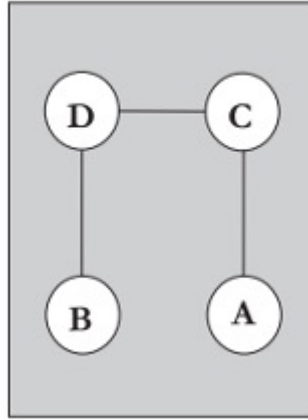


Figure 2. Low density network



Source: Levine and Kurzban 2006, 177

The other centrality measure, closeness, for identifying most prominent word(s), concerns distance between the node in question and all other nodes. Closeness focuses on direct ties of the node or its neighbours in the graph. By taking average of path (geodesic) distances, the central position of the network is measured (Chung et al. 2013). Similar to degree centrality, a distinction can be made between in (receiving) and out (sending) closeness, depending on the direction of links. In network analysis, *betweenness*, related with one node's connectivity to others, is considered as a measure that reflects a node's importance. Borgatti (1995) defines betweenness as "the number of shortest paths (between all pairs of nodes) that pass through a given node" (112). Lying between other words, a certain node acts as a bridge, and higher betweenness scores suggests a greater nontrivial effect on network structure.

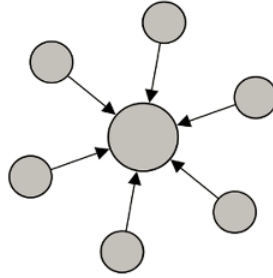
To detect semantically cohesive word subgroups, *m-slice (m-core)* technique, a clustering based measure, can be utilized. An *m-core* is explained as a "maximal sub-graph in which each line has a multiplicity greater than or equal to *m*" (Scott 2013, 111). Maximal sub-graph addresses a complete graph, which cannot be extended by adding nodes without losing its quality, such as connectedness (de Nooy, Mrvar, and Batagelj 2011).

Figure 3. Centrality measures

**In-Degree**

*'Effect'*

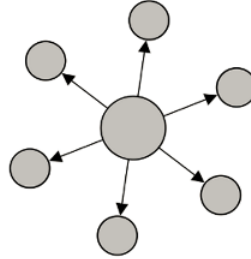
Variables with high in-degree are impacted by multiple other variables. An in-degree of 0 means a variable is not influenced by others in the system.



**Out-Degree**

*'Cause'*

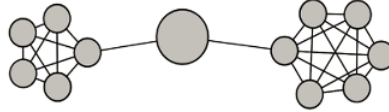
High out-degree variables have an ability to change many others in the system. Variables with an out-degree of 0 do not directly influence others.



**Betweenness**

*'Mediator'*

An ability to connect variables or clusters of variables. These variables are likely to be mediators on paths that conduct diffusion through the system.



Source: McGlashan, et al. 2016, 4

**Findings**

The unit of analysis is editorial, in which Pajek, the program for analysis and visualization of networks, was utilized to demonstrate meaning, using the relationships among the words in *Ülkü*, the journal published to construct national identity.

The journal text was scrutinized in terms of its structural aspects and patterns by concentrating on network indicators, including centrality measures, valued core, et

Table 1. Overall network description

Ülkü Network	
Number of nodes	1914
Number of lines	50296
Density of the network	0.014
Average degree centrality	52,556

Overall, the network description table has revealed remarkable results regarding the number of nodes, number of lines, density of the network and average degree centrality. Accordingly, 1914 nodes (words) were identified within the *Ülkü* network. The interconnection between these nodes, which indicates the relations between the words, were illustrated by 50,296 lines in total. Then, the table enclosed the number respecting the density of network, which is assumed to be the fundamental network characteristics. As reported by the analysis, network density remained considerably below the maximum density level (1) with the score of 0.014. Lastly, the average degree centrality, which displays the number of words within each network unit, was found as 52.556. In other words, every unit within this network contained on average between 52 and 53 words. Degree, closeness, and betweenness are the main measures of centrality utilized in the current study.

Table 2 and Table 3, demonstrating input-degree and output-degree centrality, give remarkable clues with regard to significance of a word in a network. Based on these results, it is concluded that the highest value belongs to the word *Turkish* in *Ülkü* network, both for the in and out degree (11.383/13.533). The value of the word *Great* is similarly parallel in both tables, occupying the second rank in terms of significance within network. The remaining values in the table differ in the order in which they appear, but it is noteworthy that the words *Nation*, *Homeland*, *History* and *Time* are found in both tables, despite the different rankings.

Table 2. Input-degree centrality

Ülkü Network	Value
Turkish	11.383
Great	9.788
Nation	6.961
Saying /Year	6.849
Homeland	6.625
History	6.513
Giving	6.093
Time	5.618
Name	5.534
Doing	5.478

**Table 3.** Output-degree centrality

Ülkü Network	Value
Turkish	13.533
Great	10.722
Year	9.921
Homeland	9.316
History	6.872
Time	6.504
Turkey	6.482
Nation	5.639
World	5.466
Language	5.444

Similar to previous results, the most outstanding words in input and output centrality appear as *Turkish* and *Great*, displayed in Table 4 and 5, while comparably the least prominent words are identified *Doing* and *New*, in input-closeness and output-closeness centrality, respectively.

**Table 4.** Input-closeness centrality

Ülkü Network	Value
Turkish	1.666
Great	1.539
Year	1.492
Homeland	1.478
History	1.369
Time	1.349
Turkey	1.346
Nation	1.315
Ankara	1.306
New	1.294

**Table 5.** Output-closeness centrality

Ülkü Network	Value
Turkish	2.487
Great	2.316
Homeland	1.936
Nation	1.931
Saying	1.911
Year	1.891
History	1.888
Giving	1.847
Name	1.781
Doing	1.754

Betweenness centrality in Table 6 provides identical results with the measures examined earlier, undoubtedly due to the typical character of central nodes.

**Table 6.** Betweenness centrality

Ülkü Network	Value
Turkish	25.678
Great	16.859
Year	12.265
Homeland	11.322
Saying	7.684
Nation	7.571
History	6.830
Time	6.740
Language	5.196
Turkey	4.935

As illustrated in Figure 3, in total, 22 words arise in the *Ülkü* network in which m-core value is disclosed as 10.





abled us to identify hidden patterns of nation building efforts. By merging the connectivity and content analysis, we unearthed significant nodes referring to ideological framework of nation-building process in Turkey, guiding communication policies of the era, 1930s. Our findings support the idea that *Ülkü*'s mission was to convey the ideological messages of the ruling Republican People's Party.

The observed words (*History, Big, Nation, Year, Homeland, Turkish*) appeared most prominently in all 6 measures of network analysis i.e. in-out degree, in-out closeness, betweenness, and *m*-slice. These measures, relying on co-occurrence information, provided us more robust results than a single frequency-based method. Emerged word patterns are interpreted and discussed in the light of socio-political and historical background.

*Ülkü*, as the publication of the Central People House of Ankara, hosted the most important intellectuals of the time with various interests in arts, culture, politics, history and education. Above all, *Ülkü* fundamentally served to indoctrinate the masses with the republican ideology and to educate the masses. Indoctrination aimed at teaching the masses 'the great history of Turks', as distinct from the Ottoman history. Thus, the concept of 'history' aroused in the network is an evidence for "exaggerated nationalist discourse for the reappearance of national pride" precisely as a 'Turkish', not Ottoman (Yazıcı and Yıldırım 2018, 7).

A significant number of articles on the ancient origin of the Turks in Central Asia and Anatolia aimed at proving that Turks had a distinct civilization. Ultimately, these studies served to create a pride in Turks, who thought to be subordinated to the Ottoman Islamic tradition.

This was part of the process of the establishment of a national culture, with ancient roots in central Asia, blended with Anatolian civilization. Anatolia as the last 'homeland' of the Turks, has a unique place in the formation of the Turkish identity.

Kemalists disowned the Ottoman past and made the new generations' access to historical heritage impossible by adopting the Latin script. For these ends, they formed the Turkish History Institute and Turkish Language Institute. The former produced a 'Turkish History Thesis', which 'proved' that Ottoman past was an unwanted accident in the course of Turks' long and glorious history, while the latter supported this thesis with the 'Sun Language

Theory', which asserted that all languages and therefore all civilisations originate from 'Turkish'. According to Eroler (2019) this effort might overcome the inferiority complex of the successors of Sick Man of Europe (Ottoman Empire) regarding the West.

The concept of history, stands out in the network analysis, turned to an exaggerated nationalist discourse to create national pride in the hands of *Ülkü* writers. Consequently, an exceptional emphasis on 'greatness' of (Atatürk) (Krueger 2016), the leader Atatürk ("Ulu Önder"=Great Leader), the Turkish nation (Katalin 2016) ("Yüce Türk Milleti"=The Great Turkish Nation) and Turkish history' (Yıldırım 2014,)), characterised the elite discourse in the 1930s.

Educative purpose of the journal was to transform the popular belief systems and conventions in favour of modern ones. Book reviews, historical research studies and scientific articles in *Ülkü* were part of the educational sources of the new republic to establish and maintain a modern/western state and society. *Ülkü* was published under the supervision of the Secretary General of the Republican People's Party and *Ülkü* reflect the prevailing reviews of the ruling party. The most radical modernization/westernization reforms were implemented in the 1930s, the articles express promoting rapid modernization with a didactic approach, a characteristic view of the Kemalist elite, which manifests itself with 'saying' and 'name' expressions in the network. Examined articles address direct or indirect 'sayings' of many intellectuals, 'names' such as Falih Rıfık Atay, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, Recep Peker, who adopt and support Kemalist view. For this very reason, an authoritative and educational language is dominant in the articles in question. Findings of semantic network analysis indicate a constant reference to the words of political and cultural elites, who are considered to be guiding the society. The aim may be to emphasize the believability of the spoken words and the authority of those who say them. The word 'name' was also used in the text to point out specific books, events, research studies etc. Likewise, 'year' and 'time' also specify certain dates, historic periods, future happenings all of which may be observed in other circulations. Yet, when all addressed subjects are considered, it can be claimed they were leveraged as to intentionally convey ideological messages.

*Ülkü's* new vocabulary is future-oriented, the concept of 'time' refers to the future time. Discussions about the future are structured to evoke development and progress. The use of these concepts, which emerged in the semantic network analysis, in an interrelated structure arises from the need to constantly emphasize the constituent elements of the type of citizen that the new re-

public wants to create. From this perspective, one of the most important aims of *Ülkü* magazine is to enable the new generation to weave their future visions with new associations and new concepts. The effort of the writers of *Ülkü* is to create an intellectual ground to make sense of the new world and the new republic with new concepts, not old ones. In connection with this, *Ülkü* indicates an active subject. The future, in which an advanced level of civilization will be achieved, will only be possible with progressive individuals. This emphasis stands out as a basic approach in each of the *Ülkü* articles reviewed, but these individuals are not yet the 'people', but the intellectuals who will educate the public. One of the most important goals of *Ülkü* is to serve as a school to contribute to the education of this class. Under these historical conditions, *Ülkü*, which functions as a school for raising the generation that carries the ideals of the new republic to the future, has largely accomplished this historical mission.

Consequently, this study objectively has examined the different issues and articles in *Ülkü* through a holistic approach. It clearly explains the role of *Ülkü* with its historical context as a vehicle for diffusing republican ideology to the masses. Using network data, a wider perspective is adopted, and as a result, a great deal of homology is observed between the findings and the official ideology, as reflected in *Ülkü* which could be considered part of the ideological state apparatuses. The holistic approach adopted in this article has a potential contribution to the literature. The study provides a foundation for future research analyzing journals, radio, newspapers and magazines of Early Republican Period as instruments of indoctrination from a holistic perspective yielding more valid indications of embedded ideological latent meanings.

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