

**Renewal And Transformation Of Cultures in Modern World: A Case Study
of Cultural Change During Mustafa Kemal Ataturk**

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Abstract

As a result of globalization, cultural patterns and trends are increasingly being embraced all over the world. Culture in the modern world has shifted from being a set of practices to more of a philosophy. It is not a new practice, but throughout the early nineteenth century, it became more widespread for powerful states to acquire the cultures of other influential nations. To fully grasp this theory of cultural change and cultural adoption, it is necessary to first have some familiarity with Ataturk and the reforms he enacted, as well as the concept of cultural transformation. These different kinds of adoption had an effect on various parts of cultural life, but this sort of nationalism was also a product of the revolution that brought about these changes. This article makes an attempt to trace the transformation of culture and society under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. This includes the language, clothing, education system, and religious practices. However, the author restricts the authority of Turks to the geographical boundaries that exist at the present time. The goal of this endeavour was to bring the Turks and Turkish culture up to date by modelling it after that of the West, which at the time was the most powerful region in the world in all respects. The foundation had been laid for the achievement of this agenda; nevertheless, if these reforms were not implemented, all of these reforms were regarded as vital in order to accept modern norms and values. These cultural shifts, along with the political shifts that accompanied them, were embraced as part of a revolutionary movement. This article delves into all of these current tendencies, as well as Ataturk's ability to make profound changes in Turkish society in a relatively short amount of time when he was in power..

Key Words

Culture, Transformation, Modernization, Social change and Western culture.

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Introduction

To comprehend the process of cultural change in the modern world, several theories on culture and the transformation of civilizations have been developed. Nationalism and cultural transformation have a mutually reinforcing relationship in the Middle East and Near East.¹ Arabs and Turks are the two largest and distinctive national groups in these two areas. The language, along with other factors, is the main distinction between the two countries. More than other factors that were dropped after World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, religious traditions and customs united the two countries. The founding father of the Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, had a significant role in transforming Turkish culture and releasing it from Arab rule.² Similar to modern Turkey, which was intended to be a new beginning for the Turks; it was not just the outcome of political development and institutional growth. This initiative has been ongoing for a while in many regions of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in modern Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk created the Turkish national anthem with the intention of elevating his people's homeland to the status of the richest and most civilized country in the world, as well as elevating the nation itself above to the level of modern civilization.³ Mustafa Kemal Ataturk himself was influenced by several ideas and personalities which led him towards Westernization of Turks and Turkey such as his basic teachings were from "*Ziya Gokalp*" and inspired by the concept of nationalism promoted by Jacobin and the scientific concept of positivism which was very popular in West at that time. In other words, it took a single man's intellect to convert the Ottoman Empire and Turkey's culture into what it is today. According to certain specialists on Turkish history and "*Kemalism*", the French and Soviet models served as the basis for contemporary Turkey.⁴ The aim for changing Turkish culture and society includes the adoption of the authoritarian single-party system and statist economy from the Soviet Union as well as the secularism and centralized citizenship ideas from the French system. This was also a start toward changing a culture that was built on religious principles. To create a unified country committed to modernity and inextricably linked to the Europe of the Enlightenment, Mustafa Kemal promoted secular citizenship.⁵

Throughout the whole Republican era, there has been a cultural rivalry in Turkey between supporters of the Ottomanist and Kemalist organizations. It's important to comprehend the cultural differences between these two groups, each of which sought to introduce their own culture and system.⁶ On this matter, the history of the Mustafa Kemal Ataturk period is divided into a number of notions, each of which is founded on the group's ideology and seeks to further its own viewpoint of the relevant era. This involves the change from a conventional to a secular condition of social psychology. This shift was known as the Turkish Revolution. A new way of thinking about life that was promoted as the pinnacle of Turkish culture was taught to the Turks. It was also seen as the dissolution of the old order and the movement of the Turks toward the contemporary economic and technical world.⁷

In this article the cultural change is focused with special emphasis on the religion, behavior, rituals, customs, beliefs, attitudes, art, drama and music, food and language of the Turks after fall of Ottoman Empire. Religious change and transformation of Mustafa Kemal has been the key element in cultural transformation, as all other factors of change are dependent to it. Mustafa Kemal was very keen to adopt the real Turkish culture which was amalgamated with the Islamic norms by the Ottoman Sultans and Caliphs for religious gain it was an agenda of reviving the Turkish Culture.⁸ This is also considered as the renaissance

of Turkish cultural trends and compared it with the renaissance of Europe in eleventh century. Several dimensions of Turkish culture have never been discovered with relation to the pre-Ottoman period Culture and its transformation during the Ottoman rule. Whether the new cultural trends which were promoted by Mustafa Kemal were the same as in pre-Ottoman period? Or were only Western system or the cultural outfits were adopted? This article also tries to trace the connection between Mustafa Kemal reforms and the Turks pre-Ottoman empire societal norms.⁹This is very important to trace out the historical roots of Turkish culture to understand the construction of society of contemporary Turkey. Today, this difference is very evident in the form of ideologies of Kemalists (Modernists) and Ottomanizes (Conservatives) which are the results of the historical developments in region.¹⁰

Research Methodology

Methodological approach in this research article is multifaceted. Qualitative techniques of research are utilized to accomplish the task with the help of documented data. Along with qualitative techniques of research historical analytical method is also used in this research article. The content analysis of various documents and materials, most of which were obtained from secondary sources, was used to collect the data for this study. These secondary sources included published articles and books related to the topic, written by experts and authors in the relevant field such as Bernard Lewis, Kemal H Karpaz, and a number of other individuals. These works are evaluated and studied in their current state, in accordance with many overarching themes.

Transformation of modernity during Mustafa Kemal Ataturk

During the early part of the twentieth century, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk had a major role in world politics and affairs. Kemal's political and cultural views, as well as his secular outlook, are vitally important to studies from a variety of paradigms and perspectives which are the base for the formation of the modern Turkey and Turk nation.¹¹Most of the literature on the Kemalist regime and era had brought Turkey into a new system of modernization on different aspects with distinctive angels, it was with the well or direct procedure to transform the transform the Turkish culture with amending the constitution and social pattern of the country which were for most of the social scientists and experts it was the process of personal will and achievement of the Western pattern of life to transform the country towards modernity. The reforms were in the form to disown the traditional Islamic leadership, to implement Turkified Islam and attack on the Islamic culture. These trends were taken up to go forward towards new cultural formation, modernity among the Turks and to attack on the Islamic leadership.¹²

One thing was very clear from the ideological approach of Kemal and his supporters was clear to eliminate the Islamic authority and to attack on the ideological and traditional Islamic leadership. The main focus in the beginning was to eliminate the Caliphate from Turkey after a series of new reforms were introduced to end Islamic system of life such as in 1923 the institution of Ulema which was also called as the Sheikh-al-Islam and the ministry of *Sharia* was totally abolished with the modern system of courts and constitution.¹³Abolition of these institutions had a great impact on the society and religion of Turks. Educational institutions like Madrassas were the most important constructor and play a great role in the development of society which were also transformed to modern western education

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system. Another institution of the Muslim society in Turkey at that time were Sufis orders which were suppressed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk where as a valid example of it was to give death sentence to Sheikh Said. This type of people was considered as fool by the Kemal regime and were face of uncivilized in modern Turkey. On these reforms a number of people accepted the reforms which were introduced with the new modern system and never considered them against Islam and Turks, except a chunk of people. It was shown by the Kemalists that they are working for purifying Islam with un-Islamic practices. This was one of the elements that made Kemal's reforms successful in eradicating the Islamic authority in Turkish society.¹⁴ Similarly, in 1926, the Islamic law which was working and under use in Ottoman empire was replaced with the Swiss Civil Code of Law. This was the first step towards the Western style of law into Turkish Republic where no space was provided to the Islamic law and legal system. In 1928 Islam as the official and state religion of the country was also removed from the constitution which was another step towards keeping the Turks away from religion and nearer to Western civilization on the legal front as well. However, it is quite intriguing to see that Kemal, in spite of his eagerness to adopt Western law on Muslim personal status, still demonstrated his allegiance to the Muslim community by forbidding Muslim women from getting married to non-Muslims.¹⁵

Another strategy for bringing Turks up to date is to advance the idea of Turkified Islam. According to the new Kemalist agenda, the Turkish people and Turks are the rightful owners of the country's sovereignty, and any reforms must take into account Turkish culture as well as Turkish needs and national identity. Writing and reading of the Arabic language was very crucial for the Muslims during the Ottoman period in Turkey and in other places, this was also changed in 1928 by introducing Latin based alphabet. After this the Arabic language call to prayer was substituted with Turkish language in 1933 AD.¹⁶ Along with this Quran was also translated to Turkish language and people were guided to read Quran in Turkish language rather than Arabic to Turkify Islam. One of the most divisive secularization initiatives in the Kemalist Republic was this endeavor. According to Kemal, the Arabic translation of the Quran would be a tampering with the word of God because the Divine revelation was given in Arabic. These all the reforms related to Quran and Islam were just to reduce the influence of Arabic and Islamic civilization on Turks and Turkish society. This had a great impact on the Turkish society and Turks which are lasting for decades and ultimately cut off the new generation to access the rich Ottoman literature that was only available in Arabic scripts. All the literature which was available in Arabic was of no use for the young generation of Turks as they were not allowed to read and write Arabic. This also decreased the admission in the subjects of theology and Islam because of students' transformation towards modern languages and learning.¹⁷

A notion was promoted by the Kemalists that Islam had blocked the progress of Turkey and it is now the need of the hour to eradicate it from the lives of the Turks- this elimination includes the Islamic social and political authority.¹⁸ This act was done with the help of removing Islam from the culture at first with banning fez and turban, replacing it with the hats and caps which were part of Western culture at that time. The Ottoman cultural outfits were considered as the symbols of unenlightened traditionalism. Islamic calendar was being used by the Ottoman Sultans and Caliphs it was also changed by the Kemalist regime in 1925 with which all the new trends of the British were adopted and Sunday was declared as a holiday for Turkey. Alcohol is banned in Islam and Muslims are not allowed to

consume it but in Turkey it was made legal in 1926. This was followed by women's emancipation between 1925 and 1935. When it protected women's independence in society, it was seen as a significant improvement for women's standing.¹⁹ They started to enjoy the same rights as males in terms of divorce, property ownership, child custody, etc. In addition, women started to get equal legal treatment, moving from having no political representation to having full suffrage. The prohibition of religious attire was another serious affront to Islamic culture. Outside of places of worship, wearing religious attire was prohibited. These all reforms ultimately lead Turks and Turkey towards modernization and Westernization both in look and thinking. Turkish names were adopted rather than Islamic, adoption of names also became westernized from 1934 and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk name which means father of Turks was also adopted from the Western style of Surname. Turkey in this way was more modernized in cultural aspect as compare to other patterns of life and society.²⁰

Trends in cultural Transformation

Political change and the issues of power have been discussed in relation to cultural transition. The Arab Invasion of South Asia, the British Invasion of Australia, America, and South Asia are just a few examples of how power and political authorities have significantly influenced the alteration of cultures throughout history, both in modern and pre-modern eras.²¹ Turks have a great history and culture of their own before the advent of Islam and they are proud of it. This is why, once the Ottoman Empire fell, the great Turkish leader Mustafa Kamal Ataturk strove to restore the Turks' own cultural traditions and get rid of the Arab dominance culture that the Ottomans had infused into their way of life. These changes were inspired by Ziya Gokalp philosophy (A sociologist who framed true in Westernized structure). The Ziya Gokalp's notion of Turkism was extremely similar to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's reformation. Gokalp defined three terms "country," "culture," and "civilization" to start off his theory. He believed that a society is made up of people who share a common language, education, and set of religious, moral, and aesthetic values; in other words, people who share a similar culture and religion.²² This point was very important for cultural transformation of the Turkish culture. This idea was particular to that culture and was regarded as a key component of national identity; it represented the revival and renaissance of Turkish culture. The nation's material culture received very little attention because it was similar to that of other countries and areas of the world and was thought to be a component of civilization. With regard to Turkey's culture, this article focuses on those characteristics that were responsible for its transformation and regeneration, whether by force or permission of its people.²³ Culture was viewed as a subjective experience with a distinct personality. Clothing, language, religion and education were all impacted by the revolution. Cloth which is considered as one of the important ingredients of the culture was also changed with the help of totally modern dresses for both the man and woman in all parts of the country which was a direct and rapid transformation of culture and society. Turkish women were promoted to be more western in outlook and to follow the modern system of clothing and to leave the other indigenous clothing patterns, this was a part of the material culture was not focused in the context of reforms.²⁴

Changes and Renewal of Language

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As a foundation for cultural change and a source of national transformation, language is a constant battle among nations to preserve their own dialects. Ottoman Empire was heavily influenced by Arabic and all religious festivals and ceremonies that were part of its culture were performed in Arabic to promote Islam among Turks and other parts of the Empire because the Empire's major standing was based more on its name as a religion than on its cultural practices.²⁵This was the reason that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk focused much on the transformation all the religious and other activities in Turkish language and it was between 1927 to 1928 that Turks start using new form of the language which was written in Latin alphabet rather than Arabic and during this period all the Turks were compelled to used new system of language and the Arabic system was abolished totally. As of the start of 1928, the international standard for numerals had been adopted. A new alphabet was introduced in the same year as these westernization and modernization efforts peaked, with the intention of completing the process. This was the way through which the identity of Turks was constructed along with the concept of secularism and nationalism.²⁶

The first step of in language policy was to liberate it from religion and religious texts which are taken from Arabic and Persian language, were affecting the core of the Turkish society. For this a language policy was devised as a separate institution to work for the Turkish language with the name of *Turkish Language Society* (Turk DilKurumu) this society was founded in 1932 as an official body.²⁷Regarding the latter objective, the official language policy seeks to establish a single national language to aid in the formation of a cohesive national community. The changing of the script was also a great turning point in the history of Turkish language which was done in 1928. This was with aim to generate a western system of language with the help of the indigenous language. It was also considered as the renaissance of Turkish culture roots with initiating the roots of the Turkish language.²⁸A combination of history and language in the philosophy of Kemalists reforms which was working for the construction of a modern Turkish society. It was founded on the idea that, similar to other cultural features, language might be changed to fit a political agenda, making it a powerful tool for renaming and reshaping the social and political order. This was the transformation and renewal of culture with changing the language patterns of Turks with immediate effect. Through the use of language engineering, the state elite, politicians, and laypeople rather than linguists started this revolution. Language policy, which is described as state interference in language through a number of laws and other measures, as well as public and official attitudes about language, served to encourage the revolution in language.³⁰ In nutshell, a great number of changes were brought in language in the form of changing the script, texts, terminologies and the religious texts were translated into Turkish language. The percentage of the terminologies which were changed with Turkish language in this period are as follow.

Table: 1
Change in Terminologies to Turkish

Ottoman period	% Of term in Turkish language	Republic period	% Reduced in Turkish Language
Arabic	94%	Arabic	53%
Latin and Turkish	3 %	Turkish	33%
Other languages Western	3%	Other languages Western	7%

This table is a great source for understanding the major trends of the changes in the language both in the shape of normal language and in the form of normal language for the usage with in turkey and other places. These language policies can be compared with the central Asian Turks language script which are still following the Arabic script and are influenced by the Arabic culture and system. A single national language was viewed as being crucial to the creation of a mass sense of being a member of a cultural whole during the early years of the Republic of Turkey, when the first attempts to construct the institutions of a nation state were made. For each person to feel like a distinct member of a nation, the new regime's leaders believed that language was crucial to the establishment of the new political and cultural identities. Turkish was therefore designated as the official language of the State. These reforms lead to the formation of a new language of Turkey which is a part of the new Turkish culture.³¹

Educational Policies: A Source of Cultural Rebirth and Transformation

For the reforms in the different sectors were opened naturally with the political situation of the country and the world. A period of national struggle begins in the years following the Ottoman Empire occupations during World War I, and several points can be noted as essential variables that assist prepare the required environment when looking at those years. That's why Atatürk was able to make required modifications during the difficult years of national struggle and the founding phase of Turkey's Republic.³² As a result of these arrangements (reforms), education was one of them. With an education system dominated by religion and free of nationalist sentiment, the Ottoman Empire's was woefully deficient on both counts: Therefore, Atatürk proposed a modern, national structure that serves the interests of both the state and the people. In this article, the mode of education which was transformed is discussed in the relation to the cultural change. Education is the main tool which change the fate of the nation and have the capability to construct a collective idea and understanding of the culture in a nation. The main and fundamental changes which were introduced by Kemal Ataturk based on the Western education system which was attained by him during his life time. As it was discussed by Ataturk in number of places that truths of education are based on science and fundamentals of getting rid of superstitions devised by the religious elites and authorities. The reforms of Ataturk were directly related to the changing of old system of education which was not according to the time and with that education it was not possible for the Turks to compete with the modern world. In this way a new method of education was devised and all the religious elements were taken out of it and the language for the education of Turks was also changed from Arabic and Persian to Turkish. All the religious schools were shut down and were replaced with modern school system.³³

Table 2

Difference between Ottoman and Kemalists

Ottoman educational institutions	Republican educational system	Educational difference
Madrassa (Main educational institutions)	Modern educational (main educational institutions)	Transformation to modern system of education
Literacy rate 7%	Literacy rate 15%	Increase in literacy rate

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For a Turkish society to remain an autonomous state in a rapidly changing world, it is imperative that all segments of the population, including city dwellers, peasants, intellectuals, illiterate ones, women, and men, undergo major and radical social transformation and reform. It was Atatürk's goal to bring this social shift into the modern world without destroying the country's language, religion, traditions, and history, and instead use it as a source of creative strength in order to maintain Turkish independence. These all the reforms were possible with the changing of the education system.³⁴In the absence of education and science, looking for a compass is a mistake. Atatürk was a firm believer in the need of imparting knowledge that can be put to good use. An information society was his primary ambition for schooling. In this regard, he came to appreciate the importance of education. To eliminate ignorance is a cornerstone of our educational mission. We'll all be in the same boat if it's not destroyed. To truly escape, we must first destroy this lack of knowledge with all of our might and determination. Ataturk was very conscious about the educational reforms for which he never waited and his first focus on the educational change. The most difficult decisions which Ataturk took were related to the education to led the Turks towards modern civilization. According to the data the literacy rate of the country was 7 % during the war of independence, from which only 10% were the men and 4% were the women. On the other hand, there were only 15% people who could read and write.³⁵ In the same way about 90% pf the population were under the process of education where there were no teachers and a proper system of education. Most of the population of the modern Turkey were the peasants and the working class due to the political system of the Empire and they were very far from education and education system. The data also shows that there were only 1241 students in high schools and 2558 students in 20 vocational technical schools. The number of students enrolled in Madrassas were very high up to 18000 and only from them only 10% were involved in the process of education. This was the reason that on education emergency measures were taken to solve the problem of literacy and to introduce the new system to the young people of the country with the help of education. This was also a step towards forming a new culture.³⁶

Ataturk's changes follow a similar pattern: he first identifies a problem with a Turkish institution, then, with the help of experts and with a few modifications, locates a model that has already proven successful in a developed nation. But when it came to education, things were different because teaching the Turkish people required a more involved procedure. As he travelled the nation, Atatürk realized the seriousness of the issue, and it was his personal qualities that made it possible for him to implement institutional reforms that were successful.³⁷

Conclusion

The program of reforms which were initiated by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk more cultural and power related rather than other aspects of politics and society. The finding of the research shows that cultural transformation of the Turks has been very important in all this episode which shaped the cultural and national identity of the Turks. In this article only some of the ideas are discussed related to the cultural transformation such language, clothes, living style and educational reforms are focused which were the key elements changed rapidly. The objective of modernization and civilizing the Turks began with the cultural transformation of the Turks in a variety of various ways, such as through the assistance of education in

order to Westernize the Turks. This does not mean that the Ottoman education system and model of culture was vague but it was not according to the modern system and at that time some of the Western and European powers had done great achievement in the field of war fare and other aspects whereas the Ottomans were weak at that time and their Empire was tumbling. Also, western countries had developed strongest education system. It was the need of the hour for the transformation and reforms this was the reason that Ataturk introduced modern system for the competing the world within the same system.

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