

politics, and literature—and taking a bold and revisionist approach to most of the conventional assumptions about this era, Yıldırım's book represents a major contribution to the study of the Turkish peasantry, which until recently constituted a majority of the population, as well as of Turkish politics, in which rural dwellers came to play a crucial role after World War II.

E. Attila Aytekin

Middle East Technical University

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Zeynep Kezer. *Building Modern Turkey: State, Space and Ideology in the Early Republic*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015, xii + 330 pages.

Zeynep Kezer's *Building Modern Turkey* is a meticulous study on the spatiality of nation-building in Turkey. In the author's words, it sets out to portray "Turkey's transition from a pluralistic (multiethnic, multireligious) empire to a modern unitary nation-state as a fitful twofold process that simultaneously unleashed creative and destructive forces" (p. 11). To this end, the book analyzes the physical setting and sociospatial practices of the new political order, as well as its efforts to dismantle those of its predecessor, thereby demonstrating the interdependence between the creative and destructive dynamics of the same process.

The book represents a fine contribution to the growing body of work scrutinizing the spatial character of Turkish nation-building in the interwar period. While earlier studies were characterized by an implicit (and at times explicit) appraisal of the making of the young republic, the recent scholarship that has flourished since the 1990s has developed an increasingly critical perspective that makes use of contemporary debates, particularly those of postcolonial theory. Within this framework, Kezer's contribution analyzes this historical process through its "ambivalences and anxieties," rather than seeing it as a smooth process of development and progress.

The book is made up of three main sections, each comprising two chapters. The first part, entitled "Forging a New Identity," focuses on the republican capital of Ankara. Chapter 1 revisits the reconstruction of Ankara by the nationalists, who saw it as the symbol of the nation-state and the locus of a modern way of life that was to be disseminated out across the country. Although this process has been examined in various studies in different languages, here the author rigorously supports her narrative through analyses of original archival sources ranging from

newspapers and governmental publications to the minutes of parliamentary sessions and the correspondence of foreign embassies.¹ While the utilization of the capital as a showcase by the young nation-state has been much discussed, in Chapter 2 of Kezer's book, entitled "Theaters of Diplomacy," the author discusses how Ankara in-the-making also served as a showcase for diplomatic performances by European powers (including the Soviet Union). Thus, the author skillfully demonstrates the interactions among different spatio-political scales and their influence on the shaping of the new capital.

The book's second section, focusing on "erasures," is perhaps its most impressive part, for it makes the study stand out within the existing literature on Turkish nation-building. Whereas previous works have concentrated on the creative side of the nation-building process, these two chapters uncover the destructive component of nation-building. Chapter 3 focuses on the dismantling of the spatial networks of Islam, which was a dominant element in shaping social life in the Ottoman Empire. These changes were implemented by means of the modification of institutions, crackdowns on civil organizations, and legislation introducing new techniques for disciplining the subjects of the new nation-state. The discussion here develops around three themes. The first of these concerns pious foundations (*vakıf*), which had controlled vast institutional networks of economic activity in addition to providing welfare services: the secular republic was determined to eradicate the influence of *vakıfs* as religious instruments and subordinate them to state control. However, when it came to vernacular Islam—which serves as the second theme addressed in the chapter—the state was pragmatic enough to utilize Orthodox Sunni Islam to suppress heterodox practices and their enclaves, since these were considered potentially dangerous. The last theme of the chapter is the body as "the site of self-expression in the public sphere" (p. 88), which became the subject of policies aimed at imposing Western-style attire as a strategy of reshaping social distinction. Chapter 4 discusses the "others" of a national identity in formation. Appropriately entitled "Of Forgotten People and Forgotten Places," the chapter masterfully narrates the painful dismantling of Turkey's non-Muslim

1 Since the 1990s, Ankara has become the object of studies questioning the spatial aspect of Turkish nation-building. See, for instance, Jean-François Pérouse, "D'Angora à Ankara (1919–1950): la naissance d'une capitale" (Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, 1994); Bernd Nicolai, *Modern ve Sürgün: Almanca Konuşulan Ülkelerin Mimarları Türkiye'de 1925–1955*, trans. Yüksel Pöğün Zander (Ankara: TMMOB Mimarlar Odası, 2011; original German edition, 1998); Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); and Ali Cengizkan, *Ankara'nın İlk Planı: 1924–25 Lörcher Planı, Kentsel Mekan Özellikleri, 1932 Jansen Planı'na ve Bugüne Katkıları, Etki ve Kalıntıları* (Ankara: Ankara Enstitüsü Vakfı, 2004). For a critical evaluation of this recent literature, see Bülent Batuman, "Early Republican Ankara: Struggle over Historical Representation and the Politics of Urban Historiography," *Journal of Urban History* 37 (2011): 661–679.

landscapes. Here the author examines several topics: the production of a new subjectivity (via the concept of “minoritization”), the reconfiguration of local cognitive maps through the changes that occurred in urban morphology as a result of waves of non-Muslim departures, and the joint processes of toponymic erasure and economic dispossession. This section of the book not only depicts the erasure of different components of Ottoman society seen as irrelevant or undesirable by the new nation-state, but also provides comparisons regarding the different spatial strategies of erasure applied to different cases, such as the dismantling of non-Muslim and heterodox Islamic landscapes (pp. 150–151).

The third and final section of the book deals with the making of the nation as an “imaginable community,” with reference to the now classic work of Benedict Anderson. Chapter 5 focuses on the making of the nation-state as a territory, a real and imagined space, through a centralized web of infrastructural projects. Here, Kezer points out the nation-state’s monopoly over the means of violence, which targets society as well as space. Thus, the transformation of the physical landscape is closely related to the implementation of official notions of identity, order, and authority (p. 159). Chapter 6 discusses the making of citizens through the spatial forms and practices of the three most important republican institutions: elementary schools, Girl’s Institutes, and People’s Houses (*Halkevi*). In fact, with its discussions of the nationalization of territory and people, this section further extends the previous section’s discussion of “erasures.” This time, however, the underlying story is that of the Turkification of Kurds, a minority that could not be recognized as a minority (as in the case of non-Muslims), suppressed (as in the case of vernacular Islam), or assimilated into the system (as in the case of Sunni Orthodox Islam). In this chapter, Kezer shows how the Kurdish question became an issue *through which* strategies of national integration were implemented, as well as dealing with why this same question has proven to be a resilient one, still troubling the Turkish state today.

The book closes with an epilogue that fast-forwards to contemporary Turkey, where an Islamist party has been in power for fifteen years. For Kezer, the current situation presents a double irony very much related to her book’s discussion: while the authoritarian character of nation-building has played a role in the rise of the Islamist opposition and its eventual rise to power, it also presents the key to understanding the increasingly authoritarian character of the current government, which has appropriated the state’s institution and practices.

It has already been mentioned that *Building Modern Turkey* is a well-written contribution to the literature on Turkish nation-building. Curiously, however, the book does not address this literature or defines its position with reference to it, a failure that at times results in overlooking critical works that have dealt with the topics discussed in the book. This problem becomes most visible in Chapter 1, on Ankara, where, for instance, the discussion on Ankara’s

republican monuments (p. 43) or the characterization of earlier works on Ankara's urban development as "flattening a multilayered narrative of visions, frictions and resistances" (p. 51) does not do justice to recent critical works.² In fact, Kezer's study provides its most original claims on the history of early republican Ankara not in the chapter actually devoted to this task, but rather in others, such as the sections on the unmaking of *vakıfs* (pp. 91–92), the real and cognitive change of the city's macroform (pp. 129–133), the capital's utilization as a model for urban development (pp. 168–169), and how all this was never actually a smooth process of adaptation (p. 187).

Here, it is necessary to point out two significant (and praiseworthy) aspects of the book that especially deserve attention. The first of these is the study's emphasis on the contingent character of nation-building; that is, how nation-building is never a grand scheme that is executed smoothly. This leads the author to uncover ambivalences and inconsistencies of and resistances to the nation-building process, a process which must be understood as one that occurred through performances of multiple agents acting on multiple (spatial) scales. The second significance of Kezer's study is precisely related to the scale-sensitive approach of the author. The book provides a wide range of examples from different locations within Turkey, going well beyond earlier studies, which mostly analyzed the major cities (particularly Ankara and Istanbul). The study's geographical extent allows the author to detect and compare differences embedded in the social formation as well as the diverse strategies of control that have been used to tackle the relevant issues.

Building Modern Turkey is representative of a political break in the architectural and urban historiography of early republican Turkey. The modernist will of the republican elite has influenced generations of scholars and led to a remarkably long-lasting failure to address the authoritarian aspects of nation-building. Even though this semi-conscious oblivion has been disputed by the scholarship of the past two decades, Kezer's book stands out through its author's scholastic rigor, which is matched by her strong politico-ethical stance.

Bülent Batuman

Bilkent University

2 In addition to the works of Bozdoğan and Cengizkan cited above, see, for instance, Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu, "Between Civilization and Culture: Appropriation of Traditional Dwelling Forms in Early Republican Turkey," *Journal of Architectural Education* 47 (1993): 66–74; Güven Arif Sargin, "Displaced Memories, or the Architecture of Forgetting and Remembrance," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 659–680; Bülent Batuman, "Identity, Monumentality, Security: Building a Monument in Early Republican Ankara," *Journal of Architectural Education* 59 (2005): 34–45; and Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).