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THE ROLE OF THE NEWSPAPER *HAK VE ÖZGÜRLÜK* IN SHAPING TURKISH IDENTITY IN BULGARIA (1991- 1995)*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of the publication of the newspaper *Hak ve Özgürlük* – (Rights and Freedom), which was published between the years of 1991 and 1998 in Turkish as an official media organ of the political party The Movement for Rights and Freedoms – MRF, in the construction of Turkish Identity in Bulgaria after the collapse of Communist Regime. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire Bulgaria has become the country where the biggest number of Turks live in Balkans. Bulgarians after founding their national state has faced several regime changes that effect its population and their identity deeply. Turks, having directly been affected by these changes, have spent a vigorous effort to construct their identity as a national minority in Bulgaria. The Communist Regime's policy change towards Turkish community starting from 1971 resulted in *name changing campaign* of 1984-1985 and finally the great exodus of 1989. After the fall of Zhivkov the process of democratic transition started in Bulgaria and Turkish minority took its position in this practice. Throughout this process a newspaper published by the political party MRF, which is known as the Turkish political party in Bulgaria, has supplied content to promote Turkish identity. The issues of the newspaper published between the years of 1991 – 1995 has been received in the archives of the Turkish National Library in Turkey. In order to find out the effect of the newspaper's publication, the content has been analysed in a detailed way. Therefore, the study is conducted by using document analysis technique to analyse the content. As a result of this analysis it has been reached that the newspaper content has played significant role in shaping Turkish identity in Bulgaria after the collapse of Communist Regime.

* This article is based on the oral presentation that presented at the 5th International Congress on Social Sciences held in Skopje/MACEDONIA in June 2019.

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STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Turkish community was not part of the political debate in Bulgaria during the Second World War; however, the arrival of communism in Bulgaria after the end of the war changed this dramatically. In 1980s, the Bulgarian communist regime developed a program for changing the names of Turkish-Arab origin and replacing them with the Bulgarian ones. Between the years 1984 – 1989 Bulgaria officially denied the existence of any Turks in Bulgaria and tried hard to eliminate the evidence of Turkish presence in the country. As a result of organised resistance of Turks, general exodus of Turkish people from Bulgaria, which is known as the grand excursion, took place. The mass migration of Turks from Bulgaria caused serious social, economic problems and contributed to the fall of Zhivkov from power on 10 November 1989. Fall of authoritarian regime caused birth of the democratic aftermath; and then Bulgaria started its peaceful transfer to democracy. In this process, the official establishment of the party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), which is widely known as the first Turkish political party due to having predominantly Turkish and Muslim leadership and its constituency, provided the Turkish community with the right to participate directly and equally in the political life of Bulgaria. The status of Turkish minority has changed since 1990 in a positive manner towards finding a suitable place in social and political life in Bulgaria. The number of newspapers published in Turkish language increased and one of the newspapers started to be published in those days was *Hak ve Özgürlük* (*Rights and Freedoms*) which forms the basis for this study.

The study intends to answer the question whether the publication of the newspaper *Hak ve Özgürlük* play a role in shaping Turkish identity in Bulgaria between the years 1991-1995. The content of the newspaper mainly composed of economic, politic, social news that concern Turkish minority living in Bulgaria. The content of the newspaper that emphasize the features of Turkish identity can be grouped into three main categories: content emphasizing the ethnic identity and nationalistic feelings, content emphasizing cultural values and religion, content emphasizing Turkish language. At least three or four examples from newspaper news or articles that support the argument given under each three categories. *Hak ve Özgürlük* throughout eight pages of its content followed the same design and the sections meticulously. It is found out that most of the news are related to Turkish community in Bulgaria such as the bills concerning the rights of minorities in Bulgaria, teaching and learning opportunities and rights of Turkish as a mother tongue, religious services, cultural and social activities and international news which are generally related to human rights and the relation between Turkey and Bulgaria. It is concluded that the newspaper provided comprehensive content that appeals to nearly all features of Turkish identity, which can be said to have mainly been composed of ethnic commitment, religious affiliation, liability of the mother tongue Turkish.

Keywords: Turkish identity, Bulgaria, Hak ve Özgürlük the newspaper.

HAK VE ÖZGÜRLÜK GAZETESİNİN BULGARİSTAN'DA TÜRK KİMLİĞİNİN ŞEKİLLENMESİNDEKİ ROLÜ (1991 – 1995)

ÖZ

Bu makale 1991 ve 1998 yılları arasında *Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi* (HÖH) partisinin resmi yayın organı olarak Türkçe dilinde yayınlanan *Hak ve Özgürlük (Rights and Freedom)* gazetesinin, Bulgaristan'da Komünist Rejimin çökmesinin ardından Türk kimliğinin inşasında oynadığı rolü araştırmaktadır. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun çöküşünün ardından Bulgaristan Balkanlar'da en çok Türk nüfusun yaşadığı ülke durumuna gelmiştir. Bulgarlar ulus devletlerinin kuruluşunun ardından, toplumu ve kimliklerini derinden etkileyen birçok rejim değişikliği ile yüz yüze gelmiştir. Bu değişikliklerden doğrudan etkilenen Türkler, Bulgaristan'da ulusal azınlık olarak kimliklerini inşa etmek için yoğun çaba sarf etmiştir. Komünist Rejimin 1971'den başlayarak Bulgaristan'da yaşayan Türk toplumuna yönelik politika değişimi, 1984-1985 yılları arasında gerçekleşen *isim değiştirme kampanyasına* yol açmış ve en son olarak 1989 büyük göçü ile sonlanmıştır. Jivkov'un iktidardan düşmesinin ardından Bulgaristan'da demokrasiye geçiş süreci başlamış ve Türk azınlığı bu süreçteki yerini almıştır. Bu süreç boyunca Bulgaristan'da Türk politik partisi olarak bilinen HÖH (*Hak ve Özgürlük Hareketi*) tarafından yayınlanan gazete Türk kimliğini destekleyici içerik üretmiştir. Derginin 1991 – 1995 yılları arasında basılan sayılarına Türk Milli Kütüphanesi arşivlerinden ulaşılmıştır. Gazete yayınlarının etkilerini ortaya çıkarmak amacı ile içerik ayrıntılı bir biçimde incelenmiştir. Bu sebeple çalışma, içeriği incelemek üzere belge analizi tekniği ile sürdürülmüştür. Bu analizin ardından gazetenin sağladığı içeriğin Bulgaristan'da Komünist Rejimin çöküşünün ardından Türk kimliğinin şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Kimliği, Bulgaristan, *Hak ve Özgürlük* Gazetesi

Introduction

Turkish population in Bulgaria are the second biggest group after the Bulgarians. According to the 2011 census results %8,8 of the total population defined themselves as Turks, which makes 588,318 people (Population and Housing Census in the Republic of Bulgaria 2011, 2019). The presence of Turkish population in Bulgaria can be observed soon after the Ottoman conquest of the country during the fourteenth century. However, it can be dated back to the sixth century when Turkish tribes started to settle in the region. Warrior tribes coming from Asia by following the route of Black Sea steppe, either mixed with the locals like Thracian and Slavs and later disappeared or founded mighty states in North – East Balkans like Bulgarian Khanate by Kutrigurs. Between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries Cumans/Kipchaks settled in the Dobruja Region and Christianised. A group among these founded a beylic around Dobruja and Varna called Dobruja Beylic by Çolpan, who later recognised Murat I in 1388 and annexed into the Ottomans in 1393 by Bayezid I. Therefore, it can be said that the region was a country for Turks before Ottomans. (İnalçık, 2005, pp. 20-21).

Besides being a Turkish land before Ottomans, Bulgarian lands served as the hinterland of the Ottoman Capitals, first Edirne and then İstanbul after 1453, received considerable attention from

the Ottoman administration. The population of Turks in the region rose due to the colonization of strategic areas with Turks from Asia Minor and Anatolia. Therefore, demographic structure changed in favour of Turkish population in the region; and this structure persisted until the Russo – Turkish War of 1877-1878. Because of the defeat, Turks in the region composing the majority started to emigrate and became minority gradually. (Eminov, 1999, p. 31). After the Russo – Turkish war nearly one million Turk forced to emigrate and a half million were dead due to the war, hunger, cold and epidemic diseases. This emigration practice went on steadily starting from 1879, resulting loss of Turkish population in the region. When it comes to 1934, Turkish population decreased from one-third to under 10%. In 1940, there were 640,000 Turks and after the annexation of Dobruja to the Bulgaria the population rose to 705,000. However, according to the 1956 census the number again decreased to 656,025 because of the 1950 -1951 emigration (Şimşir, 2012, pp. 26-28).

As it can be noted from the information above, Turkish presence in the region dates to centuries ago. However, many of the Turks living in Bulgaria settled in the region after the Ottoman conquest of the country by systematic settlement. Throughout the years of systematic migration to Balkans and Bulgaria, Turkish population constituted the majority. Moreover, Ottoman Turks brought Islam to the region besides long-term Turkish ethnicity factor. After the 14th Century Bulgarians and Turks started to live together under the Ottoman rule with the system of Millet. According to this system *millet* refers to the religious community. It is a kind of societal organization and in this organization the society divided into two as being Muslims or Non-Muslims (Ortaylı, 1999, p. 82). In this organization Turkish population belonged to the Muslim community, which can also be called as Millet-i Hakime (ruling nation). As Turkish people in Balkans or Bulgaria have lived strictly together, religious affiliation inevitably becomes one of the most important assets of their identity.

As a prominent force of the 20th century nationalism triggered the establishment of nation states. In this context Bulgaria became a Principality that is interdependent to the padishah with the Berlin Treaty of 13 July 1878; and after being an autonomous Principality for thirty years, Bulgaria announced its independence from the Ottoman State in the year 1908 (Şimşir, 2012, pp. 480-482). Starting from this year Bulgaria formed its national state firstly under the name of Bulgarian Kingdom. The positions of Bulgarians and Turks in the country reversed. The Christians, previously governed by the Ottoman millet system, became a majority in the newly founded Bulgarian State due to massive migration waves. Therefore, formerly dominant Muslim Turks evolved into minority within the new state (Mahon, 2001, p. 264).

Accordingly, the Republic of Turkey was established on October 29, 1923 after the Turkey's National Liberation War. The history of modern Turkey began with this foundation with the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk embodying the principles of nationalism, westernization, secularism, populism, and revolutionism. Turkish people living in Bulgaria kept on perceiving Turkey as their mother-country and preserved their unity and strong association with Turkish Republic and its new system of values. Therefore, apart from their Muslim identity Turkish population in Bulgaria started to identify themselves as ethnic Turks besides their religious identity. In other words, Turks in Bulgaria in the 20th century was ethnic minority identifying themselves on an ethnic and religious faith. As Baskın Oran puts forward "religion and nationalism are two different and rival ideologies in Turkey; but Islam as minority's religion in a county like Bulgaria, where the majority has different religious fate, becomes the number one factor that supports the Turkish minority's national consciousness" (Oran, 1993, p. 123). As a result, it can be stated that ethnicity and religion are two most important notions for Turkish population living in Bulgaria for describing themselves.

By taking all into consideration, the study intends to answer the question whether the publication of the newspaper *Hak ve Özgürlük* play a role in shaping Turkish identity in Bulgaria

between the years 1991-1995. In order to find out the effect, the issues of the newspaper published between the years of 1991 – 1995 has been received in the archives of the Turkish National Library in Ankara, Turkey. Unfortunately, the issues published after 1995 were not available in both Turkish and Bulgarian National Libraries. Moreover, MRF Headquarters declared that they didn't have the issues. Therefore, the study had to be carried out with the issues reached through archives. With the available issues the content has been analysed in a detailed way; in consequence the study is conducted by using document analysis technique to analyse the content of the Newspaper.

1. The Political and Social Background in Bulgaria Before *Hak ve Özgürlük* Started Publication

Bulgaria after declaring its independence from the Ottomans adopted the liberal Turnovo Constitution and became a monarchy. The first monarch Alexander of Battenberg was followed by Ferdinand of Saxe – Coburg – Gotha and he was followed by his son Boris III in 1918. After his death in 1943, he was succeeded by King Simeon II (Crampton, 2013, p. 51). Before the Second World War Bulgaria suffered severely from the depression in early 1930's, peasants income fell by half and unemployment rate was critical. As a result of the instable situation there was a coup in 1934, then King Boris dissolved the coup in 1936 and elections were made in 1938. Soon before his death in 1943, Fatherland Front was formed with the involvement of the Communists, Social Democrats, and Agrarians in 1944; and staged a coup and formed the new government. On September 1944 Russian troops entered the Bulgaria and communist takeover started gradually. In September 1946 a referendum on the monarch resulted in Bulgaria becoming a republic. Then, finally in 1947 Communists introduced Dimitrov Constitution which brought a full Communist regime in Bulgaria (Lambert, 2018).

Turkish community was not part of the political debate in Bulgaria during the Second World War; however, the arrival of communism in Bulgaria after the end of the war changed this dramatically. The internal politics of Bulgaria was led by the powerful politicians of the Communist Party in Bulgaria under the strong influence of the Soviet politics until the death of Stalin (Brzezinski, 1967, pp. 50-55). This means that Bulgaria was going to be governed by communist ideals and practices. In terms of minorities, the first Communist Constitution adopted in 1947 guaranteed the rights of the minority groups like speaking their mother tongue or enhancing their culture and traditions and practising their religious duties. These constitutional rights were not only written statements, they were also practised actively in daily social life of the minorities. The idea behind this practice was that different cultures have the duty of realising communist modernization and all of them were the tools for reaching this goal (Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria*, 2004, p. 63). Therefore, Turkish minority kept on living with their system of values without disturbed by the communist regime during the first or second decades of their government.

On the contrary, a policy shift took place towards Turkish population especially after adopting the 1971 Constitution. In this new constitution the Bulgarian citizens from different ethnic origin was assured the right to learn their mother tongue as in the 1947 Constitution. However, this time there was no regulations for the minorities; because the new constitution did not consist a word like minority. By doing so, it was meant that the determining role of the Bulgarian citizens for the government is their adherence to Bulgarian collective socialist identity; not their ethnic origin (Baest & Torsten, 1990, pp. 400-401). In order to reach this goal, the regime had been practising some different ways to assimilate Turkish community in Bulgaria for some time. As Communist Party leader Dimitrov put forward that Turks living near the border with Turkey were an *ulcer* for Bulgarian national security, Turkish minority started to be concerned as a potential threat. The natural result of the changed policy was letting almost 150,000 people migrate to Turkey between the years 1950-1951 and deport some of them by accusing them of not supporting the collectivization

process. When Todor Zhivkov ascended to the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP) in 1956, the policy changes became evident. Turkish schools were merged with the Bulgarian schools and as a result of this the number of Turkish language lessons decreased and in the year 1974 all the courses were taught in Bulgarian. Turkish only became an elective course in schools. In other words, regime abolished teaching of Turkish language in schools in 28 years' time after the Second World War. Moreover, the publications of Turkish books lessened, and later stopped as for magazines and newspapers. Furthermore, the first campaign of banning traditional Muslim costumes started; and State Security began to recruit agents among the Muslim clergy. All these again resulted in a new migration agreement in 1968 and almost 130,000 Turkish people migrated to Turkey in ten years' time in the scope of this agreement (Lütem, 2012, pp. 139-140).

In the 1980s the situation changed dramatically. The Bulgarian communist regime developed a program for changing the names of Turkish-Arab origin and replacing them with the Bulgarian ones. The main ideological justification for the mass name changing campaign of 1984-1985 was the hypothesis put forward by the propaganda machine that all Turks in Bulgaria were the successors of Bulgarian Christians forcibly converted to Islam during the Ottoman rule. However, the main reason was nationalism and the fear that the higher birth rate of Turks would overwhelm the Bulgarians soon. In other words, the Bulgarian felt that if the measures were not taken the size of the Turkish population would exceed the psychologically acceptable threshold of 10 percent (Sabev, 2012, p. 18).

As a result of this ironically called *revival process* of 1984-1985 and widely known as the *name changing campaign* started. Bulgarian Council of Ministers decided to issue new identity cards starting from the 1st of January 1981 with the decree numbered 56 dated 1978. This process was going to be completed by 21st December 1985. Accordingly, firstly Turkish speaking Roma citizens were given their new identity cards in 1981 and 1983; then in the summer of 1984 Tatars and Albanian and then lastly the Turkish minority were given their new identity cards in late 1984. This forcibly name changing operation was directly organized by Todor Zhivkov and applied by all the governmental institutions. After completing this name changing process in south Bulgaria and not confronting much opposition the government went on this activity in North Bulgaria. As a result of this process, the names, religion and ethnic origin of the Turkish minority changed, speaking Turkish in public places, listening Turkish songs, celebrating the religious and national bairams, and even burying the dead bodies in Turkish graveyards was banned. However, all these assimilation efforts and oppression was not successful despite all the economic, cultural, social and political precautions taken by the regime. Turkish intelligentsia started resistance movements like the Long Winter (Dilga zima), Turkish National Revival Movement and Independent Human Rights Union directly after this forcibly name changing process. Meetings, protests, manifestations, active and passive oppositions, hunger strikes, and several personal reactions were organized in the regions where most of the residents were Turkish with the help of these organizations and unions (Kamil, 2018, pp. CIV - CXXI).

Between the years 1984 – 1989 Bulgaria officially denied the existence of any Turks in Bulgaria and tried hard to eliminate the evidence of Turkish presence in the country. Turkish covert resistance to government assimilation policy converted to overt one in 1989; especially by widespread demonstrations by Turks in order to get their identity back organised during May and June 1989. As a result of this organised resistance the government firstly started to deport large numbers of Turkish intellectuals and leaders to the West. Then, the government issued passports to anyone with *Turkish ethnic self-consciousness* who wanted to migrate to Turkey. This resulted in general exodus of Turkish people from Bulgaria, which is known as the grand excursion (Eminov, 1999, p. 32). During this process almost about 2.500 people deported to countries like Austria and Yugoslavia and 350,000 people migrated to Turkey between June 1989 and July 1990. The mass

migration of Turks from Bulgaria caused serious social, economic problems and contributed to the fall of Zhivkov from power on 10 November 1989 (Dayıoğlu, 2005, pp. 305-306).

On 10 November 1989, one day after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Zhivkov was deposed by the central committee and the removal of Zhivkov was accompanied with respect for legal forms. In other words, the authoritarian regimes' nature caused birth of the democratic aftermath; and then Bulgaria started its peaceful transfer to democracy (Diamandouros & Larrabee, 2000, p. 41). An initial step towards liberalization was the removal of Article One of the Constitution which declared that the communist party is the sole leading force in society (Linz & Alfred, 1996, s. 338). Mladenov and the new leadership promised to promote and develop pluralism in the country. They stopped the persecution of Turkish minority and invited those who had fled the country to return and reclaim their property. They also allowed opposition groups to register as legal entities and promised to eliminate the role of the state security forces (Bell, 1997, p. 360).

Shortly after Zhivkov's withdrawal and Mladenov's takeover Round Table Talks started in January 1990. The Communist Party, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) and the official Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU) started negotiations that resulted in a series of agreements related to political and institutional reforms. (Özbudun, 1993, pp. 108-109). The achievement of the Round Table Talks was the adoption of important legislation such as The Law on Political Parties and the Election Law. The participants agreed on 18 months tenure of the Grand National Assembly (GNA). It was decided that the GNA would prepare a new Constitution while functioning as a regular Parliament. The parties also agreed to promote civilized and bloodless transition to democracy (Bell, 1997, p. 369).

One of the opposition movements emerged during name changing process was *Turkish National Revival Movement*, which was formed in the 1980s, regarded as an underground organization. Accordingly, the leader of the movement, Ahmed Dogan had served time in prison from 1986 to 1989 for his opposition to Zhivkov's assimilation campaign. He was found guilty for establishing illegal organization. After having released from prison he established the political party *Hak ve Özgürlük Hareketi, Movements for Rights and Freedoms (MRF)*, which is widely known as the first Turkish political party in Bulgaria (Şerefli, 2002, pp. 199-200). The reason for having been concerned as Turkish party is its predominantly Turkish and Muslim leadership and its constituency; and especially having most of its demands concerning the Islamic community of Bulgaria (Neuburger, *Bulgaro-Turkish Encounters and the Re-Imagining of the Bulgarian Nation*, March 1997, p. 9). The official establishment of the party provided the Turkish community with the right to participate directly and equally in the political life of Bulgaria. Along with this, the party won 24 seats of 240- seater parliament in the 1990 elections and had right to be presented in the parliament (Peeva, Autumn 2016, p. 90).

The status of Turkish minority has changed since 1990 in a positive manner towards finding a suitable place in social and political life in Bulgaria. In 1991 the new constitution guaranteed the Turkish citizens the right to study and use their language. Later in 2000, the Bulgarian National Television started newscasts in Turkish language, new textbooks were published for teaching Turkish and the children could study the Koran, Turkish history, language and literature. As a result of these developments the number of newspapers published in Turkish language increased (Peeva, Autumn 2016, p. 90).

One of the newspapers started to be published in those days was *Hak ve Özgürlük (Rights and Freedoms)* which forms the basis for this study.

2. The Newspaper *Hak ve Özgürlük* and its Role in Shaping Turkish Identity *The Organization of the content*

The newspaper *Hak ve Özgürlük* started its publication with its trial version in December 1990. The first issue was published in February 1991 in Turkish and had 16 pages. The same issue was also published in Bulgarian with the name *Prava i Svobidi*. The newspaper went on its publications with 8 pages weekly and ceased its publication in 1994 and March 1996 because of economic difficulties. Later, the publications started again until 1998. The newspaper is also the official media organ of the political party MRF. The content mainly composed of economic, politic, social news that concern Turkish minority living in Bulgaria. The news related to the rights of the Turkish minority were the core element in the newspaper. In addition to this, the religion and the religious services, cultural life, education and ethnic issues of Turkish minority in Bulgaria were the main topics in the newspaper. Besides, the news related to Balkans, Turkey and Turkish world was also covered (Alpay, 2018, p. 257).

The newspaper is divided mainly into four or five sections depending on the year; because the names of the sections can slightly differ from time to time. The front page is usually like the summary of the other pages; but there is always a headline. The headline is generally about a national or local news. Mostly this national news is related to the political party MRF. In addition to this, the information on the newspaper itself is given in the headline caption. It says that it is the publication of Movement for Rights and Freedoms and date and the number of the issue is also provided in this part. In most of the issues there is always an information on how to subscribe the newspaper and it's benefits to the newspaper economy. Moreover, there are also leads of the articles in front page. The articles' content varies depending on the social and political atmosphere of the week. However, the articles whose lead provided in the front page are mostly written by a politician on the latest political, cultural or social events.

The first section of the newspaper is always reserved for the news from the political party MRF. The section is called *The Movement and the Public (Hareket ve Toplum)* and it covers the second and the third page. Throughout these pages there are news from the party itself. MRF's bills for the Grand Assembly, their official meetings with other organizations, declarations, communiques by party committees, announcements, articles written by party leaders or members, and all the activities carried by MRF can be found on this section of the newspaper.

The next section that follows the Movement and the Public part is *Culture* pages. The section generally covers pages four and five. This section's scope is wide. You can find news and articles concerning Turkish traditions, religion issues, education, language, Turkish folklore, and concert news.

Following the culture part there comes the news related to economy. The section called *Economy* is in pages six or seven depending on the length of the topics. Sometimes the title changes as *History and Economy*. Throughout this section there are mostly news related to Bulgarian economic data, plans and regulations. Most of the time the economic news is chosen according to the needs and concerns of the Turkish population in the country. Sometimes, some historical information on Turkish world are also given in this part of the newspaper. In addition to this, sometimes this section is used for the news related directly with Turkish – Bulgarian relations; again, depending on the political and social developments.

The last pages of the newspaper are reserved for *Entertainment* section. The issues covered in this page are: practical knowledge on housing, farming or health, information on TV broadcasting streams, and jokes. Additionally, the broadcasting stream of Turkish TV channels started to be given after private TV channels had started broadcasting in Turkey and had been available for people around the world via satellite connection.

In some of the issues there is also section called *Art*, which provides information on especially Turkish writers and poets and their articles. The other section that can find a place for itself in some of the issues is *Problems and Comments* part. In this section the opinions of the readers are covered. Readers write about their problems related to education, farming, and their rights as equal citizens of Bulgaria.

The last thing to mention about the organization of the content of the newspaper is its special supplement for children. Almost about a year the newspaper published a newspaper supplement called *Filiz* designed only for children. The supplement started to be published in 1991 and stopped on 31 January 1992. Starting from this date, it became a separate publication again with the same name. As *Filiz* started to be published separately and was a part of the newspaper for a short time, it is not going to be analysed in the study.

Newspaper Content that Emphasize the Features of Turkish Identity

One of the simplest definitions for identity can be as follows: "Identity describes the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture" (Deng, 1995). To put it another way, a person's faith, attitudes, values and norms symbolise his/her way of life and all of these makes up his/her identity. In other words, identity is the reflection of the individuals' cultural values and their status in their social environment (Karaduman, 2010, p. 2886).

In this context, Turkish minority living in Bulgaria has always preserved their culture, religion and language and attached high priority on their ethnic and religious values; especially when they felt threat towards their identity. The assimilation policies of Communist regime and forced name changing practices were examples of great threats for the identities of Turkish people living in Bulgaria. After the dissolution of the process and stepping for democratic regime, a newspaper called "*Hak ve Özgürlük*" started to be published in Turkish language. This newspaper worth analysing as it provided wide range of material for Turkish community living in Bulgaria.

The content of the newspaper that emphasize the features of Turkish identity can be grouped into three main categories: content emphasizing the ethnic identity and nationalistic feelings, content emphasizing cultural values and religion, content emphasizing Turkish language.

Content emphasizing the ethnic identity and nationalistic feelings:

One of the most striking articles that talks about ethnicity is named "Who, in fact, are you?". Here the writer severely criticizes somebody who still preserves his changed name after Turks are given the right to get their names back. He advises them not to betray their lineage and be disgraced. He says them not to be Asen instead of Hasan by adding the question "Who, in fact, are you?" (Siz Kimsiniz Aslında?, 1991, p. 5). In addition to this, another article based on interview with villagers puts importance on ethnicity. Having Turkish or Muslim names is shown as true and simple way of showing someone's ethnic identity. That is why the article is named again with another question "Why don't our kins get back their names?". By asking this question, they try to answer the previous question. The reason is shown as political and social bias against Turkish and Muslim people in Bulgaria and listed as the fear of getting sacked, the problems related to the act on getting their names back and the procedures (Soydaşlarımız Adlarını Neden Almıyorlar?, 1992, p. 1).

Another article that discuss ethnicity clearly is named "The ethno-demographic chart of our country should be decent" and written by Ayten Cafer. The main concern in this article is that the census results do not demonstrate the numbers of people according to their ethnic identity. Evgeniy Drumev from BSP and Vasil Zlatorov from UDF has put a resolution to the National Assembly about eliminating the parts of census questionnaire questionnaire related to citizens ethnic identity and religious faith. If this resolution accented by the Assembly, it would be unable to learn the numbers

of minorities according to their ethnic origin officially. The writer claims that the numbers of ethnic minorities should be counted and be made public officially (Cafer, 1992, p. 2).

Another striking example that emphasizes ethnicity is again an article written based on an interview with national-ethnicity problems and religious affairs advisor of the president, Mihail Ivanov. The interviewer asks Mr. Ivanov about his opinions on the omission of the parts of the census questionnaire related to citizens ethnic identity and religion. He answers by saying clearly that this decision may pave the ways for new assimilation policies and adds that choosing one's ethnic identity is a basic human right. Additionally, the interviewer expresses his negative attitude towards population census that excludes ethnic and religious identity information (Aliosman, 1993, p. 2).

The relationships between Bulgaria and Turkey are given prior importance in the newspaper. Turkey as neighbouring country is also called *mother country* for Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Therefore, Turkish minority's relations and perceptions of Turkey can also be regarded as an issue of ethnicity by taking the kinship into consideration.

Most of the time political news related to Turkey is given as a headline in the first page of the newspaper. One of the examples of this kind of news is related to the visit of Süleyman Demirel, the president of Turkish Republic in 1995, to Bulgaria and his meeting with the Bulgarian President Jelu Jeleu. One of the subheadings says, "For the first time the people of Deliorman (Ludogorie) cherished for taking a Turkish President in their bosom". After giving the details of the visit, it is expressed that neighbourliness and cooperation between two countries are growing and strengthening. Moreover, the full speech of Süleyman Demirel delivered at the Bulgarian National Assembly on 5th June 1995 is also published on pages 4 and 5 (Dostluk ve İşbirliği Gelişip Kuvvetleniyor, 1995, p. 1).

The National days of Turkish Republic take their place in the newspaper. For example, on 24th April 1992, there are two important news from Turkey titled "April 23 national sovereignty and children's day" and "Atatürk created Turkish Grand National Assembly of Turkey". The news is about the history of Turkish War of Independence and the foundation of Turkish Grand National Assembly. In addition to this, information on the celebration ceremonies of the year 1992, Turkey is also provided. The poem named "The Rose of Independence" by a Turkish poet Ceyhan Atıf Kansu is also published in order to emphasize the importance of the day for Turkish people (23 Nisan Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayramı, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'ni Atatürk Yarattı, 1992, p. 3).

Content emphasizing cultural values and religion:

The article titled "In the long winter nights" tells the name changing process in a form of story and at the end of the story the lesson to be learned is that the Turkish community in Bulgaria should stick to their culture, values and remember their old days. The writer claims that it is their duty to vitalize their outraged existence and develop their self-essence (Dağlı, 1991, p. 5). On the same page of the newspaper, there is news announcing the concert that will be given in Turkey. The concert will be given by a choir of the village Samuil, Razgrad. The choir named "Birlik" (Unity) will play and sing Turkish folk music and wear traditional clothes in the concert. Three concerts will be held in Bakırköy, Gaziosmanpaşa and Avcılar, İstanbul (Çete, 1991, p. 5).

Another article titled "We should Keep our Folklore Alive" in the Culture section of the newspaper is about the successes and importance of amateur folk-dance club. The writer thanks God that they are able to display their traditional shows in their mother tongue Turkish after a long period of suppression. He also adds that they have some economic problems and need sponsors for buying the necessary costumes, equipment and cover their travel expenses (Bakoğlu, 1992, p. 5).

Similarly, the news for announcing the festival named "The First International Turkish Folklore Festival" is given as a headline on the first page. The details of the festival are provided,

and it is expressed that Turkish culture and folklore will be on stage again. The title of the news itself gives a clear message: “Our folk songs, the songs that missed by heart” (Türkülerimiz Türkülerimiz, Candan Özlenen Türkülerimiz, 1995, p. 1).

In the culture column information on a special old Turkish horseman competition with javelin (Cirit) is given under the title of “our traditions and customs”. Cirit is known as Turkish ancestor sport and this information is also mentioned. It is added that this sport is popular in Turkey, especially in the city of Erzurum (Geleneklerimiz, Göreneklerimiz: Cirit Nedir?, 1995, p. 7).

Another cultural theme is about the old traditions. The writer gives details of a traditional Turkish wedding ceremony in his village Yassenkovo, Shumen. In another column, the writer announces a special occasion organized by Deliorman Turkish Writers Association. The organization is called “the night of literature” and it is announced that secondary school students are going to participate in the organization to show their knowledge and talents in Turkish literature (Berber, 1995, p. 5).

The wedding ceremony of Ahmet Doğan, the leader of MR, is presented in a detailed way throughout two pages with various photos. It is emphasized that the ceremony is designed according to old Turkish traditions including rituals, folk songs and folk dances. Wrestling matches, which is traditional Turkish sport, are also held by famous wrestlers from Ludogorie (Deliorman) (Sayın Ahmet Doğan'ın Düğününde Gelenek ve Göreneklerimiz Yeniden Canlandı, 1993, pp. 4-5).

The news related to religion and religious services is also included in the newspaper. The courses for learning Koran in the city of Bourgas is explained and it is added that people feel restful and blessed as they are free to practice their religion. Parents are eager to send their children to this course and glad to see them learn how to be a decent Muslim (Rafet, 1991, p. 5).

Islamic festivals, Eid Al-Fitr (Ramadan) and Eid Al-Adha (feast of sacrifice) are also given prior importance in the newspaper. The newspaper celebrates these special religious days on its first page as a headline. The importance of practicing their religious duty freely emphasized by articles from director of religious affairs (Pınarcı, 1993, p. 1). Additionally, the greeting messages of leaders and important people are also published on the following pages. Moreover, the writer points out that it is really hard to forget the days that officers of the communist regime used to check their refrigerators whether they had meat of sacrificed animals or not; and also whether they were going for performing bairam namaz (Dağlı H. A., 1995, p. 1).

Content emphasizing Turkish language

There is always a special column for Turkish Language in the newspaper. In this column the grammar of Turkish language, usage and practical knowledge on daily language is given. Usually, the title of the column is “Home Language Courses” and it aims at teaching Turkish language syntax and semantics. For example, in one of these columns, the difference between Bulgarian and Turkish alphabet, spelling and punctuation is explained in a detailed way (Memiş, Evinizde Dil Dersleri, Konuşma Dili, 1991, p. 5). In another one, language families and the place of Turkish Language is explained. In addition to this, information on some specific Turkish sounds like *ü, ö, ğ, and c* is also provided (Memiş, Evinizde Dil Dersleri, Dil Aileleri, 1991, p. 5). Sometimes the column is written by a different columnist titled “Our Modern Turkish”. Here the writer explains the meanings of some Turkish words which are useful for the necessities of the era. He goes on explaining the misuse of some suffixes in Turkish (Tahsin, 1991, p. 5).

There is also news related learning and teaching practices of Turkish language in Bulgaria. The interview with the Vice Minister of Education of Bulgaria is published and he was asked questions regarding Turkish children's learning their mother tongue. He points out that learning one's mother tongue is guaranteed via Bulgarian Constitution and there will be no dispute on that right.

Furthermore, he adds that Turkish children should also learn Bulgarian in order to integrate into Bulgarian social and business life (Hacieva, 1995, p. 5). The meeting, held in Kubrat (town in Razgrad Province) with the participation of Turkish language teachers and school directors of the Municipality, and members of MRF, is covered under the title of “the Obstacles for Teaching our Mother Tongue”. Especially the problems of Turkish language teaching at secondary school level explained. The problem is mainly because of the courses’ status as an elective course in schools and parents reluctance to choose the course because of their fear of discrimination (Tunalı, 1993, p. 5).

In June 1992 the newspaper announced that Turkish content would be broadcasted on state networks for an hour and a speaker contest had been completed for this programme (Türkçe Televizyon Spiker Yarışması, 1992, p. 1). There is also the announcement of the beginning of Turkish radio programs in May 1993. It is also complained that the starting of Turkish TV and radio programs is being delayed intentionally (Türkçe Radyo Yayınları Mart'ta Başlıyor, 1993, p. 1).

Turkish famous novelists and poets are also given importance in the newspaper. Yaşar Kemal, famous Turkish novelist, and his ideas on art, and an extract from his famous novel is published. Besides, new poems of the readers are published, and they are praised for their success (Söz Tükenmedikçe Roman Tükenmez, 1992, p. 5).

Conclusion

The article has sought to answer whether the newspaper *Hak ve Özgürlük* play a role in shaping Turkish identity in Bulgaria between the years 1991 – 1995. In order to answer the question properly, the political and social environment in Bulgaria analysed. Turkish community having centuries old history behind them in the region, have strived hard for keeping their culture, language, and religion alive for the last century. Starting mainly from the establishment of national Bulgarian state, the Turks became minority in the country and has faced several assimilation periods. However, the period called “name changing” was the tipping point for the Turkish. They protested the policy and its practices; and this resulted in the process so called “great exodus” in 1989. After the fall of the communist regime in 1989, Bulgaria started its transition to democracy and Turkish community started rehabilitating their violated rights. MRF, which is widely known as the Turkish party having seats in Grand National Assembly, started publishing weekly newspaper *Hak ve Özgürlük* in the transition period.

Hak ve Özgürlük throughout eight pages of its content followed the same design and the sections meticulously. It is found out that most of the news are related to Turkish community in Bulgaria such as the bills concerning the rights of minorities in Bulgaria, teaching and learning opportunities and rights of Turkish as a mother tongue, religious services, cultural and social activities and international news which are generally related to human rights and the relation between Turkey and Bulgaria.

It is concluded that the newspaper provided comprehensive content that appeals to nearly all features of Turkish identity, which can be said to have mainly been composed of ethnic commitment, religious affiliation, liability of the mother tongue Turkish. Accordingly, the newspaper systematically published content that refers to Turkish minority’s cultural and moral values, their adherence to ethnic identity and the importance of speaking, learning and teaching Turkish properly. Therefore, all the content has positive attitude towards preserving and developing all aspects of Turkish identity. As a result, it can be deduced from the content of the newspaper that *Hak ve Özgürlük* played significant role and contributed much in shaping Turkish identity in Bulgaria between the years 1991 – 1995.

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