**YouTube and Music:**
**Competing Expressions of Turkish Nationalist Sentiment in the Virtual Sphere**

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The video sharing website YouTube represents a vibrant space for sociomusical interaction. The use of the space in Turkey is characterized by a particularly high level of politicization, as seen through the ban of the site in that country (current as of the time of writing). As a musical medium, YouTube provides a space where users can post and view videos that combine music with imagery and commentary. Being one of the most popular international video sharing websites, YouTube might seem to be an apolitical, borderless arena for a completely new kind of interaction. However, videos of Turkish folk songs, which have been used by the state in nationalist discourse, often serves as a forum for expressing nationalist feelings. By focusing on videos of one particular folk song, "Kalenin Bedenleri" ("The Walls of the Castle"), this study analyzes contested representations of Turkish identity. The importance of the medium of video sharing can be seen in the growth of other outlets as a response to the ban on YouTube, such as Facebook, İzlesene, and Dailymotion. This study analyzes the ways in which the differing forms of these alternate outlets reveal new barriers that arise out of the nature of the Internet and accessibility. By examining both the media and a particular song, this thesis shows the multiple ways that music, YouTube and Internet video sharing are used as a forum for discussing Turkish nationalist sentiment by users around the world.

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION: REDEFINING "TURKISHNESS" ON THE INTERNET

In the *Nutuk*, a five-day address to the Turkish Parliament in October 1927, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first president of the Republic of Turkey, articulated his political philosophy, which became the foundational ideology of the Turkish Republic, often called Kemalism. One of the many famous quotes from this address, "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene [How happy is he who calls himself a Turk]," can be found manifested in all aspects of contemporary life in Turkey, from offices and classrooms to inscriptions on statues, banners held by sports fans, and Facebook fan pages. As historian Erik Zürcher points out, Ataturk's early speeches do little to elaborate on who or what can be called Turkish (Zürcher 2001). The resultant ambiguity has led to a discourse on the definition of Turkishness that is continually played out, especially in music.

In order to provide a national foundation for the modern Republic of Turkey, definitions of who can call themselves a "Turk" and what is really "Turkish" have been created and challenged in both official and unofficial discourse since Atatürk's speech. One early definition, from the state-published secondary school history primer printed in 1931, stated that "any individual within the Republic of Turkey, whatever his faith, who speaks

Turkish, grows up with the Turkish culture, and adopts the Turkish ideal, is a Turk."[1] Articulating exactly what the last two ambiguous statements of this definition meant was the challenge of Republic-era thinkers of the 20th century.  The particular difficulties of creating a nation-state out of one of history's longest-lasting empires (1300-1923), in a region where people of different linguistic and religious backgrounds had lived side by side for centuries, have made debates over "Turkishness" (Tr: *Türklük*[2]) heated and influential. Intellectuals, governments, and the media at various times have all contributed to the formulation of a somewhat standard definition of Turkish national identity, which has been challenged by different groups in many ways – through protests, by artists and writers such as the late Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink, through popular music movements such as *arabesk*, and by political organizations such as the Justice and Development Party (Tr. *AKP*), currently in control of the Turkish government and often accused of bringing political Islam into secular Turkey.

Over the course of the twentieth century, this standard definition has been especially challenged in many aspects of musical life in Turkey.  As I describe in the first chapter of this thesis, writers, government personnel, official media, and individual musicians have defined Anatolian folk music as the foundation of a "national" music, while

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[1] Zürcher, Erik J.  "`Fundamentalism' as an Exclusionary Device in Kemalist Turkish Nationalism". *Identity Politics in Central Asia and the Muslim World: Nationalism, Ethnicity and Labour in the Twentieth Century*. New York: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2001. 211
[2] This is the term that appeared in Turkish Penal Code Article 301, which is at the center of well-known public discourse on who or what is Turkish.  One important official definition comes from Article 66 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, which states: "Everyone bound to the Turkish State through the bond of citizenship is a Turk."  An English edition of the full text of the Constitution can be found online:
Gözler, Kemal. "Turkish Constitutional Law Materials in English." TÜRK ANAYASA HUKUKU SİTESİ. 9 Feb. 2009. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
<http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/english.htm>.

sometimes labeling other musics in Turkey, such as Ottoman classical or religious music, as backwards or against modern Turkish values. These definitions have played an important role in formulating a national identity for "Turks" (previously defined ethnically, linguistically, and religiously) as a distinct nation. The choice of officially supported music has helped the state to articulate the position of Turkey as allegedly separate from the extinct cosmopolitan Ottoman elite, the Arab states, and the rest of the greater Islamic world, while related to, but allegedly distinct from, the rest of Europe.

As this thesis aims to show, technologies such as the Internet have allowed for competing discourses of Turkish identity between that promoted by the state and as expressed by its citizens. With the rising importance of Turkish diaspora communities (especially in the EU), foreign tourism in the country, and the changing relationships between Turkey and its neighbors, this debate is becoming increasingly transnational. The Internet plays a particularly significant role in the relationship between people who identify as Turks, whether in Turkey or in diaspora communities. In this role, the Internet provides a space for dialogue where the historically tense relations between Turkey and its neighbors (particularly Greece in this study) can be discussed in the framework of music. Internet music videos allow for multiple perspectives and modes of expression and understanding regarding who and what is "Turkish". By focusing on sites that host music videos, such as YouTube and Facebook, this study provides a general impression of how this debate plays out musically in emerging Internet media that, as it appears, is policed by state monitors.

## 1.1    POLITICIZATION OF YOUTUBE IN TURKEY

One important forum for the debate of Turkish identity is the video-sharing website YouTube, available in Turkey shortly after the formation of the company in 2005. YouTube allows users to distribute and view videos which express their points of view, making the website a clearly important politicized space. This is illustrated nowhere better than in the Turkish courts' current (as of Jan 2010) restrictions on YouTube access from users in Turkey. The current ban is the latest in a series of several bans that have been in and out of effect since March 2007. A flurry of videos posted by Turkish and Greek users, part of what was dubbed a "virtual war" by Turkish media, culminated in a court decision in 2007 to ban YouTube for failure to remove videos that insulted Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. [3] Insulting Atatürk is a criminal offense in Turkey, as is insulting "Turkishness".[4] The specific video that prompted the ban was allegedly posted by an eighteen year old Greek student[5] and described Atatürk and the Turkish people as a nation of homosexuals as part of a clip taunting Turkish football supporters. To sensitive, conservative Turkish nationalists, such an allegation constituted a serious attack on the

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[3] Crampton, Thomas. "Court blocks access to YouTube in Turkey." *The New York Times.* 08 Mar. 2007. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/07/world/europe/07iht-turkey.4835389.html>
[4] The controversial Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which took effect on June 1, 2005, made insulting "Turkishness" an offence punishable by imprisonment. In April 2008, "Turkishness" was replaced with "the Turkish nation". Insulting Atatürk is a crime under Article 8 of the penal code. The entire document, as of 26 Sept. 2004, including the term *Türklük*, can be found at
<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5237.html> (accessed 20 Apr. 2010)
[5] "Videoyu YouTube'a yükleyen kişi tespit edildi." *CNN TÜRK.* 11 Nov. 2007. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
<http://www.cnnturk.com/2007/dunya/03/11/videoyu.youtubea.yukleyen.kisi.tespit.edildi/313427.0/index.html>

character of Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish people. While the video was voluntarily removed and the 2007 ban eventually lifted, YouTube was banned again in 2008, this time over Google's refusal to remove dozens of other videos that the courts identified as in violation of Turkish law. This latest ban remains in effect.[6] Despite the current ban, YouTube (which is nevertheless accessible from many university servers) remains one of the most popularly visited sites in Turkey, and even Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has admitted to using Internet proxy sites to circumvent the ban.[7]

This example of judiciary involvement in YouTube shows that certain factions within Turkish government want control of virtual space. The Internet prompted early optimism as a space for free speech and boundary-free international communication. However, limits like those imposed in Turkey contradict these hopeful expectations. As some have argued, international corporations such as YouTube and Google (YouTube's parent company at the time of the ban), are really more in control of the space than the Turkish court system in this case.[8] As an international entity, YouTube is not obliged to remove videos that are illegal under the Turkish penal code. The measures that the Turkish courts have taken to enforce Turkish law have been largely unsuccessful, as shown in the continued popularity of the site in Turkey. Clearly, then, YouTube, as a popular space for presenting self and national identity, is a more difficult space for Turkish cultural policy

[6] Berlinski, Claire. "Turkey's YouTube Ban Is Cause For Concern". *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.* 08 Jul 2009. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
<http://www.rferl.org/content/Turkeys_YouTube_Ban_Is_Cause_For_Concern/1772003.html>
[7] Mackey, Robert. "Never Mind the Ban, Turkish Leader Stars on YouTube." *The New York Times.* 02 Feb 2009. <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/02/02/never-mind-the-ban-turkish-leader-stars-on-youtube/>
[8] Rosen, Jeffrey. "Google's Gatekeepers". *The New York Times*, 28 Nov 2008. < http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/magazine/30google-t.html>

to control than previous media, such as radio and television. Instead, control is in the hands of a company that, so far and up to a certain point, seems to give users latitude in how they present themselves and the content they generate.

YouTube provides a space where it is possible for amateurs or professionals to combine music, imagery, and text to express themselves, though the space is used for other goals as well. Through comments as well as published profiles, users can interact virtually and construct virtual identities. Often, YouTube is used to simply share music or videos for enjoyment, without broader agendas. YouTube contains many videos of traditional Turkish songs that are framed in such a way as to engender very little debate. However, many videos of traditional Turkish songs become forums for heated discussions on the identity implied in the song, and ultimately, the definition of "Turkishness" itself. As shown in this thesis, the format of YouTube video and comments can allow users to influence how the video – and the music – may be received and understood. Meaning is created by individuals and is contextual; thus, the space where the music is found changes the ways in which meaning is constructed. The several videos discussed in this study have become flash points for debate and forums for discourse when the context and framing implies (or overtly states) a meaning that conflicts with established, promoted meanings about identity and "Turkishness".

The current national YouTube ban shows how far the controversy surrounding online debates can be taken – an argument between soccer fans has become an issue for the national court system. Additionally, the judicial banning of YouTube shows the seriousness of challenging established notions of Turkish identity. The Turkish court system, and especially the *Büyük Hukukçular Birliği* (Great Jurists' Union) of nationalist

prosecutors, has a tendency to act as the preservers and protectors of an elite-fostered sense of Turkish national pride.  The banning of YouTube is one episode of high-profile incidents, such as the prosecution of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink and Nobel Prize-winner Orhan Pamuk[9], where legal action has been taken to protect the allegedly standardized view of what it means to be Turkish.

One additional insight this example offers regarding how YouTube acts as a forum for debate lies within the international nature of the case.  The original videos that prompted the ban were posted from Greece and viewed by ethnic Turks in Turkey and diaspora communities around the world.  Additionally, business executives in Google's offices in the United States viewed the video to decide whether the videos warranted removal.  Legal interpretations of local Turkish laws in many past incidents have been the primary determiners of what is offensive to "Turkishness"; here, in the face of a powerful international corporate entity, they have been much less successful in controlling these definitions or in punishing behavior that violates Turkish law.  Local political ideology now competes with global economic interests in defining "Turkishness".

The global character of YouTube and its departure from the censorship and government involvement that have characterized previous arenas for debate have created a new kind of dialogue space.  As the government and international response has shown, the debates going on over Turkishness on YouTube are taken quite seriously and have a far-reaching importance on political and personal levels.

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[9] Hrant Dink went on trial three times in 2002, 2004, and 2006 for insulting Turkishness before his assassination in 2007; the accusations derived their evidence from articles, speeches, and interviews in which Dink referred to the fate of Ottoman Armenians as a genocide.  Similarly, Orhan Pamuk went on trial for speaking about the Armenian Genocide in an interview, although he did not term it genocide.

For the Turkish courts that instituted the ban, attacks on "the Turkish national character" and especially on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk undermine the entire nation-building program of the past century. Before the Tanzimat era of reorganization and reform, (1839-1876), "Turk" had a generic and often derogatory meaning, referring to a poor rural Muslim living in Anatolia.  In the later 19th and early 20th century, different ideologies such as Pan-Turkism and Ottomanism attempted to create loyalties to a perceived Central Asian heritage (in the case of Pan-Turkism) or Ottoman patriotism (in the case of Ottomanism). The ideology that came to be espoused by the Turkish state established in 1923 was drastically Turk-centric and tied to the land, in order to create a sense of nation.  The impact of this is still felt today in Article 301.

While the YouTube ban is an example of how seriously the judicial authorities consider perceived attacks on Turkishness, less drastic modifications to the official consensus of what it means to be a Turk on a personal level are also significant.  A key tenet of the ideology that places Turkey at the center is that certain products of culture, including music and songs, are purely Turkish – produced by ethnic Turks and integral to Turkish culture.  However, other peoples of the former Ottoman region, such as Greeks, Armenians, and Kurds, often also claim these products.  When the "Turkish" identity of a song is contested in this way, even in a virtual space, it constitutes a subtle attack on Turkishness that stirs a reaction from individuals, politicians or not, for whom such debates define their sense of ethnic belonging.

## 1.2    SECOND SECTION

I became aware of YouTube as a space for debate by searching the site for videos of Turkish folk songs.  I spent several months in Turkey in 2008 and 2009, once living with Turkish roommates in a dorm while attending the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, and later living with a host family while taking language classes under a scholarship from the Councils for Overseas American Research Centers.  I experienced firsthand how important a role traditional religious, classical, and folk music plays in people's expression of ethnic identity.  In 2008, I attended METU's Türk Halk Müziği Topluluğu (Turkish Folk Music Club), where members gave me informal lessons on the *saz* (a long-necked stringed instrument most often connected to Anatolian folk music) and *ney* (a reed flute most often associated with religious and Ottoman-era classical music), as well as plenty of supporting information on both instruments. Many of these students expressed views about Turkish folk music that paralleled the official narrative.  For example, the codification of Turkish *saz* music in the 20th century led to a strict, organized description, connecting tuning systems (*düzen*) and rhythmic strumming patterns (*tavır*) to specific regions of Anatolia.  This logical organization was used by academics and ideologues to establish Turkish *saz* music as the allegedly natural, logical, and purest musical expression of the Turkish people. Ethnomusicologist Martin Stokes points out that by connecting the "people's music" to the rural territory of the Turkish state, these thinkers have used the officially supported music to buttress the ideological foundations of the Turkish state.[10]

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[10] Stokes, Martin. "The Media and Reform: the Saz and Elektrosaz in Turkish Folk Music." British Journal of Ethnomusicology 1 (1992): 89-102

During my second stay in Turkey in 2009, I had many other chances to experience the ways in which people think about folk music. I lived with a host family in Ankara that had a special interest in music of many different kinds, though, unlike the METU Folk music club members, none of the family members considered themselves to be devoted students of music. I discussed with them and their friends what makes music "Turkish". This experience gave me additional insights into how the nationalized character of traditional music is perceived by people of different regional backgrounds, ages and perspectives. This understanding became extremely useful in my study of online music.

My interactions with people in Turkey were shaped by my status as a student in my early 20s (living in a university dormitory in 2008 and with a host family in 2009). While I was not in Turkey specifically to study music, I made my musical interests known to my friends (mostly other students my age) and host family members. I played music with friends in non-structured social settings, which occasionally led to conversation about what makes music "Turkish" from the perspectives of my acquaintances. For some people I played with, rock music with Turkish-language lyrics was definitely Turkish; for other people, Turkish-language folk music was more Turkish than other musical forms.

In Turkey, I had many opportunities to see this interaction between musical style and contested Turkish identity – whether understood in terms of ethnicity or citizenship. After my semester abroad, I returned to Pittsburgh where, even with continued contacts in Turkey and America, I had much fewer opportunities to witness this interaction. As a high school and college student living very much a "digital" life, I have often looked for music online on sites such as YouTube. As my interest in Turkish music grew, I continued to use these sites to search for music I learned in Turkey or related music

that was new to me.  While I knew that music played an important role in historical understandings of Turkish identity, I was somewhat surprised to find identity debates – especially debates over the origins of different songs – on YouTube.  I quickly became aware of how YouTube functions as an arena for debating the same issues of identity I had been introduced to in Turkey.  This interested me; YouTube was banned twice during my first stay in Turkey in 2008, and while I was still able to access the site, using specific computers or proxy sites was inconvenient.  This led me to investigate who was participating in this dialogue, and I discovered that this debate is transnational, often between Turkish speakers in Turkey and other European countries, as well as speakers of other languages with roots in the region, accessing YouTube from around the world.

The illegality of the site frames the dialogue that takes place on it in an important, overarching way. Accessing this banned site constitutes an illegal act, though even the prime minister has admitted to doing so regularly.  Because of the ban, Turkish users might see YouTube as an "anti-government" space, or a space outside of the government censorship that may exist elsewhere.  Perceptions of the Internet depend on the user's social context.   A statement such as, "It's on the Internet, so it must be true," might be understood only sarcastically by Americans; however, as ethnomusicologist Adriana Helbig points out, "scholars who conduct Internet research must be careful not to project their particular configuration of assumptions and experiences with the Internet onto users elsewhere."[11]  It is possible that the ban fosters an impression that Internet content is more

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[11] Helbig, Adriana. "The Cyberpolitics of Music in Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution." *Current Musicology* 82 (2006): 81-101.

"true" (or at least more emotionally charged, genuine, and less manipulated by the government) than other media.

For this study, I examined and analyzed three different YouTube posts, including songs, textual accompaniments, and comments, that prominently feature the same *türkü* (a genre of Turkish folk music), "Kalenin Bedenleri" ("The Walls of the Castle"). The page for each video contains a performance of the song by an established artist, accompanying visuals, title, and description selected by the poster, and comments from listeners, all of which I analyze. In my investigation, I also look at the types of cyber persona or identities the different participants create, and supplement this with information derived from online interviews to begin to unravel how people create musical meaning for themselves and for others.

Musical activity takes place in more websites than YouTube. Since the ban has at least made YouTube access more problematic, other sites have become centers of musical activity. Two important and prominent examples are Facebook, the social networking site, and İzlesene, a Turkish-language video sharing site. These two sites, like YouTube, foster video sharing and allow for a more community-based or contextual musical interaction than other types of music-related sites. However, each site has its own unique features that influence and determine how the music is accessed and framed. These disparate framing elements are enough to create a different kind of dialogue on each of the sites. By looking briefly at some musical activity on these sites, I show the importance of the music's immediate context (how it is presented and accessed online) as a determining factor in how it is received.

This study is not intended to be an exhaustive look at the phenomenon of online videos of traditional Turkish music. Rather, the study is structured along the lines of ethnography – here, a virtual ethnography. In the study I analyze the cybersonic environment – musical content as well as contextual framing elements – that exists on YouTube videos. Among the many difficulties in pursuing "e-fieldwork" of this kind that have been noted by scholars such as ethnomusicologist Abigail Wood are the uncertainties surrounding projected identities – identities of the people encountered online, as well as the identity that the researcher presents.[12] This difficulty is only compounded when the issue being examined is itself a question of identity. The alleged anonymity of Internet encounters may suggest to some that the danger of an individual completely fabricating an inflammatory personality or leaving pointless conflict-generating comments for personal amusement makes online fieldwork more hazardous than face-to-face communication. This danger is real, but I believe we can safely assume that many if not most Internet personalities are genuine, at least insofar as they represent an individual's self-perception.[13]

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[12] Wood, Abigail. "E-Fieldwork: A Paradigm for the 21st Century?" in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2008. 182

[13] An example of one such pitfall is the kind of comment often described by Internet users as "trolling" – posting deliberately inflammatory comments in order to garner reactions and attention. Whether or not this behavior should be taken to represent the user's actual beliefs or values in general is unclear; however, in cases where the comments are consistent with the users' other behavior, they can be assumed to represent, at the very least, an extreme version of his or her actual viewpoint. This may be determined by taking note of the same poster's consistent inflammatory behavior in different contexts. Additionally, the reactions produced by these comments provide insight into others' views as well. To some extent, these comments can be useful ways of understanding people's views if treated with caution.

The agreement and similarities between this study and my "real-world" background in this same music leads me to trust, generally speaking, that an online presence with a name, location, and generated, creative content corresponds to a real, actual person with those real, actual opinions – though those opinions may be stated more strongly than in face-to-face communication. A profile lets an individual select which of their features they present. In the real world, it may not be immediately apparent how a new acquaintance identifies ethnically or nationally. In the world of online profiles, if an individual feels strongly about these aspects of personal identity, such views might occupy a prominent place in his or her profile (as simple as "I am a Kurd living in Berlin", for example). This self-perception could then be influential in how a new person, to whom identity is also important, perceives them.

E-fieldwork is a constantly changing field, and authors including ethnomusicologist Abigail Wood have noted that a definitive practical guide may not be possible (Wood, 2008). Instead of directly imitating other researchers' methods, I have adapted the ethical guidelines proposed by communications scholar Barbara Sharf:[14]

1. The researcher should contemplate how the research may help or harm the purposes of the group.
2. The researcher should clearly introduce him or herself, identity, purpose, and intention.
3. The researcher should attempt to directly contact an individual for consent to quote posted messages.
4. The researcher should maintain openness to feedback from the e-mail participants who are being studied.
5. The researcher should attempt to maintain and demonstrate a respectful sensitivity toward the psychological boundaries, purposes, vulnerabilities,

[14] Sharf, Barbara F. "Beyond Netiquette: The Ethics of Doing Naturalistic Discourse Research on the Internet." *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net*. Ed. S Jones. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999. 243-256

and privacy of the individual members of a self-defined virtual community, even though its discourse is publicly accessible.

These standards essentially point to a kind of virtual communication that is as similar as possible to face-to-face interaction. The goal of the standards is to prevent the kind of abuses (on the part of the researcher) that Internet anonymity can allow. However, even if the researcher follows these guidelines to the best of his/her ability, virtual communication is always different than face-to-face communication. A researcher attempting to be as open and transparent as possible has no guarantee that the other people involved will be as forthcoming. This does not necessarily have to be seen as a weakness of virtual fieldwork, as long as the researcher can establish meaningful connections and draw informed conclusions that take into account possible posturing. By maintaining a presence on the different websites I have examined, I have attempted to be transparent and provide communication avenues with the individuals I have contacted. Additionally, it has not been my intention to show disrespect towards anyone I have interacted with; rather, I hope to demonstrate the importance and weightiness of their expressed perspectives regarding the music in question.

A study of this kind has certain limitations. While it is not always possible to know why a person behaves the way they do, the distance inherent in e-fieldwork makes it difficult to even ask the person these types of questions. In this study, I analyze what people post online at face value, and examine how other users respond to this content. While it would be interesting to supplement analysis of these interactions and expressed views with direct interviews, such an in-depth analysis is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I hope to provide a concentrated look into online dialogue in relation to postings of

Turkish folk music videos and to position this dialogue within broader discussions of "Turkishness" in light of the government ban on Youtube.

My analysis of folk song videos on YouTube consists of three parts. The first chapter is a discussion of the politicized history of music in Turkey generally, and presents the background (historical, geographical, and musical) context of one particular *türkü*, "Kalenin Bedenleri" ("The Walls of the Castle"). In the second chapter, I examine four specific YouTube videos that use this song and show how the song's background and the different contextual elements of each video contribute to varying forms of dialogue in relation to each video. The third chapter expands this discussion to other online video-related websites and shows how differences in online presentation contribute to different kinds of online dialogues between commentators. Through this study, I show the importance of the Internet as a space for debating existing historical issues concerning "Turkishness", and how the debate changes in this new space.

## 2.0   *TÜRKÜ* ON THE INTERNET: A NEW SPACE FOR AN OLD DEBATE

Many Turkish folk songs have been posted to YouTube.  Some of these songs become the focal points for debate and controversy, while some, though they have been used in the same Kemalist dialogue of the past century, do not.  The way a song is presented in terms of elements such as textual information, performance style, and the title given to a video by the poster may have as much of an effect on how the song is received as the history and past contexts of the song. In order to show the importance and potential of virtual space in determining meaning, I examine one particular song with an interesting, though by no means unique, position in the "Turkishness" debate.  This song, "Kalenin Bedenleri" ("The Walls of the Castle"), is seen as an example of the *türkü* genre of Turkish folk song.  The term *türkü* (pl. *türküler*) is mainly used to refer to all Turkish traditional song,[15] but often is applied only to anonymous songs with a strict meter, thus making *türkü* a subcategory of *kırık hava* (Tr: broken melody).  This name refers to how the melody is "broken" by having a meter.  The other broad category of traditional song is *uzun hava* –

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[15] This definition is given on the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's website. "REPUBLIC OF TURKEY MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM." T.C. KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
<http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN/Genel/BelgeGoster.aspx?17A16AE30572D313A781CAA92714FCE05620E14DF965E1EB>.

long melody – which is unmetered.[16] Defined in that sense, *türküler* are regarded as some of the oldest Turkish folk songs, with texts that are seen as some of the oldest forms of folk poetry.  This antiquity has given *türküler* an importance in ethnic Turkish folklore, ensuring an important role for *türküler* in the official nation-building policies of modern Turkey.  The history of these policies must be understood in order to appreciate the debate currently underway in the virtual sphere.


## 2.1    A "FUNDAMENTALLY TURKISH" MUSIC?


The politicization of Turkish traditional musics is part of a larger intellectual movement with roots in the rise of nationalism in the 19th century.    As nationalist movements spread throughout the Balkans, beginning with Greek nationalism and Greek independence in 1830, observers began to predict the collapse of the Empire.  Russia, which had been engaged in conflict with the Empire over the question of Black Sea trade and access to the Mediterranean, hoped to be able to exert a increased influence in the Empire's European, Orthodox territories.  This prospect worried other major European powers, who feared that a growing Russian Empire would upset the balance of power in 19th century Europe (the "Concert of Europe").  The question of what would become of Ottoman territories if the Empire were to collapse became known as the "Eastern Question".  The Crimean War (1854-56), which began as a conflict between the Ottoman and Russian Empires but expanded as Britain and France supported the Ottoman Empire,

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[16] Markoff, Irene. "Aspects of Turkish Folk Music Theory." Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 6: The Middle East (2001): 77-87.

stands out as an example of European intervention and attempt to maintain the balance of power among Europe's empires.

While other political entities planned for the dissolution of the Empire, Ottoman intellectuals formulated measures intended to prevent its collapse. "Ottomanism" was introduced in the later 19th century as an appeal to an Ottoman patriotism, attempting to counter the growth of religious or ethnic nationalism. Other thinkers felt that a return to stricter political Islam could be the solution to the Empire's troubles; if the Sultan could assert his position as Caliph (political leader of all Muslims), this could provide a powerful counter to the Russian and British Empires.[17] These approaches proved unsuccessful in slowing the growth of Balkan and Arab nationalist movements; thinkers turned instead to a European-inspired ethnic nationalism that envisioned the Turkish people as the core of a new, post-Ottoman state.

This intellectual climate fostered a discourse that sought to define Turkish culture and Turkish national character. This search for "Turkishness" as the essential values and qualities of ethnic Turks sought to both elevate Turkish nationalism to an equal plane with other nationalist movements in Europe as well as identify "non-Turkish" elements in the existing social and political system. By doing so, these intellectuals hoped to provide an ideological framework for a post-Ottoman Turkish nation. The Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp (1876 – 1924) presented one framework and critique of Turkish culture in his highly influential work, *The Principles of Turkism* (Tr. *Türkçülüğün Esasları*), published one

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[17] Both empires contained a large population of Muslims – the British in India and the Russians in Central Asia. However, the claims of the caliph to represent these people politically proved to be of little value during World War I, despite the hopes of the Central Powers.

year before his death, in 1923. Gökalp's book and underlying ideology had a strong influence on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and other political figures who founded the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and formulated its new cultural policy throughout the 20s and 30s. Additionally, Gökalp's view influenced musicologists, such as Mahmud Ragib Gazimihal, who used his study of Turkish music to support Gökalp's nationalist principles. Gökalp's influence on policy makers and intellectuals in turn colored, and still colors, how Turkish music is understood today.

*The Principles of Turkism* cast Turkish culture into two segments. In this view, certain cultural elements, such as Ottoman classical music, represented the decaying imperial segment of Ottoman culture. These elements were linked by a connection to the multiethnic cosmopolitan environment of the coastal urban centers and Ottoman court. Gökalp used Ottoman classical music as a prominent example of this Ottoman culture, which was dominated both by the religious framework of Islam and by non-Turkish groups, among them Greeks, Jews, and Armenians. As a result of these non-Turkish influences, Gökalp argued, Ottoman music had stagnated and could not provide a foundation of a new post-Ottoman music.[18]

The second segment of Turkish culture as argued by Gökalp in *The Principles of Turkism* was the pure national tradition, with its origin in Central Asia rather than the Islamic or Mediterranean world. Rather than looking to the urban centers for cultural elements that fit into this segment, Gökalp looked to the culture of the rural Turkish-

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[18] O'Connell, John Morgan. "Sound Sense: Mediterranean Music from a Turkish Perspective." The Mediterranean in Music: Critical Perspectives, Common Concerns, Cultural Differences (Europea: Ethnomusicologis and Modernities). Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005. 3-25.

speaking Muslims of inland Anatolia.  Because of central Anatolia's relative isolation from the cosmopolitan, multiethnic culture of the Mediterranean coastal regions, the musical traditions of this region provided sociologists and musicologists, working from a nationalist perspective, with a basis for a national music that provided an alternative to the cosmopolitan (and, to them, moribund) Ottoman classical music.

Other politically motivated discourse in the previous century, such as the ideology of Turanism, sought to show that all different Asian, European, and American[19] cultures derived from Central Asian culture (and thus giving Turkish folk culture an elevated position).  For example, the "sun language theory", developed by Turkish linguists in the 1920s and 30s, was an attempt (now discredited) to show that all languages have a Central Asian and thus ultimately Turkish origin.[20]  By putting Turkish in an elevated place in linguistic theory, proponents of the theory (including Ataturk himself) challenged the Eurocentric view of history, as well as the view that Turkish language and culture was derived from Arabic and Persian sources.  Loanwords from Persian or Arabic that Ataturk's language reforms were unable to replace were excusable under this hypothesis, because according to the theory they were all ultimately derived from Turkish.  This trend towards casting elements of Turkish culture as foundational found its way into other fields as well, including musicology.

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[19] The view that the Native Americans are descended from early proto-Turkic tribes still enjoys some popularity today, as evidenced in a panel discussion held in New York, 2008, entitled "Common Roots between Native Americans and Turks".
<http://haber.turk.net/haber_detay.asp?ID=1940102&cat=ENG> Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
[20] Lewis, Geoffrey L. *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*. Oxford: Oxford Univ., 2002.

Much of the early work by Turkish musicologists, such as Mahmud Ragip Gazimihal (1888 – 1961), was motivated by this nationalist goal of elevating Turkish folk culture and used the ideas of Ziya Gökalp as a launching point. Gazimihal's comprehensive study of world musical practices, published between 1923 and 1928, developed a theory of microtonality and pentatonicism which gave Turkish folk music a central position as progenitor in understanding the relations between different musical traditions.[21]

During the first three decades of the Turkish Republic, *türküler* was described and taxonomized (along with other forms of Anatolian folk music) as an ideal basis for understanding Turkish character, at least as a distinct entity separate from Islam and non-Turkish ethnic groups. Songs were collected, described, and grouped based on regional similarities and differences. This organizational scheme linked the folk music to the territory that had become the Republic of Turkey, cementing the claim that the different regions of Turkey, with their historical connections to other political entities and ethnic groups, were all integral parts of the Turkish nation-state.

The government established by Ataturk and his supporters in 1923 quickly began a program of reform, called the Ataturk Revolutions[22] (*Atatürk Devrimleri*). Even after the political developments of the past eighty years, these reforms continue to dominate how cultural debate is understood in Turkey. The conventional understanding of Turkish cultural issues pictures an elite and powerful central state bureaucracy imposing reform

[21] O'Connell, 13.
[22] The reforms implemented by Ataturk in areas such as religion, language, women's rights, and education were so drastic that in Turkish they are referred to not as reforms, but as revolutions.

measures on a passive periphery.[23]  This view stems from the early years of the Republic, when the personal ideology of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and widely-perceived hero of the new Turkish state, became official cultural policy.  In this ideology, which came to be called Kemalism, music in the new state was used to advance the nationalist and modernizing goals of the government.  Western classical music, symbolizing modernity as well as reflecting Turkey's new westward-looking stance, was promoted through the establishment of conservatories and official radio stations.  Additionally, Turkish folk music, including the *türkü* genre, was promoted in the mid 1930s to reflect the supposedly unified ethnic identity of the Republic.  It was believed that the folk music of the rural central Anatolian region would reflect a purely Turkish character.  In this view, Anatolian folk music would have been "unspoiled" by influences of the Islamic Middle East (seen as underdeveloped and dangerously reactionary by Europe-facing secular Kemalists) as well as from the influences of "subversive" (according to those same Kemalists) minority groups such as Greeks or Armenians, which, in the view of Turkish nationalists, had contributed to the collapse of the old empire.

## 2.2     CHALLENGES TO "TURKISHNESS" FROM POPULAR MUSIC

This view that Anatolian folk music represented the "unspoiled" ethnic character of the Turkish nation was challenged by the "pure Anatolian folk" from the beginning, despite (or because of) its pervasiveness.  Along with the efforts to promote and control

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[23] Stokes, Martin.  "Islam, the Turkish State, and Arabesk."  *Popular Music*. Vol 11. No 2. Cambridge University Press. 1992.

music and language, names of minority groups or regions within Anatolia, such as *Kürt* (Kurd), *Kürdistan* (Kurdistan), *Laz* (an ethnic group in northeastern Anatolia), and others were banned in public and official discourse. Additionally, names of regions were changed from non-Turkish to Turkish names. These official efforts to homogenize and define the identity of residents of the Republic of Turkey in the 30s and 40s caused some populist backlashes as people rejected these state-imposed definitions and identities. Before World War One and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the territory that became the Republic of Turkey was home to people that identified themselves along different religious, linguistic, and ethnic lines, and who had been assigned different identities by various prior authorities.[24] Some, such as the Greeks, had strong ties to other nation-states with similarly complex nationalist issues. "Turkifying" this region created conflict, evident in reactions to musical developments such as the growth of the genre called *arabesk*.

While the Turkish-language folk music of Anatolia had been selected to reflect the national character of Turkey, it remained unpopular with many rural listeners, who identified more strongly with the music of the religious establishment. As Stokes shows, the secular government's efforts to dissociate itself from the surrounding Muslim regions (mainly the Arab states that had been established after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire) and political Islamism, viewed as a potential threat to the existence of the state, led to a suppression of Arabic-language film in 1948; however, Arabic-language radio was popular with large segments of the population. This affinity and government pressure to limit

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[24] For example, the *millet* system, which evolved as an Ottoman institution beginning in 1453, clearly defined four minority communities – Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Syraic Orthodox, and Jewish – along religious lines. By allowing the groups to enforce social laws, the system fostered distinct community identities.

access to Arabic-language music led to a domestic Turkish genre, *arabesk*, which imitated practices of Arabic music with Turkish instruments, lyrics, and themes (Stokes, 1992).

The rise of *arabesk* in the 1950s can be seen as an indication that the government's imposed definition of what music is truly Turkish and appropriate for a Turkish nation-state was challenged by listeners and artists from the very beginning. The ideology that had been articulated by Ataturk's government had clear, though contradictory, definitions regarding which music was acceptable. "Foreign" Arabic or *makam*-based music was identified with a pan-Islamist ideology and a dangerous type of foreign connection. At the same time, European classical music was encouraged as fitting with the Kemalist ideology's West-looking goals. *Arabesk* grew in popularity, developing lyrical themes that dealt with the feelings of alienation, isolation and estrangement felt by a people experiencing radical shifts in society. In the 1960s and 70s, these tensions increased, along with violent demonstrations by the far left and far right. The 1980 military coup ended the violence and firmly re-established the nationalist, Kemalist agenda as the directing force of the state. However, the top-down stance of the Kemalist government continued to alienate many Turks, especially those who associated with *arabesk* and its expression of the disconnectedness of modern life. As Stokes points out, this alienation led to a kind of "*arabesk* politics": by the mid-1980s, *arabesk* was clearly linked with a certain political stance characterized by center-right nationalism and support for some forms of public religious expression (Stokes, 1992). For many, this opposition to strict Kemalism represents a challenge to the ideals of Atatürk; such challenges to established definitions of Turkishness are taken seriously. I have found that, even today, listeners who associate politically with the CHP (the party of Atatürk) still tend to view *arabesk* as an affront to the

foundational ideals of the republic, even if they consider *arabesk* to be an old and outdated genre.

Today, the 1930s Kemalist conception of what music is truly "Turkish" and what music is foreign (whether positively, as in the case of Western classical music, or negatively, in the case of *arabesk*) has been part of the nation's educational and media institutions for around 75 years. These distinctions are part of life and influence how people understand music today. The seriousness of challenging these distinctions, whether in conventional spaces or in online videos, can be seen in the debate that arises whenever and in whatever space such challenges occur.

## 2.3    *"KALENİN BEDENLERİ"* ("THE WALLS OF THE CASTLE"): HISTORICAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON A SONG'S MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

The song "Kalenin Bedenleri" ("The Walls of the Castle") is described by the national public broadcaster of Turkey, TRT (*Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu* – Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) as a *türkü* from the Tokat region.[25] Tokat is a small town of approximately 120,000 people, located in the north-central Black Sea region of Anatolia, east of Ankara. Today, this region is firmly within the borders of the Turkish nation-state. Like many other regional musics, the music of the rural Tokat region fits the government definition as an expression of purely Turkish culture. Despite this fit, the music of Tokat

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[25] "TRT Nota Arşivi." Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010. <http://www.trtnotaarsivi.com/>.

also exhibits characteristics that make a "purely Turkish" description problematic, as my analysis of online videos demonstrates.

The geography and physical location of Tokat are important in order to understand how well the music of the region could fit the profile of a "purely Turkish" art. Tokat is inland, separated from the Black Sea by the Pontic or Eastern Black Sea Mountains (Tr. *Doğu Karadeniz Dağları*). This location, separated from the coastal region and thus seemingly historically insulated from external cultural influences, gives it a privileged physical position in an ideology like Gökalp's. It is possible (and indeed common) for the Turkish listeners to whom I have spoken to assume that the music of a central Anatolian region like Tokat is purely "theirs". There is some historical scope to this perspective; in the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, in which the victorious Allies divided Anatolia into regions controlled by different groups following World War One, Tokat and the region surrounding it was included in the area under Turkish control. Evidently, even the erstwhile opponents of the Ottoman Empire, who divided Anatolia amongst themselves, Greece, and the new Armenian state, considered Tokat Turkish enough to leave to the Turks. The Allies, favoring Greek and Armenian interests, considered Tokat a Turkish area in 1920 (before the population exchanges in 1923 that would further reduce the size of minority communities); that perception can only have strengthened since then.

However, this view oversimplifies the complexity of the region's history. Before the First World War, the north central Black Sea coast was home to a large population of ethnic Greeks, whose ancestors had lived in the area for centuries. This community, called the Pontian Greeks, spoke a unique dialect of Greek and maintained certain unique traditions. The topography of the region made it difficult for the Ottoman government to maintain

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authority along the coast, especially after Russia began to challenge Ottoman control of the

Black Sea.  While the major urban centers in the Pontian region were coastal cities such as

Trabzon and Sinop, the Greek population was not limited to coastal, urban areas.  Both in

the city centers and in smaller town environments, many opportunities existed for

exchange between the Greek and Turkish populations.  Additionally, the region was home

to a large population of Armenians as well, though the traditional heart of the Armenian

homeland is usually understood to be farther east.  The existence of these historical groups

cannot be ignored, especially in evaluating nationalist claims regarding the music's "purely

Turkish" identity.

Despite this background, a *türkü* such as "Kalenin Bedenleri" could fit

perfectly into a Kemalist conception of a "truly" Turkish song.  A Turkish listener, told that

the song is an anonymous folk song from inland Anatolia, is likely to understand the song

as Turkish in the light of the nationalist dialogue.  Actions that challenge the distinct and

purely Turkish identity of the song are likely to become points of debate in a similar way to

*arabesk* in the past.



**Figure 1.** Location of Tokat Province and Tokat within Turkey.  Ordu Province is immediately adjacent to

Tokat, against the Black Sea to the northeast.

**Figure 2.** Official notation of "Kalenin Bedenleri" as found in TRT's archive. "TRT Nota Arşivi." Web.

Accessed 20 Apr. 2010. <http://www.trtnotaarsivi.com/>.

My analysis examines a number of appearances of "Kalenin Bedenleri" in YouTube videos that, in one way or another, challenge the simple identification of the song as "Turkish". One important popular recording of the song by Candan Erçetin in 1995 appears in many fan videos on YouTube, and may be regarded as somewhat typical in terms of structure and lyrics. The liner notes give the source of the song as Tokat, in north-central Anatolia. Like many *türküler*, the song exists in regional variations; each version may be claimed to be the original. Candan Erçetin's liner notes list variations from Muş in eastern Anatolia, Yozgat in central Anatolia, and İzmir and Bergama in western Anatolia. These scattered locations make the song locally recognizable across Turkey, and further strengthen the song's national character and appeal.

The song's form is typical of many characteristic of the *türkü* genre. In the Candan Erçetin version, which I will analyze, as well as most other versions, the song uses an alternating verse/chorus format. Each verse alternates seven syllable phrases with refrains of different lengths: "Yar yar yar yandım" (My love, my love, my love, I burned) and "Şinanay yavrum Şinanay nay" (Şinanay darling Şinanay nay).

| Turkish | English Translation[26] |
|---|---|
| Kalenin bedenleri | Castle walls |
| (Yar yar yar yandım) | (My love, my love, my love, I burned) |
| Koyverin gidenleri | Let those who are going go |
| (Şinanay yavrum şinanay nay) | (Şinanay darling şinanay nay) |
| Kaleden iniyorum | I am going down from the castle |
| (Yar yar yar yandım) | (My love, my love, my love, I burned) |
| Cağırsan geliyorum | If you call, I'll return |

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26 Translation is my own.

| | |
|---|---|
| (Şinanay yavrum şinanay nay) | (Şinanay darling şinanay nay) |
| Aşkından kibrit oldum | I became a match from your love |
| (Yar yar yar yandım) | (My love, my love, my love, I burned) |
| Üfürsen yanıyorum | If you blow, I burn |
| (Şinanay yavrum şinanay nay) | (Şinanay darling şinanay nay) |

The lyrics contain complex images for love that may arise from a story or from a poetic metaphor; love is like a castle that the lover wants to be free from but will still return to, and the lover is like a match, but when his or her love speaks or blows, instead of going out, the singer bursts into flames.  This kind of roundabout, poetic imagery is typical of the *türkü* genre.[27]   Additionally, the language of the song (like most aspects of the Turkish language) is gender-neutral, and the imagery is sufficiently vague to make the song appropriate in a multitude of different settings.

Candan Erçetin's recording challenges the strictly Turkish identification of the song by including a verse in Greek.  This Greek verse is taken from "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou", recorded in 1958 by Stelios Kazantzidis (1931-2001), an enduringly popular Greek singer.[28]  The song shares the tune of "Kalenin Bedenleri", with Greek lyrics written by Kazantzidis.  Kazantzidis' exposure to "Kalenin Bedenleri" likely came from his parents, who emigrated from Turkey to Greece during the population exchange in 1923. Kazantzidis' father was a Pontian Greek from Ordu, a coastal region just north of Tokat. (The name *Kazantzidis* derives from the Turkish *kazancı*, meaning a maker of cauldrons.) One could speculate that Kazantzidis' father, growing up in Ordu, may have heard the song

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[27] Markoff, 80

[28] Buhayer, Constantine.  " Obituary: Stelios Kazantzidis | News | The Guardian ." *Latest news, comment and reviews from the Guardian | guardian.co.uk*. 16 Nov. 2009. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2001/sep/18/guardianobituaries2>.

or similar music there and passed on an appreciation of the music to his son.  Certainly, Kazantzidis used Turkish material often, as if he felt that music from Turkey reflected his own heritage.  He often sang in Turkish; many of these recordings can be found on YouTube.[29] Kazantzidis' version uses the melody of "Kalenin Bedenleri", set with a new Greek text that includes a prominent reference to the Turkish tsiftetelli (çiftetelli), a dance accompanied by the bağlama.[30]

| Greek[31] | English Translation[32] |
|---|---|
| Σήκω χόρεψε κουκλί μου | Get up and dance my baby, |
| να σε 'δώ να σε χαρώ | So I can see you and enjoy you, |
| τσιφτετέλι Τούρκικο | Turkish Tsiftetelli |
| νιναναη γιαβρουμ νιναναη ναηνα | Ninanay darling ninanay nayna |

The chorus of the song (Opa nina ninanay ninanay nay...) is also the same as in the Tokat version.  These elements, especially the "Turkish tseftetelli" reference, link the song to Turkey in ways that would be impossible for a Greek listener to ignore, and act as a clear expression of appreciation for commonalities in Greek and Turkish culture.   This is especially notable in light of poor Turkish-Greek relations in the 1950s and the violent anti-

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[29] " YouTube - Oglan Oglan Kalk Gidelim - Stelios Kazantzidis ." *YouTube - Broadcast Yourself.* 16 Nov. 2009. Web.  Accessed 20 Apr. 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGNnHUZmQpE>.
[30] "Çifte" means "double" and "tel" means "string" in Turkish; thus the çiftetelli refers to a dance accompanied by an instrument with doubled strings, such as the bağlama.  The Greek bouzouki resembles the bağlama and is likely a closely related instrument.
[31] Logothetis, George.  "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou." Accessed 7 Dec 2009. <http://www.greekmidi.com/songs/kazantzidis/sikohorepsekouklimou.html>
[32] Tahira. "Lyrics Forum". Accessed 7 Dec 2009 <http://www.allthelyrics.com/forum/greek-lyrics-translation/54025-arvanitaki-eleftheria-and-co-siko-xorepse-koykli-moy-baby-get-up-and-dance.html>

Greek Istanbul riots in1955 that left many dead and wounded and accelerated the Greek flight from Istanbul. Kazantzidis' use of Turkish folk song to both express his personal roots and to consciously note the ties between Turkey and Greece is not unique, in the sense that many other songs have been used by different performers for similar ends. The rebetiko song "Miserlou", written by a Greek artist with an Anatolian background, is another example; the title is a Greek spelling of the Turkish word *Mısırlı*, meaning an Egyptian Muslim (here, the object of the singer's passion). The song "Üsküdar'a Gider iken" (Tr. "On the way/While going to Üsküdar" [an Anatolian neighborhood across from Istanbul]) is another example, appearances of which are well documented among Greek, Serbian, Bosnian, Arab and Jewish communities.[33] Artists, audiences, Internet posters, and commentators today use these and many other songs as a way to express views on ethnic authenticity in musical performance, and Greek or Turkish (or any of many other regional) identities.

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[33] Buchanan, Donna A.. ""Oh, Those Turks!": Music, Politics, and Interculturality in the Balkans and Beyond." *Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene: Music, Image, and Regional Political Discourse (Europea : Ethnomusicologies and Modernities)*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007. 3-55.

# 3.0 ONLINE VIDEO AS A MUSICAL EVENT: ANALYSIS OF FOUR YOUTUBE VIDEOS OF "KALENİN BEDENLERİ"

YouTube videos that combine music and imagery can be considered a form of musical performance. As in any musical event, there are a number of participants in a YouTube video, each fulfilling a number of roles; some act as performers, some as presenters/hosts, and some as listeners and commentators. YouTube acts as a space where participants have access to different forms of self-representation. These opportunities for expression can reverse normal expectations regarding who is given a voice. The artist or musical performer whose work is used in a video may not have any more of a voice than a listener, unless the video is officially released by the artist. If the song is used as part of an unauthorized video, such as in fan videos or other original works, the artist may not have any say at all in how his or her music is disseminated and received. This situation makes it especially important to examine the role of all different participants in the musical event. Thus, in the videos I analyze, I look at the video's creator/poster and commentators, as well as the song's performers.

The first video represents what for many viewers might be seen as a traditional performance context of "Kalenin Bedenleri".[34]  The video is a filmed session of an Ordu *Türk halk müziği* (Turkish folk music) social gathering.  The presentation and performance of the song in this version are different than the other two song videos I analyze.  Unlike other versions, this performance takes place outside of an overtly performance-centered setting, and is played on traditional Turkish instruments.  These differences encourage a response that addresses the musical performance without the politicized debate that marks other presentations on YouTube.

The video shows a group of 21 men, with ages ranging from their 30s on up, sitting against cushions in a long rectangular room playing the song and singing.  Several different instruments are being played by the group, including the *saz* and *tanbur* (two different long-necked lutes) and the *darbuka* and *daf* drums.  Many of the men are singing and clapping along, and there is no clear indication of an audience apart from the performers themselves, who may act as their own audience.  This gives the performance the feeling of a gendered social event or gathering.  The decoration and layout of the room, with carpets, cushions, and low tables, shows a preference for traditional Turkish aesthetic motifs.

The poster of the video is turkusevdam52 (*türkü sevdam* means "My *türkü* passion"), a username that could inform a Turkish speaker about the kinds of videos this user may post.  A YouTube user who does not speak Turkish would be unaware of this information; the content is thus directed at a Turkish-speaking audience.  turkusevdam52

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[34] "YouTube - Kalenin Bedenleri ( Niksarın Fidanları )." YouTube - Broadcast Yourself. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRZm26EJEe4>.

posts videos recorded at the *Ordu İlinde Sosyal ve Kültürel Amaçlı Türk Halk Müzik Topluluğu* (Ordu District Social and Cultural Turkish Folk Music Community). There are 153 uploaded videos on turkusevdam52's user page, all of which are recordings of *türkü* performances in various settings. Appearing on the upper right of the video page beneath the username, turkusevdam52 describes the video in the following terms: "Toplu İcra ; Ordu İlinde Sosyal ve Kültürel Amaçlı THM Topluluğu.Şef Şener Gök." ("Group interpretation; Ordu District Social and Cultural Purpose Turkish Folk Music Community. Leader: Şener Gök.") Similar descriptions, giving the title, performers, and limited performance information, are found for every video from this poster. Other information found on the user page inform us that turkusevdam52 is based in Turkey, has been recently active, and has 28 subscribers. Though many other people many view this poster's videos, these 28 subscribers have chosen to be informed whenever a new video is poster. If we believe turkusevdam52's profile to be true to his personal/real identity (and we have little reason not to) when that states he/she is a Turkey-based poster sharing videos of performances at a Turkish folk music society in Ordu, we must assume that he/she is finding some way to circumvent the YouTube ban. Brief investigation of the subscribers shows that they mostly list their location as Germany or some other EU country, with some subscribers listing the United States or Turkey as their location. Almost all use the Turkish language in their profiles.

The video for "Kalenin Bedenleri" gives the upload date as February 9, 2008. Since then, the video has been viewed 8,882 times, rated 18 times with an average rating of 4.78 out of 5 stars, and commented on 14 times, including 2 comments by the poster. YouTube provides data and statistics on viewing trends directly on the video page, based

on the information given in viewers' profiles.  This data, presented in a small world map,

shows that the majority of viewers with profiles are males living in Turkey, with a sizeable

group also coming from Germany.

Some comments prompted by the song support the idea that this

presentation of the song does not challenge its perceived "Turkishness".  One commentator

with the username poscotathar left a comment that translates to "No one else understands

us like we ourselves, brother... Happy is he who calls himself a Turk, happy is Anatolia!"[35]

The perception that this song is truly Turkish manifests itself in a denial that any other

group could "understand" or claim the song.  When the music is extended and attributed to

other groups, it raises controversy.  The other versions in this study demonstrate these

contentions.

The perception of the performance as being "authentic" is implicit in this and

other comments under the video.  This perceived authenticity could have its roots in a

number of sources.  First, the song is played on traditional instruments, using Turkish

tuning systems.  This is the only video I analyze that uses these instruments and this

tuning.  While it is not the goal of this study to explain Turkish tuning systems in detail, it is

an important part of the sound and lends to the feeling that this performance is more

"authentic" than the others I analyze.  Additionally, the song is performed in a gendered

space; everyone in the video is a man, and a viewer might identify this with traditional

Turkish gender separation.  A community of men singing and playing socially – not

professionally – outside of a big-city setting could be seen as more authentically Turkish

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[35] "Bizi bizden başka kimse anlamaz kardeş..  Ne mutlu Türküm Diyene, Ne mutlu
Anadoluya!"

than other performances. In these ways, the song's representation (performance as well as the framing) validates, reinforces, and contributes to, rather than challenges, the song's "Turkishness".

I chose this video as an example of a performance of "Kalenin Bedenleri" with little debate. Other versions, which use Greek lyrics and English text in their framing, tend to lead to contested discourse. This version contains little that would engender contentious debate. All the comments except one are in Turkish, and almost all of them are praise for the performance of the musicians. This video shows that, by not challenging the established "Turkishness" of the music, it is possible to present "Kalenin Bedenleri" in such a way as to limit or minimize controversy.

## 3.1    CANDAN ERÇETİN'S VERSION AND THE ROLE OF THE POSTER IN FRAMING DIALOGUE

The reception of a song that accompanies an online video is shaped by at least three factors. First is the "song itself" – its lyrics, melody, accompaniment, and other aspects of the song as sound. Secondly, the way that the poster presents the song – the video, title, search terms, and additional comments – determine how a song is received. Lastly, the contributions of other viewers through comments and video responses can greatly influence the conversation a song fosters.

A YouTube video of Candan Erçetin's version[36] of "Kalenin Bedenleri" illustrates the effect of all three of these influences. Candan Erçetin is a Turkish pop star, born in Kırklareli in Thrace and educated in İstanbul, who has often sung arrangements of folk tunes. "Kalenin Bedenleri" appears on her 2005 album *Aman Doktor*,[37] which consists of 12 rearranged folk songs. Each song on the album is associated with both Greece and Turkey, and all but one[38] have lyrics in both languages. Erçetin sings in both Turkish and Greek for each song, and provides information on the Greek lyrics in the album's liner notes. All the songs have anonymous Turkish lyrics that reflect their provenance as Anatolian folk or traditional songs. For many of the songs, the Greek lyrics were written in the 20th century following the 1923 population exchanges in which most of the Greek population of Anatolia, including the Pontic Greek parents of Stelios Kazantzidis, were removed to Greece in exchange for the Muslim population of Greece. The *rebetiko* musicians who had Anatolian roots adapted the folk songs of their former homes for their exclusively Greek audience.[39] The rest have anonymous Greek lyrics as well, pointing to the inherent difficulty of describing a song as purely Turkish or Greek.

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[36] "YouTube – Candan Erçetin – Kalenin Bedenleri." YouTube – Broadcast Yourself. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saue841_ikk>.
[37] "Oh Doctor", the title of one of the songs on the album.
[38] The Greek lyrics for "Küçük Yaşta Aldım Sazı Elime / Με το σαζι μου στα χερια" ["I picked up the saz at a young age"] were written specially for the album, since the song is sung with Turkish lyrics in Greece.
[39] As we have seen, "Kalenin Bedenleri" is an example of a song of this type. Erçetin's notes provide this information: "In 1958, Siko Horepse Kukli Mu became one of the period's biggest hits in Greece. With words written by Stelyos Kazantzidis, the song used the melody of Kalenin Bedenleri, a turku from Tokat. The "Sinanay Yavrum" section is the same in both Greek and Turkish, and the song is known by this name in both countries. Four different regional variations from Mus, Yozgat, Izmir, Bergama, and Tokat, in 5 separate compilations differ from our version with minor variation in the Turkish lyrics." [Translation is my own.]

This album represents a careful and deliberate message in support of Greek/Turkish friendship.  This message is an important part of the musical text, and plays a key role in determining the song's reception.  I have spoken to several Turkish listeners (men and women in Ankara, mostly college-aged) who have expressed surprise, if not displeasure, at hearing a song as "Turkish" as "Kalenin Bedenleri" sung with Greek words.[40]  It is possible for this reaction to be amplified by the song's presentation in a video; however the framing of a video can also downplay such a reaction.

The online video I am examining was posted onto YouTube on October 4, 2007 by the user ichyoushe, whose location is listed as France.  The video is presented primarily as a fan page.  The title is simply "Candan Erçetin - Kalenin Bedenleri", the information provides the lyrics and a link to Erçetin's official website, and the video is a montage of photographs of the singer taken from officially released materials.  Hardly any mention is made of the song's politicized context, perhaps reflecting that the politicization is not as relevant in the poster's physical location (France).  The poster does not attempt to categorize the song as a *türkü* or any equivalent term.  The Greek title is featured prominently beside the Turkish title, as it is on the album *Aman Doktor.*  Both titles are possible search terms (as well as different terms for "Turkish" and "Greek" in English, Turkish, and French).

This user's profile provides an example of how personality is presented on YouTube.  A poster like ichyoushe, through his/her profile, creates an online persona that may be an idealized or selective representation of him/herself. As popular music scholar René T. A. Lysloff describes in his essay on virtual fieldwork, Internet interactions are not

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[40] From conversations in Ankara, 2009.

strictly mediated by physical appearance (or, for that matter, anything physical), allowing the user's self-presentation to frame perception.[41]  ichyoushe has chosen to reveal only certain aspects of who he or she is.  I did not contact ichyoushe for this study, and my perception of this user is limited by the small amount of information that he/she has provided.

One important identifier in ichyoushe's profile is language.  The use of Greek, Turkish, English, and French all point to the possibility of multiple intended audiences.  By using both Turkish and Greek, ichyoushe indicates that the video is directed towards both linguistic communities.  The use of French, the language of the user's immediate surroundings, shows that the video is not limited to Turkish or Greek audience and points to a connection to the user's other (real-world or virtual) social interactions.  In videos that are posted by Germany-based, Turkish-speaking users, the use of German indicates similar connections.  The use of English, as is the case in all of the videos I analyze, points to an international audience.  A dialogue in English is limited to English speakers; however, the development of the Internet is tied to the English language and, although the Internet is becoming a more multi-lingual place[42], English often still functions as the Internet's *lingua franca*.  Search terms in these languages determine who is likely to find the video if they search for it.

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[41] Lysloff, René T. A., and Leslie C. Gay. Music and Technoculture. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan UP, 2003.
[42] It is expected that by mid-2010, Internet domain names will not be limited to using only English characters.
"Internet Set To Add Web Addresses In Non-English Characters." Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/10/26/international-domain-name_n_333449.html>.

Other aspects within the poster's control indicate how the video is understood. These other framing elements include the kind of imagery and text surrounding the video. In this example, the imagery and text emphasize the artist, not any kind of underlying social or political issue implicit in the music. This "fan video" presentation might possibly be an indication that the poster does not consider the video to be fundamentally divisive, or at least that any political message in the video is secondary to other aspects of the performance – the artistry and skill of the performer, or the tastefulness of the song's interpretation. This study is limited to an analysis of online presentation; the view that this is primarily a fan video is supported through the video's imagery (still images of Candan Erçetin) and title text.

One might reasonably expect that ichyoushe's profile and framing would produce a certain response if it were the sole factor to influence audience reception and creation of meaning. Since the song is framed as part of a fan video, one would expect the responses to focus on Candan Erçetin as a performer. Indeed, many of the video's 62 responses fit this description; they consist largely of praise for the quality of the rendition, with a few comments on Erçetin's appearance. Additionally, since the framing of the video gives search terms in French, English, Turkish, and Greek, one would expect responses to come from all of these languages. This is somewhat reflected in the comments; many are in Turkish and English, and though none are written in Greek, many English comments

indicate that the commenter is Greek.[43] Despite the poster's listed location and use of French search terms, none of the comments are in French.

However, several of the video responses directly address the politicized background of the song in ways that the poster's framing cannot directly account for. Many comments are messages of support for peace and friendship between Greeks and Turks. A few comments (by one or two users) are against such an idea, using offensive language when talking about Greeks or implying that Erçetin has ruined the song by singing in Greek. These comments are a response to Erçetin's implicit stance on the nature of the song as an element shared by Turks and Greeks, a stance which conflicts with the view that the song is fundamentally Turkish. These responses are few, and greatly outweighed by more positive comments. Unlike other versions, this video has not created very heated debate because the framing has not placed the issues in the foreground; the presence of any debate at all is a sign of the importance of the issue, which can surface even when downplayed.

The use of language here, as in the poster's search terms discussed earlier, points to the international nature of YouTube. A user who posts in Turkish is limited mainly to Turks, whether in Turkey or abroad. By posting in English, a Greek or Turkish speaker attempts to reach a broader international audience. The success of this strategy can be seen by using YouTube's "like" feature. YouTube by allows viewers to respond to comments by "liking" or "disliking" them. Seeing how many "likes" or "dislikes" a comment gets can act as an indicator of how widely it is understood as well as how it is received. The three most "liked" comments in this video are English-language comments with a message

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[43] One typical such response: "Love you all, my turkish friends!  Greetings from Greece!", posted by the user veganyorgos.  The use of English when addressing Turks specifically is examined below.

in support of Greece-Turkey friendship.  Similar comments in Turkish receive fewer responses.  Two comments by the same user (eyalcin1), posted around the same time, demonstrate this quantitatively; one is in Turkish, and the other in English.  Both say roughly the same thing – Turks and Greeks are very similar, and enmity between Greece and Turkey is the result of foreign imperialist meddling.  The Turkish comment has received four "likes"; the English comment, seven.

YouTube provides a variety of other statistical information as well that can be used to paint a clearer picture of who is viewing the song.  Under the "Statistics and Data" section on the video site, there is a small world map that roughly indicates where people are viewing the video.  This video shows the most viewers coming from Turkey, with substantial numbers of viewers also in Greece, Germany, and Bulgaria.  This generally confirms the assumption that, as a Turkish pop singer, Erçetin's main audience would be Turkish speaking (explaining the predominance of Turkey and Germany on the map).  The presence of Greek search terms, and the song's history in Greece, explain the large number of Greek viewers as well.  The number of viewers from Bulgaria likely reflects the song's broader regional recognition and appeal (perhaps stemming from the strong historical Ottoman influence in the region).   This regional appeal is also apparent in comments signed from Bulgaria and Serbia (one of which extends the concept of Greece-Turkey friendship to the entire Balkan region).

The responses to this video show how the song as sound, the presentation of the poster, and the comments of viewers work together to influence the song's reception. Though Candan Erçetin's version emphasizes the importance of the song in both Greece and Turkey, the song's presentation in a fan video takes this emphasis out of the

foreground.  Thus, the responses to the song are predominately related to the concerns raised by the framing of the video.  The comments and the responses they generate show that all the users play some role in shaping the meaning of the song in this virtual context.

This ability of users to control aspects of how their content is presented is a development that departs from many other earlier forms of online communication. The Internet in general represents a specific kind of communication that provides very little contextual information to users.  In anthropologist Edward T. Hall's framework, outlined in his 1976 book *Beyond Culture*,[44] communication can be understood on a scale of the centrality of a message.  On one end, communication may emphasize a message ("content") over the context of the message.  This would be considered "low context" communication. On the other end would be communication in which the message seems to be less important than the context that surrounds it, such as the relationships between the people. This would be considered "high context" information.

In general, much of the existing study of Internet musical activity has emphasized content over personal relationships, communal events, or even physical interaction; in other words, content is more important than context.  For example, as René T. A. Lysloff points out in the introduction to *Music and Technoculture*, academic works that analyze online musical activity often emphasize file sharing,[45] which has the potential to be a very low context form of communication – a user can download music with a bare minimum of interaction with others.  Other Internet communication, such as the dissemination of music

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[44] Hall, Edward T. "Context and Meaning." *Intercultural Communication: a Reader*. Boston, Mass.: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009. 34-42.

[45] Sexton, Jamie. "Introduction". *Music Sound, and Multimedia*. Edinburgh University Press, 2007. 6.

criticism and background information, provides a huge amount of data and leads to patterns of consumption rather than generation or relationship building.[46]  However, as this video shows, YouTube provides avenues of Internet communication that allow users to determine the level of certain types of context: background information about the other users, pictures of them, other content they have generated, and their online relationships to others as YouTube subscribers.  One could argue that these avenues can be used by individuals accustomed to high context communication – what Hall would call members of a "high context culture" – to more easily appropriate the virtual sphere (presumably the product of a low context culture) to their existing cultural practices.  Neatly categorizing cultures as low context or high context can be problematic, but describing the level or importance of "context" in virtual musical interactions can show how musical meaning is determined.

  In the video of "Kalenin Bedenleri" posted by ichyoushe, the context-rich environment of YouTube can be seen through the way the commentators interact with the video.  Most of the responses are related to the poster's presentation of the song in the context of a fan video.  That the video produces responses related to Greek-Turkish friendship at all (both for and against the idea) reinforces notions of just how close to the surface this issue is.  In this and other examples, YouTube's "context-adding" features give users many opportunities to bring established, "real-world" conflicts and ideas such as Greek-Turkish relations into the virtual sphere.  An issue such as the Turkish national identity, which has been debated in musical circles for decades, is particularly likely to show up in comments on videos accompanied by Turkish folk music.

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[46] Ibid, 7.

**3.2    "KALENİN BEDENLERİ" ON "SONGS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TURKEY**

**AND GREECE": A CONTENTIOUS SPACE FOR NATIONALIST SENTIMENT**

Candan Erçetin's album *Aman Doktor,* on which "Kalenin Bedenleri" appears, is in many ways a project to show the commonalities in Greek and Turkish song, and to point to deeper commonalities in history and culture. Similar projects have been undertaken by other musicians, as well as by YouTube users. One such user is Kalimeraba[47], who posts a series of videos of songs with significance in both Turkey and Greece. One of these videos uses "Kalenin Bedenleri"/ "Siko Hourepsi Koukli Mou", creating a space that conflicts with a "purely Turkish" conception of the song.[48]

The video, like many posted by Kalimeraba, begins with an image of the text, "Songs for Friendship between Turkey and Greece." The rest of the video (and others by the same poster) is simply a still image of Greek and Turkish flags side by side. The information box on the side reads "Music is our common!! Music can change everything... We have the chance to know eachoter [*sic*] with music!!" The search terms include English, Greek, and Turkish terms, including "friendship" and "peace". Unlike ichyoushe's video, all these framing elements place a large emphasis on the shared nature of the song.

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[47] This is a combination of καλημέρα [Gr. Good morning] and Merhaba [Tr. Hello]; Kalimeraba says that this was a common greeting in historically mixed Greek and Turkish regions.
[48] "Tsiftetelli Tourkiko - Kalenin Bedenleri (Niksarin fidanlari)." YouTube - Broadcast Yourself. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2010.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EURxC3t0f0>.

Additionally, the version of the song used in the video also points to the joint Greek and Turkish claims to the song. A male vocalist, singing in Turkish, alternates verses with a female vocalist singing in Greek. Both vocalists sing the lines "Şinanay yavrum şinanay nay" and the chorus, lines that are common to the song in both languages. Each language is given equal time; using a male singer for one language and a female singer for the other could also imply both a balance and a relationship, especially when singing love songs. Alternatively, since the song is posted by a Turkish user and is likely from a Turkish artist, the use of the male voice to represent Turkish and the female voice to represent the Greek "other" might indicate a dominant or paternal attitude towards the Greek singers of an "originally Turkish song".

The song shows the most viewers in Greece, Turkey, and Germany. Larger numbers of viewers also appear in Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Also, all (or almost all[49]) of the song's 155 responses are messages in favor of Greek-Turkish friendship.

This brief example shows yet another way that framing and content shape how meaning is created. This version of "Kalenin Bedenleri" uses more Greek than Candan Erçetin's version, but the way the song is presented, above all other things, shapes how people respond to the performance. This video can be accessed by searching for terms such as "Greek Turkish friendship", or by following links from other videos with a similar message. The video thus attracts an audience interested in this message and willing both to voice support for it and to defend it against hateful comments. Such a strong framing thus selects a certain kind of viewer, leading to a very one-sided discourse.

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[49] At least two are clearly negative comments, but still relate to the poster's message.

**3.3    FUNDA ARAR'S VERSION AND THE ROLE OF COMMENTATORS IN**

**GENERATING DEBATE**


The last version of "Kalenin Bedenleri" I examine shows that, though aspects of the video and its presentation affect how musical meaning is created, the viewers themselves also play an important role in creating the terms of debate.  This video[50], posted by the user JasonSeaman1, is a live performance of the Turkish singer Funda Arar.  The video shows her singing with a backup orchestra, including a bouzouki player who sings one verse in Greek.

Even though the poster lists his location as Greece, he provides mostly Turkish search terms.  Additionally, the singer is Turkish, and the song is sung mostly in Turkish. As a result, the video has been viewed more times in Turkey than in Greece.  However, this is not reflected in the comments, most of which are in English and many of which appear to be written from a Greek perspective.

Some of the comments are similar to those in previous videos, praise for the song and messages about the closeness of Greeks and Turks.  However, this video also shows many inflammatory comments[51], several of which deal with whether or not the song should be considered Greek or Turkish.  One early comment, posted in English by the user cyprussunizhot, begins an argument over the song's origins by saying "i like it in greek

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[50] "Funda Arar – Siko Horepse Koukli Mou / Kalenin Bedenleri."  YouTube – Broadcast Yourself. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_wmeuhs5bc>. Incidentally, this video was the first to appear when the searchterm "kalenin bedenleri" was entered into YouTube's search box.

[51] These comments might be considered trolling, as described in the introduction.

better. sound werd in turkish".  The same user also reacts to the presence of a Greek instrument (the bouzouki) in a Turkish performance.  While many other comments do not respond to cyprussunizhot's statements, a discussion emerges between a few users who extend the argument to what is Turkish or Greek in general.  This discussion ranges from the land (cyprussunizhot asserts, for example, that Anatolia was Greek long before it was Turkish and that the song is thus Greek, while a Turkish user, burcu1983, disputes this and describes Greece as "a poor house of europe") to people (at one point, burcu1983 has a heated exchange with another user over whether Atatürk was Turkish or Greek due to being born in Thessaloniki, in today's Greece).

Very little about this video's content or framing explains this type of discussion.  To be sure, there are elements that could be expected to prompt a different kind of discussion – for instance, the performance, in which a female singer walks around singing while being accompanied by seated male instrumentalists, only one of whom sings, could be expected to lead to a discussion on gender roles, for instance.  However, the discussion I am focusing on here is on questions of history and national identity, which is not easily tied back to these performance elements.  The use of Greek in the performance, as well as the Greek bouzouki, might account for the argument on whether the song is Turkish or Greek, but these elements alone cannot explain why an argument emerges about the history of Asia Minor, or how long Turks have lived in Anatolia, or Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's true nationality.  After the issues are brought up by one or two posters seeking to draw a reaction, however, the audience of the video begins to respond; these issues become part of the video and shape how it is viewed.

## 3.4    OTHER VIDEOS AND COMMON PATTERNS OF DISCOURSE

A pattern is established in the comments to this video: while the earliest comments are often praise for the song and thanks to the poster for putting it on YouTube, one or two inflammatory comments prompt a discussion that disputes the origins of the song.  Usually, this discussion extends to Ottoman history, racial and ethnic origins, and whether or not specific other cultural elements are Greek or Turkish.[52]  This pattern of commentary is not unique for this video; many other videos of this song show similar patterns of discussion, and the pattern extends to other songs as well.

The prevalence of this phenomenon indicates that it is more than simply the result of what Internet users often call "trolling".  Elements of the video, framing, or comments that challenge the "Turkishness" (or other nationality) of the song not only prompt angry comments about the song, but raise issues of what and who is culturally, ethnically, or racially Turkish or Greek.  The discourse surrounding "Kalenin Bedenleri" is

[52] Some examples as of 25 Feb. 2010:
- "Mydros - Siko horepse koukli mou, Cocek"
  <http://www.youtube.com/watch#v=eqmWNPV857E>
- "Nina Nai Nai / Sinanai Greek Turkish Song Versions"
  <http://www.youtube.com/watch#v= VXwx14QQ5gs>
- "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou (Nina Nai Nai) Oud Master John Bilezikjian"
  <http://www.youtube.com/watch#v=21QVYr_9_KM>
- "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou (Nina Nai Nai)"
  <http://www.youtube.com/watch#v=FijENNWUkto>
- "Tsifte teli tourkiko (opa nina nai) greek version - Esma Redžepova"
  <http://www.youtube.com/watch#v=U_J7OBS1u0A>
    - This particular version follows a similar pattern, but instead of debating the Greek/Turkish origins of the song, viewers have debated whether the song is Greek or Macedonian.

These few examples are only for "Kalenin Bedenleri"; many examples can be found for songs with similar shared history, like "Üsküdar'a Gider İken" ("On the way to Üsküdar").

tied to these long-standing issues. By approaching the song from a Turkish perspective, I have attempted to show in more detail the possible origins of strong conceptions of the song's "Turkishness"; however, it is clear from the comments that similarly strong notions of Greek identities exist for this song. These conflicting identities run deeper than this particular song alone; contentious YouTube comments can be understood in the light of these long-standing nationalist discourses.

## 3.5    OTHER VIDEOS AND COMMON PATTERNS OF DISCOURSE

The examples I have examined all show the relationship between different influences on the construction of nationalist meaning in songs. Challenges to the song's perceived Turkishness can come from the performer, the poster, or the commentators. While all three sources can foster debate, challenges from the commentators seem to create the most contested dialogue, often straying far from the issue of just one song. This might occur for a number of reasons. In a fan-produced video like the ones we have seen, the performer's views are contained in a one-time act. Candan Erçetin does not continually clarify her views in YouTube videos others post. Similarly, if the poster does not take a leading role in discussion, they contribute to the creation of meaning only once. The ways in which the music is viewed come about through a dialogue. Commentators who actively participate in this dialogue thus can create the most heated debate over the song's meaning.

# 4.0    FACEBOOK, DAILYMOTION, AND İZLESENE: DISCOURSE (NATIONALIST OR OTHERWISE) IN OTHER VIRTUAL SPACES

The examples discussed in the previous chapter use YouTube videos to show how existing issues of nationalist sentiment and identity continue to be inflammatory in newer virtual contexts. YouTube itself, in many ways, is a singular phenomenon. Its popularity, along with other aspects of how video is presented on the site, distinguishes it from different venues for video sharing. These unique features create dialogue that is unlikely to appear on other sites. In the wake of the current YouTube ban, alternatives to YouTube have gained in popularity with Turkish users. (However, even despite the ban, YouTube continues to be a popular site for video sharing in Turkey, as I have seen by how often new content is posted to YouTube from Turkey-based users.) Dailymotion and İzlesene are two video-sharing sites that greatly resemble YouTube; both of these sites share YouTube's structure of users sharing and commenting on videos. These sites, along with the social networking site Facebook (which can be set up to display in Turkish and is immensely popular in Turkey) represent alternative virtual spaces to YouTube, with distinct framing that ultimately contributes to a different kind of dialogue than what appears on YouTube. By comparing these three examples to YouTube, we see the importance of the media itself in determining the types of debates that take place in its created virtual space.

## 4.1 FACEBOOK AND THE EFFECT OF "CONTEXT-ADDING" STRUCTURE

Though Facebook is not primarily a video-sharing site, pages exist that are dedicated to music videos. These pages become the sites of comments and postings that can be compared to YouTube. GÖNÜL TÜRKÜLERİ (loosely "Türküs of the Heart") is an example of one such page. This page has more than 21,000 fans, all of whom may be notified whenever the page's administrators post a video of a türkü or send a message to all fans. The page acts in a similar way to a YouTube channel. However, since fans can choose to be notified whenever the page's administrators post a new video, [53] they are delivered a constant stream of the page's videos. Viewers can comment on them in much the same way as with YouTube videos. Many of the postings link to other sites where the video is actually found. These sites, similar to YouTube (but rarely YouTube itself for Turkish video due to the ban), usually allow for comments as well; however, it appears that Facebook users usually comment on the Facebook page if they first saw the video there. This particular page is only one example of Turkish-language Facebook video pages. Other pages deal with other types of videos; examples can be found of pages that post humorous content, clips from television shows, or that deal with specific celebrity musicians.

One video out of the long list on the Gonul Turkuleri page is of the *türkü* "Bir Ay Dogar" ("A Moon Rises"), recorded from live television by Mustafa Ozarslan. This video follows a typical pattern for music on this page. The date and time that the video was posted is given. Underneath is a number for how many people have "liked" the video (a

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[53] The default is to be notified; thus, more accurately speaking, fans can choose *not* to be notified.

general indication of the video's reception and audience size).  Beneath this is a list of comments, all of which are in Turkish and respond to the singer's performance.  Scanning this page, I saw many comments in Turkish praising the performance and thanking the poster, but saw no comments in English, or any conflict over a song's Turkish or other national identity.

The reasons for these observations derive from the structure of Facebook itself.  My analysis leads me to argue that YouTube acts in some ways like an online community.  However, Facebook takes this model to a new dimension. Facebook is a social networking site, not primarily designed for video sharing.  Users create profiles for themselves and establish links to the profiles of other users (by adding them as "friends"), with whom they can share uploaded media and send messages.  The term "friends" implies that these virtual connections were designed, at least originally, to mirror real-world friendships or other social connections; additionally, the conventional Facebook profile is assumed to represent an actual person.  This link between "Facebook friendship" and the real social connections between people has consequences for the idea of online persona.  Many features of the site, such as the ability for others to upload photographs of others and "tag" them, constantly link the online persona of the Facebook profile to the real-world individual it represents.  Anonymity is thus less overt on Facebook than on other sites like YouTube; while it is possible to create a profile that protects a user's anonymity, most Facebook users link their online persona to their real-world persona.

These social network features of Facebook make it a different kind of space than YouTube.  YouTube does share some similar network-style features; for example, YouTube "subscribers" act somewhat analogously to Facebook friends.  These connections

are more like an added feature, not the central organizing principle of the site.  Even the

choice of language reflects the two sites' different intended function.  "Subscriber", to some

extent, implies "consumer".  It is not assumed by this language that a user even knows their

subscribers outside of the virtual arena.  Additionally, certain features of Facebook are

designed to be accessible only to the user's friends.  In contrast, YouTube, being more

clearly separated from real interactions and thus safer, is much more open; a user can

search for and view content posted by almost anyone, regardless of whether or not the user

subscribes to their content.  All sites are free and accessible to anyone with  sufficient

Internet access; the relative openness of YouTube comes from the structure of the site.

Chronologically speaking, Facebook began with fewer features beyond being

able to add friends and view their profiles; additionally, by requiring university email

addresses, the site emphasized that profiles should reflect real people.  Newer features

have opened up the site to different functions, many of which were no doubt unforeseen by

the site's creators.  Video was added to the site in 2007; commentators speculated that this

feature would cause Facebook to compete with YouTube as the most-used video sharing

site.[54]  Another important feature for video sharing is a special type of Facebook profile,

called a "page", released in 2009.[55]  Unlike personal profiles, pages act specifically as a kind

of advertising tool; they can represent celebrities, politicians, bands, companies, and other

kinds of non-personal entities.  Instead of become "friends", users become "fans" of these

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[54] Cashmore, Pete. "Facebook Video Launches: YouTube Beware!" Social Media News and Web Tips – Mashable – The Social Media Guide. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010. <http://mashable.com/2007/05/24/facebook-video-launches/>.
[55] "Facebook Pages - Facebook Developer Wiki." Main Page - Facebook Developer Wiki. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010. <http://wiki.developers.facebook.com/index.php/Facebook_Pages>.

pages; this appears on the user's personal profile and keeps the user informed on new content released by the page's administrators.

These two features are used, especially by Turkish Facebook users, for a kind of video-sharing that is very different than the activity on YouTube. The pattern for this kind of sharing is as follows: a page is created specifically for the purpose of video sharing, with a title that indicates for which kind of video it will serve as a space.[56] It is likely that many different individuals have administrative access to this page, and can post videos to the page at any time. Users who find the page and are interested in the kinds of video it is sharing become "fans". Whenever the administrators of the page post a video to the page, the fans are notified and may view the video. This video sharing is based on the site's inherent social networking properties, and acts as a kind of filter on who views the content.

Video or music-specific pages are not the only way that video is shared on Facebook. Individual Facebook users also share video. Often, video is shared and re-posted by the friends of the original poster. I have viewed many videos on Facebook, linked to by my friends, without knowing the identity of the original poster even though the poster's name and picture appeared at the top of the page. The comments under a video shared in this way can also become a place for people to express their views on the video, although the original poster can delete comments as they like. This form of Facebook video sharing is even more closely tied to social networks than the video-sharing pages.

Due to all these factors, Facebook lies farther than YouTube on the "high-context" end of Hall's "high" and "low-context communication" framework. The space

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[56] I have been unable to find any similar sites for other languages; part of what is preventing me may be that I don't know what I am looking for. The Turkish pages are readily accessible to me because I am connected to many Turkish users.

created by YouTube's particular format, despite ways in which "context" can be added, still fosters patterns of consumption. Most visitors to YouTube go to the site primarily to find and view videos. Though they may communicate with their friends or engage in dialogue through comments, the focus of the site is on receiving (or distributing) video as a product. In contrast, Facebook is meant to be a social space, where users do not visit the site primarily in order to consume or disseminate any particular thing. If YouTube acts in some ways like a market or exchange forum, Facebook acts like a coffee shop where coffee is an excuse for socializing and conversation.

Perhaps because of the potential for high-context communication, Facebook is undeniably extremely popular in Turkey. Observers, such as the professional blogger Mike Butcher, have also attributed this popularity to the early translation of Facebook into Turkish, Turkey's young population (the median age is 27.7 according to the CIA World Factbook[57]), and the large Turkish population abroad, while noting that Turkey's Facebook use (third in 2010, after the United States and the United Kingdom) is disproportionately high compared to countries with similar characteristics.[58] As an example of this popularity, the page for "Türk Bayrağı" (The Turkish Flag) has 3,087,567 fans (by comparison, a page for "Facebook" itself has 7,408,146 fans). Given this popularity, as well as the restricted

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[57] "CIA - The World Factbook." Web. Accessed 23 Apr. 2010.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>
[58] Butcher, Mike. "Turkey: The Land That Embraced Facebook, FriendFeed and Startups."
TechCrunch Europe. 23 Jan. 2010. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.
<http://eu.techcrunch.com/2010/01/23/turkey-the-land-that-embraced-facebook-friendfeed-and-startups/>.

access to YouTube in Turkey today, it is no surprise that Facebook video sharing pages have become so common.[59]

## 4.2    İZLESENE AND DAILYMOTION: CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF YOUTUBE'S MARKET DOMINANCE

Even with their incredible popularity, YouTube and Facebook together still represent only two of the many sites used for propagating music and video. Other sites, many of which borrow the general format of YouTube, have become replacements for YouTube during the ban. These sites are not subject to the same bans as YouTube because they have not become the sites of dialogue that "insults Turkishness". A different kind of dialogue exists on these YouTube-like sites than on YouTube itself, pointing to a different kind of framing context provided by these sites.

Two examples of sites with YouTube-like formats are Dailymotion[60] (a France-based site which actually opened one month before YouTube) and İzlesene[61] ("Watch!", a Turkey-based site). Both these examples allow users to create profiles, post and view videos, and leave comments. With formats so similar to YouTube, it might be expected that these sites would foster similar debate. In fact, Dailymotion, like YouTube, was also blocked in Turkey in 2009, though no reason was given by the courts at the time.[62]

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[59] Many times day I see links to videos posted by my Facebook friends in Turkey.
[60] http://www.dailymotion.com
[61] http://www.izlesene.com
[62] [Turkish] BİA Haber Merkezi. "Bianet :: Türkiye'de Yasaklı İnternet Sitelerine DailyMotion Da Eklendi - Bianet." Bianet. 7 May 2009. Web. Accessed 20 Apr. 2010.

However, the dialogues on the two sites are very different. Quick searches on Dailymotion reveal systematically fewer videos, as well as fewer comments, than similar searches on YouTube. A search for "Kalenin Bedenleri" on Dailymotion reveals only five videos, none of which contains a single comment. "Opa Nina Ninanay", which produces many results for both "Kalenin Bedenleri" and "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou" on YouTube, produces none on Dailymotion.

Not only is Dailymotion used less overall, but videos prompt less discussion. Again, to use a concrete example, one of the five "Kalenin Bedenleri" videos on Dailymotion is a recording from American television in 1966, showing the singers Harry Belafonte, Danny Kaye, and Nana Mouskouri singing "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou" and exchanging comments about the music.[63] They sing the song in Greek, adding humorous and seemingly improvized English lyrics for the verses and chorus, and simply describe the song as "a Greek song" with "Greek magic".[64] This same exact video can be found on YouTube,[65]

<http://bianet.org/bianet/ifade-ozgurlugu/114346-turkiyede-yasakli-internet-sitelerine-dailymotion-da-eklendi>.

[63] "Dailymotion - Opa Ni Na Na- H.Belafonte,D.Kaye,N.Mouskouri - Müzik Kanalı."*Dailymotion - Online Videos, Music, and Movies. Watch a Video Today!* Web. 25 Feb. 2010. <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xbrgt1_opa-ni-na-na-h-belafonte-d-kaye-n-m_music>.

[64] I was especially amused by one of Danny Kaye's lyrics: "Every time you feel unhappy and you don't know what to do, like a Greek sing a simple little phrase: Ninanay yavrum ninanay nay" – which happens to be the only Turkish phrase in the entire song.

[65] YouTube - Nana Mouskouri - Opa Ni Na Nai - Show Danny Kaye Avec Harry Belafonte 1966." *YouTube - Broadcast Yourself.* Web. 25 Feb. 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CL9VcdZjig&feature=PlayList&p=A44DC2DE4EDCB2A5&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index-13>
This video has been viewed primarily in the US, Australia, and Greece; the only search terms are "Nana" and "Mouskouri", which would probably lead more Greek users than Turkish users to the page. To find it, I had to enter "Harry Belafonte Ninanay"; in other words, I had to be quite intentionally looking for it. I stumbled upon the video on Dailymotion by simply searching for "Kalenin Bedenleri".

where it has prompted 44 comments.  These comments display a pattern seen before; most of the comments are praise for the performance, but comments have been posted claiming that the song is Turkish, Greek, and Macedonian, with one Turkish user even posting the Turkish lyrics to "Kalenin Bedenleri" to prove that the song is Turkish.  As I have argued before, this video prompts this debate because it represents a clear challenge to the "Turkishness" of the song.  It could conceivably be even more irritating to Turks that in this video foreigners ascribe this aspect of shared culture to Greeks.[66]  Notably, however, the video on Dailymotion has prompted no comments at all.  This is despite the fact that the video is posted by a Turkish speaker and is easily found through Turkish search terms.

This example seems to indicate that Dailymotion is not the space for debate that YouTube is.  I believe a number of factors may explain this.  Most obviously, YouTube clearly dominates the online video sharing market; once it gained the reputation as the premier site for video sharing, YouTube has also become a social space more active than its competitors.  YouTube is owned by Google, one of the largest Internet entities.  A Google search rarely produces Dailymotion videos when YouTube results are found, further reinforcing YouTube's dominance.

Additionally, YouTube is more international.  Dailymotion expects users to select their language.  When I first visit the site on a computer in America, Turkish language comments are not even displayed unless I choose to view comments in all languages.  YouTube, on the other hand, doesn't limit access in any way based on how a user identifies

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[66] Just as many Turks become indignant when foreigners refer to baklava as Greek.

language, with the result that multi-lingual dialogue occurs in many videos. Perhaps even this small hurdle is an obstacle for YouTube-style communication on Dailymotion.

Finally, the dominance and relation to Google also streamlines the advertising experience on YouTube, while the ads on Dailymotion seem cluttered and obtrusive (and included, on one visit, an ad for something on YouTube!) This design feature, though seemingly unimportant, greatly limits how much control a poster on Dailymotion has on the framing of thier video, as well as present the site more as a place to consume a product than as a social space. If "context" is important in some forms of communication, as Hall suggests, these features of design which limit communication to just "the message" damage the contextual aspects of the site and hinder debate.

Dailymotion seems to be used most often as a host site for videos that end up linked to on Facebook. (This connection led me to the site in the first place.) It is similar in this way to İzlesene, the Turkish-language, Turkey-based video sharing site. İzlesene is also similarly bereft of YouTube-style debate, though I believe for some different reasons. Along with the obstacles faced by Dailymotion, the main obstacle to debate faced by İzlesene is most likely the homogeneity of its audience. Because the site is very Turkey-centered, few non-Turkish speakers are likely to visit the site, and fewer videos that challenge the "Turkishness" of a particular song are likely to be posted there. After my experience searching for debate-sparking videos on YouTube, I spent hours searching for similar videos on İzlesene; the few songs I found in Greek, or using both Greek and Turkish lyrics, had not been commented on at all.[67]

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[67] One example of Greek/Turkish music on İzlesene can be found at the following address: "İzlesene.com | Video - İzmir Şarkısı - İzmir Yunan & Türk Şarkısı." *İzlesene.com |*

These three examples of alternatives to YouTube (Facebook, Dailymotion, and İzlesene) illustrate the factors that shape the dialogue taking place on the site. All four video-sharing sites construct online persona and relationships in a different way. Facebook (at least as indicated by terminology) seeks to model online persona strictly on real life, and relationships on Facebook also largely mirror real relationships. Dailymotion and İzlesene do little to develop online persona, and contain some barriers (both in terms of language and the size of the user pool) to establishing connections that parallel life. YouTube is open-ended in how closely online persona fits the physical user, and is similarly free in how close virtual contact can be. This can also be expressed in terms of what level of "context" each form of communication is characterized by. Facebook is largely contextual; the content of the message (here, the video) is "embedded" so deeply in "context" information that it might not be accessible without knowing many details about the other people involved. Conversely, Dailymotion and İzlesene are more content-based; the content is treated like a product, and there is little incentive to interact outside of a producer-consumer relationship. Of the four, YouTube has a balance between content and context that promotes a particular and vibrant dialogue, the kind of dialogue seen in the videos I have analyzed.

*Türkiye'nin Video Sitesi*. Web. 25 Feb. 2010. <http://www.izlesene.com/video/muzik-izmir-sarkisi---izmir-yunan--turk-sarkisi/1202261>.

# 5.0    CONCLUSION


Ever since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's famous words, "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene", it has been vitally important to different Turkish authorities to establish who and what is Turkish. This debate, which has been taking place in government institutions, schools, literature, art, music, the media, and in almost all other arenas of public life, has naturally found life in emerging virtual contexts. The terms of the debate are largely unchanged; the fundamental differences are scale and voice of individual players.

Music has always been at the center of nationalist debate in Turkey. What music is Turkish and what music is not was the business of Ziya Gökalp in 1922, and remains the business of anonymous YouTube commentators today. The main challenge in establishing this definition is in the complicated history of the region. In the Ottoman Empire, drawing lines between different religious, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural groups was impossible; assigning ethnic, and later national, identifiers to products of anonymous folk culture was complicated by these constantly overlapping boundaries. Thus during the collapse of the Empire, when claiming certain cultural elements became a priority in establishing the foundations of a nation-state, it was inevitable that elements would be claimed by multiple parties.

All the intervening history has not erased this tension. Songs and genres are still claimed by members of different groups, especially between Greeks and Turks. When

a Greek (such as cyprussunizhot in JasonSeaman1's video) calls "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou" a strictly Greek song, this challenges Turkey's claim to the song as a *türkü* from the center of the modern territory of Turkey. When a Turk (such as burcu1983, commenting on the same video) claims that "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou" is a cheap imitation of "Kalenin Bedenleri", this challenges Greece's connection and roots in Anatolia and its long shared history. These arguments have all been articulated in many different forms of media, and today are being repeated on YouTube.

Even though the terms and stakes of the debate may be the same, the players have changed. YouTube may not represent the idyllic space of free speech that some early Internet advocates prophesied; however, many people are given a voice. Specifically, expatriate Turks living in Western Europe, urban residents (especially residents of Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir), and generally more affluent individuals are given a voice; economic, location, and linguistic factors continue to act as barriers to access. However, with the continued rapid growth of sites like YouTube and the expansion of Internet access, it is possible to be optimistic about the future of accessibility.

Additionally, the scale has changed. The debate about what is Turkish has expanded beyond the physical boundaries of the country. By looking at the locations of YouTube commentators, we could say that the expat community, with better Internet access and more exposure to other viewpoints (as well as an increased need to define "Turkishness" to maintain a sense of identity) is playing a large role in the debate. An international forum like YouTube also enables a dialogue between people who are separated by distance, who have never met, and who have radically different backgrounds (as long as they share a language). Thus the debate is not limited to Turks in Turkey or

abroad; YouTube is a forum for dialogue between Turks, Greeks, and YouTube users around the world.

These changes will likely have a serious effect on these online identity debates. Indications that the debates differ in its YouTube form than in other contexts have already been seen. As my analysis shows, YouTube provides a way of seeing how comments are received. In many of the most watched and most discussed videos of "Kalenin Bedenleri", a pattern has emerged indicating a possible consensus. YouTube users seem most favorable to suggestions that songs like "Kalenin Bedenleri" and "Siko Horepse Koukli Mou" represent elements of culture that are shared between the different nations in the region. This consensus, which downplays nationalist sentiment, could be a product of the international nature of the debate. Listeners who all claim the song seem more willing to compromise when they are in a mixed forum; additionally, the generally affluent and well-traveled YouTube user may be less likely to insist on the uniquely national character of a song if they have seen its importance to others. As the debate continues online, it moves away from the government-supported definitions and discourse of the 20th century and into new, more free areas.

Cast in these terms, the Turkish court's attempts to control YouTube take on new meaning. Many observers believe the Turkish courts, along with the military, represent the most conservative strain of Kemalism in Turkey today; they continue to see themselves as the protectors of Turkish secularism, of Turkish national pride, and Atatürk's ideals, as protectors against attacks from within and without.[68] Banning YouTube is an

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[68] As Atatürk himself said in a speech to the army that is printed in the Anıtkabir, his memorial/tomb in Ankara.

attempt to continue to act in the conventionally-understood role established by Atatürk, imposing reform, as Stokes puts it, "upon a passive (if reactionary) periphery" (Stokes, "Media and Reform…", 1992.). Government has regulated media and national discourse before, but the current ban's lack of success, indicated by the still thriving discourse ongoing in the virtual arena, suggests that this role may be becoming more difficult to maintain.

This continually developing space opens new areas for investigation into how people represent identity musically. Other issues of national song "ownership" between Turkey and its other neighbors may show different levels of contentious dialogue. "Sarı Gelin" ("Yellow Bride"), popular across the Caucasus region and played at Hrant Dink's funeral in 2007, is contested between Turks, Armenians, and Azeris. New scopes for deeper inquiry into ensuing debates regarding Turkish identity, music, and politics in cyberspace can be found by examining whether or not this song, or other songs that are contested between Turks and other groups, generates YouTube debate, and whether that debate is similar to the dialogue shown here.

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