A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF NATIONALISM PERCEPTIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS: WESTERN NATIONALISMS VS. TURKISH NATIONALISM

Nihat YILMAZ

Dean, Faculty of Political Sciences, Trabzon University

Introduction

Different societies have attributed various interpretations to the concepts of nation and nationalism. The historical experiences of each society during specific periods notably influence their perceptions of nationalism. This study aims to provide a comparative evaluation of Western nationalism and Turkish nationalism. Firstly, the positive aspects of nationalism in the West and its aggressive manifestations are thematically addressed through various thinkers. Following this, the basic principles, intellectual traditions, cultural and historical foundations, and political consequences of Turkish nationalism are elaborated upon. The emergence, evolution, underlying assumptions, and repercussions of both Western and Turkish nationalism are also discussed. There are fundamentally significant distinctions between Western nationalism and Turkish nationalism. This inquiry aims to explore the differences between Western and Turkish interpretations of nationalism, particularly regarding culture and history.

Turkish nationalism, which primarily emphasizes culture, tradition, history, language, and religion, stands out as a distinct form of nationalism with both modern and ancient roots, differentiating it from its Western counterparts in concrete terms. In particular, the ag-

gressive Western nationalisms that emerged after the First World War came to the forefront with their pejorative perceptions and characteristics. Western nationalisms have largely evolved based on racism and discrimination, both in terms of the historical process and the perspectives of thinkers. Ideologically, Western nationalisms associated with fascism diverge from Turkish nationalism in both respects.

In contrast to the nationalism that emerged post-World War I, Turkish nationalism embodies principles dating back to the French Revolution, emphasizing a deeper integration with concepts of democracy and emancipation. However, this situation persists in the modern form of Turkish nationalism. Additionally, Turkish nationalism possesses a national consciousness and sentiment that has existed since the era of the ancient Turks. This text examines the aforementioned consciousness and sentiment in conjunction with its modern form, analyzing this understanding in the context of the differences between the aggressive and racist ideologies that were prevalent between the two world wars, as previously discussed.

Conceptual Framework

The concepts of people, race, nation, and nationalism are closely interconnected and are commonly utilized in everyday language. One of the important concepts is "nation." The term "nation," derived from the Latin word "nasci," which refers to the birth process, denotes a unity arising from common ancestry. However, this common ancestry may not necessarily be biological; it can also be cultural (Patzelt, 2017). The Turkish term for "nation" is "millet," a word of Arabic origin. In Arabic, the term "sect" has been used with various meanings, such as "prostration," while the term "ummah" refers to the path and principle adhered to, denoting the collective sum of the members of a religion (Niyazi, 2000, p. 16). Over time, the concept has undergone a shift in meaning, acquiring its contemporary interpretation. The content of the concept in Europe has been shaped by regional experiences.

The concepts of nation, nationality, and nationalism have been pivotal in shaping European history throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. These concepts began to emerge in Europe in the second half of the 18th century and spread widely among the populace during the

19th century. By the mid-19th century, the concept of the nation had been established as a key source of political legitimacy. Nationalism reached its zenith in 1914 when millions were prepared to die for their nations in World War I. Despite its apparent decline post-World War II, nationalism, in terms of belonging to a nation and national pride, remains significant in many people's lives (Jansen & Borggräfe, 2007, p. 7). The concept of 'nationality,' which is another important phenomenon of the 19th and 20th centuries, derives from the word 'nation' and expresses belonging. The relationship between these two terms is articulated in the "Lügat-ı Naci" dictionary as follows: "Nationality is the sum of conditions and characteristics that distinguish one nation from others" (Niyazi, 2000, p. 17). The culmination of human societal development is embodied in the concepts of "nation" and "state," where the 'nation' represents an organized community with its own independent territory. Nationalism, a potent ideological force throughout the centuries, is derived from these concepts. However, it is observed that the concepts of "people" and "nation" are sometimes confused and used interchangeably. "People" refers to the community at a specific time, while "nation" signifies a consciousness of existence" (Atsız, 2011, p. 113). According to Yusuf Akçura (2016, p. 17), "A nation is a human community where unity has formed in its social conscience due to the essential unity of race and language." Additionally, Alparslan Türkeş (2019, p. 166) defines 'nationalism' in his 'Doctrine of the Nine Lights' as loyalty and love for the Turkish nation, along with loyalty and service to the state of Türkiye. Generally, the conditions and characteristics that distinguish nations from one another have also played a role in shaping their unique understandings of nationalism.

Fundamentally, nationalism can be divided into two categories: "ethnic"-based nationalism and "political" nationalism. Ethnic-based nationalism is a type of nationalism characterized by belonging to the nation and loyalty to innate traits that predominantly emerged in German-speaking countries. In contrast, political nationalism, which evolved in France, emphasizes concepts such as state borders and life within the constitution as decisive criteria. It is stated that these two forms are ideal, and in reality, a mixture of these two forms often emerges. The classification of "good" or "bad" nationalism, characterized by variability between these two types, is also frequently employed.

As a worldview, nationalism organizes the political, cognitive, and emotional content it associates with the nation in various ways (cf. Echternkamp, 2002, p. 8). According to Hans-Ulrich Wehler (2002, p. 205), nationalism represents a system of thought born out of the idea of the nation to justify the existence of the nation, explain its past, and plan its future. The key concepts used to affirm nationalism include "national consciousness," "national sentiment," and "patriotism." Along with social change, the idea of a nation helped introduce these concepts into the literature. Social modernization is a significant starting point that facilitates the formation of the nation. During periods of social upheaval, the concept of the nation, as a new form of collective identity, enabled broad segments of the population to participate in decision-making processes and political power for the first time. Social resources were guaranteed to everyone who complied with the definition of belonging to a nation (Jansen & Borggräfe, 2007, p. 10). The interpretation of belonging to a nation has also led to the emergence of different classifications within the concept of nation. A distinction can be made between the "subjective" and "objective" concepts of a nation. According to the "subjective concept of a nation," a nation is based on the belief that its members belong to each other. This concept, which can also be termed political nationalism, is rooted in the ideas of the French Revolution. For the realization of such a nation, popular sovereignty, the rule of law, and liberal basic and civil rights must be guaranteed. Membership in a subjectively defined nation is predicated on an individual's conscious choice, influenced solely by personal beliefs, thus facilitating easy accession to such a nation. In contrast, the "objective concept of a nation" differs from the "subjective concept" based on criteria that extend beyond individual actions. Depending on the definition of national affiliation, various characteristics are used as membership criteria, including common language, history, tradition, culture, and even common ancestry and kinship. This objective concept of nation corresponds to ethnically based nationalism, which originated in Germany (Jansen & Borggräfe, 2007, pp. 11-13). As can be seen, the historical and cultural experiences of countries also influence their understanding of the nation. In addition to this understanding, societies significantly impact the formation of individuals' personalities. This influence persists from birth to death.

Mehmed Niyazi (2000, p. 13) articulates this situation through the relationship between society and the individual as follows: "Our body structure is equal as biological entities, but our personalities are different. We belong to nature with our body structure, and to society with our personalities. Therefore, society is not a mere mathematical sum of individuals, but a composite of the unique characteristics of the individuals living together. Individuals also derive at least some aspects of their personalities from the society that transcends them. With few exceptions, the personalities of people who grow up in a society are closely related to the level and characteristics of that society." Therefore, the influence of society on the character formation of individuals is extremely important. The culture formed within this society will inevitably influence the personalities of those who govern the state.

Another significant concept that influences personality formation by shaping individuals' thoughts is "ideology." The term "ideology" was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754–1856). Tracy used this concept to express a new "science of ideas (ideology)" aimed at revealing the sources of conscious thoughts and ideas (Heywood, 2017, p. 70). Until the turn of the century, "ideology" referred to the science dealing with the emergence and development of intellectual-historical and philosophical ideas. There are also states that act ideologically. Those in power seek to shape society according to their own ideas and views, often not allowing for alternative perspectives. For instance, in both communism and national socialism, individuals were not free to decide how they wanted to live; the ruling party dictated this, thereby "ideologizing" every aspect of life (Schneider & Toyka-Seid, 2023). Therefore, in both the aggressive nationalism that emerged in the Western world and communism, individuals' lives were entirely under the control of ideology. Individuals could not influence decision-making processes with personal opinions that contradicted the prevailing ideology.

In the social sciences, a political theory is a more or less coherent set of ideas that forms the basis for organized social activity. Its fundamental characteristics include an explanation of existing power relations, a model of a desired future, and a blueprint for how political change can and should occur. Ideologies translate political theory into political practice. In this sense, ideologies are similar to political philos-

ophies, which form a collection of values, theories, and doctrines that constitute a separate worldview. However, in another sense, ideologies transform into broader political movements and are embodied in the activities of political leaders, parties, and groups. Ideologies are by no means isolated or immutable systems of thought. They overlap with each other at many points and sometimes share common interests and literature. Ideologies constantly renew themselves politically and intellectually as they interact with and influence other ideologies and as they adapt to changing historical conditions. The importance of an ideology increases or decreases depending on its capacity to adapt to political, social, and economic conditions and to renew itself theoretically (Heywood, 2017, p. 70).

Nation and Nationalism in the West

This section explains how the West engages with the concepts of nation and nationalism. Here, Western nationalism's approach to and interpretation of these concepts are evaluated from two different perspectives. This section addresses the viewpoints of thinkers in the West who hold positive views on nationalism, as well as the emergence of the aggressive characteristics of Western nationalism. Before discussing nationalism, it is essential to touch upon the concept of Europe, which has become synonymous with the West.

This Europe, born from the exchange of material and spiritual values, the cooperation of races and nations, and the competition of religions, systems, and interests, is a marketplace on a very limited piece of land where ideas, beliefs, and discoveries accumulate. From every corner of the earth, material and spiritual values have begun to flow there. On one hand, the new lands of America, Africa, and the oceans, as well as the ancient empires of the Far East, sent their raw materials; on the other hand, the powerful machine known as awakened Europe, nourished by the knowledge, philosophies, and religions of old Asia, processed the material and spiritual raw materials sent by the East and produced new materials, ideas, and inventions from them. Throughout history, the influences of ancient Greece, Rome, and Christianity have been evident in European thought. Those who have not experienced these three influences cannot be considered European, even if they live in the heart of Europe. Conversely, people who possess a

mindset shaped by these three influences are considered European, re-gardless of which continent they inhabit. The Renaissance is a culmina-tion of these three influences (Safa, 2013: 114-115). However, although the Renaissance began first in Italy, this country was the last in Europe to realize its social development and formation as a nation. The effort and aspiration to become a nation are clearly evident in the develop-ments of England, France, and Spain, which were the first to achieve this in Europe. The peoples of Europe have made immense sacrifices in their pursuit of nationhood. The continuously forming middle class, aiming to establish a national and centralized state based on the peo-ple, first allied with kings to eliminate feudalism and render the nobil-ity harmless. Then, by uniting with various classes and masses, it also eliminated kingdoms in many European countries or preserved them as a unifying element in a symbolic nature (Turhan, 2019: 220-221).

European nationalism emerged as a result of the progress of two op-posing forces, sometimes through conflict and sometimes through co-operation, since the Renaissance. One of these forces is spiritual, while the other is materialistic. The first represents Christian spiritualism, while the second signifies large-scale industry based on the founda-tions of colonialism. These two forces have fiercely competed for two centuries. At times, we see the ideal of Christianity prevail, emerging with high moral values. The movements that reveal the victory of the spiritual front include the Renaissance, the progress of the sciences, the Reformation, as well as the French Revolution and the Romantic movements. The Renaissance opposed religious domination; howev-er, the ideal of humanity during this era encompasses a cosmopolitan view that does not align with nationalism. Nevertheless, the fact that the geniuses who paved the way for the Renaissance—artists such as Dante and Petrarch in Italy, and Shakespeare in England—wrote their works in the national language should be considered a step toward nationalism (Topçu, 2010: 75-76).

During the development of nationalisms in Europe, disasters and defeats suddenly awakened nations that had fallen into a slumber of complacency. All members of the nation gathered around a common ambition, their hearts beating with excitement. Eventually, the national ideal was born from this widespread and sacred fervor. Hungarians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Germans, Italians, and Greeks unified and clung to

these ideals after experiencing disasters of defeat and enslavement, thereby ensuring the survival of their nations. The concepts of nations involve uniting their kin in language, religion, education, spirit, and sentiment and gathering them all within a political boundary to safeguard their interests. Panhellenism, Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, Italian 'Irredentism,' and the significance of Macedonia for Bulgarians illustrate that each nation has formed its own national ideal.

The concept of nationalism first appeared in an article by Herder published in 1774. Later, the use of the term "nationalism" in the field of political language began to solidify. Initially, conceptual and phenomenological inadequacies in discussions about nationalism, along with the early shortcomings of its pioneering thinkers, prevented nationalism from being articulated as clearly and distinctly as its opposing currents, such as liberalism and socialism. Although little attention was paid to nationalism at first, Herder put forward an interpretation that focused on an already ethnically defined nation (Jansen/Borggrafe, 2007:17).

The German philosopher and critic Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) developed the concept of romantic or organic nationalism, a form of ethnic nationalism where the state derives its political legitimacy from historical, cultural, or hereditary groups. His fundamental assumption was that each ethnicity should be politically distinct from others. Herder expressed his ideas on this subject through the Volksgeist theory (Hamilton, 2011). In addition to the Volksgeist, Johann Gottfried Herder was also interested in the concept of the Zeitgeist. Therefore, Herder is a key figure in the development of two well-known philosophical-anthropological concepts.

The first of these concepts is Zeitgeist (zeit: time + geist: spirit), meaning "the spirit of the time" or "the spirit of the era," which indicates the cultural, intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and political climate of a period in general. Herder reportedly coined the term in 1769 in a critique of a work by the German philologist Christian Adolph Klotz. The second concept relevant here is Volksgeist, usually translated as "national spirit" or "national character." Volksgeist represents the spirit and manifestation of the people; it invigorates the nation (Hamilton, 2011). Johann Gottfried Herder and subsequent romantic thinkers regarded the diversity of peoples and their languages as anthropological

and cultural richness. The concept of "people" is etymologically defined as "a large community of individuals connected by a common culture, history, and language." According to historian Leopold von Ranke, people were "thoughts of God," and therefore each people was valuable in their own right (Seibt, 2016). Another thinker who made significant contributions to the concept of nationalism after Herder is Johann Gottfried Fichte.

According to Johann Gottfried Fichte (1806:46-47), "It is necessary for a German to openly declare that he relies on his people and has true and rational love solely for the German nation. A person who does not see himself as eternally bound to his nation cannot have general love and, likewise, cannot love a homeland that does not exist for him." Philosopher Fichte views education as the sole means of achieving a morally and rationally founded state. According to him, the individual should be guided both to overcome his own egoism and to see state property as his own property. Fichte speaks of the long-term main goal of these efforts as the creation of a new humanity, a goal no less significant than the formation of the human race itself (Fichte, 2019).

Richard Schröder (1993: 110-111) states: "So then: we, Westerners and Easterners, are Germans because our fatherland, our mother tongue, our history, and our culture bind us together. And that is why it is good and normal that we, united by so much, once again live together in a shared state with equal rights and obligations, and also jointly manage our common affairs. When I say, 'Germany is the country I like best' (even if it's not necessarily the most comfortable one), this is not nationalism of a kind that discriminates against anyone. For every person's country should be able to be his favorite. I am not discriminating against anyone when I say, 'my children are the children I like best.' For I am their only father, and that creates an obligation – sometimes also in an unpleasant way. It is perfectly all right that this country and its problems are more important, more serious, and more immediate to me than those of other countries, just as it is perfectly all right that I am not indifferent to the rest of the world."

The first half of the 19th century was a period in Europe that served as a source of many new ideas and saw nations and groups clashing to bring those ideas into practice. At the beginning of the century, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire had thrown all of Eu-

rope into turmoil. The Germans, Italians, and Spaniards, based on the idea of nationality, prepared and implemented national revolts against the Emperor during the last periods of Napoleonic domination. The Germans, Italians, and Slavs, who worked diligently on the idea of the nation from historical, legal, and literary perspectives, were preparing for separation from Austria through German, Italian, and Slavic unity (Akçura, 2016:21).

It was the scientific movement that facilitated the consciousness of Western nationalism. This consciousness manifested during the Renaissance in geniuses like Leonardo da Vinci, who had a passion for understanding truth in every field. It also brought about a revolution in mindset and method, based on the principle of seeking truth in the light of reason, through the works of Bacon and Descartes. The Reformation, on the other hand, was a transition from the religion of the ummah to the religion of the nation. The translation of the Bible into German was a turning point. The French Revolution established the principles of personal liberty and equality of citizens' rights as the foundation of national sovereignty.

One of the most important outcomes of these movements was the triumph of Romanticism in the West. This movement, which began with artists such as Walter Scott, Schlegel, and Chateaubriand in Western literature, continued until the mid-19th century and was a reaction against the cosmopolitan spirit of classical literature. Romantic poets reflected the beauty of their homelands in their nature poetry. In their national theater plays and stories, they sought to revive national music. Romanticism is the product of a Christian ideal that succeeded not only in art but also in morality, family, religion, and politics. In Germany, Goethe's "Faust" symbolized the ability of the soul in the form of a fist used against the mortality of life and desires. Victor Hugo revealed in *Les Misérables* that salvation can only be achieved through faith, love, and affection. The Romantic movement, which was firmly rooted in the belief in God, became the sincerest nationalist movement seen in the West. It played a crucial role in embedding the concept of nation into the heart and soul. Romantics chose national themes with this sentiment and created nationalist works. They completely abandoned the inclination to address humanistic sentiments within the framework of universal and general topics, as seen in previous centuries (Topçu,

2010:76). In later years, theorists emerged in the West who worked on areas beyond romantic nationalism.

Until the 1980s, studies on nationalism oscillated between two subjective and objective concepts of the nation. In his 1908 work *Cosmopolitanism and the Nation-State*, Friedrich Meinecke distinguished between the "state nation" and the "cultural nation." According to Meinecke (1908), a regional state that already exists in state nations (as in France) adopts nationalist ideas, while cultural nation-building in cultural nations (as in Germany) precedes the nation-state. The state nation corresponds to the subjective concept of the nation, and the cultural nation corresponds to the objective concept of the nation. However, this conceptualization is strongly influenced by ideology, as it assumes the superiority of German "culture" over Western "civilization."

In the 1980s, theorists of nationalism such as Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Rainer Lepsius described the idea of the nation as an "imagined community" with "invented traditions" as the natural or primordial order of social life. According to Smith, however, there can be no completely subjective understanding of the nation, because this cannot explain the nationalists' belief in ethnicity. Conversely, the opposing view, which relies entirely on an ethnic basis, is also indefensible. A nation is based not only on the will of its members but also on their "ethnic" origin. According to Smith, it is indisputable that the complex structures of contemporary nations cannot be equated with their pre-modern predecessors, and the relations between these two should be taken into account (Smith 2000: 6-8).

In pre-modern times, there were already forms of communities resembling today's nations, which continued their existence through myths, culture, and territories. Ethnicity is not necessarily related to ancestry; rather, it is related to history and origin myths. He defines nations based on the historical territories occupied by an ethnic group, shared culture, and laws. According to him, a nation includes both ethnic and civic components and is shaped by ethnic myths and symbols passed down through generations (Smith 2000: 63-67). The theorists mentioned here made significant contributions to the study of nationalism.

When examining 20th-century Western nationalism, it is useful to address the concepts of Social Darwinism and race. Historically, the term "Social Darwinism" was first defined in the early 1870s. It is of-

ten described as the application of Darwin's theory of evolution to human societies. In fact, evolutionary theories of social transformation existed even before Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Darwin's rapidly and widely accepted theory of evolution was not the origin of Social Darwinism but rather a catalyst for a development that had begun earlier, with Darwin primarily used as a scientific authority. Social Darwinism reached its peak during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During these periods, groups conducted studies on Darwin's theory to achieve their goals (Lenzen, 2015).

The theory of evolution, on one hand, legitimized liberal (laissez-faire) economic thought through the concept of natural selection, and on the other, supported the Marxist notion of class struggle by considering conflict as the basis of progress (Doğan, 2006:2). Therefore, it can be concluded that the theory of evolution influenced the intellectual frameworks of both ideologies.

The National Socialists were convinced of their own "theory of race." This "theory of race" divides people into different groups, asserting that there are various "races" of people, each with distinct values. The National Socialists claimed that some "human races" are less valuable and ranked lower in the hierarchy. For instance, they posited that Jews ranked at the bottom and that their lives were less valuable. Children were required to learn this "racial theory" in school, as the National Socialists aimed to influence children at a young age and instill their worldview (BPB, 2022). Through these processes, they sought to create a new superior race, both ethnically and culturally.

The concept of a "people's community" (Volksgemeinschaft), referring to a people that is as homogeneous as possible from an ethnic and cultural perspective, is noteworthy. The term originates from the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Today's neo-Nazis have rediscovered this concept of "people's community" and positioned it as a central pillar of their political goals. So, what does "people's society" (Volksgemeinschaft) mean from their perspective? For them, this concept is based not only on language, culture, and traditions but also on the common origin of its members, aiming to create an ethnically homogeneous community. Connected to this vision was the exclusion of "others," who were considered ethnically and genetically "foreign." The metaphor of the "body of the people" (Volkskörper), frequently used during this period, refers to an authoritarian, hierarchically struc-

tured, and racially homogeneous community. The assumption that peoples and races occupy a position in the natural hierarchy based on their "inherited biological traits" is also a fundamental tenet of Nazism (Lemke, 2012: 27-28).

Representatives of these theories have fueled fears that a people will be "spoiled" by so-called "bad" genes. Many individuals seized this opportunity to call for repressive measures against certain groups deemed "inferior." This movement was termed "eugenics." Francis Galton, Darwin's cousin, is considered one of the fathers of eugenics. Galton argued that people with disabilities or mental illnesses should not be allowed to have children. In the 19th and 20th centuries, eugenics measures were employed in many countries. For instance, in the United States, many individuals were sterilized against their will until 1932 (Studyflix, 2023). Therefore, such practices have been observed not only in Europe but also in various countries, leading us to expand the scope to include the West in general.

Although Social Darwinism became less appealing after World War II, it still persists among certain social groups. For instance, many individuals believe that homeless people are lazy and that their circumstances result from their own failings. Similarly, some people hold negative views about the unemployed, often regarding them as useless and a burden to society. Additionally, there can be overt racism and xenophobia directed towards non-whites. Economic Social Darwinism also exists, where individuals are evaluated based on their economic performance. This perspective implies that the more money a person contributes to society, the more valuable they are perceived to be (Studyflix, 2023). While this mindset emerged in the first half of the 20th century, modern interpretations of it continue to persist today. This situation can also be described as modern Social Darwinism. Some of its characteristics can be listed as follows (Mittelbach, 2020):

- A decrease in the number of supporters after the end of the Second World War.

- The notion that some people are less valuable than others has not entirely disappeared.

- Certain minorities and groups are regarded as less valuable. For example, there is a belief that homeless people (Obdachlose) are lazy and that this laziness is their own responsibility.

- A similar attitude is displayed towards people of immigrant origin or foreigners in general

- Finally, the perception of "if you have less money, you are also less valuable", in which people are evaluated according to their economic performance.

In the formation of xenophobia and negative attitudes towards differences, historical experiences may also be influential. Ernst Moritz Arndt mentions the following in his 1813 work "On the Hatred of the People": "The Germans must now have a burning grudge against the French. (...) I want hatred against the French not only for this war, but for a long time and constantly. Then Germany's borders will be safe even without the need for artificial defenses. Because the people will always become a unified force against them when restless and marauding neighbors attempt to cross this border. May this hatred shine as the religion of the German people, as a holy madness in all hearts, and may it always keep us faithful." By saying this, he reveals the dimensions of hatred against the French.

Paul de Lagarde highlights the aggressive nationalism in the West in his works published in Deutsche Schriften (1878: 58): "It is not appropriate for any nation to have another nation in it. ... It follows from this that Jews, as Jews, are a great nuisance to every European people. The result for Germany is that Jews must either emigrate from Germany or become Germans. The more sharply we develop and shape our character as a nation and the characters of all individuals who can be tolerated among us, the less space there will be for Jews in Germany ... We do not accept the jelly of humanity (Dechalert der Humanität) because it is inedible for us, and at the same time, we reject the spirit of the century." Another intellectual who finds this view narrow and emphasizes the inclusiveness of French nationalism is Heinrich Heine.

According to Heinrich Heine (1836: 35), "French patriotism consists in the warming of the heart and, thanks to this warming, it expands, grows, and thus embraces with love not only its closest relatives but the whole of France, the whole country of civilization. On the other hand, German patriotism includes the narrowing of his heart, contracting like skin exposed to cold, hating foreign things, no longer wanting to be a citizen of the world and a European, but only desiring to be a narrow German." While the inclusiveness of French patriotism is praised here, German patriotism is criticized as a narrow pattern.

This aggressive understanding of nationalism in the West caused antisemitism to be carried to advanced levels. Antisemitism advocates anti-Jewish attitudes and actions with different motivations. These attitudes and actions can be both individual and collective. Antisemitism emerged with the formation of European nation-states in the 19th century, but it was based on a centuries-old Christian tradition of anti-Semitism. In the 19th century, racial ideology gave antisemitism a political character, transforming it into much more than mere hatred toward Jews (Bergemann, 2023). All these notions of racial othering and segregation that occurred during a specific period in the West have significantly influenced literature.

Today, the Western world, particularly under the influence of Americans, often associates nationalism primarily with fascism and Nazism. In reality, nationalism, being a cultural movement, rejects racism; and as a political movement based on the people, it also rejects authoritarian systems of governance. In this regard, evaluating nationalism through the lens of fascism would be starting from an incorrect example (Güngör, 2019: 82). Therefore, when the concept of nationalism is mentioned in the West, the first thing that comes to mind is the negative practices that occurred there. From this, it can be said that ethnocentric prejudices have developed or been fostered against different understandings of nationalism in the West.

Nation and Nationalism in Turks
Although the word "nation" has Arabic origins, Arabs use the term "Sha'b" in a sociological sense; for example, "Sha'bul – Arabi" (Arab Nation) and "Shabu't Turki" (Turkish Nation). The Turkish Language Institution has shown that the word "millet" (nation) is synonymous with "ulus" (peoples). The word "budun" was also used in the same sense in Turkish history. Describing our national existence with this word, which is foreign in origin, may be seen as a contradiction. However, the word "millet" has entered our language by acquiring another meaning and has become a part of our lexicon. All Western nations have used the term "nation" to express the concept of "millet," despite its foreign origins. What matters is using a word that can fully convey the intended meaning (Niyazi, 2000: 17).

The concept of "Turk" has been used in different meanings across various sources. However, it does not contain tribalism and exclusivism in a general sense. The word "Turk" was first assigned to the Oghuz by others at the time of the Tukia state. The Uighurs referred to the Oghuz as "Uluğ Türk" to distinguish them from themselves. The name "Turk" is mentioned as "Türük" in the Orhun Monuments, meaning "the people/subjects who are loyal to their state," or "the strong, powerful nation." According to Mahmud Kashgari, the name "Turk" was given by God himself, signifying health and maturity. "Türk" was not the name of a tribe; rather, it was a title given to those who adopted the customs and religion.

Islam has become an integral part of the Turkic world since the eleventh century. According to Turkish nationalism, people who share the same culture, past, and vision for the future constitute a nation. Having a long history, unity of language, religion, homeland, ancestry, shared victories, and collective suffering make up the Turkish nation. Unlike Western nations, the absence of one of these elements does not damage the sense of belonging or detract from being Turkish. For example, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha is not Turkish in terms of ancestry; however, according to historical accounts, he was Muslim enough to read the Quran every night and Turkish enough not to sleep without reading Turkish history. This implies that one can belong to the Turkish nation and even practice Turkish nationalism without being ethnically Turkish. Atatürk's words, "How happy is the one who says I'm a Turk," and his belonging-based understanding of Turkishness also support this claim. Such nationalism, which is not considered unusual but rather quite normal in Turkish culture, cannot be found in the culture of any European nation or even among Muslim Arabs.

As Toynbee points out, racial characteristics are predominant in European cultures, leading to the exclusion of those who do not share the same roots. Arabs also employed racist policies during the Umayyad period. The citizenship status of Muslim Arabs, non-Arab Muslims (mawla), and non-Muslims was not the same. Non-Arab Muslims were branded on their hands for easy identification and prohibited from marrying Arab women. Unlike Turkish culture, being non-Arab by ancestry rendered other traits insignificant. The preservation and development of a nation can only be achieved by maintaining the char-

acteristics that constitute it. If the Turkish nation loses its qualities of adaptability, tolerance, and high morality, it will become an indistinguishable crowd and face extinction in the long run. Thus, a Turkish nationalist focuses meticulously on these qualities and elements such as language, religion, and homeland that characterize the Turkish nation (Niyazi, 2000: 143-145).

Recent Turkish thinkers have made significant intellectual contributions to Turkish nationalism, helping to develop the theoretical content of the concept. One important concept emphasized and elaborated upon by Turkish thinkers is the concept of "race."

The formation of races is a distinct field of scientific research. Whether explained by "geographical and cosmic influences" as Ibn Khaldun and Lamarck proposed, or by "natural selection" and mutations as Darwin suggested, races always represent a variety. Attempting to view races as if they were separate species based on differences in skin color, skeletal structure, and skull shape, and using this to justify political and social exploitation, leads to the development of a "highly erroneous" theory of humanity that considers humans polygenically. Such abuses are not encountered in the Turkish and Islamic world. The Western world has turned the notion of race into a field of political exploitation. Many intellectuals and politicians from France, England, and Germany developed theories in the name of science to exploit people whose colors and skulls were different from their own. The claims of individuals like Arthur de Gobineau, Vacher de Lapouge, Sir F. Galton, and Otto Ammon are open to criticism not only from a scientific perspective but also from a moral standpoint (Arvasi, 1999: 117-118). From this, we can understand that the perspectives on race in the Western world and the Turkish-Islamic world are generally different.

Races, of course, exist. However, political exploitation based on races and the promotion of theories such as "inferior race" and "superior race," which offend human dignity, should never be allowed. Islam does not deny the "truth of race," but it opposes the abuse of this truth. Scientists and politicians must act with an awareness of this truth and a sense of "reverence for God." According to our exalted and holy book, the Qur'an: "And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. Surely there are lessons in this for those who know" (Surah Rum, 22).

The form that nationalism takes in each country often conflicts or contrasts with that in other places. For example, while Arab socialism is an important element in Arab nationalism, socialism in Türkiye serves as an antithesis to nationalism (Güngör, 2019: 3). In addition to those who have worked materially and spiritually to establish the nation, there are also significant ideas and thinkers who have intellectually and theoretically nourished Turkish nationalism.

Ziya Gökalp, an important intellectual of Turkish nationalism, wrote in his work titled "The Principles of Turkism" that "race means nation according to the racial Turkists. The word (race) is essentially a term of zoology. Each animal species is divided into a number of groups by appearance. These groups are called races. For example, the horse species has several anatomical races named the Arabian, the English, and the Hungarian." Here, he actually defines race as a term used in classifying horses. Similarly, humans have long been categorized into four groups: white, black, yellow, and red. Although this is a rough classification, it still retains its value. However, Gökalp (2019: 13) also states that there is no fully pure race to justify this classification.

Differences in skin color, facial features, and body shape enable each individual to be "himself/herself" with his/her own distinctive characteristics while also allowing people to relate to each other as separate individuals. In fact, in the 13th verse of Surah Hujurat, the purpose of dividing humanity into different peoples and tribes is explained as a means of ensuring their acquaintance, the natural result of which is the establishment of mutual social relations (Commentary on the Way of the Qur'an, vol. 4, pp. 303-304). Islam acknowledges the phenomenon of "biological race" but rejects "biological racism." People may differ in color and structure, but they all come from one root.

Alparslan Türkeş's advice and admonition to Turkish nationalists regarding race emphasizes the unique features of Turkish nationalism: "Defining a nation based on race, according to biological principles, is very dangerous; as a matter of fact, it is this distorted and morbid state of shifting that polarizes instead of welding together, ignites conflicts instead of embracing, and is evil instead of being compassionate" (Bahceli, 2019). Turkish nationalism discards race-based and biological perspectives with its compassionate, inclusive, and embracing characteristics.

Yusuf Akçura (2022: 100), in his work titled "Three Styles of Politics," criticizes various attitudes regarding the Unity of Turks, Islamic Union, and Ottoman nationality. He mentions that even if "separating Turk from Islam, Islam from Turk, Turk and Islam from Ottomanism, and Ottomanism from Turk and Islam" might come to mind, these concepts will not settle in our minds. As such, he states that these concepts support each other and should not be separated. It is well known that seeking solutions outside the sphere of Turkishness and Islam has led to accelerated disintegration and decay, resulting in tragic losses such as the downfall of an empire. For this reason, if change becomes uncontrolled, if it moves away from the essence, a hybrid and degenerate understanding will emerge instantly. The essential and fundamental challenge is to achieve change without being swept into the vortex of transformation, transitioning into another form or different dimension. Otherwise, change may lead to liquidation, destruction, and annihilation (Bahceli, 2019).

Islam acknowledges the reality of "biological race" but rejects claims of "racial superiority." Turkish nationalism also rejects basing its policy on "biological racism" and instead focuses on the concept of "social race," which plays an important role in the life of nations and is addressed by sociology. "Social race" is a subject of sociology, not biology. It refers to the "consciousness of kinship" among individuals, families, classes, and strata that constitute a nation. This consciousness manifests as a sense of belonging, rooted in kinship and blood ties, which exists as a shared awareness.

In addition to biological inheritance, common culture, shared geography, a collective lifestyle, and joint struggles bring individuals and strata of a nation closer together, both spiritually and physically. As marriages become easier between people who live in the same culture and share the same fate, individuals will start to resemble each other physically over time. In other words, a "social race" is born from social, cultural, economic, and political integration as a sociological necessity. If there are groups within the same social structure that do not intermarry for various reasons or insist on staying within a small "narrow region" as a "small ethnic structure," it becomes difficult for a typical social race to emerge (Arvasi, 1999:119). Therefore, societies that can form around a common culture may become stronger and find it easier to achieve their national ideals.

With the help of modern sociology, Ziya Gökalp systematized ideas that had previously been expressed only in a scattered manner into a coherent doctrine of Turkism. For other aspects of his doctrine, Gökalp closely followed the ideas of his predecessors in Turkish nationalism. He demonstrated the distinction between culture and civilization; while he accepted the adoption of science and technology from the West, he opposed adopting the cultures of other nations, whether Arab, Iranian, or Western. From his point of view, the nation is a "society united by culture." Gökalp advocated for investigating the true cultural values of the pure and untainted layers of the populace. These values were widely present in the literature, art, crafts, morals, and customs of the people (Kushner, 2009:189).

Gökalp (2019:19) states, "The nation is neither a racial, nor a tribal, nor a geographical, nor a political, nor a voluntary group. A nation is a group composed of individuals who share a common language, religion, morality, and art, meaning they have received the same cultural upbringing." The Turkish peasant phrases this with the idiom: "Whose language matches my language; whose religion matches my religion." Indeed, a person prefers to live with those who share the same language and religion rather than those who share the same bloodline because our human identity resides not in our bodies but in our souls. A person may sacrifice their life, if necessary, for the nation in which they were raised and received their upbringing. Whether they come from Albania or Arabia, we should not discriminate against our kin who have grown up with Turkish upbringing and ideals. Those who have made great sacrifices for our nation cannot be told, "You are not Turk."

According to Gökalp (2019:20), race has no effect on social character. However, the concept of race is extremely important in horses regarding lineage and pedigrees. In short, Gökalp asserted, "There is no alternative but to recognize as Turkish every individual who declares themselves to be Turkish, and to punish only those who are found to have betrayed Turkishness." This emphasizes that anyone who feels part of the Turkish nation can belong to this nation. He also frequently uses the concept of culture in his work titled "The Principles of Turkism." Therefore, there is a strong emphasis on a nation based on culture.

In our country, the ease of "intermarrying," due to shared religion and a common awareness of heritage, along with increasing "social

contacts" throughout the nation, facilitated the formation of the "Turkish social race," which has continued to strengthen over time. Essentially, because foreigners in our country did not convert to Islam en masse, "marriages" occurred between Turkish tribes and clans that came together in various ways and bore various names, making cohesion among them easier. Additionally, the distribution of Turkish tribes across the homeland was executed thoughtfully. Instead of having one Turkish tribe settle in a specific region, various Turkish tribes were dispersed or intermingled. This approach helped to ensure cohesion and reinforce the "social race."

Due to these and other reasons, just as distinct characters have developed for the French, English, German, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese, a "Turkish character" has also emerged. This character, like those of other nations, did not form recently; it is the result of a historical accumulation spanning thousands of years (Arvasi, 1999:119). Ziya Gökalp (2019:27) refers to this accumulation as culture. Culture is the harmonious sum of a nation's religious, moral, legal, intellectual, artistic, linguistic, economic, and scientific lives. Within European civilization, distinct and independent French and German cultures exist.

Each nation represents a "typical social race," and this race possesses certain characteristics. In Turkish poems, stories, fairy tales, and epics, charming expressions depict and explore the "Turkish character." Descriptive phrases such as "crescent-browed," "gazelle-eyed," "rosebud-lipped" for Turkish girls, and "bull-chested," "wolf-waisted" for Turkish young men illustrate the characteristics of the "Turkish social race" found in the collective imagination of the Turks. Each "social race" is beautiful in its unique way. A Far-Easterner who is ashamed of the slant of their eyes and undergoes plastic surgery to resemble a European, a black-skinned individual seeking assistance from American and European scientists to whiten their skin, and those striving to alter their aquiline noses are not merely pitiful for themselves. It is crucial to recognize the drama of a nation or race that, overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy, "becomes alienated from itself" at a fundamental level. "Social race characteristics" are original values that add color to humanity and bestow a unique atmosphere upon cultures and civilizations. A Turkish nationalist embraces and cherishes the Turkish social race while striving to establish their family within this essence.

Cosmopolitanism is viewed unfavorably. However, the "social races" are regarded as a "verse" of Allah (Arvasi, 1999:120-121).

While "biological racism" has a disintegrating and divisive character, "social race" possesses a unifying and integrative trait. No one has the power to determine their biological inheritance. However, the "social race" is a matter of choice. It enhances the consciousness of "blood and lineage unity" among individuals who share the same history, culture, religion, and ideals. In a confined area, "national consciousness" is strengthened by building "marriage bridges" among tribes, strata, and ethnic groups. This method has been attempted numerous times throughout Turkish history to ease conflicts between tribes and principalities and has proven beneficial. The "social race" is seen as a force that strengthens both the nation and the state. Anyone who integrates into the Turkish social race—who has intermarried and joined the Turkish social race for centuries, adopts Turkish history, culture, and ideals, does not long for another nation, and shares a common destiny with the Turkish State and Nation—can be considered Turkish. For this reason, the concept of "social race" belongs to sociology, not biology (Arvasi, 1999:121-122).

A civilized Turk is someone who is aware of their national culture. This person can and should adopt the inventions that belong to all humanity while also embodying the cultural values of their own nation in their spiritual life (Kushner, 2009:11). Through this engagement, a deeper understanding of the nation and the state is ensured.

The theory of pure race is not a concept that can effectively contribute to the formation of a strong sense of nationhood. Across the globe, it is evident that the theory of pure race is widely rejected. There is no pure race left anywhere, but there are nations. For example, it is a significant mistake to claim that the French belong to one race. The French nationality emerged from the unification of various groups, including Germanic, Celtic, Latin, Greek, and others. Similarly, many Slavic elements have been absorbed into the German nationality. Is Switzerland not a nation despite its racial and religious conflicts? (Akçura, 2022:77).

Throughout history, groups from around sixty different races have come and gone in France, with some settling there. Their descendants have come together to form a unified society through shared institutions such as language, upbringing, customs, traditions, and religion,

thus constituting the French nation. The Germans and the English are also not of a pure and self-contained race. Likewise, the Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Greek nations have formed through the coming together of individuals and groups from various races who speak a common language and unite around a shared culture, traditions, and collective identity (Seyfettin, 2020:102-103). In terms of political organization, the most homogeneous and closely-knit unit among the Turks is the tribe. We can assert that the basic principle governing these tribes is merit.

The most homogeneous unit of ancient Turkish society was the "tribe" (boy). In this context, the term "boy" also conveys the meaning of a complete whole. Ancient Turkish society was divided into two strata: the rulers (beys) and the ruled (people). Those in power were referred to as "ak kamag bodun" (people with white bones), while the ruled were called "kara kamag bodun" (people with black bones). There was no rigid class system; the beys (ak kamag bodun) were responsible solely for the administration of society. Positions and titles existed for service rather than for establishing class distinctions. Merit was essential in this society, meaning that lineage, wealth, or title did not create class differences. The path to ascension was always open to those who were intelligent, hardworking, talented, and successful. It was possible for someone from the common people (kara kamag bodun) to rise to administrative and military positions as a bey or commander through their achievements in service (Koca, 2002:8).

In the organization of the ancient Turkish state, the head of state, the legislative assembly (toy), and the government were separate institutions, each fulfilling distinct functions. However, the head of state, who embodied sovereignty, held all the reins of power and was primarily responsible for the people and the country. He appointed prime ministers, convened the legislative assembly (toy), proposed changes to the moral law (töre), and presided over the state court (yargu). This authority was believed to be divinely endowed (kut). The expectation of Turkish communities throughout history to rely on him for sustenance, clothing, growth, and peace stemmed from this concept of "complete authority."

The ancient Turkish administrative mechanism, which meticulously preserved its military character, facilitated the implementation of

this complete authority. However, due to the strict provisions of the moral law (töre), this system never became tyrannical or transformed into a militaristic dictatorship that oppressed local or foreign subjects. Therefore, it is misleading to view the old Turkish "authoritarian state democracy" as an oppressive clamp, and it should not be confused with the ineffective type of "democracy" that disintegrates and disperses the integrity of power through the "separation of powers" (Kafesoğlu, 2018:25).

Another crucial element in strengthening power in Turkish states has been the position of women. Historically, in many nations, and particularly today, women have often been portrayed as sexual objects, serving carnal desires and seducing men through entertainment. Ancient Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Iranians, and Indians considered women to be evil creatures and treated them as property. In contrast, Turks are one of the few nations that give women their true value (Atsız, 2011:150).

In Turkish culture, women are often depicted as beings who radiate light, dazzle with their beauty, and are almost impossible to access. Those who have been humiliated, despised, and oppressed throughout history—treated almost as commodities or slaves—have held a significantly different position in Turkish society. In Turkish communities, women have traditionally been seen as the cornerstone of society, an indispensable element due to their chastity, moral understanding, maternal instincts, loyalty to their husbands, wise and heroic personalities, and their superior skills in administrative, political, and social domains (Koç, Saadettin, 2011:156).

In ancient Turkish societies, women participated alongside their husbands in nearly every field, including political, social, economic, and even wartime situations. Within the Turkish family, women enjoyed equal rights with their husbands, and the principle of mutual respect prevailed. Due to their religious beliefs, the ancient Turks regarded women as possessing sacred power, which elevated their status in society. Historians acknowledge that in ancient Turkish society, women had equal rights with men, participated in wars, and influenced political decisions. For an order to be fulfilled among the ancient Turks, it had to begin with the phrase "Hakan (Khan) and Hatun (Khatun) order that." The Khatun stood alongside the Khan in all assemblies (Tel-

lioğlu, 2012:212). Consequently, in Turkish wisdom, the order of the world stemmed from the harmony between men and women, granting women a special position before the Khan and within the family (Ülger, 2020:59).

In Turkish states, khatuns were the bearers of authority (the Khatun Law). Among them were women who influenced state policies, served as leaders, and governed as regents (e.g., the Sabars, Gokturks, Uighurs, and Oghuz). Gokturk khatuns were present at the receptions of Chinese ambassadors in 585 and 726. Women with separate palaces and "orders" usually attended state assemblies and sometimes received ambassadors. It was essential that the khatuns be the first wives and of noble (i.e., Turkic) descent, as they were expected to be the mothers of future khans. The Turkish equivalent of the word "princess" was "esi" (Kafesoğlu, 2018:259).

In general, Turkish women were not an oppressed group deprived of rights, as was common in other societies of the era. They were free and respected members of society. More importantly, women actively participated in all family activities alongside men. In fact, they rode horses, used guns, hunted, and wrestled just like men. The physical strength difference between men and women that exists today was not as pronounced in the past; this difference is more a result of environmental influences than an innate condition. Especially in ancient times, Turkish women were nearly equal to men in terms of strength, endurance, effort, determination, and courage (Koca, 2002:9). "There is a need for women who say, 'to raise honorable sons and virtuous daughters is my greatest debt to this country'" (Atsız, 2011:151). These ideals resonate in the collective conscience of nations rather than just among a few individuals.

Just as individuals have souls, emotions, and consciences, nations also possess a social soul, emotions, and a conscience. Ideals are born from this collective consciousness. These ideals are never the work of just a few individuals. A nation without an ideal is considered dead; in such a case, individuals do not feel the existence of the nation and are unprepared to sacrifice their lives for it. The ideal of one society can be offensive to another; it cannot merely be a defensive ideal. When the members of a nation are left scattered and miserable, they are deprived of ideals. All kinds of disasters befall that nation. Neighboring

nations may seize their homeland, leading that nation to become captive and servile, losing their autonomy. Victors often attack their religion, customs, and traditions. A captive nation first loses its language, then its religion, and its customs, ultimately erasing its identity from the world (Seyfettin, 2020:99-100; Atsız, 2011:132). Conversely, those who have ideals possess a country, a nation, a flag, and a history for which they are willing to risk everything. Those with ideals embody principled lives, resolute behavior, and virtuous ideas (Bahçeli, 2019). Thus, having an ideal serves as a significant barrier to the disappearance of nations.

Turkist politics is public, much like the politics of Islam. It is not confined to Ottoman borders (Akçura, 2022:82-83). The Turkish ideal of the Red Apple was thoroughly formed and shaped during the glorious ages of the Ottomans, becoming a symbol of Turkish greatness, a vision of elevation, and a divine purpose. Without this profound thought, the one million Turks who arrived in Anatolia in the 11th century could not have established a worldwide state or created a masterpiece of organization and civilization across four continents, even with the help of a few divisions of Christianized remnants of other Turks encountered in the territories of Byzantium in Asia and Europe. The purity and naturalness embodied in the Red Apple signify the ancient roots of the Turkish ideal. The term "Red Apple" illustrates that this ideal was born among the people before intellectuals. An ideal first emerges in the hearts of the populace, deep within their consciousness and dreams, manifesting initially in epics. It later becomes articulated by great leaders, who inspire heroic efforts to realize it. During these endeavors, the people with ideals pursue their heroes with fervent desire. Through these struggles, the nation advances, initially in spirit and eventually in material progress, maturing as it does so. The Turks' ultimate ideal is to achieve abundance and happiness within their realm by establishing a great and superior state at the culmination of their conquests (Atsız, 2011:19).

According to Atsız (2011:33), Turkism is synonymous with Turkish nationalism. The suffix at the end of the word indicates, depending on the context, membership, affection, or support. Turkism is an ideal that emerges from four sources:

1. Nationalism, whose roots are very old and have existed for centuries within the consciousness of the Turkish *urug* (sept);
2. The movement of nationalism following the Tanzimat Era (political reforms initiated in the Ottoman state in 1839), which sought to implement a populist movement in Turkish territory akin to those of nationalists in Europe;
3. The reaction arising from the betrayal of foreign elements within our state;
4. The significant troubles that the Turks have endured for 200 years.

The ideas from these four sources have merged to form present-day Turkism.

The ideals of Islam, such as "Nizam-ı Alem" (the Islamic world order) and "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" (proselytizing Islam), have been intertwined with the Red Apple-like concepts of "kut" (divine duty) that the Turks have pursued throughout history. Although both "Nizam-ı Alem" and "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" are fundamentally Islamic concepts, they have resonated within the Islamic world primarily through the mentality and ideal of Turkishness (Coşkun, 2014:36).

The equivalent concepts in statecraft for "Nizam-ı Alem" and "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" are encapsulated in "Devlet-i Ebed Müddet" (eternal state). This phrase signifies that the lifespan of the state is so enduring that it cannot be constrained by time. "I'lay-ı Kelimetullah" refers to the mission of knowing and spreading the appreciation of the word of Allah, celebrating His glory, and conveying the truths of Islam. In Turkish-Islamic history, this concept has been interpreted as a commitment to announce the name of Allah to all humanity, glorify His majesty, and confront those who deny Him, all within the limits He has set (Erdem, 2014:95).

Nationalism is not merely the product of momentary excitements, a collection of thoughts reacting to external stimuli, or a specific means to fulfill periodic desires. It is not an idea that turns away from democracy, freedom, human rights, or technological inventions and economic developments. According to the late Erol Güngör, nationalism is the movement to transform national culture into a source of civilization itself and to save society from becoming an open marketplace for degenerative changes. In other words, nationalism is also a catalyst for

civilization. At the heart of Turkish nationalism is a unique love and unparalleled commitment to the Turkish nation. There are two primary sources of the Nine Lights: the first is the pride of Turkishness and a conscious Islamic faith; the second is love for humanity (Bahçeli, 2019).

In the earliest centuries of its existence in Central Asia, our nation learned to shorten distances by domesticating the horse, thereby finding the means to control vast regions and achieve the success of establishing a great state. While other nations could only form city-states, the idea of world domination and the pursuit of grand ideals emerged in Turkish states, which encompassed many cities. The Hun, Göktürk, and Ottoman Empires are the results of this grand ideal; only Rome and the Abbasids can be compared to them in the history of the world (Atsız, 2011:95). The ancient Turks held a deep and sincere belief in an omnipotent God, who had bestowed upon them the dominion of the world. Bilge Khan expressed this piety and the divine origin of dominion when he stated: "I sat on the throne and brought the nations near and far into order because God willed it." Just as in the Islamic era, the Turks were devout and faithful during the Shamanistic period as well, finding it fitting to their sense of dominion, justice, and humanity to show respect for foreign religions. Thus, the ideals of Turkish world dominion and global order developed on this foundation and perspective (Turan, 2003: 115).

By harmoniously combining national, Islamic, and humanitarian sentiments, the Turks committed themselves to the cause of a world order, believing that God had entrusted them with global dominion based on these principles. By respecting this trust, they believed they were not only the guardians of a single dynasty, class, or group but also of all the peoples and religions they ruled over. For this reason, disputes and struggles of nationality, religion, and class were not prominent in the Turkish Empires; justice and harmony prevailed. The international nature of Turkish world dominion and order, evolving within Islamic and humanitarian principles, was thus made possible (Turan, 2003: 12).

The ideal of the Turks is not one of blind, rapacious, or oppressive imperialism that neglects the goal of nationalism. The Turkish concept aims to establish a large and powerful "ilkhanate" by uniting the Turkish provinces adjacent to each other in Asia under the shadow of

the Ottoman flag (Seyfettin, 2020:101). Another factor facilitating the Turks' spread in various directions is the soundness of their spirituality. Flowing toward unknown horizons, even out of necessity, being ready to face imminent dangers, and engaging in a relentless struggle for survival is not a behavior considered natural for every nation. This spiritual vitality, clearly observed among the Turks and enabling their continuity as a dynamic community throughout history, was further enhanced by their successes. Every military achievement led to new political objectives, and as territories were conquered, the desire for further conquests was fueled. Over time, this gave rise among the Turks to a philosophy of conquest aimed at bringing peace and tranquility to the world and a global dominion ideal dedicated to implementing the just and egalitarian Turkish code everywhere (Kafesoglu, 2018:55).

According to Hilmi Ziya Ülken (2020:54), "The concept of an ideal is not a realm that can never be attained, one where every attempt fails, nor is it a distant dream that we see only as a mirage throughout our lives. Rather, this concept is the 'Gök Tengri' (Heavenly God) who constantly inspires us to strive further and move closer, and whose beloved face we eagerly behold every time we lift our heads." For this reason, Turkish wisdom is neither fatalistic like Greek wisdom nor reverist like Iranian wisdom; it is truthful and progressive.

At the heart of the Turkish concept of the state and sovereignty is the idea of a universal state that encompasses the entire world. The main goal of the Turkish state is to ensure "Tört bulung," meaning the sacred sovereignty of the Turks over the four corners of the world, and to spread Turkish justice everywhere "from where the sun rises to where it sets." Many also integrate this with the old Turkish belief system. The Turks, loyal to God since the depths of history, believe they are an elite people of God and are under divine protection. Turkish khans believed they were tasked with establishing Allah's rule over the world (Gömeç/Fidan 2020:329).

Some integrate this belief with the ancient Turkish belief system. In other words, *kut* (the power to rule) is granted by God to the Turkish Khan, who possesses sovereignty; however, this power is not absolute and is limited by the *töre*. The legitimacy of political power continues as long as it complies with the *töre*. In Turkish culture, the concept of *töre*

signifies that sovereignty belongs not to an individual but to a system known as *töre*. The idea that "the state may fall, but the *töre* remains" reflects a unique approach to law. In Turkish culture, the provisions of *töre* are not unchangeable molds. With these qualities, *töre* serves as one of the most significant foundations of Turkish state philosophy (Macit, 2022:26-27).

Ömer Seyfettin (2020:100) defines the nation as the assembly (sum) of people who speak one language and are united by a common religion, upbringing, and education. According to him, political boundaries can never separate a nation. To be considered a Turk, it is sufficient for an individual to speak Turkish, be Muslim, and live according to Turkish customs and traditions. In Anatolia, millions of Muslims speak Turkish and identify as Turks. Beyond Anatolia, the vast region extending to Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Kashgar, Yarkent, Hotan, Aksu, Turfan, Karakorum, and Manchuria is populated by the Turkish nation, all of whom are Muslim and speak Turkish.

Additionally, the Northern Turks are spread along the Volga River as far as Kazan and Ufa. The Tatar dialect increasingly resembles the Istanbul dialect, thanks to the broad influence of Turkish literature. Scholars who have grasped the national spirit, such as Musa Karullah Bigiyef, always write their works in the Turkish spoken in Istanbul. The language used in the *Tercüman* newspaper of Crimea is the same as that of Istanbul. The motto of the late Ismail Gaspıralı Bey, "Unity in language, work, idea,"[1] reflects the ideal of nearly all our brothers and sisters. In Siberia, the foothills of the Altai, and the Pamirs, Turks also live in strong communities, speaking Turkish. Atsız (2011:83) refers to the independence and unification with Türkiye of these kin nations, located in the historical homeland of the Turks and still largely populated by Turks, as Turanism.

Musa Karullah Bigiyef and Ismail Gaspıralı's intellectual contributions to Turkish nationalism are of great importance. They campaigned for the intellectual awakening of Muslim Turks under difficult conditions. Gaspıralı İsmail Bey, through his newspaper *Tercüman*, sought

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[1] The slogan of the movement started by Crimean Ismail Gaspıralı for the unity of Turks

to elevate the cultural level of the Muslim Turk communities under the domination of Tsarist Russia and to secure their religious and national rights. This endeavor became known as the Jadid movement or Jadidism. One of the ideas that Ismail Gaspıralı, the pioneer of the Usul-ü Jadid (New Method) movement, aimed to spread through the *Tercüman* newspaper was the establishment of a "common literary Turkish language." A common literary language would allow Turkish tribes and clans to understand each other and create a strong cultural and political union. When İsmail Gaspıralı referred to "our language," he meant the "common Turkish language," and when he spoke of "our nation," he was referring to all Turkish tribes and clans. Musa Karullah Bigiyef wholeheartedly believed in the need for all Muslim Turks to act together to attain national interests and political independence. He remained faithfully committed to the core principles of Gaspıralı İsmail Bey's motto of "unity in language" and earnestly adhered to these principles in his works (Temizyurek, 2002:146-147).

One of the significant scholars representing the realist stage in the history of Turkish nationalism is Remzi Oğuz Arık. Some intellectuals, like Arık, who are deeply connected to Türkiye's geography and sacred values, advocate for a nationalist ideal rooted in the concept of the homeland, inseparable from its geography. They drew inspiration from the War of Independence in Anatolia. This realist nationalism movement, based on genuine intuition, is closely linked to the sacred values that have emerged from the genius of the Turkish nation and the Islamic religion in our time. Thus, two forces—material and spiritual, namely homeland and religion—that once played a fundamental role in the establishment of Türkiye, are now working hand in hand to revive our nationalism (Topçu, 2010:79). Another important Turkish thinker who examines the Turkish and Western struggle comparatively through culture is Erol Güngör.

According to Erol Güngör (2019:58), the vitality of a nation is possible only when it has very solid foundations in its culture. As we will see when discussing the distinguishing qualities of the Turkish people, no other culture has developed and disseminated human virtues worthy of being considered universal values as extensively as Turkish culture. Despite engaging in prolonged and arduous struggles with the West, no other nation has demonstrated such steadfast resistance

and continued this struggle as we have. The reason for this resistance should be attributed not to a lack of adaptability in the Turkish nation, but rather to the robustness and deep-rootedness of Turkish culture, which, in terms of human and moral values, may even surpass Western civilization. In summary, the late Erol Güngör defined and documented nationalists as people who contend for establishing and maintaining unity in a country.

In his speech on February 9, 2019, marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Nationalist Movement Party, the party's leader, Devlet Bahçeli, provided important insights into the fundamental principles of Turkish nationalism. Within the framework of these principles, there is a clear reaction and stance against those who attempt to divide the nation into classes and groups or categorize it along ethnic and sectarian lines. Turkish nationalism emphasizes that the nation is a cultural union and a historical unity. It is stated that even if one were to search the illustrious pages of Turkish history for racial bigotry or racist obsession, none would be found. Lineage is distinct from race; a lack of nobility is different from racism. Turkishness is an understanding that cannot be discovered through cranial measurements in laboratories and does not involve looking down upon or despising others. Among the members of a nation, both memories and sorrows are shared. The thousand-year law is everlasting. If there is superiority, it lies in piety. If there is a difference, it may be in luck, history, or definition. A nation is a living organism consisting of people who share the same culture, faith, language, past, and future. Therefore, dividing the nation into class compartments is contrary to national heritage and is deemed completely outside the boundaries of nationalist thought and ideology. The understanding of the nation is based on national values, spiritual values, and principles of morality and merit. Thus, any racial distinction, such as "white Turk" versus "black Turk," is considered intentional and flawed. It is emphasized that no one in Türkiye is unequal or insignificant, and that no one is to be regarded as second-class citizens.

Additionally, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk explained the necessity of working hard to ensure that the name of the nation and the homeland, known as "Turk" for a thousand years and destined to remain so for eternity, carries significance. He stated: "Turkishness is fundamental.

It is appropriate to take pride in Turkish civilization. To be worthy of this pride, it is necessary to work very hard." Ziya Gökalp encapsulated the idea of "We are Turkish, Turkist, and lovers of Turan and Türkiye" with the assertion: "The homeland for Turks is neither Türkiye nor Turkestan; the homeland is a vast and eternal country: Turan."

A Brief Evaluation
Previous social theorists often made the mistake of perceiving nationalism as something entirely negative that could be overcome through education and enlightenment, eventually leading to its irrelevance. However, we see that theories predicting the disappearance of nation-states and the elimination of borders due to globalization hold no significance today, as nation-states continue to be the centers of influence in the international arena.

A comparison between Western nationalism and Turkish nationalism leads us to the following conclusion: In Turkish nationalism, the tradition of coexistence prevails, and this tradition has not developed a racist structure. In contrast, the West, regardless of theoretical rhetoric, shows through practical experiences a desire for a homogeneous social structure. These attempts to create a homogeneous society have resulted in significant disasters in the West. Therefore, from a historical context, the nation-building processes in the West and Türkiye have fundamental differences. The most crucial distinction is that while Western nation-building often occurred through bloody conflicts involving religious and national strife, Türkiye's nation-building process was not marked by such bloodshed.

Turkish nationalism also differs from Western nationalism in its inclusiveness and embrace, which are not based on the notion of a pure race. A review of foundational works throughout thousands of years of Turkish history readily reveals that distinctions such as superior and inferior races are absent from these records. It can be observed that Turkish nationalism, with its universal ideals such as Turkish World Dominion, the Red Apple, and İ'layı Kelimetullah (proselytizing Islam), aspires to bring justice and order to the world.

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