

# TURKISH NATIONALISM: IDEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL BOUNDARIES

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## **Introduction**

One of the most exploited and despised terms in social science literature is nationalism. The reason for this is due to the efforts of academics or authors with different ideologies who make so-called objective evaluations in order to equate nationalism with racism and fascism by treating their own ideological prejudices as if they were scientific hypotheses. Of course, Turkish nationalism also strongly receives its share of this process. However, nations and nationalisms have their own history and therefore their own stories. Presenting shallow and reductionist approaches under the disguise of scholarship leads to a misunderstanding of nationalism as a historical reality. Therefore, academic sensitivity and honesty require understanding and explanation by acting more objectively toward the object of study.

In order to define nationalism, it is first necessary to define the actor that gives it spirit, namely the nation. However, there is no universally accepted definition of *nation* and *nationalism*. It is not possible to say that social scientists agree not only on the definition but even on the timing of when a nation emerges. The reason behind this is that nation and nationalism are the subjects of social sciences. The main character-

istic of the social sciences, unlike the natural sciences, is the difficulty of establishing a general rule that transcends theory for all eras and locations. This is because the social scientist cannot approach the object of study as objectively as a physicist approaches optics or a chemist approaches the element sodium. However, they cannot produce a scientific study without finding ways to overcome this objectivity or without starting to work by revealing his own prior knowledge and value judgments.

This study proceeds from the presumption that the author feels that he belongs to this nation while evaluating the nation, nationalism and especially Turkish nationalism. However, the author reveals the process in which he tries to prevent these elements from affecting his evaluations while being aware of his identity and values. Here, too, ethical values and empathy are included in the process in order to eliminate the ethnocentric perspective. Otherwise, the study would be no different from the ideological evaluations of supporters of scientific socialism, who claim to analyze social structure from a pseudo-scientific perspective.

### **What is a nation?**

There is a vigorous debate about the recognition and definition of the nation and nationalism. A key reason for this intensity is the question of whether a nation should be defined solely by objective characteristics—such as ethnicity, language, religion, territory, shared history, common origin or ancestry (kinship), and culture—or by subjective characteristics, including will, memory, self-awareness, solidarity, loyalty, devotion, patriotism, and collective will. The subjective definition of a nation is often associated with Ernest Renan's famous concept of the nation: "The nation is a spirit, a spiritual being. This spirit is composed of a rich heritage of shared past memories and the willingness to live together. The worship of ancestors is the most legitimate worship. Our ancestors made us what we are. A past full of heroism, great men, glory, and honor... This is the social capital on which a nation can be built. To have experienced common glories and honors in the past, to have a common will in the present, to have accomplished great things together, and the willingness to accomplish such things again—these are the main conditions for becoming a nation!" (1946:120).

A definition of a nation based solely on objective elements is not unique to any specific nation, as these characteristics do not necessarily distinguish one nation from another. For example, the English language is not what defines a nation. English is spoken in England (or Great Britain), the USA, and Australia, yet these are considered distinct nations.

“As an important source of reference in the literature on nationalism, Smith’s definition of nation can be seen as an inclusive definition (2009, 32): “A nation is a group of people who share a historical territory or country, common myths and historical memory, a mass public culture, a common economy, and common legal rights and duties.” However, this definition reveals certain deficiencies when it comes to nationalism. Since nationalism places the nation at the center of daily life, thoughts, and political goals, it is not sufficient to explain it solely by objective factors, law, or common culture. The nation is not only a community of people with a shared culture (language, religion, tradition, etc.), but also reflects a sense of belonging, love, and devotion toward that culture. At this point, Renan’s and other subjective definitions of nation can be considered more compelling for nationalists.”

Turkish nationalism’s understanding of the nation is culture-oriented, as reflected in Ziya Gökalp’s definition. Gökalp (2015: 40) succinctly defines the nation as “a group that possesses a unique culture.”

Proving that it is insufficient to define the nation through variables such as race, tribe, and geography, Gökalp, drawing from sociological knowledge, views the bonds of a nation as rooted in shared upbringing and culture—essentially, in shared emotions. He defines the nation as follows (Gökalp 2015: 37): “The nation is not a racial, tribal, geographical, political, or voluntary group. A nation is a group of individuals who share the same language, religion, morals, and arts—that is, who have received the same upbringing. The Turkish peasant describes it as ‘whose language matches my language, whose religion matches my religion’.”

Not only is the definition of the word “nation” a matter of debate, but so is the time of its emergence. For modernist theorists, who claim that nationalism arose with modernization, the nation did not exist in ancient history but developed only in recent times. However, for primordialist theorists, nations have existed since antiquity and have

retained their essential characteristics (national qualities) without undergoing significant change. Modernist theorists argue that the nation began to emerge alongside the modern state and industrialization—essentially, as part of the modernization process. In contrast, ethno-symbolists see nations as the transformation of ancient ethnicities into nations through and around a dominant ethnicity, facilitated by changes that took place in the modern era. A nation, they argue, refers to a professional, hierarchical, and differentiated social structure characterized by increased population density, and in this sense, it marks a departure from traditional, tribal-based social structures. However, this historical and social change does not imply that the characteristics of the nation only emerged recently, nor does it deny the existence of societies that had already become nations. This situation can be understood as a cyclical transition.

What modernist theorists fail to see is that their cumulative understanding of science, rooted in the classical (positivist) paradigm, mirrors the view presented by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which argues that scientific progress does not follow a straight line but occurs through periodic revolutions. For example, the Turks, who achieved national unity during the Gokturk period, rallied around a single sovereign against external powers (such as China) and governed themselves as a sovereign state, realizing their national identity and unity through national consciousness. The Orkhon Monuments reveal the high level of national identity consciousness during this period, particularly in resisting exploitation and assimilation by China. This process is what Hobsbawm describes as pre-nationalism or pre-national feelings. However, it is clear that all three elements of a nation, as mentioned by A. Smith—national identity, national unity, and self-determination—can be seen in the Gokturks. Therefore, it is evident that the origins of the nation and certain aspects of nationalism can be traced back to the depths of history. This idea is particularly applicable to nations with historical depth, whose roots extend back to ancient ethnicities.

### **What is nationalism?**

Like the nation, there is no single agreed-upon definition of nationalism. Nationalism is sometimes defined as an emotion, sometimes as

love for the state paired with patriotism, sometimes as a political and social movement, and sometimes as an ideology. Lawrence summarizes the challenge faced by many writers on nationalism under a few key points (2005: 39): The term nationalism is problematic because it has numerous broad definitions. Sometimes it is an abstract ideology; other times, it is a political doctrine. This doctrine is based on the belief that homogeneous nations with distinct characteristics govern themselves.

Sometimes, nationalism is the emotion felt by people belonging to a nation in their daily social relations and at other times, as Voltaire emphasized, the freedom of the citizen is more important than the unity of the nation. Sometimes it appears on the stage with the liberal- liberalizing meaning belonging to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it takes the form of exclusionary, aggressive and integral (nation- and state-centered) nationalism. Nationalism is sometimes a widespread and popular expression of socio-cultural identity (Lawrence 2005:4). This popular socio-cultural identity is manifested in national matches or other types of national competitions. Even people who do not consider themselves nationalists often display their identity in popular demonstrations and marches with their national flags. This is why nationalism makes its presence felt in every sphere – from the economy to sports competitions, from warfare to the individual psyche – and can have an advantage over other ideologies in terms of public display.

Although the roots of the concept of the nation can be traced back to the 15th century, especially in France and England (with some authors even tracing them further back), the concept of nationalism emerged in the literature in the late 19th century. At this point, nationalism became associated with both self-determination and democracy. Thus, nationalism is both theoretical (the belief that every nation should have its own country) and practical (the idea that ethnicity and culture are important and worth defending) (Hastings 1997: 4).

Based on the assumption that every nation has the right to a state or self-government, and that every nation's culture is important and valuable in its own right, "nationalism is an ideology that places the nation at the center of its concerns and seeks to maximize its well-being" (Smith 2013: 20). Three specific goals are set for this ideological purpose: national identity, national unity, and national autonomy.

Stating that nations that cannot achieve these three goals cannot survive, Smith's definition also reveals why nationalism is an ideology: "an ideological movement that aims to achieve and preserve autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population, some of whose members intend to form an actual or potential 'nation'." (Smith 2013: 20).

According to Smith (2013: 15; 2009: 119), while nationalism refers to the process of establishing and developing nations and national states, it also encompasses the feeling of belonging to a nation and the sense of security and welfare associated with that nation. Nationalism is an ideology and a socio-political movement that contains prescriptions for achieving the nation's goals and realizing the national will. As can be seen, nationalism is viewed not only as a feeling or social or political movement but also as an ideology in itself.

### **Nationalism and ideology**

In political science, nationalism is considered an ideology with a specific program, set of concepts, and goals. However, because the nationalist literature views nationalism as a "false consciousness" in Marxist terms, which prevents the ideology from being narrow and real, and as a "straitjacket put on our perceptions" in the words of the late Cemil Meriç, it is expressed as a theory or doctrine. Yet neither theory nor doctrine is sufficient to capture the action-oriented side of ideologies or nationalism, since ideologies (and nationalism) are not merely a matter of theory, doctrine, or sentiment but a form of attitudinal action. Ideologies "claim both to describe and to prescribe" (Vincent 2006: 24). For example, nationalism as an ideology seeks to reveal not only a feeling or an attitude but also an action. In this context, viewing nationalism as a paradigm that encompasses theory, action, attitude, and emotion seems more meaningful for expressing nationalist literature and activism.

The argument made by those who claim that nationalism is not a comprehensive ideology is based on its ability to articulate different ideologies; that is, nationalism can encompass conservative, socialist, and liberal ideologies. Therefore, it is quite flexible and does not possess the inclusiveness typical of a comprehensive ideology. However, this claim can be extended to other ideologies as well. For example, 'social liberalism' combines features of both liberalism and socialism, which are often seen as opposing ideologies. The counterpoint to so-

cial liberalism, positioned on the right side of the political spectrum but with claims that do not seem too far left, is social democracy. The conception of social democracy put forth by Eduard Bernstein, which articulates basic Marxist views (1850-1923), represents a deviation from the Marxist-Communist line. More recently, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have radically criticized the class-based socialist conception of socialism and developed the theory of “radical democracy” based on culture and identity, continuing the radical critique initiated by Antonio Gramsci. The class-based classical socialist and communist perspectives are harshly critical of these new theories that deviate from orthodox Marxism. Therefore, given the various adaptations not only in nationalism but also in other ideologies, the criticism of nationalism as lacking the quality of being a comprehensive ideology can be dismissed.

It is difficult to assert that a clear boundary exists between nationalism and other ideologies because the liberal interpretation views nationalism as a liberating movement and thought. Just as human beings deserve freedom, so too do nations. This freedom is ensured by their right to self-determination. In this sense, nationalism, like other Enlightenment ideologies, is seen as “progressive and emancipatory” (Heywood 2007: 210).

On the other hand, against this optimistic perspective, the tribalist aspect—expressed as the dark side of nationalism—that perceives the other as a threat is emphasized (2010: 212). It is impossible to overlook that the expression “dark side” here relates to a perception of threat originating from National Socialism (Fascism) within the European tradition.

Another liberal criticism of nationalism is that it is a collectivist ideology that threatens individual freedoms by mobilizing the masses (Spencer and Wollman 2020: 24). However, this criticism also applies to identity politics, which is a central argument of radical democracy as a new socialist theory. For example, an aggressive and dominating political style based on gender identity can threaten not only individuals but also the healthy future of society and the family. Similarly, when identity politics is used to manipulate the voting behavior of an ethnic group (e.g., the identity pressure exerted by the HDP on Kurdish citizens in Türkiye), the phenomenon of identity, defined as emancipa-

tory, can become a tool that oppresses others and prevents them from exercising their free will.

For Marxist ideology, nationalism is viewed as an element of the superstructure and is defined within the framework of the infrastructure-superstructure distinction used in social structure analysis. In this context, nationalism emerges as a reflection of the mode of production, which is fundamentally a combination of the means of production and the relations of production, influenced by these networks of relations. This dependent variable characteristic of nationalism leads the ruling classes to oppress other classes, equipping them with false consciousness and confronting them with nationalism as a veil that prevents them from seeing the truth. Like religion, nationalism is also a tool of oppression and a source of false consciousness for the ruling classes that maintain the oppressive-exploitative state to exploit other classes.

In Türkiye, criticism of nationalism is based on a colonialist understanding of the state. However, as illustrated in the text, in Turkish nationalism, the state is not viewed as an instrument of oppression; rather, those who govern the state strive to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, as seen in the Orkhon Monuments. This perspective reflects the understanding of the state in Turkish nationalism, which has remained unchanged for centuries. The state is, of course, the absolute authority with the power of violence, but in Turkish political culture, the state is also seen as the father, the hand of compassion, and the hand of mercy.

### **The ancient roots of Turkish national identity:**

#### **Orkhon Monuments**

Since nationalism studies typically begin with the French Revolution (1789), it is often assumed that there were no nations, no sense of nationality, and therefore no nationalism before that date. This assumption stems from the dominant hegemony of modernist theory. Any viewpoint expressed outside the modernist framework regarding nationalism is often dismissed as emotional and ideological blindness, or, in short, subjectivity. Consequently, discussing different historical and socio-cultural developmental trajectories outside of Western history has almost amounted to excommunication from the church of science. For instance, claiming that feelings of national identity and nationality among the Turks were articulated in the Orkhon Monuments long



before the French Revolution was enough to be accused of stepping outside the realm of pure heroism and science. Nation and nationalism are perceived as concepts that belong to the post-French Revolution period.

With the Gokturk State (552-745) founded by Bumin Khan, the term "Turk" appears in the name of a state for the first time in history. The Gokturk State represents a structure where ethnic identity and the state are identified, making it an exceptional example in Turkish history. Additionally, the messages conveyed by the rulers of this state to the people-nation and the dominant other (China), perceived as a threat, serve as a source of motivation that reinforces the national identity of the Gokturk nation.

The information revealed by the Orkhon Monuments, which provide insights about the Gokturk State and its people, indicates that awareness of national identity was high, yet the history of nationalism is not extended to this period. The primary reason for this is tied to the variables regarding how nation and nationalism are defined and what their criteria are. For example, since nationalism is associated with modern terminology such as self-determination and popular sovereignty, the data and spirit of the monuments are not considered within the scope of nationalism. However, concepts like national identity, a sense of national consciousness, the power that mobilizes a nation, and the motivation to defend one's own culture against others are directly emphasized in the text and are relevant to the ideals of nationalism.

In these monuments (Ergin 1970), the perception of Ötüken as a sacred homeland, the characterization of the Turkish nation as a nation chosen by God, and the heroic deeds of the past, as expressed in İlderis Kağan's statement, "the nation that had been without a province, without a khan, the nation that had become concubines, the nation that had become servants, the nation that had abandoned the Turkish tradition, was created and raised by the tradition of my ancestors," evoke ideas reminiscent of Ernest Renan. Furthermore, the monuments illustrate the relationship between national identity and the survival of the state by emphasizing the loss of national identity through the abandonment of Turkish heritage.

The Orkhon Monuments highlight a state based on an ethnic foundation. This state comprises an organic people living peacefully in the

sacred homeland of the Turkish nation, known as Ötüken, within the framework of their own customs. In the homeland called Ötüken, we can talk about a nation consisting of people with the same identity and emotions formed over time.

The dominance of modernist theory on nationalism and ethnicity assumes, with certainty, that phenomena such as nation and nationalism are recent developments. Connor, a proponent of this view, argues that it is incorrect to speak of a nation before the nineteenth century, as there was no broad-based national consciousness among many peoples recognized today as nations. According to him, national consciousness is a sentiment that should be shared not only by the elite but also by the masses (the people). He asserts that the masses, who were semi- or completely illiterate until recently, remained largely silent about identity(s) (2005:42; 2004:43). Stating that the phenomenon of nation and national consciousness emerged in the 18th century, Connor cites the Altai Turks (Gokturks) as an exception, while expressing doubt about encountering these phenomena before this date (Connor 2005:45). He highlights the "Altai Turks" (Gokturks) as his favored community regarding nation and national consciousness.

Unlike early European histories that focus on the elite, the Orkhon Monuments address not only the attitudes of the lords and nobles but also those of the masses, referred to as the Kara Budun, indicating the existence of national consciousness among the Turks at a very early period of history. He describes how the Kara Budun, once satisfied with their kings, became corrupt and degenerated under Chinese influence, submitting to Chinese rulers and khans, marrying Chinese women, and adopting the Chinese language, clothing, and lifestyle; thus, the Kara Budun, whose golden age came to an end in this way, began to harbor resentment toward the Chinese. Consequently, it is emphasized that the national consciousness of the Gokturks was not limited to the elite, as seen in Western societies, but that all segments of society shared the same sentiments.

As a political ethnicity, the Turks gathered under the Gokturk State can be seen as a nation with a sense of national identity and nationalism because they perceived themselves as part of a kinship-cultural community with similar characteristics living under the same roof, distinct and separate from others (China).

### **Nationality and Turkishness in the Ottoman Empire**

In the 11th century, the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia coincided with the Crusades. "Türkiye" is the European name for Turkish-speaking Anatolia, a term that has been used since the first Turkish conquest of the region in the 11th century (Lewis 2010:3). For the Islamic world, the influx of Anatolian converts to Islam represented "the Muslim East's resistance to the massive Crusader onslaught from Europe, and then the military and religious vigor that would enable it to repulse the Crusaders" (Lewis 2010:8). The arrival of the Turks in Anatolia, referred to as Asia Minor, led to the definition of this geography as a Turkish homeland.

During the Ottoman period, the word "Turk" was used in the following ways:

1. *Strong and Powerful*: The word "Turk" was used to convey strength and power.
2. *Ignorant and Rude*: It was also used in a derogatory sense to refer to those living in the countryside and villages. The erroneous portrayal of these negative connotations as the only meanings of "Turk" throughout Ottoman history does not reflect the truth. When this perception intersects with the religion-based social structure of the Ottoman Empire, one encounters an Ottoman history largely devoid of Turks.
3. *Distinction Among Ottomans*: The term was used to distinguish between Turkish-speaking Ottomans (Muslims) and those who spoke other languages. It was sometimes employed among Muslims to highlight ethnic differences, such as between Turks and Tatars.
4. *Western Perspective*: In the eyes of Westerners, "Turk" referred not only to Ottoman Turks but also to all Muslims within the state.
5. *Equating Muslim and Turkish Identity*: The term was used to equate Muslim and Turkish identity. This ethno-religious combination was also employed to emphasize the strength and power of the Turk in opposition to the infidel.

While Turkishness as an ethnic identity continued to exist among nomads and peasants, the idea of Turkish nationality was revived in the 19th century through Turkology studies in Europe. This revival was

further fueled by the arrival in the Ottoman Empire of members of Turkish descent who had undergone Russification policies in the Russian Empire and had developed a distinct Turkish identity in reaction to Slavization.

In the Ottoman Empire, the concept of “nation” could be understood in several ways. Initially, it referred to a religious community, particularly in relation to non-Muslim communities, as seen in the millet system introduced by Mehmet the Conqueror. However, with the Tanzimat reforms and the weakening of the empire, the millet system began to dissolve and started to take on the modern meanings of “nation” or “people” (Kushner 2009:54-55). The late 19th century marked a period of conceptual debates within the Ottoman intellectual sphere, where “nation” and “nationality” were often discussed in conjunction with Islam, while the term “tribe” was linked to Turkishness or viewed as a Western concept (Kushner 2009:54-55).

Initially, Ottoman subjects did not identify as Turks, nor did they use the term “Ottoman” to express a sense of nationality; their primary self-identification was as Muslims. The terms “Ottoman” and “Osmani,” which emerged later, were initially used to denote pride in the dynasty and the state. However, with the Tanzimat reforms, these terms came to encompass all subjects (Muslims, Christians, and Jews) within the framework of creating Ottoman citizenship, which was the main goal of that era.

### **The Birth of Turkish Nationalism**

Since its emergence in the late Ottoman period, modern Turkish nationalism has taken many different forms, ranging from cultural nationalism to anti-colonial nationalism, and from racism to socialist nationalism. Turkish nationalism aims to work for the benefit of the Turkish nation, preserve its national culture, and elevate the Turkish state to the level of modern nations.

Just as there is no universally accepted definition of nationalism, the meanings attributed to nationalism by proponents of Turkish nationalism vary widely. Turkish nationalism, which initially emerged as cultural nationalism in the Ottoman Empire from the Tanzimat period to the Second Constitutional Monarchy, later manifested as anti-colonial nationalism from the Second Constitutional Monarchy to the foundation of the Republic.

The use of various terms to describe different types of nationalism—such as citizenship-based nationalism, Atatürk’s nationalism, Kemalist nationalism, racist nationalism, Turkism, and Turkish nationalism—has created confusion regarding the meanings attributed to both nationalism and Turkish nationalism. This confusion arises because Turkish nationalism has held different meanings at various stages of the Republic’s history, influenced by the political positions and worldviews of individuals.

Turkish nationalism began to take shape in the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the 19th century. Despite this delayed emergence, it developed with astonishing speed. The reasons behind this rapid development are closely linked to the factors that gave rise to it. The key reasons for the birth of Turkish nationalism are as follows (Kushner 2009:26-27, Georjon 2013:1-21, Sarıay 1995:23-76):

1. *Orientalists’ Interest in Asia*: The intense interest of Orientalists in Asians during the 19th century led to a more nuanced portrayal of Turks in Europe. This shift highlighted their virtues and culture, contrasting with the previous depiction of “barbarian Turks.
2. *Cultural Nationalism*: Cultural nationalism emerged under the influence of Western writers and their works, fostering a renewed sense of identity among Turks.
3. *Rise of Pan Movements*: In the second half of the 19th century, various Pan movements arose in Europe, beginning with Pan-Germanism, aimed at uniting all Germans, followed by Pan-Slavism. In response, Turkic intellectuals advocating for Pan-Turkism migrated to Türkiye from Turkistan and other regions of Russia, driven by Russian pressure.
4. *Interest in Compatriots Abroad*: Turks began to take a growing interest in their compatriots outside the empire, spurred by reports from Western writers published in newspapers that shaped public opinion.
5. *Events Following the Declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy*:
  - a. The revival of new currents of thought with the return of opposition intellectuals from exile.
  - b. Economic boycotts against products from the occupying country and its collaborating tradesmen.

- c. Expansion of freedom of association into the ethnic sphere.
- d. Increased diversity in the broadcasting landscape.
- e. Nationalism emerged as a reaction against ethnic nationalism.
- f. The rise in the proportion of the Turkish population in Anatolia, particularly due to territorial losses from wars like the Balkan War, necessitating migration to Anatolia.
- g. The usage of “Turks” and “Türkiye” by Europeans when referring to the Ottomans elevated the prestige of these terms, as enhanced relations with Europe brought new meaning to “Turk.”

Europeans often used the terms “barbaric” and “immoral” to describe the Turks, reflecting a history of animosity and slander directed at a people they had fought against for centuries. The Turks were viewed as a significant threat. However, alongside these negative portrayals, there was also an acknowledgment of their virtues and cultural contributions. Western studies focusing on Turkish history and culture revealed that the origins of the Turks trace back thousands of years to Turkistan (Central Asia).

### *Turkish nationalism is a middle-class intellectual movement*

Some of the theorists writing on nationalism claim that nationalism is a middle-class intellectual movement. These intellectuals became aware of their own culture, national identity and nationality, and expressed through their works of poetry, literature and history that they saw themselves as a distinct and unique community. This stage can be seen as ‘Stage A’ in Marxist historian M. Hroch’s (2011:51) account of the emergence of nationalism in Eastern Europe. According to Hroch, stage A is a purely cultural period in which nationalism is based on literature and the presentation of the traditions and customs of the people. Stage B is a period of “national agitation” in which the intellectuals engaged the public through a political campaign. The advanced detachments of the national movement that are active in this phase are more political in their efforts to awaken national consciousness in the people. In Stage C, the people, who gained a sense of national identity and nationality through intellectuals, were transformed into a nation and drawn into politics. At stage C, nationalism has now become mass.

It is clear how important intellectuals and writers were in the beginnings of Turkish nationalism. In the emergence and development of Turkish nationalism, the expansion of the middle class, the development of the literate mass, and the influence of the media organs that would shape this mass or public opinion are very important. From Süleyman Pasha, the Commander of the War School, to Ahmet Vefik Pasha, poets such as M. Emin Yurdakul, storytellers such as Ömer Seyfettin, and intellectuals such as Ziya Gökalp clearly influenced the emergence and spread of nationalism.

***Turkish nationalism is a literary and cultural movement:***

Turkish nationalism emerges as a cultural movement within the national literature movement. The fact that literary works express the stories and legends reflecting the historical roots of that nation and that this is began to be given in the mother tongue is an important reason for the emergence of a sense of nationality.

Kohn states that there is a relationship between language and nationalism, but it is not only related to Turkish nationalism: "Even in Türkiye, as elsewhere, contemporary feelings of nationalism have risen with the emergence of a new and natural literary language close to the mother tongue" (Kohn 1944:12). The introduction of the concept of homeland in literature is an important issue in itself. "The word "homeland", which had hitherto meant home or birthplace, was now taken to mean (Fatherland). And the word (millet), which until then had been used to mean "religious sect", was taken to mean the people and the people-specific (national), as opposed to the palace, which previously meant the entire state activity" (Kohn 1944:13). With the work "Vatan Yahut Silistre" by Namık Kemal, who is known as the poet of the homeland, the concept of homeland comes to the fore.

It is possible to see the first example of the birth of national poetry in Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) Bey (1869-1944), who was titled the national poet. His poem "While Going to the Battle", written during the Turkish-Greek War (1897), is an important work that feeds the idea of Turkism by expressing the feeling of Turkish nationality in a concise manner. Y. Akçuraoğlu (2006) emphasizes the importance of this poem as follows: "For the first time among all Turkish poets, the poet of Turkish Poems consciously realized and shouted that his language was Turkish, his nation was Turkish, and the majority of the nation was the people."

***Pan-Turkism had an impact on the development of Turkish nationalism***

The Turkistan (Central Asia) roots of Turkish nationalism manifest themselves in two ways: First, the roots of the alperen, who helped Turkify Anatolia, go back to Ahmet Yesevi in Turkestan in the 12th century. The other is the idea of Pan-Turkism brought by those who migrated to the Ottoman Empire under Russian pressure in Turkistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

While Islam developed in Anatolia with Turkish ethnic traditions, the followers of Sufis such as Ahmet Yesevi, who formed the roots of Turkish Sufism in Central Asia, also formed the roots of Turkish nationalism (Karpas 2010a:144).

Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism emerged as part of the process of the birth of nationalism among Muslims in Russia in the 19th century (Karpas 2010a:121). The cradle of Pan-Turkism was the city of Kazan, the center of the Turkic intellectual world in Asia, and its iconic figure was Ismail Gaspiralı. From 1883 onwards, when Gaspiralı launched the newspaper *Tercüman*, his goal was to achieve “unity in language, thought, and work” throughout the Turkic world. The idea of Pan-Turkism in the Ottoman Empire was revived after the Second Constitutional Monarchy (1908) when all the dissidents returned from exile. The front opened by Gaspiralı was expanded by Hüseyinzade Ali, Yusuf Akçura and Ahmed Ağaoğlu.

Turkish nationalism was a political way to solve the problems of the empire: The first time Turkism was presented as a political choice for the Ottoman Empire was in Yusuf Akçura’s (1876-1935) treatise “*Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*”. The main characteristic of *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* is that, for the first time, the formation of a Turkish nation (Turkism) as a race-based policy was clearly and directly expressed as a political choice.

The emergence of political nationalism alongside cultural nationalism occurred during the Second Constitutional Monarchy. The declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy (1908) resulted in a wind of freedom in the world of the press and organization (associations). The opening of many magazines (*Genç Kalemler* 1910-1911; *Türk Yurdu* 1911; *Halka Doğru* 1913) and associations (*Türk Derneği* 1908; *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* 31 August 1911; *Türk Ocağı* 1912) in various fields shows the cultural and political vitality of this period.



Turkish nationalism developed as a result of the territorial losses in the empire: When the Second Constitutional Monarchy was proclaimed, the empire was still spread over three continents despite major territorial losses. However, the Balkan Wars (1912-13) had resulted in the loss of European Türkiye. The Balkan Wars were followed by uprisings by Muslim Albanians and Arabs. Each uprising meant the loss of a piece of territory. The uprising of Muslims in addition to the uprising of Christians showed that the idea of Islamism as well as Ottomanism was no longer a binding idea for the subjects of the Empire. So there was only one idea left to save the state: Turkism.

Economic boycotts in the Empire strengthened the sense of nationality: The significance of the economic boycotts is that with the boycott, the distinction between us and them, which is the essence of nationalism and which reinforces national identity, emerges sharply. Turkish nationalism, as a national reaction against the Western colonial powers and their local collaborators (e.g., the non-Muslim communities of the empire), led to the consolidation of national identity within the country and eventually to the emergence of national unity.

Economic boycotts are one of the forms of action that paved the way for political and national consciousness. The first example of these boycotts was the commercial boycott against the Greek state after the Greeks of Crete decided to unite with Greece (1866). One of the most important boycotts in the Ottoman Empire was the boycott launched in Istanbul against the goods of Austria-Hungary after its occupation of Bosnia in 1908 and then against Italian goods after the Italian occupation of Tripolitania in 1911.

The second major boycott was the boycott of Greek tradesmen in Istanbul in 1913-14. This Greek battleship, the *Averof*, which was purchased with donations from "Ottoman Greeks who supported Greece in the Balkan Wars and prevented the Ottoman navy from entering the Aegean, largely the product of profits from Turkish Muslim customers" (Findley 2011:228), virtually imprisoned the Ottoman navy in the Sea of Marmara. The *Averof* battleship was the main reason for the boycott: Due to the *Averof*, the Ottoman navy could not sail to the Aegean during the Balkan War and could not defend Thessaloniki and the Ottoman islands in the Aegean. On the other hand, the troop transport of the period was carried out by sea due to the impossibility of land transportation. Because of the *Averof*, troops could not be

shipped from İzmir and Beirut to Rumelia. A single Greek ship tied the hands of the Ottoman navy (Toprak 1995:109). In the face of these developments, Muslim people were encouraged to buy from Muslim merchants and Muslims were encouraged to become prominent in commercial life to replace non-Muslim merchants.

Turkish nationalism was reinforced by the struggle for independence against imperialist powers: Turkish nationalism refers to the struggle against the colonial powers and their supporters in order to reclaim the occupied territories of the remaining lands of a disintegrated empire with the War of Independence (1920-1922). For this reason, Turkish nationalism, as the *Kadro Journal* (1932-34) first articulated it, is the first example of the struggle against the colonial powers and a guide for the Third World countries. However, it is also erroneous to reduce Turkish nationalism to a Third-Worldist revolt because although Turkish nationalism developed as a movement against European hegemony and colonialism, it was not anti-Western. The replacement of Western culture, which was criticized for causing cultural degeneration in Ottoman modernization, with Islam as the cause of cultural degeneration in the Republic (Georgeon 2013:9) is meaningful in terms of showing the cultural and political position vis-à-vis the West.

### **Turkish Nationalism in the Republican Era**

With the foundation of the Republic and the establishment of the new nation-state, nationalism became one of the main principles (the “six arrows”) of the official state party. While abandoning and denouncing the ideal of Turanism, the new state aimed to create a homogeneous “nation” based not on religion but on Turkishness. For the idealist Turkish intellectuals of the Republican era, nationalism (Karpat 2010:329) was a nationalism that had been stripped of its religious shell, capable of encompassing both the national and the universal. The Republic imposed upon its citizens the duty to abide by and embrace its founding principles. The new theme of nation and nationalism sought to build a “new nation” by leaving aside not only the Islamic religion but also the Ottoman past. Within this framework, the Republic served as the key to initiating a new life guided by the principle of nationalism; therefore, everything connected to the Ottoman past was severed (Karpat 2010:329).

Republican Türkiye recognized that the rapid modernization of the West was affecting the entire world and that the Ottoman Empire had collapsed because it could not keep pace with this modernization process. For the founders of the new state, modernization not only entailed economic development and a new political organization but also a socio-cultural transformation that included integration into Western civilization. The young republic rapidly embarked on industrialization initiatives for economic development while adopting the principle that sovereignty rests with the people in the 1921 Constitution, even before a republic replaced the monarchy. A significant source of motivation in addressing crises such as economic downturns, national liberation wars, and social integration during this transformation was the awareness of national identity that resisted colonialism. In fact, in the eyes of Western writers and journalists during the period of national struggle, this struggle was viewed as one of Turkish nationalists and an example of oppressed nations fighting against colonialism.

Nationalism serves as a remedy for the problems encountered during the modernization process. "Rapid industrialization and modernization require a flexible political system to maintain social solidarity and an ideology such as nationalism that integrates the individual with the state. Nationalism, therefore, helps to bridge the gap between more traditional communities (*Gemeinschaft*) and modern organizations (societies)" (Vincent 2006:391). In the transition from traditional to modern societies, processes such as the development and establishment of democracy, industrialization, popular sovereignty, and the desire for self-government (self-determination) illustrate that nationalism is an important means of social integration.

The modernization of the Republic, while building a regime based on national sovereignty by ending the dynasty in a society ruled by monarchy and based on the *ummah* axis, also resulted in the construction of a new national state. In this new central state, the focus of political organization is no longer the *ummah* but the *nation* (in the sense of nation).

Confirming some of the claims of the modernization theorists of nationalism, the young Turkish Republic began to create a new nation and a new identity through a widespread education and training network that would spread national consciousness to all citizens of the

country. At this point, the fact that the activities of the Turkish Hearths, which were spread all over the country before the Republic, continued in the post-Republic period also indicates the dissemination of national identity and culture to all segments of society through these hearths.

The Republic, which emerged as a result of the nationalist movement's struggle against colonialism, as one of the founding principles of the Republic, gradually shifted from civil nationalism to official nationalism, which was identified with the status quo by the official institutions of the state, with the closure of the Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları) in 1931 and the establishment of Community Centres (Halkevleri) a year later. "Now nationalism is a state affair. The Community Centres are seen as a means of creating a new collective identity in Anatolia. By distributing an enthusiastic, small group of elites to cities and towns, engaging with local traditions and creating a network of information and news distribution through numerous magazines and cultural performances" (Georgeon 2013:20). The stabilization of nationalism continued with the introduction of theories such as the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun-Language Theory, which fell out of favor after the death of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Both of these theories were articulated in order to construct a modern national identity, not to be excluded from European civilization and to assert the claim of civilization-building. Thus, indirectly, the Ottoman Empire, which had been ignored in terms of Turkish history throughout the history of the early republic, was seen as an important part of Turkish history.

The Republic of Türkiye has been based on the idea of nationalism since its foundation. Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution defines Turkishness as "The inhabitants of Türkiye are called Turks by citizenship without distinction of religion or race." Being a Turk is defined on the basis of citizenship without distinction of religion or race. The 1961 Constitution reformulated the definition of Turkishness as "everyone who is bound to the Turkish State by the bond of citizenship is a Turk". The 1924 Constitution defined Turkishness (the Turkish nation) not in terms of ethnic origin, religion, or language, but in relation to citizenship. In the founding years of the Republic, the positions of non-Muslims, especially Jewish Turkish nationalists such as Tekin Alp (Moiz Kohen), within the Ottoman-era Turkish nationalism and the theorizing of Turkish nationalism were also legitimized. Until the

1930s, Atatürk's views on race should not be interpreted differently from those of the Islamist Mehmet Akif Ersoy. However, it should be noted here that the word "race" was not used in the sense of race, which refers to biological characteristics and differences, but in the social anthropological sense, that is, in a way that points more to ethnic and national identity. Although from time to time a definition based on race is attempted, the maxim "How happy is the one who says I'm a Turk" actually indicates that a citizenship-based understanding of nationhood is at the forefront.

With the Republic, nationalism, apart from Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism, declared a piece of land surrounded by national borders as a homeland. This declaration actually meant formulating a new nationalism in which Islam and Turkism would no longer be the leaven of nationalism. This new nationalism would be a Western-style rational nationalism based on the history of a nation purged of its Ottoman past. A new, more rational (linking citizenship to loyalty to the Turkish state), secular (completely eliminating the unequal structure of the Ottoman millet system, integrating non-Muslims into the system and removing Islam as the primary leaven of the nation), and materialist (not defining the nation on the basis of religion), but more official, understanding of nationalism was emerging. This official nationalism would paradoxically bifurcate in the 1930s with the emergence of conservative nationalism, such as Nihal Atsız's, which attempted to carve out a space solely on the basis of the Turkish race and later blended it with Islam.

### **Perception of nationalism in Türkiye**

If those who write on nationalism in Türkiye have nationalist sentiments, whatever they write is from the outset considered to be patronizing, subjective and unscientific. These writers are not only pushed out of the scientific community but also belittled. They are accused of not yet having completed the process of intellectual evolution, or of reviving or keeping alive an idea that has remained on the dusty shelves of history. The reason why contempt turns into accusation is that what they do is to provoke people into doing what the national fascists did once again. But is socialism like this? Karl Marx's "Scientific Socialism", as it is called, makes a (pseudo) scientific analysis of all societies,

explaining in scientific language (in reality, prophesying) how societies have gone through and will go through a process of change. Socialism is the name of the course of development and liberation of all societies. Whoever or whatever tries to prevent this is fascist, and their ideology is fascism. The pseudo-intellectuals who accuse nationalists of “accusing everyone of being communists!”, while lumping everyone who is not a socialist together with liberals, conservatives, nationalists and Islamists and accusing them of fascism, claim that they act with an objectivity that evaluates the objective truth of the matter and history from the perspective of scientific socialism, not reductionism.

The united front of academics, columnists, intellectuals, and investigative journalists writing on nationalism in Türkiye and Turkish nationalism, all start their articles with the words “Nationalism in Türkiye, ülkücüler, nationalist thought...” and end with racism and fascism. In doing so, they refer to the ‘so-called’ history of the Nationalist Movement, which began in the 1960s and has been characterized by violence, hatred and crime. The same front describes those who went to Marxist guerrilla camps in Lebanon in the 1960s to receive terror training as “youth leaders”. Their training is seen as legitimate and rightful, but the struggle against those who attempt to overthrow the Republic of Türkiye and change the regime is presented as a reactionary, fascist and racist struggle. The struggle and reaction against those who are trying to reverse the history of humanity, which is to progress (!) in accordance with dialectical materialism, is presented as innocent and oppressed, and their aggression as legitimate. And despite all this, those who try to protect their own state and their own lives from terrorists are stigmatized. The baseless accusation is made by so-called objective journalists as follows: “Nationalist youth were using terror against left-wing workers, students and intellectuals in the streets, schools, factories and squares”

The approach to nationalism and nationalists is so vulgar and offensive that professors talk about the “rise” of nationalism, not its rise. In a highly reductionist language, nationalist writers are equated with fascism and racism. They are often described as dreamy and sentimental at their most innocent, but more frequently as racist, fascist, and rabid. Violence is not associated with left-wing and socialist movements but is portrayed as an inherent phenomenon of right-wing

and nationalist movements. This right-wing violence is characterized, according to so-called objective writers and journalists, by the implication that left-communist-revolutionary violence is inoculated and victimized, suggesting that they even shoot their own friends—other nationalists—and that this greed and ruthlessness offer a double gain. In this case, nationalists are blamed twice: once for killing their own friends and again for stirring up trouble and creating discord. The martyrdom of nationalists during these periods is always an “unsolved death” because it is not clear where the bullet came from. However, the murderer of every communist or leftist who is killed is necessarily and absolutely labeled a fascist. In contrast, left-revolutionary violence is seen as aligning with the nature of things; therefore, “revolutionary violence” is regarded as a legitimate form of action inflicted on those who deserve it.

The most objective writers belonging to the Turkish left who write about nationalism start their works by stating how impartial and scientific they are regarding Turkish nationalists, and then immediately on the second page they return to their founding settings by saying “fascists” or even “... those rabid, racist, aggressive... fascists!”. Despite this defamation, slander, delirium and intellectual vomiting, their work is presented as completely scientific and objective. Therefore, it is clear that there is a clear need to write the history of idealism in Türkiye with a truly objective lens for future generations and to clarify some of the misrepresentations of the past.

### **Turkish Nationalism as a Political and Social Movement: 1960s and 1970s**

The transformation of Turkish nationalism from a cultural movement to a political movement began theoretically with Akçura's *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (1904) and continued with the War of Independence, which led to the actual establishment of a national state. The early years of the Republic were the period when Turkish nationalism was reformulated, reconstructed and formalized as a developmental and state ideology. In this period, nationalism was embodied as an ideology of development and inclusion in Western civilization for the construction of a more secular and modern society. As part of the founding ideology, nationalism was included in the constitution as one of the six prin-

ciples of the CHP in 1937. However, different Turkists such as H. N. Atsız, criticized this official nationalism. Behind these criticisms was the distrust of individuals who had witnessed the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the occupation of the country by local collaborators against the whole world and non-Muslims within, and their hatred and resentment against the occupying states.

With the Republic, being Turkish became more prestigious due to the aphorisms of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the new, special meaning he attributed to Turkishness, leading to an increased interest in Turkish history. Towards the end of Ghazi's life, although nationalism appeared to be prioritized as a constitutional principle, in reality – especially towards the end of the Single Party period (1930-1945) – the rising far-left movements were perceived as a threat to Turkish nationalists. The perception of a growing far-left threat and the failure to take serious measures against cultural degeneration were criticized by those representing Turkish national identity. During this period, nationalism remained one of the six founding principles (the six arrows) that did not come to the forefront, and a discourse was developed by the bureaucracy and some intellectuals that Turkishness, previously ignored in the Ottoman past due to the influence of Islam, was being rebuilt. "In the first twenty-five years of the Republic, Turkish nationalism had a rationalist, secular, and materialist identity, an identity that only a small group of intellectuals could accept. Although the masses remained under the influence of its cultural front, they adopted it by equating nationalism with religion" (Karpaz 2010:332). The understanding of nationalism by the people and that by some intellectuals and bureaucrats reflects Gökalp's contradiction between intellectuals and the masses. The public's sense and interpretation of nationalism would pave the way for the emergence of a new political and social movement in the later years of the Republic, emphasizing nationalism as a founding principle.

May 3, 1944, marked a turning point in the transition from official nationalism to civil nationalism for Turkish nationalism, as well as the concretization of the public visibility and civil reactions of Turkish nationalists. However, it is also clear how brutal the methods of punishment for this outburst were. The struggle of intellectuals and young people who were punished in the so-called "coffin" cells led to the



emergence of Turkish nationalism as a political movement. This reaction was not limited to 1944; the end of the 1960s also brought Turkish nationalism to the forefront as a political and social movement.

Turkish nationalism revived both in the late 1960s and the 1970s. An important reason for this was the struggle to prevent regime change against a socialist model such as the Soviet Union, China, etc., which communist and socialist far-left movements planned to establish in Türkiye through a violent revolution.

Turkish nationalists saw themselves as patriots fighting for the survival of the Turkish state during this period. The way Alparslan Türkeş, the leader of the nationalist movement, defined the nationalist youth, who represented Turkish nationalism in this process, for this purpose is particularly significant (Turhan 2016:VIII): "The nationalist movement is heroic. The history of the nationalist movement is full of glory and honor. By preventing the Turkish nation from being dragged into captivity like Afghanistan, the young sons of our country risked martyrdom on the soil of the homeland without blinking their eyes."

Especially in the late 1970s, Türkiye was full of activities by forces trying to invade the country. The extreme leftists occupied universities and refused admission to anyone who did not share their rigid and bigoted ideology. New weapons, which were not in the hands of the state, were being used by the militants of communist and socialist organizations; these weapons were mainly manufactured by the Soviet Union. It is not only universities that are controlled and occupied in the country, but also public institutions and the streets, which are occupied by extreme leftists who use violence as a means to achieve their goals. The so-called revolutionaries are trying to take control of the whole country in the name of the people but with violence against the people. In the 1970s, Türkiye seemed to be experiencing the harshest periods of the Cold War. The magnitude of the threat to Türkiye is clear, but it is not only Türkiye that is under threat; NATO is also at risk. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare a coup environment that will ensure NATO's security.

To understand the seriousness of the communist threat in Türkiye, we need to look at the example of Afghanistan. The fact that the communist Babrak Karmal, who won the elections in Afghanistan, invited the USSR to invade his country is both a significant example for the

communists in Türkiye and a new security concern for NATO. On December 26, 1979, the USSR's (communist) expansionism, which began with the invasion of Afghanistan, was interpreted as a threat to NATO and the United States. Moreover, the growing sympathy of extreme leftist movements in Türkiye towards Russia is very disturbing for the U.S. Similarly, the overthrow of the pro-U.S. Shah regime in Iran in 1979 and the establishment of a religious regime led by the anti-U.S. Khomeini is another area of concern. Drawing experience from the 1960s, the U.S. believed that the growing strength of leftist terrorist organizations in Türkiye could be interpreted as a sign that Afghanistan, Iran, and then Türkiye were losing their grip. The fact that Greece, which was also on the same route, left NATO at the end of the so-called Colonels' Junta (1967-1974) in 1974, using NATO's lack of reaction to Türkiye's intervention in Cyprus as an excuse, created a major security gap. This situation paved the way for the September 12 military coup in Türkiye to avoid a security problem for the U.S. and NATO.

At the end of the 1960s, the rising leftist violence against those who did not think like them in schools led young people from different parts of Anatolia who were committed to their national identity to come together and establish their own civil organizations, which naturally pushed them towards solidarity. The main goal of these young people with a national consciousness is to serve their country and nation as a source of pride for their families after receiving a good education. The reaction to the refusal of students from different parts of the country to attend universities in big cities for their education by far-left communist and socialist students in the schools compelled Turkish nationalist students to take a stand and react. Turkish nationalism and the "ülküçü" organizations of nationalist youth created a strong solidarity network for these young people. This network is an "emotional compensation for the unfamiliarity of city life" (Roger 2008:38). On the one hand, this network is a national consciousness movement against the hoisting of red flags with sickle-hammers in city squares (Öznur 1996: 175-176), and on the other hand, it signifies a unity of power that will enable them to resist the leftist violence against them.

Behind the emergence of the Ülkücü youth organizations was the occupation of autonomous universities by communist and socialist student groups, as well as the fact that both the school administration

and the institutions responsible for security and public order turned a blind eye to the actions of extreme leftist organizations. The press statement made on January 23, 1971, by the Second President of the Ankara Union of Ülkü Ocakları shows the gravity of the situation in the country, the rampage of the extreme leftists, and the consequences of the inability of security forces to enter universities on the pretext of university autonomy. "We, as Ülkü Ocakları, have been informing all constitutional institutions, government officials, and university administrators, especially our head of state, about the situation for six months and demanding that the security of life and property of hundreds of nationalist students, who are not allowed into schools, and their right to study and freedom of opinion, which are guaranteed by the constitution, be upheld" (Turhan 2016:98). Both the university administration and the relevant public institution administrators turned a blind eye to the violation of the constitutional right to education. No one took any steps to solve the problem of young people from different parts of Anatolia being deprived of their right to education through violence and threats.

On January 27, 1971, young people marched to the Governorship of İstanbul with banners reading "Communist Kurds are on the prowl at the University," "We want to study," and "Incapable Government, the situation at the University is your work." The youth who wanted to make a press statement were dispersed by the community police with batons and were detained (Turhan 2016:98). The only thing these young Turkish nationalists wanted to do was to exercise their constitutional rights to get an education. When young people who organized against this prevention reacted to the violence against them in schools, they were described as aggressive fascists by so-called neutral writers. Behind the association of Turkish nationalists with aggression and terrorism is the aim of hiding the rampage and aggression of communist and socialist organizations. The sole purpose of these young people who organize against leftists is to ensure their security, which the state is unable to provide. For this reason, they enter and leave school en masse, because when they come to school individually, they are subjected to attacks by leftists who see violence as both a means and an end. This situation was the same not only in the late 1960s but also in the 1970s.

Behind the problem faced by these young people with a national consciousness lies the continuation of the intellectual-public dichotomy, which has been expressed since Ziya Gökalp, in its new form with the separation between the bureaucrats (rulers) and the public. Since May 3, 1944, the problem that Turkish nationalists have been experiencing stems from this dualism. According to Türkes (1978:38-39), the rulers are always distant from the people; they do not tell the people the truth and cannot mobilize them in line with the goals that are in the interest of the country and the nation. Since intellectuals, just like the rulers, despise the people, interpret their religious beliefs as reactionary, do not understand the problems of the citizens, and live a lifestyle separate from the people, the public does not believe in their rulers or intellectuals.

Neither industrialization nor urbanization alone played a major role in the emergence of Turkish nationalism as a political and social movement. For this reason, it does not seem very useful to transfer the theories that would explain the developments in Western societies to this context. For example, the state's control of power and the construction of a society through intellectuals (elite), or explaining nation and nationalism as a result of industrialization or capitalism, are theoretical explanations that cannot be applied to Turkish society in this period. While in the 1960s, the transformation of individuals into 'one-dimensional human beings' by over-industrialization and thus capitalism in Western societies was articulated by the legendary gurus of the 1968 student protests, such as Herbert Marcuse, one of the leading figures of the new socialist thought, the debate in Türkiye focused on why we could not industrialize and become a Western society.

The emergence of Turkish nationalism as a political and social movement, which gradually became more visible and influential over time since the 1960s, was a resistance against the efforts of socialist and communist movements, which were very influential in these years, especially in universities and the press, to transform Turkish society and the idea of building a new society. In this period, in which Turkish nationalism was redefined and tried to make its voice heard as a civilian force in the political, social, and cultural spheres, the idea of national development, on the one hand, and the idea of building a society with a sense of history and national consciousness against foreign movements

and ideologies, on the other hand, were brought to the forefront. The main goal here is to ensure development with individuals who have the same feelings. This is the driving force behind the idea of Turkish nationalism.

In the assessment of the leader of Turkish nationalism in this period (Türkeş 1978:88-89), competition and mutual competition between nations are possible only if the people who make up the nation unite around common feelings and national consciousness and direct their existence toward certain goals. If nationalism, which expresses the love for their homeland and nation by people whose hearts beat with the same feeling, is directed toward the Turkish nation, then it is called Turkish nationalism. In this context, according to Türkeş, on the one hand, Turkish nationalism is seen as a source of motivation that ensures the development of the country and the ability to compete against other nations, and on the other hand, "Turkish nationalism is the expression of the deep love and sense of loyalty towards the Turkish nation, and the consciousness of a common history and a common goal" (Türkeş 1978:89). Thus, Turkish nationalism expresses not only development for the welfare of the nation but also, and primarily, national love, loyalty, humanistic goals, national consciousness, and socio-cultural similarity.

### **Globalization, the future of nationalism and Turkish nationalism**

Globalization, which has made national borders permeable all over the world with the fluidity of information, knowledge, raw materials, and capital, and has eroded the sovereignty of nation-states through international agreements, has caused and is causing a challenging process for national cultures and nation-states due to the cultural homogenization it brings with it. With its economic, cultural, and media power, the United States, which made a power experiment on the whole world after 1989 (the fall of the Berlin Wall) and 1991 (the collapse of the USSR), is the triggering actor of globalization and has great transformative power over local cultures and identities. Although this post-Cold War military, economic, and cultural hegemony of the US is now under discussion, it continues to exist. However, what is certain is that this hegemony can no longer be sustained smoothly or in a way that

allows it to do and be done as it pleases. The reason for this is that the power of local elements, which emerged as a reaction against the homogenization—McDonaldization or Americanization that started with the globalization process, has gradually reached a dimension that will affect global functioning. This process is referred to as the intertwining of the global and the local (multilocalization/glocalization). In addition, anti-globalization brings with it a growing awareness of the importance of “particular cultures” and their authenticity (Çelik, 2022).

Against the emphasis on the uniqueness and distinctiveness of a nation, concepts such as nationalism, internationalism, or cosmopolitanism—which do not separate all the peoples of the world based on differences such as religion, language, etc., but rather see them as a whole—highlight the perspective of optimistic globalizers in terms of perceiving the world as a single entity. However, neoliberals, with an optimistic approach to the globalization process, see the peoples (actually states) of the world as different and competing structures. If cosmopolitanism means the end of national identities and the establishment of a common political loyalty that unites all peoples (Heywood 2007:225), it would be a pipe dream to expect such a form of organization to emerge. It is not possible to speak of a single post-Cold War view of the world or ideology (such as F. Fukuyama’s End of History theory). Regional organizations may exist for economic and political purposes, but to view these organizations as transregional or transcontinental and to extend them to the whole world would be nothing more than a utopia.

In the debate on whether nationalism can be replaced by alternative concepts and theories, Delanty and O’Mahony (2002:175-182) mention four views on the alternatives and limits of nationalism:

1. *Proponents of internationalism:* They see nationalism as a sign of degradation and degeneration. Representatives include Gellner and Hobsbawm. According to this internationalist view, nationalism is a xenophobic state of degeneration. It is based on a false understanding of the world, rooted in myths, inventing traditions, and presenting a distorted view of the national past.
2. *Those who attempt to save nationalism from nationalists* advocate a kind of liberal “patriotism.” Proponents of this view define themselves as patriots, not as narrow-minded nationalists. Be-

hind this distinction lies the desire to distance themselves from the dark shadows of German fascism and racism. In Türkiye, individuals claiming to be patriots rather than nationalists often resort to fascist ideologies. However, fascism does not represent an ideology or a past that should be embraced; it serves as a black stain on Turkish nationalism.

3. Those who reject both nationalism and patriotism advocate for transnational cosmopolitanism. This perspective differs from early internationalism in its strong antipathy toward ethnically discriminatory nationalism and the concept of the nation-state. They argue that politics is no longer tightly controlled by nation-states, and cosmopolitans often support their ideas with moral universality. For them, cosmopolitanism is a moral imperative and holds as much relevance in the modern world as nationalism.
4. The fourth group, advocates of postmodern transnationalism, combines features of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. They argue that nationalism and cosmopolitanism are intertwined, both being highly divided and insufficient on their own. Instead of envisioning a cosmopolitan future that overrides nationalism, they advocate for a more reflexive and hybrid consciousness within nationalism, which is not understood as liberal patriotism. In postmodern transnationalism, migrants, women, and citizens of exploited states are viewed as global actors who occupy a more significant place in the contemporary definition of the concept of the nation. In this view, nationalism is not an artificial construct created by elites; rather, it is a field of diverse forms of resistance—especially from those who deviate from the norm, such as migrants, women, and citizens of exploited states. Cosmopolitanism must be reinterpreted in light of this alternative perception of diasporic nationalism. Recent studies emphasize transnational, postcolonial cosmopolitanism, where national identities are reconstituted as sites of resistance under the conditions of globalization.

In fact, beginning with Kant's cosmopolitan ideals, none of the alternative perspectives on nationalism that have emerged alongside globalization have successfully mounted long-term resistance to it. This is

largely because the protective umbrella, sense of loyalty, and altruism that nationalism offers remain unmatched. Additionally, the division of the world into nation-states underscores the primary competition at play. While globalization seeks to create a universal world citizen and a homogeneous perception of reality, local and national identities are, paradoxically, becoming increasingly pronounced. Delanty and O'Mahony highlight this phenomenon, arguing that globalization reconstitutes national identities as sites of resistance.

While globalization has increased the number and strength of regional alliances, it has also given rise to a world where multinational corporations wield economic power comparable to that of nation-states.

In the process of globalization, the signatures of nation-states on international agreements imply acceptance of decisions that affect their own borders. For example, the obligation to comply with decisions made by international courts that conflict with those of their own independent courts may arise. In such cases, local and national reactions against globalization can emerge, paradoxically strengthening local and national loyalties and identities. Thus, the convergence theory, which begins with modernization and extends into globalization—asserting that all societies will increasingly resemble each other despite differences in ideologies (such as socialism and liberalism)—may present a flawed interpretation when it comes to nationalism. Nationalism has already triumphed ideologically over mainstream ideologies like liberalism and socialism. This victory has been acknowledged by Marxist historians, including E. J. Hobsbawm. However, Hobsbawm, like many modernist thinkers, contends that the power of nationalism will diminish over time and become a secondary force. Similarly, political scientist Heywood's (2007:229) prediction that globalization will lead to the "final collapse of political nationalism" in the 21st century (not a scientific claim!) is an underestimation of nationalism's resilience in the global era.

Claims that existing nation-states will lose power and see their sovereignty erode, or that they will be challenged by multinational corporations, reflect a global interpretation of the old modernist claim. However, it can be succinctly stated that it is the nation-states that ultimately make the final decisions on these matters.



It is often claimed that nationalism will lose its power in the process of globalization, which is viewed as a higher stage of Western modernization. This assertion posits that globalization will diminish the influence of nation-states, erode their sovereignty, and lead to cultural and organizational homogenization (McDonaldization), thereby rendering local cultures less important and valuable. However, nation-states remain a more effective decision-making force compared to global corporations. The real challenge faced by nation-states is not global corporations, but rather “the distribution of power and resources among the constituent ethnicities of national states” (Smith 2002:117).

For optimistic globalizers, the association of nationalism with World War II-era racism, dark thoughts in the human psyche, and aggression suggests that it has no place in a happier and more peaceful future.

The criticism of nationalism often centers around the idea that it is the root cause of many of the world’s ills. As Smith (2002:169) suggests, nearly all the evils on the planet are attributed to nationalism. He cynically argues that, without nationalism, humanity could potentially exist in a world of peace and tranquility. For instance, he posits that without nationalism, millions of lives might not have been lost during Mao’s ‘Cultural Revolution’ in China, and many Turkish intellectuals in Turkistan might not have been massacred under Stalin’s regime.

What many modernist theorists who discuss the relationship between nationalism and evil overlook is how to explain the problems that existed before the French Revolution of 1789. Would massacres and genocides not have occurred without nationalism? The main issue here is the tendency to equate nationalism with fascism, which undermines nationalism’s role in promoting national culture, consciousness, and identity while combating cultural degeneration.

When nationalism is understood as a means of protecting national identity and culture and striving for the well-being of one’s own nation, it becomes a primary motivator that triggers and strengthens international rivalry. This motivation—directing people toward a common goal, aligning their hearts with the same emotions, and embracing differences as a richness despite social divides—is a hallmark of nationhood. The power of nationalism lies in the sacrifices individuals are willing to make for their nation and state. At the Battle of Jena (1806), the militias of post-revolutionary France triumphed over the

disciplined and professional Habsburg army because they fought for France. As Gökalp noted, nationalism can transform ordinary people into brave warriors.

The fundamental condemnation of all nationalist movements is also challenged by some modernist theorists, such as Tom Nairn and Michael Hechter. Rather than attributing a negative connotation to nationalism, they view it as a source of struggle to address existing inequalities and internal exploitation. Moreover, it is evident that Turkish nationalism, after its emergence in the cultural sphere, evolved into the political realm during the War of Independence, ultimately generating the energy necessary to establish an independent state from the empire. Therefore, to fully understand nationalism, it is essential to move beyond the reductionism and shallowness of conflating all nationalisms into a single narrative.

The emergence of nationalism in the form of techno-nationalism is an important strategy for global competition and for maintaining the superiority of nation-states. This new face of nationalism manifests as techno-nationalism, characterized by the reluctance to share technology with others. Beyond protecting a country's territory, nationalism also entails safeguarding the technology produced within its borders. Just as national culture is a unique element that must be preserved and belongs to the nation, so too is technology. It is what makes a country (or nation) superior and distinctive.

Robert Reich (1987) defines techno-nationalism as an attempt to "protect America's future technological breakthroughs from exploitation at the hands of foreigners, especially the Japanese." Initially, the term was applied to Japan, then to other Asian economies, and today, it is often used in reference to China. Techno-nationalism is perceived as an ideal for uplifting a nation. Ziya Gökalp's vision of modernization aligns closely with this concept. Adam Segal and David Kang describe techno-nationalism as "the desire of Asian states to free themselves from dependence on Western technologies" (Kennedy 2013:911).

Türkiye's struggle against terrorist organizations for nearly half a century has led to significant advancements, particularly in military technology. Projects such as UAVs, UCAVs, DİHAs, and MİLGEM exemplify techno-nationalism and embody Gökalp's vision of modernization. Moreover, Turkey is leveraging this technology not only for

its own civilizational geography and for supporting oppressed nations but is also developing an export sector that contributes to the country's economic growth.

The reasons why globalization cannot discredit nation-states, nations and nationalism can be explained as follows. The main claim about nationalism was that its power would diminish as modernization continued. Isaiah Berlin (2016:427), who said of nationalism, "No influential thinker that I know of has predicted its future", was actually explaining the general tendencies and predictions of social scientists on this issue. Modernization theory states that nationalism would decrease, with the resolution of the problems faced by societies. For example, when exploitation ended, nationalist feelings for oppressed and exploited nations would also decrease and nationalism would begin to decline. Nationalist sentiments were rising because the right of nations to self-determination was being denied, so when self-determination was realized, nationalist sentiments would diminish.

Nationalism has proven time and again, with positive and negative examples, that it is not a temporary anomaly or an ignored reality that modern society faces, as modernity and later globalization theorists claim. The phenomenon of the nation has also proven time and again that loyalty and orientation extend far beyond loyalty to structures and institutions such as class perspective (socialism), ideologies that emphasize individual rights and freedoms (liberalism), and feminism; and structures and institutions such as the family belong to and should belong only to the nation, and has proven its superiority over other ideological structures.

Therefore, it is not correct or possible to claim that the value and importance of nationalism and the nation as an actor have diminished or disappeared. Smith (2002:175-182) explains that the interest in nationalism will not diminish for three arguments:

1-Nationalism is politically necessary because it is a means of struggle for oppressed or unrecognized states in an unequal and unfair interstate system. The same applies to cultures and communities that are not accepted within a state. Again, only nations and nationalism can coincide with the principles of popular sovereignty and popular will. It is the principle of nationality that can mobilize the people of the state and provide legitimacy. Within the scope of these characteristics,

it does not seem possible to talk about a new political order that makes it possible to overcome global interstate competition with a new order. Although it is said that its power is diminishing and its sovereignty is being eroded, “nations and national states are still the only protectors against imperial tyranny” (Smith 2002:176).

2-National identity is politically functional because in modern society the cohesion of heterogeneous social and ethnic elements with different aspirations is realized through national myths, memories, symbols and ceremonies. All social energy is directed towards the sacred ‘motherland’. The perception of the fraternity of all citizens turns the nation into a community with high internal solidarity, allowing them to feel the strength of their collective identity and increase their self-awareness. This spirit makes it possible for many to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their nation. The rate of this sacrifice is so high that Smith says it is unimaginable for any other collective identity.

3- The nation is historically embedded in pre-modern ethnic structures. As the modern inheritor of ethnicity, the nation is uniquely capable of national liberation and popular mobilization in the ancestral homeland. The nation becomes embedded by combining three elements:

- a- the symbols, myths and emotions of pre-modern ethnicity;
- b- popular sovereignty; and
- c- the power of public mass culture.

This triple combination makes the nation and its power and energy unique. Therefore, the modern nation, like the ethno-religious communities of the past, gives mortals a sense of immortality. “It is the ability to satisfy this desire for immortality that distinguishes nationalism from other ideologies and belief systems in the modern world. Nationalism reveals a transcendental dimension that sweeps the individual off his feet and detaches him from the present” (Smith 2002:181).

It is not possible to think that nationalism will disappear either with the process of modernization or with globalization’s ideal of creating a one-world society; the same claim applies to national identity. Cultural affinity or McDonaldization may be widespread in terms of consumer culture and organizational style, but the resistance of local culture to these global elements is a socio-cultural and economic reality. Claims that the sovereignty of the national state (or nation-state) will be eroded

by allegiance to inter-state organizations, or that they will show democratic weakness in the face of multinational corporations, have failed to demonstrate much validity. National states are still very powerful, and even if regional political or economic organizations are established, it does not yet seem realistic to speak of an integrated world or perfectly functioning regional alliances.

Nevertheless, the dynamism of national identities, long-standing international problems, and debates ranging from nationalism to racism as a reaction against the “other” arising from global migration movements are the primary agenda items of political and social life. One of the ideologies (communism and its soft version, socialism), which tries to build a cosmopolitan world through different means, seems to have lost all its power and sympathy compared to the past. The other dominant ideology (liberalism) still seems to be strong because of its ability to adapt to all existing processes and because it incorporates individual and collective actors (such as the state) who hold power and capital, but its articulation – from time to time, such as with conservatism in recent decades – is open to debate on the basis of the criterion of success. This negative perception of nationalism, which is constantly criticized alongside all these ideologies and is associated with National Socialism (German fascism) at a certain historical moment in the West, and in this context with violence, racism, and dark emotions, cannot produce a conclusion about nationalism alone. First, it is not an emancipatory practice based on popular sovereignty. Secondly, it is clear that nationalism is one of the most fundamental emotions motivating the struggle for decolonization in non-Western societies, often against colonial Western states.

Nationalism gains superiority over other ideologies because it leads to the dedication of power and loyalty not to class, family, or individual, but directly to the nation, and because it successfully realizes this. Moreover, nationalism does not divide society into classes; divisions based on loyalty to the nation are less problematic than class-based divisions. Class theories try to solve society in an irreconcilable, confrontational, and ultimately violent way. However, since nationalism conceives of society as an organic whole, it focuses more on inter-state conflicts rather than intra-national divisions. This does not mean ignoring or postponing the struggle against views that lack a sense of

national identity and national history, as was the case in the 1970s. For example, in the context of gender theories, statements, interpretations, and practices that threaten the Turkish family structure are seen and interpreted as an important internal threat of foreign origin. Globalization is not only fought against in the face of globalization that destroys national culture but also against the face of globalization that disrupts the family structure and is not suitable for the Turkish social structure. The Chairman of the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party), the leading party of Turkish nationalism, Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, has made a very meaningful speech on this issue: *"We will resist, we will resist, we will resist, we will resist, and we will never give in to the neo-liberal harassment that exploits our national and spiritual soul roots; and we will resist, we will resist, we will resist, and we will never give in to the corruption of our national existence by ideological pressure and indoctrination that is corrupt and devoid of humanitarian heritage."*

Pessimistic theorists, who see the process of globalization as a negative process of change, oppose the process by emphasizing that this process produces great injustices in global income distribution. Since Turkish nationalist thought does not read society in terms of class distinctions or differences, it takes a stand against both the global inequitable distribution of income and the domestic inequitable distribution of income caused by globalization.

Nationalism takes the nation, which it sees as a collectivity, as its main focus, but this does not mean neglecting the people who make it up. The understanding of Turkish nationalism emphasizes the unique attitudes and behaviors of people rather than classes in shaping history and the economy. In the words of Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, "Man is not a being who pursues only economic interests with rational impulses. There is a price for making Anatolia our homeland, and we will inevitably have to endure the pains of this price until the end of time. When İlayi Kelimetullah, which is our ultimate goal, is realized and dominated worldwide, then the Muslim Turkish nation will put its seal on the era and the call of humanity.

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