

The Creation of Nationalism in Theoretical Perspective

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Abstract: Nowadays, the development of identity politics carried out on a world scale constitutes the general framework of politics. In this context, we could say that nationalism, due to exhibiting progressive and advanced structure; confront us as a modern phenomenon. As we face nationalism as a modern structure, dealing with and analyzing nationalism according to the conjuncture with socio-political issues has a vital importance. Within the framework of these elements nationalism is above three axes of a number of constructions. Religious, sectarian or racial occurring in the frame and build national identity manifested in the shaping of international politics has become too obvious. In this study, by revealing the structural framework of national identity, what appeared to interact with elements during building process such as have been studied.

Keywords: Identity; National Identity; Nationalism; Identity Politics; the Construction of the Nation

JEL Codes: Z00, Z19, F53

Teorik Açından Ulusalçılığın Doğuşu

Özet: Günümüzde, dünya ölçeğinde yürütülen kimlik politikasının gelişimi politikanın genel çerçevesini oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, milliyetçiliğin ilerici ve gelişmiş yapı sergilemesi nedeniyle modern bir olgu olarak karşımıza çıktığını söyleyebiliriz. Modern bir yapı olarak yüzleştiğimiz milliyetçilik ile sosyo-politik konularda konjunktüre göre uğraşı ve analiz hayati öneme sahiptir. Bu unsurlar çerçevesinde milliyetçilik bir dizi üç eksen yapı üzerindedir. Din, mezhep veya ırksal çerçevede meydana gelen ve uluslararası politikanın şekillenmesinde tezahür eden ulusal kimlik inşası çok bariz hale gelmiştir. Bu çalışmada, ulusal kimliğin yapısal çerçevesini ortaya koyarak ulusal kimlik inşası sürecinde bu unsurlar ile etkileşimde ne ortaya çıktığı incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kimlik, Ulusal Kimlik, Ulusçuluk, Kimlik Politikaları, Ulus İnşası

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1. Introduction

The political struggles empowered by the globalization triggered many dynamics, especially in the emergence of nationalism and the construction of national identity which owe their developments some parameters. However, the French Revolution and Industrial one served as the triggers of the settlement of nation-states within the world order. In this framework, the newly established nation-states have shaped the recent political order as well as together with many socio-cultural affiliations. Nevertheless, the construction of nationalism led to the emergence of the term social engineering. Nationalism requires the nation-states as unique and the new parameter of the new world order.

Nationalism, excluding the European historical development process, completely transformed into the social engineering as nation-building strategies because the eastern civilization had no experience with nationalism and secularization

process. New mentality was consist of patriotism arisen from the defeats, self-evident values and national feelings interwoven and constrained with the ethnic borders (Eker, 2012).

In broader perspective, by means of the French Revolution which suffered the transition from the agricultural community into the industrial society as a result of changing the political, economic and religious structure of existing society. This revolution brought many concepts and norms together with the mentioned changes. For instance, the principle of 'self-determination' was the product of the Revolution which was imposed over the communities for the sake of the establishment of nation-states. Nevertheless, the communities were not ready to be intrinsic nations. The preparation process has been completed by constructing the notion of nation. The word nation was the meaning of tribe before the French Revolution, together with the Revolution, nation gained new meaning as the constructed, secularized and imagined unions

(İnaç, 2006: 27-33). However, new sovereignty areas were identifying themselves as homogeneous entities. The new sovereignty paradigm envisaged in Europe and the Lutheran perception of secular world without church made the society away from the religion as a coherent component of society. At this time, European societies needed to have a unifying factors and sacred entities to be stronger. These factors and holy entities were the national feelings, patriotism, nationalist ideologies and the ambition of sovereignty as new creations (Eker, 2011).

These developments and understandings have been reflected into Turkey as Turkist movements whose leaders were Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura arisen from the necessities of defense mechanism. This movement led to the emergence of a new nation-state from the relics of the Ottoman Empire. The Empire has been envisaged as the new face and form of Turkish Union with new philosophy apart from the imperial dreams. This changing and transformation would be realized by the youngsters within the Empire as the open-minded, civilized and intellectual members of Turkish society. Nevertheless, these intellectual young leader firstly initiated to stimulate the national consciousness and awareness of 'we feeling' because overwhelming majority of the Turks had forgotten their pasts (Akçura, 2005: 31). This awareness was the starting point of modern nation-state for many respects.

Therefore, Ziya Gökalp as the most prominent theorist of the Turkist Movement wrote two vitally important articles entitled as 'New Life' and 'New Values' for the journal of Young Pens (Genç Kalemler). He argued that the purified language was the most important element of Turkist national awakening together with the other components of culture would be influential within the existing society (Heyd, 1979: 109). Nevertheless, the globalization and other important processes confronted the modern states to redefine and rethink the ideas of nation, national, nationalism and nation-states in comparison with the multicultural challenges and neo-liberal ideologies.

2. The Etymological Analysis of National Identity

National identity is very complicated and multi-dimensional matter. For this reason every

researcher defines and explains this concept by emphasizing its different perspectives. For instance, Breuilly underlines the exclusive character of the national identity by regarding the relations between culture and nationalism distinguishing the nations from each other. On the other hand, Kymlicka refers to the civic nationalism by aiming to pinpoint its inclusive character by respecting the cultural differences. According to Gilroy national identity is a melting pot which has the assimilating character by depending on the notions of citizenship and patriotism. Anderson asserts that national identity is imagined and constructed. Rutherford claims that national identity depends on the uniformity, cultural community and common culture. Calhoun seeks the way to link the national identity to the theory of democracy by means of post-national social formations. Güvenç finds the origins of national identity in the national culture which will be obtained by the socialization processes. Yurdusev establishes a correlation between the national identity and state and he claims that national identity is the yield of nation-building and national ideology. Connor and Smith emphasizes the primordial character of national identity and they use the word 'primordial' in the meaning of its back-ward looking character seeking the myth of national origin. As a contrary, Bradshaw says that the national identity has a forward-looking character and this identity emerges with the politicization of an ethnic group looking to the future destiny by sharing the same soil of the homeland.

Breuilly, in his book entitled *Nationalism and the State* elaborates upon the relationship between culture and nationalism. For him this relationship always bears the traces of historical, ethical, and political forces that constitute the often shifting and contradictory elements of national identity (Breuilly, 1993: 269-270). Central to the construction of right wing nationalism is a project of defending national identity through an appeal to a common culture that displaces any notion of national identity based upon a pluralized notion of culture with its multiple literacies, identities, and histories and erases histories of oppression and struggle for the working class and minorities'. According to Breuilly, "to the degree that the culture of nationalism is rigidly exclusive and defines its membership in terms of narrowly based common culture, nationalism tends to be xenophobic, authoritarian, and expansionist" (Ibid.:270).

Kymlicka does not share the same idea with Breuilly and she claims that nationalism moves closer toward being liberal and democratic to the degree that national identity is inclusive and respectful of diversity and difference: "A civic nationalism that makes a claim to respecting cultural differences does not guarantee that the state will not engage in coercive assimilating policies" (Kymlicka, 1995: 17). How nationalism and the nation state embrace democracy must be determined, in part, through the access of diverse cultural groups have to share structures of power that organize commanding legal, economic, and cultural institutions on the local, state, and national level (Ibid.:18). Cultural differences and national identity stand in a complex relationship to each other and point to progressive as well as totalitarian elements of nationalism that provide testimony to its problematic character and effects.

In Gilroy's idea national identity is structured through a notion of citizenship and patriotism that subordinates ethnic, racial, and cultural differences to the assimilating logic of a common culture, or, more brutally, the 'melting pot' (Gilroy, 1993: 72). Behind the social imaginary that informs this notion of national identity is a narrowly defined notion of history that provides a defence of the narratives of imperial power and dominant culture. Of course, national identity, like nationalism itself, is a social construction that is built upon a series of inclusions and exclusions regarding history, citizenship, and national belonging. As the social historian Benedict Anderson has pointed out, the nation is an 'imagined political community' that can only be understood within the intersecting dynamics of history, language, ideology, and power. In other words, nationalism and national identity are neither necessarily reactionary nor necessarily progressive politically (Anderson, 1991: 13). National identity is always a shifting, unsettled complex of historical struggles and experiences that are cross-fertilized, produced, and translated through a variety of cultures.

Rutherford claims that national identity based on a unified cultural community suggests a dangerous relationship between the ideas of race, intolerance, and the cultural membership of nationhood. Not only does such a position downplay the politics of culture at work in nationalism, but it erases an oppressive history forged in an appeal to a common culture and a

reactionary notion of national identity (Rutherford, 1972: 42-44). Pitting national identity against cultural difference not only appeals to an oppressive politics of common culture, but reinforces a political moralist that polices 'the boundaries of identity, encouraging uniformity and ensuring intellectual inertia' (Ibid.:47).

Calhoun tries to combine the national identity and democracy by using the legal rights. In his words, "in the first instance, national identity must be addressed as part of a broader consideration linking nationalism and post national social formations to a theory of democracy" (Calhoun 1972: 311). That is, the relationship between nationalism and democracy must address not only the crucial issue of whether legal rights are provided for all groups irrespective of their cultural identity, but also how structures of power work to ensure that diverse cultural communities have the economic, political, and social resources to exercise 'both the capacity for collective voice and the possibility of differentiated, directly interpersonal relations.

Güvenç defines national identity as a kind of socialization manner processing that takes part in the individual within any certain community, or, it is a feeling of the state of belonging to any group by means of acculturation (Güvenç, 1985: 27). It is the 'we feeling' which is shared by all individuals living within the certain geographical frontiers, in governing of the nation-state and with the creation of a national culture dependent on the historical and cultural perspective" (Ibid.:29). National identity is perceived inevitable for every community within the process of nationalization as the guarantee and base of the national existence.

Yurdusev argues that the process of nation building or the construction of a nation can be comprehended within two levels. First of all, the rise of nation-state and second one is the dominance of the national ideology (Yurdusev 1997: 22). The national ideology enhances the emergence of a general world-view within the framework of a common and widespread 'we feeling' awareness for society. On the other hand, nation-state performs a functioning tool of the self – realization of the national ideology.

Connor defines the term "nation" as a mass-based community of belonging and interest, whose members share a back-ward looking sense of

common genealogical and geographic roots, as well as forward-looking sense of destiny. As a community of belonging, members typically view the nation as an extended family related by common ancestry, although this belief in a common ancestor is based more on myths and legends than on an appraisal of the nation's history (Connor, 1978: 377-400). Most nations are products of inter-ethnic integration. The myth of common ancestry is critically important and the myth reduces the likelihood that nations can be unmade. It makes nations appear as primordial communities that are both natural and eternal. The primordialist depiction of national identity is emphasized by nationalists in order to explain the back-ward looking character of the national identity.

As Smith argues the myths of national origin also typically stress the importance of the nation's geographic roots in some ancestral homeland and often depict the nation as a product of both blood and soil. (Smith, 1986; Anderson, 1988) This myth of primordial connectedness with the homeland serves one of the main bases for nationalistic claims to territory today.

The nation is more than a backward-looking community of belonging; it is also a forward-looking community of interest. That is, future orientation provided by the national identity transforms the nation from a backward-looking ethno-cultural community concerned with preserving the past, into politicized interest group which intends on seizing control of its fate or destiny: National self – determination. This forward – looking aspect of national identity also has a geographic dimension, since most nationalists assert that in order for the nation to gain control over its destiny, it must gain control over some geographic place. Territory becomes the means through which the nation will fulfill its destiny. Of course, the geographic place that nationalists assert control over is the ancestral homeland (Bradshaw 1997: 10). In this way, the backward and forward-looking dimensions of national identity are intimately connected through the soil of the homeland. In this understanding, the nation is not an ethnic group, nor is it a state, although it is used as a synonym for one or the other. However, the nation is intimately related to both ethnic groups and states. Nations may be seen as ethnic groups that have become forward-looking politicized and territorialized interest groups.

Bradshaw states that the nation is also often referred to as a cultural community whose member shares a set of tangible traits or objective characteristics, such as language, religion, customs and so forth (Ibid.:12). Although this is normally the case, the retention of these objective characteristics is not a necessary condition for the maintenance of national identity, and the existence of a community whose members share a common language, religion, etc is not a sufficient condition in and of itself for the emergence of a national identity. Indeed the loss of one's native language or religious affiliation has often led to not to the demise of one's national identity, but conversely to a rise in national self-consciousness as a reaction against the forcible nature of such assimilation processes.

3. The Nation Building Process in accordance with the Nation-State

Nation and nationalism are two concepts bearing the controversial ideas about the preceding of their tangibility and conceptualization (Ersanlı-Özdoğan, 1985:175). Fortunately some data helps us to comprehend the matter. First data is the reality that today's ongoing political unit is nation-state (Bottomore, 1987: 59). At the same time, "nationalism is a doctrine accepting the necessity of organizing the people within the realm of nation-states" (Kedourie, 1970: 29). Second data is pertaining with the synchronization of the nationalism with the industrialization as well as with the modernization (Gellner, 1983: 55). Thus, the nature of the nation-state is related with the answer given to the question of the beginning period of the nationalization process and its persistence. The starting point of this process is Western Europe. The process fell into two categories. One of them is the unit of nation emerging with the spontaneous products of newly emerged formations and discrepancies brought about by the industrialization and capitalism. Second one is the unit of nation which is formed as a defensive element against the menacing factors coming from the West with the contribution of the imposition of ideas of French Revolution and, thus, which oriented to the unity surrounding with the pre-modern motto of "one language, one culture and one history".

French Revolution, as a distinctive feature, brings a new understanding of legitimacy and this legitimacy threatens other absolutist monarchies of the Europe. The Revolution imposes the idea

that the sovereignty belongs to the nation and approves the “self-determination” and the “right of resistance” or changing the regime in case of the violation of the social contract acted between the state and citizen as vested interests (Kedourie, 1971: 4). Naturally, the key word in new understanding is “nation”. The nation emerges as an actual entity as the first time in history in France and England. Since 10th century, when the cities and regional organizations became leading factors before the churches and feudal relations depending on the flourishing of the trade, feudal frontiers rapidly fuses and natural national borders are established. The constitution of absolutist national monarchies displays their luminous patterns in France, Britain and Spain.

Taking precedence, England and France played a very prominent role at emergence of the absolutist state in 16th century as a result of rapid centralization process as well as the nationalization of the churches with the Reformation movement. Aforementioned absolutist establishment expresses the consensus and balance between the feudal nobility and newly established bourgeois (Anderson, 1974: 15-16). For this reason, absolutist state should be understood as a transitory form. As a result of the working money economy (mercantilism), bourgeois comes to power. Nevertheless, this socio-economic power turns as a political strata in 17th and 18th centuries with the transformation of the states to the constitutional monarchies. This is the brilliant victory of the “tiers etat” (Third Estate). In 17th century England achieves to create the nation and settle and establish her state over the basis of nationality by means of suppressing the ongoing disputes with the governing monarchs and unifying the people who are exposed to be categorized within the castic divisions (Rustow, 1968: 8). Thus, this definition means the comprehension of transferring the sovereignty to the nation, as socially, culturally, economically and politically integrated people.

The state in England, removing the feudal partition with the Norman occupation, ends the power of the church positioning as a non-centralized rival against the absolute sovereignty of state and provides its ultimate submission and acceptance of national obedience. England witnesses the rapid increasing of the capital accumulation, making widespread the manufacture production and settlement of a new understanding of proprietorship over the land

within the first half of the 17th century. These developments originate from capital accumulation by the mercantilist expansion of England. This acceleration of social change forces to destroy the political structure of the previous social relations system as expected. The widening of the market turns the whole nation to the one economic unit and, eventually, the monopoly of competition is demolished (Ibid.: 12-22).

Consequently, the absolutist state mechanism establishing the stability between the feudal elements and bourgeois holding the economic dominance with its hand loses its historical function. In this case, the first half of the 17th century is the years of the struggle between two social institutions; on one hand, English patriotism, English Protestantism (Puritanism) as a national sect of the Christianity and economic power of the bourgeois; feudal aristocracy tied with the land possession and resisting against the monetary economy (mercantilism) and England Catholicism (Anglicanism) as official interpretation of the religion, on the other hand. This strife results in the victory of the liberal on the leadership of Oliver Cromwell. The period of 1640 - 1660 when these episodes realize implies the transition to the new political arena and free ground giving chance to flourish the capitalism as a necessity and essential factor for competitive national economy (Hill, 1983: 35-88).

These developments came true at the end of the 18th century in France. Apart from England, French political thought developed the philosophic and ideological basis of transition from absolutism to constitutionalism and republic. As Tocqueville, who is a very prominent political sociologist known by his book *Democracy in America*, claims that French Revolution is not a social but political revolution, he means by social revolution the changing in the production, possession and distribution systems (Mardin, 1971: 197). Subsequently, French thinkers achieved to get rid of the ancient dynamics of the established social structure with the motto of “*égalité, fraternité, liberté*” (equality, brotherhood and liberty). Because the main target of these principles is to overthrow the monarchs of the Europe, French thinkers envisage the emancipation of the people who bound to be subjected of monarchs by the idea that “the sovereignty belongs to the nation”. Under these circumstances, the French nationalism, having the “internal” nature tackles to the matter of settling their own nation-states

to the last ladder of the modernization, by having the “external” nature it becomes the producer of the ideology that will separate their national hostiles from the inside. Thus, the most important historical steps to universalize the nationalism are the Napoleonic wars and French Revolution which extends the influence of these ideas towards along with the Germany, Italy, Spain and Russia.

4. Conclusion

As a result, the distinctive features of the French and English are their possession of spontaneously established national economies and internal market integrities parallel to the rise of capitalism and the shaping of the world economy without needing to direct to the first principle. The weakening of the feudal sovereignty and increasing centralist influence of the absolutist state provides the integrity and unification of the country within the frontiers of the national economy. In this process, the national identity is formed and enhanced the volunteer obedience for the national power represented by the absolutist state. The reached relative welfare in 17th century and the mercantile development to supply this welfare and necessities of the increasing population and the bourgeois turning to the preponderant economic element by empowering with these developments removes the need of absolutist state which functions as a stability/consensus component between previous social relation system and newly established order. In this framework, the real social power replaces its own political strength with the support of wide popular strata and their original ideology. Thus, the second aim of nationalism, autonomous national body, is constituted as inclusive of “new middle class” and exclusive of all regional power components. The most perfect form of the nation-state, which covers the content of the power, posses the pluralistic structure. For this reason, as Hayes argues, the understanding of “nation” is rather different from the approach of the nationalistic or cultural nation (Hayes 1937: 231). It is based on the assumption that the citizens who share the equal rights and duties have the consciousness of being the part of the same “civilization”. Therefore, some elements such as language, sect, religious order and ethnic origin are reduced to secondary rank.

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