

**TRACING THE ORIGINS OF IDENTITY FORMATION IN
ATATÜRK'S NATIONALISM: INSIGHTS FROM TÜRK OCAKLARI
AND HALKEVLERİ**

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Abstract: During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire first sought remedies for its relative backwardness in its struggle with Western Civilization, and then, in the disintegration phase, tried to establish a national state from the remaining remnants. The Ottoman Millet system, which was shaped around religious minorities, proved unsuccessful in granting independence to Christian nations inspired by the 1789 French Revolution, following the Balkan Wars. In the meantime, there emerged an idea to create a new nation from the Muslim Arab and Turkish populations under Ottoman rule. However, this project failed due to the Arab nations' collaboration with the Allied Powers against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. In the political sphere, the unsuccessful attempt to establish a Parliamentary Monarchy during the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1908) led to an increasing unrest among the Ottoman intellectuals of that time. The Young Turk Movement, founded by exiled intellectuals during Abdulhamid II's era, merged with a military-originated rebellion against the Sultan in the Balkans. Initially named the Committee of Union and Progress, this coalescence later transformed into a political party,

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becoming a powerful political force that left its mark on the final years of the Ottoman Empire. The predominant ideologies of this party during its brief period in power were Turkism and Nationalism, which significantly influenced the empire's concluding era. All of these efforts culminated in the establishment of the Republic of Turkey as a national state on October 29, 1923. In this context, this study aims to examine the historical background of the idea of establishing a modern nation-state and creating a nation, which can be defined through the analogy of first forming a national state and then constructing a nation. It aims to explore this concept from a psychopolitical perspective, taking into account relevant nationalism theories.

Keywords: Nationalism, Committee of Union and Progress, Turkism, Ottomanism, Kemalism, Atatürk Nationalism,

ATATÜRK MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİNDE KİMLİK OLUŞUMUNUN KÖKENLERİNİN İZİNİ SÜRMEK: TÜRK OCAKLARI VE HALKEVLERİNDEN İÇGÖRÜLER

Öz: *On sekizinci ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıl boyunca Osmanlı İmparatorluğu önce Batı Medeniyeti ile girdiği mücadelede görece olarak geri kalışına çareler aramış, daha sonra ise parçalanma evresinde elde kalan bakiyeden bir milli devlet kurma çabasına girmiştir. Dini azınlıklar temelinde şekillenen Osmanlı Millet sistemi, 1789 Fransız Devriminden ilham alan Hristiyan milletler ile girilen Balkan Savaşları sonunda, bu milletlerin bağımsızlıklarını kazanması neticesi başarısız olmuştur. Bu arada bir dönem Osmanlı'ya bağlı Müslüman Arap ve Türk Halklarından yeni bir ulus yaratma fikri ortaya çıkmış, ancak bu projede Arap Milletlerin Birinci Dünya savaşında Osmanlıya karşı İtilaf devletleri ile iş birliği yapmaları sonucu başarısız olmuştur. Siyasal alanda, II. Abdülhamit (1876-1908) döneminde Parlamenter Monarşi denemesinin de başarısız olması özellikle zamanın Osmanlı aydınları arasında huzursuzluğun giderek daha da artmasına neden olmuştur. II. Abdülhamit Döneminde sürgüne gönderilen aydınların kurduğu Jön Türk Hareketi, Balkanlar'da Sultan'a karşı isyan eden asker kökenli hareket ile birleşip önce İttihat ve Terakki Komitesi adını aldı, daha sonra siyasi partiye dönüşerek güçlü bir siyasi hareket olarak Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun son yıllarına damgasını vurmuştur. İşte bu partinin kısa iktidarı döneminin başat ideolojisi olarak Türkçü ve Milliyetçi akımlar imparatorluğun son dönemine damgasını vurmuştur. Tüm bu çabalar 29 Ekim 1923 yılında milli bir devlet olarak Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin kuruluşu ile neticelenmiştir. Bu kapsamda bu çalışma; önce bir Milli devlet kurma, sonra bir Ulus inşa etme analojisi ile tanımlanabilecek modern bir milli devlet kurma ve millet yaratma fikrinin tarihsel arka planını, milliyetçilik teorilerini göz önünde bulundurarak psikopolitik perspektiften incelemeyi amaçlamıştır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, Türkçülük, Osmanlıcılık, Kemalizm, Atatürk Milliyetçiliği

INTRODUCTION

The Turkish people possessed a profound awareness of their significant contributions to the historical narrative of Islam and embraced a deep sense of pride in their role. However, this pride was not based solely on their Turkish nationality or ethnicity, but rather on their identification with the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire's primary purpose was to uphold and fulfill religious mandates, and therefore, triumphs achieved in warfare were perceived as victories for Islam as a whole (Kushner, 1998) .

The Ottoman state maintained a clear demarcation between the ruling class and the general population, known as the reaya. Within this social structure, the responsibility for production primarily rested upon the reaya, who also contributed to war efforts. Taxation was regarded as an obligatory duty of the reaya. Being a "Platonic" state, it was believed that the rulers enjoyed a higher standard of living compared to the ruled. The state functioned primarily to serve the interests of the ruling class rather than the general populace (Akşin, 2007) .

It is not unexpected that within the realm of patriotic intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire, there existed individuals who pursued diverse ways for national redemption and rejuvenation.

As a young Ottoman patriot, the path that led to Kemalist nationalism of the 1930s, passing through Pan-Turkism and communism in its most statist form, is of course unique and special to Şevket Süreyya Aydemir (Bora, 2008).

Similar to pre-revolutionary France, the Ottoman society didn't undergo a comparable post-revolution transformative process. Unlike the urban bourgeoisie's vision of an all-encompassing revolution involving peasants and workers, this aspiration didn't come to fruition in the Ottoman context.

Instead of a bourgeoisie-led revolution including peasants and urban workers, the Ottoman Empire's modernization in its last 150 years was mainly driven by high-ranking military officials and bureaucrats, using a top-down approach. Initially centered on Ottomanism for unity, this evolved into Islamism under Abdulhamid II and later into Turkism, especially with the Committee of Union and Progress. Following the empire's end and the Turkish Republic's inception, this ideology became a more inclusive, non-expansionist Turkish nationalism, greatly shaped by Mustafa Kemal.

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's literary work, titled "Suyu Arayan Adam," serves as a notable exemplar within the genre of autobiographical literature, offering a

psycho-political analysis of the Ottoman Empire's withdrawal from the Balkan region and subsequent relocation to Anatolia, as witnessed and interpreted by an Ottoman intellectual. Within our research, we will utilize Aydemir's analytical perspective to enhance our comprehension of this historical phenomenon.

I. NATION, FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NATIONALISM

The term "millet" originates from the Arabic root "imlâl," meaning to write from memory or dictate. It denotes something confirmed and corrected. In Islam, "People of the Book" refers to those following religions with organized scriptures, like Jews and Christians. During the Ottoman era to the early Republic, "millet" referred to religious groups, grouping followers by religion (e.g., Orthodox millet included Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks). Armenians were split into three millets (Gregorian, Protestant, Catholic) in the 19th century (Şentürk, 2005).

The term "Ulus" (Nation) gained prominence after the language reform in the Republican era, equating to "nation." The Latin "Nasci" (birth) connects to emerging nations and nationalism. The Republican period is a rebirth, building a nation from a fallen empire. To define Atatürk nationalism, grasp the impact of the 1789 French Revolution and related ideas shaping this ideology.

In order to comprehend the French Revolution, it is imperative to gain insight into the financial circumstances of the French state in 1789. Prior to that year, the assembly known as Etats Généraux had not convened since 1614. As the king of France faced a severe fiscal crisis and had exhausted all ways for securing funds, he was compelled to convene this assembly. Subsequently, this parliamentary assembly became the catalyst for the revolution. Similarly, the American Revolution also ensued due to underlying financial motivations (Akşin, 2007) .

The concept of nation holds significant importance, yet the contributions of Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyes, a renowned intellectual of the French Revolution, are often overlooked in existing literature and research on this topic. To thoroughly examine the French Revolution and its purported influence on the emergence of nationalism, it is crucial to highlight Sieyes' definition, which serves as a guiding principle for understanding Western-Style nationalism. In the eighteenth century, French society traditionally consisted of three Etat (Class). The first Etat comprised members of the clergy (Clergymen, First Etat), the second Etat consisted of nobles holding feudal titles (Second Etat), and the Third Etat, or Tiers Etat, encompassed all other citizens. The clergy constituted a population of approximately 130,000 individuals, the nobility numbered around 140,000, while the commoners accounted for a significantly larger segment with approximately 25,000,000 people (Huberman, 2011).

The segment referred to as the Third Etat (Class) consisted of peasants, workers, and the bourgeoisie. Sieyes himself belonged to a bourgeois family. Out of the 1,200 members of the Etat Generoux, 578 were from the Third Etat (Class). The main cause of conflict between the aristocracy and the Third Etat, encompassing the bourgeoisie, workers, and peasants, was the inequality in privileges and access to high positions. As the king was unwilling to make these changes, the General Assembly was dissolved. Following Sieyes' proposal, on June 17th, 1789 the Third Estate declared itself the National Assembly. With this decision, they demonstrated their refusal to acknowledge class distinctions. Simultaneously, the representatives of the Third Etat confirmed that they would not recognize any tax imposed without their consent (Ağaoğulları, 2010).

In the introduction to his book(2005) "*Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?*" (What is the Tiers Etat?), written in 1789, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès begins by stating that the plan of this writing is quite simple.

We have three questions to ask:

- 1- What is the Tiers Etat? **EVERYTHING**
- 2- What has happened so far within the political order? **NOTHING**
- 3- What do they want? **TO BECOME SOMETHING**

In his book, Sieyes argues that the noble class is useless, burdensome to the nation, and not truly a part of society. Such a class is undoubtedly foreign to the nation due to their laziness. The noble class is also not considered less foreign to us with their civil and political rights and privileges. In light of Sieyes' statements, what he actually aims to explain is how a good system of government should function (Sieyes, 2005).

After conducting detailed analyses of the meaninglessness of differences between social classes, Sieyes provides the famous definition of the nation that characterized the French Revolution. When asked, "What is the Nation?" Sieyès (2005) famously responded with the following definition: "What is a Nation? It is a common community of people living under the same law, represented by the same legislative body, and so on"(Sieyes, 2005)

So, in the new French Nation, no one will have a privilege that does not stem from the laws, and no one who does not receive delegation from the people will be represented in the national assembly. At the end of the first chapter of the book, Sieyes (2005) uses these striking expressions: "Therefore, the Tiers Etat embraces everything that belongs to the nation; anything that is not included in it cannot be considered as part of the nation. So, what is the Tiers Etat?" **EVERYTHING.** ((Sieyes, 2005)

When considering Mustafa Kemal's speeches and statements during the establishment years of the Republic, such as his Tenth Year Speech, it can be observed that there are parallels with Sieyes' notions of the laziness of the nobility and the industriousness of the Tiers Etat. Examples like "We achieved a lot in a short time," "The Turkish nation is intelligent," "The Turkish nation is hardworking," or "The Peasant is the master of the nation" reflect similar ideas (<https://www.atam.gov.tr/ataturkun-soylev-ve-demecleri/onuncu-yil-soylev>).

The formation of a nation is a topic that has always been debated, whether it is a creation or a phenomenon that is revived through the construction of a common language based on historical cultural similarities. The French Revolution, as is known, was the result of the organization of the bourgeois class leading the peasants and workers. Why did the bourgeoisie need the concept of nation or people? This is an important question. In fact, it is related to the social status of wealth. In times when having money was not enough to claim nobility or rights, being rich did not give the right to protest against social inequality. Therefore, this protest had to be made on behalf of the wider masses. On the contrary, there was a deep-rooted prejudice that those who had a lot of money would not have a clean reputation in the spiritual realm. The bourgeoisie, who could not say, "I will speak because I have money, and you will listen," came up with the idea of saying, "I am speaking on behalf of the nation, and therefore you will listen to me." (Belge, 2011). The crux of the matter lies here. It should not be forgotten that Emmanuel Joseph Sieyes was also a member of the bourgeoisie. It can be said that French-style nationalism is a clever creation. There is no reason not to draw parallels between the creation of the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal, who was an Ottoman Pasha, was speaking on behalf of the nation after April 23, 1920.

In fact, even before Mustafa Kemal, Ottoman intellectuals had contemplated adapting the French Revolution to Ottoman society. For instance, Namık Kemal's approach to the French Revolution is quite interesting. Namık Kemal attempted to make the ideology of the French Revolution more acceptable to Muslims by dressing it in Islamic or indigenous attire. For example, he adopted Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory of social contract and claimed that it existed in the oath(biat) ceremony of loyalty. According to Namık Kemal, everyone living in the Ottoman homeland is a citizen, regardless of their language or religion. This was referred to as "İttihad-ı Anasır" (unity of elements), which can be understood as Ottoman nationalism (Akşin, 2007).

1. A. THE PSYCHOPOLITICAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In "Suyu Arayan Adam," Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's novel, chapters detailing Edirne's condition during the Ottoman-Greek War (1897) and the Balkan Wars offer psycho-political insights from an Ottoman citizen's viewpoint. In his book "Suyu Arayan Adam,"(2021) which contains profound analyses of the years when the Turks withdrew from the Balkans, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir describes the year 1897 as follows. The author mentions that his birth coincided with a year of war, marking the dissolution of an era, that is, the decline of the empire. Aydemir also states that as one of the thousands of nameless children, he had his share of this collapse. The author also describes in his book the chaos and turmoil in the Balkans, explaining how gangs belonging to different nations(Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian) launched bloody attacks on each other's territories.

As can be understood from the above excerpt, the modernization efforts of the Ottoman Empire, which began during the reign of Sultan Selim III (1761-1808) and continued with Sultan Mahmud II, did not yield the desired results. The Empire, particularly due to Russia's Pan-Slavism policy and the nationalist separatist movements supported by Russia in the Balkans, witnessed the declaration of independence by the Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Albanians. In the year 1897, which coincided with Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's birth, the Greeks once again sought to gain new territories in Thrace, leading to the outbreak of war. Surprisingly, the Ottoman Empire emerged victorious from this war. However, it is now known to everyone that these temporary victories were not enough to halt the process of fragmentation.

The final situation in the Ottoman Empire, which considered itself a European empire during its establishment and development, is far from encouraging. Edirne, which once served as the capital of the Empire, has now become the last bastion of resistance as it withdraws from the Balkans. It has turned into a battleground where the insurgents roam freely and launch attacks. The residents of the city face an extremely insecure environment. The city serves as a stage for the bloody conflicts of Balkan nationalism. After the loss of millions of square kilometers of territory, it has become a gathering point before seeking refuge in Anatolia.

In the same book, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir(2021) describes the Ottoman Empire, which he refers to as a fairy tale, as a groundless illusion and asserts that its collapse was not merely the result of the Balkan Wars or World War I but had

already occurred as a collapse of a spirit and a mindset. He contends that the Ottoman Empire had already collapsed before the Great War and the Balkan defeat.

The lines above represent the written manifestation of profound disillusionment in the soul of an Ottoman intellectual, reflecting the collapse of an empire. It defines this collapse as the downfall of a spirit, a mindset. From this point onwards, they would either completely disintegrate or embark on a new beginning with a new spirit. Here, we can find the foundations of the establishment of the new Republic of Turkey in the political and social changes initiated by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The entry into the First World War on the side of Germany in 1914 constituted the military steps towards this liberation. However, they failed. Their situation became even more challenging as they needed to engage in another war. This war would now be called the War of Independence. This war, which began on May 19, 1919, would continue until October 6, 1923, the day of the liberation of Istanbul from enemy occupation.

II. OTTOMAN EMPIRE, MODERNIZATION AND NATIONALISM

The reform and modernization movements, known as the Nizam-i Cedid or New Order, which began with Sultan Selim III, continued during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839), who is sometimes referred to as the "Mad Peter" of the Ottoman Empire by certain historians. However, Mahmud II saw the key to the success of reforms in *strengthening centralization* and started with that. He first eliminated the ayan (local notables), and then abolished the Janissary Corps (1826), which he saw as an obstacle to reforms. Furthermore, Mahmud II established modern schools in the Western sense, sent students to Europe, and published the first Turkish newspaper. He also created a rational bureaucracy to implement a modern type of division of labor. The centralization and bureaucracy established by Mahmud II brought about a multidimensional change in terms of power within the Ottoman state. A bureaucracy group emerged alongside the Sultan, responsible for driving the modernization process. As a result, during the later years of Mahmud II's reign, modernization became the state philosophy (Turhan, 1951).

The inception of the centralized state under Mahmud II, accompanied by collaborative bureaucrats, established a lasting government administration model. Spearheaded by the military and complemented by bureaucrats, top-down modernization persisted into the Republican era. Mahmud II's reforms paved the way for the 1839 Tanzimat Edict, forming the foundation for subsequent reforms with both European aspirations and the preservation of empire's unity in mind.

Around seventeen years after the Tanzimat edict, the "Islahat Edict" was issued in 1856, introducing the novel idea of "Ottomanism" for the first time. Ottomanism aimed to unite the diverse nations within the empire. Yet, it became clear that this concept couldn't prevent the empire's unity from deteriorating. The Balkans saw Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian separations, spurred by Russia's Pan-Slavism influence in the region

Terms that are derogatory towards non-Muslim populations would not be used. In courts, testimony from Christians would be accepted, and witnesses would swear on their own religious books. The term "*citizen*" is used to refer to the subjects at the beginning of the decree. *"If we consider the 1839 decree as issued for Muslims, we can also consider the 1856 decree as a document issued for Christians."* The 1856 decree did not please the Muslim ulema (religious scholars) and also did not satisfy the Church clergy. This was because their powers and interests over the communities known as "millets" were restricted. While the 1839 decree did not provide a constitution for the Muslim population, the 1856 decree became the beginning of the constitutional development of Christian "millets" and served as a manifesto for their national independence aspirations (Berkes, 2022).

Understanding the foundation of the early Republic of Turkey necessitates awareness of the period's ideas and proposed solutions. Concepts like the Republic, parliamentary system, and constitutional democracy were extensively deliberated within the empire. Mustafa Kemal later interpreted and acted on them. Ottoman intellectuals, bureaucrats, and military members with European exposure, particularly in France, significantly influenced these developments. This led to the emergence of political movements and key figures, notably the Young Ottomans, who played a pivotal role in declaring the First Constitutional Era (I. Meşrutiyet) in 1876

In the 19th century, modernization, Tanzimat reforms, and Western influence through the press spurred Ottoman intellectual opposition around the 1860s. The Young Ottomans, including figures like Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha, and Ali Suavi, emerged as pioneers by 1865. Despite differing views, they collectively advocated for a constitutional, legitimate government to rescue the state.

The Young Ottomans, exposed to Western republicanism and nationalism, viewed these ideas as detrimental to Ottoman society. They proposed a Constitutional Monarchy with an Islamic identity. While influenced by the West, they introduced Islamic perspectives on political power. They defended "Unity of Elements" (İttihad-ı Anasır) and "Islamic Nation" (İslam Milleti) against nationalism. These seemingly contradictory ideas laid groundwork for modern Turkish thought. Their concepts of "progress," "freedom," "constitutionalism," and "patriotism" profoundly influenced Turkish intellectuals.

The Constitutional Period (Meşrutiyet era) was declared in 1876, but shortly after, it was terminated by Abdulhamid II through an indefinite adjournment of the parliament (Karpas, 2021). The decision to adjourn the parliament instead of fully dissolving it led to the emergence of new freedom movements.

The period of II Abdulhamid is generally referred to as the era of despotism. It was a time when political liberties were restricted, but modernization movements continued. Especially the **educational institutions** planned during the Tanzimat period were spread throughout the country, and significant advancements were made in **transportation and communication** (Kodaman, 1999) .

While unable to prevent the state's collapse, modernization movements introduced ideas that challenged traditional Ottoman foundations. Concepts like homeland, nation, liberty, equality, and constitutionalism entered through embassies, students, schools, Western educators, translated books, and minority interactions with the West. These Western ideas significantly impacted Ottoman intellectuals.

Modernization movements triggered political, social, administrative, cultural, and economic changes, fostering the growth of nationalism. Improved transportation, trade, communication, and press led to social mobility and cultural progress, cultivating a global sense of identity and the idea of nationalism. The Ottoman Empire's modernized bureaucracy, centralized structure, education, and culture efforts notably led to the emergence of Turkish Nationalism.

2. A. TURKISH NATIONALISM; HOW CAN I SAVE THE STATE? FROM THE NEW OTTOMANS TO THE YOUNG TURK

Since the Tanzimat period, the opening of modern schools and the establishment of the "Encümen-i Daniş"(Council of Education) (Berkes, 2022) in 1851 have contributed to the growing interest in the Turkish language and its evaluation by Şinasi and subsequent intellectuals as a means of modernization and identity. This, in turn, has further contributed to the development of Turkish nationalism.

In modern administrative organization, public services, citizenship responsibilities, and the emerging division of labor in the economy have brought about significant changes to the traditional Ottoman political and social structure. Parallel to these developments, political modernization has gradually **merged with nationalism** over time (Ward, 1976).

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 brought profound disappointment to both state administration and the people due to their defeat. Losing almost all of its European presence, the nation sought refuge in Anatolia. To comprehend the psycho political collapse from this retreat, consider Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's descriptions. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir(2021) asserts that after suffering a heavy

defeat in the Balkan Wars, the only place for the Turkish-Muslim nation to go was Anatolia. However, he also emphasizes that even the state leaders were unfamiliar with Anatolia, and furthermore, Anatolia was home not only to Turks but also to Greeks, Arabs, Kurds, and Armenians, and they were also regarded as strangers in this land. He mentions that they only knew Anatolia through the soldiers sent from Anatolia to the Balkans, but even these soldiers were hesitant to integrate into the local population. Nevertheless, necessity has now compelled these distinct nations to live together in Anatolia

A generation once dedicated to spreading Allah's commands worldwide now faced returning to unfamiliar lands. Uncertain of their reception, they encountered Greeks, Kurds, Arabs, and Armenians also part of the Ottoman Nation. This struggle was a decisive battle for re-existence, with victory or loss at stake.

32 years after Sultan Abdülhamid II terminated the First Constitutional Era in 1876, he embraced "Islamism" after Balkan territorial losses, aiming at Arabs and Turks. Yet, opposition from soldiers and civilians, weary of his autocracy, led to the reopening of the parliament in efforts to restore political freedoms.

In this context, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which left its mark on Turkey's recent history, was initially established in 1889 as a secret organization called "İttihat-i Osmani" (Ottoman Union) by the students of the Mektebi Tıbbiye-i Şahane (Imperial School of Medicine). Its goal was to restore constitutionalism and maintain the unity of the Ottoman Empire. In the same year, the organization merged with the İttihat (Ottoman Union) and Terakki (Enlightenment; progress through the education and technical means of contemporary civilization) Society, founded by Ottoman intellectuals abroad in Paris. As a result, it became known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) (Temo, 1987).

However, as a political force, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) emerged through the merger of the Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti (Ottoman Liberty Society), which was established in 1906 in Thessaloniki by certain officers of the Third Army, and the Terakki (Progress) and İttihat (Union) Society founded in Paris in 1907 (Akşin, 1980). An organization that was initially known as Terakki and İttihat for a short period later began to be referred to as the İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Bleda, 2010)

Although they frequently used the term "**freedom**" the primary motive that drove them was not freedom in the sense of establishing a constitutional government. Their cause was to preserve the empire. The homeland was being lost, and it was necessary to save the nation.

Some of the minority groups living in the Ottoman territories believed that they could contribute to their own nationalist and separatist ideas by supporting the İttihat ve Terakki. In return, the İttihat ve Terakki Society's expectation from

constitutionalism was to at least effectively govern the remaining territories of the Ottoman State, ensuring unity and integrity, strengthening the dominant Turkish element, and granting rights to Turkish sovereignty (Dürü, 1965).

However, while advocating Turkish nationalism openly, they did not see any benefit in alienating different ethnic groups from the empire. On the contrary, they believed in the idea of "Ottomanism" by recognizing that Turks were already the founding element of the Ottoman State (Hanioglu, 2001).

In 1908, Abdulhamid II decided to reopen the parliament. Minority deputies openly accused the İttihat ve Terakki Society of promoting Turkish nationalism during the parliamentary proceedings. They increased their criticisms over time.

The İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti's rule can be divided into two phases: 1908-1913 as a parliamentary pressure group, and 1913-1919 when they held full government power. These periods have distinct political events. Yet, during their effective control, they sparked a nationalization movement shaping the practices of the future Turkish Republic in social and economic realms.

The İttihat ve Terakki Society aimed to address Balkan Muslim migrants' challenges and prevent Anatolian conflicts with non-Muslims. Moreover, its important social breakthroughs, including promoting national music, film production and education, should not be ignored. Additionally, they sought to establish a national bourgeoisie class to cultivate a national economy.

The concept that left its mark on the era of İttihat ve Terakki was the notion of National (Milli).

The creation of a **National Economy** movement was seen as inevitable. According to economic historian Zafer Toprak, the İttihat ve Terakki can be considered as the architects of the Turkish bourgeoisie. They believed that a society consisting only of soldiers, officials, and peasants could not transform into a modern state (Toprak, 1982).

The İttihat ve Terakki Society's Turkish nationalism policy evolved, influenced by Turkist Russian intellectuals, occasionally aligning with Pan-Turkism. Notably, Yusuf Akçura and the Türk Ocakları Society were prominent during this shift. From Russian-exiled intellectuals emerged Pan-Turkism or Turanism, a new Turkish nationalism. It aimed to forge a unified Turan alliance encompassing Turkey, the Caucasus, Turkistan, and even Afghanistan. This vision included various Turkic groups, including Russia-residing Tatars.

The parallel drawn by Political Scientist Baskın Oran between the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and Mustafa Kemal's practices is indeed interesting at this stage.

The policy implemented by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), also known as the Young Turks, after gaining control of the state and which they had previously concealed, had two key concepts: **Turkism and Westernization**. Especially during the war years when the notion of "relative independence of the state" came into action, the Young Turks found the opportunity to implement these two policies as they desired, just like Atatürk utilized the 1929 global economic crisis for the implementation of his nationalism. (Oran, 1988)

Westernization or Modernization was indeed a crucial goal for the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), just as it was for Mustafa Kemal. Perhaps when you hear about the steps taken towards modernization after that, you will be surprised by the similarities it shares with the Mustafa Kemal era.

Capitulations; One of the most important steps taken by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in terms of modernization was undoubtedly the unilateral abolition of **capitulations** on **September 9, 1914** (Ahmad, İttihat ve Terakki 1908-1914, 2004, p. 191). However, we know that capitulations were actually abolished through the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923. This step was crucial for the creation of a national economy and a national bourgeoisie.

Education; A notable aspect of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) era was its educational reforms. Emerging from the Tanzimat period and driven by Ottoman intellectuals aiming to counter Western influence, the CUP era witnessed substantial education investments. Even amid struggles to fund Edirne's liberation, the education budget consistently grew. Starting at 200,000 lira in 1908, it surged to 660,000 in 1909, 940,000 in 1910, and peaked at 1,237,000 lira in 1914 (Avcioğlu, 1974, s. 274). Mustafa Kemal recognized that national education was vital for forming a new nation. Upon the Republic's proclamation, the Law on Unity of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat) passed on March 3, 1924, in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. This law abolished religious schools (medreses) and placed all schools within Turkey's borders under the Ministry of National Education.

Exemption from Military Service for Teachers; During World War I, teachers of military age were spared for education. Associations like Milli Talim ve Terbiye, Halka Doğru, and Türk Ocakları (1912) emerged to advance public education. During the CUP era, these groups organized conferences for citizen education, focusing on Turkism and Pan-Turkism to promote awareness.

Villagers and Women; The Committee of Union and Progress focused on villagers and women for awareness. They aimed to boost agriculture with technical tools, investing in irrigation and reforestation. Farm machinery, tools,

and seeds were provided to landowners, aided by German experts. Modernizing agriculture, they sent 150 Turkish students to Germany for advanced farming methods (Ahmad, İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme, 1986, s. 56) . Under the Committee of Union and Progress, women's rights advanced significantly. Universities and high schools opened to women. Ziya Gökalp and others introduced feminism, opposing veils. Their writings encouraged women to unveil their faces, even if not entirely removing veils. Enver Pasha formed an association during the war, substituting women for men in military workshops. Thousands of women were employed, leading to the creation of the first women's labor battalion, serving in the rear areas of the First Army. Historical records substantiate Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's recognition of the significance of these societal groups. Consequently, after the establishment of the Republic, significant strides were made in improving the socio-political rights of both villagers and women.

Turkish Language and History; In foreign schools, it has been made mandatory to teach history and geography in Turkish. New school textbooks suitable for Turkish language and culture have been prepared, and foreign classics have been translated into our language. Mustafa Kemal also attached special importance to the subjects of history and language. The Turkish Historical Society (1931) and the Turkish Language Institution (1932) were established.

Importance of Arts; Under the Committee of Union and Progress, art witnessed substantial progress. An annual state painting exhibition began in 1916, promoting various art forms, especially painting. Two conservatories, for men and women, introduced Western music to Anatolia. Theaters in Istanbul received funding for state theater growth, and an actor training school was founded. Remarkably, Turkish female theater performers emerged during World War I's end. Amid ongoing war and military focus, art remained essential. Mustafa Kemal emphasized art's role, establishing the Academy of Fine Arts in 1928 to advance painting, sculpture, and architecture. This academy stands as a crucial institution for contemporary Turkish art.

Secularization; Besides education and art, the Committee of Union and Progress era saw substantial modernization and secularization through concrete legal actions. In 1916 party congress, a draft law to remove the duality between Sharia and modern laws was prepared and widely accepted (Avcıoğlu, 1974) . The draft introduced marriage without religious distinction for all Turkish citizens. Despite conservative protests, the Quran was translated into Turkish, and Friday sermons were delivered in Turkish. Religious publications were closed, initiating a secularization process to free society from religious dogma.

Gregorian calendar, Weight and length measurements; Under the Committee of Union and Progress, significant changes occurred, like adopting the Gregorian calendar, standardizing weights and measures, language reforms, and establishing the Scouting Law.

Alphabet Reform; The adoption of the Latin alphabet was considered during that time, but instead, Enver Pasha implemented a limited-scale alphabet reform that maintained adherence to the Arabic alphabet to prevent hindering the reading of various forms of the old script.

Erik-Jan Zürcher's research reveals that principles forming the Six Arrows of the Kemalist Revolution were established decades before the revolution. Figures like Ahmet Rıza, Abdullah Cevdet, and Ziya Gökalp played pivotal roles in reviving and strengthening laicism, which was temporarily overshadowed during the Ottoman Empire (Zürcher, 2009).

Both the Ittihat and Terakki Society and Mustafa Kemal spearheaded extensive modernization endeavors upon their ascent to power. Notably, these initiatives were characterized by a top-down approach, as they were not prompted by societal demands but rather executed by military and civilian bureaucrats. Consequently, in order to bridge the gap between the planned innovations and the general public, the establishment of institutions became imperative. During the Committee of Union and Progress era, the Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları) assumed a prominent role, while the Mustafa Kemal period witnessed the rise of the Public Houses (Halk Evleri), which played a crucial part in disseminating information about the envisioned reforms.

III. THE KEY ORGANIZATIONS OF TURKISH MODERNIZATION: FROM THE TÜRK OCAKLARI TO THE HALKEVLERİ

Türk Ocakları:

Namık Kemal, a prominent intellectual within the Ottoman Empire, played a pivotal role in introducing and popularizing “*nationalist*” terminology, including notions such as homeland, **patriotism, nation, freedom, and equality**. Through his writings and theatrical works, Namık Kemal aimed to emphasize the significance of these concepts in both Turkish and Ottoman contexts, with the overarching objective of preserving the unity of the state (Uzer, 2016)

After the Ottoman Empire fell, these concepts (Ottomanism, Islamism, Turkism, Nationalism) were used to build the new Turkish nation in the Republic of Turkey, evolving over time.

In the context of the Ottoman Empire, the concept of Ottoman Millet initially included all non-Muslim subjects. However, during the Committee of Union and Progress era, it merged with Pan-Turkism, extending to incorporate Central Asian Turks. This shift transformed Ottoman Millet into a tool for nationalist promotion. This period saw the emergence of Türk Ocakları associations carrying this ideology. The Young Turk ideology was marked by positivism, rationalism, and support for a constitutional monarchy, driven by nationalism. Their goal was

to establish a rational, technologically advanced societal order for state rejuvenation. Intellectuals were to guide the people toward "goodness." This populist approach aimed to enlighten the masses with preferred values. Over time, Young Turks' populism became intertwined with nationalism (Köker, 1993).

Turkish nationalism aimed for an Asian imperial vision or an Anatolian nation-state, given the Ottoman Empire's Balkan losses. After ceding Balkan territories, nationalists sought alliances with Central Asian counterparts to restore a significant empire. This vision drew from Turkist thinkers in Caucasus and Azerbaijan.

Similar to Panslavism and Pangermanism, Pan-Turkism was a romantic and mystical vision. It enabled Turkish nationalism within the Ottoman Empire by celebrating Turkish qualities, recalling their historical grandeur, and suggesting new territories despite ongoing losses.

Unlike Pan-Germanism supported by a strong Prussia, Pan-Turkism differed. It lacked backing from a robust economy and military, relying on a weakened empire. This disparity caused a gap between aspirations and efforts, resulting in frequent disappointments.

Pan-Turkism's goals required Russia's defeat or disintegration, a powerful neighbor. After Russia's losses to Japan and the 1905 Revolution, Pan-Turkism gained momentum. Ottoman Empire's entry into World War I against Russia in 1914 created new opportunities. A resurgence occurred during the 1917 Revolution, leading to the brief Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918 (Georgeon,2006). After 1918, Pan-Turkism's course changed. Mustafa Kemal's collaboration with the Soviet Union in the War of Independence shifted focus to creating a Turkish state in Anatolia.

Faced with the failure of Ottomanism and Islamism to safeguard the empire, intellectuals turned to Turkish nationalism. They openly organized, backing publications like newspapers, magazines, and books for its promotion.

One of the first associations defending Turkish nationalism was the Türk Derneği (Turkish Association) founded in 1908. The president of the association is Fuad Raif, the secretary is Yusuf Akçura and the honorary president is the Şehzade Yusuf İzzettin Efendi.

The association articulates its objective in its program as the pursuit of acquiring knowledge of the history and language of all ethnic groups commonly referred to as Turks. The association has extended its reach by establishing branches in Izmir, Kastamonu, and Budapest.

The Türk Derneği (Turkish Society) balances Ottomanism politically and Turkism culturally. It emphasizes expanding Turcology and simplifying Turkish

language. The association believes evolving the language unifies the Ottoman legacy, leading members to join Türk Ocakları movement (Uzer, 2016).

Türk Ocakları was founded on March 25, 1912, in Istanbul, during Balkan War-related depression. Its initial board included Ahmed Ferid (Tek) as President, Yusuf Akçura as Vice President, Mehmed Ali Tefvik as Secretary General, and Dr. Fuad Sabit as Treasurer. Amid significant opposition and skepticism, even among Turkish intellectuals, Hamdullah Suphi noted concerns that Turkist policies of the Türk Ocakları would worsen ethnic divisions. Therefore, Türk Ocakları's establishment responded to non-Turkish nationalist groups (Sarınay, 1993).

The Türk Ocakları's goals were outlined in different regulations over time. The 1912 version aimed to uplift Turks in national education, science, social welfare, and economics, within Islamic culture. It sought Turkish race and language development. To achieve this, Türk Ocakları would establish clubs, arrange lectures, conferences, and schools, and promote economic and agricultural growth. They would guide diverse professions and artists, maintaining a national, non-political stance, avoiding political faction influence (Türk Ocağının Nizamname-i Esasi ve Dahilisi, 1328 (1912)).

Türk Ocakları's founding sparked discussions about two main issues. Firstly, it stressed a non-partisan stance, avoiding ties with political parties. Secondly, debates revolved around defining the association's activities' scope and limits.

From 1912 to 1931, Türk Ocakları played a key role in forming a new national identity, resembling a social extension of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). It began with Central Asian Turkish members like Yusuf Akçura, but its influence expanded. Intellectuals like Ziya Gökalp, Turkism's founder and the first Turkish sociologist, also engaged with Türk Ocakları.

Scholars have debated the relationship between CUP and Türk Ocakları. Historian Zafer Tunaya proposes that Ziya Gökalp's role in *Genç Kalemler* magazine solidified an inseparable link between these two entities (Tunaya, 1988). The consolidation of Turkism as an official policy during the Third Congress of the Union and Progress Party, which ascended to political dominance in 1913, further solidified and deepened this interconnection.

Regarding the second matter, before the 1918 congress, members held differing views on the association's scope. Some wanted it limited to Türkiye, while others sought global Turkish unity. In 1918, the association's scope expanded to include Turks worldwide, with regulations stating its purpose was the moral unity and cultural progress of all Turks.

Prominent Türk Ocakları members like Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul), Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Akil Muhtar, Kazım Nami (Duru), Hüseyinzade Ali, and Ziya Gökalp

were central figures in the Committee of Union and Progress or served as deputies due to their shared ideology. These Turkist intellectuals greatly shaped the nationalist policies of the Union and Progress administration from 1913. The Türk Ocakları significantly influenced the Committee, with the government often following their recommendations closely.

Ahmet Ferit Bey's presidency ended in 1912 due to his resignation, causing a short period of turmoil in Türk Ocakları. Yet, this was swiftly resolved by naming Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrıöver) Bey as the new president on May 18, 1913.

In response to the disillusionment following the Turkish defeat in the Balkan Wars, Türk Ocakları emerged as a hub for nationalist discussions. Financial backing from the Union and Progress Party led to increased activities and rapid growth in branches and membership. As World War I neared, Istanbul's Türk Ocakları saw expanding membership and branch reach. By the Armistice, the Central Türk Ocakları in Istanbul had 2743 members. In 1914, 16 Türk Ocakları opened, rising to 25 by August 1916. The 1918 Istanbul congress noted 35 branches, with President Hamdullah Suphi Bey's speeches indicating active presence in Baku, Turkistan, and China (Sarnay, 1993).

A significant majority of the members belonging to the Türk Ocakları actively took part in the national liberation war spanning from 1918 to 1923. Over this period, a considerable number of Türk Ocakları branches underwent a transformation and evolved into the Anatolian and Rumelia Defense and Law Society.

During the Republic's early years, Mustafa Kemal initially backed Türk Ocakları associations. He addressed its IV Congress on April 28, 1927, discussing religious, national, and secular education. In this statement, he said, *'Friends... One of the main areas of interest for members of the Türk Ocakları is formulated as follows: Education can either be national or religious. We have left religious education to the family and taken on the responsibility of providing national education through the state.'* (Palazoğlu, 1998)

Mustafa Kemal initially aimed to align Türk Ocakları with Republic principles and realistic cultural nationalism, spreading these values. Ocaklar, driven by nationalism, struggled to communicate reforms to the public. However, realizing they couldn't effectively convey Republic ideals, he recognized the need for a new structure. This prompted the establishment of new institutions blending nationalism (Milliyetçilik) and populism (Halkçılık) more effectively.

On March 24, 1931, Mustafa Kemal urged merging Türk Ocakları with the Republican People's Party. While causing initial unrest, they dissolved on January 10, 1931. Their assets were transferred to the Party, with 121 buildings given, 77 for local Party branches and 44 repurposed as Halkevleri (Georgeon, Osmanlı-Türk Modernleşmesi 1900-1930, 2006).

Halkevleri:

Halkevleri (Community Centers) emerged due to factors following the new state's establishment on Ottoman remnants and a new philosophy's adoption. Victory in the National Struggle's armed phase and diplomatic progress paved the way for modernization. This led to reforms in politics, law, society, and economy.

Turkey faced challenges including the 1929 global economic crisis, worsening the post-war economic difficulties. Reforms didn't reach the public well as power was concentrated among a few. Limited literacy and communication hindered awareness, slowing down understanding of new regime changes. Some referred to Mustafa Kemal as "my sultan," revealing remote areas' ongoing attachment to the sultanate. This showcased a major disconnect between people and the state.

During his trip across the country in 1930, Mustafa Kemal recognized this disconnect and took a series of measures to address it, with the establishment of Halk evleri being one of them.

During the initial years of the Republic, the desired citizen was an educated and modern individual who comprehended the reforms, accepted the regime's principles, and embraced its ideological system.

The closure of the Türk Ocakları in 1931 was not a mere coincidence, as it coincided with the official announcement of the **six arrows** of Kemalism, which formed the ideological foundation of the Single Party era and became the endorsed ideology of the state. These principles were publicly declared during the same year, attaining their definitive form during the Great Congress of the Republican People's Party in 1931. Atatürk initially introduced these principles as "Kemalism." During the Congress held in 1935, the term "Kamalism" emerged, reflecting the native language policy of that period. Subsequently, in the 1931 congress, the principles of Kemalism, embodied by the six arrows encompassing republicanism, nationalism, populism, revolutionism, laicism, and statism, were formally incorporated into the Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu (Constitution) in 1937 (Yeşilkaya, 2003) .

Halkevleri's main task was to spread principles like Republicanism, Laicism, and Populism and to eliminate prevalent misconceptions among the public.

Before creating Halkevleri, thorough examination of international practices occurred. Anıl Çeçen argues that aside from this, Jacobin Clubs notably influenced Mustafa Kemal's ideology. These clubs, akin to public schools in the French Revolution, fostered idea sharing among revolutionaries, promoting revolutionary ideals among the people. Drawing from his French Revolution study, Mustafa Kemal integrated Jacobin Clubs' aspects into the notion of Halkevleri (Çeçen, 2000).

The understanding of nationalism in the New Turkish Republic combines aspects of nationalism seen in the French Revolution and incorporates the cultural aspect defined by Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès. Crucially, this nationalist perspective within the Republic doesn't display a racially transcendent nature.

The affirmation of this perspective is evident in the definition of the nation outlined within the Republican People's Party Program of 1931. The program defines the nation as a comprehensive political and social entity comprising individuals bound together through a shared unity of language, culture, and ideal.

The primary characteristic of the nation-state resides in the notion of "nation-state-party identity," whereby the establishment of a political apparatus enables the implementation of the **"for the people against the people"** political framework (Köker, 1993) .

Halkevleri hold a central role in this structure, functioning as essential elements. One of the primary goals of Halkevleri is the significant emphasis placed on educating the population.

From the time of its establishment until 1946, there were a total of 455 Halkevi distributed as follows: 63 in urban cities, 288 in district centers (İlçe), 73 in the center of sub-districts (Bucak), 28 in villages, 2 in neighborhoods (Mahalle), and 1 located abroad specifically in London (Çeçen, 1990) .

Operating until 1946, Halkevleri, faced criticism upon the Democratic Party's entry into parliament that year. Previous support from civil servants of different levels diminished. The Democratic Party's complete control in 1950 led to Halkevleri's permanent closure on August 11, 1951, during which all Halkevler's assets were transferred to the Treasury.

CONCLUSION

Whether referred to as Atatürk Nationalism or Kemalism, these two concepts were not merely ideas that occurred to Mustafa Kemal and his comrades overnight. They were the culmination of solutions devised by patriotic soldiers, bureaucrats, and civilian intellectuals as a means of finding salvation from the crises that befell a long-standing imperial past. It is the story of a group of individuals who first built a national state and then constructed a nation after the loss of a colossal empire.

The intellectual underpinnings of Atatürk's Nationalism can be readily discerned, tracing their origins from the New Ottomans and the Young Turks movement within the intellectual sphere, as well as politically during the era of the Committee of Union and Progress. It is not erroneous to assert that these movements drew substantial inspiration from the French Revolution as a central

source of cultural nationalism. The primary challenge confronting both the New Ottomans and the Committee of Union and Progress pertained to the question of safeguarding the homeland. However, Mustafa Kemal confronted an additional, weighty task of instituting a state from the remnants of a collapsed empire. His military and civilian resources were primarily derived from the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, his role extended beyond mere leadership of the populace; he grappled with the imperative of managing their disillusionment, erosion of confidence, and entrenched biases. While the physical conflict was waged on the frontlines, an intense psychological warfare was concurrently conducted in the rear. This psychological struggle aimed to sustain the hopes of supporters while effecting a positive transformation in the attitudes of reluctant participants in the liberation war. It was a difficult task to persuade a group of people who strongly believed in their allegiance to the Sultan that the territories they had lost were not only the Sultan's possessions but also their own homeland.

Firstly, the establishment of a nation-state was necessary, followed by the development of a citizenship framework that aligns with the nation-state's standards. Achieving this objective necessitated educating the public, as emphasized by J.J. Rousseau, who famously stated that merely instructing citizens to be good was insufficient; instead, they needed to be taught how to cultivate virtuous behavior. Halkevleri were established in the early years of the new Turkish Republic to fulfill this mission. Halkevleri were not exclusive to Turkey; similar examples existed in various parts of the world. This transformation was the final link in a narrative of change spanning nearly one hundred and fifty years.

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