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The phenomenon of nationalism in nation-state¹

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Abstract

Following dissolution of empires, nation-states appeared on the stage of history in the 19th century when they were established as a result of nationalism that came into prominence based on unity of common language and history.

It would not be wrong to say that the nationalist movements that started in the 19th century and the transition period to the nation-state structure took place simultaneously. Nationalism has an important role in the process of losing the legitimacy of traditional structures and the emergence of modern states.

The nationalist movement and its studies, which gained momentum especially after the world wars, were generally evaluated together with modernism. Even if nationalism is not an ideology, it is undeniable that the nation form has existed in social life since ancient times.

In addition to the economic, social and cultural reasons and changes that helped the emergence of the nation-state, there is also the concept of "nationalism", which was of interest to sociology at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century.

The nation-state differs from previous state structures with its nationalist nature. Reasons such as changing economic functions, their organization and social change have found reality in the nation-state structure on the political axis and have also formed the cultural essence. It would be appropriate to emphasize that nationalism is undoubtedly the dominant element in the structuring of the nation-state, whether it is based on blood ties, language or cultural unity. The nation-states, which we accept as the modern period state structure, have formed today's modern nation-state structure by adopting nationalism as an ideology in order to integrate their people.

This study seeks to answer certain questions such as whether the idea of nationalism influences the formation of nation-state and whether nation-states play an active role in the rise of nationalism. As a result of evaluations, it appears that the idea of nationalism, on one hand, has an active role in the formation of nation-state and nation-state, on the other hand, plays a role in the rise of nationalism as an ideology for keeping together the population living within its territory after its formation process.

Keywords: Nation, Nation-state, Nationalism.

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1. The Concepts of Nation and State

Nation refers to “a group of people who mostly live in the same territory and share a common history, ethnicity, culture, traditions and language”. *State*, however, refers to “a political community organized as a result of settlement by a group of people with cultural unity within a territory under a government”. In other words, *state* is “a legal entity by public law, which legally impersonates the nation, having internal and external sovereignty and monopoly of organized use of force over a territory”. Usually, the existence of close ties between the nation and the state leads to a nation-state. Occasionally, the state is born before the nation (as seen in decolonized countries). In addition, there are nations who are divided into multiple states, as seen in multinational states (Meydan Laorusse, 1986: 3105, 11935).

According to Habermas, nation emerges as a more successful and substantial new base of social integration. The idea of nation is more or less based on fictional history and discovered traditions of a community that has common ancestors, common language and culture (Finlayson, 2007: 176).

Plato is one of the philosophers who first defined the concept of state. According to Habermas, state is described as “*an ideal form of the materialization of the human spirit and knowledge of the Philosopher-King*” by Plato, as “*an organic structure where individual exists as a political member*” by Aristo, as “a political power that secures the human existence” by Hobbes, as “*a reflection of God on earth*” by Hegel, as “*an organ for the oppression of sovereigns*” by Marx, as “*a historical destiny*” by Heidegger and as “*the biggest lie*” by Nietzsche (Habermas, 2002: 8).

Giddens defines today’s nation-state, the subject matter of this study, as “*a state, which is a set of institutional forms of governance maintaining an administrative monopoly over a territory with demarcated boundaries, its rule being sanctioned by law and direct control of the means of internal and external violence*” (Giddens, 2005: 146). Touraine describes the concept of nation as “*a political form of modernity integrated and restructured by law that is inspired by the principles of reason rather than traditions, customs and privileges*” (Touraine, 2000:155).

Giddens, stating that the rise of nationalism plays an effective role in the formation of nation-state, defines nationalism as “*collective loyalty of members of a population to symbols denoting that they belong to the same community*”. On the contrary, he states that nation-state and nationalism should not be considered as “two peas in a pod”; in example, post-colonial states in today’s Africa are undoubtedly nation-states surrounded by regional segregations that are more powerful than national loyalty to a community. (Giddens, 2005: 147).

Although nation-state has an ideological foundation, it constitutes a major organization by nature. Social structures have directly influenced institutional form of authority since the ancient ages.

Nowadays, when many people consider that nation-state has come to an end and left the arena to the administrative actors of the global system, it would be useful to consider the nature, birth and development process, and transformation of nation-state.

2. The Birth and Development Process of Nation-State

There are a lot of different ideas about the origins of nation-state. As it is also stated by Özyurt, according to Lipson, “the official date of birth of nation-state is the date of marriage between Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon which reinforced the unity of Spain in the second half of the 15th century” (Lipson, 1978:147). There are people who consider that the birth of nation-state entered on the world stage by the French Revolution of 1789 (Sarıbay, 2000:213).

According to Sarıbay, nation-state construction has been completed in four phases in the Western Europe:

The First phase is the period of emergence of nation-state between the 15th century and the 18th century when the aristocracy integrated with economical, political and cultural context.

The Second phase is the period when the aristocracy and the people came up against each

other. In this phase, it is observed that the public integrated with mass movements. As stated by Sarıbay, the factors such as education, military service, prevalent communication and etc. resulted with structural changes in the public and provided a new identity to the people.

The Third phase comprises a period when the concept of “citizenship” imbedded. “This emerged in line with institutionalization of assurance given to the opposing party, granting rights to a larger electoral body in member election of representative bodies, and organization of political parties functioning as uniting and expressing common interests” (Sarıbay, 1991). The sovereignty of people and citizens participating, indirectly, in state government means that emphasis is made on the concept of democracy. This period is important for various reasons such as conflict between aristocracy and bourgeoisie, increase in the power of bourgeoisie as a result of the Industrial Revolution subrogating the power of landownership, and etc. The changes in the third phase are seen not only between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, but also between the state and the church as well as the minority culture and the majority culture. In this struggle, the nation-state system was victorious against the church, the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy, and the integrated national identity against the minority culture.

The Fourth phase is seen as a period when central state government enlarged its field of practice. It is known that the idea of social state spread out and put into practice in this phase. It also differs from the other phases in terms of the efforts to equalize distribution of income and economical conditions of the citizens.

In the middle ages, the power of state derived from the church. By Enlightenment, as the result of Renaissance and Reform, the church and members of the clergy started to lose their influence, and the secularization process began. This resulted with power and legitimacy shift of state from the religion to the nation (Habermas, 2002:8).

The fundamental reason for formation and rise of nation-state all around the world is the capitalist economy. Industry is monetarily enriched through trade, which resulted with a new middle class, bourgeoisie, who wished to participate in state government (Şahin, 2007:118), and this reveals the role of capitalism in the construction of nation-state. In line with the Industrial Revolution, absolute monarchies collapsed, and as a result, state started to establish an understanding of legitimacy on fundamental rights and freedoms (Görmez, 2005: 23). “In the 18th century, sovereignty belonged to the state representing the citizens as a result of revolutionary policies in France, and therefore, it has begun to be effective as a political phenomenon. It has become to be an institutional authority that directly controls internal and external physical instruments of force, based on territorial authority within demarcated boundaries, glamorized with law. The impact of globalization on nation-state is fully addressed to this institutional authority” (Sarıbay, 2002).

It is also important to evaluate main characteristics of nation-state that differs from traditional state systems as much important as the reasons for formation of nation-states. We may say that nation-state, rather referred to as modern state, is the product of modern era. Unlike traditional states, nation-states have central state government. The existence of central state government in nation-state system has resulted with cultural unity and integration of people living in different communities in traditional states under the name of ‘nation’ through factors such as common culture and language (official language), and etc. In this context, integration capacity of traditional states is poor. However, nation-state system, which has a high integration capacity, can also comprise the concept of citizenship as a political state by determining a political understanding. (Drucker, 1994:171).

Nation-states differ from traditional states not only in terms of authority, but also in terms of politics, economics, society and military force. (Giddens, 2000:146). Within this framework, Giddens mentions three types of main factors in the emergence of nation-states. Accordingly, the *first* factor is the combination of industrial and military power. The countries that are developed in industry and have new weapons established nation-states. Weber describes nation-state as “*human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force*” (Weber,

1993:80). In other words, use of weapons and violence is fully limited with the state initiative and by state consent. The *second* factor is the vast expansion of administrative power of nation-state. The *third* factor concerns contingent historical developments (Giddens, 2005:334).

The followings can be listed as the reasons of difference between traditional state and nation-state: establishing regular armies, increasing importance of central defense rather than regional, strictly demarcated boundaries, ensuring -internally and externally- security of citizens, monopoly of military power and violence -as Giddens puts excessive emphasis on. In addition, nation-states, when compared to traditional states, gained power by recognizing national sovereignty internally and externally (Coşkun, 1997:165).

It is also continuously emphasized that historical processes and conditions resulted with changes both in the social structure and governing systems. One of the important events in nation-state construction is the “*Peace of Westphalia*”.

The Peace of Westphalia, which was a series of peace treaties signed in 1648 and ended Thirty Years’ War, is a significant step in the establishment of nation-states. According to the Peace of Westphalia, each state would have sole authority over its citizens and the states would not interfere with internal affairs of each other. Thus, authority of a state to interfere with the citizens of the other countries would become null and void. “State would be the sole respondent to the outsiders as the representative of all its citizens” (Kayder, 2004). Pursuant to the Treaties, intergovernmental relations would be regulated according to certain rules of law. In addition, nation-state would patronage all its *citizens* regardless of their religion.

When we evaluate the Peace of Westphalia in terms of nation-state, state has undertaken to protect all its citizens against internal and external threats and attacks regardless of their religion and nation, ensured equality among its *citizens* through constitutional *citizenship*, and regulated their social security and business lives. Hence, national state takes its source and power from national awareness of its citizens, legitimacy of nation-state, and the principle of equality and common values among the individuals that constitute the nation. *Citizenship* is a concept comprised of general and equal rights granted to individuals against state and clearly defined liabilities (Poggi, 2007: 9). Until the emergence of nation-state, neither the individuals nor the state considered the concept of citizenship for people who lived in traditional states (Giddens, 2005:276). This process that started in coffeehouses in line with the emergence of bourgeois public sphere and Enlightenment had an effective role in the transformation process. These places where individuals exchanged their free thoughts turned into an institutional structure based on “*equality*” before the French Revolution. These places where individuals could meet regardless of their social class and status were not only state centric, but also social (Timur, 2008: 49). Thereby, the steps towards the awareness of citizenship were taken, and public opinion was created. Then, the support of the society started to become important for the state (Kerestecioğlu, 2007:325). The spirit of the French Revolution of 1789 has revealed that the sovereignty belongs to the nation. However, nation-state regime has continued to maintain a state-centric government, and used this power to establish a national unity (Güler, 1991: 43)

While we are analyzing nation-state system, which appeared in the 19th century as a political process, it would be appropriate to mention the conditions and events, especially the phenomenon of “*nationalism*”.

3. The Phenomenon of Nationalism in Nation-State

In addition to the reasons of emergence of nation-state such as economical, social, cultural changes, there is the concept of “*nationalism*”, which is included in sociology’s field of interest from 19th century to 20th century.

“Nation can be defined not only in the axis of ethnicity based on the perception of bloodline-ancestry, but also in the axis of various social categories such as religion, language, territory, class, religious doctrine, ideology and etc.” (Aktürk, 2006:52).

Before addressing key elements that constitute the idea of nationalism, it would be useful to mention that the concept of nationalism historically emerged in politics simultaneously with the emergence of nation-state in Europe (Karakaş, 2006: 57).

However, it is also necessary to state that there are different opinions among the philosophers about where nationalism emerged for the first time. It is the common opinion that nationalism first emerged in France, but there are people who believe that nationalism was born in America. The emergence of nationalism is related with the French Revolution in terms of ideology as a political system establishing nation-state structure and making the population to adapt this regime (Kerestecioğlu, 2005: 329-330).

Nationalism, so to say global nationalism, which became popular after the First World, continued to exist in different countries based on ethnicity whereas the system based on language and citizenship in France. In example, Germany applied a concept of nationalism based on a single ethnicity. There was a single-ethnic nationalist policy based on bloodline-ancestry by discriminating the population who do not have a German bloodline, although they all shared the same culture and geography for many years (Aktürk, 2006: 52).

Aktürk describes three ideal types of nationalism: single-ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic.

While there is a bloodline-ancestry relation in the center of *single-ethnic* regimes, in *multi-ethnic regimes*, "more than one ethnic groups are considered to be the essential elements of the nation and the state is obliged to protect the collective rights of these elements (Aktürk, 2006: 45). In *non-ethnic regimes*, such as Turkey and France, nationalism is a system based on republican principles, national language and citizenship.

It would not be wrong to say that nationalist movements in the 19th century coincide with transitional period of nation-state. Nationalism plays a significantly important role in the process of delegitimization of traditional regimes and emergence of modern states.

Nationalist movements and practices, which particularly accelerated after both world wars, have generally been evaluated together with modernism. It is not possible to deny the longstanding existence of the concept of nation in social life even if we put aside nationalism as an ideology. Some scientists, however, i.e. Gellner, disagree with the others concerning nations stem from the ideology of nationalism. To him, nationalism is not one of the characteristics of an agricultural society, but it is peculiar to industrial society (Kerestecioğlu, 2007:313). The Industrial Revolution influenced and changed not only the economical sphere, but also cultural and social structure. Gellner, who argues that state and society does not have close ties in an agricultural society, considers that industrial societies, where pluralism prevails in the cultural sphere, uses nationalism to eliminate the disunity in nation-state relations. Thus, the society becomes anonymous and homogenized as a result of increasing division of labor following the Industrial Revolution. Gellner's analysis of the concept of nationalism is based on structural grounds. We may say that Gellner analyzed nationalism by focusing on the changes of social structure following the Industrial Revolution.

According to Smith, who emphasized that nationalism is a power structured on historical and cultural ties, not on ideological grounds, nationalism is not the output of the modern times. It is a system that has resulted from social changes since the settlement of humankind, the Industrial Revolution, and the French Revolution as well as a concept that comprises cultural essence. But it would be misleading to claim that Smith considers that nationalism emerged against modernism. To him, nationalism is an output of both the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution in intellectual and social context. "*Nation*, as the title of a community sharing a historical territory-country, common myths and a historical memory, an aggregated public culture, a common economy, common legal rights and responsibilities, is a multi-dimensional concept, a standard where embodiments have similarities at various degrees or an ideal type of milestone." (Smith,1999 75).

Hobsbawm evaluated the concept of nationalism in the aspect of masses. This phenomenon can have a meaning and practice only if masses adopt and embrace nationalism. It is important for Hobsbawm that nationalism becomes massive. However, this expression prevented Hobsbawm to consider that nationalism is an ideology created by masses. Nationalism has emerged as a result of efforts of “petit bourgeoisie” for ensuring that it is adopted and embraced (Roger, 2008: 72). Public masses that have not involved in the political sphere until the French Revolution, started to make their presence felt in the political sphere by nationalist movements supported by the middle class, bourgeoisie, following the collapse of aristocracy. Bourgeoisie, sought to take the power of aristocracy by nationalism, achieved to build up a sufficient proponent group on massive grounds (Roger, 2008: 75). According to Hobsbawm, bourgeoisie aimed to take masses and formations under control, which may stance against and threaten their objectives and changes, in this way. In summary, Hobsbawm considers nationalism not only as a top-down ideology (as the result of approaches of bourgeoisie), but also as an ideology adopted by populace masses.

Many philosophers have different opinions about how and when nationalism emerged. One of the most recognized opinions is that nationalism emerged with the French Revolution. Although there were several countries that were constituted in the form of nation before the French Revolution (Spain, France, Germany and etc.), it would not be correct to say that they adopted the ideology of nationalism. The social changes after the French Revolution, started to form a nation with different characteristics than the previous nations. Especially, Rousseau is one of the prominent names of the ideology of “nationalism” in France with his reviews criticizing the relations of “administrator-administered” and his articles built on the “common will” (Kerestecioğlu, 2007:331). The phenomenon of nation subrogated the phenomenon of religion is also based on statism and patriotism. This movement started in France has spread out to many countries in Europe. The idea of nationalism, having emphasis on language unity, continued to spread in Europe through literature, and particularly, romanticism movements. Language has a significant effect on nationalism. This appears to be natural when we consider that one of the fundamental characteristics of nations is the principle of “language unity”. Fischmann considers that there is an emotional bond between nationalism and language. Language is realistic in terms of being “natural”, “instrumental”, “divine” and “earthly”; every nation considerably loyal to its language and fights for spreading their language. (Roger, 2008: 38). As Aktürk also mentioned, however, it is seen that language component, which forms the essence of French nationalism, is not one of the fundamental elements of nationalism in every country governed by nation-state regime. Aktürk, who gives the example of the USA for supporting his argument, draws attention to the USA as a multi-ethnic nation-state differing from the UK (Aktürk, 2006: 32). Modern nation-states, however, keep their citizens together with the ideology of nationalism. As seen in the examples of Turkey and France, however, every nation-state does not find sufficient to speak the same language and to have identity of citizenship, and such nation-states make a difference between the identity of nation and the identity of citizenship. While "national identity" is a phenomenon related to the status of individuals within the society, "identity of citizenship" is a phenomenon that determines the status of individuals against the state (Sarıbay, 1991).

As for nationalism only based on a bloodline, in example Germany, is included in the ideology of nation-states. The key element of such kind of nationalism is ethnicity. Culture, geography and language unity has no importance whatsoever. We are still witnessing this kind of nationalism, which is only applicable to individuals with the same ethnicity, notwithstanding where they live in the world, as ethnic nationalism applied in Germany.

Giddens makes a difference between the concepts of nation-state and nationalism; while the concept of nationalism refers to a psychological condition (Giddens, 2005: 159), the nation-state has the characteristics of modern state, result of which is demarcated boundaries and recognition by the other states.

CONCLUSION

One of the important points, which draw attention during analyzing nation-states and nationalism in the *sociological* context, is that European nations are examined in the nation-state and nationality debates. Especially, European sociologists primarily evaluated nation-state structure in the European territory in the light of political approaches together with the social structure (Schnapper, 2005: 426). European sociologists concerned about a recipe perspective with regard to the states that have not completed their development and have newly decolonized (Kerestecioğlu, 2007:311), and pointed out the European countries as an ideal type of nation-state.

As a matter of fact, nation-state is different from previous state structures as a result of nationalism. The factors such as changing economical functions, their organization and social changes resulted with nation-state structure in the political spectrum (Ökmen, 2005: 23). When it is taken into consideration that individuals are influenced from the changes in the social sphere after nation-state started to be constructed, it was inevitable for state theories to acquire an important place in sociology.

One of the state theories, which sociology focuses on, is undoubtedly Marxist state theory. First of all, America and many European countries consider pluralist-functionalist approach against this theory. As it is understood from the term, this approach that derives from different pluralistic points of origin is based on Weber.

The pluralist-functionalist approach, which almost identically overlaps with the concept of democracy, institutionalized state (Ökmen, 2005: 37). In this approach, the domination capability of individuals, living in the same state, within the framework of their mentality is proportionate to their voice in state government. This can be regarded as a practice of democratic states (Şaylan, 1995:200).

In other words, this supports that pluralist-functionalist approach resembles democratic regime. The alternative of reviewing state theories and state-nation model, associated with modernism, by the disciplines of philosophy, politics and *sociology* in the 19th and 20th centuries, by a dichotomy of Marxist versus pluralist-functionalist resulted with a critical approach when it is understood that the structures of state and society are more complex in today's conditions, and analysis with the said dichotomy is insufficient.

Within the framework of a new analysis of the said state theories started to be questioned, Ökmen mentions a definition of which main concept is "minimal state". This concept refers to the necessity of considering state in nation-state analysis within the framework of "law" and "regime". He considers that the new political conditions after the Second World War and changes in the social structure as a dynamical phenomenon started to be reanalyzed in the light of Weber-Parsons approach (Ökmen, 2005: 40).

It is remarked that state analysis of structural-functional approach is considered in the light of Parsons approach. In the essence of this approach, which coincides with the end of the 20th century, it is assumed that the political structure is a part of the society.

In conclusion, it would be appropriate to emphasize that nationalism, whether based on bloodline-ancestry or language or cultural unity, is undoubtedly the principal element of nation-state structure in the 19th century. The nation-states, which we recognize as modern state structures, adopted nationalism as an ideology for integrating their citizens, and created today's modern nation-state system.

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