SYED AHMET ARVASI'S (1932-1988) CRITIQUE OF TURKISH NATIONALISM

BY

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates Syed Ahmet Arvasi's ideas on an alternative model of nationalism that integrates Islam and ethnic peculiarities without discriminating against any minority groups, thus building social cohesion. It also explains the profound importance of Islam in Turkish society, and how Islamic identity is interwoven with Turkishness. Firstly, this research examines the main features of the Atatürk version of Turkish nationalism, the factors behind its emergence, and the integrity of the Turkish society during and subsequent to Atatürk's period. During the Republican period, Western influence became a dominant factor both in the construction of the national identity and in the fundamental processes such as secularisation and democratisation. This research finds that Turkey has taken very concrete steps towards Westernisation and consequently lost characteristics of its traditional Turkish and Islamic culture. Moreover, based on the ideas of Arvasi, this research finds that the ethno-centric European ideology of nationalism was alien to the Turkish people, who had been affiliated with a multi-ethnic Islamic identity and values for centuries. The ideology of modern Turkish nationalism demanded a secular approach, creating a nation based on secular and Western values, consequently causing tensions and social discord. This study accordingly suggests, based on the ideas of Arvasi, that there should be a more inclusive alternative model of national cohesion for the Turkish nation. This research also analysed the intellectual biography of Syed Ahmet Arvasi with special emphasis on his life and times, and his major works, exploring his important political thoughts on Turkish Islamic idealism and the concept of social race. Arvasi's model of Turkish nationalism refuses to build its policy on ethno-centric biological racism and social inequality. This study presents that he proposed the concept of social race to bring people together, both spiritually and physically, through a common culture, geography, and struggle. Also, Arvasi suggested that the basic ideology of the Turkish nation was Islam, therefore the Turkish nation's concept of nationalism must be inherently linked to Islam. In summary, for the Turkish nation to live in social harmony, the Turkish nationalism should be based on the concepts of the social race and Turkish-Islamic culture.

خلاصة البحث

هذا البحث يحقق في أفكار سيد أحمد أرفاسي حول نموذج بديل للقومية يدمج الإسلام والخصوصيات العرقية دون التمييز ضد أي مجموعات من الأقليات، وبالتالي بناء التماسك الاجتماعي. كما يشرح الأهمية العميقة للإسلام في المجتمع التركي، وكيف تتشابك الهوية الإسلامية مع التركية. أولاً، يبحث البحث في السمات الرئيسية لنسخة أتاتورك من القومية التركية، والعوامل الكامنة وراء ظهورها، وسلامة المجتمع التركي خلال فترة أتاتورك وبعدها. خلال الفترة الجمهورية، أصبح النفوذ الغربي عاملاً مهيمناً سواء في بناء الهوية الوطنية أو في العمليات الأساسية مثل العلمنة والتحول الديمقراطي. ويخلص هذا البحث إلى أن تركيا قد اتخذت خطوات ملموسة جدا نحو التغريب وبالتالي فقدت جوانب من ثقافتها التركية والإسلامية التقليدية. وعلاوة على ذلك، واستنادا إلى أفكار أرفاسي، وجد البحث أن الأيديولوجية الأوروبية التي تركز على العرق القومية كانت غريبة عن الشعب التركي، الذي كان منتميا إلى هوية وقيم إسلامية متعددة الأعراق لعدة قرون. إن أيديولوجية القومية التركية الحديثة تتطلب نهجاً علمانياً، وخلق أمة تقوم على القيم العلمانية والغربية، مما تسبب في الخلاف والتوترات الاجتماعية. وبناءً على ذلك، تقترح هذه الدراسة، استناداً إلى أفكار أرفاسي، أنه ينبغي أن يكون هناك نموذج بديل أكثر شمولاً للتماسك الوطني للأمة التركية. كما حلل البحث السيرة الفكرية لسيد أحمد أرفاسي بشكل خاص على حياته وأوقاته، وأعماله الرئيسية، واستكشاف أفكاره السياسية الهامة حول المثالية الإسلامية التركية ومفهوم العرق الاجتماعي. ويرفض نموذج أرفاسي للقومية التركية بناء سياسته بشأن العنصرية البيولوجية التي تركز على العرق وعدم المساواة الاجتماعية. تعرض هذه الدراسة أنه اقترح مفهوم العرق الاجتماعي لجمع الناس معاً روحياً وجسدياً، من خلال ثقافة مشتركة وجغرافية ونضال. كما أشار أرفازي إلى أن الأيديولوجية الأساسية للأمة التركية هي الإسلام، وبالتالي يجب أن يكون مفهوم الأمة التركية للقومية مرتبطاً بطبيعته بالإسلام. باختصار، لكي تعيش الأمة التركية في وئام اجتماعي، ينبغي أن تستند القومية التركية إلى مفاهيم العرق الاجتماعي والثقافة التركية الإسلامية

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

………………………..
Elmira Akhmetova
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

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…………………………..
Shukran Bin Abd Rahman
Dean, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Esra Polat

Signature.. Date..

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SYED AHMET ARVASI'S (1932-1988) CRITIQUE OF TURKISH NATIONALISM

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

Arabic Transliteration Scheme

(According to IIUM Thesis Manual)

Consonant

Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration
ء	ʼ	ز	Z	ق	Q
ب	b	س	S	ك	K
ت	t	ش	Sh	ل	L
ث	th	ص	Ṣ	م	M
ج	j	ض	Ì	ن	N
ح	h	ط	Ï	ه	H
خ	kh	ظ	Z	و	W
د	d	ع	Ñ	ي	Y
ذ	dh	غ	Gh		
ر	r	ف	F		

Vowel

Arabic term	Transliteration	Arabic term	Transliteration
ـَ	a	ا +	É
ـِ	i	ى +	Ê
ـُ	u	و +	Ë
اي	ay	او	Aw

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Nationalism is a modern ideology that emerged towards the end of the 18th century in Europe. There is no single widely accepted definition of nationalism. It is generally defined as an understanding of the communities that are connected to each other with the ties of common language, culture, and history, and the acceptance the legitimacy of the political system.[1] According to the Irish political scientist Benedict Anderson (1936-2015), there is no possibility that the whole human race will be one nation, because of mental differences among them, thus nationalism is an exclusive ideology that defines individuals as groups based on ethnic features (including skin colour and language as well as cultural attributes such as shared history) as distinct from "others."[2] Professor of Ethnicity and Nationalism, Anthony D. Smith, in his classical work entitled *Nationalism Theory, Ideology, History* differed two types of nationalism: territorial and ethnic nationalism. He also classified two primary types of nation, Western and non-Western. The Western model explains that a nation comprises the people who are living in a particular territory, while the non-Western model is based on ethnicity and implies a nation as a "superfamily."[3]

The problem of not having a commonly-accepted single definition of nationalism resulted in the emergence of studies on the classification of nationalism started in the first quarter of the 20th century. In the 1920s, Carlton Hayes and Hans

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[1] Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (United States: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 23-27.
[2] Benedict Anderson*, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Publisher Verso Books 2006), 5-7.
[3] Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 10.

Kohn began working on the classification of nationalism or, in other words, the determination of "typology." Hayes divided nationalism into the various types that began to emerge during the 18th century, such as Humanitarian, Traditional, Jacobean, Liberal, followed by more recent Economic and Holistic (Integral) nationalisms.[4]

Kohn divided nationalism into "Western" and "Eastern" types. According to Kohn, nationalism in Britain, America, and France was rational, optimistic, and pluralistic, while in Asia it was emotional and authoritarian.[5] This research is primarily concerned with Kemalist nationalism, which is a Western type of nationalism in its principles, but which occurred in a country deeply-rooted in Eastern values and Islamic principles. The terms "Kemalist nationalism" and "Turkish nationalism" in this research bear the same meaning, and are used interchangeably.

Due to an ideological vacuum that emerged in the European society following the consequences of the French Revolution in 1789, nationalism rapidly gained popularity among the populations of the nascent European nation-states of the 19th century. Traditional national identities were bound to monarchical sovereigns, but the collapse of the old regimes and the emergence of democratic forms of governance called for new ideologies to unite individuals and communities in the new political system. Therefore, this century was called "the golden age" of nationalism in the West. Later on, this product of the Western thought was introduced to other parts of the world by Europe's growing imperial reach.[6] The phenomenon of nationalism had a significant impact on the disintegration of traditional empires. The development of nationalism was actively encouraged by the rising empires of Britain and France, causing the

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[4] Louis Leo Snyder, *The New Nationalism* (New Jersey: Cornell University Press, 2003), 49-51.
[5] Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (London: Routledge Press, 1958), 324-326.
[6] Elmira Akhmetova, "Ideas of Muslim Unity at The Age of Nationalism: A Comparative Study of The Concept of The Ummah In the Writings of Musa Jarullah And Said Nursi," (Ph.D. thesis, University of IIUM, 2007), 2.

fragmentation of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, leading to the emergence of Hungary and Greece as independent nation-states.

The development of nationalism in this region directly led to WWI, when the Habsburg heir Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by Serbian nationalists, and the subsequent conflict led to the liquidation of what remained of the Habsburg and Ottoman realms, to be replaced by the Austrian, Turkish, and other nationalist states, such as the Arab and Jewish nations of the modern Middle East. These great geo-strategic changes were associated with profound societal changes throughout the world.

Having initially considered maintaining a ceremonial caliph, Turkey ultimately abolished the institution (in 1924), and became a modern secular nation-state following the Treaty of Lausanne, when the Republic of Turkey officially declared its sovereignty on 29 October 1923. The first President of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk,[7] made radical changes in Turkey to make it a secular state within a short period.[8] Islam had been a unifying force for Anatolian-Ottoman Muslims and was a decisive element of Turkism, and the proto-Turkish nationalism that had already begun to emerge during the late Ottoman period, but after 1924 Kemalism actively removed Islamic elements from the definition of Turkish nationalism.[9]

Such radical changes in the identity of Muslim communities were seen as a positive development in human history by several leading Western scholars on the fields of nationalism and sociology of religions. Hans Kohn, for example, by observing the radical changes in Turkey, concluded that the process of replacing the religious identity

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[7] Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) was born in Thessaloniki (Salonika). He became the president of the new Turkish Republic, serving until his death in office in 1938. See, Edward J. Erickson, *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Leadership, Strategy, Conflict* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing 2013), 6-7.

[8] Suna Kili, *The Atatürk Revolution: A Paradigm of Modernization* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008), 208.

[9] Soner Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge Press, 2006), 24.

of Muslims by nationalism was carried out with commendable speed in Turkey[10] as he stated that:

> Only twenty-five years ago the Turks, described themselves first and foremost as Mohammedans. They were not yet conscious of ethnical designations, or only accorded them secondary consideration. Today the Mohammedan is primarily a member of his nation or a citizen of his state, and only afterward a Mohammedan.[11]

This new version of Turkish nationalism propagated by the Kemalist state was based mainly on European thought and secular approach, which openly aimed to create a nation with secular Western values. Naturally this met with some resistance in Turkish society. Some Turkish scholars such as Eşref Edip (1882-1971), Said Nursi (1877-1960), Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983), and Syed Ahmet Arvasi (1932-1988) criticized the ideology of nationalism for being alien to the Islamic heritage of the Turks, and a cause for spreading enmity among the races. Arvasi said that "Turkish nationalism" inherently evokes racism, and it evokes enmity within the nation.[12] He also mentioned that "I saw those who fear the word 'Turks,' I saw those who fear the word 'Islam,' and I saw those who are horrified by the mixture of words 'Turk' and 'Islam' in this country."[13] These statements of Arvasi clearly assert that, although Turkishness and Islam were inextricably fused in the hearts of the Ottomans, the new concept of nationalism caused these two sides of one identity to clash. It seems that Turkey is still looking for the best and most appropriate concept of nationalism, which can integrate Islamic, cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences of the modern Turkish

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[10] Hans Khon, *Nationalism, and Imperialism in the Hire East* (London: Routledge Press, 1932), 19.
[11] Ibid., 24.
[12] Syed Ahmet Arvasi, *Türk İslam Ülküsü I* (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz Yayınları, 2008), 240.
[13] Ibid., 242.

nation. This study provides a new understanding of nationalism based on the ideas of Arvasi, which is in harmony with Islamic ideals.

Arvasi (1932-1988) was a writer and philosopher of Kurdish origin. He was known as Syed, designating his position as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). In his scholarly words, Arvasi expounded upon the ideology of the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis Doctrine" and its effect on modern Turkey. He summarized his ideas in an interview:

> I am the possessor of the consciousness of the Turkish nation, one who lives by the rules of Islamic belief and values, who desires the great Turkish nation to be pleased and noble in both worlds and who regards Islam as his aim. My understanding of nationalism has nothing to do with racism, sectionalism, and a narrow approach to tribalism. I am against any kind of racism, either of minorities or majorities.[14]

This thesis is the result of studying the alternative version of the concept of nationalism formulated by Arvasi, who was one of the most influential theorists of the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party, which is still a part of the ruling alliance in Turkey today.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk officially declared the sovereignty of the Republic of Turkey as a nation-state. Turkey went in a new direction with a cultural revolution seeking to eliminate its traditional Ottoman identity, which the Kemalists saw as the moribund legacy of a dead civilization that hampered national progress. Following this new quest, the Turkish state thought itself meaningful in a

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[14] Hüdavandigar, Onur, *Arvasi Hocayala Başbaşa* (İstanbul: Çınar Yayınları,2007), 61.

Western and non-religious civilizational path.[15] In the process of building the nation-state under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, a number of radical reforms were adapted such as the abolishment of the institution of the caliphate on 3 March 1924, and the Dervish lodges and *zawiya* (small Islamic monasteries) on 30 November 1925. On 10 November 1928, the state officially renounced the earlier used slogan of "Turkish State's religion is Islam." In February 1933, the government decided to translate the *azan* into Turkish, and its original Arabic version was forbidden to be recited. As a result, under the influence of Kemalist type of national path, in the newly founded Republic of Turkey religious identity was gradually replaced by pure nationalistic elements, excluding the traditional Ottoman culture that was ultimately rooted in Arab-Islamic heritage.[16]

Most importantly, the new national identity of the Turks were planned to be formed by separating them from the affiliation with the East and Islam while attempting to establish growing connections with the West.[17] Consequently, official Kemalist nationalism formulated a new definition of the identity of Turkish citizens of the Republic of Turkey, as those who "have adopted the ideals of the Republic, westernized, bound to the Turkish culture, as anyone who has Turkish and Turkish-speaking origin."[18]

This new definition of national identity is inherently exclusive to the "Turkish," openly imitating the European nationalist cultures and secularism, while ignoring traditional Islamic heritage. As a result of this new Western approach adopted by the

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[15] Hayati Tüfekçioğlu, "Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi ve Türk Basını,"," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi*, Vol.3 (1992), 45.

[16] Aydın Erdoğan*, "Yeni Bir Din: Milliyetçilik," *Üsküdar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol.7 (2018), 227-253.

[17] Korkut Tuna, *Türk Tarih Tezleri ve Sosyoloji* (İstanbul: İstanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1991), 57.

[18] Ahmet Yıldız*, Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları 1919-1938* (Ankara: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 16.

Turkish government, various problems occurred gradually between the state and society. For instance, a Turkish religious scholar of that time, İskilipli Âtif Hodja (1876-1926), thought that this blind imitation of the West would be a disaster in a long run. In 1924, he published a book entitled *Frenk Mukallitliği ve Şapka* (Westernization and the (European) Hat). İskilipli Âtif Hodja consequently was arrested on charges of opposition to the Hat Law,[19] which came into the force one year after the publication of this book, and was executed.[20] The new official national identity necessarily excluded and marginalized non-Turkish ethnic minorities, consequently intensifying ethnic tensions and conflicts in the society and in in foreign policy. Soner Cagaptay stated that:

> By the late 1930s, various laws had established many privileges for the Turks in the country. In some of them, the government had tacitly favoured ethnic Turks, under the clause "Turkish citizens." In others, it had openly sided with ethnic Turks. In the eyes of the High Kemalist government, ethnic Turks were the preferred citizens.[21]

A remarkable example of this was recorded in a 1935 letter from the general directorate of security affairs to the governor of Aydın. In this dispatch, Ankara requested information about Tepe village in the province due to a spike in police-related occurrences reported there lately, causing the query "Are the inhabitants of this village Kurdish? … How many Turks are there in Tepe?"[22]

As we can observe from the above-mentioned statements, Kemalist nationalism has caused the problems of inequality, discriminations based on ethnicity, and social hatred due to its non-inclusive nature. However, Syed Ahmet Arvasi's national model

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[19] The "Hat Law" No. 671 was adopted in the Parliament on 25 November 1925. It obliged members and officers of the Turkish Grand National Assembly to wear Western hats. See, Seçil Akgün,"ŞapkaKanunu,"," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dergisi*,Vol.14 (1981), 50.
[20] Ethem Erkoca, *İskilipli Atıf Hoca Hayatı Düşüncelreri ve İdamı* (Ankara: Salmat Yayınevi, 2016), 5.
[21] Soner Cagaptay*, Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge Press, 2006), 70.
[22] Ibid., 80.

proposed the notion of a universal nation that could unite society around religious affiliations, regardless of different ethnic racial, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds.

Turkey is a home to numerous ethnicities, particularly Kurds, Circassians, and Laz. Thus, the official Kemalist nationalism of Turkish ethnic exclusivity is inherently irrelevant to the demographic nature of the population of Turkey itself. Moreover, until the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, Islam was capable of uniting all Anatolian Muslims around the common belief, culture, and identity regardless of ethnic, linguistic, or cultural differences.[23] Unfortunately, in the scramble to assemble a Western European-style nation-state, this inclusive structure and tradition was actively destroyed during the Kemalist era. This study accordingly looks at an alternative model of national cohesion for modern Turkey that integrates traditional religious identity with Turkish nationalism based on the perspective of Syed Ahmet Arvasi.

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it shows that the importance of Islam in the Turkish society is profound, and Islamic identity is interwoven with Turkishness. For most cases, being Muslim is inherent in Turkish people's self-identification of being Turkish.[24] For centuries, Islam united the Anatolian-Ottoman Muslim population regardless of their ethnic or racial backgrounds.[25] However, during the Republican period, Western influence became a dominant factor both in the construction of the national identity and in the fundamental processes such as secularization and democratization. Consequently, Turkey has taken very concrete steps toward

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[23] Ibid., 26.
[24] Carte V Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity 1789-2007* (United States: Yale University Press, 2010), 7.
[25] Soner Cagaptay, *Islam Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge Press, 2006), 27.

Westernization. For Mustafa Kemal, who emerged as the indisputable national leader, the main objective was to reach the level of the contemporary modern, civilization of Western nation-states. Turkey thus applied the model of Western countries to the Turkish context, and subsequent secular reforms severed the Ottoman past from the national identity. In other words, the main objectives of Kemalist reforms were the Westernization and secularization of a society, and the destruction of Ottoman-Islamic heritage.[26]

Second, the scope of an ideology of nationalism that emerged on the European model was not an inclusive in regard to non-Turkic citizens, and was an alien model for the Turkish people who had been affiliated with the Islamic identity and values for centuries. The new concept demanded a secular approach, creating a nation based on secular Western values, consequently causing social discord and tension. This study accordingly demonstrates that there may be a more inclusive alternative model of national cohesion for the Turkish nation.

Lastly, the life and ideas of Arvasi have not received significant academic analysis, including his ideas on nationalism and affiliation with Islam. Most of his books are scattered, and works on his ideas in English are particularly rare, thus his ideas are not known to a broader audience. Thus, this research contributes to the field by introducing the life and ideas of Arvasi to an English-speaking audience.

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[26] Nuray Atlındağ, "Türkiye Milliyetçiliğinin Siyasallaşması ve Batı\Batılılaşma Algısı,"," *AÇÜ Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol.2 (2016), 45.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study concentrates primarily on a critical study of Kemalist Turkish nationalism by highlighting Syed Ahmet Arvasi's concept of nationalism by responding to the following inquiries:

1. What were the main features of the Kemalist version of Turkish nationalism and its impact on Turkish social cohesion?

2. What were the historical happenings in Turkey that shaped Arvasi's worldview?

3. What are main features of Syed Ahmed Arvasi's model of Turkish nationalism and how is it different from Kemalist Turkish nationalism?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the main features of the Kemalist version of Turkish nationalism and its impact on Turkish social cohesion.

2. To study the life and ideas of Syed Ahmet Arvasi, and the historical happenings that shaped his worldview.

3. To study the main features of Syed Ahmet Arvasi's ideas of nationalism and its difference from Kemalist Turkish nationalism.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The secondary sources of this study consist of several books and articles in the field, mainly written in English or Turkish. The secondary sources could be divided into two thematic categories: those which discuss Turkish nationalism, its definitions, causes and consequences; and those which highlight the life and ideas of Syed Ahmet Arvasi.

There are plenty of books which studied Turkish nationalism in many languages, such as Bernard Lewis's *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.[27] This book covers the emergence of the Republic of Turkey over two centuries, including the decline and collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Lewis explains the stages of reform in the 19th century and then discusses the process of building the new Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the direction of a modern secular state. This book is important to understand the transformation of the corporate sense of identity and loyalty among the Turks, and the transformation of theory and practice of government, religion, and cultural life.

Carter Vaughn Findley's *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007*[28] argues about the clash of secular and religious people, both in the late Ottoman period and in the new Republican period. It re-evaluates the political, economic, social, and cultural history in Turkey. This evaluation is essential to understand the difference between different understanding of nationalism between the reformers and he conservatives.

Hans Kohn's *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East*[29] is considered a classic work on nationalism. Kohn describes the process of replacing the religious identity of Muslims with nationalism, and perfectly illustrates how the identity of Turks was changed with the concept of nationalism. According to Kohn, before nationalism, Turks described themselves first and foremost as "Mohammedans" (i.e., Muslims), but the emergence of nationalism changed the identity of Muslims. According to Kohn, religion lost power when confronted with consciousness of the nationalistic idea. However, his theory is problematic, as although religion lost its power while

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[27] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London:Oxford University Press, 3rd edition, 2001).

[28] Carter Vaughn Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007* (United States: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[29] Hans Kohn, *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East* (London: Routledge Press, 1932).

confronting nationalism, it did not disappear in Muslim societies. Nevertheless, this book helps understand the relationship between religion and nationalism in Turkey.

Jenny White's *Muslim Nationalism and New Turks*[30] emphasizes that Islam is one of the main pillars of national consciousness in Turkey, and that the transformation of nationalism in recent years should be read through the nationalist interpretations of Islam. According to White, in Turkey, there is a fierce battle between secularists and Muslims. However, according to the results of White's research, for both secularists and "conscious" Muslims, being a "Turk" means being a "Muslim," and people believe that the best form of Islam in Turkish Islam. This book is an essential source for the idea that Syed Ahmet Arvasi is a scholar who suggested the idea of an inseparable bond of Islam and nationalism.

These above-mentioned sources are significant in understanding the concept of nationalism in Turkey and analysing the main ideas in contemporary Turkish academia. These sources reveal that the current form of Turkish nationalism is inadequate and not inclusive. Accordingly, these resources demonstrate the necessity of looking for an alternative understanding of nationalism, which is inclusive of all members of the society, regardless of their ethnicity or race. Such an inclusive identity has been suggested by Arvasi.

H. Nihal Atsız in *Turk Ülküsü* (Turkish Idea)[31] uses the word "Turkism" to denote Turkish nationalism. According to Atsız, only those who believe in the superiority of the Turkish lineage can be Turkists. He also claims that a Turkish nationalist can only be from a Turkish ethnicity. However, this idea of Nihal Atsız is inherently problematic due to its overt doctrine of Turkish racial superiority,

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[30] Jenney White, *Muslim Nationalism and New Turks* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013).
[31] Nihal.H. Atsız, *Türk Ülküsü* (Ankara: Ötüken Yayınları, 2015).

discriminating against and devaluing Turkish citizens who are from other minority ethnicities but who nevertheless are essential and active members of life in Turkey. Syed Ahmet Arvasi is an example of this, as an ardent Turkish nationalist and an ethnic Kurd. Syed Ahmet Arvasi did not believe in the superiority of any race, rather he emphasized that there is no concept of a master race and sub-race among the races, but superiority can only due to the level of *taqwa*, as per fundamental Islamic doctrine. As biological racism is divisive and disintegrating, Syed Ahmet Arvasi preferred to use the concept of "Ictimaī Irk" (social race), based on the Islamic understanding and celebration of ethnic diversity and unity among all people.

Kemal Karpat's *Turk Demokrasi Tarihi* (History of Turkish Democracy)[32] claims that national identity was expected to be equal with the Islamic identity among the people and intellectuals under the Kemalist paradigm (ignoring the aggressive suppression of the latter during the early years of the Republic), but nationalism has lost its secular character and religion has gradually become a means of expression and defence of nationalistic ideas in Turkey and the Muslim world in general. According to Karpat, this situation may lead to the removal of the national (i.e., secular) qualities of the new Turkish state. He also states that the Turkish nationalism needs to be free from the ideology of Islam. However, Syed Ahmet Arvasi argues that religion and nationalism are inseparable. For centuries, the Turkish nation has adopted Islam both as religion and ideology, and Arvasi claims that the Turkish culture and civilization is formed by the Islamic spirit and faith. According to Arvasi, Turkish nationalism is a movement that seeks to glorify the faith and consciousness of Islam while providing happiness for the people.

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[32] Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010).

Don Waxman's article *Islam and Turkish National Identity: A Reappraisal*[33] examines the place of Islam in the formal construction and expression of Turkish national identity and argues that Islam plays a crucial role in establishing Turkish national identity. In this respect, this article supports Syed Ahmet Arvasi's claim that Islam is the cornerstone of Turkish nationalism and cannot be separated from it. Also, this article is an essential source for comparing Arvasi's model of nationalism with Kemalist nationalism. According to this article, Kemalism was hostile to Islam and continues seeking to change the general religious identity of the Turkish people with its national identity. Also, according to the Kemalist nationalism, Turkey must be based on the principles of modern secular nationalism, and the Republic of Turkey should not contain any religious principles within its ideologies. However, Arvasi's conception of nationalism claims the exact opposite. As mentioned above, it is Islam that Arvasi emphasized in his understanding of nationalism. According to him, the sentiments of Islam and nationalism are inseparable for the people of Turkey. According to the results obtained in the article, despite differences in opinion between secularists and Islamists in Turkey, both camps acknowledge Islam to be a part of "Turkishness," and also share the idea that belief is an essential element of identity. For both groups, being Turkish includes being a Muslim, but for secularists the active suppression of Islamic heritage and identity was a fundamental part of the Kemalist vision. Put simply, while the Kemalist vision did not proscribe Islam *per se*, it sought to dislodge it in any meaningful form from Turkish life, and sensible analyses do not give much credence to nationalist claims to be applying a special "Turkish Islam" rather than simply seeking to remove Islam from Turkish national life.

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[33] Don Waxman, "Islam, and Turkish National Identity: A Reappraisal.*" Turkish Yearbook of International Relations,* Vol. 30 (2000).