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**CURRENT NATIONALIST DISCOURSES IN SERBIA AND TURKEY**

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CURRENT NATIONALIST DISCOURSES IN SERBIA AND TURKEY

Sırbistan'da ve Türkiye'de Güncel Milliyetçi Söylemler

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

- AKP - Justice and Development Party
- ANAP - Motherland Party
- CHP - Republican People's Party
- DOS - Democratic Opposition in Serbia
- DP - Democrat Party
- DYP - True Path Party
- EU - European Union
- HDP - Peoples' Democratic Party
- ICTY - International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
- MHP - National Movement Party
- MTTB - National Turkish Student Union
- PKK - Kurdistan Workers' Party
- RP - Welfare Party
- SANU - Serbian Academy of Science and Arts
- SNS - Serbian Progressive Party
- SPC - Serbian Orthodox Church
- SPS - Socialist Party of Serbia
- SRS or SRP - Serbian Radical Party
- TRT - Turkish Radio and Television Corporation

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## **ABSTRACT**

Today, after several decades of its apogee in the politics, importance of nationalism is re-increasing in the new world. Serbia and Turkey emerge as two countries where the characteristics of politics and people are strongly embodied by nationalism. In these countries, today nationalism still continues to shape political discourses. This thesis attempts to analyze nationalist discourses in post-Yugoslav Serbia and Turkey during AKP era in the context of specific titles which are religion, the idea of Greater Serbia, the idea of Ottomanism, victimization, denial, social base, authoritarianism, othering, minorities, xenophobia, woman, LGBTQ and family. Both of these countries consider nationalism as an identity-based ideology. Serbian nationalism, as a clear example of ethnic nationalism with a strong religious effect, emerges as an aggressive, defensive, irredentist and even expansionist nationalism which influences the lives of not only Serbian but also all the Balkan people. In Turkey, religious nationalism emerges as the new official nationalism of the state under the strong rule of AKP. In this regard, AKP tries to build its own nation, together with its complementaries like national history, as the new hegemonic power of Turkey. This thesis suggests that despite the individuality of each nationalisms, nationalist discourses in Serbia and Turkey are fed by similar concepts. And despite all the changing and development of the world and thereby politics, we still need to understand the nationalism to understand Serbia and Turkey as two countries which are strongly marked by nationalism.

## ÖZET

Milliyetçiliğin günümüz dünyasındaki önemi, onun bir ideoloji olarak siyaseten zirveye ulaştığı dönemden yıllar sonra, bugün yeniden artmaktadır. Sırbistan ve Türkiye, siyasetin ve halkın temel özelliklerinin milliyetçilikler tarafından şekillendirildiği iki ülke olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu ülkelerde bugün etnik milliyetçilikler hâlâ siyasi söylemleri şekillendirmeye devam etmektedir. Bu tez, Yugoslavya'nın dağılmasından sonra Sırbistan'da ve Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi döneminde Türkiye'de ortaya çıkan milliyetçi söylemleri din, Büyük Sırbistan düşüncesi, Osmanlıcık düşüncesi, mağduriyet, inkâr, sosyal taban, ötekileştirme, azınlıklar, zenofobi, kadın, LGBTQ ve aile başlıkları bağlamında analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır. Hem Sırbistan hem de Türkiye milliyetçiliği kimlik temelli bir ideoloji olarak ele almaktadır. Sırp milliyetçiliği, güçlü bir dini etki altındaki etnik milliyetçiliğin açık bir örneği olarak, yalnızca Sırp'ın değil bütün Balkan milletlerinin de yaşamlarını etkileyen saldırgan, savunmacı, irredantist ve yayılmacı bir milliyetçilik olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Türkiye'de ise Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin güçlü iktidarı altında, dini milliyetçilik devletin yeni resmi milliyetçiliği olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, ülkenin yeni hegemonik gücü olarak kendi millet algısı doğrultusunda Türkiye'nin yeni milletini oluşturmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu tez, her milliyetçiliğin kendine özgü karakterine karşın, Sırbistan ve Türkiye'de milliyetçiliklerin benzer anlayışlardan beslendiği fikrini ileri sürmektedir. Bu nedenle, dünyadaki ve dünya siyasetindeki bütün değişim ve gelişmelere rağmen, milliyetçiliklerden güçlü bir şekilde etkilenmiş iki ülke olan Türkiye ve Sırbistan'ı anlamak için bugün hâlâ ilk önce milliyetçikleri anlamaya ihtiyaç vardır.

## INTRODUCTION

Nationalism is a phenomenon that has influenced politics and international relations deeply. Although the French Revolution in 1789 is considered of the birthday of the political idea of the nation, the principle of nationality triumphed at the end of the World War I. And the period between 1918 and 1950 is regarded as the apogee of nationalism. However, afterwards and even today the ideas of nation and nationalism continues to influence the destiny of the people. Although the effect and role of the nations and nationalism as a phenomenon, there is no certain and common definition of these concepts in the literature. Moreover, as Anderson states “unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes or Webers.” (Anderson, 2016) On the contrary, each nationalism is nourished by its own thinkers and intellectuals. Therefore, the concepts of nation and nationalism are defined in various ways. Although these concepts are indefinable, changeable and complicated; even so some well-accepted and well-known definitions of nation and nationalism exist in the literature of social sciences.

This thesis aims to analyze characteristics of Serbian nationalism and Turkish-religious nationalism, which is represented by AKP in Turkey, within the framework of specific titles such as religion, the idea of Greater Serbia, the idea of Ottomanism, victimization, denial, authoritarianism, xenophobia, minorities, othering and gender. In this context, the thesis will both focus on theoretical dimensions of these nationalisms and try to reveal practical results and reflections of them. Even though these two nationalisms emerge in quite different conditions and positions, nevertheless they have several common and similar characteristics which structure and influence them. In the same vein, these two nationalisms reflect and influence their people in similar ways. Serbian nationalism represents a unique example of the concept of ethnic nationalism. However, although the Serbian nationalism is an example of ethnic nationalism; at the emergence stage of Serbian nationalism, the boundaries of the nation is set by the religion. On the other hand, religious nationalism represents a specific example of the concept of

ethnic nationalism by replacing ethnicity with the religion. In this regard, despite existence of common points in their discourse or methods, these points can reflect their people in significantly different ways. However, at the final point, these two nationalisms can be brought and examined under the same or similar titles even if the effect, importance, role and goals of their change. The titles, which the thesis includes, are: religion; victimization; denial; social base; authoritarianism; othering, minorities and xenophobia; gender; the idea of Greater Serbia and the idea of Ottomanism.

In this context, this thesis, first of all, will deal with role and effect of religion in both Serb and religious nationalisms as the constitutive elements of them. While in religious nationalism religion emerges as the main constitutive element of both the nation and nationalism understanding; in Serbian nationalism, religion emerges as unifying element of the nation. Under this title, the thesis will basically focus on establishment process of the nations and nationalisms through religion and the role of nationalism on the relationship between state and religion. Secondly, the thesis will try to analyze the idea of Greater Serbia and the idea of Ottomanism as the touchstones of Serbian nationalism and AKP's religious nationalism. Then, it will analyze victimization as a unique and very effective political tool for both Serbian and religious nationalisms. Then, the thesis will examine denial discourse in both nationalisms. Here, will be seen that even though methods, goals and forms of denial discourse are very different in Serbian nationalism and Turkish religious nationalism, both of them use it a defense mechanism against which they want to protect and explain themselves. Then, the thesis will try to understand social bases of these nationalisms. After that, it will deal with authoritarianism as a common point of both nationalisms. Even though there is no direct relationship between authoritarianism and nationalism, both Serbia and Turkey are not, at least democratic regimes. Therefore, the thesis will try to understand the relationship between nationalism and authoritarianism in both countries. Here, the thesis will use different ways to explain the level and effect of authoritarianism in these countries due to current and rapid authoritarian shift of Turkey under the rule of AKP. Then, the thesis will focus on approaches

and attitudes of Serbia and Turkey toward minorities and foreigners with a nationalist perspective. Also, it will deal with othering as an essential part of discourses of leaders in both Serbia and Turkey. After that, this time it will examine approaches and attitudes of Serbian nationalism and religious nationalism toward woman and LGBTQ people one of the main targets of them. And in AKP, it will deal with the family as a significant concept of AKP's political understanding.

For this thesis, Serbian nationalism is chosen as one of the research areas because of two main reasons. Firstly, Serbian nationalism is an example from the Balkans which is influenced and damaged from nationalism even in the twenty-first century. In the Balkans, as an ethnically heterogeneous region, nationalism has its own specific dynamics and characteristics, that is why in a nationalism study, the Balkans should not be kept out of the question. In the Balkans, Serbia is especially chosen because Serbian nationalism has always been more dominant and effective than nationalism of other Balkan nations. Besides, through its concept and context Serbian nationalism emerges as strong as to change destiny of all the region. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbian nationalism did not lose its influence, this is another reason why the thesis is interested in it. In that sense, this thesis will try to address Serbian nationalism in Serbia after 2000 which is also a small gap in the literature.

Turkish nationalism, unlike Serbian nationalism, has several phases and approaches. Therefore, this thesis has to focus on one of these phases and approaches. In this regard, nationalism understanding of AKP is chosen, because the thesis would like to focus on today's nationalism rather than nationalisms which are discussed many times. Despite its nationalist character, AKP is not described a nationalist party by many people who consider nationalism only in classical and common sense. Also, in the politics of AKP, nationalism is tightly coupled with conservatism, even these ideologies can usually intertwine in the discourse of AKP. Even so, in this thesis both nation and nationalism understanding of AKP as the new official nationalism which impresses today's Turkey is preferred to study. The scope of this study is mainly nationalism. That

is why, it does not want and aim to emphasis on other ideological sources or political tendencies and steps of AKP. However, due to reasons which are mentioned above sometimes the thesis can cross the line of nationalism and refer to AKP as a whole.

The research will depend on primary sources and some secondary sources which are books, articles, reports, thesis, press articles, and other published documents. Also some reports and news from other media sources will be analyzed.

In the first chapter, this thesis is going to examine Serbian nationalism and nationalist discourse in the context of concepts which produce and influence them. In the second chapter, establishment and development of Turkish nationalism during AKP era is going to be analyzed. In that sense, second chapter is going to examine nationalist discourse of AKP. In conclusion, the thesis going to criticize Serbian nationalism as the most distinct characteristic which affect Serbian people and Serbia, in the context of its identity-based, authoritarian, aggressive and defensive discourse. And it is going to analyze how religious nationalism establishes Turkey's new nation and becomes the official nationalism of the country under the rule of AKP, in the framework of certain elements which strengthen it as a political discourse.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Benedict Anderson (2016) defines nation as “an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” in his famous book *Imagined Communities*. According to Ernest Renan, “nation is a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future.” (Renan, 1996) For Conor, “nation refers to a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group to share such a myth of common descent; it is, in a sentiment sense, the fully extended family.” (Conor, 1992) And Weber defines nation as “a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of

its own.” (Weber,1991) Eric Hobsbawm refers difficulty of defining the nation in his book *Nations and Nationalism* and argues that “nation is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the nation-state.” (Hobsbawm, 1992) He argues that nations must be analyzed in terms of political, economic, technic and other conditions and requirements. That is why, he states that nation is a “dual phenomena constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interest of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist.” (Hobsbawm, 1992) As Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner refers difficulty of defining the nation and qualifies nation as a contingency rather than a universal necessity in his book *Nations and Nationalism*. Even so, Gellner argues that about the nation 1) “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.” and 2) “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities.” (Gellner, 2006) Moreover, Anthony Smith, the leading theorist of the approach of ethno-symbolism, defines nation as “a named community of history and culture, possessing a unified territory, economy, mass education system and common legal rights.” (Smith, 1989)

As nation, the concept of nationalism is perceived and used in different meanings. Ernest Gellner defines nationalism as “theory of political legitimacy, requires ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state should not separate the power holders from the rest and therefore state and culture must now be linked.” (Gellner, 2006) As Gellner, Hobsbawm uses the term of nationalism in the meaning of “primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.” (Hobsbawm, 1992) According to Hans Kohn, “nationalism is a state of mind, permeating the large majority of a people and claiming to permeate all its members, it recognizes the nation-state as the ideal form of political organization

and the nationality as the source of all creative energy and of economic well-being.” (Kohn, 2005) For Carlton Hayes, nationalism can be defined as “a fusion of patriotism with a consciousness of nationality.” (Hayes, 2010) Furthermore, Anthony Smith defines nationalism as “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the autonomy, unity and identity of an existing or potential nation” (Smith, 1991) with an ethno-symbolist point of view. Also, according to Smith, “nationalism is a form of culture — an ideology, a language, mythology, symbolism and consciousness — that has achieved a global resonance and the nation is a type of identity whose meaning priority is presupposed by this form of culture.” (Smith 1991)

About source of nation and nationalism, mainly there are two different approaches in the literature. While primordial approach argues that nations comes first and then nationalism comes; on the other hand, constructivist/modernist approach asserts the contrary and argues that nationalism comes first and then creates the nation. Also, there is a third approach in between of these which is perennialism perceives the nations as the national outcomes of the ethnic nations/groups.

American philosopher Hans Kohn makes an important breakthrough on nationalism studies in his 1944 dated book *The Idea of Nationalism* and argues that there existed two brands of nationalism: one democratic and rational civic nationalism and the other one undemocratic and irrational ethnic nationalism. Kohn’s distinction is mainly based on geographical criteria and he uses the terms of Western nationalism and Eastern nationalism to define his typology. In the Western world, Kohn argues that, “nationalism is a political occurrence; it was preceded by the formation of the future national state.” (Kohn, 2005) That is why, he claimed that Western nationalism which based on the state and citizenship is nice and civic. On the other hand, he argues that in the Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia, “nationalism arose not only late, but also generally at a more backward stage of social and political development: nationalism, there grew in a protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern — not primarily transform in into a people’s state, but to redraw the political boundaries in



conformity with ethnographic demands.” (Kohn, 2005) That is why, Kohn regards Eastern nationalism which based on culture as nasty and ethnic.

Civic conception of nationalism is generally associated with French Revolution. As Seymour states “the concept of nation that characterizes civic form of nationalism is subjective and individualistic —hence voluntary— as it emphasizes the will of the individuals that compose it.” (Seymour et al., cited in Özkırmı, 2005) On the other hand, ethnic conception of nationalism is associated with German Romanticism which emerged as a reaction to Enlightenment. Ethnic nationalism, in contrast to civic one, emphasizes common descent and cultural sameness. According to ethnic nationalism, what gives unity to the nation and makes it home is pre-existing characteristics of the people like their language, religion, traditions and customs rather than shared rights. As Özkırmı (2005) states “ethnic nationalism claims that an individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen; hence membership in the nation is not a matter of will. It can only be acquired by birth, through blood.” Thus, nation understanding of ethnic nationalism is exclusive.

Based on Kohn’s typology, nationalism studies usually use ethnic and civic nationalism discrimination. Especially after the Cold War through the resurgence of nationalism in Europe, typology of Kohn “have been re-conceptualized as civic and ethnic nationalism respectively and based upon criteria of membership in the nation.” (Özkırmı 2005)

As Kohn, Montenegrin political philosopher John Plamenatz, name at birth was Jovan Petrov Plamenac, classifies nationalism as Eastern nationalism and Western nationalism in his 1973 dated article *Two Types of Nationalism*. Plamenatz (1973) describes Western nationalism as liberal, political nationalism. On the other hand, he describes Eastern nationalism as illiberal and cultural. Just like Kohn, Plamenatz explains Western nationalism through French and English nationalisms, while he explains Eastern nationalism through German and Italian nationalisms. However, maybe the most dangerous and fanatic version of Eastern nationalism is seen in his homeland, in the Balkans.

Today, the word of Balkan evokes the concepts of nationalism, ethnic nationalism and ethnic conflicts in many people. “Unlike Western Europe where nations lived in more or less homogeneous blocks, in the East they were jumbled in a way that added the word *macédoine* to the vocabulary of menu writers.” (Todorova, 2009)

“The primary characteristics of the life of Balkan people was the strong national direction, including the aim of the establishment of the independent, nationally based state.” (Jelavich, 1993) In the Balkans, even before the emergence of nationalism, nation imagination of groups are embodied around religious differences. Even though there is no clear distinctness between groups except churches which affiliated, emergence of proto-nationalism in the region is based on much earlier through religious ties. Hence Balkan nations emerged as nations whose linguistic and cultural differences have not been clear for a long time, whose geographical borders are controversial, and who have been intertwined in many ways and fed by religious differences. Besides, under the rule of empires, “once embarked on efforts to attain self-identity, the emerging Balkan nations tried to delineate boundaries between themselves and their rulers. This was done in a framework and rhetoric —the national— inherently incongruous with the imperial principle but more importantly, the dominant discourse in Europe. It was a national idea based mostly on ethnicity with a strong linguistic core.” (Todorova, 2009) With the influence of multi-national empires and the conflicts between these empire, these jumbled nations constituted the most fanatic examples of ethnic nationalism.

In this framework, Serbs distinguish as the Balkan nation whose nationalist sentiment is most developed. “The national origins of *Homo Serbicus* are traced in the later medieval period, a fact that confers legitimacy – apodicticity – to claims of a continuous presence in the region. The demarcation – cultural and physical – of the Serbian community revolves around the religious and linguistic medium.” (Mylonas, 2003) Even before emergence of nationalism, Serbs built a developed proto-nationalist identity through their strong religious identity and traditions even before and more than other Balkan nations. As Hobsbawm (1992) states, “there is

no reason to deny proto-national feelings to pre-nineteenth century Serbs, not because they were Orthodox as against neighboring Catholics and Muslims — this would not distinguish them from Bulgars — but because the memory of the old kingdom defeated by Turks was preserved in song and heroic story, and, perhaps more to the point, in the daily liturgy of the Serbian church which had canonized most of its kings.” Even, as Todorova (2009) states, in the memories of European itinerants, Serbs were described as people who are devoted to their liberty.

“In the Orthodox world, the Church, the ethnic community, and the state grow together.” (Perica, 2002) So, in this respect, the Serbian Orthodox Church takes an important place on the establishment and development of Serbian identity in such a way that as Perica (2002) expresses, “the Serbian Orthodox Church was a cultural and quasi-political institution, which embodied and expressed the ethos of the Serbian people to such a degree that nationality and religion fused into a distinct Serbian faith.” Furthermore, “the church’s identification with the medieval Serbian kingdom has since motivated territorial perceptions based upon historical claims. This close proximity between the national and spiritual content further enhances to unique and non-universal character of their union.” (Mylonas, 2003)

Even though the origins of Serbian nationalism based on the medieval Serbian Empire and principalities (and it should be noted that in the development of Serbian nationalism, heritage of the medieval Serbian Empire and principalities, which was preserved by the church as national institutions, matters), modern Serbian nationalism emerges and develops under the multi-national empires, which were the Ottoman Empire and the Austria-Hungary Empire and the multi-national states, which were the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. However, among Serbians, “the nationalization of the masses particularly intensified at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, reaching its peak on the eve of and during the Balkan wars when the Serbian establishment put a great deal of effort into developing the ideological

narratives that would legitimise territorial expansion throughout the Balkans.” (Malesevic, 2017)

“Like the Italian and German national idea in the nineteenth century, the Serb national idea of the time voiced the call for political and cultural unification of a nation.” (Pavkovic, 1994) Hence, Serbian nationalism can easily and clearly mark as an example of ethnic nationalism in Kohn’s typology.

In Turkey, unlike Serbian nationalism, nationalism does not progress in one way. Each political term and view create their own nationalism approach in accordance with their ideologies, priorities and point of views to state and nation. And moreover, each of them regards nationalism as a unique political tool to govern, and sometimes manipulate, the people and their political preferences. In Turkey, nationalism emerges as *sine qua non* of the politics. Even it may be considered as constituent and stable characteristic of Turkish politics, since the establishment of republic, even the Ottoman modernization period. Nationalism sometimes can intertwine with other political ideology which is dominant and determinant in Turkey, conservatism. Therefore, sometimes it can be supposed to disappear. However, even when it supposes as disappear, nationalism continues to influence politics as an irreplaceable factor. That is why, nationalism is usually seen even in left ideologies more or less. And in Turkish right, it establishes the main body of ideology, together with conservatism. As a result, in Turkey nationalism can easily change the shape but it never disappears in the mainstream politics and always continues to influence the destiny of Turkey. In 1980s and 1990s Turkish nationalism gained momentum correspondingly the regional developments. In this respect, Tanıl Bora (1998) has classified and analyzed the nationalism understandings of Turkey as follows: official nationalism or i.e., Atatürk nationalism, Kemalist ‘left’ nationalism, Turkish radical nationalism, liberal ‘new’ nationalism, and Islamist nationalism in his article *Nationalist Discourses in Turkey*. However, these nationalism approaches are not going to be analyzed in the scope of this thesis. This thesis is directly going to deal with religious nationalism of AKP as the new official nationalism of today’s Turkey.

Before to deal with nationalism understanding of AKP; if one examines the first decade of the 2000s in terms of nationalism, possible to say that struggle for hegemony between nationalism understanding of AKP and other nationalism understandings which against it has marked these years. In the 2000s, different nationalism understandings of the 1990s have unified against AKP and its nationalism understanding and have created the synthesis which is called as *ulusalcılık*. As Özkırmılı (2013) argues, the synthesis of *ulusalcılık*, which is Islamophobic and partly racist, was organized through anti-Westernism and obsession with laicism.

In 2011, as Özkırmılı (2013) states, AKP won the struggle for hegemony against the *ulusalcı*-wing. Among mainstream political parties, only MHP stays out of the synthesis of *ulusalcılık* due to not ideal but political and pragmatic concerns. And in this framework, AKP started to determine the new official nationalism of the state. Nationalism understanding of AKP can be described as religious nationalism in the general sense. Even though it emerges as a follow-up of Turkish religious nationalism, dominance and effect of it surpasses its predecessor due to political success of AKP which is turned it into new hegemonic power of Turkey.

Even though AKP represents religious nationalism in the scale of nationalisms in Turkey; nevertheless in its first term in government, between 2002 and 2007, AKP was distant from nationalism and nationalist policies in both theoretical and practical dimensions. Effects of nationalism in the political discourse of AKP have started to become evident in 2010s which called as “mastery period” by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. (Hürriyet Web, 3 April 2011) In 2011, after by-passing *ulusalcı* wing on a large scale (Özkırmılı, 2013), AKP started to establish its religious nationalism project within the state and society. And in 2015 after the election frustration of the party on June 7<sup>th</sup>, the level of nationalism in the politics and political discourse of AKP started to increase rapidly in a way which is more oppressive, discriminative and aggressive than religious nationalism which was adopted till that day.

In theoretical aspect, religious nationalism of AKP can be marked as ethnic nationalism in Kohn's typology because of two main reasons. First, Kohn (2005) describes ethnic nationalism through pre-existing characteristics of people like religion, traditions or ethnicity and his definition emphasizes culture as one of the constituents of ethnic nationalism even as much as ethnicity. Even though AKP is distant from ethnicity in its nation definition, it builds its religious nationalism on two other inherited characteristics which are directly marked by Kohn in his ethnic nationalism definition: religion and culture. That is why, as a nationalism which based on common descent and cultural sameness, religious nationalism of AKP can be clearly considered as an example of ethnic nationalism. Secondly, Kohn expresses that in an ethnic nationalism "nationalism grew in a protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern." (2005) And religious nationalism of AKP emerges against and in conflict with Atatürk nationalism which was the official nationalism of Turkey since the establishment of the republic. So, religious nationalism of AKP corresponds to the term of ethnic nationalism due to the conditions which build it up.

Özkırımlı names the nationalism understanding of AKP as "neoliberal conservative nationalism." In his 2013 dated column Özkırımlı analyzes the neoliberal conservative nationalism of AKP and describes it as a pragmatic, flexible and changeable approach at first. In the context of neoliberal conservative nationalism, AKP offers a powerful Turkey which integrated with the world through economic and political alliances with West. However, in the cultural dimension, conservative wing of nationalism steps in and AKP emphasizes Ziya Gökalp's synthesis (see in chapter 2.1) as the cultural source of the nation and nationalism. Furthermore, as a new hegemonic power, AKP re-defines and re-shapes the nation in terms of its ideology. And it builds the national identity over two main veins: Islam and the Ottoman past. And as an end, despite its all differences and claims of being new, AKP cannot abandon to use nationalist discourse which was used by previous governments and approaches.

According to Burak Cop (2012) nationalism of AKP is nourished from three sources: First one is *National Vision* and it is nationalism approach based on

Islam. Second one is Turkish-Islam synthesis which is a result of September 12. And the last (and currently the most dominant) one is Turkish right which comes from the DP to 2000s and its flag-azan nationalism.

Burhanettin Duran (2014) argues that AKP produces Muslim nationalism by establishing a pious Turkey. He interprets nationalism of AKP as a part of a civilization vision which aims to reach the ideal of New Turkey.

Gürkan Öztan (2013) describes “admissible” nationalism of AKP as a kind of neoliberal nationalism which based on “action” especially after 2007. According to Öztan, nationalism approach of AKP which is reconciled with the market economy, blends the discourse of advanced democracy with the symbols of banal nationalism. And it uses the religious and conservative patterns to ease the tensions of the system. That is why, it references to Islam as the unifying factor by defining the nation. In that sense, he is resembled nationalism approach of AKP with nationalism approach of Özal rather than the *National Vision*.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN POST-YUGOSLAV SERBIA**

The characteristics of Serbian peoples and Serbian states were strongly marked by the nationalism. Serbian nationalism, in many sense, has the characteristics of ethnic nationalism with strong religious effect. It can also be described as an aggressive, defensive, irredentist and even expansionist nationalism. In the chapter of Serbian nationalism, the thesis is going to try to analyze main characteristics and themes which influence and structure Serbian nationalism and its political discourses and tendencies. And it is also going to deal with point of view and attitude of Serbian nationalism in some specific issues.

At first, the thesis is going to deal with the role of religion in the establishment and development of Serbian nationalism. In this context, it is also going to interested in politics and religion relationships in Serbia in the light of nationalism which is a meeting point between secular politics and religion. Here, Kosovo issue is going to take an important place as religion-based issue at least at the emergence of it. As it is known, Kosovo issue is a unique mirror to reflect Serbian nationalism with its main characteristics.

Then, under the title of “the Idea of Greater Serbia”, the thesis is going to examines the Greater Serbia idea and its development within time as one of the touchstones of Serbian nationalism which also reflects its irredentist and aggressive point of view.

Serbs describe themselves as one of the most victimized nations of the Europe. Under the title of victimhood, sources of the idea of victimization and in this regard victimhood discourse of Serbian nationalism are going to be analyzed.

Then, denial is going to be discussed as one of the most prominent factors of nationalist discourse in Serbia since the war of Yugoslavia. The title of denial is also going to deal with normalization of violence and glorifying of war criminals in the country by the nationalist politicians as a result of denial discourse.

After the analyzing of social base of Serbian nationalism together with the reasons which are mainly characteristics and politics of the country, the thesis is



going to discuss authoritarian tendency of Serbian nationalism especially in the Milosevic period.

After that xenophobic tone of Serbian nationalist discourse is going to be examined in the framework of the minorities and other marginalized groups. And at the final stage, this thesis is going to analyze approach and attitudes of nationalist powers in Serbia towards woman and LGBTQ population. Here, the thesis tries to understand roles and positions of woman and LGBTQ people within the nationalist Serbian society.

### **1.1. RELIGION IN SERBIAN NATIONALISM**

According to Eric Hobsbawm (1992) “the links between religion and national consciousness can be very close” so much so that “conversion to different religions can help to create two different nationalities” as in the example of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy which divided Croats from Serbs, with whom they share a single language of culture. Thus, religion takes an important place on the origins of Serb national identity. “Two Serbian religious cults — the cult of St. Sava, the founder of the Church, and that of Kosovo martyrs and St. Tsar Lazar — probably provide the earliest defining marks of Serb national identity.” (Pavkovic, 1994)

“The medieval Serbian Empire founded after the Christianized Serbian principalities in the 11th and 12th century had won their independence from the Byzantine Empire.” (Krizan, 1994) “St. Sava was born in 1169 as Rastko, the third son to Nemanja, ruler of Ras, the forerunner of the medieval Serbian State. As a young prince he ran away from the royal court to become a monk Sava on Mount Athos where he founded the first Serbian monastery and began his endeavors for which he later acquired the title of the first Serbian Illuminator / Enlightener. With the remains of his father, the founder of the holy dynasty, Sava later returned to Serbia that Sava secured for the Serbian national Church from the enfeebled and exiled Byzantine Emperor, and Patriarch in Nicaea and became its first Archbishop. Moreover, St. Sava helped to restore Serbs, exposed both to

Roman Catholicism and the Bogomil heresy, to the bosom of the Orthodox Church.” (Aleksov, 2003) During the four centuries Ottoman domination, St. Sava myth, be called as the “Sun of Serbian heaven” was symbolized as the protector of Serbs and has kept alive the national spirit of Serbian identity against Turks. In the age of nationalism, the St. Sava cult re-emerge as the symbol of the liberation struggle of the Serbs. In the nineteenth century, St. Sava cult represents and reproduces the images of national golden age and denotes national unification and martyrdom for the Church and nation. Notably, in Yugoslavia, the construction of St. Sava Church as the national monument has been the symbol of the unification of all Serbs against communist suppression. Moreover, during the civil war period, “in connection with its mythologization and the idea of indelible bonds between the Serbian nation and Orthodoxy, the St. Sava cult has been one the ideological pretexts and criteria for ethnic cleansing.” (Bogomilova, 2005) In that during the Yugoslavia civil war religion gained a privileged position and considered as an inherent part of the culture and national identity. Furthermore, apart from all these the Millet system of the Ottoman Empire made religion crucial in the formation of national identities not only in Serbia but also in all Balkans.

In this day and age, after the dissolution of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, “from a highly secularized society, in which religion and religious institutions had been even more marginalized that in other parts of former Yugoslavia, over the course of only two decades Serbia has become a society with high rates of religious identification, while religion and Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) representing the major denomination, have gained a prominent place in public” (Drezgic, 2010) and political life. According to Rada Drezgic, the change in the position of religion and the Church has been in a gradual process that can be divided into two phases. In the first phase, in the late 1980s and the 1990s, there was a limited influence of religion and the Church over the politics and society; and in the second phase begins with the 2000s a tighter connection established between religion and politics as it can be seen on the issue of introduction of religious education in public schools in 2001. During the

Milosevic era, despite of reciprocal relationship between the Church and his leadership, even so, the national mobilization power of the religion; religious leaders did not completely forgive and support Milosevic regime due to his communist past and atheism, although they supported his politics of national mobilization.

On the other hand, Drezgic argues that “nationalism has always been the meeting point between secular politics and religion in Serbia and discuss the role of SPC within the nation state-project.” (Drezgic, 2010) After the fall of Milosevic on October 2000, a much tighter relationship established between the Church, the state, and the society; or as Rada Drezgic (2010) says “the instrumental pious nationalism of the 1990s was replaced by a model of religious nationalism after 2000.” “The new right in Serbia sees itself as the defender of Christian Orthodoxy, the harmony between church and the state, the nation, portrayed as servant of God, patriarchalism, and corporativism” (Tomic, 2013) as the overall worldview of the radical right. Notably Serbian Radical Party (SRS), Serbian right-wing organizations support the supremacy of Orthodox Christianity, and “uses religion to legitimize their claim to power.” (Drezgic, 2010) Especially, SRS as the main extreme right actor in Serbia, and its leader Vojislav Seselj explicitly “defend the privileged position of the Serbian Orthodox Church because of the historical connection between Orthodox Christianity and Serbian nationalism.” (Bakic, 2009) Moreover, the SRS supports xenophobic attitudes and hostility towards other churches and religious communities like the Catholic or Islamic. In another word, Islamophobia and “anti-Catholicism play a significant role in the ideology of the Serbian extreme right” (Bakic, 2009), such that they identify Muslims and Catholics, who use the same language as Serbs, as traitors to religion and nation. On the other hand, notably the Serbian Orthodox Church, “religious communities use nationalism for their own rehabilitation and reaffirmation” (Drezgic, 2010), in consequence of this reciprocal relationship nationalism is determined as the common project of the state and the SPC, and “despite the secular nature of the state being guaranteed by the Constitution, Orthodox Christianity is considered the state religion” (Dzombic, 2014) just like

Islam and the state relationship in Turkey. By 1990s, the state “instrumentalized religion and the Church in order to create a cohesive national body and to mobilize the population for its own political aims, it declined to support it on any other issue.” (Drezgic, 2010) On July 2001, as an indication of the shift from instrumental pious nationalism towards religious nationalism, religious education was introduced in public schools. During the coalition government of Vojislav Kostunica (2004-2007) the Church and the government are considered as national allies. In the politics of the conservative and populist government religion, the Church and family has played important roles; further the Law on Religion and Religious Communities and the Law against Discrimination passed by government with the direct influence of the SPC. “Extremist tendencies towards the clericalization of political life in Serbia were taking very different forms, ranging from the formation of the inferior St Sava Party to the prohibition of some theater performances and efforts to organize ‘synods of the clergy and laity.’” (Jaksic, 2001) As a result, the door that was kept ajar by Milosevic, was pulled open by the new authorities after he was removed from power.

“Most nations look at their past and identify particular events as defining moments in their national development.” (Bieber, 2013) In that sense, “the legend of Serbia’s defeat by invading Ottoman forces at the medieval Battle of Kosovo on June 28, 1389, has long occupied a special place in Serbian national memory.” (Greenawalt, 2001) “After the crucial defeat of the forces of the Serbian Knez Lazar Hrebljanovic by the Ottoman army in the field of Kosovo, the Serbian Orthodox Church introduced a cult of St. Tsar Lazar and the Kosovo martyrs.” (Pavkovic, 1994) The story of Kosovo was reframed corresponding to Biblical-Christological role-models and the battle itself was reconstructed and represented as a fateful loss of the Serbs.” (Suber, 2006) In that sense, the Kosovo myth has influenced the characteristics of Serbian nationalism within the framework of following ideas: the idea of martyrdom, the idea of betrayal and the idea of chosen people.

“According to the myth, on the eve of the battle, Knez Lazar was offered the choice between establishing either a heavenly or an earthly kingdom. Lazar chose

the former, which prevented his victory the following day but ensured the creation of a perpetual heavenly realm for the Serbian people.” (Bieber, 2013) In the case of Serbian nationalism, throughout the Ottoman rule and increasingly by the nineteenth century, the myth of St. Lazar and the Kosovo martyrs has been symbolized a moral victory of Christian Serbs over the Muslim Turks and kept their national spirit alive through support of the SPC and more importantly it has been the symbol of rebirth of the Serb national identity and unifying of the Serb nation through the national traditions. In 1892, the date of the battle was recognized as an official national day as the representation of martyrdom for the national liberty. Also, the Serbian Orthodox Church designates the day as the religious holiday, a feast day in commemoration of the St. Lazar and the Kosovo martyrs. “The medieval cults of St. Sava and Kosovo martyrs proved to be useful instrument for Serb self-identification” (Pavkovic, 1994) in the nineteenth century and thereafter remained in the background in spite of national unification dream of Serb nationalists till the year of 1981.

“Kosovo, both as a place and as a national idea, re-entered Serbian public consciousness in the aftermath of the protests of Kosovo Albanians in the spring of 1981,” (Bieber, 2013) as the phrase is in an overnight. These protests of Kosovo Albanians actually started with student demonstrations that demand better food service in Pristina erupted into a mass revolt to demand the status of a full republic for the autonomous province of Kosovo just like the Slavic nations of Yugoslavia. However, “such a claim was unacceptable to both Serbian officials and nationalist intellectuals,” (Guzina, 2003) thus Serbian Communist Party and the SPC perceived the protests as a threat to Serbian nationalist myths surrounding Kosovo and the history of the great Serbian medieval state. Most importantly, Serbian authorities regarded the protests as an ethnic threat to Kosovo Serbs, and “the Serbian media for the first time reported extensively on the migration of Serbs and Montenegrins from the province.” (Bieber, 2013) “Aftermath of the 1981 events was that Serbs and Montenegrins had been constantly emigrating from from Kosovo, particularly since the ‘Albanianisation’ of all instances of power in the province in 1966.” (Dragovic-Soso, 1998)

The ethnic polarization of Kosovo has revealed the debates of ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia for the first time but not the last. Furthermore, debates over the migration of Serbs and Montenegrins from the province made the 'genocide' a current issue for the first time in the public realm, in such a way that notably Serbian Communist Party, Serbian people used the term of genocide to describe the fate of these Kosovo Serbs, while Albanians described as "dispossession of ethnic Albanians and political terror." (Pestic, 1996) In 1986, prominent Serbian academics and intellectuals have been part of the issue as the result of a few years tension and a general dissatisfaction over the continuing economic and political decay, and "they sketch a manichean picture of irreproachable Serbs becoming victims of chauvinistic Albanians trying to achieve an 'ethnically pure' province of Kosovo." (Krizan, 1994) Especially, the Memorandum which is drafted by the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SANU) stated these sentences were referring to Kosovo, "The expulsion of the Serbian people from Kosovo bears dramatic testimony of their historical defeat. In the spring of 1981, the open and total war was declared on the Serbian people which had been carefully prepared for in advance various stages of administrative, political and constitutional reform. This open war has been going to almost five years. It is being waged with a skillful and carefully orchestrated use of a variety of methods and tactics, with the active and not just tacit support of various political centers in Yugoslavia, which they are taking no pains to conceal and which is more ruinous than the encouragement given by our neighbors. Moreover, we are still not looking this war in the face, nor are we calling it by its proper name. It has been going on now longer than the entire national liberation war fought in this country from April 6, 1941 to May 9, 1945." (the SANU Memorandum, 1986) in a manner that was going to be a source for Milosevic and his narratives on Kosovo, just as is seen from following sentences of him "Kosovo is not some imaginary legend of the past, but a real historical destiny that continues today." (Suber, 2006) or "After six centuries we are again engaged in the battles and quarrels. They are not armed battles, but this cannot be excluded yet." (Crampton, 2002) which was declared in the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo. Not so much three years after the

Memorandum, “the symbolic culmination of this process of mass mobilization took place with the sixcentenary of the battle in 1989” (Bieber, 2013) in the streets of Belgrade as one of main tools of political discourse of Slobodan Milosevic. “Since the changes of March 1989 Serbian nationalism was rampant and its primary objective appeared to be the subjugation of Kosovo with Milosevic’s moving swiftly to impose full Serbian control in the area.” (Crampton, 2002) Consequently, “in March 1989, Kosovo had been stripped of its autonomy in the course of controversial constitutional changes introduced by Milosevic in order to increase Serbian dominance within Yugoslavia.” (Bieber, 2013)

In the rest of the 1990s, almost all the political organizations in Serbia, including radical oppositions to Milosevic regime, have shared and promoted the same position on the issue of Kosovo in despite of their all discrepancies and divisions. Particularly the SRS led by Vojislav Seselj has developed more radicalized policies towards the Kosovo issue, under the influence of demographic obsession the SRS has offered ethnic cleansing and demographic engineering projects towards Albanians in Kosovo. The tension has increased throughout the 1990s and reached ahead by the February of 1998; from then on ethnic conflicts erupted into a war between Kosovo Albanians led by Kosovo Liberation Army, with the air support from the NATO, and the Armed Forces of Yugoslavia. On June 11, 1999, after the 78 days air strike of the NATO over Yugoslavia, “Slobodan Milosevic was compelled to agree to peace terms which seriously compromised Serbian sovereignty in Kosovo” (Ramet, 2000) However, in spite of the war and even the bombardment, Belgrade has continued to insist on maintaining its sovereignty in Kosovo; nevertheless the Kosovo war, so much the more the NATO bombardment have been a turning point in the mind of Serbian people, undoubtedly not in the positive way.

By the year of 2000, after the fall of Milosevic and the Kosovo war, both prominent and radicalized actors of the new Serbia have continued to protect their position on the issue of Kosovo, and the SPC has been their main supporter thanks to its mobilizing power and political influence over the society. On September

2006, while the Serbian Assembly was adopting a new constitution, bylaw on the Kosovo that is “Kosovo was and would remain an integral part of Serbia.” was passed; and at the end of October the constitution draft was approved by the 51.6 % of votes despite opposition of Kosovo Albanians. However, on February 17, 2008, Kosovo declared independence even though recognized by a great number of states, notably the US, the NATO and the EU. As might be expected Serbia has not recognized the independence of Kosovo together with Russia, Greece, Spain and some other states. In Kosovo after the Kosovo Parliament declared independence, 11 representatives of Kosovo Serbs boycotted the parliamentary session. On the other hand, in Serbia, “different approaches regarding negotiations about the final status of Kosovo notwithstanding, all major political parties insist on preserving the territorial integrity of Serbia, thereby keeping the Kosovo issue unresolved and open to political manipulation.” (Drezgic, 2010) Nevertheless, the same day, the Serbian Parliament confirmed the government decision and refused the illegal declaration of independence. On February 17, 2008, just after that independence of Kosovo, the Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica stated that “Belgrade would never recognize its independence in any way, referring to Kosovo an ‘artificial state’ and insisting it would remain part of Serbia”, and “the Serbian Minister of Economy Mladen Dinkic stated that Serbia was once again descending into collective madness.” (Vetta, 2009) Also, soon afterward the proclamation of independence of Kosovo, ‘Kosovo is Serbia’ protests were organized notably in Belgrade in the all Serbia with the participation of the PM Vojislav Kostunica and other prominent political elites. At the midnight of February 26, the protests escalated into street riots; “shops being looted, cars being burned and embassies being damaged, 150 people were injured and one person killed in the streets of Belgrade.” (Vetta, 2009) In the sequel of street riots, the Minister of Infrastructure Velimir Ilic stated that “smashing a few embassy windows is a ‘democratic’ response to these countries act of robbing us of fifteen percent of our territory ... they have to be taught that is democracy as well.” (Vetta, 2009) So, when one thinks regarding understanding general point of view of Serbian people and political elites, Theodora Vetta argues that “followed the



proclamation of Kosovo independence all point to the same: nationalism is back.” (2009)

Religion in Serbia is a divisive, not a unifying force since the emergence of Serbian nationalism over the religion. Religion played an important part in the formation of the Serb nation and “became closely identified in each case with the concept of nationhood.” (Alexander, 1983) In Serbian case, religion emerges as the distinctive element between the nations, thereby the origins of the historical problem between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs also based on the religion and turned into ethno-national within time. On the other hand, “territory is one way in which we see tensions between religion and politics plays out.” (May et al., 2014) Therefore, territory can symbolize more than a delineated geography on both national and religious terms as in Serbian example through Kosovo issue.

## **1.2. THE IDEA OF GREATER SERBIA**

The Greater Serbia is one of the touchstones of Serbian nationalism that reveals its irredentist, dominant, aggressive character directly. Origins of the Greater Serbia ideology, which basically aims unification of all Serbs within a great Serbian state, based on the first written sources of modern Serbian nationalism. Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic, famous philologist and founder of the Serbian literature and literary language, expresses early signs of the Greater Serbia with the sentence of “All and everywhere are the Serbs.” (Krizan, 1994) in his 1838 dated linguistic essay. Karadzic describes Serbness through the language and argues that all Southern Slavs who used the same language, without regarding the religion, historical or ethnic considerations, are Serbs. On that sense, Karadzic’s linguistic model of national identification comprises everyone who lives in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, even in Dalmatia and Slovenia and regards as the first signs of the Greater Serbia ideology. Nevertheless, for the first time, the Greater Serbia ideology was directly asserted by Ilija Garasanin, a Serbian politician, in his 1844 dated book *Nacertanje* (Draft).

In *Nacertanje*, Garasanin advocates “expansion of Serbia at the costs of its

western neighbours and the Ottoman Empire” (Krizan, 1994) for the purpose of Serb liberation and unification. He justifies expansionism as ‘holy historical right’ of Serbian people and by the splendour of medieval Serbia.

While the borders of the Greater Serbia were not clearly drawn, hypothetical borders of the Greater Serbia include territories in modern-day Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and FYR Macedonia. Even in some approaches territories expand in a way to include some parts of Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary.

**Map 1.1**



Source: Tromp, N. (2006). Prosecuting Slobodan Milosevic: The unfinished trial. New York: Routledge.

“Serbia entered the WWI with the aim of bringing together all Serbs and

Serbian lands, including those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Vojvodina.” (Pesic, 1996) “The Serbian government under Nikola Pasic was not an ardent champion of South Slav unity, but it did wish to acquire the lands that it regarded as ethnically Serbian.” ( Jelavich, 1993) However, in the official sense, it defined its war goal as the united struggle of all Balkan Slavs for the purpose of creation of a Balkan Slav federation. Indeed, at the end of the war, Serbia realized that the only way of permanent solution of Serbian national question is the establishment of Yugoslavia under the leadership and dominance of Serbs. Accordingly, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was established in December, 1918, in consequence of the culmination of protracted negotiations that had been carried on during the war, and the evolution of Serbian policy. However, “to the Serbian leaders the new South Slav state was simply the culmination of the long line events leading to national unity.” (Jelavich,1993) Therefore, “they saw no need to adapt their institutions and their political convictions to their new partners.” (Jelavich, 1993)

In the WWII, even though Chetniks have fought to create ethnically pure Greater Serbia, they were defeated by Tito’s Partisans at the end of the war. In the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia “two distinct nationalist policies have struggled for primacy in debate over the country’s political future: Croatian separatism striving for an independent state and Serbian centralism striving to preserve to common Yugoslav state under its dominion.” (Pesic, 1996) In the second Yugoslavia, Serbia defined as a state-constitutive nation together with Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbs were overrepresented in the federal organs of power that were administration, military, and police. However Serbia perceived Yugoslavia as a vehicle for Serbian domination and strong, centralized communist order was regarded as a way to unify all Serbs in one state. As Dejan Guzina (2003) states, “Yugoslavism came to be perceived as a Serbian attempt to blur the distinction between Yugoslavia and Serbia at the expense of interests of other republics.” As a result, an idea of Serbian Yugoslavism occurred differently from socialist Yugoslavism. Dobrica Cosic, the father of Serbian nation, “criticized Serbian Yugoslavism as a means of ‘establishing the privilege of their

(Serbian) language and the assimilation of smaller nations; unification for them is never the superseding of their own Serbdom.” (Guzina, 2003)

During the 1950s and 1960s, there was a “dynamic tension between centralization and federalization in institutionalized decision making, especially in matters of investment allocations; in an oversimplified but understandable fashion, the issue came to be likened to the prewar polarization between the Serb penchant for hegemony and anti-Serb, Croat-led wish for autonomy; and whether socioeconomic development would be best served by capitalizing on the advantages of the country’s relatively advanced northern half or by promoting the underdeveloped southern half.” (Rothschild, 1989)

“The revival of the Serbian question to the evolution of Titoist system in the 1960s and 1970s, with its new emphasis on the federal units and specific national cultures as opposed to the Yugoslav state as a whole and a notion of Yugoslav unity.” (Dragovic-Soso, 1998) The 1974 Constitution, as Tito’s one of most significant decentralization policies, altered the character of Yugoslav federation and decreased Serbian influence in the country more or less. The 1974 Constitution gave six federal republics and Serbian provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, the status of the nation-state in terms of legislative or executive powers and such crucial matters such as defense, and foreign policy. However the constitutional amendment caused ending of the sovereignty of the Serbian republic at the borders of the autonomous provinces.

More importantly, due to decentralization, the status of Serbian nation emerged as problem in the Yugoslav federation as a whole. In the 1970s, almost 15 percent of Croatian population, and 38 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina population were constructed by Serbs, that is how Serbs were overrepresented in the party, and country despite the institutional weakness of the Republic of Serbia. However, extension of equal status to the republics and autonomous provinces changed the balance to the detriment of Serbs. The principle of ‘one republic, one vote’ neutralized the ethnic votes of Serbs in both Croatia, and Bosnia Herzegovina and its autonomous provinces Kosovo, and Vojvodina. That is to say, as Guzina (2003) summarizes “by elevating republics to the status of nation-

states, the architects of the constitutional amendments were promoting state-based nationalisms that acted primarily against the interests of the Serbs, of whom almost 40 percent lived outside the borders of Serbia proper.” From the perspective of Serbian Yugoslavism, Mihailo Duric<sup>1</sup>, stated that “It is obvious that the borders of the present Socialist Republic of Serbia are neither national nor the historic borders of the Serbian nation... The Serbian nation lives in four of the five other republics, but not in one of these republics can it live its own life... In a moment when the Serbian people... must again establish its own nation-state, can the Serbian people be indifferent to its other parts outside the present borders of the Socialist Republic of Serbia?” (Guzina, 2003) As a result, as Vujacic (1996) said “old Yugoslavia had attempted to be a Serb national state; in the new Yugoslavia the Serbs received only national equality and tended to think themselves as oppressed.” and this perception of oppression blazed up the Greater Serbia idea through the ‘fathers and grandfathers’ rhetoric among the Serbian nation. In the late 1980s, the rhetoric of ‘fathers and grandfathers’ grew louder through the SANU Memorandum and in 1990s could be considered as the only option among the Serbian nationalists.

The 1986 SANU Memorandum was perceived as a source for a better future through Serbian unity by frustrated Serbs. Some parts of the Memorandum had characteristics of the call for an ethnically pure Greater Serbia against victimization of the Serbian nation. “By offering statistical evidence of the large numbers of Serbs living outside the physical borders of Serbia, the Memorandum called on the disparate Serbs to unite as a people, grounding this call to action in evidence of grand plot against Serbia from a variety of factions through Yugoslavia.” (Morus, 2007) So much so that, the Memorandum re-defined Serbia with Vuk Draskovic<sup>2</sup>’s words that is “Serbia is wherever there are Serbian graves.” (Morus, 2007)

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<sup>1</sup> A prominent Serbian academician at the University of Belgrade’s Law School, and member of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

<sup>2</sup> Serbian writer, the leader of Serbian Renewal Movement, the Foreign Minister of Serbia and Montenegro (2004-2007)

“The various post-1990 approaches to the question of Serb national goals and ideals could be roughly classified into four distinct groups: 1) federalist Yugoslavism; 2) integral Yugoslavism; 3) broad Serbism; 4) narrow Serbism (or Serbia first). Each of these approaches offers a distinct evaluation of the post-1914 historical experience of the Serbs and, on the basis of its evaluation, proposes or suggests what the Serb national goals should be.” (Pavkovic, 1994)

The Federalist Yugoslavism, that was defended by Dobrica Cosic and his colleagues, argues that the Serbs should constitute the largest federal unit due to its numerical superiority over the other nations. In spite of this, the federalist concept guarantees democracy and protects both national diverse composition and diversity of national interests and federal of units. Integralist Yugoslavism, by contrast with the federalist concept, claims that “the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes (and by implication Macedonians and Bosnian Muslims) form one nation, does not allow for the diversity of national interests within the state.” (Pavkovic, 1994)

The integralist concept, which was also supported by the SRS, uses religion as the base of national identity. The concept of Broad Serbism, find Yugoslavism wrong because it argues that Serbs have wasted their national energy and élan in attempting to preserve Yugoslavia, which was not their national state, instead of endeavoring their own national state. The broad Serbism aggrandizes the victimization of Serbs and offers the unification of Serbs, and the establishment of Serbian national state but without corporate neither the Serb- populated part of Croatia nor the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The narrow Serbism argues the idea of Serbia first. The narrow Serbism defends the interests of people of state of Serbia without considering peripheral Serbian interests. Because it accuses Serbs who live outside of Serbia with hypocrisy and claim that Serbia should concentrate its own state instead of heeding Serbs outside of Serbia. However, despite their all differences, all four approaches agree that Serbs were exposed the political and cultural oppression by Yugoslav Communist Party after the WWII. And all of them argue the necessity of political restoration and at least cultural unity to the Serbs.

Throughout the 1990s, both Milosevic and the opposition parties, including the SRS, have called for the unifying of Serbs and the Greater Serbia. Even, “Milosevic’s policy was criticized by some opposition parties due to his failure to fulfill his and their dream about a victorious Serbia, a strong Greater Serbia.” (Jaksic, 2001)

In the 2000s, the idea of Greater Serbia has been continued to defend by the extreme right and nationalist organizations. For example, in 2007, extreme right organizations Blood&Honor and *Nacionalni stroj* (National Order) planned ‘March for the unity of Serbia,’ but the march failed as a result of the strong resistance of citizens, and anti-fascist organizations.

“In modern political usage irredentism has come to mean any territorial claim made by one sovereign national state to lands within another. These claims are generally supported by historical and/or ethnic arguments.” (Mayall, 1990) Ernest Gellner (2006) says that “nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones.” When ethnic (and historical) boundaries cut across the political one, as in Serbian case, nationalism can easily turn into irredentist one and produces irredentist policies, which is supported with ethnic and historical reasons, as the idea of Greater Serbia.

### **1.3.VICTIMIZATION**

“Victimhood nationalism is a working hypothesis to explicate competing national memories over the historical position of victims in coming to terms with the pasts.” (Lim, 2010) The theme of victimization and as the consequence of that grievance are the most significant features of Serbian nationalism; such that as can be seen in the rest of the chapter, Serbs are described themselves as the most victimized nation of the Europe since the WWII. Especially the SANU Memorandum, as the one of main ideological sources of the contemporary Serbian nationalism, gives wide coverage to enemies of the nation and victimization stories. However, in advance of that the 1974 Constitution of

Yugoslavia could be considered as the first source of the victimization theme of Serbian nationalism. Because, “according to the constitution Serbia was not a sovereign negotiating party like the other republics because of the sovereignty of its two provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina.” (Pestic, 1996) This meant that in ethno-demographic terms, Serbian could have right to speak for only 42% of the Serbs living in Serbia, and Serbian influence over the Yugoslavia was decreasing; because the 1974 constitution, the republics and provinces were on equal footing regarding rights and duties. Thus, the Serbs have described themselves as only Yugoslav nation has no state of its own. Besides, ethnic polarization of Kosovo lead to increase of threat and enemy perception within the Serbian society and they started to regard the people are from other Yugoslav republics as the enemy of the Serbs.

In Serbia, the broad coalition of nationalist and conservative parties led by the Communist Party did not hesitate to manipulate the ethnic threat and enemy perception of the society and defined it as the national threat for legitimization of right to defense. “The basic emotion upon which Serbian national identity was built was the enmity of other Yugoslav people,” (Pestic, 1996) just as it can be seen in the words of, father of the Serbian nation and the first President of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Dobrica Cosic: “The enemies of the Serbs made Serbs Serbs.” So, in the circumstances, the SANU Memorandum brought the paranoid Serbian victimization and grievances against other Yugoslav nations to the top. “Within the Memorandum, each slight against Serbia is portrayed as a part of historical trajectory, each flowing the last, as if history were single seamless narrative featuring the Serbs as tragic, martyred heroes.” (Monus, 2007) Initially, in the context of the Memorandum, Yugoslavia is described as a Serbian delusion. According to this understanding, “Serbs were naively duped into accepting Yugoslavism and the fraternal bond of its other nations, while those ‘brothers’ were continually building their ethno-national state on the bones of dead Serbs who fought in wars of liberation.” (Pestic, 1996) In that sense, the writers of the Memorandum argue that only Serbs love Yugoslavia and fight for it, while the other anti-Yugoslav nations sacrificed it for their own national interests. Thus,



they reflected themselves betrayed by their brother nations during and after the wars. So, as Dragovic-Soso (1998) states “the Memorandum is significant in that it represents a repository of all the various standards of the new Serbian nationalism — the historical vision of the Serbs as a victim nation, the ‘destiny of genocide’, the national claim to Kosovo and the deep sense of betrayal by other Yugoslavs — in one 40 pages text.”

As it is explained in detail in the first part of the Memorandum, the prominent Serbian intellectuals and academics assert that Serbia was economically exploited by Croatia and Slovenia. They accused Croatia and Slovenia for its economic backwardness and argues that Serbia was oppressed and neglected due to economic domination of Croatia and Slovenia. The SANU Memorandum described Serbs as the losers, because they are the only nation that does not have a state proper in despite of their war victories. And Serbs explain that with this well-known sentence: “Serbs, we are always winning the war, but always losing the peace.” “It presented the status of Serbia and the Serbian nation as one of inequality, resulting from the ‘comintern legacy’ and historical depiction of Serbs as ‘oppressors’, ‘unitarists’, ‘centralists’ or ‘policeman’ of other Yugoslavs nations.” (Dragovic-Soso, 1998) Moreover, the Memorandum asserts that Serbs are exposed the hatred and the conspiracies of the League of Communist Yugoslavia and all other Yugoslav nations, and a ‘Serbophobia’ has increased wide layers of other nations particularly Slovenians, Croatians and Albanians. The Memorandum even argues that Macedonia Communist Party have committed ethnocide against Serbs who lived in Macedonia, in a sense Macedonized them.

The most remarkable assertion of the Memorandum is that Serbs are exposed the genocide. The genocide assertion was renewed in a variety of ways and used as a political tool to provoke fair and ethnic clashes by the Serbian politicians; but the most significant one was the Ustashe (the Croatian regime during the WWII) atrocities against Serbs. According to that, “genocide was committed against Serbs during the WWII in Kragujevac and Kraljevo by Germans and in the Croatian concentration camp in Jasenovac.” (Mehler, 2012) Furthermore, the Albanian Muslims of Kosovo demonized by linking the Kosovo myth to the

WWII, and the Albanian Muslims of Kosovo were described with the global devil term 'Nazi.' Accordingly, they were mythicized the anti-Nazi Serbian resistance during the WWII, and they identified Serbs with the Jews of the WWII; consequently, the Serbian nationalists argued that "just as the Jews had been, and that, like the Jews in Israel, the Serbs now fighting a fundamentalist Muslim terror for the historic claim to their ancestral land in Kosovo and Bosnia." (Morus, 2007) So much so that some of them, such as The Serbian Defense League which was a extremist group, marked Serbs as the main and biggest victim of the WWII, and accused the Jews stealing the Serbian genocide. In the 1988, a group of prominent Serbian intellectuals formed the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Society for strengthening Serbian-Jewish relationship with regard to their historic victimization. Inspired by these contexts put forth in the Memorandum, through the rest of the 1980s, pamphlets, films, posters were distributed by favor of the major newspapers and television with the theme of Serbian genocide both ethnically and culturally. Actually, the main aim was the national unification under the roof of ethnically pure Greater Serbia, because the genocide assertion increased the ethnic tension between Croat and ethnic Serbs living in Croatia. At that point, the use of demonizing terms like 'genocide,' 'assimilation,' 'annihilation' with the assertion that Serbs have lost their identity have been the pretext for legitimizing of the Greater Serbia argument. In this regard the Memorandum stated that: "The establishment of the Serbian people's complete national and cultural integrity, regardless of which republic or province they might be living, is their historical and democratic right. The acquisition of equal rights and an independent development for the Serbian nation have a more profound historical significance. In less than fifty years, for two successive generations, the Serbs were twice subjected to physical and annihilation, forced assimilation, conversion to a different religion, cultural genocide, ideological indoctrination, denigration, and compulsion to renounce their own traditions because of an imposed guilt complex." (the SANU Memorandum, 1986) So much so that the Memorandum asserted that "the 'promised land' of Greater Serbia

rested on no less a moral foundation than the right of the Jewish people to the state of Israel since both peoples were history's victims." (Morus, 2007)

The self-victimization used as a legitimizing discursive strategy for mobilization of Serbian nationalism during the 1990s and is still present in the extreme right argumentation. In April 1994, in the paper presented at the Second Congress of Serbian Intellectuals, from this once the West described as the one of main enemies of the Serbs and this anti-Western sense has increased especially by the effect of Kosovo war and the civil war. According to Veselin Duretic, a prominent Serbian historian and member of Congress, "the most nefarious of Serbia's enemies are the West, the Vatican, the Comintern, and, above all, their 'agents' among the Serbs. (Serbian rudiment, 'rootless cosmopolitans', 'anti-Serbs', 'domestic aliens etc.')" (Guzina, 2003) The statement of Duretic is proved that the terms of agents and domestic aliens are the most prevalent, manageable and effective arguments of nationalist discourse for manipulating citizens in the whole world without noticing the nation or country. In 1997 two documents published by prominent Serbian academics and intellectuals with the support of Patriarch Pavle, *the Declaration Against Genocide Committed Against the Serbian People* and right after *Second Declaration on Terminating the Proceedings of the Hague Criminal Tribunal Against Dr. Radovan Karadzic*. The first document which also signed by some of the highest government official in after Milosevic Serbia stated that "Throughout their history, they were subjected to the most severe forms of genocide and exodus, which were endangering their survival and they were always defending their survival, their spirituality, culture and democratic conviction ... During all those events, Serbs the Serbs were on the side of humanism; they were defending not only themselves, but also as a bulwark against the invasions and extermination of other peoples. Since the early medieval times, in their struggle against the Turks, Serbs, together with their rulers and church dignitaries, were the last bastion of defense of Europe against the Turkish invasion and the breakthrough of the Islam ... In the process of destruction of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbs endured the greatest sufferings and expulsion from their historical lands in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

During that period, Serbs were exposed to physical destruction and spiritual genocide. The history of the Serbian people shows, and will show, the magnitude of its spirituality to every impartial person, both today and in the future.” (Javanovic, 2001) On the other hand, the second document was identified Dr Radovan Karadzic with whole Serbian people, just like the well-known method that is used by undemocratic ideologies for example, “*Ein volk, ein Reich, ein Führer*”<sup>3</sup> slogan of Nazi Germany, and regarded pressure on Karadzic as pressure on the whole Serbian people, fate of Karadzic as the fate of the whole Serbian people. Also, the document described Radovan Karadzic as the protector of Serbs and a national hero who fought against chauvinism and local patriotism. Besides these, by the year of 1993 Serbia acquired a new enemy, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

In the rest of 1990s and 2000s the ICTY was regarded as the main victim of Serbia also in behalf of the US and the Europe. The nationalistic perspective of Serbia views Serbs as victims, and others particularly the ICTY as victimizer. Even in 2006, one deputy of Serbian Radical Party “described the ICTY as ‘great evil for the Serbs’, another called it a ‘political monster.’” (McMahon and Forsythe, 2008) However, through 2000s the most remarkable discussions about victimization held in the parliamentary sessions on the declaration condemning the 1995 massacre of Srebrenica in 2010. During the parliamentary debates not only Srebrenica or war crimes were discussed, but also crimes committed against Serbs were handled at least as much as the other. “Most concepts of transitional justice are used in a double way: active, with Serbs as the actor, and passive, with Serbs as the victim” (Mehler, 2012) as the central dynamic of the Serbian discourse. The equality of victims was the main theme of parliamentary debates, the deputies argued that crimes committed against Serbs did not draw much attention and were covered by the international media due to the isolationist policy of Slobodan Milosevic and cooperation of Yugoslav state institutions with the ICTY. So much so that the representatives of the Democratic Party of Serbia,

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<sup>3</sup> “One people, one nation, one leader”

New Serbia, the Serbian Radical Party and the Serbian Progressive Party, that is to say all the political parties in the Parliament except the Liberal Democratic Party, demanded a common declaration on all crimes committed during the Yugoslav wars instead of a separate declaration on Srebrenica, they argued that “a separate declaration on Srebrenica should not be adopted, as this would marginalize and discriminate against Serbian victims.” (Mehler, 2012) Apart from the accusation of Bosniaks, the Croatian genocidal campaign against Serbs was also upheld during the debates. The deputy of New Party Velimir Ilic was interpreted the “Storm Military Operation” which executed by Croatian armed forces in August 1995 to gain control of territory that was occupied by Serbs since 1991 and stated that “Why are crimes that happened during ‘Operation Storm’ less important? Can there be a greater genocide than driving a nation from one country to another and, when they have left this country, to bomb their convoys, to massacre the weak and children, to disperse the convoy with planes?” (Mehler, 2012)

As a consequence, it is possible to say that the narrative of Serbian victimhood went into the politics as the discourse of facing the past. Because as Lim (2010) states “once we put dichotomy of victimizers and victims in national term, the victimhood become hereditary and thus consolidates the national collective beyond generations.”

#### **1.4. DENIAL AND NORMALIZATION OF VIOLENCE**

In politics, victimization and denial considered as behavior patterns of people and parties who have committed crimes. Stanley Cohen classifies the political denial under three titles: “honest declarations based on what the person making the denial believes to be truth; outright lying in order to avoid admitting what the person in question knows to be truth; and something in between, in which a combination of selective perception, selective recollection, and selective interpretation all combine in order to block the recognition of information which the person in question cannot bear.” (Ramet, 2007) The third approach of Cohen

calls as “the denial syndrome” by Sabrina Ramet (2007); and is used to explain behavior pattern of Serbian nationalism since the outbreak of Yugoslav wars in 1991 in two senses: both denial and escapism. Serbian nationalism which is defensive and xenophobic in its nature reflects Serbs as innocent, cleansed of all guilt and according to Ramet “the denial syndrome creates a powerful concoction in which the society is able to escape into mythic reality in which a people are portrayed as simultaneously heroic and victimized.” (2007) Also, when we regard denial a universal defense mechanism, this directly coincides with the defensive characteristic of Serbian nationalism. On the other hand, denial has seen as the way of constructing a guilt-free nation and reflect it as a victim against enemies despite all complexities and wrongs of itself; and it rescues the nation from taking responsibility before the people and history. Furthermore, denial has seen as one the best ways of propaganda and manipulation especially by Milosevic type leaders. However maybe most importantly denial paves the way for normalization of violence; because if somewhere there is no guilt, then there is no guilty there, and everything that happen can be justified as normal or defense.

Again, in Serbian case, the first obvious examples of denial and normalization of violence seen in the SANU Memorandum. The Memorandum called Serbs taking actions, including violent actions, against Albanians or Croats and normalized this under the pretext of defense. On the other hand, the tone and language of the Memorandum normalized ethnic hatred and violence in Serbia. In the 1990s came Serbian nationalism has chosen two discourses to explain what happens: either deny or when they could not deny legitimizing. For example, when they could not deny the ethnic massacres, they see the wars as a legitimate way of preventing Yugoslavia from dissolution. According to Nenad Dimitrijevic, in Serbian case “even more troublesome is that the denial of criminal, political, moral or material responsibility for the recent crimes appears to be at the core of the official attitude to Serbia’s past.” (2008) For example, after the May 1992 Sarajevo breadline massacre and the February 1994 Sarajevo Market Square bomb, Radovan Karadzic, the leader of Bosnian Serbs, not only denied the facts or responsibility but also “accused Bosniaks of bombing themselves to gain

international sympathy.” (Morus, 2007) Especially, the Srebrenica massacre has regarded as one of the most polemical issues in the Serbian past; many people in Serbia preferred to totally ignore it, but when it came to the point where it could not be ignored or denied, it was legitimized as a defense or national interests than a mass crime. Even 2010, the Declaration Condemning the Crime in Srebrenica was on the table it caused ideological and political divisions in Serbia, neither politicians nor most of the public did not recognize it as it is, a mass crime.

By 2000s, denial tradition of Serbian nationalism has been continued by the extreme right organizations, “on the one hand they fiercely deny well-documented and proven war crimes conducted by Serbian military and paramilitary forces during the wars, and on the other hand, they glorify Serbian war criminals and their actions against civil population during the 1990s.” (Dzombic, 2014) Actually, the glorification of indicted war crimes arose with the rehabilitation of Drama Mihalovic’s Chetniks of WWII. However, the effort to rehabilitate the Chetniks, even identified them with Partisans, preceded the outbreak of Yugoslav wars and has continued throughout the 1990s particularly by the pro-monarchist Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO). Thought the 1990s “the SPO organized annual pilgrimages to Ravna Gora, the mythic birthplace of Mihailovic’s Chetniks, and continued to demand the official rehabilitation of the Ravna Gora Chetniks.” (Ramet, 2007) During the 2000s, the same glorification and rehabilitation policies have pursued through the war criminals of Yugoslav wars, particularly the ICTY indictees Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic by almost all of the far-right organizations. For example, one of these organizations, the Serbian Defense League, includes the following tribute to indicted war criminals Mladic and Karadzic in its website: “We salute the last of Serb heroes! Gen. Ratko Mladic... and Dr. Radovan Karadzic... led Bosnian Serbs in their fight for survival; we thank the great men for their sacrifice with a hope that our pages will strike a spark of inspiration for future generations.” (Ramet, 2007) In Serbia, songs, and poems composed to celebrate them, children named after Ratko and Radovan, the websites posted in honor of these national heroes. Furthermore, an opinion poll conducted in 2004 indicated that almost two out of three of Bosnian

Serbs regarded Karadzic still as a national “hero-as-fighter-against-the-odds” (Ramet, 2007), not a war criminal. However, the perception of national heroes did not only belong to ordinary people; also the government rejected to fully cooperate with the ICTY in respect to extradition of Mladic and Karadzic to the ICTY. Moreover, they have been protected by Serbian authorities, including the government, army and secret service quite a while. Even the assassination of the PM Zoran Djindic in 2003 was correlated with the promise he gave about the extradition of war criminals to the Hague.

The role of denial in the Serbian nationalist discourse proves the “where denial is present, it masks a complex ethnographic reality” (2013) sentence of Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik. As she expresses “all groups can use the same mechanisms of denial such as justification, minimization and rationalization.” (Obradovic-Wochnik, 2013) And these mechanisms of denial bring normalization of violence along. Particularly in aggressive and defensive nationalisms, like Serbian nationalism, violence can be easily perceived as normal, especially during or after the wars and conflicts.

## **1.5. SOCIAL BASE OF SERBIAN NATIONALISM**

Nationalism, together with being an ideology that spreads throughout the Serbian nation, should also be considered on the social groups that constitute the basis of this ideology and their characteristics. Sabrina P. Ramet (1996) explains the characteristics of Serbia with ‘idiocy of rural life’ term of Karl Marx. She argues that “the mobilization of the countryside has direct consequences for political discourse about national values and that in time of crisis, the ‘conservatism’ of the countryside has the potential to assume an aggressive, offensive posture.” (Ramet, 1996) In Ramet’s article (1996) she uses the term of ‘idiocy of countryside’ in two sense: First one is the idiotic concerns of countryside for its own values, and in that sense Ramet evaluates mobilization of countryside is a danger because she argues that “leaders will see the nation as the village-writ large, and adopt the mores of the village as their model for the



nation.” (Ramet, 1996) In the second sense of the term of ‘idiocy of countryside,’ Ramet defines the countryside in opposition to the city.

Considering Serbia case, she describes Serbia’s character as rural both in social and cultural terms; and argues that despite communist regime’s endeavors for imposing the city values on Serbian culture, together with Milosevic era countryside, that was represented by the new regime, predominated over the city. And she also explains rising of nationalism with resurgent of rural perceptions and rural values and describe countryside as “the true heart of nationalism” that “tends to be more concerned about threats to the nation.” (Ramet, 1996) Indeed, Serbian myths and history are originated the Serbian nation among the Serbs of rural Kosovo. And we also know that Serbia was late in experiencing industrialism and economic development, and as the most remarkable point, Serbia (including Kosovo and Vojvodina) is the country that had the highest proportion of total population engaged in agriculture among Yugoslav republics until the early 1980s. In the circumstances, when Serbian nationalism considered, rural character of its is noticed especially against city values that were represented by the Titoist regime. Even in the 1980s, the re-emergence of Kosovo issue as an ethnic conflict, first time among rural Kosovo Serbs, may be considered as the turning point of Serbs to their rural origins and the Serbian national re-awakening. On the other hand, Ramet stated that “polls taken by various agencies have repeatedly shown that Milosevic’s electoral success have been built on solid support from rural Serbs, while anti-Milosevic, anti-war opposition has remained largely a Belgrade phenomenon.” (Ramet, 2013) The supports of elites and intellectuals to Milosevic regime could not be ignored, but when the demographic structure of the country is considered the importance of rural support over Milosevic regime could not be denied, even not only in the elections but also in the armed forces during the war times.

When the 1990s came, as the consequence of civil wars and national conflicts, nationalism spread throughout the not only Serbian but also most post-Yugoslav societies. As Dorde Tomic (2013) states “the political transformation in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s was marked by the establishment of a

nationalist political mainstream” through the emergence of radical right groups which mostly supported by Yugoslav successor states. The Serbian Radical Party as one of the most important representatives of Serbian radical right, and of course a great indicator, since 1991 has received the support of lower-strata voters by using nationalist demagogy, at the first step in the municipal level. Jovo Bakic (2009) expresses the social profile of SRP supporters during the 1990s as follows: 35% of supporters had no more than elementary school qualifications, 28% of supporters completed vocational and secondary education, 16% of supporters were secondary school educated clerks and technicians, 15% of those were skilled workers, and unemployed people represented 12% of the SRP supporters. Moreover, Bakic (2009) stated that “the border of regions of Serbia with Croatia in western Vojvodina, that is, Srem, and with Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that of southern Serbia with Kosovo, display above-average levels of support for the SRP. Therefore, ethnic threat (either real or perceived) is seen as sufficient reason to vote a party at least verbally supports the most radical form of nationalism.”

Although ushered Serbia into a democratic era in conjunction with the fall of Milosevic by 2000, nevertheless nationalism resurged in the country after a while. Especially after the assassination of the PM Zoran Djindic in 2003, nationalism spread rapidly “among unsavory politicians, pensioners, mafiosi and denizens of Belgrade’s suburbs and Serbia’s backward countryside.” (Greenberg, 2006) So, in the 2000s a wide variety of extreme right organizations, from neo-Nazi to patriotic, have occurred in the Serbian political scene. Usually unemployed and uneducated, or at least not well-educated, working-class youths, “who have lost all prospects for a future in post-socialist Serbia,” (Bakic, 2013) have formed the social base of these organizations. These organizations, which are mostly violent, and hierarchical, have chosen football stadiums or streets for their activities not surprisingly. In Serbia, just like the many other places around the world, football has been the common point of lower-class youngsters, thereby most of these extreme right organizations were recruited among fans of football clubs. Still today, these “fascist hooligans can be found among the fans of Belgrade based football clubs Crvena zvezda (Red Star), Partizan, OFK Beograd” (Tomic,2013)

as the worldwide known examples of football hooliganism.

On the other hand, in the sense of political parties the SRP, and partially Socialist Party of Serbia, have continued to be most remarkable actors of the extreme right; and the social profile of supporters of nationalist parties remained the same in the 2000s. According to a 2005 research survey, as the table indicates nationalist parties like the SRP and the SPS received the support of low or middle class unskilled and semi-skilled workers who lived in the cities more than other parties. However, more importantly, Serbian peasants who live in the countryside has formed the main base of these nationalist parties as mentioned above. Furthermore, like the table indicates housewives have supported traditional and nationalist parties more than other parties. Also, Bakic (2009) stated that “50% of the party (the SRP) supporters perceived themselves as losers in the 2000-2005 transformation process. On the other hand, nationalist parties got the least support from upper-middle-class urban people and educated students.

**Table 1.1**

Source: Bakic, J., “Extreme-Right Ideology, Practice and Supporters: the Case Study of

	Small parties	Democratic Party	Democratic Party of Serbia	Movement Force of Serbia	Socialist party of Serbia	Serbian Radical Party	Don't know how to vote	Average
Peasant	11	2	7	6	23	21	8	10
Unskilled or semi-skilled workers	2	2	9	8	11	17	7	8
Skilled workers	35	18	21	41	29	28	22	24
Technician	17	23	12	13	10	9	15	15
Clerk	10	24	19	17	8	9	11	13
Expert	17	17	16	9	4	4	8	9
Housewife	5	2	11	2	15	11	19	13
Student	3	12	5	4	0	1	10	8
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Ck = 0,41.  
Source: Mihailović et al. (2005, 9).

Serbian Radical Party”, *Journal Of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 193-207, 2009

As a result, political tendencies of Serbian society show that the losers of the

political transition process, even the privatization process by early the 1990s, such as unemployed, unskilled and semi-skilled workers formed the social base for the extreme right. In the absence of politically and institutionally organized left, extreme right organizations, particularly the SRS, are considered themselves as the only political option against economic problems such as high unemployment or low wages, “with a sense of profound national humiliation due to Kosovo’s independence and on-going pressures to improve cooperation with the Hague Tribunal” (Bakic, 2009) by using political manipulation and national demagoguery. Furthermore, those people who could not find what it had hoped for and gradually became poor is getting closer to far-right as a reaction.

## **1.6. AUTHORITARIANISM**

John Juan Linz defines authoritarianism as “political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.” (Linz, 1964)

“The rise of nationalism in the post-Communist era, particularly the violent breakup of the former Yugoslavia, has put the problems of the ethnocentrism and nationalism at the top of research agenda.” (Todosijevic, 1998) According to Todosijevic “authoritarianism is differently correlated with various dimensions of national attitudes: more with exclusive ethnocentric attitudes, less with patriotic attitudes.” (Todosijevic, 1998) In the same way, Grimm et al. Argue that “high authoritarianism strongly influences nationalism as well as xenophobia.” (Grimm et al., 2016)

Furthermore, authoritarian and hybrid regimes use nationalism as a unique political tool to mobilize and sometimes manipulate, subjects of a nation. Thus under proper circumstances, such as ethnic conflict, war etc. both of them usually emerge together.

Consequently, the modern Serbian nationalism has authoritarian characteristics not surprisingly. Indications of authoritarian characteristics of Serbian nationalism are seen in the SANU Memorandum as one of main ideological sources of contemporary Serbian nationalism. The Memorandum offers a strong leadership for solving of clear and obvious problems of the nation. And not surprisingly, “Milosevic’s most ardent supporters belonged to the group of academicians who had produced the 1986 draft Memorandum.” (Dragovic-Soso, 1998) Correspondingly, “the Serbian Constitution of 1990 provided the basis for the one-man rule of Slobodan Milosevic.” (Hayden, 1992) Like the 1990 Serbian Constitution, the 1992 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Constitution was prepared in a way to maintain the personal power of Slobodan Milosevic. Florian Bieber (2003) argues that Milosevic era was “a specific type of a semi-authoritarian regime, coupled with a high level of nationalism and a fragmented opposition.” Throughout the 1990s, “the SPS retained all the levers of power in its own hands: the state apparatus (particularly the army and the police), the economy, and the media.” (Goati, 2011) In economy and media the SPS played the role of ‘general manager.’ While the media was used as a party organ, also the economy was seen as the way of ensuring privileges for the party and its members. Even though multiparty elections have held, they were not free nor fair, as one the primary symptoms of authoritarian regimes. Under these circumstances, democratic institutions, including the Serbian Parliament, “were active deep within the sphere of influence of the ruling SPS.” In 1998, after the establishment of ‘red-black coalition’ which is coalition government comprising SPS, JUL and SRS, repression, especially over the media and opposition organizations, increased. In the first step, the ruling coalition accused the media of collaborating with Serbia’s external enemies, then restricted the freedom of the independent media’s activities totally by the Law on Public Information of the Republic of Serbia. On that sense, Vladimir Goati (2001) explains Milosevic era as “in ten years period of time under examination (1990-2000), there was not one political order in force in Serbia but two, from 1990 to 1998 it was a pseudo-democracy, while in later period it was a ‘denuded’ authoritarian order with signs of sultanism.”

After the fall of Milosevic regime in September 2000, nationalist ideology continued to dominate Serbian politics through new political parties and actors that most of them were opposed to Milosevic regime in various levels. However, the common point of new actors of Serbian politics with Milosevic regime was not only nationalism but also most of those parties, including the new government party DOS, had authoritarian tendencies, at least inner party issues. That is to say, the new political actors of Serbia which expected to democratize the country, had *Führer principles*, which is organizing by their leader rather than by their program or activities, within them. “Thus, one can hardly expect that the undemocratically organized political parties will be able to promote democracy in the country and society.” (Jaksic, 2001) Moreover, leaders of those parties who have mostly charismatic and demagogical personality, have displayed oligarchic behaviors. Alongside the political parties, other nationalist, and rightist, organizations were some sort of ‘modern hybrid’ organizations under the strong leadership and hierarchical order.

In conclusion, in Serbia, nationalism brings authoritarian shift along, especially in Milosevic era. Because authoritarian rules under the strong leadership is considered as the solution of the nation’s problems. And in that sense, authoritaian leaders, especially Milosevic, feature national sensitiveness in their discourses to reinforce their power and authority.

## **1.7. XENOPHOBIA, OTHERING AND MINORITIES**

“Xenophobia is the fear of difference embodied in persons or groups.” (Berezin, 2006) While nationalism brings together and exalts in which is of its own by its nature, at times it creates a feeling of hostility and hatred, as the result xenophobia, against which is not its own. In some nationalisms, like the Serbian one, this xenophobia is the result of the nation’s considering themselves as the victims, and others as enemies. Furthermore, xenophobia creates a paranoid structure within the nation as a result of seeing everyone as potential enemies and threats. While nationalism sees a group as others, it often alienates and excludes

this group from itself. In particular, minorities within that nation become a clear and explicit target of both this xenophobic approach and othering. Thus, the rights of minorities needing protection from the potential tyranny of majority groups or another word great power nationalism. Especially when the majority nation has xenophobic and aggressive tendencies, like Serbs, rights of minorities are under the risk more than other circumstances and need more sensitive protection. When the protection does not be provided, minorities can face any kind of risk and danger, including assimilation and even genocide in some cases.

The xenophobic attitude of Serbian nationalism was widely shaped by the effect of the SANU Memorandum in the late 1980s as a result of the rising of anti-Serbian overtones within autonomous regions and emergence of ethnic conflicts in the country. Moreover, two decades after the publishing of the SANU Memorandum, average reaction of Serbian citizens during the NATO bombings of 2000 has arisen as “an excessive and widespread instance of a radical split between 'us' and 'them', where 'them', in fact, signified 'the rest of the world.’” (Suber, 2006)

The xenophobic tone of Serbian nationalist discourse has been obtaining against two different targets. Firstly, it created ethnic hatred and hostility against non-Serb others and substantially ethnic minorities within the Republic of Serbia. Prominent Serbian intellectuals and Serbian media have directly contributed to rising of xenophobic tone and creation of hostility within the society, so much so that sometimes this xenophobia transformed into racism through the language of intellectual authority. For example, Dr. Biljana Plavsic, a well-respected biology professor at Sarajevo University, dehumanized Muslims and portrayed them as a genetically inferior. She defined Muslims as “mob” and “rapist” due to their natural tendencies and stated that “Rape, unfortunately, belongs to the war strategy of Muslims and some Croats towards Serbs. For Islam, rape is normal, for that religion tolerates polygamy. Throughout 500 years of Turkish occupation both ‘begs’ and ‘agas’ were entitled to spend the first night with a recently married woman from the ‘mob.’ Also under the Islamic religious tenants, the nation of a child is the one of the fathers.” (Morus, 2007) in Serbian newspaper

*Borba*. The statement of Plavsic show that those intellectuals did not hesitate to use their professional position and authority to foster xenophobia and ethnic tension. Even, due to this kind of statements and rise of ethnic hatred against ‘others’, since the 1990s mixed marriages have been pressured with the aim of ethnic homogenization even not only in Serbia but also in all of the Yugoslav Republics.

In the second sense, “the rise of Milosevic and the emergence of nationalism as the dominant social and political features in Serbia in the late 1980s triggered the emergence of the ‘other Serbia.’” (Bieber, 2003) The term of ‘othering’ within the process of defining the own nation means “rejecting any cultural, historical, or political relationship between them, or, in the best case, claiming that all ‘others’ actually derive from ‘us’ arguing for the alleged autochthonous character of the own nation.” (Tomic, 2013) At the same time, the ‘others’ are depicted as negative, in the form of evil, over against ‘us’ that is in the form of the good. In the Serbian case, this term of ‘other Serbia’ or shortly ‘others’ has been used to describe a non-nationalist alternative to the regime and antiwar groups, the NGOs, intellectual circles, student organizations, etc. That is to say, through to 1990s each group and organization that mobilize people to make another Serbia possible were marked as others. The only way of belonging to Serbia has been supporting the government and the war and being nationalist in the 1990s. The othering campaign which was conducted by the state polarized the society as a liberal-democratic block and social-national block; and polarization resulted in paranoia and intolerance in both sides. On the one hand, while the “over than 200.000 educated and highly skilled people between the age of twenty-five and forty-five left the country” (Korac, 1993), on the other hand, both side continued to organize under the political parties and other organizations.

In the 2000s, after the fall of Milosevic regime, despite all the positive changes and development of democracy and modernity, somehow, anxiety about tolerance did not disappear and sustained by the hand of extreme right organizations. While the radical right in the country, or “organized intolerance” in the words of Sabrina Ramet (2007), was spreading xenophobia, against ‘inner enemies’ which was



defined as 'fake peace lovers', minorities and external enemies; at the same time legitimized the violence against them with the support of state authorities and Serbian Orthodox Church. Roma people, Albanians, Muslims, Croats. LGBTQ people or NGOs, human right organizations, woman organizations declared as 'others' by the Serbian extreme right, and attacks against those groups reached a critical threshold as we are going to see in Pride Parades example. Furthermore, anti-minority politics for the aim of ethnic homogenization or anti-refugee campaigns has been essential and useful tools for the right-wing political parties like the SRS or the SNP. Undoubtedly that these kinds of policies are always used by nationalist or conservative politics as a very important part of their political discourse and Serbian nationalism, as an aggressive and defensive ideology, has a suitable background for using of these kinds of policies.

## **1.8. WOMAN AND LGBTQ**

Due to its rural tradition, history and aggressive characteristic, Serbian nationalism constructs a patriarchal identity in its basis. Serbian national identity, actually as many other, leave the women on the margin of its national history and construct a patriarchal order and male-centered power structure within society. Due to its aggressive characteristic, Serbian nationalism puts men in the center of its warrior history as violent war machines and dignifies the values of masculinity as the constituent elements of the nation. On the other hand, it attributes women the role of guardians of their children, men, and homes, and in this picture they can only be heroic mothers "who devoted the lives of their sons to the great historical goal their nation." (Korac, 1993) Due to their passive and static role, women are regarded as the natural product of the history while the history was making by men.

In Serbia, women started to be excluded from society by the 1980s as a result of the overlap of Yugoslavia's two historic turning points: economic crisis and re-emergence of nationalism as the dominant political ideology. Wendy Bracewell explains effects of these two turning points over the women in two phases.

According to her, due to economic crisis working-class men were led to a stalemate by rising unemployment and poverty; and as she states “Yugoslavia’s growing economic crisis shook the foundations of such men’s financial security and expected life trajectories.” (Greenberg, 2006) The new structure of the men under the new economic conditions directly influenced masculine honor and caused the crisis of masculinity among the men of the country. Meanwhile, re-emergence of nationalism re-asserted masculine honor as the route for national dignity and thus “crisis of masculinity formed the basis for new nationalist publics and politics in Serbia.” (Greenberg, 2006) The rise of masculinist nationalism gave priority to the male identification and define the post-socialist citizenship of the 1990s through Serb and heterosexual man identity. Hence, everything else was identified primarily with men. “Everyone and everything else is regarded as their supporters or their property.” (Korac, 1993)

On the other hand, due to women’s reproductive bodies, nationalist projects regarded them as the source of continuity and purity of the nation. Especially during the war times, control of women’s reproductive bodies was considered as an instrument of war. In Yugoslavia wars, on the one hand, “women’s bodies were additionally ethnicised through rape, which, as an instrument of war, served to define female body as ethnic boundary and as the national territory.” (Drezgic, 2010) On the other hand, women body were regarded as a tool to humiliate and demoralize the men enemies through rape and killing.

Not only during the war times but also throughout post-socialist era woman body and her fertility has continued to regard as a symbol of the continuity of the nation in Serbia. After the war, both nationalism and religion have claimed right to speak about women and their body by favor of political parties and Serbian Orthodox Church. Throughout the 1990s abortion debates have continued in the country by male political actors and the SPC. Actually, the main focus point of abortion debates was the social role of women within the society. “By reducing womanhood to motherhood, religious-nationalist discourse placed woman symbolically back into the private realm and reinforced male dominance in society.” (Drezgic, 2010) Especially feminism and feminist organizations, such as

Women in Black, was considered as a forbidden zone by the state perspective. About women's issues, the Serbian governments, as a traditional method of religious- nationalist ideologies, has focused on women's health and domestic violence and excluded women from the political sphere. Today, Serbia seems to be beyond of that kind of issues considerably. At least discussions on woman and her body are making under the leadership of the woman PM in politics.

While nationalism attributes different gender role to man and woman, homosexuals are alienated from society completely. On that sense, "Serbia provides an important example of the politicized use of homophobia in post-communist Europe." (Gould and Moe, 2015) Nationalism has always been very successful in producing a homophobic rhetoric and use it as a political weapon without getting too much reaction from rest of the society. However, their opposition to LGBTQ identity is basically built over two main arguments. Ethnic nationalists base source of a nation to a shared bloodline and common descent, and they attribute reproductive gender roles to man and woman for continuity of nation. Thus, they emphasize heterosexuality between co-ethnics for the purpose of producing children who are going to continue the nation. With the same perspective, they accuse homosexuals of shirking their duties and even causing national genocide in the long term.

Secondly, "nationalists justify their claim to power by promising to protect the Serbian nation from enemies both within and without and by upholding traditional Serbian values." (Gould and Moe, 2015) On that sense, they identify homosexuality with Western depravity and regard LGBTQ activists as national traitors and foreign mercenaries who conspire to weaken even destroy the Serbian nation. According to their masculine nationality understanding, homosexuality threatens Serbian values and moral integrity of the nation with the effect of foreign forces and that is why they consider both homosexuality and support to homosexuality as treason. Serbian nationalists, like many other examples, find themselves to be right to speak on behalf of the nation. That is why they do not hesitate to divide the nation into two as traitors and patriots, the authoritarian structure of the country provides a suitable basis for this polarization undoubtedly.

On the one hand, while nationalists have threatened and attacked LGBTQ persons through both domestic isolation and violence; on the other due to demobilization that they created through division of society, the anti-authoritarian opposition did not resist for the LGBTQ rights against homophobia. That is to say, homophobic discourse built a bridge between the old and new regimes, and LGBTQ persons had to come up against multiple form of oppression, both homophobia and authoritarianism. The EU and Serbia's pro-European democratization movement proved to be very poor partner in the fight for LGBTQ rights quite a while, thus LGBTQ persons had to activate their latent organizational potential themselves against rising oppression and hostility. Beyond the support of external actors, LGBTQ movement has tried to build a domestic legitimacy for human rights-based reform because international support was perceived as a national threat and turned LGBTQ activism into the target of nationalism.

Throughout the 1990s LGBTQ people have been influenced from masculine nationalism and patriarchal order of society as much as women. On the one hand, while LGBTQ people have tried to fight for their rights in a limited space with the international support, on the other hand they have been the obvious victims of on-going wars. Throughout the wars the nationalist regime expected to protect the nation from Serbian men; thus a large number of gay men had to migrate from the region at the outset of the war. Furthermore, they were exposed to rape in an attempt to emphasize a nation's physical dominance over the enemy. "The Balkan wars thus produced a discourse that emphasized a nation, not the raped person, as the primary victim of sexual assault." (Gould and Moe, 2015) At the end of the wars a lot of rapist and criminal men were walking freely in the streets of Belgrade; and while they glorified as national heroes, homophobic discourse and hostility against LGBTQ people were growing within the society. After the war, the regime continued to use homophobia as an effective demobilization tool, people who fought for both gender and human rights were described as elitists and even traitors who betrayed the Serbian nation for the foreign ideas and interests. Not only regime but also anti-regime organizations, including human right

organizations, discriminated against LGBTQ people and their rights, even the opposition were sharing homophobia and patriarchy of the regime. Some opposition groups who tolerated LGBTQ persons did not put LGBTQ issue on the agenda. That is to say during the Milosevic era attempting to establish a non-heterosexual opposition was considered as a threat against nation and its values.

The defeat of Milosevic in 2000 did not remove his mentality and produce democracy in the country. The electoral opposition of Milosevic had united around nationalist candidate Vojislav Kostunica; thus new regime has continued to pursue nationalist policies. In 2001, as the part of convergence policy of the new government with the ICTY and the EU, Milosevic sent to the Hague for trial. However, nationalist circles perceived the extradition of Milosevic as an example of Serb victimization by external enemies. At this point, 2001 Pride Parade, or so-called “The Massacre Pride Parade” was attacked by clerico-fascists under the pretext of “the link between homosexuality and EU/ICTY critiques of Serbia.” (Gould and Moe, 2015) After the attack, while the PM Zoran Djindic blamed LGBTQ organizations, the Pride Parade was perceived as a natural and predictable provocation to people due to its immorality. As a result, “the attacks on the LGBTQ population and Pride Parade illustrate the relationship between extreme right-wing organizations, state authorities, and the Serbian Orthodox Church.” (Dzombic, 2014)

By the year of 2005, ground began to develop for some remarkable steps forward for the LGBTQ community thanks to the EU’s interest on the issue. Even though the new LGBTQ organizations, such as Kvar<sup>4</sup> or Gay Straight Alliance, have established and LGBTQ communities have achieved some victories between 2005 and 2008; in 2008 with the electoral victory of the nationalist wing, homophobia remained stable in both political and social environment, even despite the pro-European attitude of the new government. In 2009, scheduled Pride Parade had to be canceled due to threats of extreme right organizations, with

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<sup>4</sup> “Activists adopted the term ‘kvar’, meaning ‘malfunction’, to replace the Western Word ‘queer’ with a term of Balkan origins. (Gould and Moe, 2015)

the support of the SPC which described the Parade as an act of violence against Serbian people. A year later, in 2010, due to gain momentum of the EU process, the government had to assign the police forces to ensure security of Pride Parade in Belgrade. Even though the police protected the marchers from attacks of protesters, particularly priests of the SPC, police forces and downtown of Belgrade were exposed to attacks and vandalism of protester groups. “While the media and politician did condemn the violence, Mayor Dragan Dilas blamed LGBTQ marchers for the destruction,” and “Minister of Internal Affairs Ivica Dacic blamed the EU for forcing the government to allow LGBTQ citizens to assembly free.” (Gould and Moe, 2015) Attitudes of state authorities one more time proved that although the state’s homophobic perspective remained stable, the only reason for their moderate attitude is the EU accession process and foreign repression. Next three years, until 2014, the government banned pride parades to prevent provocations. In March 2014 parliamentary elections held in Serbia and the new PM Aleksander Vucic (the SNS) allowed the Pride march amid huge security. Next years due to gain moment of EU accession process of Serbia, which is most important foreign policy goal, tolerance and inclusion toward the LGBTQ have increased.

Today Serbia is still a risky place for LGBTQ individuals. However in August 2016 openly LGBTQ Ana Brnabic<sup>5</sup> was appointed as the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self Government of Serbia. And today, since the June 2017 she is the first female and openly LGBTQ Prime Minister of Serbia as the proof of Serbia’s increasing tolerance on the way toward the EU. In September 2017 she attended the Pride march in Belgrade as the first openly LGBTQ PM of not only Serbia but also all the Balkans.

However, in Serbia, women and LGBTQ people emerge maybe the most marginalized and oppressed part of the society under the pressure of heterosexual and patriarchal nationalist policies.

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<sup>5</sup> Ana Brnabic is an independent deputy and the Prime Minister

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN TURKEY DURING AKP ERA**

Nationalism of AKP has always been a controversial issue since the emergence of AKP in the political scene in that in the politics of nationalism understanding of AKP intertwined with Islamism and conservatism and even sometimes is overshadowed by them. However, as above-mentioned AKP is a nationalist party in the religious-Islamist sense. In the chapter of “Nationalist Discourse in Turkey During AKP Era” religious nationalism of AKP is going to be analyzed in the framework of its main characteristics and themes which lead its discourse.

Religion is the most important factor which embodies both nation definition and nationalism understanding of AKP. Thus, at the first stage, role of the religion is going to be discussed basically in the scope of nation-building process of AKP. Secondly, the thesis is going to address “the idea of Ottomanism” as another primary and founder element of national identity imagination of AKP, together with Islam. Here, alongside the effect of the Ottomanism in the nation-building process, the Ottoman effect is going to be examined as an important part of the political vision of AKP.

Then, the thesis is going to deal with the theme of victimization which is a dominant factor of nationalist discourse of AKP. Here, the thesis especially tries to analyze external and internal enemies perception of the party. Under the title of denial, the thesis tries to answer the question of how and why AKP denies that it is a nationalist party in the classical sense

After the thesis addressing the main supporters of AKP within the society; it is going to deal with authoritarian tendencies of AKP in the person of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Even though AKP recently drifts “towards an excessively majoritarian conception of democracy, or even an electoral authoritarianism of a more markedly Islamic character” (Özbudun, 2014), authoritarianization of AKP is a very comprehensive issue to analyze under one title. That is why, here the thesis is going to address Erdoğan as the core of the authoritarianization of AKP and his democracy understanding which is majoritarian democracy.

Then, othering, another prominent and dominant factor of AKP's political discourse is going to be analyzed in the framework of nation definition of AKP. And after that, policies and discourses of AKP towards minorities and foreigners are going to be examined. Here, especially Kurdish identity, is going to take an important place as the second largest ethnic group in Turkey. Finally, the thesis is going to deal with three important concepts which are woman, family and LGBTQs. Firstly, the woman and AKP's policies regarding woman is going to be examined in the light of Muslim nationalism and motherhood. After, the role of family is going to be addressed in both nation understanding and social order of the AKP. And at the final stage, approaches and policies toward homosexuality is going to be criticized.

## **2.1. RELIGION IN AKP'S RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM**

Religious nationalism emerges as a result of rejecting of religion and religious people within the nation-state through a secular consensus. Religious nationalism is not alien to the formation of the modern nation-state (Friedland, 2001) but it aspires to structure the nation-state in a religious context through cultural contents and religious authority sources. While it does that, it transforms the nation as the key element of the nation-state and increases the dominance area of the nation-state by enlarging the scope of the nation. Because religion presents a more inclusive hegemonic area than ethnicity or race through the cultural ties, that is why actually religion increases the sphere of influence of nationalism. As Kaldor (2004) expresses, the concept of religious nationalism has become visible by the 1990s as a response to globalization. Because as Türkölmez (2014) argues by the 1990s when societies have started to lose their confidence in the project of nation-state due to the oppression of globalization and neoliberal policies, religious nationalism has emerged as the result of an identity seek which is older and more effective than nationalism.

When examined the relationship of Islam and nationalism, "the Quran directly rejects a nationalism based on ethnicity or race." (Karabaşoğlu, 2009) Because as



stated in Surah Al-Hujurat<sup>6</sup> Islam rejects superiority of a tribe over the another one and regards all the believers as a part of the nation of Abraham regardless the ethnicity. In that sense, as Karabaşođlu (2009) remarks the Quran describe the nation as a unity of believers, and it consider the ethnicity-based sense of community as a jahiliyyah characteristic. However, despite all the orders of Quran cannot prevent emergence of nationalism based on ethnicity within the Islamic world.

In Turkish politics, leading cadres of Islamism and nationalism usually share the same background in both sociological and organizational dimensions. Most of these people who have embodied the political future of Islamism and nationalism come from the same student organizations, anti-communist organizations, and ideological organizations. Therefore, in Turkish right, especially after 1960s, Islam and nationalism usually seem intertwined with each other in different ways. In that sense, Bora (1998) supposes nationalism and conservatism as nested ideologies instead of dealing them as two different ideologies. Because he argues that especially in Turkish politics boundaries between these three ideologies are unclear and thus they can both influence and easily transform to each other. And even so, they have different roles and effects, they all structure the Turkish right together. Hence, as an important part of Turkish right, AKP carries characteristics of all these two ideologies in an articulated form. So, although AKP denies nationalism and sometimes it is accused of not being nationalist; nevertheless in AKP, nationalism and conservatism are a coherent and articulated form. Especially in the 2010s, nationalism level of AKP increases quickly and distinctly. AKP regards Islam as a specific and integrative constituent of nationalism and interprets the nationalistic concepts such as homeland, state, country, national interest, etc. through an Islamic identity. In another word, AKP

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<sup>6</sup> “O mankind! Surely we have created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may get acquainted with one another (your lineage) Surely the most honorable of you in the presence of Allah is he who is the most pious of you (not by race or lineage)” (Surah al Hujurat, verse 13)

builds nationalism on an Islamic identity and that is why nationalism understanding of AKP is defined as Islamic nationalism by many scholars.

Ziya Gökalp, who was a sociologist and known as the founding father of Turkish nationalism, describes the nation as a community who shares the same language, emotions, religion, ideals, ethics and aesthetic sensitiveness. He also regards nation as a community who have a national economy and culture. Gökalp explains nation-building as a result of a three-stage process by influencing from Durkheim's sociology. According to that, "first there were tribal communities in which language and race had precedence. Then there were the religious communities based on religious unity. And, finally, there was the nation in which the basic concepts of culture and civilization had to exist." (Shaw and Kural Shaw, 1997) That is to say, Gökalp builds nationalism on the division between culture and civilization. While he regards culture as belongs to the nation, sees the civilization as an international concept. That is why he argues that "a nation may change from one civilization to another, but it cannot change cultures without losing its identity" (Shaw and Kural Shaw, 1997) Gökalp marks the ideal of Turkey as modern Islamic Turkishness through "Turkification, Islamization, and Contemporarization." In this sense, Gökalp considers the past, traditions, and Islam as the cultural base of Turkishness. And he aspires to reach contemporary Western civilization by protecting its culture. Thus, he offers adoption of Western models and methods only in technic and science, but not at the cost of national culture and identity. Like Gökalp, Ali Fuat Başgil and Mehmet Akif Ersoy make the same division between culture and civilization by using different terms and regards the wrong Westernization as the greatest hazard for the Turkish nation.

The ideas of Gökalp was supported and emphasized by the representatives of Islamist political actors even before the AKP. Both MTTB and Necmettin Erbakan offers to borrow technic and science from the West by protecting national and religious values. Just as his processors, Erdoğan argues adoption of science and technic of the West without influencing from other characteristics. And Erdoğan accuses the Kemalist regime of adoption immorality of the West instead of its science and art. In his speech to Turkish graduate students going to

study abroad, Erdoğan expressed his accusation towards the old regime with the sentence of “the poet who penned Turkish national anthem said that we should compete with art and science of the West; but unfortunately we adopted the West’s immoralities that are contrary to our values.” (Birgün Web, 25 January 2008) Erdoğan regards Turkey superior and more ethical than the West due to its religion, Islam. In that sense, he envisions to synthesize Islam with the Turkish culture, which mostly based upon the Ottoman period, as the essence of the national identity.

Bora (1998) describes national identity as a category which can be built and rebuilt historically rather than an ascribed status. Hence, he argues that governments build a nation and a national identity through their activities and discourses for replying to questions of “who are we?” and “how should we be?” as a component of their nationalism understanding. In this context, religion and religious references can be the keystones of the national identity during the nation-building process of AKP.

In Turkey, in spite of everything laicism could not be applied radically and this causes the protection of the religion as a value within the national identity. Moreover, in Turkish politics, the state uses the religion as a political tool based upon the assumption that Turks are Muslims whenever it would like to strengthen its authority over the society. Otherwise, when the state isolates the religion, this time religion and religious identity come to the forefront as the representative of the opposition, and victimization and legitimizes through the assumption that Turks are Muslim in the politics. That is to say, in Turkish politics religion protects its existence within the national identity anyway, sometimes it keeps in the background but sometimes it is highlighted as the backbone of the Turkish national identity. When religion is highlighted as the keystone of the national identity the term of “*millet*” prefers to refer the nation rather the term of “*ulus*” which signifies an artificial society based on secular values.

In national identity vision of AKP, Islam is presented not only as a religion, but also as the real national culture of Turkey based on the Ottoman past. Also, Islam is regarded as the source of national progress and development. Hence, AKP

builds its new nation through a religious nationalism. In that sense, Islam is located in the center of national identity imagination of AKP as the most significant indicator of the national culture. That is why political elites of AKP consider the culture and tradition as the essence of the nation rather than language, ethnicity or race, and in their nationalism understanding this essence is based upon Islam. Eventually, AKP imagines a national identity which is described around Islamic culture and based on Muslim brotherhood. Thus, all the Muslim people can be included the new nation through Muslim brotherhood. Undoubtedly, in this national identity imagination, Islamic dosage takes up more than Turkishness dosage.

In the nation-building process, AKP emphasizes Mehmet Akif Ersoy<sup>7</sup> as a reference point. On the one hand, while the AKP government underlines the historical connection between the national identity and the Ottoman past, on the other hand, it tries to embrace the Turkish War of Independence and the establishment history of the Republic of Turkey. In this context, Mehmet Akif Ersoy as an Islamist intellectual of the Ottoman modernization, and the author of the Turkish National Anthem has come to the forefront since the establishment years of AKP. Thanks to his religiousness and the national role due to the Turkish National Anthem, Mehmet Akif represents the national identity imagination and idealized society model of AKP as a great example. Moreover, through his ideological point, the name of him symbolizes the Islamic identity against the founder national identity. As a result, while AKP glorifies Mehmet Akif's name through various activities, on the other hand the Turkish National Anthem identified with its author more than even before.

AKP presents its idealized national identity imagination through the "*Asım's generation*" of Mehmet Akif Ersoy. *Asım's generation* emerges as an idealized youth prototype which is explained in Mehmet Akif's writings and poets. Mehmet Akif presents *Asım* as a Muslim young who loves his nation, homeland, and values, cares for the problems of others around him, tries to solve them and stands

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<sup>7</sup> Turkish poet and the author of Turkish National Anthem

against unjust. While *Asım* is marked as a strong character, religiousness is underlined as the most important characteristic of him. In this regard, Mehmet Akif (2012) gives place following verses in his poetical story *Asım* as advices to Turkish youth through *Asım* character:

*“Trust Allah, (work) strive, settle in discretion  
This is the way I know, I do not know another direction.”*

...

*“What a great faith is a divine jewel...  
Rusty heart of unbelief is overloaded in chest!<sup>8</sup>”*

Furthermore, alongside emphasizing on the concepts like religion, faith, propriety, conscience or moral Mehmet Akif also mentions the role of sport and positive sciences on the character formation of *Asım*. While Mehmet Akif identifies *Asım* with the Fatih district of Istanbul, he marks him as a non-drinker, pure person. So, AKP and notably Erdoğan underline *Asım* as the role model to the Turkish youth. Erdoğan expresses his point of view regarding that with the sentence of “we have to raise the coming generation with this awareness for it is the generation of *Asım*.” (Milliyet Web, 26 December 2015) Through the idealized *Asım* character, Erdoğan clarifies his imagined national identity as a religious and modern generation. As is seen in *Asım* prototype, AKP synthesizes religion and modernity to create its imaged national identity. However, at this point, both Mehmet Akif and Erdoğan advise the youth of the relations which establish with the West. Like Gökalp, Mehmet Akif also approaches with suspicion toward the West and advise youth of while adopting the science, technic and civilization of the West, avoiding the other characteristics of it. Regarding that Mehmet Akif (2012) written following verses:

*“Learn the 300 years of lost science immediately.  
That infinite spring leaking from science,  
Both drink up and bring those impressive waters to our country*

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<sup>8</sup> Allah’a dayan sa’ye sarıl, hikmete ram ol; / Yol varsa budur bilmiyorum başka çıkar yol.” /... / “İmandır o cevher ki ilahi ne büyüktür... / İmansız olan paslı yürek sinede yükür!”

*Drink the same fountains here gratifyingly,  
Run your head son, get then a canal frequently.<sup>9</sup>*

Mehmet Akif presents his approach regarding the West as a dilemma between “*marifet*” and “*fazilet*” and he imposes the protection of *fazilet* which are essential values like religious, national and moral values as the pre-condition of *marifet* which refers to adopting the science and art of the West. In *Asım*, Mehmet Akif (2012) explains his ideas about the concepts of *marifet* and *fazilet* in following verses:

*“Let you educate yourself, yes you!  
Cause it is necessary for the nation ascension  
To have two powers, science and virtue  
First science will give the community happiness,  
Then virtue will come and humb the whole nation  
It was so far from the science and virtue of its great breakthrough  
And it saw its soul destroyed by a certain community  
Unless the nation has virtue power  
It does not work out, they do not withstand with only virtue power<sup>10</sup>”*

As a result, while AKP builds its nation over the acceptance that Turks are Muslim, it regards religiousness as the pre-condition of being moral. Besides, AKP maintains to have prejudices toward the West inherited by Gökalp and Mehmet Akif. Furthermore, politicians of AKP, particularly Erdoğan continue to imitate Mehmet Akif on behaviorally and make political speeches in the mosques or preach through poets as a political tool.

Moreover, beyond all these, as Murat Aksoy (2014) argues being the supporter of AKP is underlined as the dominant factor of the national identity increasingly

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<sup>9</sup> “Sade Garb’ın yalnız ilmüne dönsün yüzünüz. / O çocuklarla beraber gece gündüz didinin; / Giden üç yüz senelik ilmi sık elden edinin. / Fen diyarında sızan namütenahi pınarı, / Hem için, hem getirin yurda o nafi suları. / Aynı menbaları ihya için artık burada, / Kafanız işlesin oğlum, kanal olsun arada.”

<sup>10</sup> “Hadi tahsilini ikmale tez elden, hadi sen! / Çünkü milletlerin ikmali için, evladım / Ma’rifet, bir de fazilet...İki kudret lazım. / Ma’rifet, ilkin, ahaliye saadet verecek / Bütün esbabı taşır; sonra fazilet gelerek / O birikmiş duran esbabı alır, memleketin / Hayr’ı i’lasına tahsis ile sarf etmek için / Ma’rifet kudreti olmazsa bir ümmette eğer / Tek faziletle teali edemez, za’fa düşer.”

day by day. And Muslim nation project of AKP which turns into a Sunni hegemony externalizes other groups more and more.

By the year of 2011, AKP has started to conceive the slogan of the new Turkey. And in this regard, it has addressed the new Turkey within the context of “*dava*” under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Origins of Islamic-Turkish national identity is taken reference by AKP based on Necip Fazıl Kısakürek<sup>11</sup>. While Kısakürek embodied the “*dava*” as the main purpose of the struggle and the main target, he also specified “own children” and “owners” of the country against the Kemalist regime and the West as the co-conspirator of the regime. Necip Fazıl accused Kemalists of granting the state and the nation to the West and aimed give them back to the rightful owners as the main goal of the *dava*. In this context, he expresses his ideas and disappointments regarding the Republic which was embodied by Kemalist regime with the following sentences:

*“The republic was the resistance of national liberation consciousness that the noble owner of thousands of years history against to the Western world which came to send Turkish people away from their land. Besides that this resistance only get liberation mean in terms of geography but in the essence it is not able to move forward from being continuously superficial imitation of the West except to be more talented and capable. Despite the fact that they save their land from the Western world, deliver their spirit completely and unchecked to the superiority of the Western puzzle. So much so that they are away from the art and ideology of the great breakthrough and see the soul was destroyed by a certain community.”<sup>12</sup>*  
(Kısakürek, 2014)

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<sup>11</sup> a prominent Turkish-Islamist poet and author

<sup>12</sup> “Cumhuriyet ise, tek cümle halinde, Türk’ü mekan planında tasfiyeye gelen Batı dünyasına karşı, binlerce yıllık bir tarihin asil varisi sıfatıyla milli kurtuluş iradesinin şahlanıştıydı. Bununla beraber bu şahlanış, sadece mekan planında kurtuluşu idrak etmiş; ruh planında Garbın daha maharetli, fakat daima satih üstü kopyacılığından başka bir oluşa şahit olamamış, maddesini Batının pençesinden kurtarabilmesine karşılık, ruhunu topyekün muhasebesiz ve murakabesiz, Batı üstünlüğü ukdesine teslim etmişti. Öyle ki büyük hamlesinin sanat ve ideolocyasından öksüz yaşamış ve ruh planının, belli başlı bir zümre elinde büsbütün harap edildiğini görmüştür.”  
(Kısakürek, 2014)

In that vein, AKP's approach of the new Turkey basically means to return to the essence and rightful owners of the country against the old Turkey which is represented by the Kemalist regime. Actually, the approach of new Turkey clearly reflects that how AKP assumes the role of constituent power, and that is why the *dava* concentrates on the political and cultural spheres as the constituent factors of a nation rather than the economic sphere. Thus, while AKP builds the opposition with the old Turkey and the West through political and cultural differences for legitimizing of *dava*, it can also extend the scope of the *dava* through the political, historical and cultural ties whatever it needs. So, the new Turkey emerges as the own state of AKP which is constituted by itself. However, as Aktoprak (2016) argues this new state does not only include the renewal of backbone of the state but also include the building of a new nation in line with the new state. In the new Turkey, AKP utilizes the state apparatus such as bureaucracy, education, the army are used for the nation-building process. That is to say, the new Turkey emerges as the strengthened and actualized status of the national identity imagination of AKP through hegemony based on Islam. The new Turkey is envisioned as a state which provides unity with its religion, culture, and history overcoming the alienation of Kemalist era. New Turkey is based on the understanding that the states can be secular but not the persons. Thus, it supposes Turkey as a country which is 99% of citizens are Muslim. In short, new Turkey is envisioned as a model which party and state integration are completed within the framework of Islam, conservatism, and nationalism.

Moreover, AKP creates its own national history narrative as one of the main components of the nation-building process. The alternative national history narrative is basically build around the concepts which are excluded by the Kemalist regime. Thus, the content of the national history narrative is mostly embodied around the Ottoman history that I am going to deal with under the title of *Ottomanism*. Furthermore, earlier period Turkish history is presented as a part of national history narrative through a religious perspective. In this regard, AKP highlights the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 in the context of Anatolia and its cultural diversity. AKP unites Anatolia through the religious tie and regards it as



starting point of Islamization of Anatolia against Christianity. AKP does not totally exclude the context of Kemalist national history narrative but deals with it with a new religious perspective. For instance, AKP regards the Battle of Gallipoli or Turkish War of Independence as a part of national history but interprets these as wars which won through the power of belief of Anatolian people ignoring the factors and characters of Kemalist history. In this regard, AKP organized alternative commemoration or celebration ceremonies. For example, AKP organizes alternative ceremonies in Çanakkale or Istanbul instead of Ankara and Anıtkabir<sup>13</sup>. However, the Holy Birth Week which is the birth week of Prophet Muhammed forms the most prominent part of national history narrative of AKP. The week which is celebrated between April 14-20 also comes the forefront alternatively 23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day. Although the Holy Birth Week has been celebrated since 1994 by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, nevertheless it is institutionalized as a part of official history by AKP. After that, the Holy Birth Week started to celebrate in the schools in parallel with increasing the role and effect of Islam in the educational system. During the official ceremonies singing the National Anthem and reading the Qur'an at the same time, clearly show that how religious and national intertwine.

Martyrdom has always been a very significant concept for nationalism. Despite its religious sense, in Turkey, the martyrdom was addressed as a secular concept without too much considering its religious sense until AKP government. However, AKP re-features the religious sense of martyrdom in both daily and historical discourse. And as Koyuncu (2014) argues AKP shifted the concept of martyrdom from the secular nation-state context to a religious context. While AKP sacralizes die for his country at every turn, on the other hand, underlines martyrdom frequently as a very efficient political tool. Even, increasing the religiosity of the politics, martyr funerals has been one of the most important places for political speeches of AKP elites. Particularly Erdoğan attends martyr funerals quite often and give speeches in front of the flag draped coffins regarding

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<sup>13</sup> Atatürk's Mausoleum

both the martyrdom and the political agenda. In the speeches, he emphasizes importance of martyrdom in Islam with reference to the Quran, hadiths, and religious poems. For instance, he quietly repeats verse 154 of Surah Baqarah which is “And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, ‘they are dead.’ Rather, they are alive, but you perceive not.” for glorifying the martyrdom as a religious concept. However, right after that he usually mentions the issues like military operations or terror etc. Even sometimes he criticizes the political oppositions in his funeral speeches. Thus, martyr funerals emerge as places where religious and national intertwine maybe the most.

In conclusion, in religious nationalism of AKP, religion establishes the core of the nation. In that sense, religion provides basis for the nationalist concepts and that is why religious can easily turn into national.

## **2.2 THE IDEA OF OTTOMANISM**

In the politics of AKP, the idea of Ottomanism is similar to Greater Serbia idea of Serbian nationalist politics. Thus, it can be said that the Ottomanism idea emerges as one of the touchstones of AKP’s politics and national identity imagination. However, as Tanıl Bora refers in his well-known book *Türk Sağının Üç Hali* (1998), even before the establishment of AKP, right-wing political parties, such as the National Vision parties or the Motherland Party, took the Ottoman vision as reference time to time for emphasizing the historical power of Turkey. Thus, the emphasis on the Ottoman past is not peculiar to AKP. For example, Necmettin Erbakan called the names of several Ottoman sultans as the founders of the party in the establishment congress of the National Order Party in the context of the Ottomanist vision. On the other hand, in the Motherland Party, the Ottoman vision became prominent especially in the foreign policy. Turgut Özal, the leader of the Motherland Party, embodied the foreign policy of the party towards the former Ottoman territories which are the Balkans, Middle East and Caucasus in the light of a neo-Ottomanist approach. However, differently from the other right-wing parties that used the Ottoman past mostly as a political tool,

as AKP takes the imperial Ottoman past as an example and reference for construction its own national identity. While AKP criticizes and contradicts the Kemalist modernization process as oppressive and exclusivist, it glorifies and fetishizes the Islamic Ottoman past against Kemalist modernization process. According to AKP, Ottomanism represents “the national” through Islamic memory and cultural pluralism against cultural alienation which represented from Kemalism throughout 80 years.

Ahmet Davutoğlu underlines the Ottoman heritage as the real, permanent identity and the core of Turkish society in the Strategic Depth. According to him, “as the core of the national identity the Ottoman heritage constitutes the criterion of correctness of a political tendency, notably the foreign policy.” (Saraçoğlu, 2013)

As above-mentioned, in religious nationalism understanding of AKP, national identity is built over the cultural values of Islam based upon the model of the Ottoman Empire. As Saraçoğlu (2013) argues, this approach of AKP indicates that Islamism and conservatism forms of Turkish right establish the discursive context of its nationalism. Also, the Ottoman emphasis over the national identity can be regarded as the reason of preferring of the “*millet*” term instead of the “*ulus*” term which is identified with Kemalist nationalism understanding.

As a result, as Aktoprak (2016) states AKP’s strategy of positioning itself in the future without betraying its heritage brings rewriting the history of heritage in its wake. The Ottoman heritage does not only unify the Turkish society under the same identity but also increase its power and value to determine the stream of history. In this context, AKP creates its own history narrative as one of the main components of the national identity. The new history narrative of AKP based upon the Ottoman Empire against Kemalist history narrative based upon the Republic.

In this context, the Ottoman capital Istanbul emphasizes against the Republican capital Ankara. Ankara and Istanbul symbolize two different national identity imaginations for the establishment years of the Republic. While Istanbul which describes as the promised land of Islam, it also symbolizes the Ottoman Empire

due to its cosmopolitanism, on the other side, Ankara symbolizes modernization as one of the constituent elements of the Republic. Thus, over against being alienated from Istanbul in the Republican narrative, the AKP narrative dignifies Istanbul as a part of its national identity and representative of the history. Therefore, “it is no surprise that most government sponsored international meetings are held in Istanbul rather than Ankara.” (White, 2014) In that sense, the celebration of the conquest of Istanbul comes to the forefront as the significant part of the national history narrative of AKP. Even, as White (2014) argues, it is possible to say that in AKP’s history narrative, the celebration of the conquest of Istanbul displaces the celebration of the Republic Day of Turkey. Actually, before AKP, the conquest of Istanbul was celebrated for various reasons in both Ottoman and Republican era. However, political elites of AKP, notably Erdoğan have struggled for power through the celebration of the conquest of Istanbul in their early political lives. When Erdoğan was firstly elected as the Mayor of Istanbul from the Welfare Party, he and political environment of the RP regarded the election victory as re-conquest of Istanbul. Especially after the electing of Erdoğan as the mayor, the celebration of the conquest foregrounded with emphasis on the re-conquest. And in the anniversaries of the conquest grand celebrations were organized by the cooperation of the municipality and the RP as the indicator of alternative national identity. By 2003, together with electing of AKP as the ruling party, Istanbul has started to gain more importance as the symbol of the national identity vision of AKP. Thus, as long as the legitimacy and effectiveness of AKP increases the celebration of the conquest is highlighted by both the government and the municipality as a significant part of the official history. However, in parallel with increasing the emphasis on the conquest of Istanbul, focus point changed into modernism from Islam. Through Mehmet the conquerer, his rationality, and technic, modernity is underlined as the determinant characteristic of the national identity. Moreover, in the 2009 *Panorama 1453 Historical Museum* was opened as a part of symbolization of Istanbul and the conquest of Istanbul in the historical narrative of AKP. In the museum which was opened with the emphasis of Ottoman heritage, at the same time the themes of

rationality and technic are foregrounded through the Mehmet the conquerer and the history of the conquest. Also, through the Ottoman heritage, AKP deals with Istanbul as in the Ottoman times. In that sense, it includes the Ottoman cities in the scope of the national history of Istanbul and identifies Istanbul with these cities like Sarajevo, Skopje or Prishtina. Besides, emphasizing the global Istanbul idea through its history and political importance corresponds to neoliberal policies of AKP.

Apart from Mehmet the conquerer, Abdulhamit the II. glorifies as a part of the Ottomanism of AKP. Alongside Abdulhamit the II. emphasis on the political discourse of Erdoğan and other AKP elites, AKP endeavors to make him a part of national history through the education. In this sense, in February 2018, Directorate of National Education of Ankara instructs the schools in respect of organizing events regarding the 100th death anniversary of Abdulhamit the II. for introducing him to students. (Cumhuriyet Web, 22 February 2018)

Furthermore, in the 2016 AKP raised the Ottoman victory in the siege of Kut'ül Amare and celebrated the 100th anniversary of the victory as a part of the alternative national history. (CNN Türk Web, 29 April 2016) Also tv series and films about both the victory of Kut'ül Amare and the Abdulhamit the II. and some other issues in the Ottoman history are directly supported by the AKP government and Erdoğan. (Anadolu Agency, 16 January 2018; Yenişafak Web, 10 February 2018) And some of these tv series are televised in the state channel TRT for promoting the Ottoman history.

According to AKP, the Ottoman Empire represents the peak of the nation. Thus, AKP marks its main goal as re-achieving of political power of the Ottoman Empire. The goal of AKP which is called "the Great Turkey" idealizes the Ottoman Empire in both domestic and foreign policy. As Türkölmez (2014) argues the Great Turkey ideal of AKP can be considered as reflection of the seeking nostalgia of AKP. Especially for a party which regards itself as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, like AKP, the argument of Türkölmez would not be wrong. However, the idea of Great Turkey not only misses the golden era of past but also integrates the the past with the modernity and technology. That is

why the idea of Great Turkey emerges as a civilization project which aims to revival of the Ottoman civilization in today's conditions.

Furthermore, as White (2014) states "an Islamist vision of political life has given way to a Muslim nationalist vision that is focused less on a shared global umma and more on a structured relationship with the Muslim world in which Turkey takes the leading role, as it had in Ottoman times." As Dönmez (2011) argues, this approach of AKP can be interpreted as a post-modern emperorship perception. In this context, Turkey tries to reintegrate the region, which is the Balkans and the Middle East, because of the certain responsibility which it believes it has as the natural heir of the Ottoman Empire and the heartland of the region. That is why, both Erdoğan and Davutoğlu have saluted Sarajevo, Skopje, Baghdad, Gaza, Baku etc., in their speeches alongside Turkish cities.

As conclusion, the idea of Ottomanism represents idealized nation imagination of AKP through religious and cultural ties. And it especially creates national history narrative of AKP by glorifying the Ottoman past.

### **2.3. VICTIMIZATION**

In AKP's political discourse, the theme of victimization is used in two different senses. In the first sense, AKP emphasizes victimization of Islamist and/or religious part of the society through the oppression of the state which was represented by Kemalist nationalist ideology. "Victimhood in relation to the rising secularist Western world and Kemalist elites is a constitutive element of the hegemonic imaginary of Turkish-Islamist ideology in Turkey. In this context, Turkish-Islamist identity is deeply established around the claim of victimhood." (Yılmaz, 2017) Origin of the Turkish-Islamist victimhood ideology and discourse of social suffering based on the writings of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and culminates in the political discourse of AKP, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. "You are a stranger in your own country, a pariah of in your homeland<sup>14</sup>" verse of Necip Fazıl clearly

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<sup>14</sup> "Öz yurdunda garipsin, öz vatanında parya!" (Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Sakarya Türküsü)

reveals his victimhood discourse and is often mentioned by Erdoğan in his speeches regarding victimhood and problems of Islamist, or religious, and conservative people.

Erdoğan started to emphasize how the policies of one-party era oppressed devout Muslims and how the CHP sustained this attitude toward Muslims since the 1990s when he was the Mayor of Istanbul. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, he has continued to use victimhood rhetoric through the military in oppressing graduates of Imam Hatip Schools, and the non-admission of female students wearing the headscarf into universities and banning the headscarf in the public sector. For example, he frequently emphasizes women students who had to drop out the universities because of the headscarf ban. Or he mentions his own daughters who had to study in the abroad because of their headscarves as a part of his political discourse. On the one hand, while Erdoğan has marked the entire history of CHP as the main responsible of cruelty and oppression; on the other hand, he “presents himself both as the victim of the old regime and ‘the voice of the voiceless masses’ so as to promote emotional identification between himself and his followers.” (Yılmaz, 2017) Especially, after the February 28, 1997 coup victimhood perception culminated among Turkish-Islamist part of the society; thus victimhood rhetoric of Erdoğan also culminated as the voice of the voiceless masses. In his premiership and presidential periods, Erdoğan uses the best examples of victimhood rhetoric as the one most effective sources of his political discourse. For example, he defines AKP as the “black Turks” of Turkey “which are stigmatized as ignorant and disparaged as drum-heads<sup>15</sup> by Kemalists” (Yılmaz, 2017) against “white Turks” which represents Kemalist elites of Turkey.

Essentially, according to the claim of victimhood of Turkish-Islamist identity, Sunni Turks of Anatolia, which represents periphery in Şerif Mardin’s center-periphery model, are regarded as real victims of Turkish modernization process. And the triumph of AKP in Turkish political scene is considered as the triumph of periphery over the center which is represented by Kemalist state elites. Thus, AKP

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<sup>15</sup> See Yılmaz Özdil, “Bidon kafa” in <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bidon-kafa-7074842>

consolidates and enlarges its political, and cultural hegemony through the victimization notion and uses “holy quietness” rhetoric as a very effective political tool to prove its power, determination, and rightness.

In this respect, in the second sense, AKP deals with the concept of external and internal enemies as a threat to the party and thereby the nation. AKP regards itself as the only representative of the nation; thus identifies itself with the nation. That is why, it perceives threats against AKP as threats against the nation and sees the party as the main target of external and internal enemies which aim to abolish and harm the nation, and AKP uses the victimhood discourse that based on the threat perception as a very crucial political tool for legitimizing itself, especially in domestic politics.

Carlton Hayes (2010) regards determining of external and internal enemies by nationalist ideology as the turning point of nationalism into chauvinism. Thus, in this regard, relating the enemy and threat perception of AKP with its nationalism would not be wrong. Although AKP has emphasized the self-confidence and flexibility through the strong, and self-confident Turkey discourse which based on particularly Strategic Depth of Ahmet Davutoğlu; on the other hand, the enemy perception maintains to be a vital factor of Erdoğan’s politics. While the enemy perception causes the security obsession through demonization of each agent which is regarded as opposite of potential threat; at the same it time creates politics as a war perception and causes the strengthen of Erdoğan cult as a leader on target. “These assertions of victimhood and its accompanying ethos are building blocks of authoritarian populism, which promotes the identification of supporters of the party with the leader on the basis of reactionary feelings.” (Yılmaz, 2017) Accordingly, conspiracy theories and intelligencer type of columnists have started to become visible in the media. While PKK, Gülen Community (it was Ergenekon Organization instead of Gülen Community until 2013), CHP, and other opponents notably HDP are marked as main and permanent political enemies in domestic politics; after the Gezi Movement, supporters, and participants of Gezi, or with Erdoğan’s words *çapulcular*, was marked as social enemies with external support. Especially after the Gezi



Movement conspiracy theories have strengthened victimhood perception of AKP and its supporters within the society. For example, Kabataş Issue<sup>16</sup>, which was directly emphasized by media and defended by Erdoğan, reflected the headscarfed, religious people who support AKP as the main target and victim of Gezi Movement. Also, AKP and Erdoğan have continued the victimhood discourse in their speeches for a long time through Kabataş Issue.

On the one hand, while AKP victimizes itself and the nation as the main target of enemies through its political discourse and conspiracy theories, on the other hand, it assumes the proud saver role of the nation in spite of threats of enemies. “Needless to say, the recent failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, will reinforce and further intensify this paranoid mood, as well as the assertion of victimhood and the structural crises in Turkish politics.” (Yılmaz, 2017) After the 15 July Coup Attempt, Erdoğan keeps invoking the victimhood narrative to maintain a tight grip on power, especially in domestic politics. Even as victimhood narrative strengthens AKP’s support and, Erdoğan’s leadership cult, it also strengthens nationalist narrative against a common enemy. Especially PKK attacks on Turkish security services, and civilians and “aggressive responses by the state and ordinary people key directly into the ‘enemy within/enemy without’ threat paradigm and masculinist, militarist definitions of national subjectivity (“We are all soldiers.”)” (White, 2014)

Moreover, the historical opposition of Islamist-conservative block to the West manifests itself in the threat and enemy perception of AKP. External enemy perception of the party is mainly shaped by the West which is the EU and the US, together with Israel which is regarded as the representative of another historical opponent, the Jews. In the first term of AKP government, gaining momentum of the EU accession process of Turkey has caused anxiety within the society. The large part of the society “feared that membership would open the door to foreign interference that would harm and humiliate Turkey. This fear was expressed in the

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<sup>16</sup> Zehra Develioğlu who is a headscarfed woman, also daughter-in-law of Mayor of Bahçelievler from AKP, asserted she was being attacked along with her three children by 70-100 protestors in Kabataş during the Gezi Movement.

form of conspiracy theories involving Turkey's internal and external enemies and losing Turkey's dignity and pride." (White, 2014)

Although the breakdown of Turkey and the EU relationships and de-facto suspending the EU accession process of Turkey, AKP has started to support and utter these kinds of victimization discourses for discrediting the EU and legitimizing its anti-EU attitudes, and narrative in the eyes of Turkish nation. On that sense, Turkish diaspora who live in the EU countries and problems, violations of right which exposed of these people have been very important source for anti-EU victimhood discourse of AKP. Furthermore, in AKP's and Erdoğan's discourse toward domestic politics, the West is reflected as the hostile of Turkey which envies Turkey, its progress, and development. For instance, one of his speeches Erdoğan said that: "Why is the West jealous of us? Because of dams like this (referring to Yusufeli Dam), Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, the Bosphorus underwater tunnel, and the Marmaray Subway line." (Presidency of Republic of Turkey, 21 May 2016) In this regard, AKP and pro-government media describe the Gezi Movement as occupation from within which was organized with the support of foreign powers. For example, pro-government newspaper *Sabah* asserted that Gezi Movement was supported by organizations like *Occupy*, *Otpor/Canvas* which also organized Arab Spring and Orange Revolution. Even some pro-government writers, such as İbrahim Karagül from *Yenişafak* argued that "The US administration planned a coup in Turkey through the Gülen terror organization and tried to cause a civil war, make our people kill each other." (Karagül, 2016) in his "The US tried to assassinate Erdoğan" titled column.

#### **2.4. DENIAL**

While Serbian nationalism denies what nationalist people have done in the cause of nation and nationalism, on the other hand, AKP fundamentally denies that it is nationalist. When nationalism is regarded in the classical, *de facto* point of view, it means Kemalist nationalism i.e., *ulusalcılık* in Turkish case, this claim of AKP could make a sense. However, we know that nationalism does not have a

certain definition and nationalism understanding can change depending on the ideological positions or priorities of people or groups. That is to say, even if AKP is right to deny classical, official sense of nationalism, it cannot deny nationalism as a whole as it does usually. Besides, as we are going to see although AKP denies and discredits Kemalist nationalism, nevertheless AKP does not avoid correspond to it within time.

AKP accuses variations of *ulusalcılık* being racist, Islamophobic, status-quoist, oppressive, and exclusivist due to ideological reasons. But also politicians of AKP, notable Erdoğan frequently mention this opposition as a part of their political discourse to defend and prove themselves towards people who share the same opposition with them. Therefore, the denial discourse of AKP towards nationalism foregrounds as long as the party needs in domestic politics. Likewise, as long as AKP gets close to classical approach of nationalism, the level of denial discourse increases concurrently. Mehmet Metiner, a columnist and the MP of AKP, interprets the claim of nationalist regarding AKP as slander in his September 2012 dated column. In the same column, he argues that religious belief and democracy understanding of Erdoğan forbids each kind of ethnic nationalism, thus being nationalist of AKP is impossible. He tries to explain reasons, which causes the interpreting AKP as nationalist, as sensitiveness about protection of democracy, not nationalism. The excuse of protection of democracy to respond claims of being nationalist is used by not only Metiner, AKP frequently uses the excuse of protection of democracy as a defense mechanism against accusations or undesirable claims. Again Metiner, in his September 2017 dated column, denies increasing nationalist shift claims regarding AKP and regards as nationalism as “jahiliyyah dirt.” However, this time he uses term of ethnic nationalism instead of term of nationalism. This change may be the result of increasing the emphasis on religious nationalism in the discourse of AKP instead denial of nationalism as a whole. Either it may interpret as getting closer of AKP to classical nationalism in a level that could not be totally and easily denied. Furthermore, both Erdoğan and the PM Binali Yıldırım and other politicians of AKP deny nationalism in their speech. However, the emphasis on nationalism changes into Turkish nationalism

gradually, while the level of emphasis on religious nationalism increases. However, the explanations of them toward religious nationalism keeps its contradictions unsolved. While Erdoğan explains nationalism of AKP through “*Rabia*” which has become a part of AKP party bylaw, he marks the principle of “*one flag, one nation, one homeland, one state*” which evokes classical nationalism rather than religious nationalism nonetheless.

In 2013, Erdoğan started to use the word (and make the four-fingered hand gesture) of “*Rabia*<sup>17</sup>” or “*Rabaa*” to support President Mohamed Morsi and Muslim Brotherhood against coup d’eta during the Egyptian demonstrations. Especially, after death of Asmaa el Beltagy<sup>18</sup> in *Rabia* massacre during the demonstrations, *Rabia* emphasis of Erdoğan has increased. However, meaning of *Rabia* which signifies solidarity with Egypt turns into “*one flag, one nation, one homeland, one state*” within time with reference to its four-fingered hand gesture. Together with its new meaning, the term of *Rabia* has started to be the new keystone of political discourse of AKP, especially toward domestic policy. Even it was symbolized as the sign of AKP and included AKP party bylaw in 2017 as the symbol of its political goals and strategies. (Vatan Web, 21 May 2017) AKP’s and Erdoğan’s emphasis on these four principles display their nationalist shift on the basis of a religious symbol.

In conclusion, despite its all denial attempts, AKP could not avoid to adopt nationalism in the sense which they opposed. By 2015, nationalist shift of AKP has reached the peak especially due to pragmatic concerns. At the point we reach today, AKP allies with the National Movement Party in the elections with the aim of receiving votes of nationalist electors. On the one hand it tries to appropriate Atatürk, on the other hand it continues to underline a flag-azan based nationalist discourse. And many of its supporters identify themselves as nationalist. (Cumhuriyet Web, 31 May 2018) As a result, one can say that nationalism

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<sup>17</sup> The woman name Rabia means fourth in Arabic. Term. Sign of Rabia comes from Rabia al-Adawiya Square where demonstrations take place in Nasr city. The square was named after the Muslim saint Rabia al-Adawiya of

<sup>18</sup> She was a 17 year old daughter of Mohamed el Beltagy who is a Muslim Brotherhood politician.

continues to be one of the touchstones of Turkish politics and still has to power to shift politics and discourses of political parties no matter how they are strong as in example of AKP.

## **2.5. SOCIAL BASE OF AKP**

While analyzing AKP, leaving it out of the great Turkish right-wing tradition would not be possible. In one way or another, AKP is a part of Turkish right; thus it should be approached within this context. Like other main representatives of Turkish center right which are basically the Democrat Party, the True Path Party, and the Motherland Party, AKP claims that it represents the masses that are despised by Kemalist state elites, and regards their rights, demands. According to this claim, right-wing parties represent national will against elites which are represented by Kemalist state tradition. AKP “has immersed itself in efforts to fill a place between the two main political lines of the Turkish political experience, the Democrat Party of Menderes and the Motherland Party of Özal.” (Yıldırım, 2007) In this context, despite their differences in various senses, AKP regards itself as the continuance of these parties, but especially the Democrat Party. Thus, AKP addresses the same political and social base with other representatives of great Turkish right-wing tradition, DP, DYP, and ANAP. However, with the difference from these parties, the leader of AKP, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan comes from the same origin with the people who he claims they are representing. “Erdoğan was born into a poor religious family that had migrated from the Black Sea region to the Kasımaşa district of Istanbul.” (Yıldırım, 2007) Erdoğan describes characteristics of his district, which have embodied his personality substantially, as follows: “At that time, things like cobblestone pavements and asphalt roads did not exist. We used to live in mud; sinking, lying and standing in it... During religious days and eids (festivities) we shuttled from door to door, kissing the hands of the elderly in order to get pocket-money. There were neighborhood and street consciousness. The people of neighborhood were like the members of a family.” (Yıldırım, 2007) Even, in this regard, in 1994 when

Erdoğan was the candidate for Beyoğlu Mayorship he showed his wedding ring as his only property to prove that he was in common with the people he was representing. Not only Erdoğan alongside him, most of the other leaders of AKP also comes from lower and middle classes families of the Black Sea and central eastern regions of Anatolia

Since its first term in government, AKP, just like other right-wing political parties, has described itself as the representative of periphery<sup>19</sup> against center which was represented by Kemalist state elites. So, AKP won his first election victory in November 2002 right after the 2001 great economic crisis. Within this framework, on the contrary its neoliberal characteristic, AKP emerged in the political scene with the aim of receiving the support of the working people, the artisans, and the owners of small capitals who suffered from the economic crisis. Despite grievous of its neoliberal policies, through populist policies AKP gains the support of lower middle class masses consistently. On the one hand, while neoliberalism increases unemployment, and poverty, makes difficult the live conditions of these people; on the other hand, AKP possesses these people through aid, and service policies. However, it represented these lower middle-class people of Anatolia not only in the economic sense but also in the socio-cultural, and religious sense. “The AKP’s social base of support was mainly the conservative and religious lower and middle classes” (Yıldırım, 2007) of Anatolia, and suburbs of big cities. Also, nationalism emerges as an important factor linking the people and AKP. Thus, AKP gives wide coverage to nationalist rhetoric in its electoral campaigns.

According to a reserach which was conctucted by *KODAK* in 2011 shows that 24.4% of AKP electors identifies themselves as natioanlist, while 3 % of them identifies as “*ulusalçı*” and 27.1% identifies as conservative. (Sabah Web, 10 October 2011) However, in 2018, according to another *KODAK* research, many of AKP supporters are described themselves as nationalist. In that sense, average

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<sup>19</sup> See in Mardin, Ş., *Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics*, 1993

point of AKP supporters is 7.7 from 1 to 10, while average point of the country is inferred as 7. (Cumhuriyet Web, 31 May 2018)

Furthermore, according to a 2011 research survey which was conducted by *Veri Research* after the 2011 Parliamentary elections, AKP received the largest support from middle, middle-low, and low status neighborhoods of cities. While more than 40% of electors voted for AKP in these kinds of neighborhoods, AKP could receive the support of around 30% of total voters in upper-middle and upper status neighborhoods. As for the uppermost status neighborhood vote range of AKP decreased around 20%. Besides, 7 November 2015 Parliamentary elections results show that AKP was received the most support from the Black Sea Region (61.18%) and the Central Anatolia Region (61.67%) where people live in rural settlements and work on agriculture the most. (Tosun & Erdoğan-Tosun, 2015) Another research survey which was conducted by *ODAK* in 2016 indicates that 25-34 years electors form the main base of AKP. Also, young electors, who are ages of between 18 and 24, are mostly voting for AKP. Furthermore, the research survey indicates that almost 50% of housewives are voting for AKP. Following that AKP is mostly supported by people who are working on agriculture, and livestock breeding, private sector workers, and unemployment people. According to the research survey, AKP also receives 50% votes of suburbs and squatter settlements along with 40% votes of the country side. These researches show that lower and middle classes form the permanent and effective social support of AKP which help to construct its hegemony.

## **2.6. AUTHORITARIANISM**

As I mentioned above, even though there is no direct relationship between nationalism and authoritarianism, authoritarian and hybrid regimes use nationalism as a unique political tool to mobilize and sometimes manipulate, the subjects of a nation. As is seen clearly, under the government of AKP, the

political system of Turkey evolves competitive authoritarianism<sup>20</sup> day by day. However, authoritarianization of the regime in Turkey is a comprehensive and detailed issue which can be the subject of a separate thesis. Therefore, here the study is going to deal with the role and effect of nation and nationalism on the authoritarianism of AKP mostly through the cult of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the authoritarian leader of both the party and the nation.

Authoritarian turn of Turkey under the rule of AKP is shaped around the charismatic leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In the new Turkey of AKP, Erdoğan is regarded as the natural leader of both the state and the nation. And as a charismatic leader<sup>21</sup>, the majority of the society consents and supports the leadership and authority of his. Actually, in Turkish politics, personal charisma has always been one of the main sources of authority due to democracy's not developing completely and the long empire past. Thus, since the establishment of the republic, strong leaders who have personal charisma have become prominent in the political scene and have been supported by the masses. In this context, especially and not surprisingly, Turkish right has always emphasized on leader figures and their personal characteristics as the source of authority. However, despite the existence of several strong leader figures in the Turkish right such as Adnan Menderes, Turgut Özal or Necmettin Erbakan, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stands out as the leader who can integrate with the nation completely, at least a part of the nation which he represents.

Erdoğan believes in democracy and emphasizes the importance of democracy at every turn. Because he sees the consent of the nation as the source of legitimacy. However, his democracy understanding marks majoritarian democracy. By the nature of majoritarian democracy, it can easily turn into the tyranny of majority.

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<sup>20</sup> "In competitive authoritarian regimes, formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority. Incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy." (Levitsky & Way, 2002)

<sup>21</sup> Weber classifies sources of authority in three types as: charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational. He defines charismatic authority as "resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him." (Weber, 1958)



And in the politics of Erdoğan this change occurs under the strong leadership of his and his party's. Authoritarian shift of Erdoğan usually happens under the name of democratization and is based the consent of the majority of the nation. And Erdoğan's authoritarian steps are reflected as taken to protect common good and national values. Thus, he wins the approval and support of not only the followers and audiences of his but also of other right-wing voters.

As Türk (2014) expresses, Erdoğan believes the nation is represented in himself. That is why he identifies and unifies himself with the nation as an ordinary component of the nation. He draws a sacred leader profile that can die for his people, and thus creates a leader cult adorned with religious motifs. In that sense, while he dignifies the martyrdom, he states that he wants to be a martyr for this country. Especially, after the coup attempt on July 15th, holy leader cult of Erdoğan has reached the peak level.

In return, the nation of his is deeply bound up with him unconditionally. With the effect of the monarchist empire past, Erdoğan is regarded as the new "sultan" of the new regime. Even some fanatic supporters of Erdoğan identify him with the prophet. (Cumhuriyet Web, 20 January 2015) As a result, as Türk (2014) expresses, Erdoğan creates a strong and unshakable "tall man" or "*reis*" cult over the nation which he represents and form the basis of the legitimacy of AKP in the eyes of people.

Even though AKP was established with the claim of democracy and wandering away from the authoritarian one man tradition of National Vision Movement, it turned into the party of Erdoğan by making over all the power to him in governing both the party and the country. For example, Party Programme of AKP states that "it is our priority to carry out pre-elections with the participation of all members of the party to determine the candidates for the seats of deputies" to establish intra-party democracy and transparency. However, in the practice all the cadres of the party were appointed by the party headquarter which leads by Erdoğan together with some other prominent names which are close to him. Besides, Party Programme includes the article of "for the sake of politics based on principles, the term of service of Chairman of the party and that of the parliamentarians shall be

as indicated in our Regulations” which is known as the “rule of the three period” by public. Likewise, the rule, which was applied till the limit of Erdoğan, was broken to make him the member of parliament more than three times.

At the point we reached today, in conjunction with the purge of other dominant and constituent elements from the party, AKP identifies with Erdoğan. Especially after the purge of other founder names such as Abdullah Gül and Bülent Arınç from the party, Erdoğan is started to reflect as the only founder and leader of the party. Furthermore, family members of him are became prominent in the party and politics regardless of any merit. For instance, his son-in-law Berat Albayrak was selected at first as the MP and then was appointed as the minister. As a result, when Erdoğan should have been symbolizing the party as one of the party representatives, AKP started to symbolize Erdoğan and his leadership.

So, Erdoğan, as the only representative of the nation, uses nationalism in his discourse to reinforce his strong leadership and provide basis for authoritarian shift.

## **2.7. OTHERING, MINORITIES AND XENOPHOBIA**

The idea of stoking anxiety, exclusion, or polarization are not the new strategies in Turkish politics. In this context, othering emerges almost in each stages of politics in Turkey. Thus, not surprisingly AKP uses othering discourse effectively; in this manner while it is drawing the lines of its national identity, on the other hand it strengthens its hegemony within the boundaries of its own “us” as the acceptable citizens of the new Turkey.

In AKP’s politics, classification of individuals and groups shows an alteration depending on political agenda, priorities or leadership cadre’s attitudes. Although othering is one of the most useful and effective political tools of AKP since emerging of its in the political scene, context and definition of “us” and “others” do not always remain stable. However, despite the changing of context and definition of “us” and “others,” each context and definition are embodied around some main concepts such as religion, victimhood, culture or national interest. As

long as AKP increases its power and hegemony over the society borders of “us” become apparent within the context of nation definition of AKP, and “others” who are not to match with the AKP’s nation definition and resists its policies, are marginalized evenly. According as AKP identifies itself with the nation and regards itself as the real and only representative of the national interests, groups which stay out of this are marked as traitors. On the one hand, while AKP marginalizes “others,” on the other hand considers them as enemies.

Since the early 2000s, AKP constructs “us” over the victimhood discourse together with disadvantaged groups of Kemalist state understanding. In that sense, in the sight of AKP, CHP as the main representative of Kemalism symbolizes the permanent other of the country. AKP not only blames CHP for almost all of the problems and discriminations of republican history, but also associates CHP with another “others” of the political agenda. According as AKP constructs its religious nationalism in the context of Islamic culture, it legitimizes its own nation through the emphasis on national. As Koyuncu (2014) argues in nation imagination of AKP each form of “us” are regarded as de-facto Muslim, and the rest of the characteristics can change depending on circumstances. Although AKP denies nationalism which based on ethnic identities, Turkishness becomes prominent in AKP’s nation and “us” definition together with Sunni Islam. On the other hand, others who stay out of AKP’s nation definition are marked as non-national. In this respect, national vs. non-national dilemma is frequently used in AKP’s politics as a prominent part of its othering discourse.

Furthermore, as Erdoğan (2012) expresses, according to AKP, voting emerges as the primary and most important role of the nation. Thus, AKP’s majoritarian democracy understanding legitimizes the party through the voting decision of the nation. Hence, according as AKP represents the national will as the party who represents the plurality, it also represents the nation. In this sense, people who do not vote for AKP and stay out of the plurality, also stay out of the nation and are alienated and radicalized. Therefore, this non-national minority can solely be tolerated by the nation. Besides if someone is not from the nation as a part of plurality, AKP has right to determine who these radicalized subjects are in fact. In

this context, Erdoğan finds the right to determine regarding protesters whether students/workers or not in himself as he frequently does especially since the Gezi Movement.

Particularly CHP, Kurdish Movement and HDP, other opposition parties, supporters of Gezi Movement, Alevis, LGBTQ people, opponent media are regarded as “others” by AKP. However, at the point we reached today, as long as the scope of “others” enlarges, AKP starts to define and homogenize the nation through belonging to AKP upper-identity. And while the “us” is organizing and stuffing within the state bureaucracy and pro-AKP institutions, “others” exclusion from the system somehow increasingly.

As Özçelik (2014) explains, Kurds form the largest ethnic minority<sup>22</sup> in Turkey which stay out of the Sunni-Turk based national identity definition of AKP. The Kurdish issue emerges as appears as the most challenging and controversial issue of the AKP. During its government period, AKP implements three different Kurdish policies depending on its priorities, and necessities both in domestic and in foreign policy. However, as Saraçoğlu (2011) argues, it should not be forgotten that each of these three approaches reflects AKP’s specific position within Turkish right in any way, thus should be evaluated in relation to AKP’s hegemony project within Turkish right ideology.

In AKP’s Party Doctrine which produced in its establishment process, Kurdish issue addressed within the framework of citizenship rights, and economic development. AKP’s Party Doctrine addresses Kurdish issue under the title of “The East and The Southeast” and states that “... the way to end terror requires an approach by the State, respectful or basic rights and freedoms, and a way of thinking, which sees economic development and security as pieces of the same whole.” (Party Programme, AK Party) In this first phase which called as “*hizmet* phase” by Cenk Saraçoğlu (2011), AKP endeavored to build the consent of Kurds through service policies and benevolence actives in Kurdish regions. However, as distinct from classical state approach which based on economic

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<sup>22</sup> Kurds make up apx. 20% of Turkey’s total population.

underdevelopment, AKP also implemented policies directed toward recognizing the existence of Kurdish national identity. Thus, while AKP implemented neoliberal service policies in the region, it represented these as benevolence and kindness of AKP's toward Kurds instead of state support or investment. Within this period, AKP also tried to develop clientele relationships with the local community through service policies as a struggle tool against Kurdish movement that monopolized municipalities in the region. At the same time, AKP used service policies to reveal deficiencies of Kurdish municipalities. That is to say, in the *hizmet* phase, AKP basically aimed to nullify Kurdish movement, notably DTP and then BDP and gain Kurds' support thanks to services and benevolences for constructing its hegemony. However, due to effectiveness of Kurdish movement, AKP could not achieve its goal as required.

Furthermore, in the first term of its government, AKP has made progress on the Kurdish issue, such as canceling of state of emergency in Şırnak, and Diyarbakır or starting part-time Kurdish TV broadcast in TRT 3, etc. in accordance with the EU harmonization standards.

In 2005 Diyarbakır Meeting, Erdoğan recognized the existence of Kurdish question for the first time by virtue of recognizing Kurdish national identity and offered a citizenship based solution within the framework of *one flag, one nation, one homeland, one state*" principle. In the meeting, Erdoğan declared that "the Kurdish problem is my problem" and added that "we resolve all problems with more democracy, more civil rights and more prosperity within the scope of constitutional order" (Yenişafak Web, 13 August 2005) regarding the solution. In this regard, in 2008, AKP started the Kurdish initiative process which based on a peaceful solution of Kurdish question through political and social steps on the purpose of ending the conflict between Turkey and PKK and improving standards of democracy on the basis of citizenship. By 2009 while the extent and content of process was becoming vague, also the name of the project was changed as "Unity and Fraternity Project" for decreasing reactions and enlarging the scope in a way to comprise other minority groups. In this respect, by 2009, Erdoğan started to divide issue as PKK question and Kurdish question and addresses Kurdish

question within the context of citizenship, and civilization. Here, the thesis does not have the aim of analyzing Kurdish initiative process, or AKP's Kurdish politics, instead it is going to try to understand approach of AKP to the Kurds in the context of nationalism and citizenship. So, in this second phase of AKP's Kurdish politics which called as the *hürmet* phase by Saraçoğlu (2011) while AKP implemented solution-oriented policies on the Kurdish question, also identified itself with Kurds in terms of victimhood against Kemalist state and its representative CHP. Thus, as Saraçoğlu (2011) argues, AKP's approach to the Kurds can be evaluated as a way of including them to its hegemony construction process, which was required the elimination of Kemalist institutions, as an allied. However, while AKP recognizes the existence of Kurdish national identity, it rejects to define them as an ethnic group or a separate nation. Here, AKP's approach to the Kurds directly reflects the characteristics of its nationalism understanding. AKP's religion-culture based nationalism understating defines Kurdishness as a color of Turkey in a culture-based approach and reject its political existence. Because AKP's nationalism perspective defines nation on the basis of religion and ethnicity remains insignificant as a sub-identity beside the religion. Thus, as Kurds share their Muslim upper-identity, it would not be wrong to deny their existence as a nation and to approach them in the context of "*one flag, one nation, one homeland, one state*" politics. In this respect, AKP addresses Kurdishness regarding the Sunni-Islamic culture and common Ottoman past. And while it describes the nation as a peaceful family in terms of common Ottoman past, assumes the role of the brother as the Turkish subject of the nation. As a consequence, the second phase of AKP's Kurdish politics can be summarize through well-known motto "Love the creatures for the sake of God."

The third phase of AKP's Kurdish politics aimed elimination of Kurdish identity as a political actor. Thus, in this phase which called as "*tasfiye phase*" began to be mentioned as early as 2011 by Saraçoğlu (2011) AKP excluded Kurdish movement from politics as the main representative of Kurds. However, with difference from previous governments, AKP intended to eliminate not only military elements but also political elements of Kurdish politics. AKP regarded

Kurdish political movement as its main opponent, and primary obstacle which could disrupt its hegemony construction process. Because, although Kurdish political movement possesses to mobilization power over Kurds, it also conflicts AKP's approach on the ideological level. By contrast with AKP, Kurdish movement defines Kurdishness as an ethnic identity and addressees Kurdish issue as a national problem in a way to comprise the Kurdish nation as a whole. Furthermore, in contrast to AKP's religion emphasis, Kurdish movement has a secular characteristic. At the point we have reached today, AKP could eliminate Kurdish movement out of the political scene on a large scale. Many representatives of Kurdish political movement, HDP, are suspended in both parliamentary and municipal level. Even some of them are sentenced to prison without a clear offense or judicial decision. Kurdish political movement is declared as terrorists and traitors in the political discourses of AKP and Erdoğan. However, instead of receiving Kurdish people's consent, AKP tends to ignore Kurdish national identity with a kind of pro-Kemalist point of view.

In regard to other minority groups, even though AKP has made progress about minorities and their rights between 2002 and 2005 due to the golden age of EU harmonization process of Turkey, nevertheless "since the commencement of accession negotiations in October 2005, there has been a decrease in the credibility of EU conditionality." (Beylunioğlu, 2015) Especially in the issues are related to the religion and religious freedom, for example, equal status demand of *cem houses* or restitution of Fener Boys High School, the impact of EU remained insufficient for solution. By the 2007, AKP's attitude towards especially Christian minorities shifted after a series of murders. AKP politicians began to meet more frequently with representatives of non-Muslim minorities and signaled an increasing sympathy for their demands." (Beylunioğlu, 2015) In this process both Erdoğan and at that time President Abdullah Gül mentions about minorities, and their demands frequently. For example, in 2010 Gül presented himself as the "president of all citizens regardless of their religious belonging" (Beylunioğlu, 2015) in an attempt to underline the existence of religious minorities in Turkey. In 2008, all minority groups included in the scope of Democratic Initiative Process,

or i.e., Unity and Fraternity Project for the purpose of improving democracy, human rights and freedom in Turkey. Between 2008 and 2010 a range of meetings and organizations were made with the representatives and prominents of Armenian, Greek Orthodox, Roma, Alevi and Caferi groups alongside of Kurds. However, after 2011, strengthen of religious discourse and increasing the emphasis on Islamic values overshadows the “richness” and “equality” discourse in the political approach of AKP. So, instead of referring to religious freedom on the basis of equality and human rights, AKP prefers to provide different approaches such as Ottoman millet model which based on the superiority of Islam over the other religions. In fact, as Beylunioğlu (2015) explains, in the absence of the EU norms, in conjunction with changing of AKP’s nationalism understanding in a pro-Kemalist sense, minorities begin to become indistinct in AKP’s politics, while the importance of Islam and Turkishness is increasing.

Even though AKP claims that it is a tolerant and inclusive party towards different identities, nevertheless sometimes it can have xenophobic discourses usually as a result of its aggressive attitude. Its xenophobic discourses come to exist against nations which are regarded as enemy historically or religiously. First of all, Armenians as the historical enemy of Turkish nation is exposed to xenophobic discourses of political elites and supporters of AKP. People of AKP, notably Erdoğan do not hesitate to use derogatory words for Armenians. For example, on a TV show Erdoğan by saying “Excuse me, they told me Armenian” (Diken, 6 August 2014) for proving his Turkishness insulted the Armenian identity as the PM of the country which has Armenian citizens as well. On the one hand, while AKP accuses them of damaging Turkey from the outside, on the other hand, uses the words of Armenian as an insult against who it regards as others. Another nation which is exposed to xenophobic attitudes of AKP is Jews. For example, “spawn of Israel” is frequently used as an insult against others and enemies by political elites of AKP, notably Erdoğan. Also, pro-government media makes anti-Semitic propaganda openly and frequently against both directly the Jews and other enemies by using anti-Semitic discourse. Especially after 2008, increasing political conflicts with Israel, AKP’s anti-Semitic attitude has also



increased in parallel with political tension. In 2009, World Economic Forum in Davos, during a panel discussion on Gaza, Erdoğan by telling “when it comes to killing, you know well how to kill” (Newyork Times, 30 January 2009) to the Israeli President Shimon Peres just before leaving the panel, directly reveals his hostility against Israel.

As a result, that is possible to say that xenophobic tone in AKP’s discourse increases depending on its national sensitiveness. Undoubtedly, national sensitiveness of it is impressed by political agenda. Especially Erdoğan, as part of his aggressive discourses, can easily turn into a xenophobic tone.

## **2.8. WOMAN, FAMILY AND LGBTQ**

“Women’s link to the state is complex. On the one hand, they are acted upon as members of collectiveness, institutions and groupings, and as participants in the social forces that give the state its given political projects in any particular social and historical context. On the other hand, they are a special focus of state concerns as a social category with a specific role (particularly human reproduction.)” (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989)

Despite their all conflicts, classical nationalism, in Turkey Kemalist nationalism, and religious nationalism share the same opinion about the woman and social roles of gender. Both of them, envisage state as a man experience and externalize women from being a part of state imagination, and political sphere. “In a convergence with Kemalist nationalism, the Muslim nationalist narrative likewise excludes women, who appear as passive figures on national display, not active in the work force or in politics, and as vulnerable, socially embedded beings whose physical integrity and honor must be protected through social control (rather than as individuals).” (White, 2014) Both secular and Muslim nationalists describe women as asexual mothers in the national boundaries. Even they usually avoid considering women as equal citizens or national agents within the nation. That is why, Jenny White (2014) describes nationalism as a masculine ideology intrinsically and claim that “nationalist —whether secular or Muslim—

is a masculine term with which few women are able or willing to affiliate.” (White, 2014)

In its first term of government, AKP displayed a kind of positive disposition its women policies and relations with the women organizations. Due to gaining momentum of EU accession process of Turkey, AKP has pursued liberal, and gender-sensitive policies. In 2004, AKP made reform in the Turkish Penal Code, and the new Penal Code marked important gains on the gender-based violence. According to the amendment, the new Penal Code recognized sexual crimes as “‘crimes against individuals/crimes against the inviolability of sexual integrity’, termination of provisions that had previously enabled rapists to escape from legal punishment in the case of marriage, and inclusion of provisions to eliminate discrimination against non-virgin and unmarried women can be cited as positive steps in the amendment.” (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011) In 2005, AKP made the amendment on the Law on Municipalities which obliges municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to open women’s shelters, and “the recognition of the government’s responsibility to provide shelters to female victims of domestic violence hints at the recognition of domestic violence as a political issue.” (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011) In 2009, the Parliamentary Commission for the Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men was formed as a part of pro-EU reforms. On the other hand, headscarf issue has been one of most remarkable point of AKP’s political discourse. Even though AKP addressed the headscarf issue in liberal sense, its liberal rhetoric has been prone to conservative intrusions. Thus, in its search for a solution to the problem, AKP has bypassed the liberal concerns and demands of the feminist organizations to partake in the policy-making process.

However, especially after its first term of government, AKP left aside its pro-European concerns entirely and turned back to its patriarchal route which is the combination of its conservative, and nationalist disposition.

As stated above, religious nationalism describes woman within the boundaries of motherhood and due to woman’s reproductive bodies regarded them as the responsible for giving birth to children, particularly male children. Therefore, being the mother of the male child is dignified and regarded as a more powerful

category than being the mother of the female child. Because alongside superiority and dominance male children over female children, male children are also regarded as potential martyrs. In this respect, being the mother of a martyred son is considered as the most blessed, superior, and honorable position for a woman and give her the idealized role of “mother of the nation.”

While AKP promotes the motherhood role for women and reduces womanhood to motherhood, on the other hand, uses a religious discourse to strengthen its ideas. For example, the “Paradise is under the feet of mothers” hadith of Prophet Muhammed is too often used by Erdoğan and other members of the party for dignifying motherhood. Furthermore, three children policy, that is emphasized by Erdoğan at every turn, both take an important place in the AKP’s family policy and reflects its point of view about woman and family clearly. Erdoğan sees the three children policy as the guarantee of continuity of the nation; thus he blames CHP due to its promotion for birth-control. He perceives birth-control as a trap and warns the nation against this trap with the words of “they wanted to desexualize this nation.” (CNN Türk, 19 June 2013) Moreover, AKP regards abortion as murder, and even massacre concerning religion and ethics. In this respect Erdoğan stated that “I consider abortion to be murder. No one should have the right to allow this happen.” (Milliyet Web, 26 May 2012) Even though AKP could not make intended legislative regulations, it rejects abortion in case of rape as well. However, despite its emphasis on motherhood, AKP ignores pregnancy period and exclude it from the public sphere.

In AKP’s political discourse the term of “family” takes an important place and the nation identifies with the family. According to that, AKP describes Turkish nation as a big family which is united by good and bad memories and shares the common fate. In this respect AKP idealizes the nation as traditional, patriarchal family that live in unity and solidarity, solving problems within and not reflecting these out. In this patriarchal family representation, the state represents the father role which protects and maintains his family and family honor. Thus, AKP finds the right interfering in private life as the father of the nation in itself. “This underlying mirroring of family and state explains the state’s interest in clinically

verifying virginity of girls and women through officially mandated virginity tests.” (White, 2014)

In social order, AKP dignifies family as the primary unit of the society and idealizes traditional family model. AKP envisages a patriarchal family model which is “men and women are not equal but complementary to each other” (Saraçoğlu, 2011); also this thought is directly expressed by Erdoğan’s himself. In AKP’s idealized family, woman’s essential role defines as “bringing up the next generations and ensuring happiness in the family.” (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011) In that kind of families, woman, actually all female family members, are considered as the honor of the family. Thus, they expect the woman to “be a member in good standing of her family and community, that is, an honorable woman under the *himaye*<sup>23</sup> of honorable men.” (White, 2014)

On the other hand, women who idealized as the mother of the nation also represents sexual and national vulnerability. Thus, being impeccable in their purity is expected to them as the symbol of both nation’s and families’ honor. Because women’s shame is perceived as family’s shame and the men’s shame is perceived as nation’s shame.

In socio-economic dimension, AKP reduces the role of woman to the private sphere. Due to protecting the integrity of the family, AKP “arranges working conditions for married women who have children on the basis of flexible, part-time and home-based work” (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011) in a way to proper to Turkish culture and moral goodness. In this regard, Erdoğan argues that “a woman who rejects motherhood, who refrains from being around the house, however successful her working life is, is deficient, is incomplete.” (The Telegraph Web, 5 June 2016)

So, in consequence of considering the woman issues in terms of social order and family rather than individual rights and liberties, in 2011 AKP government changed the name of the State Ministry for Women’s Issues and Women’s Status to Ministry of Family and Social Policies. “Thus changing the focus of the

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<sup>23</sup> protection, control

ministry from woman to family, and from a concern with women's status to a focus on social welfare.” (White, 2014)

Not surprisingly, “AKP's stance gradually evolved from an expressed willingness for cooperation to lack of interest, and at times, hostility toward feminist demands” (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011) with the support of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Feminist organizations, which stays out of its nationalistic limits, are not tolerated and regarded as others, even traitors.

In Turkey, the LGBTQ community is exposed to a system of structural discrimination. “The existence of a strict patriarchy in the sphere of ‘homo-society’, manifested through language of sexual binary opposition, provides the framework for structural discrimination against sexual minorities by the Turkish state and its tools of enforcement, as well as the non-state actors of the public domain at large.” (Reak, 2012) Hence, one can say that discriminations towards women and sexual minorities are fed by same patriarchal notions which are explained through religious and cultural values of Turkey.

In its first period in government, AKP dealt with the LGBTQ issue in the context of individual rights and freedoms. In that sense AKP Party Program declared that “it is the expectation of our society to see Turkey... to be brought in the area of fundamental rights and freedoms to a position which it deserves”; and “Standards in the area of human rights contained in the international agreements to which Turkey is a party, especially in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, Paris Charter and Helsinki Final Act shall be put into force.” (Reak, 2012) So, in the first half of 2000s, AKP adopted a kind of tolerant attitude toward LGBTQs to cooperate with European institutions and human rights movements in Turkey to further democratization and extend rights and liberties. However, by 2004 attitudes of AKP toward LGBTQs have started to shift rapidly in an oppressive and exclusivist way as a result of its conservative point of view. So, by the second half of 2000s and increasingly in 2010s, AKP started to be the major obstacle against LGBTQ rights

and equality. For example, in 2010, Selma Aliye Kavaf<sup>24</sup> stated that “homosexuality is a disease and needs to be cured.” (bianet, 26 September 2015) And “the AKP’s negative attitude towards LGBTQ equality were evidenced as the government refused to make any references to sexual orientation and gender identity in newly adopted legislations in 2012, concerning domestic violence and the establishment of the Human Rights Institution.” (Yılmaz, 2013 )

According to AKP, “tradition is essential to nation-building and maintaining social peace in a pluralistic environment.” (Birdal, 2015) So, by the second half of 2000s and particularly in 2010s, AKP started to determine its policies toward LGBTQ issue in the context of public morality, cultural and traditional values which based on the religion and its religious nationalism. In this regard, “LGBTQ demands for recognition are depicted as threats to national values.” (Birdal, 2013) Furthermore, existence of LGBTQs in the society is regarded as a threat against the traditional-patriarchal family which is the core of the nation and the the touchstone of cultural and traditional values in the eyes of AKP.

“In 2013, “the LGBTQs have been one of the most visible social groups participating in Gezi protests.” (Birdal, 2015) And this visibility of them in an anti-government protest caused to be marked them as the most marginalized group within the social structure of AKP. During the Gezi Protests, and Pride Parade was held right after the Gezi, LGBTQ people are exposed to verbal attacks of AKP’s politicians AKP. For example, AKP MP Türkan Dağoğlu regarded homosexuality as a disease which also triggers social breakdown. (bianet, 26 September 2015) Also, since the Gezi, Pride Parades were banned, or attacked by the police forces, in Taksim where Gezi protests was held. And in 2015, due to parliamentary elections, discriminative tone in the discourse of AKP toward LGBTQs re-increased. This time, politicians of AKP attacked LGBTQ people through politics of HDP as a part of electioneering. However, while they target LGBTQ in their speeches, for example the PM Ahmet Davutoğlu said that

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<sup>24</sup> Selma Aliye Kavaf was an AKP MP and Turkish Minister of State responsible for Women and Family Affairs

“homosexuals caused the destruction of the tribe of Lot” (bianet, 26 September 2015); on the other hand the party used the pictures of LGBTQ demonstrations in its propaganda brochures which distributed in Beyoğlu district due to pragmatic concerns.

As Birdal (2013) expresses, prominent names of AKP define homosexuality basically in two ways: as a sickness or as a sin. That is why, their approaches toward LGBTQ issue are structured by a distinct homophobia which is regarded homosexuality as a target against their national and religious values. As a result, even though AKP implements any policies which directly target LGBTQs, nevertheless it also “does not have anti-discrimination policies laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.” (Engin, 2015) That is to say, AKP marginalizes and discriminates LGBTQs and their rights and demands usually by ignoring existence of LGBTQ identity in the political sphere.

## CONCLUSIONS

Nationalism continues to be a determinant in the lives of people even today, after several decades its apogee in the European politics. Despite globalization, abolition of borders and decline of the nations-states, nationalism still stands out as an important part of the politics especially in the countries which do not provide full-scale democratization. Even though nation-states emerged organizations which are based on equality against the empires, they have exclusivist attitudes toward people who do not answer to their description of nation with the effect of identity-based nationalism approaches. In this context, nations are still re-described and re-produced and nationalisms are still re-shaped depending on political ideologies, hegemonies, interests and approaches.

The aim of this thesis was to analyze the characteristics of Serbian nationalism and religious nationalism of AKP in consideration of their similarities and differences. Even though Serbian nationalism and religious nationalism of AKP seem quite different from each other, both of them could be analyzed within the context of common points as various examples of the ethnic nationalism approach which is marked in Hans Kohn's typology.

Both Serbian nationalism and religious nationalism of AKP emerge as nationalisms which are based on cultural and religious ties. Moreover, the study shows that both of them use similar methods and discourses to achieve their political goals and interests. The study also reveals that alongside their similar opinions on the issues like gender, minorities or foreigners; both Serbian nationalism and religious nationalism of AKP are nourished from similar social base which is mostly lower and middle classes of the countries.

Both national identity and national history of Serbs are identified by the religion. Due to its specific weights in the country, religion intervenes in the politics. At that point, nationalism act as a junction between religion and politics. And Kosovo, as a religion-based historical issue, emerges as the place where religious turned into national through politics.



The idea of Greater Serbia emerges as the evidence of aggression and irredentism of Serbian nationalism. However, Serb nationalists try to prove their legitimacy through national and historical claims which are strengthened by the victimhood discourse. Victimhood and denial provide the basis of discourse of Serbian nationalism. On the one hand, they ease to face with the past; on the other hand, legalize and normalize mistakes of the past.

In Serbia, authoritarianism increases the effect and power of nationalism as catalyzer, especially in the Milosevic period. Serbian nationalism is a xenophobic nationalism. Level of xenophobic tone of Serbian nationalism increase in the base of hatred and hostility. As it can tend toward other ethnic groups in the region, it can also tend toward 'others' within the country. These 'others' can be the minorities or ethnically Serb people who do not comply with the acceptable definition of 'us.' However, undoubtedly, women and LGBTQ people are the main 'others' within the country with the effect of traditional character of Serbian nationalism. Hence, one may say that woman and LGBTQ people are under the pressure of nationalism in Serbia.

In the nationalism of AKP, national identity and national history is identified by the religion, which is Islam. AKP tries to build its nation over the culture and tradition in a religious sense. Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and partly Ziya Gökalp constitutes the main references for nation perspective of AKP. Especially, Mehmet Akif Ersoy represents idealized nation imagination of it through *Asım* character which is narrated in his writings.

The Ottoman Empire represents both religious and the powerful side of the history in a traditional aspect. Hence, the idea of Ottomanism constitutes the core of the nation imagination and political vision of AKP which calls as the 'new Turkey.' In that sense, AKP emphasizes each possible characteristics of the Ottoman Empire from the capital to sultans to infuse it into people as the peak of the nation against republican characteristics which is embraced by Atatürk/Kemalist nationalism of 'old Turkey.'

Victimization emerges as the one of important sources of AKP's political discourse. Political elites of AKP, particularly Recep Tayyip Erdoğan emphasize

on victimhood in two senses: victimhood of religious-Islamist part of the society since the establishment of the republic and victimhood of AKP and its supporters after the 2000s. In the first one, AKP accuses Kemalist regime of its anti-religious policies such as headscarf ban etc. In the second one, it produces victimhood through the discourse of internal and external enemies which are claimed to intend to harm it or jealous of it.

AKP, like many others, interprets nationalism as a Kemalist point of view. Hence, even though it shares many characteristics of nationalism in both discursive and behavioral aspects, AKP denies that it is a nationalist party. For example, while Erdoğan says “we disregard each kind of nationalism” (Hürriyet Web, 18 February 2013); on the other hand, Mehmet Metiner describes nationalist claims toward AKP as “sheer calumny” in his September 2012 dated column in *Yenişafak*. However, though it avoids to be called as nationalist, it continues to be articulated discourses and perspective of Kemalist nationalism increasingly day by day.

In the politics of Turkey, 2010s are marked by the authoritarian rule of AKP, under the leadership of Erdoğan. Despite strong democracy emphasis in the political discourse, AKP addresses democracy in a majoritarian perspective. In this context, because of the election victories, Erdoğan considers himself as the only representative of the nation in the discursive aspect. In the practice, he attitudes as the leader rather the representative.

Even though AKP claims that it is an inclusivist and tolerant party to everyone, othering dominates its political considerable. In that sense, AKP establishes its politics on the dilemma between ‘us’ and ‘others’ increasingly in the 2010s. AKP embraces the people who included ‘us’ under no circumstances and includes them the boundaries of the nation as the acceptable citizens. On the other hand, it marginalizes ‘others’ of the society as the non-national enemies. The ‘other’ scale of AKP includes many groups from opposition political parties to opponent groups of the society such as students. That is to say, people who stay out of the Sunni-Turk (and increasingly supporter of AKP) identity are marginalized from both the society and the system of AKP. In that sense, minority groups,

particularly Kurds, which do not answer the nation definition of AKP emerges as the most marginalized group both politically and socially. AKP addresses minority groups as cultural richness rather than different ethnic and national identities. Thus, it approaches minority problems in the context of tolerance, culture and religion. As a result of this perspective, it tries to solve minority problems in the context of Islam and Ottoman past which they share with itself. However, as White (2014) expresses, although AKP tries to protect its tolerance toward Muslim identities at least in the discursive dimension; it cannot provide the same attitude toward non-Muslims and its discourse evolve a xenophobic one time to time depending on its national sensitiveness.

AKP interprets the nation as a big and united family which shares common fate. In the social order, it gives specific importance to traditional (and patriarchal) families as the core of society. Through its point of view regarding the family, it ignores women as individuals within the society and dignifies them as the holy mothers of the families and the nation. On the other hand, it discriminates and marginalizes LGBTQ people because of its homophobia which regard LGBTQs as threats against national and cultural values of Turkey.

In the second chapter, the thesis focused on nationalism and nation-building process of AKP as the new hegemonic power of Turkey. Although Islamism and conservatism of AKP are more in evidence than its nationalism, and therefore AKP is regarded as a non-nationalist party by many people, AKP has been a nationalist party. However, as above-mentioned, nationalism of it is based on religion and cultural ties as distinct from usual nationalism understanding in Turkey which is secular nationalism. Religious nationalism, as a newly-emerging nationalism, mainly focuses on nation-building process within the new Turkey imagination of AKP. Fundamentally, nationalism approach of AKP is a flexible version of religious nationalism which can change depending on pragmatic concerns.

As a result, the main discussion of this thesis structured around ideas, discourses, methods and peoples that both influence Serbian nationalism and religious nationalism of AKP; and are influenced by them. That is to say, in the

thesis nationalism is addressed both as an active and a passive subject. While in the first chapter the main emphasis is nationalism; in the second chapter, the nation stands out as the prominent concept. Each nationalism is unique and taken shape by its specific factors and conditions. Hence, Serbian nationalism and Turkish religious nationalism have many differences. For example, Serbian nationalism is nourished by conflicts and chaos in the Balkans, thus it causes conflicts and chaos through an aggressive and offensive attitude. On the other hand, religious nationalism of AKP is fed by the religion and the Ottoman past. Thus, it is characterized as an exclusive and moderate nationalism. Even so, its discourses and attitudes can easily turn in an aggressive and exclusivist way toward representatives of “old Turkey” which is the other side of struggle for hegemony. Possible to increase the number of differences between Serbian nationalism and religious nationalism of AKP. However, this thesis, as a whole, focused on the common points of them rather than building a discussion based upon differences.

Even though there are many researches on Serbian nationalism in literature, they mostly emphasize on conflict periods which Serbian nationalism caused or influenced. On the one hand, this thesis tried to draw the character map of Serbian nationalism and nationalist discourses; on the other hand, it tried to gather the past and today of Serbian nationalism in a historical context. Because in Serbia, in spite of its destructive effect, nationalism never loses its place completely in both politics and people’s mind.

In literature, there is no research which emphasizes only the nationalism aspect of AKP. In the existed researches, AKP is usually addressed as a whole and nationalist aspect of it is overshadowed by Islamist and conservative aspects, as it is in real life. Also, when one considers that religious nationalism of AKP still continues to develop and increase, the gap in literature makes sense. However, for the very reason, this study tried to focus on the nationalist aspect of it. Even though the thesis exceeds the limits of nationalism due to jumbled of ideologies in the politics of AKP, nevertheless it tried to explain AKP in the scope of nationalism.

In conclusion, nations and nationalisms can change. However, for some countries and societies nationalism is like a tradition which never disappears. In Serbia, nationalism is the main thing which makes Serbia what is Serbia. And in Turkey, it is an essential part of the politics. That is why, even today, one who can establish its own nation and nationalism acquires the power and hegemony. Therefore, to understand both Serbia and Turkey in today's context, nationalism still needs to be understood.

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