

Orkhan Valiyev, *Azerbaycan Milliyetçiliği: Azerbaycan'ı Cumhuriyete Götüren Süreç*, Ankara: Nobel Yayınları, 2023, 195s.

Değerlendiren: Burcu Temür

Despite the fact that the concept of nationalism has been examined by many scholars, it has not been possible to find a common definition in the literature in general. Nationalism studies are usually examined in primordial, ethno-symbolist and modernist approaches. In this context, according to the modernist theory on which the author also based his book, nationalism emerged together with modernity as a result of different revolutions that began in the 18th century.

This work was written by Orkhan Valiyev as a Ph.D. thesis. The author received his bachelor degree in philosophy in Baku and his Ph.D. from the department of Political Science and Public Administration from Sakarya University in 2020 with the thesis titled, "The Nationalization Process of Azerbaijan in the Tsarist Era: 1850-1920¹." Dr. Valiyev who discusses the formation process of Azerbaijani nationalism in his work currently works as the head of department of Political Science and Philosophy at Khazar University in Azerbaijan. The book was prepared based on the Ph.D. thesis. The first edition of the book was published by Türkiye Notları Publications in 2020 with the title, "Nationalism in Azerbaijan: The Formation of the Nation

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and Nation-State².” The second edition was published by “Nobel Publications” in 2023 with the title, “Azerbaijani Nationalism: The Process that led Azerbaijan to the Republic³.” The author’s articles published previously are in parallel with the subject of the book and the approach he advocates regarding the origins of nationalism. He examined nationalism in Azerbaijan in his other publications within the framework of the modernist approach.

The primary purpose of Dr. Valiyev who supports that nation building process in Azerbaijan began during the Tsarist Russia era is to try to demonstrate that Miraslov Hrosh’s “small nation” concept is a suitable tool for comprehending nation building process of Azerbaijan. Hrosh, who is one of the supporters of the modernist theory, divided the stages of the small nations’ nationalism process into A, B and C phases. In this regard, it is argued that whereas national awakening occurred in phase B, the real political demand emerged in phase C (p.28). According to “small nation” concept of Hrosh, the phase A corresponds with the period of academic interest, the phase B corresponds with the period of development of national sense and patriotism, and phase C corresponds with the period of the massification of national movements (p. 51).

The book, which is predicated on the idea that nationalism evolved with modernity, consists of seven chapters including an introduction, a conclusion and a bibliography. The first part is titled, “Nation and Nationalism⁴.” In this section of the book, the terms of modernity, individual and nation are explained in detail, and moreover theories of nationalism and Hrosh’s “small nation” concept which forms the framework of study are examined and the theoretical information is provided within this framework comprehensively. In the second chapter titled, “Mirze Feteli Ahundzade as a Modern Educator in the First Phase of Nationalization⁵,” Ahundzade was the catalyst for nation building process in Azerbaijan, which corresponds with phase A. The chapter’s theoretical framework was formulated within the scope of the enlightenment thought influenced by Ahundzade, who unintentionally triggered nationalism in Azerbaijan. In the third chapter of the book titled, “The Influence of Romanticism in the First Phase of Nationalization and Ali Bey Hüseynzade⁶,” was based on Hüseynzade’s ideology in order to explain the second phase of nationalization. In this context, Hüseynzade’s influence on the formation of Azerbaijani nationalism

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is explained within the framework of the romanticism movement and this section is evaluated within the framework of Hrosh's B phase. The influence of Mehmet Emin Resulzade, who had a significant role in the emergence of Azerbaijani nationalism, is covered in the fourth chapter titled, "The Formation of the State in the Last Phase of Nationalization and Mehmet Emin Resulzade⁷," which corresponds to phase C. Lastly, the conclusion section is included and the book consists of 195 pages in total.

The theoretical framework on nationalism is provided in the first chapter of the book. The author provides a detailed explanation of fundamental concepts such as modernity, individual and nation in order to help readers better understanding the subject of nation building process within the context of modernist theory in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Hrosh's "small nation" concept which forms the cornerstone of the study is discussed at the end of the chapter. Yet, in spite the modernism serving as the book's primary theoretical premise, widely accepted nationalism approaches are explained a very intense conceptual-theoretical framework. It may be said that this led to Hrosh's small nation concept, which is the central theme of the book, to be overshadowed and difficult to comprehend.

The second chapter of the book discusses Ahundzade and his works which motivated the nationalization movement and enabled Azerbaijan to begin the modernization process. In this chapter, Dr. Valiyev focuses on highlighting that the progress of underdeveloped Muslim/people depends on science and education. In this regard, in order to understand Ahundzade, a comprehensive theoretical framework within the paradigm of enlightenment thought has been developed. The third chapter of the book focuses on Ali Bey Hüseynzade who was one of the most influential figures in the nation building process of Azerbaijan. The works of Hüseynzade has been examined and analyzed in the framework of romanticism movement. Similar to the previous chapter, before going into the dynamics of the period, a theoretical framework has been formed by elucidating the romanticism movement that contributed to the formation of the national character. It is possible to say that in an attempt to better understand Hüseynzade's nationalism, comparisons have been made between German nationalism, German romantic thought and the Azerbaijan nationalism process. It should be noted that the author's strong emphasis on the idea of enlightenment and romanticism movements in these chapters may be too abstract, making it difficult for readers to understand the author's key point. The author discusses the topic with a variety of literary comparisons and examples. Yet, this may cause the topic and readers' attention to be distracted occasionally.

In the fourth chapter of the book, which corresponds to Hrosh's C phase, discusses Mehmet Emin Resulzade who had a vital role in the formation of the state and how nation building was intentionally managed in Azerbaijan. Phase C is regarded as the period when the idea of national Azerbaijan was accepted and the national movement was shaped in accordance with the ideals of Azerbaijanism. In summary, Dr. Valiyev's conclusion is that even though Azerbaijan was able to successfully declare its independence at the end of phase C, the lack of constitution or in other words a legal basis prevented it from building a nation during this time. Compared to the other chapters, it is covered in a more detailed framework and provides examples to help clarify terms and topics. Yet, more information is needed to fully understand the some terms such as collectivist/civic nationalism model (p. 132), which the author briefly addresses and claims to have traces in Azerbaijani nationalism.

It is difficult for academics who study nationalism to agree on the book's topic. The book covers a wide range of insightful, in-depth and notable literature within the scope of the subject it addresses. Moreover, it can be noted that using tables occasionally in the book makes the subject concrete and seems helpful for better understanding. Nevertheless, the book provides an intensive conceptual-theoretical framework and each chapter is tried to be explained within the framework of theory. It may be said that due to the fact that Dr. Valiyev's bachelor degree is from Philosophy, the theoretical background of the book has been handled together with the comprehensive philosophical discussions. It may be criticized that having so much theoretical focus may detract from its attraction for those interested in reading outside the field and as well it may bring about the reader to become easily distracted while reading the book. The author, who emphasizes that nations are a modern phenomenon constantly, could not avoid repeating himself at some points, although rarely. The book, though significant for its field, brings to mind the question of whether the author could have written in a more straightforward and comprehensible language to ultimately make complex and abstract theories more accessible. It may be said that the book which may be a guiding work for academics who wish to conduct research in this field may not initially benefit those who are outside the discipline.

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