

## Political Thought in Namık Kemal

Mehmet KILIÇ<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi, m.kilic\_1989@hotmail.com, 0000-0001-6521-7700

### Abstract

The nineteenth century marks a period in which the Ottoman Empire began to decline in many respects, particularly in comparison to the West. At the same time, it was also an era in which both the causes of this decline were contemplated and debated, and remedies were sought to rescue the Empire from its deteriorating condition. Although the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II had already witnessed efforts to address the Empire's challenges, it was during the Tanzimat period that the most comprehensive reforms were undertaken in an attempt to preserve the Ottoman state. Namık Kemal, one of the prominent intellectuals of the late Ottoman period, lived through the Tanzimat era and devoted himself to seeking solutions to the Empire's predicament vis-à-vis the West, while also articulating influential ideas in this regard. Although Namık Kemal made significant contributions across a wide spectrum ranging from literature to politics, this study specifically examines his ideas concerning politics and political thought. To this end, primary attention has been given to his writings in the weekly newspapers *İbret* and *Hürriyet*, which he published in England and the Ottoman Empire in order to grasp his political views of the time, followed by an analysis of secondary sources, including books and scholarly articles on Namık Kemal.

**Key Words:** Namık Kemal, Ottoman Political Thought, New Ottomans, Tanzimat, Westernization in Ottoman Empire

### Namık Kemal'de Siyasi Düşünce

19. asır Osmanlı Devleti'nin birçok yönden özellikle Batı karşısında gerilemeye başladığı dönemdir. Bunun yanında 19. asır aynı zamanda gerilemenin sebepleri üzerinde hem düşünülüp tartışıldığı hem de ülkeyi içine düştüğü durumdan kurtaracak çarelerin araştırıldığı dönemdir. Her ne kadar III. Selim ve II. Mahmud dönemi İmparatorluğu içine düştüğü zor durumdan kurtarmak için çarelerin arandığı dönem olsa da Tanzimat dönemi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu kurtarmak için en kapsamlı reformların yapıldığı dönem olmuştur. Namık Kemal de Tanzimat döneminde yaşamış ülkenin Batı karşısında düştüğü durumdan kurtulması için çareler arayan ve bu konuda düşünceleri olan son dönem Osmanlı aydınlarından biridir. Bu çalışmada her ne kadar Namık Kemal'in edebiyattan siyasete çok geniş yelpazede önemli düşünceleri bulunsa da özel olarak siyaset ve siyasi düşünce üzerine ortaya koyduğu fikirlerin incelemesi yapılacaktır. Bu doğrultuda ilk olarak kendisinin o dönemdeki siyasi görüşlerini anlamak amacıyla İngiltere'de ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda çıkardığı haftalık gazeteler olan *İbret* ve *Hürriyet*'teki yazılarından faydalanılmış daha sonra ise Namık Kemal ile ilgili ikincil eserler olan kitaplar ve makaleler incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Namık Kemal, Osmanlı Siyasi Düşüncesi, Yeni Osmanlılar, Tanzimat, Osmanlı'da Batılılaşma

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## 1. Introduction

The Ottoman Empire began to lose its former power starting from the 17th century. Particularly after the 18th century, alongside periods of decline, the Empire also started to experience territorial losses. In this context, the disruption of the Ottoman socio-economic system—which had functioned effectively and uniquely until the final years of Suleiman the Magnificent—due to various internal and external factors led to an increase in Westernization efforts from the 18th century onwards (Erdemir, 2016:2). Although attempts at Westernization can be traced back to earlier periods, the first concrete steps were taken during the reign of Selim III, primarily focusing on military reforms. These innovations in the military domain were largely a response to the Empire's defeats in wars and the perceived military superiority of Europe.

The second phase of Westernization, under the reign of Mahmud II, involved comprehensive reforms in both the military and administrative spheres. The limited scope and effectiveness of the reform attempts during Selim III's reign necessitated more radical and far-reaching measures under Mahmud II. Significantly, the previously unsuccessful effort to disband the Janissary Corps during Selim III's tenure was ultimately achieved under Mahmud II. Beyond military reforms, Mahmud II also pursued innovations in education and governance, including the establishment of new schools and the creation of various ministries, reflecting a broader commitment to modernization across multiple sectors of the Ottoman state.

The reforms undertaken during the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II failed to produce the anticipated positive outcomes, and problems continued to escalate, particularly after the 19th century. Consequently, the 19th and 20th centuries represented periods during which the Ottoman Empire faced considerable difficulties and was on the verge of collapse in many areas. Notably, these centuries witnessed uprisings across various regions, driven largely by the rise of nationalist movements. As a result of these revolts, several states, including Greece and Serbia, declared their independence. In addition to political upheavals, the Ottoman Empire experienced severe economic distress. The Empire wasn't able to pay even the interest payments on loans acquired from Europe, trade stagnated, and foreign intervention increased, while wars further strained the already weakened economy, leaving the Ottoman financial system in a precarious state.

In an effort to overcome this severe crisis, significant reform initiatives were undertaken during the 19th century, the most notable of which occurred during the Tanzimat period. In fact, the Tanzimat represented a continuation of reform efforts aimed at addressing accumulated problems that had emerged since the 17th century and had been insufficiently resolved by the initiatives of earlier sultans such as Selim III and Mahmud II. As stated in the preamble of the Tanzimat Edict, the state had been experiencing an escalating crisis for 150 years, a crisis that manifested in the consciousness of the Ottoman people as territorial losses and, in the administration, as a complex set of problems arising from classical state and societal institutions that were disintegrating and failing to fulfill their functions (Ortaylı, 2012:468).

During the Tanzimat period, intellectuals such as Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, Ahmet Mithat Efendi, Mithat Pasha, Şinasi, and Mustafa Reşid Pasha, alongside Namık Kemal, devoted considerable attention to the problems that placed the Ottoman Empire at the brink of collapse. Namık Kemal, in particular, made significant efforts to rescue the Empire from its precarious situation. His lifetime coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in Ottoman history, the 19th century. Consequently, in the aftermath of the proclamation of the Tanzimat Edict, Namık Kemal sought to reshape the Ottoman state along the lines of civilized Western models, aiming to prevent the disintegration and decline observed in nearly all spheres of military, political, social, and economic life (Uçman, 2014:115).

This study aims to examine Namık Kemal's perspectives on contemporary issues in late Ottoman politics, law, and economy. As an intellectual who lived during the Empire's final decades, Namık Kemal's experiences in London and Paris allowed him to gain direct insight into Western societies, while his travels across the Ottoman territories provided him with an intimate understanding of the Empire's crises, enabling him to propose informed solutions. Namık Kemal is regarded as one of the leading figures of the Turkish Enlightenment movement, playing a pivotal role in introducing and imbuing concepts such as national liberty, equality, individuality, popular sovereignty, parliamentary systems, and the rule of law into Turkish intellectual and literary life (Aydın, 2013:454).

In conducting this study, a qualitative research methodology was employed. Qualitative research, which utilizes data collection methods such as observation, interviews, and document analysis to address a problem, refers to a subjective-interpretive process aimed at perceiving previously known or unrecognized problems and examining natural phenomena related to the problem in a realistic manner (Seale, 1999:470). Accordingly, to analyze Namık Kemal's political views, his writings published in newspapers such as *Hürriyet* and *İbret* were examined to gain insight into his political perspectives. In addition, secondary sources related to Namık Kemal, including books, newspapers, and journal articles, were also used to further understand his political thought.

Normally, all of Namık Kemal's works were read for the study. However, since this study focuses primarily on Namık Kemal's political ideas, only the works in which he discusses political matters have been considered. For example, Namık Kemal

has a three-volume work that describes the founding years of the Ottoman Empire, but since this work does not address political issues in depth, such writings have not been included in the study.

## 2. Namık Kemal's Political Life

It is possible to identify certain periods that contributed to the intellectual maturation of Namık Kemal, one of the most prominent thinkers of the late Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, his life can be examined in three distinct phases. The first phase extends from his birth until his encounter with Şinasi; the second phase covers the period from his meeting with Şinasi to his exile in Crete; and the final phase begins with his exile in Crete and continues until his death.

### 2.1. First Period

Namık Kemal was born on December 21, 1849, in Tekirdağ. His birth name was Mehmed Kemal, and the pen name "Namık" was given to him by the poet Major Eşref Bey while he was in Sofia (Aydın, 2013:452). His father, Mustafa Asım Bey, served as the chief astrologer (müneccimbaşı) to Sultan Abdülhamit II. His mother, Zehra Hanım, was the daughter of Abdillatif Pasha, who had traveled extensively due to his roles as muhassıl (general tax collector) and mütesellim (local tax collector) (Fazıl, 2000:30). However, Zehra Hanım passed away when Namık Kemal was only two years old, and his grandmother, Mahdume Hanım, assumed maternal responsibilities. Namık Kemal's formal education was brief, largely due to his grandfather's frequent relocations for official duties. After returning from his grandfather's post in Afyonkarahisar, he attended Bayezid Rüşdiyesi for three months and Valide Rüşdiyesi for nine months (Aydın, 2013:452). Subsequently, he accompanied his grandfather to Kars following the latter's appointment there. Although his later education was not formal, he continued his studies with private tutors. These lessons included Islamic sciences such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and Sufism, alongside instruction in Arabic, Persian, French, and history. As a result of this education, Namık Kemal became proficient in Arabic and Persian, and he is believed to have learned French quickly and effectively (Erdemir, 2016:13).

The first period of Namık Kemal's life can be characterized by his interest in poetry, particularly classical Ottoman (divan) poetry, during which he composed various poems. After returning from Kars to Istanbul and following his grandfather's appointment to Sofia, he accompanied his grandfather there. Sofia not only became the place where his intellectual development was most significant (Yiğit, 2014:18) but also the city where he devoted himself intensively to poetry. During this period, aspiring to become a divan poet, he engaged deeply with the works of prominent poets such as Fuzuli, Baki, Nef'i, and Nedim (Fazıl, 2000:47).

Around the age of 17–18, Namık Kemal married Nesime Hanım, daughter of Mustafa Ragıp Efendi, Islamic Judge in Niş (Ottoman Province), and returned to Istanbul to live with his father. They had three children: Feride, Ulviye, and Ali Ekrem (Kara, 2011:6). Upon his return to Istanbul, he began his first civil service position at the Translation Office on November 8, 1857, where he also fully mastered French (Aydın, 2013:453). Additionally, he became a member of the Encümen-i Şuara, an assembly of notable poets of the era, and was influenced by their ideas. However, the pivotal moment in Namık Kemal's life was his encounter with Şinasi.

### 2.2. Second Period

The second period of Namık Kemal's life was considerably more dynamic compared to the first. During the initial period, aside from traveling from city to city with his grandfather and his early educational activities, his life was relatively uneventful. Moreover, from his return from Sofia at the age of 17–18 until he was 23, Namık Kemal's life appears to have revolved mainly around continuing his work at the Translation Office, socializing with fellow poets, and composing poetry (Fazıl, 2000:79). However, his encounter with Şinasi after arriving in Istanbul marked a pivotal turning point in his life, as "after meeting Şinasi, there was a shift in his consciousness from Eastern to Western modes of thought" (Erdemir, 2016:13). Şinasi's extensive engagement with Western philosophy was undoubtedly influential in shaping Namık Kemal's thinking. In addition to being inspired by Şinasi's literary style, Namık Kemal also learned extensively from him about both domestic and foreign political affairs (Aydın, 2013:453). During this period, Şinasi published a newspaper called *Tasvir-i Efkâr* in Istanbul; however, after Şinasi departed for Paris in 1865, Namık Kemal continued to publish the newspaper independently (Koçak, 2004:81). During this period, it is also possible to highlight a society aimed at rescuing the Empire from its crisis, of which Namık Kemal was a founding member. Known as the Young Ottomans Society, this organization sought to establish a European-style parliament within the Ottoman state and to identify solutions to restore the Empire to its former strength. The founders of the society included Mehmet Bey, a relative of Mahmud Nedim Pasha's brother, Ayetullah Bey, and Nuri and Reşat Bey from the *Mızıka-yı Humayun* (Fazıl, 2000:92). Within this society, Namık Kemal used the *Tasvir-i Efkâr* newspaper as a platform to discuss the problems of the Ottoman state and the Turkish-Islamic population (Yiğit, 2014:18), writing articles that criticized the government. As a result, the government shut down the newspaper, and Namık Kemal was appointed as assistant governor of Erzurum. He refused this appointment, which was offered as a promotion, and fled to Paris in 1867 together with his friend Ziya Pasha. Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, who had a strained relationship with the 'Sublime Porte' due to issues related to the Egyptian Khedivate, invited them to engage in publications on behalf of the Young Ottomans Society, known in

Europe as the Young Turks (Erdemir, 2016:14). However, following Sultan Abdülaziz's visit to France and disagreements with Ali Suavi, Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha were compelled to move to London.

During his two-year stay in London, Namık Kemal, together with Ziya Pasha, published the newspaper *Hürriyet*, in which he wrote articles that strongly criticized the government, particularly the Sublime Porte. However, his relationship with Ziya Pasha deteriorated while in London, and on November 24, 1870, he returned to Istanbul on the condition that he would refrain from publishing materials against the government. Except for a few contributions to *Diyojen* until the death of Ali Pasha, he did not write further during this period (Aydın, 2013:454). During the premiership of Mahmud Nedim Pasha, Namık Kemal, along with Nuri, Reşat, and Ebuzziya Tevfik—who had returned from Europe—launched the newspaper *İbret (The Warning)*, in 1872. Due to an article titled “Garaz marazdır” (Grudge is illness) published in the newspaper, he was appointed as the governor of Gelibolu (Erdemir, 2016:15). While in Gelibolu, the performance of his play *Vatan Yahut Silistre* (Homeland or Silistra) at the Güllü Agop Theatre incited public enthusiasm and unrest, which was subsequently reported in *İbret* leading to Namık Kemal's arrest in 1873 and his exile to Magosa (Kara, 2011:7). Namık Kemal later returned to Istanbul following a general amnesty.

Upon his return to Istanbul, Sultan Abdülaziz had been deposed, and Sultan Murad, who succeeded him, was replaced by Sultan Abdulhamid II due to his mental instability. Following Abdulhamid II's accession, the Ottoman Parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) was convened, and preparations for the *Kanun-u Esasi* (The Ottoman Basic Law) were initiated. Namık Kemal was appointed as a member of the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*) and participated in the committee responsible for drafting the *Kanun-u Esasi* (Erdemir, 2016:14). However, he was arrested for reading a poem in parliament that was interpreted as implying that the Sultan could be deposed. Although it was later determined during his trial that he had not committed a punishable offense, it was deemed undesirable for him to remain in Istanbul. Consequently, he was ordered to reside in Crete; however, upon his request, he was instead sent to Lesbos (Aydın, 2013:453–454).

### 2.3. Third Period

In the third and final period of Namık Kemal's life, he led a relatively less active existence. As noted above, his second period was largely marked by exile, whereas during this final phase he devoted himself primarily to scholarly pursuits. Notably, his three-volume Ottoman History, despite later being banned, was a product of this period. Similarly, other novels and theatrical works were also composed during this time. Namık Kemal served as governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Lesbos, Rhodes, and Chios until 1888 (Aydın, 2013:454).

During his tenure in Lesbos, he took a particular interest in the problems of the local Muslim population, undertaking initiatives to address their educational and religious needs, including the construction of mosques and schools; for these efforts, he was awarded a medal by Sultan Abdulhamid II (Kara, 2011:8). After being assigned to Rhodes with similar responsibilities, he fell ill due to the climate and passed away there. In accordance with his will, his remains were later transferred to Bolayır in Gelibolu.

### 3. Intellectuals Who Influenced Namık Kemal within the Ottoman Empire

Namık Kemal was influenced by a variety of individuals throughout different periods of his life. However, the people who influenced him varied depending on the context in which he lived. For instance, during his early educational years, the primary influences were his teachers, whereas later, the views of his colleagues or companions within the same society or newspaper became more decisive. Among the teachers who influenced him during his early years were Şakir Efendi, from whom he took lessons at Valide Rüşdiyesi; Kara Veli Ağa, who instructed him in hunting and equestrian training while he was in Kars; and an unnamed sheikh from Kars, who taught him Islamic mysticism and the concept of Wahdat al-Wujud. These instructors played a significant role in shaping Namık Kemal's early childhood character. Indeed, the education he received during his formative years had a profound impact on both his life and his literary works. For example, the martial and equestrian skills exhibited by the protagonist in his novel *Cezmi* reflect the training he received from Kara Veli Ağa (Fazıl, 2000:39).

In another phase of Namık Kemal's life, prominent intellectuals of the period with whom he worked at newspapers or collaborated within the *Young Ottomans Society* had a significant impact on his intellectual development. The transformative influence of Şinasi on Namık Kemal's life, in particular, is undeniable. Additionally, during this period, other notable figures such as Ziya Pasha and Ali Suavi also played important roles in shaping his thought. In this section, the focus will be on examining the influence of Şinasi, Ziya Pasha, and Ali Suavi on Namık Kemal's views. However, due to the scope of this study, only the points of intersection will be highlighted rather than providing extensive details.

Namık Kemal's encounter with Şinasi is, in fact, quite remarkable. Their paths crossed when Namık Kemal mistakenly purchased Şinasi's work *Münacaat*, believing it to be a hymn book by Yunus Emre (Kara, 2011:6). After meeting Şinasi, Namık Kemal began to learn about Şinasi's views, particularly regarding Western philosophy. His introduction to Şinasi in 1862 and his subsequent invitation to write for the newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar* marked a turning point in his life, as he was influenced not only in literary style but also in understanding both domestic and foreign political issues (Aydın, 2013:453). Şinasi's perspectives were largely shaped by his education in the West. Notably, Şinasi traveled to France three times and spent nearly six years there, during

which he developed ideas on social classes, citizenship, law, justice, equality, and science (Aydın, 2000:114). These ideas profoundly influenced Namık Kemal, who devoted considerable attention to issues of law, justice, and equality in his writings for *Hürriyet*. Moreover, Şinasi advised Namık Kemal to study French (Fazıl, 2000:83), as he himself was familiar with the works of philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Fontenelle (Aydın, 2000:114), and he encouraged Namık Kemal to engage with these texts as well.

Namık Kemal's acquaintance with Ziya Pasha, like his encounter with Şinasi, occurred after his arrival in Istanbul. Subsequently, Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal collaborated closely for many years. Their partnership continued until September 1869, the 63<sup>rd</sup> issue of the newspaper, during their active involvement in the secret *Young Ottomans Society*, which was established in 1865 with the aim of introducing a parliamentary system in the Ottoman Empire similar to those in advanced Western countries (Uçman, 2014:115). In addition to his work with Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha held positions such as Chief Clerk of the Palace (*Mabeyn Katipliği*), governor (*mutasarrıf*), and provincial governor (*vali*). He was also renowned for his literary works, including *Terkib-i Bend* and *Teci'-i Bend*.

In addition to the influence of Şinasi on Namık Kemal's views regarding the West, Ziya Pasha represents a synthesis of both Eastern and Western thought. At this point, an intellectual interaction occurred between Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha concerning the integration of Eastern and Western ideas. While Ziya Pasha embraced Western, particularly European, concepts, he did not abandon his own traditional values. For example, like Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha believed that the constitutional system to be established should be based on Islamic principles, specifically Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), considering that such a system had historically existed in Islam and that returning to it would restore this tradition (Çadırcı, 1991:42). Regarding governance, Ziya Pasha's views were largely aligned with those of Namık Kemal and Ali Suavi. He frequently cited the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Hulefâ-yi Râşidîn*) as an example, arguing that the selection of Ottoman rulers through consultation (*Meşveret*) was already a practice rooted in Islamic state tradition. In this way, he appeared to attempt to provide a religious framework for the Western parliamentary system (Emil, 1997:37).

Finally, although Ali Suavi did not directly influence Namık Kemal's views, there is no doubt that a mutual interaction existed between them. Ali Suavi was a leading figure during the founding phase of the *Young Ottomans*, and during Namık Kemal's time in Paris, Namık Kemal, Ali Suavi, and Ziya Gökalp jointly contributed to the publication of the *İbret* newspaper. Later, due to disagreements between Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha relocated to London, where they published the *Hürriyet* newspaper. However, the exact nature of their disagreement remains unclear.

Compared to Ziya Pasha, Namık Kemal was more inclined toward Westernization, whereas Ali Suavi adhered more strictly to Islamic principles. In this regard, Ali Suavi asserted that the constitution for Muslims should be based on Sharia law (Arabacı, 1999:77). While elements of these views can also be observed in Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, Ali Suavi's stance on Sharia was notably more conservative. It is plausible that this difference formed the basis of their primary disagreement during their time in Paris.

However, there were also points of convergence among them. For instance, Ali Suavi's *Muhbir* focused on ideas surrounding the concept of "Young Ottomanism," while the *Hürriyet*, published by Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal, emphasized constitutionalism (*meşrutiyet*) from its very first issue. Additionally, the newspaper highlighted issues related to governance, economics, and finance, drawing attention to the contradictions within the dualistic mindset brought by the Tanzimat reforms, the submissive administration under foreign influence, and the inefficiencies of the state institutions (Kara, 2011:14).

#### **4. Foreign Thinkers Who Influenced Namık Kemal**

Namık Kemal's encounter with Şinasi marked the beginning of a new phase in his life. At Şinasi's recommendation, he learned French, which facilitated his engagement with Western thought. Mastery of the French language allowed him to access and study the works of Enlightenment thinkers. Accordingly, it can be observed that Namık Kemal's ideas were influenced by a wide range of Western philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Cicero, Descartes, Bacon, Voltaire, Condorcet, Turgot, Robespierre, Danton, Garibaldi, Silvio Pellico, Rousseau, and Montesquieu (Arabacı, 1999:69). However, for the purposes of this study, only the intersections between Namık Kemal's views and those of thinkers who particularly influenced his political thought—such as Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Locke—will be examined. This is because Namık Kemal's understanding of law, state, and history was shaped significantly by their ideas (Birand, 2012:99).

##### **4.1. Montesquieu and Namık Kemal**

Namık Kemal read Montesquieu's most important work, *The Spirit of the Laws*, in the original French and translated it himself (Birand, 2012:113). From this, it can be inferred that Namık Kemal adopted Montesquieu's principle of the separation of powers through his engagement with this text. He conceived of the state as a *mecelle-i manevî* (a moral entity) and asserted that the state comprises two powers: the first is the power to legislate (legislative power), and the second is the power to execute (executive power). According to Namık Kemal, the former represents the will of the government, while the latter constitutes its actions or deeds.

The most significant point of convergence between Namık Kemal and Montesquieu, however, is the idea that these two powers must remain separate, vested in different individuals or institutions. Kemal argued that as long as both powers were concentrated in a single hand, governmental action could never be free from ihtiyâr-i mutlâk (absolutism).

Similarly, in line with Montesquieu, Namık Kemal argued that laws should be made by a group separate from those responsible for their implementation or execution (Kemal, 2019:51). Such a separation, he contended, would free the government from a style of rule based on absolutism. According to Namık Kemal, scholars, jurists, philosophers, and learned men (*ulema, fukaha, hükema, ukala*) unanimously supported the principle of the separation of powers. They believed that concentrating both legislative and executive authority in a single hand—namely, the government—could allow rulers to prioritize their own will over the law in governing (Kemal, 2019:51).

#### 4.2. Jean Jacques Rousseau and Namık Kemal

Another Western thinker who significantly influenced Namık Kemal’s political views was Rousseau. In fact, in the 12th issue of *Hürriyet*, Namık Kemal not only discussed Rousseau and his ideas but also cited them as evidence in response to a question from a reader. Additionally, in addition to translating Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* from French, Namık Kemal also translated Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* (Birand, 2012:113). Namık Kemal was particularly influenced by Rousseau’s ideas on liberty, the social contract, and popular sovereignty. What distinguished Namık Kemal from Rousseau, however, was his approach of filtering the insights he gained from these thinkers through the lens of Islamic political thought. In other words, Namık Kemal integrated Enlightenment philosophical ideas with Islamic perspectives in a dynamic manner to develop his own political thought (Lewis, 2017:155).

Despite some differences, the primary aspect of Rousseau’s thought that influenced Namık Kemal was the concept of liberty. Rousseau’s notion of liberty has two dimensions. The first pertains to freedom prior to the social contract, while the second concerns the freedom that emerges after the social contract is established. In the first dimension, all individuals are free without limits because they exist in a state of nature. However, natural humans also lack certain moral values in this state. With the social contract, individuals relinquish a portion of their freedom, and thus their liberty is no longer unlimited as it was in the state of nature. In contrast to the morally unrestrained life of natural humans, social humans are constrained by legal and moral rules according to the circumstances in which they live (Kara, 2011:34).

At this point, Rousseau argues that although the social contract entails certain legal and moral restrictions, these very restrictions in fact serve to liberate the social individual. For this reason, Rousseau maintains that obedience to the laws established by the sovereign power renders the individual free, and that compelling the individual to obey these laws is, in essence, equivalent to compelling him to be free (Lessnoff, 1986:81–82). Namık Kemal, on the other hand, while benefiting from the concept of natural law—which constitutes one of the fundamental principles of Enlightenment philosophy—differs from the Enlightenment thinkers in the way he grounds this concept. Whereas natural law was conceptualized by the Enlightenment philosophers as independent even of the existence of God and justified solely through human reason, Namık Kemal bases it upon the conviction that the natural and the divine cannot be in conflict (Arabacı, 1999:73). He later defines liberty as “the ability of an individual to do whatever he wishes, provided that it does not infringe upon the freedom of another individual or the public at large” (Kemal, 2019:506). Similar to Rousseau, Namık Kemal emphasizes that in order for individuals to secure and preserve their freedom within society, there must exist an authority (Kemal, 2019:67).

Another aspect in which Namık Kemal was influenced by Rousseau is the concept of the social contract. The foundation of Rousseau’s conception of the social contract lies in private property. According to him, in the state of nature, human beings were free, equal, and happy; however, with the emergence of property, this happiness was disrupted. The state, in turn, arose through the establishment of the social contract in order to secure property (Sarica, 1983:83). Namık Kemal likewise attached great importance to private property, linking it to individual rights and liberty, and stressing that a person’s life, property, and honor must be safeguarded in every respect. He emphasized that such security could only be ensured through the proper functioning of the courts (Kemal, 2019:50). Furthermore, similar to Rousseau, Namık Kemal argued that in order to protect property and to prevent individuals from harming one another, society must establish a *kuvve-i galibe* (dominant power) (Kemal, 2019:67). Thus, it becomes evident that Namık Kemal’s views show clear parallels with those of Rousseau.

Namık Kemal, however, perceives a parallel between J.J. Rousseau’s notion of the social contract and the Islamic institution of *bay’a*, regarding both as affirmations that political authority must derive its legitimacy from society (Uçan, 2012:72). To this end, much like Rousseau—who describes the state as an entity established by individuals through their collective will—Namık Kemal also conceives of the state as a *şahs-ı manevi* (a corporate or collective person) (Sungu, 1999:846). Likewise, in the fourth issue of *Hürriyet* newspaper, Namık Kemal, in a manner similar to Rousseau, defined the social contract as “the authority that emerges from the unification of individual powers in order to establish justice and reject falsehood” (Kemal, 2019:67).

Namık Kemal was also influenced by Rousseau with regard to the principle of popular sovereignty. According to Rousseau, legislative authority belongs solely to the people, and it is inconceivable that this authority could be transferred to any assembly or

individual (Rousseau, 2015:79). The most significant outcome of his theory of the social contract was the replacement of the conception attributed to King Louis XIV, “*L’état, c’est moi*” (“I am the state”), with the principle of “*L’état, c’est nous*” (“We are the state”) (Kara, 2011:38). Similarly, in the thirteenth article of *Hürriyet*, where he discusses different types of assemblies, Namık Kemal emphasized that the members of the legislative assembly (*vazı-ı kanun meclisi*) should be elected by the people, and that every individual ought to possess the right to vote in these elections (Kemal, 2019:158). Thus, the assembly referred to by Namık Kemal is a legislative body through which authority is entrusted to the people in the making of laws.

#### 4.3. John Locke and Namık Kemal

Finally, Namık Kemal was also influenced by another Enlightenment thinker, John Locke. Similar to Rousseau, Kemal drew upon Locke’s ideas particularly with respect to the concepts of the social contract and popular sovereignty. Indeed, Locke’s notion of the contract is grounded not only in the concept of consent but also in the principle of *trust*—which conveys meanings such as confidence, responsibility, and duty (Kara, 2011:28). As discussed above in relation to Rousseau, Namık Kemal likewise identified the concept of the contract with the Islamic notion of *biat*, while also regarding the community formed through the social contract as a *shahs-ı manevi* (collective entity).

With regard to the idea of popular sovereignty as articulated by Locke, he too vested sovereignty and the legislative power in the people. In other words, Locke grounded the process of decision-making, including the establishment of government, on the will of the majority. Thus, according to Locke, once the majority decides to form a government, the entire authority of the community passes into the hands of the majority by virtue of the social contract; in this sense, the approval of the majority is deemed equivalent to the approval of society as a whole (Sabine, 2000:220–221). The same view can also be observed in Namık Kemal’s thought. Indeed, Namık Kemal emphasized that in the election of the members of the legislative assembly, the decisive factor should be the will of the majority of the people, and that every citizen has the right to vote (Kemal, 2019:158).

Namık Kemal, who also brought the tradition of civil disobedience onto the agenda under the influence of Locke’s ideas (Arabacı, 1999:82), illustrates this point with the following distinction: if the people of a town were to come together and appoint one among them as a judge to settle a dispute, the decision of that judge would be considered invalid, since the right to adjudicate belongs to the government, and the judgment would only be valid when issued by a judge appointed by the state. However, if the people of a town were to convene and pledge allegiance (*biat*) to an individual for the purposes of sovereignty or caliphate, that individual would become the sultan or caliph, and all authority of the previous ruler would be nullified, for the office of imamate belongs to the community (Kemal, 2019:67).

Although Namık Kemal’s political ideas, as examined in relation to Enlightenment thinkers, diverge from theirs at certain points, they nonetheless exhibit significant parallels. The most fundamental difference between Namık Kemal and these Western thinkers lies in the source of supreme authority: while the latter accord primacy to reason as the ultimate authority, Namık Kemal attributes this position to Islam and its religious principles. In the ninth issue of *Hürriyet*, he emphasized that in order for the state to endure, it must adhere to the Shari‘a of the Prophet (*shari‘at-i Ahmediyye*) and preserve its identity as an Islamic polity (Kemal, 2019:107). In conclusion, while Namık Kemal synthesized elements of both Western and Eastern thought in envisioning the ideal form of government, he ultimately placed greater weight on religious principles.

### 5. Namık Kemal’s Political Ideas

Namık Kemal lived during the Tanzimat period, one of the most challenging and turbulent eras of the Ottoman Empire. In general, his writings address the crises experienced by the Ottoman state during this period and offer criticisms directed at the contemporary government regarding these issues. Namık Kemal’s critiques primarily target the policies of the Tanzimat Era and, more specifically, the administrators of the Bab-ı Ali (the Sublime Porte). Indeed, the main theme of his articles—both those published in *Hürriyet* and, after his return to the country, in *İbret* and other newspapers—centers on criticisms of Bab-ı Ali. However, alongside his political writings, Namık Kemal also produced works on other domains such as economics, finance, education, society, and law. These perspectives complement and help elucidate his political thought. Therefore, to gain a clearer understanding of his views on politics, it is necessary to also consider his opinions on these other areas. Nonetheless, it is appropriate to first examine Namık Kemal’s perspectives on the problems experienced by the Ottoman state.

#### 5.1. Namık Kemal’s Perspective on the Causes of the Ottoman Empire’s Problems

Namık Kemal was a thinker who devoted considerable attention to the causes of the problems facing the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, he offered various diagnoses on this matter in his writings. An examination of his articles published in periodicals reveals that he identified multiple causes for these issues. In some articles, he approached the problem from an economic perspective, while in others he analyzed it politically. For example, in an article examining the reasons behind the afflictions of the Ottoman state, he attributed the causes to *killet-i mal* (lack of wealth), *killet-i asker* (shortage of soldiers), and *killet-i esbab* (absence of necessary means for recovery) (Kemal, 2019:304). However, he ultimately identified the root cause of all these afflictions as *istibdad-ı hükümeti*, that is, the despotic policies of the Bab-ı Ali administration. In other words, the primary focus of Namık Kemal’s criticism

was the government of the time and the erroneous policies it pursued.

One of the primary targets of Namık Kemal's criticism in his newspaper articles was the Bab-1 Ali government. He went so far as to depict Bab-1 Ali as an adversary in his writings. For instance, in the third issue of *Hürriyet*, Namık Kemal asserts that the Young Ottomans, a society he helped found and actively participated in, were politically opposed (*muarız*) to Bab-1 Ali (Kemal, 2019:60). He attributes this antagonism to his view that Bab-1 Ali was responsible for the difficult circumstances in which the Ottoman state found itself. Namık Kemal held Bab-1 Ali accountable for the destruction of agriculture, commerce, industry, and education—the foundations of the nation's wealth—as well as for the absence of justice in the courts, the rise in unemployment, and the spread of ignorance coupled with the appointment of the unqualified to positions of authority (Kemal, 2019:61).

Among the main issues that Namık Kemal criticized Bab-1 Ali for in *Hürriyet* were economic matters and the events unfolding in the Balkans. Regarding the economy, he denounced both the unnecessary borrowing by the state and the wasteful expenditure of these funds, which were not allocated to national development or education. In addition, the inability to suppress uprisings, particularly in Crete, and the failure to take the necessary measures in the Balkans were among Bab-1 Ali's shortcomings that Namık Kemal highlighted. He also accused Bab-1 Ali of acting as a repressive authority, being responsible for injustices and the lack of fairness in governance. Taken as a whole, although these criticisms were directed at Bab-1 Ali, Namık Kemal argued that they reflected deeper issues contributing to the Ottoman Empire's decline relative to Western powers and its overall crisis. Based on these critiques, Namık Kemal proposed various ideas for the revival of the empire, which can be categorized into four main areas: economic, legal, modernization and Westernization, and political reforms.

## 5.2. Namık Kemal and Economy

Given the inherently broad nature of the concept of economy, which encompasses a wide range of issues from state finance to agriculture, Namık Kemal addressed various economic topics across different articles. However, for the purpose of this study, agriculture, general economic conditions, and finance are considered collectively. One of the key economic issues Namık Kemal emphasized was foreign debt and capitulations; he was critical both of external borrowing and of the wasteful expenditure of borrowed funds (Çadırcı, 1991:47). For instance, in the 3rd issue of *Hürriyet*, written in the 1860s, Namık Kemal notes that while the state had no foreign debt approximately twenty years earlier (around the 1840s), it had since plunged into substantial external debt (Kemal, 2019:62).

Moreover, according to Namık Kemal, the loans obtained were squandered and misallocated. For example, while constructing a second public bath in Bursa required 2,000 lira, the total cost, including interest, amounted to 30,000 lira (Kemal, 2019:226). In another example concerning wastefulness, he compares the Ottoman Empire with France, emphasizing that despite the Ottoman administrative sector having substantially less revenue, it engaged in significantly greater extravagance (Kemal, 2019:95).

Another issue on which Namık Kemal focused in the economic sphere was taxation. During his lifetime, the imposition of the salt tax particularly caused hardship for the population. An article in *Hürriyet* newspaper reported that the rise in the price of salt in the Danube Province led to the death of some livestock, while the state also suffered significant losses (Kemal, 2019:58). Subsequently, the salt tax was reduced to some extent.

Namık Kemal also expressed his views on agriculture, another branch of the economy. He argued that agricultural activities were not sufficiently developed to contribute to the country's prosperity. According to him, since the time of the Noachic Flood, Ottoman farmers and agriculture had shown little progress, both in terms of clothing production and technical methods (Kemal, 2005:300). He emphasized the need for agricultural reform, as agriculture had not served the Ottoman state as effectively as the arts and trade. However, he also criticized the fact that arts and trade were largely controlled by foreign powers (Kemal, 2005:300). Namık Kemal further expressed concerns about the deterioration of state finances, stressing that irregularities in this area were at the root of many societal ills. In line with the requirements of political science, he argued that the state should maintain an organized and systematic budget (Çadırcı, 1991:48).

Namık Kemal argued that the solution to the Ottoman Empire's economic decline lay in the *usul-u meşveret* system, a consultative method based on public participation. According to him, had such a system been implemented, the Ottoman state would not have fallen into severe economic difficulties. For instance, if the *Meclis-i Şura-yı Ümmet* (Council of the Nation) had been established, the domestic debt of twenty-two million liras would not have escalated to forty million liras, nor would oppressive taxes on essential goods such as salt and tobacco have been imposed on the populace (Kemal, 2019:71). Moreover, Namık Kemal advocated that budget deficits should be addressed through internal borrowing and fiscal restraint (Çadırcı, 1991:47). Finally, he emphasized that God had endowed the country with abundant blessings, noting that the soil was as valuable as gold and that the nation occupied a strategic position across three major continents and seas; if agriculture were properly developed, it could provide for the entire country and even Europe (Kemal, 2005:41).

## 5.3. Namık Kemal and Law

Before addressing his views on law, Namık Kemal first inquires into the source of law. In his article *Hukuk* published in

*İbret*, he raises the question: “Is the source of law to be sought in a primordial principle existing in the universe, or is it based on human will?” He concludes that even the concept of human volition must be connected to a primordial source, implying that the origin of law must be divine (Kemal, 2005:53). By “primordial source,” Namık Kemal refers to God; thus, he asserts that law should have a divine foundation. Accordingly, he critiques Western law, regarding its reliance on human foundations as a weakness and questioning the rationale of dividing law into branches such as international law, political law, or administrative law beyond personal law (Filizok, 1988:44).

After explaining his views on the source of law, Namık Kemal emphasizes the position of the sultan in relation to divine law. He asserts that the people’s rights are infinite, akin to divine justice, and therefore while the sultan may govern the populace, they cannot be reduced to mere subjects or slaves (Kemal, 2019:49). From this perspective, he argues that unlawful practices against the people in the Ottoman Empire must be abolished. In particular, Namık Kemal provides numerous examples of legal abuses reported in *Hürriyet*. To prevent such injustices, he emphasizes that laws should be transparent rather than secret. For instance, he criticizes the arrest and interrogation of an imam by te police for delivering a sermon in a mosque (Kemal, 2019:79).

#### **5.4. Namık Kemal and Progress and Westernization**

Namık Kemal also questions why the Ottoman Society stopped making progress or started to decline in his own time although the Ottomans had established an advanced and high civilization in the past., According to him, the primary reason for this stagnation was the mismanagement and ignorance of the ruling authorities in recent times (Çadırcı, 1991:51). Therefore, he argued that transitioning to a *usul-u meşveret* (consultative governance) system would facilitate the advancement of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, Namık Kemal rejected the notion that Islam hinders progress. He specifically challenged and critiqued Ernest Renan’s views on this matter in his book *Renan Müdafianamesi*. In this work, Namık Kemal thoroughly addressed the criticisms directed at Islam and Muslim societies, demonstrating that Islam, grounded in reason and logic, philosophically encourages modern sciences. He further supported his arguments by referencing Qur’anic verses, framing the pursuit of scientific and philosophical knowledge as a religious duty for Muslims in the quest for truth (Aydin M., 2013:460).

Namık Kemal also addressed this issue in the *Hürriyet* newspaper, arguing that those who claimed Islam hindered progress were, in fact, unaware of the true nature of Islam. He contended that such critics lacked understanding both of their own sects and of Islam itself, and he emphasized that the persecution of Muslims in Spain was not carried out by Muslims at the time of the conquest of Istanbul (Kemal, 2019:131). Regarding the adoption of knowledge from the West, Namık Kemal acknowledged the material superiority of Western societies. He noted that from the period of Sultan Mustafa III to Sultan Mahmud II, the Ottoman Empire had confronted artillery with mere factories, and rifles with sticks, resulting in repeated defeats. Consequently, he argued that it was imperative for the empire to adopt Western knowledge, sciences, industrial techniques, and economic systems (Çadırcı, 1991:51).

#### **5.5. Namık Kemal and Politics**

As noted above, Namık Kemal was particularly influenced by Western thinkers in the field of politics. Accordingly, like his contemporaries in the mid-19th century, he engaged with modern concepts such as *shura* (consultation), popular sovereignty, and parliamentary governance. While remaining rooted in Islamic political thought, he also drew upon the ideas of Western philosophers to develop new conceptualizations (Kara, 2011:45). Furthermore, Namık Kemal expressed his political views predominantly in his most widely discussed articles, published in various issues of the *Hürriyet* newspaper, including “*Al-Haqqu Ya ’lû Walâ Yu ’lâ Aleyh*,” “*Wa Shâwirhum Fi ’l-Amr*,” and “*Innal-Lâhe Ya ’murû Bi ’l-Adli Wa ’l-Ihsân*,” which were derived from selected verses of the Qur’an (Erdemir, 2016:37).

The concept of liberty lies at the core of Namık Kemal’s political thought. It is no coincidence that the newspaper he published in London was titled *Hürriyet* (Liberty). The relationship between liberty and politics, according to Kemal, is directly linked to the participation of the people in governance. Namık Kemal contends that the prerequisite for the freedom of the *umma* or society is that individuals within the community possess both personal and political rights (Kemal, 2019:50). By personal rights, Kemal refers to the security of life, property, and honor, while political rights are understood as the active participation of the populace in the administration of governance (Kemal, 2019:50).

In this context, Namık Kemal argues that the solution to the crisis faced by the Ottoman Empire lies in a representative assembly based on popular sovereignty. He considers the absence of public participation in governance as a deficiency in political rights and suggests that this deficiency should be remedied by adopting a consultative system grounded in the principle of popular sovereignty (Kemal, 2019:51). Through this consultative system, the people actively participate in the lawmaking process, thereby contributing to the formation of legislation and ensuring that all individuals act under the law. In doing so, they secure their liberty.

According to Namık Kemal, another way to ensure that individuals act under the law is to establish a structure separate from the executive branch for the enactment of legislation. As discussed in the previous section, Namık Kemal was influenced by Montesquieu regarding the idea that the legislative and executive powers should be held by separate entities. However, in his view, the separation of powers alone is insufficient for guaranteeing the supremacy of law. For laws to be legitimate, they must be accepted

by the community—what he terms “acceptance by the ummah.” Namık Kemal argues that the most effective means of achieving such acceptance is the establishment of a *Meclis-i Şura-yı Devlet* (Consultative Assembly of the State) composed of representatives elected by the people. This is because, apart from the *Meclis-i Şura-yı Devlet*, there exists no other institution capable of legitimizing laws in the eyes of society; such a structure is present in all functioning states (Kemal, 2019:51). Following the formation of laws, Namık Kemal emphasizes that these laws must be publicly announced so that they cease to be the private possession of individuals (Kemal, 2019:68). In this way, justice can be maintained within society, as everyone will be aware of the rules they must obey and the penalties they will face for noncompliance.

The fundamental question Namık Kemal raises at this point is whether popular participation is compatible with Islamic law. His answer is affirmative. According to Namık Kemal, the *shura* (consultative) system in Islam is indeed compatible with the participation of the people. In other words, concepts such as natural rights, popular sovereignty, and a constitutional parliamentary regime—revolutionary ideas in modern political philosophy—are either already present within the Islamic political tradition or can at least be interpreted as consistent with Sharia (Kara, 2011:45). Namık Kemal illustrates the compatibility of popular participation with Islamic governance by referring to events during the caliphate of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, specifically the election of Caliph Abu Bakr. Following Abu Bakr’s selection as caliph and the initial objection of Caliph Ali, Caliph Umar affirmed that Abu Bakr had been chosen by the people (Kemal, 2019:143). Nevertheless, Namık Kemal emphasizes that, over time, procedural adjustments may be necessary; the principles of Islamic *shura* allow for modifications to reflect changing circumstances (Arabacı, 1999:79).

Accordingly, although Namık Kemal asserts that the *shura* system also exists within Islam, he emphasizes that its implementation should follow a model similar to European examples. His reasoning is that, while a rudimentary form of *shura* had existed in decision-making processes within the Ottoman Empire, the interference of the Janissaries often led to bloodshed and disorder. Consequently, Namık Kemal turned to the West, seeking institutional models to emulate (Kemal, 2019:). For this reason, in terms of administrative systems, he particularly drew inspiration from the constitutional monarchy established in France under Napoleon III rather than England. While he critiqued certain aspects of the system, he proposed that, with appropriate modifications, it could be adapted and applied to the Ottoman context (Arabacı, 1999:79).

Finally, Namık Kemal proposed a structure consisting of three separate assemblies rather than a single legislative body. Each of these assemblies has distinct structures and functions. The first of these is the *Meclis-i Şura-yı Devlet*, equivalent to the French *Conseil d’État*. According to Namık Kemal, the primary function of this assembly is to prepare administrative regulations and governmental laws, and it is composed of forty to fifty members (Kemal, 2019:157). The members of this assembly can be dismissed by the Sultan.

The second assembly, which Namık Kemal had previously introduced, is the *Cour Législatif*, referred to by him as the *Şura-yı Ümmet*. Throughout most of his writings, this assembly is consistently described as the *Şura-yı Ümmet*. According to Namık Kemal, its members are elected by the people, and all adult individuals have the right to vote (Kemal, 2019:158). The primary function of this assembly is to approve or reject the laws prepared by the *Meclis-i Şura-yı Devlet* and to oversee the maintenance of state order. Additionally, if an objection is raised to a law based on a commission’s decision, the law is sent back to the *Meclis-i Şura-yı Devlet*. If this assembly approves it, the law is enacted; if it rejects it, the law is not implemented (Kemal, 2019:158).

According to Namık Kemal, the second assembly remains in session for approximately three months, and its meetings are generally open to the public. However, if five members request a secret ballot, the proceedings can be conducted privately (Kemal, 2019:158). The president of the assembly is appointed by the emperor from among the deputies, and ministers are not allowed to be members of this assembly. The emperor retains the right to dissolve or convene the assembly, but if dissolved, it must be reconvened within six months (Kemal, 2019:158). Namık Kemal also stipulates that the term of deputies should not exceed six years, as a longer period could allow malpractice to interfere, preventing the public from replacing underperforming representatives in a timely manner (Kemal, 2019:159).

According to Namık Kemal, the relationship between the first and second assemblies is of particular importance. He asserts that the laws prepared by the *Meclis-i Şura-yı Devlet* must be ratified by the *Meclis-i Şura-yı Ümmet* in order to ensure that they are approved by the people (Kemal, 2019:159).

According to Namık Kemal, the third assembly functions as the Senate and consists of three classes of members. The first class comprises members of the ruling dynasty, each of whom becomes eligible to join the assembly upon reaching the age of eighteen, although entry is contingent upon the Sultan’s permission. The second class includes religious leaders, marshals, and captain pashas, while the third class consists of members appointed at the discretion of the Emperor. The primary function of this assembly is to act as a balancing body between the legislative and executive branches. Another fundamental duty is to safeguard liberty (Kemal, 2019:206). Furthermore, according to Namık Kemal, no law may be enacted without being presented to this assembly, which examines whether the proposed legislation complies with the following principles and cannot evaluate it according to other criteria: 1. Constitutional order (*Nizam-ı Esasiye*), 2. Sectarian procedure (*Usul-u Mezhep*), 3. Morality, 4. Religious freedom (*Hürriyet-i Mezhebiyye*), 5. Personal freedom (*Hürriyet-i Şahsiye*), 6. Equality before the courts (*Huzur-ı Mehakimde Müsavat-ı*

Umumiye), 7. Protection of property from aggression (Emlakın Taarruzdan Masuniyeti), 8. Accountability of rulers (Hükkamın Ma'zuliyyetten Beri Kalması), and 9. Preservation of the state (Muhafaza-i Memleket) (Kemal, 2019:207).

According to Namık Kemal, the establishment of the Senate is necessary for three reasons. First, when disagreements arise between deputies and officials during the deliberation of laws in the Meclis-i Şura-yı Ümmet, the Senate can act as a mediator. Second, since the Senate includes individuals of high rank, it can protect the other two assemblies from encroachments by high offices such as ministries or the seraskerlik (commander-in-chief). Finally, the Senate serves as a balancing body between the legislative and executive branches.

In conclusion, Namık Kemal's political views are influenced by factors such as economics, law, and Westernization, and they primarily focus on the principle of consultation (meşveret) and popular participation. Additionally, Namık Kemal harbors a strong opposition to the Babiali administration, holding it—and specifically Ali and Fuat Pashas—responsible for the crises afflicting the Ottoman Empire. This opposition is clearly evident in his writings in *Hürriyet*. While Namık Kemal references Islam as a guiding framework, his ideas are notably influenced by Western thought, as exemplified by his presentation of the French constitutional monarchy as a model for the Ottoman state.

## 6. Conclusion

Namık Kemal was one of the prominent intellectuals who lived during the late period of the Ottoman Empire and sought solutions to the challenges of his time. The fact that he lived during the empire's period of decline led him to devote considerable thought to prevent its collapse. However, his ideas were not implemented either during his lifetime or after his death. Indeed, the Ottoman Empire itself came to an end some forty to fifty years following his passing. Nevertheless, Namık Kemal's ideas, the most significant of which were consultation (meşveret), shura, synthesizing the Eastern and Western political thought, hürriyet (liberty) were mostly transmitted to the thinkers and politicians such as Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Young Turks etc. Therefore, it can also be said that Namık Kemal's ideas were influential both in the proclamation of II. Meşrutiyet and Turkish Republic. There are especially three political concepts which is thought to have had a direct influence on the thinkers and politicians in the Second Meşrutiyet (Liberty) and Republican Period. The first and most significant concept was the idea of consultation (meşveret). Indeed, he sought both the root causes of the Ottoman Empire's problems and their solutions in this principle. For instance, when analyzing economic issues, Namık Kemal identified the lack of consultative mechanisms as a fundamental cause and proposed the implementation of a consultative system as a solution. In his view, financial policies or budgetary expenditures approved by representatives in a meşveret assembly, through public voting, would prevent wastefulness and thereby improve the economy. Similarly, he sought to address injustices through the mechanism of meşveret, arguing that enforcement of laws derived from consultative procedures—such as arrests and punishments—would prevent injustice and lay the groundwork for halting the empire's decline.

The second is his synthesis of Eastern and Western political thought. While he sought equivalents of certain Western concepts within Islamic political literature, he did not hesitate to adopt other ideas directly from the West. For example, he equated the Western concept of the social contract with the Islamic notion of biat, while he incorporated ideas such as constitutional monarchy and Montesquieu's principle of separation of powers into the political structure of the Ottoman Empire. And as the last one, Namık Kemal was among the first intellectuals to bring the ideas of Western Enlightenment philosophers to the Ottoman Empire. Like Şinasi, he read the works of Enlightenment thinkers and offered various recommendations for governance in the Ottoman context. In addition, his ideas later served as an inspiration for movements such as the Young Turks. Indeed, the New Ottoman Movement, of which Namık Kemal was a member, acted as a guide for the Young Turks in matters such as constitutionalism, parliamentary systems, and popular participation.

However, although some of Namık Kemal's political concepts such as consultation, giving importance to the ideas of Western thinkers, etc. were similar and influential in both II. Meşrutiyet and Republican Period, he also has some differences such as focusing also Islamic political terms such as 'biat' (allegiance) and 'şura'(consultation). The difference becomes especially distinctive in the Republican period.

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