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REGULAR ARTICLE

Resolving Belief Conflicts through Political Theory: The Case of Two Ottoman Political Thinkers

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Abstract

In this paper we identify and compare the arguments offered by two leading Ottoman public intellectuals in the nineteenth century, Namık Kemal and Ziya Gökalp, on why Western institutions are compatible with those of their own society. We argue that these arguments exemplify patterns of reasoning, identified by cognitive social psychologists, which purport to resolve inconsistencies that arise in individuals' belief structures. We draw two conclusions from this analysis. Our first conclusion is that the ideas of Ottoman political thinkers, like those of their Western counterparts, constitute a domain of evidence for research in cognitive social psychology. We secondly conclude that political theories have resources to overcome ideological conflicts in a society without resorting to partisanship or utopianism.

Keywords Ziya Gökalp · Namık Kemal · Cognitive Consistency · Political Psychology · Ottoman Political Thought

A prevalent feature of Ottoman intellectual and political life in the nineteenth century was the belief that the Ottoman Empire no longer had the military or economic power to confront the Great Powers of Europe, such as France and Great Britain, which had political and economic interests in Ottoman territories (Shaw & Shaw 1997, p. vii; Inalcık and Quataert, 1994, p. 6; Karpat, 2001, p. 4). A corollary of this belief was the proposal that the Ottomans must learn from those Western societies in reforming and so revitalizing their empire (Shaw & Shaw 1997, p. vii; Inalcık and Quataert, 1994, p. 6; Karpat, 2001, pp. 7–8). Yet the Ottoman political and cultural elites disagreed on what exactly it meant to 'Westernize' the empire (Hanioğlu, 1997, p. 45). In this paper we draw attention to, and claim to account

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for, the variance between the related views of two leading political thinkers, Namık Kemal and Ziya Gökalp, by means of a theory of cognitive consistency.

Namık Kemal (1840–1888) was a playwright and journalist, who played a key role in the formation of the political ideology of the Young Ottomans, who advocated constitutional representative government in the Ottoman Empire (Mardin, 2000). Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924) belonged to a later generation of literati who witnessed the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire along ethno-religious lines, and came to regard the nation-state as the only viable form of political order of their time, going on to participate in the formation of the Turkish nation-state in the early 1920s (Parla, 1985, pp. 10–17). In short, Kemal and Gökalp represent two different phases of Turco-Ottoman political thought in the last century of the empire. What is crucial for our purposes is that both thinkers advocated the preservation of what they took to be the distinctive character of their own society, while also arguing that it had a lot to learn from Western European societies. Hence, in their works, and each in his own way, both thinkers argued for the compatibility of Western institutions with those of their own society.

Some influential social scientists have regarded well-meaning efforts—such as those of Kemal and Gökalp—to justify the introduction of foreign institutions into a society for its own benefit as 'paradoxical' or self-defeating for the reason that such efforts are torn between rival ends: on the one hand, seeking to preserve the distinctive identity of a society and, on the other, creating similarities between that society and others. According to Benedict Anderson, for example, it is paradoxical to wish to preserve the character of a particular society while advocating public policies that would bring about the 'disintegration' of that society by facilitating its assimilation to others (Anderson, 1998, p. 59). For Clifford Geertz, we have here a conflict between 'essentialism,' i.e., celebration of the uniqueness of a society, and 'epochalism,' the mutual assimilation of contemporary societies (Geertz, 1973, pp. 243–249). Similarly, regarding 'late-comer' nationalist ideologies, Partha Chatterjee holds that such ideologies are 'deeply contradictory' in that they 'imitate' while seeking to differentiate themselves from pre-existing nation-states (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 2).

We find this literature illuminating, for it helps us to understand Kemal's and Gökalp's manifest concern to avoid inconsistencies in their respective attempts to synthesize local institutions with foreign ones. Indeed, both thinkers went out of their way to address and eliminate the possibility of such inconsistencies in their writings. Ultimately, neither regarded such inconsistencies as inevitable, reckoning that the preservation of the distinctive character of a society did not rule out learning from, or even in certain regards imitating, other societies, and this was precisely what they sought to show in their writings. So the above-cited literature is useful in understanding, at least in part, the motivation behind Kemal and Gökalp's intellectual endeavors, but it is admittedly unsuited for evaluating the upshots of these endeavors.

In this paper we argue that Kemal and Gökalp used certain strategies of argumentation to avoid any contradiction in celebrating the unique nature of their own society while conceding its need to learn from other societies, and that these strategies exemplify reasoning patterns, identified by cognitive social psychologists, which purport to resolve the contradictions that arise in individuals' belief

structures. Specifically, we suggest that these argumentation strategies can be understood in light of Robert Abelson's catalog of the 'modes of resolution of belief dilemmas' (Abelson, 1959). In what follows, we first explicate this catalog. Then we look at the writings of Kemal and Gökalp to identify their respective arguments for the compatibility of Western institutions with their society, and look for parallels between these arguments and the reasoning patterns identified by Abelson. Finally, we look at some implications of regarding political theorizing as a systematic effort to resolve belief conflicts.

Before proceeding, it may be helpful to indicate what we hope to achieve by considering the political theories of Kemal and Gökalp in this way. First, we believe that political thought constitutes a rich domain of evidence for cognitive social psychology.[1] Cognitive social psychology studies, among other things, the mental processes that are involved in the formation of beliefs, so it must be fair to assume that it could account for the formation of political beliefs as well. Indeed, there is a substantial body of literature that analyzes 'the political mind' in light of common human cognitive mechanisms (Jost, 2017). However, doubts have been raised about the universality of such mechanisms (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019; Heine & Lehman, 1997). Moreover, and perhaps relatedly, 'real-world' psychological studies on how individuals in different societies respond to radical social changes 'outside the laboratory' are notoriously hard to conduct, and are therefore very limited in scope (de la Sablonniere, et al., 2013; McGrath, 2017). In this paper, by showing that the reasoning patterns identified by Abelson also operated in the minds of two Ottoman political thinkers, we seek to provide cross-cultural as well as cross-temporal evidence for the universal applicability of such mechanisms. Secondly, we would like to highlight the ability of political theorizing to remain rooted in popular political beliefs while reaching beyond such beliefs, and resolving conflicts that may arise among them. This aspect of political theorizing is often overlooked by the two dominant outlooks on political thought. One of these outlooks takes the main task of political theory to be that of providing the blueprint of the ideal society independently of the beliefs of people in actual societies (Estlund, 2014; Ingram, 2017, pp. ix-xxxiv). The second outlook, by contrast, sees political thinking as inevitably always antagonistic, which means that one cannot have political beliefs without thereby defining one's 'enemies' (Mouffe, 2014, pp. 149–157; Heyes, 2020). But, if we are right in claiming that political theorizing is well resourced to resolve conflicts of belief that arise in actual societies, then we can see how such theorizing can have a transformative effect on a society without resorting to utopianism or partisanship.

Last but not least, we wish to shed new light on the political culture of the final century of the Ottoman Empire. The initial scholarship on this period tended to portray it as a time of binary political rivalries, such as those between reformists and

[1] We use the phrase 'cognitive social psychology' to refer to a general research program which, independently of specific theoretical and empirical orientations, considers human cognition not only in terms of phenomena that take place inside the heads of individuals but also in light of social interactions that shape or influence the ways in which human beings conceive of themselves and the world they live in. For more on this research program, see for example Manis 1977 and Schwartz 1998.

reactionaries, Westernizers and traditionalists, or secularists and Islamists (Inalcık, 1964; Lewis, 1961). This dualistic picture of the period has been called into question by an alternative body of scholarship that points out the parallels and synergies, rather than rivalries, between different political ideologies (Aydın, 2006; Heyd, 2011). In our view, these two bodies of scholarship portray different aspects of the same political culture. It was the case neither that Ottoman society during that period was divided along irreconcilable ideological lines, nor that all Ottomans were then united in their political concerns and objectives; in reality, there were continually redefined conjunctions of both states. That is, the Ottoman political culture then was rich with diverse political ideologies, which were not automatically harmonized with one another, so the parallels or synergies, such as they were, were made possible partly by the intellectual efforts of individuals to reconcile competing political ideologies. We argue that Namık Kemal and Ziya Gökalp were among those individuals, and therefore an analysis of their political ideas will help to understand not just the politically salient belief conflicts of their respective times, but also some possible ways of resolving them.

Abelson on Belief Dilemmas

Abelson was a proponent of a school of thought in social psychology that explores the mental processes that operate in individuals' efforts to eliminate conflicts or inconsistencies in cognition. The key claim of this school of thought is that human beings seek consistency among their beliefs, and are disposed to alter their beliefs to achieve it (Festinger, 1957). Surely, the cohesion of one's beliefs is susceptible to different kinds of discord. For one thing, there can be an 'incongruity' between what one assumes to be the case about a particular external object, and one's actual experience with that object (Osgood, 1960, p. 359). For another, a 'discrepancy' could arise between one's beliefs and one's expectations concerning the beliefs of others (Cast & Burke, 2002 p. 1048). Also there could be 'dissonance' between one's plans of action and one's sense of one's achievements in the world (Festinger, 1957). Moreover, one may hold beliefs whose propositional contents contradict each other—and it is Abelson's work on this last type of conflict that concerns us in the present paper (Abelson, 1959). These are some of the different types of conflict that cognitive social psychologists have identified. While each conflict may have its own particular causes and characteristics, what all have in common is that they lead to psychological discomfort for those who experience them, and human beings are normally inclined to eliminate, avoid, or reduce such discomfort.

We believe that Abelson's analysis of human responses to belief dilemmas is particularly suited to examining Namık Kemal's and Ziya Gökalp's respective arguments for the compatibility between an appreciation of the distinctive nature of their own society and support for its Westernization in some areas. This is, first, because this analysis is intended to identify argumentation strategies to achieve consistency *among* certain beliefs, rather than on how to make sure that a belief (or a set of beliefs) conforms to an external object, to an action in the external world, or to the beliefs of others. This is not to say that Namık Kemal

and Ziya Gökalp were not concerned about the latter inconsistencies; rather, our claim is that these thinkers were primarily interested in reconciling political ideologies regarded by some of their peers as contraries, supposing that their own conciliatory political projects were both feasible and would gain popular support (Şiviloğlu, 2018, pp. 213–221; Erişirgil 1984, pp. 136–145). Secondly, Abelson's analysis does not reduce cognitive inconsistencies to logical paradoxes (Abelson, 1959; Abelson and Rosenberg, 1958, pp.4–5). Thus, in this analysis one may perceive an inconsistency in one's belief system even if there is no logical reason to do so; or one may hold that all of one's beliefs somehow fit together despite logical inconsistencies. This analysis is suited to examining political theories, for such theories are susceptible and responsive to discrepancies among politically relevant beliefs regardless of the logical status of those conflicts (Ashcraft, 1980; Wolin, 1969). Finally, Abelson's work has been confirmed and amplified, rather than superseded, by subsequent studies, so it continues to be useful in studying the formation of belief structures (Schank and Ellen, 1994; Wyer & Albarracin, 2005; Perloff, 2017).

Abelson identifies four 'modes' of resolving a belief conflict (Abelson, 1959). 'Denial' amounts to abandoning one of the beliefs that are in a perceived 'dissociative' relation to one another, or rejecting the existence of such a relation between those beliefs. For example, a man who, upon deciding to lose weight, comes to think that he never liked high-calorie foods in the first place, thus 'denies' enjoying such foods even if hitherto he had been a keen consumer of such goods. Similarly, when John Calvin argued that Jesus never really condemned usury, he denied the conflict between Christianity and the practice of charging interest for a loan. 'Bolstering' is the attempt to resolve a belief dilemma not by denying anything, but by introducing a third 'cognitive element' into the equation and so tipping the balance in favor of one of the beliefs at stake: the smoker who is worried about lung cancer tells himself that smoking is 'good for his nerves' and thus bolsters his addiction without denying its harmful effects. Abelson observes that the 'bolstering' of one belief sometimes accompanies the 'denial' of another. For example, a proponent of a large standing army, which otherwise would be unwelcome in peacetime, may not only deny that it has any military benefit in peacetime for the reason that it would deter potential aggressors, but also bolster his support for such an army by suggesting that 'it is good character training for the nation's youth'. Abelson's third mode of resolving belief dilemmas is 'differentiation', whereby the belief that conflicts with another is 'split into' parts so as to obtain an element of that belief that creates no imbalance. As per this strategy, a devout Christian who not only takes the Bible to be the infallible word of God, but also believes in the theory of evolution, could evade the conflict between these two beliefs by distinguishing literal from figurative interpretations of the Bible and arguing that the latter does not contradict evolutionary biology. The fourth way of resolving a belief dilemma is 'transcendence', which entails bringing together conflicting beliefs under a broader conceptual framework and so moving beyond, without eliminating, the tension between those beliefs. Accordingly, 'the dilemma pitting science against religion' can be 'transcended' if one believes that science and spirituality 'must be jointly cultivated to reach a fuller life'.

Before turning to how these reasoning strategies help us to understand the arguments that appear in the writings of Namık Kemal and Ziya Gökalp, it may be useful to identify the social-scientific basis of our analysis. While our main concern is with the ways in which Kemal and Gökalp respectively argued for the adoption of certain political beliefs, we do not consider these beliefs simply as products of cognitive operations internal to the minds of these individuals, since, as we shall see, these beliefs were formed in response to, and with the intention of resolving, the discrepancies among the prevailing political ideologies of their respective times, such as Westernism, Islamism, and nationalism. So the political beliefs under consideration are socially and historically situated and motivated. These beliefs in turn contributed to the creation of political realities of the final decades of the Ottoman Empire. Kemal was not only one of the most popular and influential playwrights of his time but also a co-drafter of the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire (1876), which transformed the Empire into a parliamentary monarchy, something for which Kemal had campaigned long and hard (Akün, 2006). Gökalp was not a popular figure, but was nevertheless the leading ideologue of the Committee of Union and Progress, the political party that ruled the Empire during its last ten years (Hanioğlu, 2011, 62). Following the downfall of the Empire after World War I, he entered the first parliament of the nascent Turkish Republic and drafted some of the key articles of its constitution. After his death in 1924, his ideas continued to influence the political elites who built the key social and political institutions of the republic (Zürcher, 2005).

What the careers of these individuals illustrate is that political beliefs cannot be considered the mirror images of the society within which they are formed, as they are among the many factors that may transform that society. Political beliefs signal the variously affirmative and critical attitudes individuals have toward their own society, and the future state of any society is partly a function of those attitudes. Of course, the political beliefs of an individual or group can have a transformative effect in a society only when a sufficient number of that society's members adopt and act on those beliefs. This means that there is no sharp line separating the individual from the social or political; what we have, instead, is an image of the social world where individuals constantly both try to make sense of that world and have an impact on it by interacting and communicating with one another. This fundamental insight, which is embraced by social scientists with diverse methodological orientations (Skinner, 1969; Tilly, 1983; Weingast, 1995; Kuran, 1995; Carter & Fuller, 2016, de la Sablonniere et al., 2013), underlies what we have to say in this paper about the political beliefs of Kemal and Gökalp.

Now let us turn to these individuals' respective arguments for the compatibility of Western institutions with their own society, and explore the usefulness of Abelsonian modes of reasoning in understanding them.

Namık Kemal on Islam and Representative Government

A concern about the continued existence of the Ottoman Empire underlay much of Kemal's literary activity (Berkes, 1998, pp. 209–214). This concern was justified, since by the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire had lost the regional military

and economic supremacy that it had enjoyed since the fifteenth century. The initial official response to this condition was an attempt to restore the empire to its original state and glory, but the military defeats by Austria and Russia toward the end of the eighteenth century made it clear that the Ottoman army could no longer win wars by traditional means, and that it needed to be reformed according to the standards of the superior European armies (Shaw & Shaw, 1977, pp. 1–54; Aksan, 2007, pp. 167–170). This judgment was variously applied by Ottoman governments starting with that of Selim III (1789–1807). The efforts to 'Westernize' the army were accompanied by reforms in other areas of social and political life, such as public administration, taxation, civil rights, and education. The ideas that lay beneath these reforms found expression in the two imperial edicts of *Gülhane* (1839) and *Islahat* (1856) (Inalcık 2001; Karpat, 2001, pp. 8–10). The reform process culminated in the introduction of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876, which launched a new type of monarchy checked by a parliament of the representatives of all Ottoman citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The reforms and the ideas behind them were not welcomed by all, however. Some public figures, including some state officials and journalists, objected to these ideas by claiming that they violated the basic tenets of Islam. One of these criticisms was directed at the idea of a parliament of people's representatives. The criticism was that this idea is fundamentally Western, and not surprisingly it undermined the authority of the sultan as the caliph and supreme leader of the Muslim world (Abu-Manneh, 1990; Oktay, 1991, pp.39–54; Mardin, 2000, pp. 367–377; Kara, 1993, p. 134–135). A second and related criticism was levelled at the idea of equal citizenship, particularly its application in the Ottoman parliament. The allegation here was that Islam could not allow the participation of non-Muslims in the government of an Islamic state, which the Ottoman Empire was or had to be (Cevdet Paşa, 1953, pp. 68–71; Davison, 1990, pp. 120–121; Karpat, 2001, pp. 75–77).A co-drafter of the 1876 constitution, and a devout Muslim, Kemal clearly did not agree with these allegedly Islamic criticisms of ideas and institutions protected by the constitution (Kemal, 2002, pp. 147–148; 2018, p. 148). He believed not only that a multi-religious parliament is compatible with Islam, but also that this institution would be beneficial for the empire. In Abelson's terms, he both 'denied' the alleged incompatibility of Islam and representative government, and 'bolstered' this denial by indicating the benefits of this institution for the Ottoman state and society.

Kemal's 'denial' of the alleged incompatibility of Islam with a parliament of people's representatives proceeded in four steps. First, he equated the Islamic notion of *biat*, i.e., the pledge of devotion, with the giving of consent to a rule or ruler, which Kemal regarded as the ultimate exercise of political sovereignty in a society. Secondly, he called attention to the importance in the Quran of 'consultation' or public deliberation prior to giving consent to anything. Thirdly, he proposed that the parliament was the proper setting for the deliberative formation and exercise of political consent and sovereignty. Finally, Kemal argued that both Islam and common sense not only permit but also demand the participation of non-Muslims in political government. Let us now look more closely at this four-step argument.

The first step of Kemal's argument revolves around an analysis of political sovereignty according to Islam. On his interpretation of Islam, God has created human

beings as free, and so the chief task of any Islamic political association is to safeguard the God-given liberty of its members. (Kemal, 2002, p. 144). Accordingly, public officials would have both the duty and the right to carry out that task. Kemal submitted, however, that this task should not be entrusted to just anyone, but only to those who receive the approval of the people; after all, it is for the sake of the liberties of citizens that someone is granted the authority to govern in a society. That means that it is ultimately up to the people to decide who is to serve as 'the guardian' of their liberty:

> If the people of a town appointed someone as judge over themselves to judge cases arising among them, the judicial activity of this person could not be valid. Judicial authority belongs to the judge appointed by the state because such jurisdiction is a right of the government. But if the people of a town gathered and pledged allegiance to someone for the sultanate or caliphate, this person would indeed become sultan or caliph, while the previous sultan or caliph would retain no authority whatever, because the imamate is a right of the Islamic community (Kemal, 2002, p. 145).

The claim here is that the 'imamate' or leadership in the Muslim world is a collective task rather than a privilege of a person or group. In matters concerning both government and faith, then, the last word lies with the people. Kemal (2002) granted that popular sovereignty in a large empire can be exercised only indirectly, i.e., through the sultan, the council of ministers, and the parliament of people's deputies, but this would not change the fact that the people's allegiance to public officials would be contingent upon the extent to which they govern by 'the will of the people'. So Kemal was not opposed to monarchical caliphate, yet he stipulated that this office must be accountable to the people. He saw this norm being properly understood and applied in France in the nineteenth century, but not in his own country, so he called for the adoption of the French model of government by the Ottoman state (Mardin, 2000, 311).

Kemal (2018, pp. 15–16) regarded unrestricted public deliberation as a prerequisite for the freedom involved in pledging allegiance to public officials. He referred to such public deliberation as the 'method of consultation' (*usul-i meşveret*). His claim was that concerning any matter, there can always be someone else who knows more than us, so the cogency of any belief cannot be ascertained without free public dialogue. This idea goes back to Aristotle (1998, 3.11), but its best-known version in the nineteenth century was articulated by J. S. Mill (1978, pp. 15–16). According to Kemal (2002), however, the ultimate justification of this idea is found in the Quran, which commands anyone who is to make an authoritative decision on a matter of public concern to 'seek the counsel' of others. He also cited the prophet Mohammed's saying 'disagreement in my community is a blessing' as a further justification of the role of public deliberation in reaching the truth in Islam (Kemal, 2018, pp. 18–19).

However, Kemal's discussion of the place of popular sovereignty and of public deliberation in Islamic doctrine, though crucial, did not amount to a full defence of the parliament against its Islamist critics. In addition, he needed to show that this institution can indeed be incorporated into the Ottoman polity.

The problem here, as stated earlier, was that it posed a challenge to the authority of the sultan as caliph by generating a forum of decision-making separate from the caliphate. The idea of separation of governmental powers had a venerable place in the history of Western societies, but for some Ottoman officials at end of the nineteenth century this idea was a 'novelty' (*bid'at*) which not only was foreign to the Islamic world but also threatened the political and spiritual authority of the sultan (Kemal, 2018, pp. 60–63).

Kemal addressed this concern in a series of articles titled 'Letters on the Method of Consultation' that appeared in the newspaper *Hürriyet* (Liberty). In those articles he argued that political institutions representing the interests of ordinary people had always existed in one form or another in Islamic societies. For instance, he reported that following the Quranic duty to always 'seek the council of others,' the prophet Muhammad and his first four successors or caliphs regularly met with esteemed members of the community and consulted them in making their decisions regarding matters of common concern (Kemal, 2018, p. 61). So the first rulers of the Islamic world shared their power with parliament-like entities, and thus upheld a separation of governmental powers (Kemal, 2018, pp. 6–7).As per this tradition, Kemal reported, the Ottoman Janissary army regarded itself as entitled to defy the orders of sultans by casting itself as the representative of the people (Kemal, 2018, p. 62; Mardin, 2000, p.311; Tezcan, 2010, p. 6).

As the final step of his argument, Kemal argued that in a multi-religious society such as the Ottoman society, the government must be representative of, or responsive to, the interests of all citizens, including non-Muslims. For Kemal, this was a requirement not only of sharia but also of common sense that recognizes the value of social peace. Thus he wrote: 'Why shouldn't we respect the rights of our non-Muslim citizens in the popular assembly? … Sharia entails the equality of all citizens. Such equality is also dictated by ordinary human reason and judgment. Only the pernicious whims of a minority stand against equality and justice for all' (Kemal, 2018, p. 147).

So far we have looked at Kemal's four-step argument for the conclusion that the institution of the parliament composed of both Muslims and non-Muslims is neither incompatible with Islam nor alien to Islamic societies. This argument exhibits the type of reasoning that Abelson calls 'denial,' for it purports to resolve an inconsistency that is said to exist between Islam and the Western institution of the parliament, and the idea of popular sovereignty that underlies it, by denying that this institution is foreign to Islam. Yet Kemal's response to this claim was not only one of denial; it also involved an argument that 'bolsters' the adoption of that institution in the Ottoman polity. The latter argument was situated in a larger argument against religious conservatism or rigidity that rejects all kinds of novelty (*bi'dat*):

> What if the people's assembly that we propose is a novelty? … A steamboat is also a novelty. What is more important: the annexation of Crete by Greek ships or not using steamboats? Repeating rifles are also an innovation; is it more important to be annexed by Greek soldiers or not to use repeating rifles? … It is best to define these innovations as more than beneficial, but as required (2018, p. 62).

So although Kemal did not consider the parliament as foreign to Islam, in his view this institution warranted support *even if* it were a foreign institution. This is because, he argued, it would benefit the Islamic world in the same way that, for example, new military technologies would help the Ottoman army to win wars that it would otherwise lose. For Kemal, one clear benefit of the parliament is that it would empower the people to expose the inner workings of the Ottoman state, and so compel public officials to better govern the country (Kemal, 2018, pp. 106–107). Also, by facilitating the participation of non-Muslims in government, such an assembly would prevent Christian European states from interfering in the internal affairs of the empire by citing the grievances on behalf of these citizens (Kemal, 2002, pp. 162–164). These are 'bolstering' type of arguments in Abelson's sense in that they reinforce a belief that Kemal already has—i.e., the belief that the parliament is an Islamic institution.

It is crucial to realize that these 'bolstering' arguments are actually instrumentalist arguments, which are independent of and irreducible to Islamic doctrine. Kemal relied on such arguments also in praising the progress in the material sciences and technologies in Western European societies; such progress, he wrote, must be welcomed, for it facilitates the continuity and development of societies regardless of their religious orientations (Kemal, 2019). That is why he urged Ottoman decision-makers to be unhesitatingly open to the transfer of such sciences and technologies from the West (Berkes 216). The fact that Kemal's social and political ideas did not derive exclusively from the traditions or achievements of his own society indicates that his 'style' of thinking was prone to flexibility and multi-sidedness rather than rigidity and uniformity (Sidanius, 1985, Nam et al., 2013; Govrin, 2014). We shall return to this point at the end of this paper.

Ziya Gökalp on Synthesizing Disparate Ideals

As stated earlier, Gökalp witnessed the breakup of the Ottoman Empire into nation states after World War I. He was involved in the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 both as a member of its first parliament and as a co-drafter of its first constitution. Yet in his early writings Gökalp was an Ottomanist, still believing in the possibility of the amiable coexistence of peoples with different religions, languages, and cultures enjoying equal citizenship rights under Ottoman rule (Nomer, 2017). Recall that this was also Namık Kemal's aspiration for the Ottoman society. Gökalp turned away from Kemal's multiculturalism to Turkish nationalism during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), having come to believe that the age of empires was over and that nation-states were the guarantee of the safety of peoples (Gökalp, 1959, p. 729).

Gökalp's was not an isolationist view of nationhood, in which nations are discrete entities that emerge and exist independently of one another. Instead, he held that nations always interact with and influence one another: 'as no nation ever lived in isolation without any contact with other nations,' he wrote, 'there has always been exchange of institutions among those who were in contact with each other' (Gökalp, 1959, p. 167). This observation is the basis for his well-known distinction between 'culture' and 'civilization'. Gökalp used the term 'culture' to refer to the distinctive

qualities of each society, such as local customs and languages, and 'civilization' to refer to ideas, institutions, or amenities that different societies share, or come to share through collaboration, such as material sciences and technologies. He relied on this distinction to portray the kind of society which, in his view, Turks should build for themselves after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Specifically, he argued that the Turkish culture and religion would be best preserved within an independent Turkish nation-state modelled after modern European nation-states, and by taking advantage of the sciences and technologies developed in Western Europe; in Gökalp'a words, Turks must thus combine nationalism, Islamism, and contemporary Western civilization (Gökalp, 1959, pp. 71–75).

Gökalp (1959, pp. 284–286) took care to note that not all his contemporaries agreed that these ideologies can be combined. This is basically because, he explained, some saw Islam and Western civilization as 'total' ideologies that purport to govern the totality of human life.[2] If that were the case, Gökalp could claim neither that Islam is compatible with Western civilization, nor that these ideologies leave any room for Turkish national culture. Gökalp did not ascribe these rival ideologies to specific individuals. But in view of his biography, it is fairly obvious that by the advocates of total Westernization, he had in mind the circle around the periodical *Ictihad*, spearheaded by Abdullah Cevdet (Erişirgil, 2007, pp. 35–39). These highbrows disparaged traditional Islamic practices such as fasting, daily prayers, polygyny, and veiling, and demanded the closing of all Islamic schools and lodges, because in their view these practices and institutions impeded progress in all aspects of life, and were therefore responsible for the Muslim world's current weakness vis-à-vis the Christian Europe that had attained what appeared to them as the highest level of progress or civilization in all aspects of human life (Cevdet, 2008, pp. 72–85; Hanioğlu, 1997, pp. 140–143). For these thinkers, Muslims can get out of this state only by adapting their faith to this last stage of civilization. Thus, for instance, Cevdet proposed that to be a good Muslim at that time entailed emulating the pious citizens of European societies and aspiring to be a 'rich, educated, and compelling individual' with a strong sense of social responsibility (Cevdet, 2008, pp. 149–156). Another contributor to *Ictihad* urged Muslims to establish, and seek education in, European-style institutions of research, such as the Collège de France (Hakkı, 1997). So, on one hand, these 'Westernists' hoped for the survival of the Islamic faith, but, on the other hand, they denigrated all existing forms of it and urged Muslims to adopt Western civilization *in toto*, with 'all its roses and thorns', as they ultimately held

[2] '[Gayemiz] İslamiyet ile medeniyet-i asriyeyi telif etmektir. Ancak bugüne kadar ülke yönetiminde söz sahibi olan iki parti Avrupa Mutaassıpları ve Medrese Mutaassıpları bu telifi yanlış politikaları sebebiyle gerçekleştirememişlerdir. Birinci parti esâsât-ı İslamiye'nin medeniyet-i hazıra ile itilaf edemeyeceğine kani olarak bütün İslami esâsâtı atıp maddi-manevi tüm varlığımızla Avrupa medeniyetine girmemizi istemişlerdir. İkinci parti ise esâsât-ı İslamiye'nin medeniyet-i asriye ile itilafının mümkün olmadığını, dolayısıyla bu medeniyetten uzak durarak ananat-ı mevcudiyetimizle iktifa etmemizin gerekliliğini savunmuşlardır (Ziya Gökalp', Ittihat ve Terakki Kongresi Münasebebiyle', *İslâm Mecmuası* IV, no.48 (1916).

that there can be only one human civilization and religion, like Comte's scientific civil 'religion of humanity' (Cevdet, 2008, pp. 234–236; Nussbaum, 2011).

As Gökalp noted, these ideas did not appeal to all. For instance, Mustafa Sabri, the co-founder of the Islamic Union Association (*Cemiyet-i İttihad-i Islamiye*) and the librarian of Sultan Abdülhamid II, regarded his fellow Muslims' fascination with the 'bright material world of the Europeans' as form of alienation from their own faith (Şeyhun, 2015, pp. 45–46). This was, first, because excessive concern with the advances that European societies had made in the material sciences and technologies diverted attention from God, the maker of all things, and led Muslims to forget that material culture is irrelevant for faith. Secondly, by criticizing Islamic societies for failing to contribute to contemporary material culture and as being inferior to European Christian societies in that regard, these Westernists undermined confidence in the unique status of Islamic civilization, namely that it embodies the 'most perfect' religion. To counteract these trends, Sabri argued that Muslims of the world ought to unite under the spiritual and political leadership of one high caliph, and thus strengthen their commitment to Islam (Şeyhun, 2015, p. 48). Different versions of this pan-Islamist proposal permeated the political culture of the last decades of the Ottoman Empire (Türköne, 1991, pp. 197–243).

So, for instance, Said Halim Pasha, another prominent pan-Islamist and one of the last grand viziers, was keen to emphasize what he took to be the main difference between the Islamic and Western political ideologies. Unlike Western European states, he argued, an Islamic state cannot be constrained by a parliament composed of lay citizens who represent the divergent interests of different constituencies, for it is bound only by rules made by the doctors of Islamic law (Şeyhun, 2015, p. 158). It is crucial to add that both Said Halim and Sabri saw Turkish nationalism that emphasized the ethno-linguistic distinctiveness of the Turkish nation as a foreign ideology that endangered the spiritual and political unity of Muslims in the world (Şeyhun, 2015, pp. 50–51, 156–157).

We have seen that for Gökalp the viability of the nascent Turkish nation-state depended on its ability to synthesize Turkish national culture, Islam, and contemporary Western civilization. But the discrepancies among the political ideologies of Westernism, Islamism, and Turkish nationalism, as sketched above, made him realize that he had to demonstrate, rather than assume, that those ideologies could be coherently combined. He took up that challenge in many writings after his nationalistic turn. His main claim in those writings was that his distinction between 'culture' and 'civilization' can serve to join those ideologies together. Accordingly, if we could distinguish the aspects of Turkish culture, Islam, and Western civilization that are unique to specific societies, as opposed to the aspects that could be shared by different societies—that is, if we could distinguish the cultural from civilizational aspects of those phenomena—then we could find combinations that are mutually compatible. Notice that this argument exemplifies what Abelson called 'differentiation,' namely dividing beliefs into their constituent parts so as to find elements of those beliefs that can be held together. In *The Principles of Turkism* (1923), Gökalp made this argument as follows:

> There is both similarity and difference between culture and civilization. The similarity is that they encompass all aspects of social life—religious, moral, legal, intellectual, aesthetic, economic, linguistic and technologic. … [Yet] culture is national, while civilization is international … Civilization is a mutually shared whole of the social lives of nations: European nations and America share a common Western civilization, within which there are English, French, German, etc. cultures (1968, p. 22).

What distinguishes civilization from culture, then, is not the particular contents of the former—that, for example it exemplifies the universality of science—but simply that it is shared by multiple societies. Gökalp regarded all the sciences as potential bases for a civilization, for they all abide by norms that can be followed by anyone, anywhere. This does not mean, however, that science is the only resource that can be international. As Gökalp stated in the passage above, legal, economic, moral, artistic, and religious practices and institutions can also be shared by multiple societies without thereby losing their distinct identities (Nomer, 2017).

Having had a closer look at Gökalp's distinction between culture and civilization, we may now consider how he proposed to combine Turkish national culture, Islam, and Western civilization. His basic strategy was to argue that exposure to Western civilization would not only *not* undermine Turks' commitment to their national identity and religion, but, on the contrary, that this commitment in fact urges them to adopt aspects of Western civilization. This argument had two parts. The first consisted in the claim that societies and social identities cannot survive long without scientific knowledge, wherever it is produced or updated; thus Gökalp asked, 'Are we not compelled to accept from the West the biology, psychology and sociology which do not exist in the East? In the past we have obtained all of our sciences from Byzantium. What do we lose religiously and culturally if we now replace the sciences of the Greeks with the sciences of the West?' (Gökalp, 1968, p. 47). More specifically, regarding the material sciences, Gökalp (1959, pp. 212–213) proposed that all societies should seek to develop or acquire the best version of such sciences, for it is through them that human beings know how to provide for the basic necessities of life and so secure their collective future. Gökalp considered the social sciences as equally vital for the continued existence of a society, for these sciences help to discover not only the common traits of all societies, but also how the ensemble of a society's language, folklore, and religious customs—i.e., its culture—differs from others (1959, pp. 238–239).

The second part of Gökalp's argument called for reliance on scientific knowledge, and generally expertise, in government. His claim here was that effective government requires a division of labor, whereby each public official does what he is best qualified to do (Gökalp, 1959, pp. 274–276, 310). Controversially, Gökalp argued that this approach to government was shared by contemporary Western civilization and the original Islamic state tradition (Gökalp, 1959, pp. 202–203; 2014). In the latter tradition, Gökalp reported, economic, judicial, and religious functions of government were separated from one another for the reason that a judgment regarding the most efficient way to produce material goods and services was not necessarily identical to a judgment on the just distribution of such goods and services, and none

of these judgments related to the purity of faith (Gökalp, 1959, pp. 202–223). For Gökalp (1959, p.186, 219), the separation of governmental functions in the original Islamic state tradition rested on a more fundamental distinction between 'piety' and 'utility'. The idea was that while piety is the unvarying requirement of Islam, the conditions under which Muslims may equitably enjoy material benefits can improve or worsen over time. In that tradition, therefore, only competent individuals were allowed to make authoritative decisions on the provision or improvement of the material conditions of human life (1959, p. 213). For Gökalp, this fact is key to understanding that Islam would never reject changes for the better, say, in financial, agricultural, aesthetic, and hygienic conditions of life, even if such changes had been discovered in non-Muslim societies.

This two-part argument amounted to a refutation of the claim—shared, as indicated, by some Islamists and some Westernists alike—that Islam and Western civilization are total and mutually exclusive ideologies. Gökalp's argument suggested, to the contrary, that there are overlaps and potentials for synergy between these two ensembles of beliefs, practices, and resources, and therefore particular aspects of these ensembles can be held together. Recall, however, that Gökalp's task was to show that this synthesis can be achieved within a Turkish nation-state. Gökalp made two points in support of the latter claim. The first was that although the history of the Turkish people goes back further than that of the Islamic world, after converting to Islam Turks developed their own Islamic poetry, music, and dance, i.e., their own Islamic traditions, which have become part of their national culture (Gökalp, 1968, pp. 119–120). Gökalp thus argued that it is anachronistic for some Turkish nationalists to wish to 'resurrect' the pre-Islamic traditions of long-gone Turkish communities and discard traditions that Turks have developed after joining the Islamic world (Gökalp, 1968, p. 83). Gökalp's second point was that although the concept of national self-determination is European in origin and partly responsible for the destruction of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, it enabled Turks to acquire national self-awareness and create their own republic (1968, pp. 1–11). It is for these reasons that Gökalp held that there is no necessary discord between Turkish nationalism, Islam, and Western civilization.

If our construal of Gökalp's ideas so far is sound, then it should be fair to conclude that these ideas combine to constitute what Abelson calls a 'differentiation' type of argument, for they collectively indicate that Islamism, Westernism, and Turkish nationalism can be divided into discrete beliefs, some of which can be consistently implemented together. Interestingly, Gökalp did not regard ideological conflicts, such as those he addressed, as harmful for a society; in fact, he believed that such conflicts provide a society with a chance to have a debate on its past, present, and future, and so to find a shared political vision to pursue. For Gökalp, the formulation of such visions is the prime task of public intellectuals:

> The crises seen among the intellectuals of a nation are not necessarily expressions of certain maladjustments within the culture. A healthy society may have unhealthy intellectuals because the store of knowledge of such individuals has been picked up from diverse international civilizations. Such knowledge is healthy and creative only when it reflects national culture (1959, p. 238).

These remarks amount to what Abelson calls a 'transcendent' type of argument, since they call for thinking *about* ideological conflicts in a society in an all-inclusive and accommodating way, namely as occasions for self-reflection and self-development, without specifying how such conflicts can be resolved. It is then up to that society's members to revolve such conflicts. We have seen how Gökalp himself took on that task: Contrary to those who saw modern Western political institutions and material culture as threats to Islam, he argued that those aspects of Western civilization would not permeate and transform the whole of the Islamic world, but would instead help it to flourish. Similarly, to counteract exclusivist notions of Turkish identity, he argued that the Turkish nation-state can be established only by means of modern political institutions and with due respect for the current religious beliefs of the Turks.

Conclusion: Political Theory and Cognitive Consistency

In this paper we have considered Kemal's and Gökalp's arguments for the compatibility of Western institutions with those of their own society by pointing at the parallels between these arguments and the 'modes' of resolving belief dilemmas identified by Abelson. We were not concerned to assess whether these thinkers *indeed* resolved the conflicts between the political ideologies they addressed, for our goal was not to offer an impartial notion of cognitive consistency but to explore the ways in which these thinkers sought to resolve the discrepancies that they saw among the salient political ideologies of their times.

This is not to say that political theory is reducible to that enterprise. This is clearly not the case (Freeden, 2013; Dryzek et al., 2011). Some political theorists specify what they take to be the basic norms of an ideal political order without addressing the conflicts among popular political beliefs in their society. Other theorists, by contrast, support the political aspirations of a particular social group without taking into account the similar aspirations of others. Still other political theorists discuss the political uses and abuses of certain concepts without proposing an alternative (Geuss, 2006). We suggest that the list of political theory's tasks must be expanded to include the enterprise of providing historically situated arguments to resolve the conflicts among political ideologies in particular societies. We do not suppose that the patterns of reasoning identified by Abelson are the only ones available to political thinkers: the field of social cognitive psychology is rich with other types of argumentation that can support or complement the Abelsonian ones (Proulx & Inzlicht, 2012). We consider this paper only as an invitation to further explore the parallels or overlaps—to our knowledge hitherto unexplored—that exist between systematic political thought and cognitive social psychology.

No doubt, there can be competing accounts of the political beliefs of Kemal and Gökalp. In line with the original idea of Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957), we have argued that these thinkers found inconsistencies among political ideologies inherently disturbing, and so they have constructed and published arguments that weave together rival political ideologies in their respective times. We thus claim to have provided cross-cultural, real-world evidence for the universal applicability

of Abelsonian patterns of reasoning as well as Cognitive Dissonance Theory more broadly. Alternative accounts of Kemal's and Gökalp's arguments can cast doubt on this conclusion, however. One such account could stem from Identity Process Theory, which claims that all human beings would like to be, and see themselves as, unique, efficacious, and self-respecting selves, and they develop certain 'coping mechanisms' to reinforce their pursuit of such a self-concept when they feel it is 'threatened' by unwelcome changes in any aspect of their lives, such as in health, finances, and personal relationships (Aronson, 2019; Breakwell, 1988, 2021). Depending on the nature of the threat, the influences and constraints of the social context, and the makeup of one's personality, one may emphasize the 'salience' of one particular component of one's self-concept over others to protect its overall integrity, for example, uniqueness over continuity, or self-esteem over efficacy (Breakwell, 1988, 2021). On this theory, individuals would respond to inconsistencies among political ideologies *only if* such inconsistencies pose a risk to their self-concept, but it is not possible to know in advance whether and, if so, how individuals would respond to those inconsistencies (Breakwell, 1988, p.195). It is not hard to see how this theory can explain the political beliefs of Kemal and Gökalp at the expense of ours: an exponent of this theory may look at these individuals' personal notebooks, diaries, letters, and other autobiographical and biographical data to identify the personal reasons they might have had for addressing the political-ideological inconsistencies in their society, and, once those reasons are identified, try to reconstruct their respective arguments as discursive attempts to protect their self-concepts from the disturbing emotional effects of those conflicts.

Another alternative to our interpretation of Kemal's and Gökalp's political beliefs can derive from Social Identity Theory, which considers individuals' beliefs and attitudes in light of intergroup dynamics (Tajfel, 1974). Social psychological studies with this theoretical orientation typically try to determine the social and personal factors that lead individuals to embrace one or more of the social identities (such as ethnic, socio-economic class, and gender identities) in the identity repertoire of any given society. Such studies also explore the ways in which individuals who identify with particular social groups respond to, or cope with, the emergence of conflicts among those groups and their respective political aspirations, which may lead to 'radical' changes in society (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; De la Sablonniere et al., 2013). Of course, under such conditions not only group identities but the lives of the individuals involved would also be at risk. A common finding of such studies is that a significant portion of individuals who experience such conditions look for a new, clear, 'superordinate' identity that can appeal to most, if not all, in their society, and a related collective vision for the future, which can help restore social peace (Oren & Bar-Tal, 2014; Coleman & Lowe, 2007, De la Sablonniere et al., 2018). It is perfectly plausible look at the political writings of Kemal and Gökalp in light of this finding, and argue that those writings are nothing but attempts to persuade rival political factions in their respective times to adopt a new, inclusive idea of collective identity, and navigate therewith through times of political turmoil without falling apart.

We consider the accounts sketched above as alternatives to ours, first, because both of them claim that concern for the continuity of the self, individual or social,

rather than cognitive consistency, is the basic driving force behind whatever we think, feel, or do in the world. These accounts do not deny the role of cognition or reasoning in the conception of oneself as a particular person or as a member of a social group, nor do they underestimate the importance of *knowing* how to defend one's personal self-concept or social group. But on these accounts, both the content and validity of cognition are relative either to individuals or to groups; thus, these accounts leave no room for regarding cognitive inconsistencies as *inherently* disturbing, or their resolutions as *universally* valid. Secondly, and relatedly, these accounts would not limit their research, contrary to what we do in this paper, to statements of beliefs that are intended for the general public; in addition, they would need biographical and autobiographical information to reach their conclusions. This is because, on these accounts, there is no reason to suppose that the published views of any political thinker would necessarily include acknowledgment of their self-concept, or affiliation with a particular political party (Benhabib, 1995).

But it is crucial to note that neither Identity Process Theory nor Social Identity Theory rules out explanations based on Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Hence, it is possible to consider the arguments that Kemal and Gökalp respectively offered for the compatibility of Western institutions with their society *also* as discursive efforts to protect their personal and/or social identities. So, if our reconstruction of Kemal's and Gökalp's arguments is accurate, which we claim it is, the question that confronts us here is not *whether* these thinkers found the political-ideological conflicts disturbing, since they clearly did so and proposed commonly acceptable arguments to resolve them. Rather, our question is whether these arguments can be understood *only* by means of Abelson's theory of human reasoning, or do we *also* need explanations along the lines of Identity Process Theory and/or Social Identity Theory? We have to leave this question open until we know more about the private and public lives of these individuals.

Before concluding, we would like to point out three general implications of regarding systematic political theory as a response to belief conflicts. The first is that political theorizing is bound up with the fact that human societies are not harmonious homogenous entities but rather consist of diverse groups with conflicting beliefs and aspirations. We have suggested that the political life of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire was no exception to this fact, and, to repeat, surely this is a fact to which political theorists can variously respond: some may side with a particular social group and defend its stance with certain arguments; others may propose some kind of utopia. We have argued that political theorists can overcome such conflicts with other kinds of arguments, including ones of the sort that concern cognitive social psychologists. Many political thinkers in the Western canon have taken this tack. Aristotle, for instance, sought to end the conflict that he saw in his own society between the oligarchs and the impoverished majority through his conception of polity, which entailed a type of political mindset that, when shared, could end or contain the antagonism between those groups (Aristotle, 1998, 4.11). And Marx proposed communism as a way to transcend the conflict between the political and economic interests of the proletariat and those of the bourgeoisie (Marx & Engels, 1972, pp. 473–491). A more recent example, Rawls's theory of justice entailed

the denial of the widely held incompatibility of equality and economic efficiency (Rawls, 1999, p. 5).

Such high-profile examples can be multiplied, which to us indicates that tackling belief dilemmas has long been part of the history of Western political thought. These examples also illustrate the transformative potential of this effort. This is the second implication of assigning to political thought the task of resolving belief conflicts: the political thinkers cited in the last paragraph are regarded as transformative thinkers partly because they are considered as having addressed and settled some of the ethical, political, economic, etc. belief conflicts that worried their contemporaries (Cohen, 1968; Miller, 2017; Titelbaum, 2008). The same can be said about the political legacies of Namık Kemal and Ziya Gökalp. Although the first Ottoman parliament, built partly on ideas most influentially advocated by Kemal, lasted only a year before being closed down by the sultan, Kemal's political ideas (especially his commitment to constitutionalism and popular sovereignty) continued to inspire later generations of public intellectuals and political elites, including those who established the Turkish Republic in 1923 (Deringil, 1993). Gökalp was among those individuals. The young republic also adopted Gökalp's cultural conception of nationhood (rather than an ethnic or racial conception) and his 'scientistic' outlook on government (Zürcher, 2005; Özbudun, 1984).

We do not claim that innovation in political thought only comes from resolving prevailing belief conflicts; sometimes such innovation calls for a radical 'epistemological break' with the past (Balibar, 1978). We do not rule out such innovation, but merely point at the specific kind of conceptual innovation in politics that is made possible by addressing prevailing belief conflicts. In Vygotsky's terms, the latter kind of innovation can be portrayed as the 'short-circuiting of the two opposing currents' in thought and uniting them by a 'leap' to a new mental organization (Valsiner, 2015). Such a leap can be seen as an instance of what critical theorists from Marx onwards have called the 'immanent critique', which seeks to trigger social change through a dialectical thought process, that is, by overcoming the 'contradictions' in the existing forms of thinking and living (Antonio, 1981; Geuss, 2006; Mihalits & Valsiner, 2022).

This does not mean no conceptual innovation can result from regarding a particular belief or set of beliefs as the only basis of meaning or value in politics. People who are rigidly devoted to a political ideal at the expense of all others may call for a related change in political mentalities in a society, just as much as those, like Kemal and Gökalp, whose political aspirations are flexible, conciliatory, and inclusive (Stenner, 2009). We also grant that exclusive devotion to a parochial political ideal may help one to cope with cognitive inconsistencies in private or public life (Nam et al., 2013; Sidanius, 1985). But in line with the critical theorists, we hold that the pursuit of conciliatory political ideals rather than exclusionary politics would not only be more deeply anchored in the political realities of a society, but also more conducive to the creation of inclusive and therefore stable societies (Bohman, 2005). As we have tried to show in this paper, this is the kind of society to which Kemal and Gökalp, each in his way, aspired.

Admittedly, delegating to political thinkers the task of addressing conflicts of belief in a society stands in tension with the basic tenet of cognitive social

psychology, namely that cognitive inconsistency generates anxiety in everyone and so all human beings are naturally disposed to eliminate it. How, then, can we consider such anxiety and the disposition to eliminate it to be universally shared by all humans, and nevertheless claim that it is the distinctive task of political thinkers to respond to belief conflicts? We believe that the answer to this question lies in the long-standing research program in social psychology that distinguishes between 'thinking fast' and 'thinking slow' (Kahneman, 2011, pp. 20–21). The former 'operates quickly and automatically with little or no effort, and no sense of voluntary control,' whereas the latter consists in 'effortful mental activities' that supersede unreflective impulses, and exhibit self-initiated reflection and concentration. Recent studies suggest that individuals who are not willing to engage in the 'slow' reflection on their beliefs tend not to become aware of the inconsistencies between them, whereas those who do make the effort to reflect on the full extent of their beliefs do detect such inconsistencies, and deliberately revise their beliefs to eliminate those inconsistencies (Gawronski et al., 2008). The latter is the kind of intellectual enterprise that, we suggest, political theorists engage in. So defined, political theorizing is not the privilege of educated professionals; it is the intellectual effort that anyone, anywhere, can engage in to move beyond the tensions between politically relevant beliefs in their society. This is the third important implication, which we here wish to register, of regarding systematic political theory as an enterprise of addressing belief conflicts.

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