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PARADIGM SHIFTS IN THE LITERATURE ON TURKISH NATIONALISM: THE EMERGENCE OF THE AGENCY

TÜRK MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİ LİTERATÜRÜNDE PARADİGMA DEĞİŞİMLERİ: ÖZNENİN ORTAYA ÇIKIŞI[*]

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to shed light on the paradigm shifts in the academic studies on Turkish nationalism from the 1950s to the present by examining the approaches of these studies to the concept of Turkishness and Turkish nationalism. This study first examines various nationalism theories and current debates in the field, as the transformation in Turkish nationalism parallels theoretical discussions in nationalism studies. It then focuses early studies until the 1990s analyzing Turkish nationalism through modernization theory, and post-1990s research highlighting its hybrid, eclectic, and pervasive nature, alongside its connections to diverse political visions and previously overlooked aspects. Finally, the article centers on pioneering studies that emphasize the active role of subjectivity in the construction and reproduction of the nation by tracing Turkish nationalism in everyday life. The recent studies on Turkish nationalism highlight the positioning of the

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individual not as a passive recipient of nationalism, but as an active agent in its making.

Keywords: Nationalism, Turkish Nationalism, Modernization Theory, Banal Nationalism, Everyday Nationalism.

ÖZ

Makale, 1950'lerden günümüze kadar Türk milliyetçiliği üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmaları ve bu çalışmaların Türklük kavramına ve Türk milliyetçiliğine yaklaşımlarını inceleyerek, bu alandaki paradigma değişimlerine ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Türk milliyetçiliği alanındaki bu dönüşüm, milliyetçilik çalışmalarındaki teorik tartışmalarla paralel bir seyir izlediğinden, bu çalışma ilk olarak farklı milliyetçilik teorilerini ve alandaki güncel tartışmaları incelemektedir. Ardından, 1990'lara kadar alanda hâkim olan ve Türk milliyetçiliğini modernleşme teorisi çerçevesinde ele alan erken dönem çalışmalar ve 1990'lardan sonra alanda görünürlük kazanan, Türk milliyetçiliğinin daha önce göz ardı edilen yönlerine, melez, eklektik, muğlak ve yaygın karakterine odaklanan ve çeşitli siyasi vizyonlarla ilişkilendirilen farklı milliyetçi tahayyülleri ve söylemleri dikkate alan araştırmalar üzerine yoğunlaşılmaktadır. Son olarak, makale, Türk milliyetçiliğinin gündelik yaşamda izini sürerek ulusun inşasında ve yeniden üretilmesinde öznelliğin oynadığı aktif rolü vurgulayan ufuk açıcı çalışmalara odaklanmaktadır. Türk milliyetçiliği üzerine yakın dönemde yapılan çalışmalarda bireyin milliyetçiliğin pasif alımlayıcısı değil, bizatihi faili olarak konumlandırılışı dikkat çekicidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Türk Milliyetçiliği, Modernleşme Teorisi, Banal Milliyetçilik, Gündelik Milliyetçilik.

INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, nationalism has been a central element in nearly all political movements since the establishment of the Republic. Each political initiative has imagined a unified Turkish nation, defined according to its own ideological and cultural framework. As a result, political groups have adopted versions of Turkish

nationalism aligned with their values to engage with the public. This has allowed Turkish nationalism to maintain its hegemonic influence by becoming embedded, in various forms, within the rhetoric of almost every political movement over the Republic's nearly century-long history. Turkish nationalism can be described as a pragmatic and populist instrument for achieving political legitimacy, maintaining its significance and influence throughout various periods and contexts.

In the early 1920s, Turkish nationalism became the foundation for building a cohesive, secular, and modern nation-state. A primary goal was creating a homogeneous society of loyal Turkish citizens (Kuzu, 2019: 73). However, this faced two major obstacles: the Kurdish population, leading to Turkification policies until the 1950s, and Islam, perceived as incompatible with modernity. While marginalizing religion in public and cultural life, the Kemalist government integrated Islam into the state apparatus to maintain legitimacy (Fabbe and Balıkçıoğlu, 2019: 57).

After World War II, Turkish nationalism evolved, influenced by domestic changes and Cold War dynamics. The Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) incorporated religious and traditional values into nationalism in the 1950s, addressing societal discontent with rigid secular reforms (Kuzu, 2019: 74). Islam re-entered public life during this period, a trend that intensified in the 1970s as right-wing leaders used religion to counter leftist ideologies.

Ethnic nationalism gained momentum in the 1960s with the rise of far-right parties like the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP). By the 1970s, Turkish nationalism blended ethnic and religious elements under the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" (Bora, 2003). The 1980 military coup institutionalized this ideology, framing both external and internal enemies as threats to national unity (Fabbe and Balıkçıoğlu, 2019: 61).

In the 1990s, heightened insecurity spurred a resurgence of Turkish nationalism, which became more ethno-nationalist and xenophobic, emphasizing Sunni Turkish identity (Çırakman, 2011: 1896). The early 2000s saw a temporary retreat from aggressive nationalism with the political ascent of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), which initially embraced liberal and democratic values. By the 2010s, however, the AKP's rhetoric took on a stronger nationalist and religious character, ultimately merging political Islam with Turkish nationalism, a combination that came to dominate Turkish politics by the mid-2010s (Aktoprak, 2016: 310).

Turkish nationalism has been a key focus for scholars seeking to understand the political and societal processes of modern Turkey. The modernization efforts that began in the late Ottoman period and culminated during the early Republican era are closely tied to Turkish nationalism. The goals of secularization and

homogenization in the Turkish modernization project required replacing Islam, which had traditionally served as the primary societal bond, with Turkish nationalism as the dominant unifying force. Consequently, Turkish nationalism is widely recognized in the literature as a critical tool of social engineering in the country's modern history.

Over the past century, Turkish nationalism has maintained a hegemonic influence, shaping the discourses of nearly every political movement in the history of the Republic. As a populist tool for achieving legitimacy, it has consistently remained relevant in Turkey's political and social spheres. In a paradoxical manner, in the age of globalization, nationalist movements have not only persisted but have also increased dramatically on a global scale, including in Turkey. Studies that examine the pervasive influence of Turkish nationalism across social and political domains demonstrate that it continues to be a vital subject of inquiry. Far from being outdated, Turkish nationalism serves as an active fault line for understanding the ways of thinking and perspectives underlying the challenges within Turkey's political, social, and cultural landscape. As such, academic research on Turkish nationalism remains indispensable for understanding both Turkey's historical trajectory and its current dynamics. This continued focus underscores Turkish nationalism's dynamic role in shaping the nation's identity and its enduring relevance in scholarly discourse.

Despite the extensive body of literature on Turkish nationalism, it is notable that no study has systematically classified this scholarship based on its analytical focus or examined the paradigm shifts within the field. This article seeks to fill this gap by offering a review of the academic studies on Turkish nationalism spanning from the 1950s to the present day, examining how these works have approached the concept of Turkishness. It also seeks to contextualize recent studies that adopt an everyday nationalism approach within the broader literature. The article aspires to make a modest contribution to addressing this oversight. However, the changes in perspectives and methodological approaches in studies of Turkish nationalism over the past three decades are not coincidental. It can be argued that shifts in the theoretical understanding of Turkish nationalism have mirrored the broader paradigm shifts in nationalism studies. To trace this parallel trajectory, the article begins with a brief discussion of the historical and conceptual development of nationalism theories. The second section focuses on early scholarship on Turkish nationalism, which dominated the field until the 1990s and analyzed the topic through the lens of the modernization paradigm. The third section explores studies conducted since the 1990s, which have investigated neglected aspects of Turkish nationalism, such as its blended, fragmented, ambiguous, and omnipresent nature, as well as the diverse nationalist discourses associated with various political ideologies. Finally, the article examines studies that extend beyond earlier works treating Turkish nationalism primarily as an intellectual phenomenon and an

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unavoidable outcome of modernization. While more recent studies highlight the plurality of Turkish nationalisms, they often overlook the impact of these frameworks on everyday actors. To address this gap, the analysis incorporates contributions that focus on how Turkish nationalism manifests in daily life, emphasizing the active role individuals play in constructing and sustaining nationhood.

1. THE EVOLUTION OF NATIONALISM STUDIES AND CURRENT DEBATES

Theories of nationalism have evolved significantly over time, enriched by both critical perspectives and dynamic approaches. Primordialism, which dominated until the 1960s, explained nations as natural, eternal entities rooted in inherent bonds such as blood, language, and tradition (Özkırımlı, 2010: 49). However, this approach has been criticized for overlooking the dynamic and constructed nature of nations. In response, Perennialism emerged, emphasizing the historical continuity and adaptability of nations. Hastings (1997: 2–4) argued that nations retain core cultural elements while adapting to changing historical contexts, offering a more flexible framework than the static essentialism of primordialism.

The modernist approach marked a critical paradigm shift by situating nations within the framework of modernity. Scholars like Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1992) and Anderson (2006) viewed nations as socially constructed phenomena shaped by industrialization, urbanization, and state-building. Gellner described nationalism as a mechanism for cultural standardization required by industrial societies (Gellner, 1983: 3–4). Hobsbawm introduced the concept of "invented traditions," which legitimized national identity through symbolic practices (Hobsbawm, 2000), while Anderson famously described nations as "imagined communities" formed through shared cultural experiences and print capitalism (Anderson, 2006: 7).

Ethno-symbolism, championed by Smith (1996), bridged modernist perspectives with a focus on cultural continuity and the enduring role of pre-modern ethnic ties in nation-building. Smith highlighted the historical connection between pre-modern communities and modern nations, integrating cultural and historical dimensions (Smith, 1996: 361–363).

Since the 1980s, nationalism studies have undergone a cultural turn[1], emphasizing agency, subjectivity, and everyday practices (Özkırımlı, 2010: 169–

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[1] The cultural turn, emerging in the 1970s, redefined culture as a dynamic process shaped by factors like gender, class, and power, rather than a fixed structure based on language or customs (Özkırımlı, 2010: 169; Antonsich, 2015: 301). Culture is now viewed as an active, heterogeneous space where meanings are constructed contextually, enabling identity formation and relational

170; Antonsich, 2015: 301). This shift redefines nationalism as an ordinary, lived phenomenon rather than an exceptional occurrence (Billig, 1995; Brubaker, 1996). Brubaker, engaging with the primordialist versus modernist discussion, maintains: "No serious scholar today holds the view that is routinely attributed to primordialists in straw-man setups, namely that nations or ethnic groups are primordial, unchanging entities" (Brubaker, 1996: 15). Indeed, in the academic world, the assertion that nations and national belonging are predetermined, inherent, innate, and everlasting has largely fallen out of favor (Mylonas and Tudor, 2021). However, Brubaker (2004: 17-18) emphasizes that merely stating that nations and related concepts are constructed does not sufficiently explain the processes through which they are constructed.

In recent years, nationalism theories have been enriched by approaches that critique nationalism not only as a phenomenon but also as an analytical category. Brubaker (1996) challenged traditional theories that treat nations as fixed and concrete entities, arguing instead for an understanding of nations as institutionalized forms and practical categories. This approach shifts the focus from defining nations to examining how nationalism functions as a classificatory and cognitive framework that shapes perceptions, behaviors, and social structures. Nationalism, from this perspective, is not a static category but a dynamic phenomenon continuously reproduced and negotiated through everyday practices.

Contemporary studies of nationalism focus on three main trends: the macro-historical impacts of nationalism, its micro-level effects on individual political behavior, and how everyday perceptions reproduce national identities (Mylonas and Tudor, 2021: 114 – 120). Macro-political research examines the emergence of nation-states and their foundational narratives, while micro-level studies investigate how national identity influences civic participation and reduces intergroup biases (Mylonas and Tudor, 2021: 114 – 119). Research on everyday nationalism uncovers how grassroots practices shape and sustain national identities, challenging elite-driven models (Mylonas and Tudor, 2021: 119 – 120).

Billig's (1995) concept of "banal nationalism" explores how routine practices, such as flag displays or references to the nation in daily life, subtly reinforce national identity as an unnoticed, habitual condition. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) extended this idea with the concept of "everyday nationalism," examining how ordinary individuals engage with, reinterpret, and sometimes resist national symbols and rhetoric. Scholars studying nationalism have increasingly focused on everyday nationhood and "the nation from below,"

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interactions (Best, 2007: 177). This shift provides new insights into identity through contextual and relational lenses.

emphasizing nationalism as a performative and relational discourse deeply woven into daily life rather than merely an elite-driven ideology (Knott, 2015; Ichijo, 2016; Fox and Ginderachter, 2018).

The evolution of nationalism theories reflects a shift away from static definitions, toward more dynamic analyses of how nations are constructed, institutionalized, and experienced. By integrating structural, cultural, and everyday perspectives, these approaches provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of nationalism. This evolution reflects a shift towards understanding nationalism as a dynamic phenomenon shaped by structural forces and everyday experiences, offering fresh insights into the study of Turkish nationalism and its broader implications.

2. EARLY SCHOLARSHIP ON TURKISH NATIONALISM AND MODERNIST PERSPECTIVE

While prominent historians made significant contributions to the study of nationalism, political scientists did not approach the topic systematically until the mid-20th century (Mylonas and Tudor, 2021: 112). During this time, articles on nationalism in political science journals were often case studies authored by scholars from other disciplines, such as history, sociology, and psychology (Mylonas and Tudor, 2021: 112). Likewise, Turkish nationalism was often considered a peripheral topic within the broader scope of Ottoman-Turkish history studies, rather than being examined as an independent field of research. Early research on the subject was led predominantly by historians like Heyd (1950), Lewis (1961), Karpat (1973), and Georgeon (1980), resulting in the emergence of the first works on Turkish nationalism within the framework of historical studies. These initial efforts were characterized by a storyline of gradual advancement centered on the idea of Western civilization, a binary understanding of Islam and modernity, and a top-down approach that prioritized macro-level structures, dynamics, and elite actors.

The early wave of scholarship on Turkish nationalism primarily adopted the modernization paradigm (e.g., Heyd, 1950; Lewis, 1961; Berkes, 1964; Karpat, 1973; Kushner, 1977; Landau, 1981; Georgeon, 1980). This approach viewed Turkish nationalism as both a natural and inevitable result of modernization and secularization, as well as a tool to achieve these objectives (Yavuz, 1993). These studies often relied on generalized models to account for the appearance and diffusion of nationalism, interpreting nations as constructs shaped by the prerequisites of modernity. Within this framework, Turkish nationalism was seen as a historical reaction to the transformation from the Ottoman Empire into the modern, secular Turkish Republic, making the modernization process from the

Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic central to understanding the origins of Turkish nationalism.

Early scholarship frequently depicted the Western tradition of nation formation process and secular transformation as the sole model for modernization and advancement. This modernist viewpoint framed history as a linear progression, with Western modernization serving as the benchmark for development. Nation-building in the West was considered an essential element of this progressive trajectory, with nationalism regarded as a vital component of modernization.

According to this historical determinist view, the founding of the Turkish Republic and the emergence of Turkish nationalism were seen as inevitable outcomes of modernization. Turkishness, as the national identity of the Republic's population, was defined as a shared ethnic and cultural identity that unified the nation (Lewis, 2002: 5). Within this context, both Turkishness and Turkish nationalism were imbued with positive, contemporary, and progressive characteristics (Lewis, 2002; Berkes, 2014).

A further key characteristic in early works was their portrayal of religion as a regressive force that obstructed progress (Yavuz, 1993). Berkes (2014: 23) argued that religious authority and its influence in areas such as economics, politics, education, and technology were the primary barriers to modernization. Consequently, Turkish modernization and nation-building were closely tied to secularization, which aimed to diminish the influence of religion in these domains. Within this modernization paradigm, secularization was considered a cornerstone of progress, and Turkish nationalism was positioned in opposition to Islam (e.g., Lewis, 1961; Berkes, 1964; Kushner, 1977; Landau, 1981; Georgeon, 1980). Turkishness was portrayed as a unified national identity rooted in common ancestry and societal values, contrasting sharply with religious identity, which was linked to anti-modernism. The secular reforms implemented by the Turkish Republic were thus seen as progressive measures supporting nationalism and the nation-state, representing a clear breakaway from the Ottoman millet system built on ethnic and religious heterogeneity.

Additionally, early scholarship on Turkish nationalism focused heavily on macro level frameworks, processes, and elite actors, often neglecting grassroots dynamics (Çetinkaya, 2014: 6). These studies analyzed nationalism within the scope of overarching historical developments and the actions of ruling elites, presenting nation-building as a top-down endeavor. They largely ignored the "from below" aspects of nationalism, failing to consider the agency of ordinary individuals in shaping nationalist movements. The linear progress narrative often emphasized the transformative role of the state, portraying nationalizing and

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modernizing state institutions as the primary drivers of Turkish nationalism. Although these grand narratives provided structural and institutional explanations, they overlooked the subjective and contextual dynamics that shaped different nationalist visions. This approach failed to capture the diversity, discontinuities, and complexities within nationalist movements and disregarded the contributions of ordinary individuals in constructing and sustaining nationalism.

Modernist historiography on Turkish nationalism has predominantly highlighted the intellectual foundations of nationalism, focusing on the ideas and activities of nationalist elites (Çetinkaya, 2014: 5). These studies often relied on the writings and actions of influential intellectuals as primary sources (e.g., Heyd, 1950; Georgeon, 1980). As noted by Çetinkaya (2014: 6), these "Great Men" among state elites were typically portrayed as the exclusive agents of modernization and nation formation, marginalizing the role of ordinary individuals. This elitist approach overlooked the social dimensions of nationalism, failing to acknowledge that nationalism is a process actively constructed and shaped by individuals in their everyday lives. Understanding Turkish nationalism as a lived experience, therefore, necessitates examining subjective experiences and concepts such as meaning, agreement, resistance, and interpretation

Even in subsequent studies, much of the scholarship maintained a focus on the intellectual origins of Turkish nationalism and the visions of nationalist elites (e.g., Yavuz, 1993; Deringil, 1993; Uzer, 2016; Taşkın, 2013). These works analyzed the formation of Turkishness as reflected in the political rhetoric employed by elites and treated nationalism primarily as a top-down process. Thus, they mirrored the tendencies of earlier research by prioritizing state policies and official ideologies while neglecting the social and everyday aspects of nationalism.

In summary, the modernization paradigm dominated the study of Turkish nationalism in Turkey until the 1990s. Through this lens, Turkish modernization was understood as a linear transition "from tradition to modernity" and "from the Empire to the Republic" (Poyraz, 2006: 434). Nationalism was seen both as a prerequisite for and a product of this grand narrative of modernization. This approach sought to pinpoint the historical moment when Turkish nationalism emerged and to explain it through the lens of modernization theory. In this tradition, religion was consistently presented as opposing nationalism and the nation-state, symbolizing the outdated traditions of the past. A further notable feature of these early studies was the stark dichotomy drawn between religion and nationalism. Finally, the structuralist and elitist orientation of this scholarship placed significant emphasis on the role of the state and nationalist intellectual elites, while largely ignoring the social dimensions of nationalism and the active participation of ordinary individuals in its development.

3. RETHINKING TURKISH NATIONALISM: POST-MODERNIST CRITIQUES OF MODERNIST APPROACHES

Since the 1990s, the re-emergence of cultural approaches within the social disciplines, along with the influence of post-modernist thought on identity has driven major conceptual change in nationalism studies. This shift, known as the "relational turn," prioritizes agency-based perspectives over constructivist approaches. A prevailing pattern of the scholarship produced in the previous three decades is its critical engagement with earlier theories of nationalism, seeking to address and rectify their limitations (Özkırımlı, 2010: 169). These fresh perspectives, which emphasize the multifaceted and discursive dominance of nationalism, have represented a significant milestone in the study on Turkish nationalism. By shedding light on the often overlooked facets of Turkish nationalism—its blended, fragmented, ambiguous, and pervasive characteristics— these studies have revitalized the field.

Firstly, unlike earlier research that primarily focused on the historical conditions surrounding the emergence of Turkish nationalism and its connection with modernism, recent studies have broadened their scope to include various dimensions, such as minorities (e.g., Aktar, 1996, 2001; Bali, 2000; Çağaptay, 2004; Oran, 2004; Bozarslan, 2005; Aktürk, 2012; Al, 2019), gender (e.g., Kandiyoti, 1991; Arat, 1997; Sirman, 2002; Berktay, 2010; Akşit, 2010; Sancar, 2014), and militarism (e.g., Altınay and Bora, 2002; Altınay, 2004). These works critique the discriminatory and gender-biased elements of state- driven Turkish nationalism, placing previously marginalized and excluded social groups at the forefront of their analyses. Departing from earlier interpretations of Turkish nationalism as a unifying and all-encompassing ideological instrument linked to modernization, these studies aim to provide a more sociological perspective by exploring its interactions with everyday social life. Nevertheless, many of these studies still tend to emphasize top-down actors, including the state and elites, along with their political rhetoric and policies.

Secondly, another prominent focus of recent scholarship is the hybrid nature of Turkish nationalism (e.g., Kadıoğlu, 1996; Canefe, 2002). In contrast to earlier scholars who primarily framed Turkish nationhood in civic terms (e.g., Turan, 1969; Tanör, 1998; Kılı, 1981; Ahmad, 2003), more recent studies have increasingly examined the ethnic dimensions of Turkishness (e.g., Kirişçi, 2000; Yıldız, 2001; Kadıoğlu, 2011). A key discussion in these studies focuses on whether Turkish nationalism is based on civic or ethnic values, whether it is inclusive or exclusive, and whether it is egalitarian or unequal (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 660). These researchers often investigate the dominant state ideology of the early Turkish Republic, linking its origins to the final years of the Ottoman Empire, and explore the state institutions and policies that embody the nationalist

vision of that era (e.g., Kadıoğlu, 1996; Yıldız, 2001; Çağaptay, 2006; Aslan, 2007; Yeğen, 2017). On this basis, a main emphasis of analysis has been the state-oriented nationalism of the early Republican era and its definition of Turkish nationhood. Notable studies have explored the state's policies and discourse targeting both non-Muslim and non-Turkish Muslim communities (Yıldız, 2001; Çağaptay, 2006), along with the civic, ancestral, and cultural aspects of Turkish nationhood as outlined in official documents and implemented through state actions of the time (Yeğen, 2017). These studies critically examine how state-oriented nationalist policies played a pivotal role in shaping and institutionalizing the notion of Turkishness during the Republic's formative period.

Criticizing the analysis of the relationship between nationhood and ethnicity through the ethnic-civic nationalism dichotomy, Aktürk (2012) develops a new classification based on the criteria of "membership" and "expression," referred to as "regimes of ethnicity." He defines the ideal types of monoethnic, multiethnic, and antiethnic regimes and conducts a comparative analysis using these categories. By applying this new classification and carrying out a comprehensive study grounded in primary sources and a variety of interviews, Aktürk suggests that the successful shifts in state policies towards ethnicity can be understood through the alignment of three critical factors: counter-elites, emerging discourses, and dominant majorities.

In his study examining the persistence and change of ethnicity and nationhood policies in Germany, the Soviet Union, post-Soviet Russia, and Turkey since the 1950s, Aktürk (2012) classifies Turkey as antiethnic. This classification is based on state policies that, while granting "membership" to different ethnic categories throughout the 20th century, did not allow these categories to express themselves. Conversely, it is argued that the reforms implemented by the AKP between 2002 and 2009 represented a historic transformation in Turkey's identity politics, marking a significant departure from its long-standing assimilationist regime and signifying a major shift in its ethnicity policies. By focusing on both internal dynamics and international comparisons, this study offers a significant contribution to understanding Turkish nationalism and nation-building processes.

Another significant contribution to the literature by Al and Karell (2016) argues that a "hyphenated identity" (e.g., Turkish-Kurdish) is both theoretically viable and practically significant in modern Turkey. It highlights the ability of hyphenated identities to acknowledge the distinctiveness of Turkish and Kurdish identities while reflecting overlapping and nested dynamics. Rejecting the dichotomy of mutually exclusive groups or a purely civic Turkish identity, the analysis emphasizes the unique attributes and perceptions tied to each identity. Turkish language and shared citizenship provide paths for integration, challenging

rigid ethnic distinctions. Unlike bilingual Kurds, hyphenated individuals incorporate Turkish into their identity repertoire, demonstrating the flexibility and inclusivity of this model.

Thirdly, although many studies since the 1990s have embraced a top-down approach—focusing on hierarchical structures and influential figures while overlooking the role of agency in reproducing nationalist discourse—the idea that nationalism in Turkey has multiple facets has become widely acknowledged among scholars (e.g., Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997; Bora, 2003; Çınar, 2005; Kentel et al., 2009; Kadıoğlu and Keyman, 2011; Özkırımlı, 2011; White, 2014; Uzer, 2016). As Özkırımlı notes, "Tanıl Bora's attempt at 'mapping nationalism' during the 1990s provides us with several dues for navigating through the complex terrain of nationalisms in today's Turkey" (2011: 93). Turkish nationalism is, in fact, neither a uniform nor a clearly defined ideology; rather, it comprises various nationalist movements and perspectives within the country (Özkırımlı, 2017: 274). The elements, driving forces, and key characteristics of Turkish nationalism have shifted significantly depending on the historical and social context. This very complexity strengthens the hegemony of nationalism within Turkish society (Bora, 2003). Bora (2003) identifies four distinct nationalist discourses in Turkey: official nationalism, left-wing Kemalist nationalism, pro-Western nationalism, and racist-ethnicist Turkish nationalism. Similarly, Özkırımlı (2011) argues for the existence of diverse forms of Turkish nationalism and suggests analyzing them using a biaxial framework: Westernism versus anti-Westernism and secularism versus anti-secularism. The researchers emphasize that these categories are neither fixed nor unchangeable. Rather, the complex and hybrid nature of Turkish nationalist discourses underscores their diverse and adaptable structure. What ties these diverse nationalist projects and movements under the broader umbrella of nationalism is the shared discourse that places the nation at the center, regards it as the ultimate authority, and frames the world in binary terms of "us" versus "them" (Özkırımlı, 2017: 275-277).

To sum up, the most significant contribution of studies and debates on Turkish nationalism since the 1990s has been their emphasis on previously overlooked topics, such as the complex and multifaceted nature of Turkish nationalism. These works have illuminated its diverse aspects, manifestations, and imaginaries, offering a fresh perspective on Turkish nationalism. By addressing the competing nationalisms within Turkey, each with its distinct features and claims, these studies diverge from earlier scholarship that treated Turkish nationalism as a singular, monolithic ideology. They have significantly shaped the field by focusing on the competing visions of nationhood articulated by different political movements, shedding light on the pervasive role of nationalism in Turkey's sociopolitical landscape. A fundamental claim of this body of work is

that nationalism has maintained a prominent presence across virtually all political ideologies in Turkey from the Republic's founding to the present. Each political project has constructed an image of a homogenous Turkish nation rooted in its own ideological and cultural principles. However, these studies often neglect the role of everyday life and its actors. Several key questions remain unanswered: What is the involvement of ordinary people in these narratives? Are they simply passive recipients of the nationalist rhetoric presented in political discourse? If nationalism and nationhood are constructed phenomena, how do ordinary individuals contribute to this process? Building on these questions, the following section will examine academic studies that investigate the performance of Turkishness in diverse everyday practices through an alternative approach. This analysis aims to place the everyday nationalism perspective within the broader context of Turkish nationalism studies. These unanswered questions underscore the importance of further exploring the dynamic, flexible, and adaptable discursive nature of Turkish nationalism.

4. EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON TURKISH NATIONALISM

During the 2000s, nationalism studies experienced a major conceptual shift, moving from a constructivist framework to an agency-focused perspective known as the "relational turn." This approach highlights the complexities and challenges tied to the sense of national belonging. Within this paradigm change, the past thirty years have witnessed an increasing number of scholars who perceive nationalism not simply as a phenomenon that emerges during crises or extraordinary events, but as a worldview and a collection of practices that are deeply ingrained in daily life. (Billig, 1995; Brubaker, 1996; Calhoun, 1997; Özkırımlı, 2010; Skey, 2011). This fresh viewpoint has had a profound impact on the study of Turkish nationalism, redirecting attention to the role of ordinary people and the dynamics of daily life. Research in the 2000s began examining how individuals engage with nationalist discourses, negotiating, internalizing, and reproducing them through personal strategies in their everyday experiences. This emphasis on everyday practices and strategies required the incorporation of empirical methods and sources of knowledge. As a result, since the early 2000s, there has been a growing scholarly focus on examining Turkish nationalism from a "bottom-up" perspective.

Tracing Banal Turkish Nationalism in Media and Cultural Texts

Since the early 2000's, notable empirical researches focusing on how Turkish nationalism is represented and reproduced in media and cultural texts have given a new impulse to the literature on Turkish nationalism (e.g., Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000; Gökalp, 2007; Gidişoğlu and Rızvanoğlu, 2011; Yüksel, 2012; Köse and Yılmaz, 2013). These studies essentially seek to investigate how

Turkishness is reflected and perpetuated in everyday life, examining the nationalist rhetoric employed in media and press. Building on Billig's concept of "banal nationalism," Yumul and Özkırımlı (2000) conducted an analysis of the Turkish press, surveying thirty-eight daily newspapers to explore their role in routinizing the concepts of nation and nationhood as normalized and unquestioned elements of daily life. The authors emphasize the crucial role played by the Turkish press in the everyday reproduction of nationhood, highlighting signals such as the use of the Turkish flag or map in newspaper logos, slogans referencing national identity, and newspaper names that serve as "constant reminders of nationhood, national ideals, and our place in the world" (Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000: 789). Moreover, aspects like the organizational structure of the press, the framing of news, and even the way weather reports are presented contribute to a routine "deixis of homeland," creating a familiar, "homely" sense of the world of nations (Billig, 1995: 94). Additionally, by analyzing themes such as religion, Cyprus, internal and external enemies, and the economy, scholars demonstrate how debates on these topics are consistently framed within nationalistic references and terms.

Bora (2004) and Çayır (2009) examine nationalist discourse in textbooks through content analysis, uncovering how education is used as a tool to embed a nationalist worldview in society. In particular, Çayır (2009) explores how the political authority's vision of the nation is reflected in textbooks revised during Turkey's curriculum reform process, undertaken as part of the European Union accession efforts. His study investigates how core themes like the Turkish nation, nationhood, and nationalism are portrayed, as well as how state- driven nationalism is constructed and reinforced in textbooks. These studies demonstrate how the nationalist perspective—marked by an essentialist and exclusionary approach that marginalizes those deemed different—is perpetuated and spread through the educational system. The nationalist expressions deliberately integrated into education, as a critical ideological apparatus of the state, reveal the nation-building vision of those in power. However, these works do not explore the discourses of the various forms of nationalism that exist or how individuals perceive these differing nationalist imaginaries. Consequently, they overlook the diverse and multifaceted ways in which nationalism is conceptualized.

By contrast, Brockett (2011) offers a distinct perspective on the nation-building process, challenging the traditional focus on the discourses of political elites. Rather, the author examines how ordinary individuals experienced and navigated a range of political, legal, religious, cultural, social, and economic reforms that had long been accepted as unquestionable within Kemalist ideology. Using provincial newspapers from 1945 to 1954 as his primary source, Brockett frames the construction of Turkish nationhood as an ongoing process of negotiation among various social groups, rather than simply a top-down

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imposition of ideology. He further contends that Muslim Turkish nationalism—an increasingly important subject in recent research that combines Islamic identity with Turkish nationalism—has its roots in the articles he studied. Moreover, his research enhances the field by highlighting the role of the expanding national print culture between 1945 and 1954 in shaping the development of Turkish nationhood.

The Everyday Face of Turkish Nationalism: Performing Turkishness

Until the 2000s, academic studies on Turkish nationalism primarily viewed it as an ideology, focusing on the collective nationalist narratives, political programs, strategies, and practices upheld by the state and elite groups. Within this body of work, Turkishness was defined as a citizenship tie, a cultural belonging, or a form of political affiliation. In this framework, the contours of Turkishness were shaped by various nationalist projects, which conceptualized it as a fixed and passive identity, idealized and enforced through the policies, actions, and discourses of rival nationalist worldviews. These visions, however, differed in how they imagined the boundaries of Turkishness, reflecting their distinct political, cultural, and ideological orientations. Recent investigate studies on Turkish nationalism, however, have taken a different approach, treating Turkishness as an active and dynamic phenomenon. Rather than viewing it solely as a narrative, these studies consider Turkishness to be a way of thinking, living, and performing, emphasizing its enactment and negotiation in everyday life. While nationalist projects articulate specific narratives of Turkishness, these are also experienced and reinterpreted in daily practices as performative actions. This shift has redirected the focus toward understanding the diverse ways Turkishness is manifested and experienced in daily life.

In the last twenty years, there has been a significant increase in scholarly work examining the multiple ways Turkishness is constructed (e.g., Çınar, 2001, 2005; Özyürek, 2006; Kentel et al., 2009; Kadıoğlu and Keyman, 2011; Çırakman, 2011; Yılmaz, 2013; White, 2014; Çetinkaya, 2014; Çınar and Taş, 2017; De Tar, 2022). These studies explore the competing visions of Turkishness developed by different political ideologies and examine how these visions are reflected in everyday life and the public realm. By shifting the focus to overlooked dimensions of Turkish nationalism—particularly its manifestations in daily life—these pioneering works have added a new dimension to the field. They have opened up fresh opportunities for understanding how different nationalist trajectories are realized and become visible within the everyday experiences of individuals. An early example of this approach can be seen in Bozdoğan's work (2001), which explores how the imagined nationhood of competing political visions within the Turkish experience of modernity is reflected in different areas of ordinary life. Bozdoğan examines areas like architecture, urban planning, specific musical

styles, and lifestyle practices, offering insights into how nationalist ideologies permeate and shape everyday experiences.

Çınar (2005: 27), a significant contributor to this field, asserts that everyday life should be viewed as "a field that is a central location of politics and power, where the key pillars of the sociopolitical system are constructed, negotiated, and contested." According to this perspective, aspects typically related to state structures and political practices—like the creation of a nation and the formation of national identity—are also closely connected to the everyday experiences of individuals. In her research, Çınar investigates how rival national ideologies infiltrate the public space to promote their visions for the future and their constructed concepts of nationhood within society, thereby revealing the multifaceted nature of Turkishness. Additionally, she examines the different ways in which nationhood is negotiated and molded in everyday life through activities like clothing, dining, consumption, leisure, and celebrations (2005: 28). By comparing secular and Islamist interventions in the public sphere related to bodies, spaces, and times, she demonstrates how these practices function as "sites of negotiation where a particular understanding of a national subject in relation to a project related to modernity is formulated, displayed, debated, or contested" (2005: 28).

Drawing inspiration from thinkers like Foucault and Anderson, De Tar (2022) employs a discourse and semiotic analysis method that combines cultural studies with nationalism theories. He explores how the symbolic "figures" in Turkish nationalist discourse, such as Europe, Islam, minorities, the military, and the founding father (Atatürk) are represented in public discourse, history books, and media, uncovering their historical development and roles in Turkish nationalism. The author argues that these "figures" in Turkish nationalist discourse are not merely descriptive elements but active tools that define and sustain historical and political authority (De Tar, 2022: 4, 9). By examining their functions within Turkish political and cultural narratives, the study analyzes how nationalist discourse maintains continuity while adapting to changing circumstances. This comprehensive research offers a new perspective by addressing nationalist language through the construction of meaning via symbols rather than material policies or ideologies. It examines the intersection of these figures with debates on secularism, identity, and authority, contributing to an understanding of how Turkish nationalism is shaped in a global context. Thus, the book provides a unique analysis of how symbolic figures have bolstered Turkish nationalism despite shifting political regimes and social transformations.

Kadıoğlu and Keyman offer the term "symbiotic antagonisms"[2] as an "analytical category for understanding the dynamics of the relationship among various nationalisms" (2011: xi). They argue that this perspective offers valuable insights into "how the existing nationalisms in Turkey, which derive their raison d'être from one another, can create conditions for each other's continued reproduction or eventual decline" (2011: xi). According to them, the different nationalisms in Turkey "sustain themselves through their interactions with one another," operating in a relational and interconnected way as rival and fundamentally contested narratives of Turkish modernity and politics (2011: xi-xii, xv). From this perspective, their research is among the earliest to offer a comparative analysis of the diverse expressions of nationalism in Turkey. The contributions in this collective work explore various dimensions of each form of nationalism and emphasize the critical role of daily interactions with these nationalisms in reinforcing nationalism as a dominant discourse in Turkey. The key purpose of the book is "to expand the scope of social and political studies of Turkey by introducing one of the most overlooked dimensions: a critical analysis of the interactions among competing nationalist claims in Turkey" (2011: xx).

Yılmaz's (2013) significant study provides a comprehensive analysis of early Republican Turkey by examining the interaction between the newly established Turkish state and society during the execution of four nationalist-modernist reforms: the Hat Law of 1925, initiatives to modernize women's clothing, the 1928 Alphabet Reform, and the establishment of new national holidays. Through oral histories, memoirs, press excerpts, and archival data, Yılmaz adopts a bottom-up approach that complements traditional state-focused narratives, exploring how individuals and communities negotiated and reshaped these reforms. Her research significantly contributes to the study of Turkish nationalism by analyzing the interplay between state-led reforms and individual agency in shaping national identity. Yılmaz emphasizes the concept of "everyday nationalism," showing how reforms in language, attire, and public conduct were experienced, adapted, or resisted in everyday life, highlighting the diversity of societal reactions and cultural transformation. A particular focus is given to the gendered dimensions of nationalism, examining how reforms targeting women's clothing and roles intersected with broader efforts to construct a modern national identity.

Blending archival research, oral histories, and cultural analysis, Yılmaz (2013) situates Turkey's nation-building efforts within a historical context. Her interdisciplinary approach reveals the tensions between the state's modernization agenda and existing cultural traditions, providing nuanced insights into the lived

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[2] "It was first used by Moore (1966, p. 2.37) in his seminal book on the social origins of modern dictatorships and democracies. In analyzing the Japanese case, he refers to the relationship between the Japanese merchants and the warrior aristocracy (samurai) as one of symbiotic antagonism." (Kadıoğlu and Keyman, 2011: xi).

impacts of these policies. This pioneering study enriches our understanding of Turkish nationalism and the complex process of nation-building during the transformative yet contested early Republican period.

White's (2014) ethnographic study delves into the question, "What does it mean to be a Turk and a member of this nation?" as a central tension in everyday life (2014: 6). Rather than providing a "coherent definition of 'Turks' or Turkishness," she offers "sketches of competing and overlapping cultures of Turkishness and other forms of national subjectivity" (2014: 18). For White, "being Turkish, like being Balinese, is a form of knowledge acquired and filtered through socialization, education, and life experiences" (2014: 18). She approaches nationalisms as "forms of knowledge embedded in discourses" (2014: 22), distinguishing between secular nationalism, where Turkishness takes precedence, and Muslim nationalism, which prioritizes Muslim identity over Turkishness (2014: 21).

White explores the production of nationalist forms by utilizing various sources, including educational curricula, customs, military duty, popular culture, and conversations with a range of individuals such as army officials, politicians, journalists, and activists (2014: 22). Through discursive analysis, she examines discrepancies and overlaps between secular and Muslim nationalisms, framing them as "relatively distinct patterns of self-identification as national subjects based on certain forms of knowledge about what it means to be a Turk" (2014: 11).

White concludes that both being Turk and Muslim are central to belonging in Turkey, though their prioritization varies. She emphasizes the ambiguity of "what it means to be Muslim, to be Turk-Muslim, or a Turkish national subject," broadening the understanding of Turkish identity beyond rigid categories (2014: 21).

Çınar and Taş (2017) analyze *Ulusalcı* nationalism, a conceptualization of Turkish nationhood that emerged in the early 2000s, through a discursive and narrative lens. They critique the dominant academic focus on nationalism and nationhood, which often centers on how the political elite or the state shapes nation-building processes (2017: 664). Instead, they argue for a broader perspective, emphasizing that the politics of nationhood extends beyond state-led efforts. According to them, nation-building is inherently political and a fundamental aspect of politics. It is not limited to governance, power distribution, or political actions but encompasses how competing nationalist discourses vie to dominate and establish their version of nationhood as the prevailing narrative (2017: 664).

Their analysis highlights that *Ulusalcı* nationalism reflects these broader dynamics, as it represents an ideological struggle to redefine Turkish nationhood

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within the political arena. By framing nation-building as a contested process involving rival nationalisms, they underscore the role of narrative power in shaping political and social structures. This approach challenges traditional state-centric views and positions nationalism as central to the broader landscape of political competition and identity formation. In this respect, Çınar and Taş (2017) conceptualize the nation as "the product of storytelling" and suggest expanding the study of nationhood to include the processes of "production, dissemination, contestation, and negotiation of different stories of nationhood," highlighting the struggles for dominance among rival movements (2017: 664). They argue that rival national projects put forward conflicting narratives of nationhood, each seeking to construct "different kinds of national subjects" based on their divergent interpretations (2017: 665). By adopting a "narrative-based approach to the study of nationalism," they emphasize the role of "stories of nationhood as the main means through which national communities come into being" (2017: 660).

Their analysis centers on the *Ulusalcı* movement, which arose in 2002 as a response to the AKP's rule. Through a narrative analysis of *Those Crazy Turks* (*Şu Çılgın Türkler*), a historical documentary novel by Turgut Özakman, a key spokesperson for the *Ulusalcı* movement, they explore how Turkish nationhood is imagined as "primordially secular," in opposition to the AKP's Ottomanist and Islamist ideology, and "adamantly anti-Western" (2017: 684). This narrative strategy relocates the founding moment of the nation to the War of Independence (1919–1922), distinguishing the *Ulusalcı* imagination from other competing visions of nationhood (2017: 666). By tracing speeches, writings, and Özakman's novel, Çınar and Taş demonstrate how this redefined founding moment helps shape national identity while reinforcing the nation and legitimizing the state in everyday life by embedding it in collective remembrance (2017: 663). Their work highlights the centrality of storytelling in constructing and sustaining national identities and political projects.

In another aspect, the notable study of Kentel, Ahıska, and Genç (2009) aims to explore nationalism by examining the lived experiences, meaning systems, and practices of individuals who engage with nationalism in their daily lives. Their study investigates how nationalism functions on an everyday level, addressing key questions like what nationalism means for different people, how they interact with it, and how it is experienced in their daily routines (Kentel et al., 2009: 14). Rather than focusing on "instrumentalized nationalism in the hands of the nation-state and elites, as reflected in history textbooks," or the extreme, "hot," aggressive forms of nationalism propagated by far-right organizations (2009: 14), the authors center their analysis on nationalism as a phenomenon constructed by top-down actors and dynamics but also consumed, reproduced, and reshaped in everyday life. According to the authors, although nationalist discourse often emphasizes a

"shared history," individuals construct varying "histories" based on personal experiences and their engagement with existing historiography. As a result, history becomes shaped by the "current" polarizations within nationalist strategies (Kentel et al., 2009: 5). From this perspective, the authors aim to understand nationalism at the level of social segments, prioritizing the question of "how" nationalism functions over merely defining "what" it is. Building on the literature on *everyday life*[3] (2009: 15) and acknowledging the dynamic interaction between macro and micro structures, they regard the varied and concrete experiences of individuals as a crucial source of knowledge within a relational framework. In their analysis, they emphasize the *tactics*[4] employed by ordinary individuals in response to macro-level nationalist strategies, examining how people make sense of, resist, interpret, or even misunderstand nationalism. They use personal narratives, individual interpretations, and strategies of resistance as essential references to understand Turkish nationalism (Kentel et al., 2009: 16). To achieve this, their primary data collection methods include in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observations.

In a similar manner, drawing from everyday life studies and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*[5], Ünlü (2018) redefines Turkishness beyond ethnicity, citizenship, or ideology, framing it as a "patterned but mostly unrecognized relationship between Turkish individuals' ethnic position and their ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing – as well as not seeing, not hearing, not feeling, and not knowing" (Ünlü, 2016: 397). Central to his analysis is the metaphor of the "Turkishness contract," a collection of implicit and explicit agreements among Anatolian Muslims that shapes Turkishness (Ünlü, 2016: 397).

Ünlü examines the Turkishness contract on two levels: governmental/societal and personal. Historically rooted in nation-building, the contract is upheld through the state's legislative, economic, and ideological mechanisms (Ünlü, 2016: 400). These mechanisms, implemented by the political elite, influence policies in education, the economy, and other sectors. Ünlü (2018: 22, 359) describes the contract as a supra-ideological consensus that governs

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[3] Central concern of this scholarship is the intricate and inventive nature of everyday life. For pioneering works in the literature on everyday life, see: De Certeau (1984), Bourdieu (1987), Foucault (2000).

[4]. Drawing on De Certeau's framework, Kentel and his colleagues conceptualize nationalism as a "strategy" and view the interactions of individuals and social groups with it as "tactics" (De Certeau, 1984).

[5] Bourdieu places *habitus* at the core of his theory of practice, defining it as "a set of dispositions which generate practices and perceptions" (1991: 13). This concept, introduced by Bourdieu to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to establish a link between social structure and social practice, refers to an unconsciously acquired and internalized framework of thoughts, behaviors, and preferences. The notion of habitus serves as a valuable foundation for a cultural approach to structural analysis, allowing for the connection of social structures with the practices of individual agency.

relationships between the state, society, and individuals, shaping Turkey's ideological and political formations. Adherence to the contract provides privileges, positioning Turkishness as a "world of privilege" (Ünlü, 2016: 398–399). Individuals comply to gain benefits, thereby reinforcing the contract's principles in everyday life (Ünlü, 2018: 16).

The contract relies on the privileged group's active participation in Turkishness's positive aspects (seeing, hearing, feeling, knowing) while ignoring its negatives (Ünlü, 2018). To explore this dynamic, Ünlü (2016) conducted fieldwork with Kurdish individuals, who feel exclusion acutely, contrasting with the invisibility of privilege experienced by its beneficiaries (Kimmel & Ferber, 2014; cited in Ünlü, 2016: 398–399). Although his study focuses on Kurdish perspectives, Ünlü (2018: 26) emphasizes the need to study Turks to fully assess the contract's broader societal impact.

Ünlü (2018: 358–359) situates the Turkishness contract within the socio-historical formation of the Muslim-Turk state and nation, presenting it as a historical and sociological model for analyzing Turkey's past and present. He argues that the contract is maintained not only by state mechanisms but also through collective societal practices, reflecting a dynamic process rather than a simplistic oppressor/oppressed dichotomy (Ünlü, 2018: 21). This approach links social and individual spaces, exploring the interplay between social history, emotions, and thought (Ünlü, 2018: 21).

While Ünlü critiques reducing Turkishness to a state-imposed ideology, his framework largely frames Turkishness within the state's nation-building project. Alternative enactments of Turkishness outside state influence are not considered. Despite this limitation, Ünlü's work offers significant contributions to understanding everyday nationalism and the Turkishness contract's role in shaping national identity.

5. CONCLUSION

Although there is an extensive body of literature on Turkish nationalism, it is notable that there is a lack of a thorough analysis comparing the different approaches to nationalism found within these sources. This article attempts to bridge this gap by exploring the various perspectives present in studies on Turkish nationalism.

Pioneering researchers frequently examined Turkish nationalism through the lens of modernization theory, viewing it as an unavoidable response to the historical circumstances that led to the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a modern and secularized Turkish nation- state. Within such a framework, Turkishness was conceptualized as a unified, modern nationhood that combined

ethnic and cultural elements, positioned in opposition to religious identity, which was associated with antimodernism. As such, Turkish nationhood was perceived as a sharp breakaway from the Ottoman millet system built on ethnic and religious heterogeneity.

Since the 1990s, however, influential studies have shifted the focus by highlighting previously overlooked dimensions of Turkish nationalism, emphasizing its hybrid and multifaceted nature. These works explore diverse interpretations, reflections, and manifestations of nationalism, examining it through the lens of conflicting nationalisms and offering a fresh perspective for the field. This scholarly attention to Turkish nationalism's hybrid and eclectic characteristics has paved the way for empirical research into everyday life, framing nationalism as a "constructed" and "produced" phenomenon, rather than a natural byproduct of modernization and secularization.

Despite these developments, most scholars studying Turkish nationalism have remained focused on top-down institutions and structures. Consequently, there is a significant gap in research exploring how ordinary people perceive Turkishness and how it is discursively and practically constructed in their daily lives. While some studies address the role of everyday experience in Turkish nationalism, they often focus on the narratives of nationhood imposed from above or on competing nationhood narratives stemming from rival nationalist projects. By primarily emphasizing political-level variations, such studies tend to confine the examination of national identity to the behaviors and statements of those in power.

Aydın (2015), in his critique of this dominant approach, argues that while historical and political analyses of nationalism are important, they fail to fully capture its development and function in Turkey. He contends that limiting the focus to elite practices and discourses does not adequately explain how nationalism permeates everyday life. Instead, he emphasizes the need to consider nationalism as a political framework that is continuously redefined by individuals through their own subjective experiences, even by those who are influenced by power structures and their ideologies.

This call for examining how nationhood is shaped through personal experiences and diverse expressions underscores a critical research agenda that has been largely overlooked in conventional studies on Turkish nationalism, which prioritize institutional and official aspects. Embracing this perspective requires attention to personal narratives, the lived experiences of ordinary people, and the diverse ways they shape their own understanding of nationhood in daily life. Research conducted from this perspective would provide valuable insights

into how Turkish nationalism has sustained its hegemonic influence over the past century, both socially and politically.

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