

EVERYDAY NATIONALISM IN TURKEY: CONSTRUCTION OF
TURKISHNESS IN NEVŞEHİR

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ABSTRACT

EVERYDAY NATIONALISM IN TURKEY: CONSTRUCTION OF TURKISHNESS IN NEVŞEHİR

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This thesis aims to understand in a period in which Islamist and ethnic nationalism become a dominant paradigm in Turkish politics, in a small- sized nationalist and conservative central Anatolian city, Nevşehir. Right-wing political parties representing political Islam and ethnic nationalism have historically always been strong in Nevşehir. This thesis aims to reveal how Turkishness is discursively constructed and reproduced by everyday actors from different political positions in Nevşehir. For this purpose, a field study, including in-depth interviews, participant observations and focus group discussions was conducted in Nevşehir between March 2017 and October 2018. In this framework, thirty semi-structured, in-depth interviews were held during this period with everyday social actors of diverse age, gender, political affiliation and occupation in Nevşehir. The findings of the research demonstrates that everyday actors, as everyday nationalism approach argues, are not passive receivers of different narratives of Turkishness which are imposed on them by political institutions and actors, rather they are active agents with their potential to negotiate, change, transform and even hybridize these narratives. Although these ordinary people of everyday life construct their nationhood in different forms and contents within the framework of their own subjectivities and experiences, it is the finding of this thesis that there are common “discursive anchors and strategies” that reproduce Turkishness.

Keywords: Nationalism, Everyday Nationalism, Turkish Nationalism, Turkishness

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’DE GÜNDELİK MİLLİYETÇİLİK: NEVŞEHİR’DE TÜRKLÜĞÜN İNŞASI

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Bu tez, Türkiye siyasetinde İslamcı ve etnik milliyetçiliğin egemen paradigmaya dönüştüğü bir dönemde, siyasal İslamı ve etnik milliyetçiliği temsil eden siyasal partilerin tarihsel olarak her zaman güçlü olduğu küçük, milliyetçi ve muhafazakâr bir Orta Anadolu kenti olan Nevşehir’de, Türklüğün, farklı siyasal pozisyonlara sahip gündelik aktörler tarafından söylemsel olarak nasıl inşa edildiğini ve yeniden üretildiğini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, Mart 2017- Ekim 2018 tarihleri arasında, Nevşehir’de, derinlemesine mülakat, katılımcı gözlem ve odak grup tartışması yöntemlerini içeren bir alan çalışması yürütülmüştür. Bu çerçevede, farklı yaşlara, cinsiyetlere, siyasal eğilimlere ve mesleklere sahip otuz Nevşehirli ile yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları göstermektedir ki, gündelik aktörler, gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımının da iddia ettiği gibi, siyasal kurumlar ve aktörler tarafından kendilerine empoze edilen farklı Türklük anlatılarının pasif alımlayıcıları değil, bu anlatıları müzakere etme, değiştirme, dönüştürme ve hatta melezleme potansiyeline sahip aktif failleridir. Buna karşılık, gündelik hayatın bu sıradan aktörleri, her ne kadar kendi öznellikleri ve deneyimleri çerçevesinde farklı biçimlerde ve içeriklerde milletlikler inşa etseler de, Türklüğü yeniden üretirken bir takım ortak “söylemsel çapalara ve stratejilere” başvurumaktadırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Gündelik Milliyetçilik, Türk Milliyetçiliği, Türklük

*I would like to dedicate this thesis
to the loving memories of my mother Vesalet and father Cemal*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	Motherland Party
AP	Justice Party
BBP	Great Unity Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
CKMP	Republican Peasants' Nation Party
CMP	Republican Nation Party
DP	Democratic Party
DSP	Democratic Left Party
FP	Virtue Party
HDP	People's Democratic Party
İYİP	Good Party
MÇP	Nationalist Task Party
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party
MNP	National Order Party
MP	Nation Party
MSP	National Salvation Party
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
RP	Welfare Party
SHP	Social Democratic Populist Party

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter aims to provide an overview of the thesis. Accordingly, the topic, purposes, methodology and organization of the thesis will be set out and explained in this part.

1.1. Statement of Topic and Aims

My thesis investigates the experienced meanings of nationhood in a small and conservative central Anatolian city of Nevşehir, in the second decade of the 2000s when Islamist and ethnic nationalism become a dominant paradigm in Turkish politics. Benefiting from the concept of “everyday nationhood”, it concentrates on “the actual practices and processes through which nationhood is reproduced in everyday life by its ordinary practitioners” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 554) and tries to explore the agency of ordinary people living in this city in the reproduction of the Turkish nation and Turkishness through their own discourse and everyday practices. The central concern of this thesis is to explore both different and similar ways in which Turkishness is reproduced by ordinary people at everyday level in the framework of national self/other, time and symbols.

The main assumption of the thesis is that what turns nationalism into a hegemonic discourse and principle both in Turkey and in the world is its constant reproduction by everyday actors, as well as the dominant nationalist political rhetoric. Therefore, this thesis argues that in order to understand the complex and dynamic nature of nationalism, it is necessary to scrutinize the everyday actors who are active agents and carriers of nationalism. From this point of view, this thesis aims to make sense of

the subjectivities and commonalities that emerge in the embodiment of Turkishness by everyday actors in Nevşehir.

Focusing on the construction of nationalism from below does not mean ignoring how top down political actors and formations define the nation and how they determine and dominate the social and political atmosphere of their time through their nationalist discourses and policies. In this context, it will be meaningful to outline the prominent position that nationalism has occupied in Turkish politics since the establishment of the Republic and its historical transformation, in terms of understanding the social and political aura in which ordinary actors constantly reproduce everyday Turkishness in Nevşehir in the 2000s.

The map of political leanings in Turkey includes unique political behaviors that are challenging to categorize using conventional political science terms (Akgönül and Oran, 2018: 13). Akgönül and Oran (2019), arguing that one of the examples of this situation is that the 'right' and 'left' as political concepts in the Turkish context encompass different realities, compared to their European roots, define five significant political streams that reflect the subjective conditions of Turkish politics. These are the extreme right- wing movement which defines itself as nationalist and statist; the Islamist right- wing movement, which defines itself as nationalist and conservative; the liberal right- wing movement, which defines itself as economically liberal, nationalist and conservative; the secularist right-wing movement, which defines itself as centre- left, Kemalist and nationalist; and Kurdish movement which describes itself as left- Kurdish nationalist (Table 1.1). In the light of this categorization, when the political formations that have appeared in Turkish politics since the establishment of the Republic are subject to the universally accepted political classification, it is possible to argue that Turkish politics is generally positioned on the right-wing of the political spectrum; and nationalism (secular or Islamist) is one of the major tenets of Turkish politics alongside Jacobinism and statism (Akgönül and Oran, 2018: 13).

Table 1.1 The political spectrum in Turkey¹			
Place in the spectrum	Sees itself as	Main political parties	Active years
Extreme right	Nationalist – statist	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Party of the Nationalist Movement, MHP) Büyük Birlik Partisi (Party of the Great Union, BBP)	1969- 1993-
Islamist right	Nationalist –conservative	Millî Görüş movement (National vision) and its parties Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Party of Justice and Development, AKP)	1969- 2001-
Liberal right	Economically liberal, nationalist, conservative	Demokrat Parti (Democrat Party, DP) Anavatan Partisi (Party of the Motherland, ANAP)	1946-1960 1983-
Secularist right	Centre-left, Kemalist, nationalist	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party, CHP) Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party,DSP)	1923- 1985-
Kurdish movement	Left – Kurdish nationalist	Partiya Karakerên Kurdistanê (Party of Workers of Kurdistan, PKK), tradition parties Halkların Demokasi Partisi (Peoples’ Democratic Party, HDP)	1978- 2012-

Turkish nationalism, like all other nationalisms, is not a homogenous or well-defined ideology; there are a number of nationalist projects in Turkey whose components, motivations and dominant characters have thus differed across time and place (Canefe, 2002; Bora, 2003; Özkırımlı, 2011; Kuzu 2019). Each of these political projects has its own imagination of nationhood. Bora (2003, 2011) distinguishes four different nationalist discourses at the political level: official nationalism, left- wing Kemalist nationalism, pro- Western nationalism and racist-ethnicist Turkish nationalism. State- centered Turkish nationalism in early Republican era, the right- wing Turkish nationalism from the 1950s, the radical nationalism in the 1970s, the Turkish nationalism blended with Islam beginning from the 1980s, and the neo- Ottomanist nationalism which has been visible in the political discourse of the ruling AKP during the last decade distinguish from each other in terms of their ideological characters and basis and their contending narratives of nationhood. In fact, in recent years, there has been an increasing academic interest in these contending forms of Turkish nationalism (e.g. Bora, 2003,

¹ Source: Akgönül and Oran, 2019.

2011; Kadioğlu and Keyman 2011; Özkırımlı, 2011; Öztan, 2014; Çınar and Taş, 2017).

Then, what is the role of ordinary people in this story? Should we consider these people as the passive recipient of nationalist rhetoric used in political area? If the nation and its derivatives are a product of a construction process, where are ordinary people surrounded by “competing nationalisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011) taking part in this process? Starting from these questions, this thesis concentrates on ordinary people’s perception of nationhood and their everyday experiences. Accordingly, it does not focus on the contending claims and narratives of Turkishness in the discourses of political movements. Neither state-supported nationalist discourse disseminated and imposed through ideological state apparatus nor clashing nationalist visions’ imagination of nationhood are within the scope of this thesis. In other words, this thesis does not investigate politically instrumentalized nationalism by official ideology and elites/ top down actors. Rather, it is concerned with the role of ordinary people enclosed by these contending interpretations of Turkish nationalism in the reproduction of the sense of Turkishness. To this end, in this thesis, the notion of “everyday nationhood” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a) is employed to explore “how nationhood can be activated ‘from below’” (Antonisch, 2016: 33).

For a while now, scholars who are interested in nationalism have been concerned with everyday nationhood and the nation from below (Knott, 2015; Ichijo, 2016; Fox and Ginderachter, 2018)². According to Fox and Miller- Idriss “the broad brush

²The pioneering studies with this perspective, which will be addressed in detail in the next chapter, as follows: Fox, J., Miller Idriss, C. (2008a), *Everyday Nationhood*, *Ethnicities*, vol. 8 (4), 536- 576; Goode, J. P., Stroup, D. R. (2015), “Everyday Nationalism Constructivism for the masses”, *Social Science Quarterly*, vol. 96 (2), 717- 739; Skey, M. (2009), “The national in everyday life a critical engagement with Michael Billig's thesis of banal nationalism”, *Sociological Review*, vol. 57 (2), 331- 346; Skey, M. (2011), *National Belonging and Everyday Life: The Significance of Nationhood in an Uncertain World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Brubaker, R. (1996), *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Antonisch, M. (2016) “The everyday of banal nationalism Ordinary people’s views on Italy and Italian”, *Political Geography*, vol. 54, 32- 42; Jacobsen, J. (1997) ‘Perceptions of Britishness’, *Nations & Nationalism*, vol. 3 (2), 181-199; Mann, R., Fenton, S. (2009), “The personal contexts of national sentiments”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 35 (4), 517- 534; McCrone, D. (2002), “Who do you say you are?”, *Ethnicities*, vol. 2 (3), 301-320; Eriksen, T. H. (1993), “Formal and informal nationalism”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 16 (1), 1-25; Fenton, S. (2007), “Indifference to national identity: what young people think about being English and British”, *Nations & Nationalism*, vol. 13 (2), 321- 339; Condor, S. (2000), “Pride and Prejudice: identity management in English peoples talk about “this country””, *Discourse and Society*, vol. 11 (2), 175-205.

strokes favoured by macro-analytical approaches to the study of nationalism blur (and sometimes obscure) the finer grains of the nation that are embedded in the routine practices of everyday life” (2008a: 553). In this sense, macro analytical perspectives in the study of nationalism, which give their full attention to the top down political and rhetorical strategies such as the nationalism of the state or elites, overlook the meaning and evidence of nationhood in the everyday life. Starting from this statement, they offer an empirical approach towards understanding both the discursive construction of nationhood in the subjective worlds of ordinary people through their narratives and expressions, and the meaning of their everyday experiences. In this direction, they are interested in how and in which contexts nationhood is made significant by ordinary people in their discursive expressions, and how nation is talked about, experienced and given meaning in manifold ways by these people who embody it. Such an agency- centered everyday approach to nationhood does not mean to ignore the role of macro structures such as state, elites or media in the construction and reproduction of nations and its derivatives (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 553) or “the degree to which they dominate a particular social environment” (Skey, 2009: 342). However, nationhood is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, “embodied and expressed not only in political claims and nationalist rhetoric but in everyday encounters, practical categories, common sense knowledge, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, mental maps, interactional cues, discursive frames, organizational routines, social networks, and institutional forms” (Brubaker et al., 2006: 6-7). In order to make sense of the dynamic and ongoing relationship between macro and micro structures, first of all, it is necessary to reveal the latter, which has been left out of the field of academic inquiry so far, and to be “aware of the manifold ways in which different groups are addressed (or ignored) and respond to, challenge or ignore such discourse” (Skey, 2009: 342). Everyday nationhood approach provides the required perspective to fill a gap in the literature on Turkish nationalisms by examining the construction of Turkishness from below.

Nevşehir is one of the Central Anatolian cities that has become increasingly conservative in terms of both voting behavior and social life, with the nationalist and Islamist discourse that has become a hegemonic characteristic in Turkish politics (Kuzu 2019; Fabbe and Balıkcıoğlu, 2019) in the 2000s (Toprak, 2008; Çarkoğlu and

Kalaycıoğlu, 2009). Particularly in the last ten years, in the city, where the AKP has achieved a performance that exceeds its electoral success in Turkey, the total votes of conservative, nationalist and Islamist right-wing parties have been consolidated by over eighty percent (Table 1.2). This political attitude of Nevşehir voters is also reflected in daily social life. Kindergartens that provide religious education to pre-school children under the name of “values education” have become widespread, restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages have been closed one by one, and even market owners who sell alcoholic beverages have difficulty finding a rental house for their families due to “neighborhood pressure”.³ For example, alcoholic beverages are not sold in the two stores of the world-famous market chain Migros in Nevşehir city center. The store officials interviewed during the fieldwork explained this situation as “the discomfort that the targeted customer group may feel from the sale of alcoholic beverages”.

Table 1.2 Vote Shares of Right- Wing Conservative and /or Nationalist Parties in Nevşehir⁴

Turkey's General Elections	Vote Shares of Political Parties in Nevşehir and Number of Their Number of Deputies	Vote Shares of Political Parties in Turkey	Vote Shares of Right- Wing Conservative and /or Nationalist Parties in Nevşehir	Vote Shares of Right- wing Conservative and /or Nationalist Parties in Turkey
1957	DP: 42,4% (4 deputies) CMP: 28,9% CHP: 28, 7%	DP: 48,6% CHP: 41,4% CMP: 6,5%	71,3%	58,6%
1961	AP: 32,5% CKMP: 35,5% (3 deputies) CHP: 31,9%	CHP:36,7% AP:34,8% CKMP:13,9% YTP: 13,7%	68%	62,4%

³ “Neighborhood pressure” is a sociological conception introduced by ŞerifMardin in 2007 to describe the risk that the rising Islamic movement will turn into a conservative pressure against differences in the society. See for further explanation Adnan Çetin (2010) “Bir Kavramın Kısa Tarihi: Mahalle Baskısı”, *Mukaddime*, vol.3.

⁴ Sources: “1946-2011 Türkiye genel seçim sonuçları”, https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/secim_sonucdari/secim3_tr.pdf (06.07.2022), “1950 -1977 Yılları Arası Seçim Çevresine Göre Milletvekili Genel Seçimi Sonuçları, SeçimÇevresi: Nevşehir”, <https://www.ysk.gov.tr/doc/dosyalar/docs/Milletvekili/1950-1977/Nevsehir.pdf> (06.07.2022), Statistic of General Elections of November 2015, http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/faces/HaberDetay?training_id=YSKPWCN1_4444014427&_afLoop=1371416700632280&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=x2skxibxv_32#%40%3F_afWindowId%3Dx2skxibxv_32%26_afLoop%3D1371416700632280%26training_id%3DYSKPWCN1_4444014427%26_afWindowMode%3D0%26_adf.ctrl-state%3Dx2skxibxv_44, (02.05.2016), Supreme Electoral Council’s General Elections Archives http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/faces/GenelSecimler?_afLoop=1371412441099493&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=x2skxibxv_1#%40%3F_afWindowId%3Dx2skxibxv_1%26_afLoop%3D1371412441099493%26_afWindowMode%3D0%26_adf.ctrl-state%3Dx2skxibxv_35 (02.05.2016)

Table 1.2 (Cont'd) Vote Shares of Right- Wing Conservative and /or Nationalist Parties in Nevşehir				
1965	AP: 47,3% (1 deputy) MP:27,1% (1 deputy) CHP:25,6% (1 deputy)	AP: 52,9% CHP: 28,7% MP: 6,3%	74,4%	62,9%
1969	AP:53,4% (2 deputies) CHP: 19,9% (1 deputy) MP:19%	AP: 46,55% CHP:27,37% GP:6,58%	76,6%	56,45%
1973	AP:35,4% (1 deputy) CHP:26,0% (1 deputy) MSP:18,4% (1 deputy) MHP:5,6% DP:5,2%	CHP:33,3% AP:29,82% DP:11,89% MSP:11,8%	64,6%	56,89%
1977	AP:41,4% (2 deputies) CHP:34,5% (1 deputy) MHP:11,0% MSP:9,9%	CHP:41,38% AP:36,89% MSP:8,56% MHP:6,42	62,3%	51,87%
1983	ANAP:49,94% (3 deputies) HP:31,25% MDP:18,81%	ANAP: 45,14% HP:30,46% MDP: 23,27%	68,75%	68,41%
1987	ANAP:33,2% (1 deputy) DYP:22,8% (1 deputy) SHP:20,8% (1 deputy) RP:10,7% MCP:6,4% DSP:5,4%	ANAP:36,31% SHP:24,74% DYP:19,10% DSP: 8,53% RP:7,16%	73,1%	65,5%
1991	DYP:28,5% (2 deputies) RP:26,44% (1 deputy) ANAP:22,02% SHP:15,90% DSP:6,69%	DYP:27,03% ANAP:24,01% SHP:20,75% RP:16,87% DSP:10,74	76,96%	67,91%
1995	RP:28,36% (1 deputy) ANAP:18,17% (1 deputy) MHP:16,59% DYP:16,58% (1 deputy) CHP:10,17% DSP:7,05%	RP:21,38% DYP:19,18% ANAP:19,65% DSP:14,64% CHP:10,71% MHP:8,18%	79,7%	68,39%
1999	MHP:31,74% (2 deputies) FP:18,36% (1 deputy) ANAP:13,35% DYP:12,42% DSP:10,20% CHP:7%	DSP:22,18% MHP:17,98% FP:15,41% ANAP:13,22% DYP:12,01%	75,87%	58,62%
2002	AKP:43,63% (3 deputies) CHP:14,39% MHP:12,41% DYP:10,27% ANAP:7,36%	AKP:34,28% CHP:19,39% DYP:9,54% MHP:8,36% GP:7,25% ANAP:5,13%	76,64%	59,8%
2007	AKP:55,72% (3 deputies) MHP:18,32% CHP:15,80%	AKP:46,58% CHP:20,87% MHP:14,27% DP:5,44%	80,61%	66,29%
2011	AKP:60,19% (3 deputies) MHP:18,24% CHP:16,33%	AKP:49,83% CHP:25,98% MHP:13,01%	80,11%	62,84%
2015 June	AKP:52,4% (2 deputies) MHP:27,3% (1 deputies) CHP:15,0%	AKP:40,87% CHP:24,95% MHP:16,29% HDP:13,12%	81,5%	59,22%
2015 Novem ber	AKP:62,5% (3 deputies) MHP:18,0% CHP:15,2%	AKP:49,50% CHP:25,32% MHP:11,90% HDP:10,76%	81,2%	62,78%
2018	AKP:53,1% (2 deputies) MHP:17,8% CHP:16,5% (1 deputy) İYİP:8,99%	AKP:42,56% CHP:22,65% HDP:11,70% MHP:11,10% İYİP:9,96%	81,05%	64,96%

Özberk (2018), in his work where the nationalist and Islamist transformation that has become increasingly evident in the political arena in the 2010s is traced in the urban text of Nevşehir, draws attention to how urban spaces were renamed in a conservative, nationalist, Islamist and Ottomanist tone in this period. In his study, the author, focusing on how the symbols of Turkish-Islamic synthesis are coded into the urban space in Nevşehir, explains the basic dynamics that reflected in the urban text of the city and brought radical changes to the names given to public places such as school, avenue, street, and intersection with the recurrence of Turkish-Islamic synthesis in the 2000s, especially after especially the July 15 coup attempt. Indeed, in the second decade of the 2000s, in Nevşehir, it was seen that the urban text, began to be constructed as the symbolic space of the neo-Ottomanist narrative, and the concept of the nation, designed as a religious collective, left its mark on the urban space (Özberk, 2018: 693- 694).

The political climate created by the Islamist, conservative and nationalist discourses and practices of the government, of course, also formed the habitus of the everyday life of the city and its everyday actors. Islamist, nationalist and Ottomanist symbols in public transportation vehicles and public spaces such as cafes and restaurants, and cars decorated with similar symbols, pointed to this conservative and nationalist new wave that penetrated all the capillaries of the city's everyday life; because everyday life was the area where the nationalist discourse dictated and imposed by political actors was transformed into the determinant of social life, sometimes by transforming it, sometimes by changing it, but by constantly reproducing it.

In this context, this research, drawing on in-depth interviews, participant observations and group discussions conducted in Nevşehir, attempts to trace the reflections of rising Turkish nationalism in the 2000s on the everyday life of the city dwellers in a social and political atmosphere increasingly occupied by a conservative nationalist discourse. In order to do this, I examine the ways in which different people define themselves, and talk about their experiences in national terms with the “logic of nationalist thinking” (Skey, 2011: 4). Paraphrasing Skey’s own words, this “logic” is based on certain taken-for-granted assumptions. First, the world is composed of identifiable nations. Second, each individual in this world inherently

belongs to a nation. Third, the nationality of each person has inevitably an effect on her or his way of thinking and acting (Skey, 2011: 4- 5). What makes the world of nations familiar and taken-for-granted for people is this nationalist logic which is reproduced by their own discourses, expressions and experiences at everyday level. The process of perceiving, interpreting and categorizing the world with a national outlook are taken for granted by nationalized subjects. Internalized and embodied discourses, practices, rituals, and symbols by them as a part of social discourse reproduce the world as a world of nations. The key actor of this reproduction in everyday life is ordinary people. In this sense, paying attention to the voice of ordinary people, “as active producers of national meanings” (Antonisch, 2016: 32), this research offers a bit more everyday approach to nationalism studies.

Firstly, one of the primary aims of this thesis is to investigate “the active role of ordinary people in reproducing, rather than merely receiving, expression of nationhood” (Skey and Antonsich, 2017: 6) and by this way to pursue the traces of Turkishness in the experiential world. Secondly, being time, event, and context sensitive, and adopting eventful analysis perspective, this thesis aims to demonstrate how, at which moments and instance, and in which ways and with which perceptions and strategies nationhood is experienced by ordinary people. With a “vernacular understanding” (Brubaker et al., 2006: 9), in the fieldwork, I examined the everyday expressions and reifications of the Turkishness to find an answer to the basic questions on the consumption and reproduction of nationhood at everyday level: how, when and in which ways do they describe themselves as Turkish? How, when and in which situations do their Turkishness crystallize?

Thirdly, also inspiring from Özkırımlı (2005) and Skey (2011), in this thesis, different sense making processes and ways in which individual construction of nationhood occurs are analyzed along three dimensions: self/other, temporal and cultural. The main reason why the thesis focuses on these three dimensions is that different nationalism projects in Turkish politics actually have different claims on the themes of us, them, past and national culture while defining the Turkish nation. Indeed, Turkish nationhood has been constructed in both top- down political discourses and in everyday life from below by ordinary actors within the framework

of us, them, the past and culture. In this context, this thesis aims to examine the reflections of the differentiations on these three dimensions in everyday life. In other words, this thesis is structured to explore how and when national “we/ they”, national “now” and national “symbols and values” emerge in the discourse and experiences of ordinary people in the area at everyday level. What meaning do they attribute to national self- other, national time and national symbols; and in which ways do they experience and embody nationhood along these dimensions?

Lastly, the nationalist way of seeing, making sense of and interpreting the world appears in different forms in everyday expressions and experiences of each individual. In each aforementioned dimension, individuals have divergent claims and different experiences about their nationhood. However, it is possible to speak of some common strategies in its subjective construction. For this reason, another primary aim is to map manifold ways in which Turkishness is enacted and the nation is reproduced by ordinary people accounting for both differences and similarities of these ways. Considering “the multiple, often conflicting, ways of talking about the same nation” (Skey, 2011:5) such a viewpoint allows us not only regarding the subjective construction of nationhood in everyday life, but also detecting some communalities in diverse imaginations of national subject in some contexts.

In brief, as I stated earlier, by focusing on people living in Nevşehir, my research aims to understand the enactment of Turkishness in individuals’ everyday practices and expressions. In this context, the traces of these everyday reflections of nationhood on their discourses and experiences are pursued in the representation of national self/other, time, and symbols and values. This I argue, allows us to account for how nationhood is reproduced on a daily basis and identify what is reproduced. By this way, I hope to deepen our understanding on the increasing salience and importance of being “national” and its complex dynamics in everyday life.

Before moving on to the methodology and research design employed in this thesis, I would like to briefly clarify a set of presuppositions on which the thesis is based. First of all, theoretical groundwork of my dissertation is based on the constructivist account of nation which explains this phenomenon as an invented, socially

constructed and imagined “cultural artefact” of modernity (Smith, 1995: 4). However, simply asserting that nation and its derivatives are constructed is not enough to specify how they are constructed (Brubaker, 2004: 17- 18). Nationalism, as a way of seeing, thinking and making sense of the world as the world of nations (Calhoun 1997, Özkırımlı 2010) is constructed, articulated, performed and finally reified by ordinary people in their everyday life. In this sense, nationalism and nationhood is socially constructed and embedded in the everyday lives of ordinary people. Everyday nationhood approach adopted in this thesis is relies on this key claim and focuses on the active role of ordinary people in everyday processes in which nationalism is internalized and routinized. Accordingly, this thesis is based on the premise that ordinary people have the potential reply politicians’ rhetoric including nationalist messages in many different ways (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a, 2008b; Skey, 2011; Goode and Stroup, 2015; Antonsich, 2016; Skey and Antonsich, 2017). They might agree, reject, negotiate or transform the content of nationalist discourse offered by institutions, political parties, media or elites. By this way, they constitute their own perception and reconstruct nationalism in their daily life with their attitudes, discourses, everyday practices. In this context, adopting a bottom-up perspective following the traces of nationalism in this domain will be an appropriate attempt for revealing the construction of nationalist discourse and its force.

1.2. Methodology and Research Design

Research methodology, as one of the vital parts of an academic study, is a roadmap that clarifies the fundamental approach to be adopted at all stages of a research. There have been two main approaches of research methodology in the social sciences; these are quantitative and qualitative research methodology (Neuman, 2007: 7; Schutt, 2015: 17). The most basic and fundamental difference between these two approaches is that while the former aims to analyze numbers and answer the questions such as how much, how many, how often, to what extent, the latter is concerned with understanding and describing a social phenomenon, thereby seeking to answer the questions of “how” and “why” (Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Given, 2008: xxix; Schutt, 2015: 358).

A methodological framework including qualitative methods for data collection and analysis is the most appropriate to address “many of the *why* questions that researchers have in mind when they develop their projects” (Given, 2008: xxix). In parallel to this, sense-making world of individuals constitutes the backbone of qualitative research methodology. It is a methodological approach that aims “to capture individuals’ thoughts, feelings, or interpretations of meaning and process” (Given, 2008: xxix). The empirical data of a qualitative research consists of these aspects of a social phenomenon; and qualitative research methodology is supposed to frame the collection and analysis of this data (Given, 2008: 516). In the light of these principles of qualitative research methodology, a research agenda that embraces rather than political speeches, newspaper articles or history textbooks, the audiences of the speeches, the readers of newspapers, and the students of history for the nation’s everyday meanings are used in this thesis. The empirical data to be presented are the outcome of a fieldwork that was conducted in Nevşehir between September 2016 and October 2018 in Nevşehir.

Selection of guiding research paradigm, defining the research question, designing a study group, the determination of topics, procedures, and methods for data collection and data analysis constitutes the most crucial parts of a qualitative research methodology (Given, 2008: 516). In the following of this section, I will discuss these stages of the thesis.

1.2.1. Guiding Research Paradigm

For this empirical investigation that aims to understand how and in which contexts ordinary people subjectively construct the Turkish nation and Turkishness in everyday life, qualitative research methodology based on a context-sensitive interpretative approach is used in order to understand and specify both contents and contexts of their experiences of nationhood. The claim of the interpretative paradigm is that “social phenomena are constructed or co-constructed by self and can be discovered by collecting and analyzing conversations and texts”(Given, 2008: 517). According to this perspective, the researcher aiming to reveal the construction of a social phenomenon needs to interact with the participant and to observe the

interaction among the participants (Given, 2008: 517). The meaning of the issue under consideration for the participants can only be effectively understood by means of active involvement of researcher in the field (Given, 2008: 517). Accordingly, on the one hand, focusing on the meanings attributed to the Turkish nation and Turkishness inevitably involves adopting an interpretative viewpoint. On the other hand capturing the context in which the phenomenon significant for the participants and their agency entails being aware of contextual circumstances.

Furthermore, in accordance with the purposes of the thesis, a discourse analytical approach, which “emphasizes the ways in which understandings of nationhood are engaged, constituted and propagated through discursive acts” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 540; cited by Dijk, 1984; Wetherell and Potter, 1992; De Cille et al., 1999) is employed to both collect and analyze the empirical data. In this process, the discursive acts of the participants are treated not as simple descriptions of nationhood. Rather, they are handled as being “simultaneously constitutive of that reality, willing into existence that which they name” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 540; cited by Bourdieu, 1991: 223). Adopting such an approach, it is aimed not only to identify the discursive acts of the participants, but also the ways in which Turkishness “is creatively and self-consciously deployed and manipulated by ordinary people” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 539); because “nationhood is not (only) lurking in the crevices of the unconscious, furtively informing talk without becoming the subject of talk; it is simultaneously the practical accomplishment of ordinary people giving concrete expression to their understandings of the nation” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 539). Thus, in this thesis, nationhood is treated as a phenomenon constituted by the talk of ordinary people, as well as it frames their talk (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 539).

1.2.2. Research Question

Two research questions that underpin this thesis are as follows. My primary research question is how and in which ways ordinary people, who define themselves as Turkish, make sense of and experience the Turkish nation and their Turkishness at everyday level in the contexts of national self/other, time and cultural features. As

secondary questions, what this research tell us about the common and contrasting patterns of Turkishness in these contexts, and the taken-for-grantedness of Turkishness in the society.

1.2.3. Defining the Population

My theoretical concern with the subjective construction of nationhood in everyday life motivated me to write this dissertation; and I decided to examine the everyday dimension of nationalism by focusing on “majority group” members, namely those who define themselves as “Turkish” and conducting a fieldwork in Nevşehir. These methodological decisions might be justified by clarifying two main questions: Why did I choose to study with majority group members and why did I prefer to do it in Nevşehir?

First of all, although there is a significant increase in the number of nationalism studies which are interested in the discursive analysis of nationalism and nationhood both throughout the world and in Turkey, it is possible to say that most of them handle the issue through marginal groups and say relatively little about the massive numbers’ the taken for granted understanding of their own nationhood (Skey, 2011; Goode and Stroup, 2015). Skey explains this situation as follows:

By and large, scholars and policy makers have focused more on marginal groups, such as ethnic minorities, who were seen to have a more uncertain status. Often, they were, quite rightly, concerned with challenging racism and other forms of social inequality. However, by attending to the lives of people whose sense of belonging, and entitlement, remains largely ‘beyond question’, we may be in a better position to explain why national forms of identification and organisation matter and, just as importantly, why such issues are being debated so ferociously at the current time. (Skey, 2011: 1)

Indeed, focusing on the groups whose status is relatively uncertain, such as ethnic or religious minorities, for example Hispanics in the United States, Muslims in Europe; many recent studies related to nationalism leave people who consider their own dominant positions in society outside of the area of inquiry (Skey, 2011: 1). In the context of the studies on Turkish nationalism, for example, I argue, except for few studies (e.g. Saraçoğlu, 2011; Kentel et al, 2009; White, 2014), there is a gap in the

literature in terms of a comprehensive exploration of the taken-for-grantedness of Turkishness from the point of the members of majority group. A large amount of these studies analyze Turkish nationalism in the context of state-sponsored nationalist politics and discourse against other ethnic or religious groups such as Kurds and non-Muslims during the nation building process (e.g. Aktar, 2001, 2006; Çağaptay, 2006; Yıldız, 2001; Aslan 2007). This attitude causes the consideration Turkish nation as a homogeneous, consistent and whole entity, and prevents to see the contested meanings of being Turk and its manifold ways of being perceived and experienced. In other words, Turkishness, in these studies, has been treated as an unproblematic category by overlooking the enormous diversity among the meanings attributed to it by the everyday actors and the ways in which it is experienced. However, concentrating on people, as the key agents of nationalism, and their “sense of belonging and entitlement” (Skey, 2011:1) has a potential to contribute significantly to our perspective. The endeavor to understand how and in which contexts national imagination, identification and belonging matters for different people “in particular, those who form part of the dominant group within a given nation” (Skey, 2011: 4) enables us to better analyze the construction process of a nation socially. In this respect, I attempt to reach the complex everyday knowledge of nationhood including as wide a range of the nationalized subjects (De Cillia et. al, 1999: 153) as possible in order to capture the differences and similarities between their perceptions and experiences of Turkishness.

Secondly, the question of why I decided to conduct a fieldwork in Nevşehir might be responded with three arguments: social structure of Nevşehir with a dense migrant population, political position of Nevşehir as a nationalist and conservative central Anatolian town, and the advantage of being familiar with the field. Selecting a site for an empirical investigation includes “purposive or deliberate sampling to ensure that participants have direct experience with the issues or topics under examination” (Given, 2008: 548). Such a sampling design “increases the breadth and depth of data collected” (Given, 2008: 548). Nine years ago, when I moved to Nevşehir to work as a research assistant in the Nevşehir University, the first thing that caught my attention was the abundance of Turkish flagged cars on streets. In fact, car stickers with Turkish flags, Ottoman sultan’s signature, and writings in old Turkic script were

quite prevalent and popular. Nationalist images, symbols and mottos in the public transportation vehicles, the news of fight between the locals and Syrian migrants⁵, and protest marches frequently organized by little groups after these happenings started to encourage me to work through the everyday dimension of nationhood. In fact, nationalist feelings, thoughts and practices, could be observed in the capillaries of the city's everyday life. However, the meanings of these nationalist appearances were not always the same. Many people were describing themselves as “Turkish nationalist”, comfortably and with pride; but what these people understood from the Turkish nation and Turkishness was not the same. In some contexts, Turkishness could become an important issue, even for a person without any nationalist sensitivity. What created the nationalist emphasis in the everyday life of Nevşehir was something very different from political rhetoric, I thought. Nationalism was providing a way of seeing, experiencing, making sense of the world for people; and the taken-for-grantedness of the nation was constantly reproduced with this same form of perception but in different contents and different contexts. The existence and togetherness of these diverse meanings attributed to Turkishness and the ways in which it is experienced in everyday life was inducing the emergence of nationalism as a strong mood that through Nevşehir. In order to specify these different contents and contexts at everyday level, it was required to ask ordinary people, as the real subjects of nationhood, for their feelings, thoughts and experiences adopting a bottom up approach.

Additionally, another important factor which makes Nevşehir a suitable social area to study this issue is that locals interact with “others”. In the formation of sense of national belonging, two processes play every important role: a process of internal identification based on cultural, political and historical characteristics and a process of external identification activated via interaction with outsiders (Triandafyllidou, 2006). In this sense, national belonging, like all other types of collective belongings, is shaped through “other” by the interaction with “other”. In this context, Nevşehir is a city where its dwellers are more likely to encounter with “other” than other central Anatolian cities for two reasons. On the one hand, as the center of Cappadocia region located in the center of the Anatolian region of Turkey, Nevşehir is a famous and

⁵For example <https://www.haberler.com/nevsehir-de-suriyeli-lerle-esnafin-bicakli-kavgasi-6501792-haberi/>
<http://www.fibhaber.com/nevsehir/suriyelilerin-karistigi-kavga-derinkuyu-yu-ayaga-kaldirdi-h79263.html>

popular tourist destination with its geological, cultural and historic features. On the other hand, Nevşehir is the one of the 62 satellite cities that hosts the highest asylum seekers and refugees, most of whom originate in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, in Turkey (Okuyuz and Angliss, 2014: 37-84). According to the statistics of UNHCR, at the end 2016, the population of concern to UNHCR at Nevşehir is 14.388.⁶ Today, according to the data of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 13.867 Syrians under the temporary protection lives in Nevşehir and constitute 4.31 percent of the total population of the province by May 2022.⁷ In addition to this, According to the foreign population figures according to the provinces published by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2021, a total of 9264 foreign nationals reside in Nevşehir, excluding the Syrians under temporary protection status and those with a visa and residence permit for less than 3 months.⁸ Within this picture, the city hosts the third largest number of Syrians under the temporary protection in the proportion to the local population in the central Anatolia, after Kayseri and Konya. The total number of asylum-seekers and migrants is estimated to be around 23.000. This figure corresponds to approximately 7.4 percent of the total population of Nevşehir. This sociocultural composition of the city provides a suitable context for exploring everyday manifestations of nationalism.

Secondly, historically specific position of Nevşehir, as a nationalist and conservative central Anatolia town, made it convenient for me to conduct this research. In terms of political behavior, according to the both general and local elections held since 1957⁹, Nevşehir might be described as a typical central Anatolian town which is an old right-wing stronghold. It can be argued that Nevşehir has always been a conservative and closed community. The tradition of nationalism- conservatism in Nevşehir has always been very strong. Traditionally the majority of voters in Nevşehir have overwhelmingly supported right-wing nationalist, Islamist, and

⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5a8ee0387/unhcr-statistical-yearbook-2016-16th-edition.html>

⁷ Statistical data published by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management on 26 May 2022 on the population distribution of Syrians living under temporary protection in Turkey by provinces <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

⁸ [https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Adrese-Dayali-Nufus-Kayit-Sistemi-Sonuclari-2021-45500#:~:text=Adrese%20Dayali%C4%B1%20N%C3%BCfus%20Kay%C4%B1t%20Sistemi%20\(ADNKS\)%20sonu%C3%A7lar%C4%B1na%20g%C3%B6re%2C%20%C3%BClkemizde,%2C3](https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Adrese-Dayali-Nufus-Kayit-Sistemi-Sonuclari-2021-45500#:~:text=Adrese%20Dayali%C4%B1%20N%C3%BCfus%20Kay%C4%B1t%20Sistemi%20(ADNKS)%20sonu%C3%A7lar%C4%B1na%20g%C3%B6re%2C%20%C3%BClkemizde,%2C3)

⁹ Nevşehir was converted into a province in 1954 as per the Law No. 6429.

conservative parties (Güvenç, 2009). Looking at the recent period, the absolute dominance of the right-wing in the 2002, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2018 general elections is remarkable (Tablo 1.2). In the general election of November 4, 2015 political parties represented in the right of the political spectrum reached 81.20 percent (Tablo 1.2). This figure constituted 81.05 percent of the total vote in the elections on June 24, 2018 (Tablo 1.2). It can be observed that historically this proportion of right-wing votes has approximately remained constant. Additionally, the city has become famous as one of the critical locations of ultranationalist organizations in the 1970s (Dündar and Kazdağlı, 1998). The ways of many leading figures of these organizations, such as Abdullah Çatlı, Haluk Kırıcı and Ömer Ay, intersected at this city (Dündar and Kazdağlı, 1998). It hosted the headquarters of two ultranationalist associations established before the 1980 coup d'état: the Association of the Great Ideal (Ulu Ülkü Derneği) and the Association of the Way for the Ideal (Ülkü Yolu Derneği) (Öznur, 2008: 583). Zeki Tekiner, then provincial chairman of the CHP, was assassinated by these groups on June 17, 1980. Nevşehir Provincial Security Directorate remained in the public memory for a long time as a place providing fake passports to the nationalist leaders involved in the crime. The fire that broke out at the passport department in the Nevşehir Provincial Security Directorate was seen as an attack to destroy the evidences of the network of illegal relations between deep state and ultranationalist groups (Dündar and Kazdağlı, 1998). In the time I had spent in Nevşehir, I observed that such dramatic occurrences and certain names, like Abdullah Çatlı, are still very much alive in the memory of many the city dwellers. Packed memorial ceremonies held annually for Abdullah Çatlı on his anniversary of death in Nevşehir has been one of the most significant indicators of this situations.¹⁰

Finally, considering the familiarity with the field in selecting site for such a qualitative inquiry plays an important role in increasing the efficiency of the study (Given, 2008: 548). In this context, researching in a site that I am already familiar

¹⁰ “Sedat Peker, Abdullah Çatlı'yı anma törenine katıldı”, www.fibhaber.comhttp://www.fibhaber.com/nevsehir/sedat-peker-abdullah-catli-yi-anma-torenine-katildi-h94257.html;

“Abdullah Çatlı, ölümünün 20'nci yılında anıldı”, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/abdullah-catli-olumunun-20nci-yilinda-anildi-40270086>;

“Nevşehir’de, Bugün Günlerden Abdullah Çatlı!”, <http://www.fibhaber.com/genel/nevsehir-de-bugun-gunlerden-abdullah-catli-h59141.html>

with provided me significant advantages during my fieldwork and made my access to it easier. The familiarity with the field, allowed for effective participatory observation as well as organizing and conducting interviews and group discussions.

All in all, the sociocultural and political texture of Nevşehir, which internalized the nationalist perspective, was an opportunity not to be missed for a researcher who is thinking about nationalism; and lives here. I wanted to do it too turning the time I spend here into an academic opportunity and designing a participatory and observational research. All these considerations made me think that this city could be a suitable area for studying the phenomenon of everyday nationalism.

1.2.4. Data Collection

Examining the agency of ordinary people in the reproduction of nationhood requires asking these two crucial questions: what does the nation mean for people, and when is it elicited? The first question refers to “content” of what people talk about the Turkish nation and their Turkishness. What are the nation’s everyday meanings and contents for ordinary people? Another question deals with “context” in which it does come to a matter. How, when and in which contexts does the Turkish nation and Turkishness become a salient category for these people? In order to be able to give a satisfactory response to each of these two questions, regarding Fox and Miller-Idriss’ suggestion, in this thesis, an empirical research approach based on “a mixture of methods” (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008a: 554; Fox, 2004a: 369) is adopted. Accordingly, developing an empirical research design combining different but complementary data collection and analysis methods, in this thesis, semi-structured, in-depth interviews, focus group and participant observation techniques, as the most appropriate methods for the investigation of the answer to both questions, were used.

Survey including qualitative questions, as still the most popular research method in social science, might be regarded useful method in terms of reaching many people in a short time for such a research. Questions about political and cultural attitudes, in-group and out-group stereotypes, the choices of people in daily life, the ritual practices performed by them in everyday life might contribute to understand the

different ways in which ordinary people construct the nation and nationhood (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 555). In this respect, surveys might be seen as effective instruments for gaining a general overview of the national sensibilities of relatively large segments of the population. However, they are less well suited for capturing variation in the nuance and texture of everyday nationhood (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 555). In other words, while it is impossible to observe non-verbalized manifestations of everyday nationhood with survey methods, interviews, focus groups and observations enable researcher to explore ordinary people's non-discursive practices. The participants may not always express discursively their thoughts and feelings about their perception of nationalism. In such a case, their body talks, gestures, attitudes during interviews provide important clues for the researcher. In the lights of these considerations, I employed semi-structured, in-depth interviews, focus group and participant observation techniques during my fieldwork. These qualitative data collection methods allowed me to observe quotidian practices of ordinary people; and provide an opportunity to explore ordinary people's discursive construction of nationhood in terms chosen by them. Despite of the fact that these methods are time consuming, they enabled me to obtain richer information about the construction of everyday nationhood.

In order to capture their everyday articulations to the Turkish nation investigating what the nation means to them, thirty semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted between March 2017 and October 2018 with everyday social actors of diverse age, gender, political affiliation and occupation in Nevşehir. In the course of each interview, using a conversational style and an interview guide, which summarizes the main topics the interview will be based on, and act as a thematic guiding tool, I oriented respondents to discuss their general opinions on local culture and politics before asking them more specifically about how they conceived of, and constructed their relation to Turkish nationalism. Under the general titles of "Self-identification: who we are?", "Turkey", "History of the Turkish nation", "The meanings of nationalist symbols and rituals", "Heritage of Ottoman Empire", "Kurdish Question", "European Union", "The meaning of 'other'", "Politics and Culture", the interviews sought to engage with respondents' experiences of Turkishness, how they give their Turkishness meaning and explain their

identification, how they position themselves vis-à-vis “others” and frame them, how they experience, negotiate, and subvert their nationhood. By the way of these interviews range from one hour and thirty minutes to three hours, I attempted to reveal the mundane ways in which ordinary people gave discursive content to their understanding of Turkishness.

During the fieldwork, I aimed to attain different perspectives and contrasting narratives, as far as possible, by interviewing with people from all corners of the political spectrum. Those who participate in political parties were involved in the research to observe how and to what extent their party belongings play a role in their subjective construction of nationhood. In other words, the aim of this choice was to interrogate how the supporters of the different political parties, which emphasize the different elements in the imagination of Turkishness, develop an attitude towards the discourse of nationalism spreading from above. Accordingly, this decision allowed me to reveal the points of challenge and confirmation in their understanding of Turkishness. From this perspective, the local supporters of three major parties which hold substantial influence in Turkey were included in the research process. These are the AKP, the MHP and the CHP. However, the HDP (People’s Democratic Party, Halkların Demokratik Partisi), which has been represented in the Turkish Parliament from 2014 and has a provincial organization even though it is weak in Nevşehir, has not been included in the thesis. This is because that the HDP defines itself as a political party which stands against nationalist forces and struggles with them.¹¹ They represent the Kurdish political tradition which has historically always a conflicting relationship with Turkish nationalism. Thereby, the HDP supporters’ discursive expressions and positions would not say a lot about the everyday construction and reproduction of Turkishness. For this reason, they were not included in the population of the research. On the other hand, even though it is represented by 37 deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly today, the İYİ Party (Good Party), which was still in the establishment phase and had not completed its institutionalization in Nevşehir at the time of the fieldwork, has not been included in the thesis.

¹¹ <https://www.hdp.org.tr/tr/parti/parti-programi/8>

Moreover, the recent studies on nationalism have provided strong evidence that civil society is an empirical domain in which nationalism is articulated and reproduced (Molnar, 2016: 170; Feischmidt et al., 2014; Trencsényi, 2014). Civic and social organizations offers a rich organizational context in which the construction of everyday nationhood can be empirically investigated (Brubaker et al, 2006; Edensor, 2002; Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a). Following this perspective, the volunteer from several organizations (Nevşehir Ülkü Ocakları, Birlik Vakfı Nevşehir Şubesi, Türk-Eğitim- Sen, Eğitim- Bir- Sen, Eğitim- Sen, Nevşehir Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası, Nevşehir Gazeteciler Cemiyeti, Kapadokya Kadın ve Dayanışma Derneği, Kapadokya İmece Kadın Derneği, Türk Kadınlar Birliği Nevşehir Şubesi, Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Derneği, Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği Nevşehir Şubesi), as soon as possible, were involved in the interviews to reach the multiple segments of the population. In the selection of the organizations, I took care of capturing different voices. In order to be able to do this, firstly, I focused on the organizations from the different fields such as culture and solidarity associations, woman organizations, employers' association and unions. Secondly, I made an effort to include civic and social organizations in the same field, but from different political perspectives, particularly in the unions. By this way, I attempted to deepen the comparative perspective of the research. For example, ÜlküOcakları and GençBirlik, as the most effective two youth organizations in Nevşehir, have represented two distinct political visions. Addressing the people related to both these organizations means including the people from different sociopolitical horizons in the thesis. Beyond the comparison of the different and contesting imaginations of Turkishness that these organizations impose, it enabled me to capture how their conceptualization of nationhood are negotiated, enacted, aligned, and sometimes contested.

I contacted the participants by the way of these political parties and organizations and by snowballing using previous participants' recommendations. During the research, it is taken care that the number of participant from each gender is in balance. The age of the participants ranged from 25 to 64 years old; and the average age of them is 42. Five of the interviewees are high school graduates and twenty-five are university graduates. Fourteen of these interviewees are the AKP voters; eight of them are MHP voters; and eight of them are CHP voters. All interviews were

conducted by myself, audio recorded with respondents' consent, and conducted in public locations (most often a coffee shop) unless the respondent requested an alternative locale. Additionally, writing down notes during interviews, I recorded my experiences not to forget and overlook any details about the data. All audio recordings were transcribed into text by me for analysis. Moreover, the interviews were supported by four focus group discussions aimed at eliciting contrasting or congruent positions of ordinary people vis-à-vis the aforementioned subject headings. These meetings provided a rich context for obtaining the differences and similarities in the participants' opinions about the nation's everyday meanings.

The interviews and the focus groups provide a great opportunity for exploring the discursive construction process of nationhood in which implicit nationhood turns into explicit. For example, implicit ethnic understanding of the nation in the statements begins with "I am not racist, but..." become starkly visible by means of these face to face interactions. In this sense, it is possible to argue that the interviews and focus group discussions uncovered participants' nationalist sensibilities and understanding of the nation that they avoid expressing clearly (Wallem, 2017: 82).

However, although these data collection methods enables us to explore the everyday meaning and content attributed to the Turkish nation and Turkishness by the participants, it is not sufficiently convenient to explain when and in which contexts they became a matter for them. For this reason, in order to locate the nation and nationhood in everyday contexts, other data collection methods were also combined in this investigation.

The reification and reproduction of the nation in everyday life occur not only by way of direct or indirect discursive verbal expressions of ordinary people. Contingent conversations, interactions and encounters among them also provide crucial clues about its embodiment; because the nation, at the same time, is a result of the everyday practices and attitudes of "ordinary people talking about themselves and their surroundings in ways that implicate and reproduce a national view of the world" (Fox, 200). In this sense, the context, in which nationhood comes up, needs to

be specified to investigate its everyday salience. When does the nation become a matter for ordinary people?

It is a fact that extraordinary times such as wars, catastrophes or international sport activities represent important settings for “everyday articulation of the nation” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 540). In such contexts, ordinary people tend to use national terms and express themselves explicitly in them. However, alongside these particular events, everyday ordinary settings of everyday life in which the nation is not the object of conversation directly, but rather “an unselfconscious disposition about the national order of things that intermittently informs talk” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 540) also provide an important area of observation to reveal the ways in which the nation is articulated in everyday life. These are routine, micro-contexts in which nationhood is invoked, reified, expressed and reproduced in daily basis (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 542).

In order to capture these contextual evidences of the nation and nationhood, I followed a strategy which provides an opportunity to see how the participants formulate their opinions on the topics not related to national categories in national terms. During the interviews and focus group discussions, besides nationally framed questions which often bring along nationally framed answers (Fox, 2004a: 393), I addressed to them some indirect questions which do not necessarily require a nationalist consideration. In this way, I attempted to uncover when and how they deploy their taken-for-granted understanding of the nation as “a resource in the course of interaction” (Wodak, 2006: 108). For example, many conversations about their careers, school life, football teams they support or daily events said a lot about the contextual meaning of their everyday nationhood. Discussing on non-nationally framed everyday topics made available to grab the manifold contexts in which they are not “talking about”, but rather “talking with” the nation (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 538- 542). Such a strategy showed that apart from being a topic of conversation, how nationhood, as “a culturally available schema” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 540), is discursively activated to interpret other topics of talk.

Although the indirect questions asked during the interviews and the focus groups give an idea about the contextual deployment of the nation, such an endeavor requires using a more appropriate data collection technique. In this respects, participant observation, as the most context sensitive data collection method (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 556), was employed to reveal more strikingly specific circumstances in which ordinary people living in Nevşehir engage the Turkish nation and its content. In this process, on the one hand, I conducted participant observation of everyday activities which provide a rich context for people to activate their nationhood such as celebrations and commemoration ceremonies in national holidays, “Democracy watch” events in the aftermath of 15 July coup attempt, political party meetings during the electoral campaign periods. On the other hand, in accordance with the purpose of the research, I also conducted participant observation by spending a great deal of time in everyday settings in Nevşehir, such as shopping malls, coffee shops where students meet, local festivals and organizations, woman home gatherings, meetings organized by women associations and so on. During the observations, I took notes which could facilitate to see some connections between verbal expressions of the participants, and their attitudes and behaviors. These fieldwork notes based on these ethnographic observations constituted one of the primary data source used in this thesis.

One point I want to draw attention to is that both indirect questions addressed to the participants throughout the interviews and the focus groups, and participant observations entailed adopting an approach which allows time for people to express themselves with their own experiences, and to talk about their stories or concerns. From this perspective, in this thesis, discourse analytical approach was combined with wait-and-listen approach (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008; Skey, 2011) to pursue the traces of the Turkish nation and Turkishness in the daily contexts, and to specify these contexts in which nationhood matters to ordinary people. Actively observing people in their natural settings, in other words leaving them to their own resources, made a great contribution in terms of regarding how and when their nationhood show up in their everyday routines.

1.2.5. Analysis of Collected Data

Data analysis is actually a dynamic process that begins synchronously with the data collection in the field. Also in this thesis, in the course of the interviews, focus groups and participant observations, the patterns of meaning about the research questions started to become apparent. Particularly, the drafts of scheme, shaped through the comparison of the participants' understandings and perceptions of Turkishness, in the field notes taken served as the first step of the data analysis process. These comparative schemes offered an insight on how the raw data is organized and interpreted at the next phase.

The transcriptions of all interviews recorded and fieldwork notes constituted the raw data for this dissertation. This data was analyzed benefiting from the combination of three different data analysis methods, content analysis, narrative analysis and discourse analysis, in order to obtain a holistic view. These different methods might be seen that they overlap and repeat each other. However, it should be noted that each analytical approach focus on different dimension of qualitative data (Grbich, 2013: 166). Content analysis, as a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data, concentrates on coding and categorizing large interview transcripts and observation reports (Screier, 2014: 170). By this way, it enables researcher to eliminate and reduce qualitative data, and facilitates the description and interpretation of them (Grbich, 2013: 166). In another respect, narrative analysis, which focuses on the socially construction of stories by the interaction between people, social and cultural relations, attempts "to put together the 'big picture' about experiences or events as the participants understand them" (Schutt, 2015: 339). Here, it is important to emphasize that analysis object "is not only the story itself as it is told and/or written, but also how it is told and makes sense to both tellers and listeners/readers, including the researcher and the researcher audience" (Esin et. al., 2014: 214). As for discourse analysis, it examines the discursive construction of the studied issue by people and investigates its rhetorical features. Both written and spoken discourse is considered as a form of social practice by critical discourse analysis method (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). There is a dialectical relationship

between discourse and social practice: “discourse constitutes social practice and is at the same time constituted by it” (Wodak et. al., 1999: 157).

In this thesis, the coding and categorizing data process has both inductive and deductive elements. First, data was both deductively and inductively coded and match with labels that represent the patterns using the themes of “national self/other”, “national time” and “national culture”. Second, these coded data was inductively categorized under each theme. The aforementioned four themes were determined by considering the relevant literature in the field (Özkırımlı, 2005; Skey, 2011). Especially, Skey’s (2011) suggestions on mapping the nationalist discourse (Skey, 2011: 11) informed and inspired the selection of these dimensions on which the thesis will focus. Skey in his work has described “five dimensions of national discourse’ that underpin more specific narratives and practices; spatial, temporal, cultural, political and self/other” (Skey, 2011: 11). The most essential point that distinguishes nationalist discourse from other related discourses, such as ethnicity and race is the imagination of a national space and time (Fenton, 2003: 24; quoted in Skey, 2011: 11). Firstly, in drawing national lines, the spatial dimension of nationalist discourse also plays a crucial role; because “it is difficult to think of a nation without a particular territory, an actual or imagined homeland” (Özkırımlı, 2005: 179). Secondly, the complex and involved relationship between the past and the present becomes visible in “the construction of national history generally reflects present concerns and beliefs about the past” (Özkırımlı, 2005: 183). With Skey’s own words, this is temporal dimension “whereby the past is articulated in national terms and the present embodied through daily and mass ‘national’ rituals, thus enabling a (relatively) secure future to be envisaged” (Skey, 2011: 11). Thirdly, the cultural dimension of the nationalist discourse points out symbolic systems which consist of images, objects and rituals which have a national meaning; and they are “used to ‘define and justify ... social norms and values [and] ... create ‘maps’ for social actors” (Özkirimli, 2005: 188, quoted in Skey, 2011: 11). Fourthly, he identifies political dimension which accentuates the role of political organizations in the mobilization and the sustenance of nationalism in a given society (Skey, 2011: 12). Although he considers the state “as the primary institutional apparatus for legitimising national discourse, through systems of education, law, finance, territorial

control and so on”, he does not deny the presence of competing political visions with their own imaginations of nationhood, and the potential conflict among them “to privilege their own definition of what the nation is” (Skey, 2011: 12). According to him, “such struggles only confirm the significance of the nation as a resonant category, which is used to justify the (sometimes violent) activities of competing political interests” (Skey, 2011: 12). Finally, the self/other dimension emphasizes the significant and active role of people in understanding the world as “a taken-for-granted world of nations” (Skey, 2011:50). Nationally schemes, which are internalized by people and reified in their thoughts, attitudes and practices, take a shape on the basis of differences and similarities. In this process, the nation is personified; and some favorable characteristics which are thought to be unique to the nation are ascribed to it. The boundaries drawn among “we” and “they”, at the same time, refers to “the important link between the particular (individual nations) and the universal (the geo-political order of nations) to the national imagination” (Skey, 2011: 12); because, “the definition of Swedishness requires the existence of Danes, Germans and Norwegians” (Lofgren, 1993: 167; quoted in Skey, 2011: 12).

As I stated earlier, the general themes of this thesis were determined by inspiring Skey’s work; and its empirical chapters were structured by considering the dimensions of the nationalist discourse mapped by him. In this direction, the subjective role of ordinary people in the construction of nationhood was examined through the themes of “national self/ other”, “national time” and “national culture”. However, political dimension which focuses on the nationalist rhetoric and practices of the institutions was considered as an issue related to other dimensions in this thesis. Instead of this, concentrating on the subjectivity of ordinary peoples in the face of these different nationalist visions, their ways of negotiating, aligning or challenging were researched. As a matter of fact each of all imaginations already have different claims about who (self/other), where (space) and when (time) the nation is. The meanings ascribed to nationalist symbols and rituals (culture) by them also differentiate. Rather than such cleavages among different nationalist discourses, this thesis deals with the perceptions and practices of the audience of these discourses. For these reasons, the issue of political dimension in the construction of nationhood will be discussed within other four dimensions when it is required.

From this point forth, images of self /other in the mind of individuals, their imagination of a nationally-bounded territory, their ways to articulate the past in national terms and their ways in which national symbolic and cultural components are employed, as the most suitable and complementary dimensions in terms of providing rich and meaningful evidence for an empirical study on everyday nationalism, constitute the main four themes of this thesis.

In this sense, the empirical data which reflect the dimension of self/other will help us to understand how and what kind of boundaries are drawn between “we” and “they” in everyday nationalist discourse. Additionally, temporal dimension of nationalist discourse will provide important insights into different contents of nationhood and their contexts. As one of the most important self-evident presuppositions of a national subject, the temporality of a nation plays a critical role in the taken-for-grantedness of the nation; and national past might be imagined and constructed in more than one ways and with diverse references. For example, imagining and narrating a founding moment is a common strategy frequently used in all construction of nationhood of competing national projects; and each of them has an appropriate claim about the founding moment of the nation to which it ascribes a special meaning and significance to establish and justify itself (Çınar and Taş, 2017). Concentrating on the temporal dimension of nationalist discourse of people, these and similar strategies pursued by the participants, differences and communalities among them will be examined. Finally, cultural area in which nationhood is embodied through symbolic forms of expression such as images, objects and rituals will be investigated to trace everyday contents and contexts of Turkishness experienced by different people. From everyday nationhood perspective, these performative acts have an undeniable part in the embodiment of the nation; but the sense and value attributed to these symbols by individuals are not fixed and uncontested. Addressing the construction of nationalist discourse with its cultural dimension will make possible to map their different and similar sense-making strategies.

In the first step of the analysis, deductive and content analysis was applied for manual thematic coding according to the pre-identified themes of “national self/other”, “national time” and “national culture” to make sense of, organize, and systematize large amounts of data. Under the title of each theme, related expressions and observation notes are listed using both codes based on the previous literature and codes derived from the text. For example, I extracted the data to be analyzed under the theme of “national self/other”, using some keywords which are already identified on the basis of the previous studies, such as “we”, “Turks”, “them”, and “others”. On the other hand, the thematic codes related to this theme, such as “Ottoman grandchild” or “children of the Republic” were derived from the text during my close reading process. At the end of this stage, the empirical material was organized as available to be analyzed according to the aforementioned four dimensions.

In the second step, the focused coding process, thematic-coded data were subjected to fine-grained, line-by-line analysis on the basis of the core points which identify the perceptions, thoughts and experiences of the participants. In this process, the most significant and frequent codes were used to sort, synthesize, integrate and reorganize the data. By the way of focused codes, which are more directed, selective and conceptual than initial codes, the main categories in the participants’ statements under the theme already recognized were captured and synthesized. The meaning attributed to the Turkish nation and Turkishness by the participants and their subjective and discursive construction of Turkish national identity was traced in texts classified according to their content. In this respect, discourse analysis was used as the best way to detect how participants construct and reproduce the Turkish nation and Turkishness. Besides, at this point, narrative analysis helped me for tracing discourse through the social construction of individual stories by participants and transforming data into findings. The point to be emphasized here is that narrative analysis, which focus on stories in the tracking discourse (Grbich, 2013: 166), provided me a viewpoint that considers the participant as not only sources of information, but rather as constitutive subjects who construct and express their comprehension of nationalism (Esin et. al, 2014: 203). At the end of the focused coding stage, the initial coded data was identified and combined into broader and

specific categories on the basis of the similarities and differences. Thus, the main categories were determined under each theme.

1.3. Organization of the Chapters

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. In the following Chapter 2, Everyday Nationhood provides the theoretical framework of my dissertation, and aims to situate the thesis in the broader theoretical debates on nationhood and nationalism. A range of academic debate that paves the way for the emergence of the everyday nationhood perspective and the recent academic studies on nationalism and nationhood which has contributed to highlight the ways in which the nation is imagined, perceived, experienced and expressed in visible forms are mentioned in this chapter.

The third chapter aims to provide an overview of the scholarship on Turkish nationalism from the 1950s to present and their viewpoints towards the concept of Turkishness. In this way, it is aimed to situate this thesis, which adopts everyday nationalism approach, within this relevant literature and scholarly debates. Therefore, in this chapter, the early studies, which continued to dominate the field until the 1990s and approach Turkish nationalism from the perspective of modernization paradigm, the studies in the field produced since the 1990s and concentrates on the different and previously ignored aspects of Turkish nationalism, its hybrid, eclectic, ambivalent and ubiquitous character and different nationalist imaginations and discourses of various political visions and the academic studies that seek the traces of Turkish nationalism in everyday life and take into account the active role of agency in the construction and reproduction of nationhood are examined, respectively.

In the fourth chapter, focusing on the self/other dimension in the everyday construction of Turkishness I examines the meaning of being Turkish for the participants and investigate how they draw the boundaries of Turkishness. This chapter is based on the conversations of the participants which include the implicit or explicit answer to these questions: Who is Turk? It shows how the distinctive

features which are considered as the basis for Turkishness emerge in the participants' discourses. At this point, ethnic, Islamist, Ottomanist and Kemalist references frequently used in defining Turkishness become apparent; and refer to the differentiation in the perception of the participants about Turkishness.

Afterwards, the fifth chapter examines the reconstruction and reproduction of "other" in the enactment of Turkishness. In this chapter, as a continuation of the previous section, this time the significant role of the "other" in the embodiment of Turkishness in everyday life by ordinary actors is investigated. For this purpose, it analyzes how Turkishness is reproduced through the answers given to the question of who is the "other" of the Turk, in which contexts and in what ways an image of the "other" is conceived. The "others" in the participants' imaginations of Turkishness are examined through an analytical classification as internal and external.

The sixth chapter examines the definition of national "now" in relation to the past and the future in the everyday construction and reproduction of Turkishness. Particularly, the role of historical events, such as Dardanelles Battle, War of Independence, the conquest of Istanbul, the proclamation of the Republic and the Crusades, in this process are explored in this part of the thesis. The manifold historical references given by the participants when defining the nation allow us to uncover the different ways in which the historicity of Turkish nation is imagined and discursively constructed. This chapter aims to examine thoroughly in which contexts, and with which contents they construct a national history on the basis of their understanding of nationhood using these events discursively.

In the next chapter, the cultural dimension of the everyday construction of Turkishness is explored through national images, symbols, rituals and collective experiences. In this way, the multiple meanings attributed to Turkish flag, national anthem, national days and nationalized objects are subjected to a scrutiny; and their role in the everyday construction of Turkishness was investigated. This chapter shows how the diverse connotations of these symbols and rituals undermine the claim, shared by all nationalist rhetoric imposed by above, that these are "common

values of the nation”; because these cultural components, just as the nation, do not carry fixed and stable meanings for different nationalized subjects.

In the last chapter, primarily, revisiting the theoretical insights, the major findings of the research are discussed. In the light of evidences presented in the empirical chapters of the thesis, I recapitulate the main statements of the research; and explain the original contributions of the thesis to the field. Secondly, this chapter reveals that although ordinary actors, who define themselves as Turkish, differentiate about the boundaries of Turkishness, through some discursive anchors and similar discursive strategies they construct it as a taken-for-granted and tangible reality. Accordingly, firstly it aims to elaborate the discursive motifs that are frequently applied by the participants in order to clarify Turkishness and draw its boundaries, and defined as “national values”, and to answer to the following question: what are the elements that individuals often refer to in the way they build Turkish nationhood and that they define as national culture and values? Afterwards, the discursive patterns and strategies that play an important role in the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in everyday life by ordinary people are focused. In line with this purpose, how and through which similar discursive strategies the participants, who define themselves as Turkish nationalist, construct their nationhood as a taken-for-granted reality although they differentiate about the definition of Turkishness is investigated.

CHAPTER 2

EVERYDAY NATIONHOOD

Since the late 1980s the studies of nationalism have entered a new stage as many areas of social sciences influenced by cultural turn (Özkırımlı, 2010: 169- 170; Antonsich, 2015: 301). The emphasis on the culture and the desire to analyze social reality by the concepts of subjectivity such as meaning, consent, resistance and cognition are the distinguishing features of this new perspective in the scientific studies of nationalism.¹² There is no doubt that post-modernist critique of modernism and of modernist discourse played a crucial role in this change of perspective; because their emphasis on the destruction of fixed forms and indisputable borders brought on the agenda the fragmentation of national belongings (Brubaker, 1994: 4). The return of culture in the social sciences and the emphasis of post-modernist discourse on identity promoted a significant theoretical shift from constructivism to agency- based perspective within scientific studies of nationalism, called as relational turn.

The relational turn in nationalism studies refers to a shift of perspective considering the nation as analytical category; and this new approach distinguishes from the predominant perspectives in the field, namely essentialists¹³ and constructivists¹⁴, in

¹²The term of cultural turn refers to a widespread change of perspective in the humanities and the social sciences which occurred from the beginning of the 1970s. Culture, here, in its classical definition based on common language, religion or customs, does not have a fixed and integrating meaning (Antonsich, 2015: 301). It has no longer been considered as a stable and constant structure; culture, conversely, is seen as a flexible and transformable notion that is influenced by the differentiations in societies, such as sex, class, gender, and power relations (Özkırımlı, 2010: 169). In this framework, it is regarded as a product of an active process which gains its meaning from a given context and relativity. In other words, it refers to "the social process whereby people communicate meanings, make sense of their world, construct their identities, and define their beliefs and values" (Best, 2007: 177). In this sense, it should be regarded as a heterogeneous ground including conflicts. This change of meaning paved the way for explaining the formation of identity by relational settings.

¹³Calhoun defines essentialism as "a reduction of the diversity in a population to some single criterion held to constitute its defining 'essence' and most crucial character" (Calhoun, 1997: 18). In essentialist vision, every cultural category inevitably has an "essence" given by nature and corresponds to real and separately identifiable

terms of its attempt to understand and explain human action by relational settings (Frödin, 2003: 10). Relational approach to nationalism opposes the view of nations as static and concrete entities; and, on the contrary, it offers to focus on the challenges and dilemmas of feel of national belonging.

In the light of this paradigm shift, in the last three decades, a remarkable increase has been observed in number of scholars who consider nationalism as a way of making sense of the world and a set of practices embedded in daily life, rather than a phenomenon that emerges during times of crisis and in extraordinary conditions (Billig, 1995; Brubaker, 1996; Calhoun, 1997; Özkırımlı, 2010; Skey, 2011). In this direction, instead of the questions of “when is a nation” and “what is a nation” that the theories of nationalism had heavily engaged from the 1960s to 1980s, since the 1990s the questions of “how and where is the nation” have occupied the central place in nationalism studies (Antonsich, 2015: 301). This new perspective in the field benefiting from constructivist paradigm and relational approach criticizes academic insistence on locating the date of the emergence of nations and nationalism, the attempts to explain their emergence and expansion by the way of “grand narratives” based on a single dimension of modernization, the analytical consideration of nations as durable entities, the neglect of the complexity and heterogeneity of nationalism, and the invisibility of ordinary in the classical debates on nationalism. This paradigm shift in nationalism studies and the main arguments on which this new perspective is based form the ground of everyday nationhood perspective.

human groups (Calhoun, 1997: 18). From this perspective, essentialist stance requires defining national identities, such as other essentialist singular categories such as race, sex or gender, by the way of this given, fixed and natural essence; and constitutes a direct and unproblematic relation between these collective identities and essences. According to this viewpoint, these different collective identities are divided into cultural categories; and there is no transitivity between them. Individuals, with their different existential features, get involved these different categories. In this sense, they have a nationality, such as their sexuality; and, their nationalities, just like their sexualities, are determined by a given and natural essence. Pierre van den Berghe (1978), Anthony D. Smith (1983, 1991, 1993, 1996), John A. Armstrong (1982), John Hutchinson (2000). In nationalism studies, essentialist approach emerges in two ways: those who identify this national essence with biological features of human being, and those who seek for national essence in cultural characteristics of communities. As is seen, while the latter emphasizes innate biological essence, the former concentrates on cultural essence in their conceptualization.

¹⁴ From the 1960s to the 1980s the dominant tendency in nationalism studies was the attempt to explain the origins of nationalism with the long-term political, economic and cultural changes (Brubaker, 1996: 19). These scholars are named in different ways by different authors in the literature such as developmentalist (Brubaker, 1996: 19), instrumentalist (Brass, 1991: 69) or constructivist (Calhoun, 1997: 18). Even though in the nationalism literature they have been broadly called as “modernists” because of their emphasis on the relation between modernization process and nationalism, their insistence on considering nationalism as an historically constructed phenomenon is the main intersection between them.

Michael Billig's (1995) theory of banal nationalism is recognized as the first work revealing this shift of concern towards the reproduction of nationalism in daily life in nationalism studies (Antonisch, 2015; Skey, 2011; Özkırmı, 2010). Focusing on the ideological habits and reminders embedded in daily routines such as flags hanging unnoticed on public buildings, the daily weather forecast limited by national boundaries and the text of newspapers, he provides a systematic analysis of the reproduction of nationalism in the established nations of the West (Antonsich, 2016: 32). However, although drawing upon Billig's banal nationalism theory, everyday nationhood approach distinguishes itself from his understanding, and more generally from the theoretical tradition in nationalism studies, in its own bottom-up methodology and its special focus on the agents of everyday life and their subjectivity. The aim of the scholars, who adopt everyday nationhood perspective taking Hobsbawm's call to examine nationalism "from below", is to concentrate on "the actual practices and processes through which nationhood is reproduced in everyday life by its ordinary practitioners" (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 554). In this sense, as a subfield of nationalism studies, everyday nationalism, revealing the invisibility of ordinary in the classical nationalism debates, has marked a shift of emphasis on "the 'masses' and human agency... to consider the role and relevance of the everyday, and relevance of the lived experience of nationalism" (Knott, 2015, 1).

Briefly, in general, new approaches in the last quarter of the 20th century in response to classical theories of nationalism, more specifically, Billig's banal nationalism thesis constitutes the intellectual background of everyday nationhood perspective. In addition to this, the criticisms against Billig's thesis and the fine, but crucial line between "banal" and "everyday" provides more mature framework of the approach on which this work is based. From this point forth, this chapter consists of four main sections. In the first section, the basic arguments of fledgling approaches and their critiques against classical nationalism studies, which are also shared by scholars of everyday nationalism, will be examined in order to situate everyday nationhood perspective in relation to the wider developments and theoretical discussions in the field. Afterwards, banal nationalism theory, inspired by everyday nationalism perspective, will be handled with its main lines. The emerging differences between "banal" and "everyday" nationalism perspectives in the light of the criticisms

directed at Billig's work (1995) will be mentioned in the same section. In the next section everyday nationhood perspective will be discussed with its main arguments for outlining a consistent and dynamic analytical skeleton.

2.1. The Roots of the “Everyday”: New Approaches to Nationalism

The 1990's, in which new approaches to nationalism, which considers multidimensional structure of nationalism and its discursive hegemony, have marked a new turning point for nationalism studies. Focusing on the different and previously ignored aspects of nationalism, these recent studies gave a new impulse to the studies of nationalism. The most important common feature of the works produced in the last two three decades is that they critically examine the previous discussions on nationalism and rectify shortcomings of the earlier theories (Özkırımlı, 2010: 169).

This new paradigm whose main proposition is that nationalism is a way in which the world is perceived and interpreted inherently and categorically opposes to primordialist and ethno-symbolist viewpoints founded on essentialist assumptions; and underlines the subjective aspects of nation as a discourse which depicts the world as divided into nations. In this sense, the scholars of this new paradigm share the constructivist assumption that nations as constructions emerged in response to the requirements of modernity. Their theoretical studies are based on the core constructivist and modernist axiom that nationalism is not the product of so-called given nations; but vice versa (Gellner, 1983: 57; Hobsbawm, 1990: 10). Particularly, Hobsbawm's point that “nations and their associated phenomena constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist” inspires many nationalism scholars in the recent period, and hence also those who adopt the everyday nationalism perspective (Hobsbawm, 1990: 10).

However, this new paradigm, which has left its mark on the last thirty years, at the same time, refers to a shift from constructivist account for nationalism towards a subjectivist viewpoint which stresses “agency”, subjective dimension of nationalism.

Even though it is possible to observe the very influence of Benedict Anderson¹⁵ and Eric Hobsbawm's¹⁶ conceptualization on the recent studies which consider "nation" as an invented discourse or a discourse of imagination, they are separated from the constructivist way at some distinguishing ways. Moreover, the followers of this new paradigm tend to overcome this debate rather than being a side of the classical nationalism debate between constructivists and essentialists.

2.1.1. Critique of the Question of Origins of Nation

First of all, the new approaches in nationalism studies might be evaluated as an attempt to go beyond the question of the date of roots of nations which dominates the field of nationalism studies beginning from 1960s (Özkırımlı, 2010: 217). In fact, the main question that induces the emergence of two different theoretical positions in the field, which direct academic discussion on nationalism until the 1990s, essentialism and constructivism, is "when is a nation". While essentialists explain nationalism and nations with ethnic affiliations stemming from human nature; constructivist vision, highlighting the different transformation processes caused by modernization, claims that nations, as well as nationalism, is the product of modernity, and historically constructed. However, the basic claim of the new approaches to nationalism that emerged in the late 1980s, which is the basis for the concept of everyday nationalism, is to overcome this dichotomy. In this sense, they draw heavily attention to the meaningless of the question of "when is nation".

¹⁵ According to Anderson, "nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are the cultural artefacts of a particular kind" (Anderson, 2006: 4). In his prominent book *Imagined Community*, Anderson describes nations as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 2006: 4- 6). From his point of view, nation is imagined in the minds of the members of a community, big or small, who will never know each other as a common togetherness; and, it creates a common spirit of comradeship (Anderson, 2006: 6). In Anderson's account, nationalism is not only about forgetting, but also about to be a part of an imagined community (Anderson, 2006: 187- 206)

¹⁶ For Hobsbawm, nations, as "a very recent newcomer in human history" and "the product of particular and inevitably localized or regional, historical conjunctures" should be examined in the framework of political, technical, administrative and economic conditions (Hobsbawm, 1990: 5- 10). Such an analysis also reveals that nations, and other phenomena related to this concept, such as nationalism, nation-state or national symbols, are the products of social engineering aiming to create a social structure that meets the requirements of a particular period (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983: 13). In this context, nationalism, with its significant potential to mobilize masses, should be considered as a response to the question of legitimacy of state in nineteenth century Europe; and it cannot be thought apart from the ideal of liberal nation- state (Hobsbawm, 1990: 18- 19, Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983: 263- 265).

For many scholars, although the classic dispute between essentialists and constructivists made important contributions to theorizing nations and nationalism in a way that cannot be denied, the insistent emphasis of both these approaches upon the issue of “when and what is the nation” is exaggerated (Ichijo and Uzelac, 2005: 1-5; Skey, 2009: 333). This situation, according to Skey, reflects a tendency “to neglect (however, unintentionally) analyses of how the nation is sustained and maintained once established as ‘the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time’” (Skey, 2009: 333; Anderson, 2006: 3).¹⁷

At a quite early date, in 1990, Walker Connor voiced his objection against academic endeavors to date the emergence of nations.¹⁷ Connor, who argues that nationalism is a mass phenomenon rather than elite, initiates a discussion on the emergence of national consciousness without ignoring historical roots of nations (Connor, 1990; Connor, 2004: 36). According to him, there is no doubt that tangible components such as common language and religion play an important role in describing a nation (Connor, 1978: 389). However, the importance of these historical roots is limited to their contribution to the constitution of a national consciousness; because what form the essence of the nation are self-awareness and self- consciousness (Connor, 2004: 37; Connor, 1978: 389; Connor, 1972: 337). As a mass phenomenon, national consciousness at a point of nation-formation process reaches the necessary and sufficient power to mobilize and motivate masses to act on the basis of national identity (Connor, 1990: 99). With Connor’s own words, “at what point did a sufficient number/percentage of a given people acquire national consciousness so that the group merited the title of nation? There is no formula” (Connor, 1990: 99). Therefore, according to him, the matter of “when is a nation” is not of key importance (Connor, 2004: 35, 45).

¹⁷ Connor, who defines nation as a self-conscious ethnic group, uses the term “ethnonationalism” in order to highlight the ethnic basis of a nation. According to him, using nation to refer to the state rather than to “a group of people sharing a myth of common ancestry” (Connor, 2004: 39), as well as using nationalism to refer to the loyalty to the state rather than to the nation, causes an ambiguity in nationalism studies (Connor, 1978: 384). The term “ethnonationalism” coined by him in order to remove these ambiguities describes the relation between ethnic collectivities and national identities. According to Connor, the mentioned relation is the core of ethnonationalism and the determinant power for nationalist sentiments. What prompts group members to enhance subjectively a feel of self- awareness and to desire being a part of a nation is ethnicity. In the light of these definitions, it is not fault to say that Connor’s ideas bear traces of essentialism. Even though he is evaluated in the category of essentialist because of his preoccupation with the relation between ethnicity and national identity, his attempt to make a psychological explanation for the appeal of belonging to nation based on kinship is seen a crucial critique against the traditional approaches that focus on institutions and elites. In this sense, he has contributed to the development of a new methodology in nationalism studies.

While both primordialists and modernists conduct a discussion on the date of the emergence of nations upon this question with historical references, they all overlook “perception of facts that undergird attitudes and behavior” (Connor, 2004: 45). The focus on chronological/factual history is the common feature of both these approaches. However, for Connor, what is the basis of people’s sense of nationhood are not ethnographic and historical facts, but their perceptions and national consciousness that constitutes the basis for seeing unquestionably themselves as a part of a putative nation (Connor, 2004: 45). Thus, the key point of his contribution to nationalism studies is his emphasis on the emotional appeal of national sentiments with a bottom-up viewpoint. In this sense, he offers to focus on “sentient/felt history” rather than “chronological/ factual history” (Connor, 2004: 45). Contrary to the dominant viewpoint until the 1990s that contemporary nations are maintained as the products of modernity, they are perceived and coded as “eternal” and “timeless” in the minds of those who devoted to them (Connor, 2004: 45). For this reason, it is the internalization of national identity by people that nationalism studies should concentrate on (Connor, 1990: 99). In a similar way, Breuilly also argues that “it is not possible to construct a valid long- term historical account of ethnic groups understood as societies linked over time through a complex of ethnic symbols because there is no such past” (Breuilly, 2005: 16).

On the other hand, the question of “what is a nation?” itself reflects to the belief that nations are real and substantial entities and necessarily leads to reproduction of essentialist definitions of nations (Brubaker, 1994: 14; Antonisch, 2015, 9) In this sense, the classical theories of nationalism, which seek an answer to this question and accept that nations are identifiable and tangible entities in this way, share the same realist and substantialist belief (Brubaker, 1996: 14-15). For this reason, contrary to popular belief, this realist and substantialist understanding of nations is the common point of both those who considers nations as superior and eternal entities, namely primordialists and those who attempt to explain the presence of nations with modernization and industrialization process, namely developmentalists (Brubaker, 1996: 14-15, 19). Making an effort to explain the existence of nations with both “the deep roots, ancient origins, and emotive power of national attachments” and “industrialization, uneven development, the growth of

communication and transportation networks, and the powerfully integrative and homogenizing forces of the modern state” are based on the same presumption that nations are real, solid structures (Brubaker, 1996: 15). Furthermore, understanding nations as real and substantial entities refers to their taken for granted existence and do not explain how they exist (Brubaker, 1996: 13). However, nationalism scholars should not focus on the origins of the nation, but rather on its reproduction (Balibar, 1990). Along the same line, Özkırımlı argues that the scholars of nationalism “should stop pondering over the question of the ‘antiquity’ of nations and problematize what we often take for granted – the various ways in which people become, and remain, ‘national’” (Özkırımlı, 2010: 218).

2.1.2. Critique of Consideration of Nationalism as an Analytical Category

The reification of nations in the classical theories of nationalism, focusing on their origins and substantiality leads to the reification of nations in practice; and the underlying reason for this is that many studies of nationalism treat a practical category as an analytical category (Brubaker, 1994: 5- 6). However, nation is not a category of analysis; and it should not be considered “as substance but as institutionalized form”; “as collectivity but as practical category”; “as entity but as contingent event” (Brubaker, 1994: 5- 6). Under these circumstances, Brubaker summarizes what needs to be done with his own words as follows:

Nationalism can and should be understood without invoking "nations" as substantial entities. Instead of focusing on nations as real groups, we should focus on nationhood and nationness, on "nation" as practical category, institutionalized form, and contingent event. "Nation" is a category of practice, not (in the first instance) a category of analysis. To understand nationalism, we have to understand the practical uses of the category "nation," the ways it can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action. (Brubaker, 1996: 7)

We should not ask ‘what is a nation’ but rather: how is nationhood as a political and cultural form institutionalized within and among states? How does nation work as practical category, as classificatory scheme, as cognitive frame? What makes the use of that category by or against states more or less resonant or effective? What makes the nation-evoking, nation-invoking efforts of political entrepreneurs more or less likely to succeed? (Brubaker, 1996: 16)

Then, in a world of meaning where nations are not real and concrete entities what does nationalism mean? To be able to answer this question, we first need to look at

what nationality is not with regard to the conceptualization in the recent studies. In these studies, one of the new ideas is that nationalism is not an aggressive ideology which emerges only in hot conflicts or a vogue which appears in some contexts (Billig, 1995: 44-46; Calhoun, 1997: 2; Özkırmı, 2010: 2). According to Brubaker's definition:

Nationalism is not a 'force' to be measured as resurgent or receding"; but rather "it is a heterogeneous set of 'nation'-oriented idioms, practices, and possibilities that are continuously available or "endemic" in modern cultural and political life. (Brubaker, 1996: 10)

Moreover, in Calhoun's account, nationalism is "a way of speaking that shapes our consciousness", in other words, a "discursive formation" (Calhoun, 1997: 3). In this sense, it should be mentioned as an all- pervading discourse (Calhoun, 1997: 3- 4). Also, Özkırmı defines nationalism as a discourse and "a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us" (Özkırmı, 2010: 206). What convinces the masses of the impossibility of a world without nations and national borders and naturalizes notions of ethnicity and nation is actually this nationalist discourse which represents nations as concrete and homogenous realities (Calhoun, 1995: 273). It, at the same time, encourages categorical identities and ignores their relationality dimension. Whereas, recently a new way of thinking nationalism providing a new perspective in order to consider identity without essentialist singular categories such as race, sex or gender, has taken place in social sciences (Somers, 1994: 613). Somers, in her work, attracts attention on "the embeddedness of any identity in networks of relations that change over time and space" (Somers, 1994: 605- 607). Identity is conceptualized, here, as something that is embedded in non-static networks of relations that alter over time and space. Similarly, also according to Calhoun, identity, as a process, "is always project, not settled accomplishment" (Calhoun, 1994: 27). This viewpoint highlights the particular, constructed and relational dimension of national identity (Conolly, 1991: 46). In this way, new approaches to nationalism attempts to deconstruct the ways in which nationalist discourse shows nation as a unified and homogenous entity.

Briefly, the deconstruction of the ways in which nationalist rhetoric depicts the world of nations as a given and unproblematic reality is one of the most important distinguishing features of the shift from constructivist approach in the field. What the scholars of nationalism need to do is to deconstruct the ways in which nationalist discourse is permanently reproduced considering nationhood as a category of practice. This shift of perspective is especially clear in Brubaker's (1996) seminal study which develop an eventful approach to nationalism which focuses on what people do and say rather than who are (Thompson and Fevre, 2001: 307).

2.1.3. Critique of “Grand Narrative”

The recent turn in nationalism studies refers to a strong objection towards the generalized models, which try to explain the emergence and expansion of nationalism and nations by a single dimension of modernization.¹⁸ The most important deficiencies of these “grand narratives” are that they reify nations as real entities; their neglect of contextual and subjective dynamics of different nationalist imaginations; and their blind eyes to differences, discontinues, and the complexity within each of them.

The endeavor of modernist perspective to construct an encompassing theory of nationalism and nation induces presupposition that nations and nationalism are concrete and complete realities (Puri, 2004: 59). In this sense, their grand narratives, consciously or not, contributes to the reification of nations above described in detail. Additionally, while concentrating to explain the emergence of nationalism with structural and institutional dynamics via grand historical narratives classical nationalism theories leave various subjective dynamics that have an impact on the emergence of different nationalisms. The objection to the modernist theories

¹⁸ The scholars, who regard nations as constructions emerged in response to the requirements of modernity, differentiate in terms of the main factor they captured in the modernization process (Özkırımlı, 2010: 72; Hearn, 2006: 67). While some scholars argue that economic conditions play the most important role in this process, others claim that political conditions require the construction of the nation. On the other hand, another group of scholar concentrates on the relation between socio-cultural transformation processes and the emergence of nationalism. The works of Karl Deutsch and Elie Kedourie might be evaluated as the first signs of the development of constructivist approaches in the field. The scholars who deal with nationalism in a constructivist way might be classified by their different focus points in the process of formation of nations. Economic Constructivist Insights: Tom Nairn (1981), Michael Hechter (1975); Political Constructivist Insights: John Breuilly (1985, 1993, 1996), Paul Brass (1991), Eric J. Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), Eric J. Hobsbawm (1990); Socio-Cultural Constructivist Insights: Clifford Geertz (1973), Ernest Gellner (1983), Benedict Anderson (2006), Miroslav Hroch (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1996).

explaining nationalism by the way of a single dimension of historical narrative and the exploration of that there are many diverse ways in which nationalism gains visibility brings the existence of many diverse nationalisms to the agenda. Calhoun clarifies the matter as follows:

At the level of practical activity, there are many diverse nationalisms; the idea of nation is integral to many different aspects of how we understand the world, to sharply contrasting state policies, and to widely varying social movements. Explanations of each case must draw on at least partially different variables, rooted in specific histories and other causal factors such as the politics of state elites or the dynamics of social movements. Structural factors, from the growth of state power to the globalization of capitalism, may create conditions that nationalist discourse is used to grasp. But use of the discourse of nationalism is partially autonomous from these specific instances and contributing factors, and links otherwise disparate phenomena in significant ways. (Calhoun, 1997, Nationalism: 21)

It is fact that both history and the contemporary world are filled with different forms of nationalism which can be elucidated by disparate motivations and strategies. Thereby, it is impossible to produce a theory that can explain all these different stories with the same variable. For this reason, according to Calhoun, what should be embraced is “the factors that lead to the continual production and reproduction of nationalism as a central discursive formation in the modern world” (Calhoun, 1997: 123). In addition to this, although principal variables in modernist explanations of nationalism may be succeed in elucidating the backbones of particular nationalisms or the processes related to these nationalisms, because of the heterogeneity of their objects of analysis, they cannot show the same achievement in regard to clarify the different contents of nations or nationalist discourses (Özkırımlı, 2010: 190). The nationalist discourse, which presents itself as a homogeneous whole, actually contains many differences and discontinuities. Considering nations as real and homogenous communities means to neglect these differences and discontinues hidden by nationalist discourse in a society. In this sense, in a similar manner with essentialists, constructivist accounts of nationalism also fail to capture the complexity of nationalism and its various dimensions.

In this context, grasping the complexity of nationalism, many scholars who adopt new approaches in the field underline the limitations of “grand narratives” based only one independent variable, and claim that there is no general theory that can

explain a complex phenomenon, such as nationalism (Calhoun, 1997: 20- 21; Thompson and Fevre, 2001: 307; Özkırmılı, 2010: 10). These criticisms of constructivist narratives of nationalism in the last quarter of the twentieth century paved the way for a shift in the studies of nationalism from grand narratives of modernity to daily life and agency that were excluded from the theoretical discussions of the previous period.

2.1.4. Neglected Actors in the Studies of Nationalism

The constructivist and modernist theories are accused of being Eurocentric, and criticized for their neglect of some questions, such as gender, race or sexuality, by many recent scholars of nationalism (Puri, 2004: 59- 65). On the one hand, these theories are criticized for considering nationalism as an essentially European phenomenon and overlooking the particular relation between colonialism and nationalism by many scholars of Subaltern Studies Group which emerged around 1982 with the aim of promoting “a systematic and informed discussion of subaltern themes in the field of South Asian Studies”, and thereby helping “to rectify the elitist bias characteristics of much research and academic world in this particular era” (Guha, 1982: vii, Puri, 2004: 59, 61; Özkırmılı, 2010: 182). In this recent period, the scholars that identify a Eurocentric bias in the modernist viewpoint on nationalism, such as Parekh (1995) and Chatterjee (1993) began to explore the link between “West” and “its others” (Hearn, 2006: 95, Özkırmılı, 2010: 182). These post-colonial intellectuals draw the line at “the ethnocentric assumptions that inform much of the literature on nationalism” (Parekh 1995: 26; Hearn, 2006: 96). According to Parekh, the Eurocentric perspectives to nationalism represent the Western experience of nationalism as universal pattern and adopted followed by the non- Western world (Hearn, 2006: 96- 97). Similarly, the failure of the previous approaches in recognizing the distinctive characteristics of nation- building processes in the post-colonial world is the starting point of Chatterjee’s criticism (Özkırmılı, 2010: 183). What he insists on is that the post-colonial world is not a passive consumer of modernity and did not simply imitate the modernizing nationalism of the West (Hearn, 2006: 97). According to him, contrary to what is described in popular political stories which mask the peculiar dynamics of the cultural transformation and

modernization processes in the post- colonial world, the modernizing nationalisms in this part of the world produce anti- Western identities (Hearn, 2006: 97).

On the other hand, in this most recent period, many seminal works on nationalism and the formation of national identity draw our attention to the importance to revealing the challenges covered by the discourse of nationalism (Thompson and Fevre, 2001: 307). In this context, they attempt to bring to light the ignored questions in the studies of nationalism and the multi-dimensional character of nationalist rhetoric. Certain scholars, for instance, searches an answer to the question of who is the nation, and of what is the role of gender in the discursive construction of nations and nationalism, and of how nationalist discourse are gendered (Yuval- Davis, 1997; Walby, 1996; Kandiyoti). Especially, since the beginning of the early 1980s, many authors have conceptualized nationalism, as a masculine discourse which reproduces a hierarchical and gendered power relation (Yuval Davis and Anthias, 1989; Yuval Davis, 1997; McClintock, 1995; Sharp, 1996; Dowler, 2001). On the other hand, certain theorists such as Dean Robinson (2001), Rod Bush (2000), and Rodney Carlisle (1975), drawing attention to the phenomenon of racialized nationalism, concentrates on the question of “how race can form the basis of a distinctive nationalist resistance” (Puri, 2004: 63- 64).

2.1.5. Invisibility of Ordinary in the Classical Debate

Finally, the emphasis on daily life is one of the distinctive characteristics of the new approaches. In spite of the fact that there are very significant distinctions between essentialist and constructivist approaches, it is necessary to specify that they converge on the neglect of the ordinary and mundane. In the studies of early constructivists such as Anderson (2006), Gellner (1965), Hobsbawm (1990), Smith (1998) who set sight on the role of modernity and the state in the formation and development of nationhood, “the constructed nature of identities became bound to state and political institutions as regulating the conditions for actors to challenge or manipulate identity categories to achieve mobilizational or distributional outcomes” (Goode and Stroup, 2015: 718). In this context, existing or potential nuances and contradictions between nationalist claims in the discourses and practices of political

actors, institutions and elites and national identities constructed by ordinary people in their everyday life are ignored in both competing approaches. The question of what is the resonance of nationalism or nationalist discourse imposed and used by the ruling elite in ordinary people's lives is left unanswered in the classical theories of nationalism.

Ethno-symbolist critique developed towards the constructivists, especially Hobsbawm and Anderson, argues that the attempt to explain such a powerful phenomenon, nationalism, with "invented traditions" of "imagined communities" is a vain effort. In this sense, Smith interrogated how the members of an imagined community can develop a consistent and strong national attachment via invented traditions (Smith, 1996). In his conceptualization, on the one hand, the answer to this question is quite obvious. According to Smith, "preexisting traditions and heritages which have coalesced over the generations" form the basis of nationalist claims (Smith, 1996: 361). These are cultural components of modern nation such as common myths and historical memoirs which find their roots in the ethnic communities of the past. All in all, the underlying reason for national loyalties is the persistence of ethnic affiliations. On the other hand, Smith's question might be responded from the constructivist viewpoint as follows: national myths might be invented and imagined; but it does not make them false in the eyes of the individuals who believe in them (Özkırımlı, 2017: 263). What is important is the beliefs and the perception of the individuals who compose the nation. National myths, symbols and rituals circulated by nationalist project, the media, national rhetoric and nationalist discourse used by politicians are sensed and internalized by these individuals. In this way, nationalist project concretizes and realizes (Sofos, 1996: 251).

However, national practices outside of formal area and the ways in which individuals activate their national identities are also ignored by many constructivist accounts of nationalism that attempt to explain a complex phenomenon, such as nationalism, by one factor, and give their full attention to the constructive changes in macro structures in society, whether economic, political or cultural. In this sense, in a similar manner with essentialists, they also fail to capture the dynamics of daily life. While explaining the emergence of nationalism with structural and institutional

dynamics via grand historical narratives they leave agency out of the picture. Constructivist explanations which consider nationalism as a top-down ideology, and see national identities as the product of top-down processes or elite decisions to dominate social groups and to legitimize the power of state remain silent about how ordinary people understand, perceive, challenge or reconstruct it. Thus, they are also inadequate in clarifying the nationalization process from a bottom-up perspective.

According to Goode and Stroup, this situation shows that “the constructed nature of identities became bound to state and political institutions as regulating the conditions for actors to challenge or manipulate identity categories to achieve mobilizational or distributional outcomes” (Goode and Stroup, 2015: 718). Constructivist explanations of nationalism bind national claims to the messages and discourses imposed by macro structures such as state and political institutions to the people (Goode and Stroup, 2015: 718). In other words, “responsiveness of ethnic masses to elite cues” is excluded from the analysis (Goode and Stroup, 2015: 718). However, “the everyday is generally the bedrock of social reality, what can be taken-for-granted” (Chaney, 2002: 4). In this context, the dynamics of national identity are embedded in daily encounters. Ordinary people are not passive recipients of nationalist ideology, but agents engaged in a “free play of signification” (Billig, 1997: 214). Then, nationalism should be considered as something inherent in the daily life of people who concretize it.

In Calhoun’s words, “what gives tradition (or culture generally) its force is not its antiquity but its immediacy and givenness. Some nationalist self-understandings may be historically dubious yet very real as aspects of lived experience and bases for action” (Calhoun, 1997: 34). Özkırımlı also argues that the disappearance of an ethnic or nationalist violence or conflicts in a society does not involve the absence of nationalism there; because nationalism is “a way of seeing and interpreting the world” which remains in existence “in the interstices of daily life even when there is no visible crisis or conflicts” (Özkırımlı, 2010: 218). This omnipresent character of nationalism encourages the scholars to view it “from below” and to analyze the paths in which ordinary peoples “challenge or subvert the values and identities imposed on them” (Özkırımlı, 2010: 218). Nationalism is a mindset, embedded in daily life, and

is reproduced again through various ways. This situation thereby necessitates focusing on its reproduction in this domain.

2.2. One Step Ahead of Everyday Nationhood: Banal Nationalism

The study of Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (1995), might be given as the earliest and most striking example of the studies which emphasizes reproduction of nationhood in quotidian life. According to the author, the widely accepted constructivist perspective in the study of nationalism is problematic in two respects (Billig, 1995: 38). Firstly, nationalism is associated with “periphery” which endeavors to build new states and extreme right-wing politics (Billig, 1995: 5). Secondly, locating nationalism as an “extraordinary, politically charged and emotionally driven” leads to neglect its mundane appearances in the center, West’s established nations (Billig, 1995: 44). This “double neglect” makes the prevalent perspective in the literature on nationalism fruitless to explain the reproduction of nationhood by the ordinary and daily reminders in these nations (Billig, 1995: 38).

Billig defines nationalism as “the ideology by which the world of nations has come to seem the natural world - as if there could not possibly be a world without nations” (Billig, 1995: 37). This ideology draws its strength from the unobtrusive and “constant flagging of nationhood” (Billig, 1995: 174). In this sense, it is not a developmental stage for being a fully formed nation- state, as claimed by some modernist scholars such as Deutsch¹⁹ and Hroch²⁰ (Billig, 1995: 37, 43- 44).

¹⁹ Deutsch, who defines nationality as a ‘wide complementarity of social communication’, associates nation building process with social-demographic changes; and attracts attention to the role of expanding mass communication in this process (Deutsch, 1953: 97). According to him, the success of this process depends on ensuring social mobilization and cultural integration. In this term, mass media, increasing literacy and urbanization, developing social communication, accelerate the establishment of nations (Özkırımlı, 2010: 41- 42). With his own words, “in the political and social struggles of the modern age, *nationality*, then, means an alignment of large numbers of individuals from the middle and lower classes linked to regional centers and leading social groups by channels of social communication and economic intercourse, both indirectly from link to link and directly with the center (Deutsch, 1953: 101; emphasis in original).

²⁰ Hroch distinguishes three structural stages from the beginning of any given national movement to its success (Hroch, 1993: 6- 7). In the first period, which he calls phase A, there is an scholarly interest for the exploration of ethnic cultural differences; but it is not possible to speak of a political demands. The second period, phase B, refers to the emergence of an activist group aiming to create a national consciousness in the framework of a political national program; and furthermore, “the social structure of non-dominant ethnic groups influenced decisively the structure of national programs” (Hroch, 1995a: 294). Political and social crisis in the old regime, social unrest, the power loss of traditional moral systems and the decline in the understanding of legitimacy on the basis of religion are the decisive conditions the transformation of the intellectual interest of a group in their own ethnic roots into a national program. The internalization of a national identity by the majority of ethnic group

Considering nationalism as a phase in this way, means to treat it, at the same time, as “outbreaks of 'hot' nationalist passion, which arise in times of social disruption and which are reflected in extreme social movements” (Billig, 1995: 44). According to him, while classical theories of nationalism are interested in these “hot” and aggressive versions of nationalism, they take no notice of its “banal”, passive and dormant appearances (Billig, 1995: 6).²¹

Concordantly, with his term “banal nationalism”, he attracts attention on the reproduction of nationalism in the established nations of the West via the ideological habits and reminders embedded in daily routines such as the daily weather forecast limited by national boundaries and the text of newspapers which offer “the national homeland as the home of the readers’ and thereby persistently reinforce a sense of nationhood by dint of a complex deixis of ‘here’ and ‘we’” (Billig, 1995: 11). Daily routines, in which “who we are” is embedded, remind and flag nationhood constantly (Billig, 1995: 38). For this reason, the author consistently underlines that “the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (Billig, 1995: 8). Here, what he keynotes carefully is that national identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life. These habits including thinking and using language, “forgotten reminders”, such flags which are omnipresent in public and private places, are the carriers of “banal nationalism” which penetrates into daily life (Billig, 1995: 6-8). The official symbols silently permeate daily life in unconscious ways and remind us our nationhood. According to him, national identity is everyday reproduced through these banal and subliminal ways as a flagging reminder.

Similar to Billig, Edensor, who focus on the relationship of national identity to popular culture and everyday life, also criticizes that the mundane dimension of national identity has not generally been taken into consideration in most of the studies based on the dominant theories of nationalism which deal with “political

members indicates the beginning of the third phase, phase C, in which a mass movement appears (Hroch, 1993: 6- 7). The articulation of nationalism as an “accompanying component” of the nationalist movement and its penetration in this process consolidated throughout the phase of mass movement (Hroch, 1996: 37).

²¹See as examples Anthony Giddens (1985) *The Nation- State and Violence*, Cambridge: Polity Press; Anthony Giddens (1987), *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

economy and history, and the national cultural elements they refer to are either in the realm of high culture, are the ‘invented traditions’ and ceremonies concocted many years ago, or are versions of folk culture” (Edensor, 2002: vi). Whereas, for Edensor, popular culture and the routine and ordinary habits of everyday life excluded from the intellectual domain of inquiry offers a productive fields for the formation and maintenance of national formation (Edensor, 2002: vi). Hence, the embeddedness of national identity in culture and mundane practices of daily life, as a “dynamic, contested, multiple and fluid” thing, is the reason why the national is still such a strong component of identity (Edensor, 2002: vi). According to him, the visible and concrete existence of nation in individuals’ daily experiences related to place and space can be observed by the way of some unremarkable material elements such as architectural styles, the design and organization of public open and recreational spaces, traffic lights which provide people “familiar, quotidian landscape”. This familiarity plays a crucial role in the consolidation of “a strong cognitive, sensual, habitual and affective sense of national identity, providing a common-sense spatial matrix which draws people and places together in spectacular and banal ways (Edensor, 2002: 37). In addition to the spatialisation of nation, insisting on the performative expressions of nationness, Edensor also focuses on “the ways in which people act in national contexts by performing everyday routines, habits and duties” (Edensor, 2002: 69) and exemplifies these unreflexive performances as follows: “For instance, there are distinctive forms of playing and watching sport, drinking alcohol, cooking, child-rearing and home-making that are inflected by class, ethnicity and gender as well as by national identity” (Edensor, 2002: 89).

2.2.1. Criticism of Banal Nationalism

In fact, the recent studies focusing on mundane, banal and everyday aspects of nationalism have represented a major paradigm shift in the field. Especially, Billig’s study is a straw in wind of “a shift in focus as research began to move away from the more macro-scale theorizing on nationalism to more empirical based studies, that focused on issues of representation, contestation and localized meaning-making as well as more contextualized case studies” (Skey, 2009: 333). Skey, on the one hand,

recognizes Billig's attempt to go beyond the general tendency to consider the nation as a concrete reality both in everyday life and social theory, and to resolve the perpetual reproduction of hegemonic nationalist discourse in the everyday as significant contributions to theorizing nations and nationalism. In this sense, Billig's thesis expresses a strong critical stance against methodological nationalism which refers to "the naturalization of the nation- state by social sciences" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003: 576; Skey, 2009: 333)²². On the other hand, Skey criticizes him for ignoring the complexity of media output and of national audience (Skey, 2009: 334- 335).

Firstly, in Billig's approach, the media is embraced as a non-contradictory, homogeneous entity that generates uniform outputs. However, the existence of particular organizations which "are designed to serve distinct sections of the population who are (often) constituted on the basis of different, sometime conflicting, (national) identities, which may or may not be aligned with a state" show us "the complexity of the media landscape" (Skey, 2009: 335). 2) In addition to this, the widespread usage of new media technologies such as the internet, satellite broadcasting and mobile phones, which surpass national borders in the contemporary world, makes it difficult to frame a homogeneous media that consists of television and press only (Skey, 2009: 336).

Secondly, Billig's banal nationalism thesis is subject to criticism for its assuming that national audience is homogeneous (Skey, 2009: 336; Rosie et al., 2006; 328- 330; MacInnes et al., 2007: 185- 189). According to Skey, "one of the weaknesses of the Banal Nationalism thesis is that does not address how different constituencies

²² Wimmer and Glick Schiller identifies three variants of methodological nationalism: "1) ignoring or disregarding the fundamental importance of nationalism for modern societies; this is often combined with 2) naturalization, i.e., taking for granted that the boundaries of the nation-state delimit and define the unit of analysis; 3) territorial limitation which confines the study of social processes to the political and geographic boundaries of a particular nation-state". The authors argue that "the three variants may intersect and mutually reinforce each other, forming a coherent epistemic structure, a self-reinforcing way of looking at and describing the social world. The three variants are more or less prominent in different fields of inquiry. Ignoring is the dominant modus of methodological nationalism in grand theory; naturalization of "normal" empirical social science; territorial limitation of the study of nationalism and state building. In the first variant of methodological nationalism, ignoring, the power of nationalism and the prevalence of the nation-state model as the universal form of political organization are neither problematized nor study in their own right. This variant has marked especially tradition of social theory. As a host of scholars have argued classic theory of modernity has a blind spot when it comes the rise of nation-states as well as of nationalism and ethnicity" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003: 577- 578).

might respond to the particular media texts or political speeches used as examples of the nation being flagged in a routine or taken-for-granted manner” (Skey, 2009: 337). In other words, how and in which ways audience construct the meanings of media messages? In Billig’s study, as in several classical studies on nationalism and national identity, these questions are left unanswered with a top-down perspective which pay no attention to “the ways in which ordinary social actors construct themselves as nationalised subjects” (Condor and Abell, 2006: 158; quoted in Skey, 2009: 337). The processes of audience meaning- making and the manifold ways in which ordinary people build themselves as a nationalized subject are ignored by this approach. This silence of Banal Nationalism thesis refers to the assumption that in a nation all people share the same national feelings and the same national belonging. The neglect of differences and dynamics of the ordinary in this way unconsciously contributes to treating nation as a static, constant and fixed whole. In this sense, the differences and common points between different nationalist imaginaries of people are left out of the scope.

Thirdly and most importantly, in the light of these criticisms, many scholars argue that the empirical studies²³ based upon Billig’s theory do not discuss the reflection of nationhood in the mind of ordinary people (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 537; Skey 2009; Antonsich 2016). Rather, they show a tendency to see these people as the passive recipients of nationalist messages. Although these studies, centering upon “media content”, make important contributions to uncovering the connection between nation and media, they fail at explaining the complexity of this relationship, seeing audience “as either coherent or ‘empty vessels’ that uncritically absorb the media messages that they encounter” (Skey, 2009: 336). Everyday nationhood perspective that we will discuss in the next section is based on these critiques to the thesis of banal nationalism.

²³ See as examples: Dhoest, A. (2007). The national everyday in contemporary European television fiction: The Flemish case. *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, 2(2), 60–76. Law, A. (2001). Near and far: Banal national identity and the press in Scotland. *Media, Culture and Society*, 23(3), 299–317. Ozkirimli, U., & Yumul, A. (2000). Reproducing the nation. *Banal Nationalism in the Turkish Press, Media, Culture & Society*, 22(6), 787–804. Perkins, C. (2010). The banality of boundaries: Performance of the nation in a Japanese television comedy. *Television & New Media*, 11(5), 386–403.

2.3. An Alternative Perspective: Complementing Banal Nationalism with Everyday Nationhood

Although drawing upon Billig's banal nationalism theory, everyday nationhood approach distinguishes itself from his understanding, and more generally from the theoretical tradition in nationalism studies, in its own bottom-up methodology. Both banal nationalism thesis and everyday nationhood perspective take a critical stance towards social constructivism which focuses on the role of state or elite discourse and conceive nationalism as a mass phenomenon (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 537, 554). However, the latter differentiate from the former by their special focus on ordinary people as agents and their active role in nationhood, its understanding of everyday life as a domain of inquiry in its own right for nationalism studies, its emphasis on contingent and intermittent nature of nationhood, potential challenges between imposed and experienced nationhood and its consideration of the heterogeneity of everyday forms of nationhood. In this way, they aim to overcome the shortcoming of Billig's thesis and provide "a fruitful way to further expand" his initiative (Antonsich, 2016: 33).

2.3.1. Agency's Centrality

According to everyday nationhood perspective, macro-structural approaches, which focus on the political, economic and cultural determinants of nationalism, ignore the active and reproductive role of ordinary people (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 537). Despite of the fact that Billig's banal nationalism thesis points to a rupture in nationalism studies in term of its stress on the reproduction of nationalism in everyday life, it is also intensely criticized for disregarding "human agency and contextual interaction". However, everyday nationhood perspective provides the scholars a new viewpoint that place "human agency" at the center of analysis (Skey, 2017; Antonsich, 2016: 32; Knott, 2015: 2; Thompson, 2001: 19).

According to them, the key actors in the reproduction of the nation are individuals rather than top or banal reminders of nationhood. Hobsbawm's argument that "nations and their associated phenomena constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is terms of the

assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist” inspires everyday nationalism approach (Hobsbawm, 1990: 10). Accordingly, “the actual practices and processes through which nationhood is reproduced in everyday life by its ordinary practitioners” are the main focus point of everyday nationalism scholars (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 554). In this sense, as a subfield of nationalism studies, everyday nationalism, both revealing the invisibility of ordinary in the classical nationalism debates and going beyond the dichotomy between hot and banal nationalisms, has marked a shift of emphasis on “the ‘masses’ and human agency... to consider the role and relevance of the everyday, and relevance of the lived experience of nationalism” (Knott, 2015, 1).

Drawing attention to the cognitive dimension of nationalism, Brubaker argues that nationhood, just as ethnicity and race, “exist only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations and identifications” (Brubaker, 2002: 174). It is the way of perceiving the world, rather than being a thing; and includes nationalized ways of regarding (or disregarding), of interpreting (or misinterpreting), of remembering (or forgetting) (Brubaker, 2002: 175). In this context, nationalized frameworks, strategies, narratives, the situational cues, forms of categorization and, formal or informal, nationalized forms of identification play a crucial role in the activation of nationhood (Brubaker, 2002: 174- 175). Additionally, the point to underline is that “the tacit, taken-for-granted background knowledge, embodied in persons... through which people recognize and experience objects, places, persons, actions or situations as ... nationally marked or meaningful” is also important part of this puzzle (Brubaker, 2002: 174- 175). Along the same line, expanding the place of agency in this complex story Fox and Miller- Idriss states that “nationhood is not (only) lurking in the crevices of the unconscious, furtively informing talk without becoming the subject of talk; it is simultaneously the practical accomplishment of ordinary people giving concrete expression to their understandings of the nation. Nationhood does not only define their talk; it is defined by their talk” (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008: 539). Thereby, ordinary people, who take an active role as agents in the reproduction of nationhood is the main subject of this process. Likewise, “it is people who work within (and against) institutions and organisations and

continuously produce social formations (gender, religion, class, nation) by defining themselves and organising their activities in particular ways” (Skey, 2011: 13-14).

They are not passive and unconscious consumers of salient of unnoticed reminders and symbols of the nation or “cultural dopes” (Thompson and Day, 1999, 38). For this reason, the principal question of the studies centering everyday nationhood is how ordinary people actually and daily make nationhood and reproduce the nation in their discourses and practices, often intentionally (Brubaker, 1994; Skey, 2009; Antonsich, 2016: 33). As Thompson suggest, ordinary subjects of everyday life must be placed at the center of analysis “for how they come to understand ‘their’ nationhood rather than for how a sense of nationhood is transmitted to them” (Thompson and Day, 1999, 38). In this way, these scholars seek to apprehend “the meaning and experiences of nationhood from the perspective of those on the ground” with an empirical perspective (Knott, 2015, 1).

2.3.2. The Everyday as a Domain of Inquiry

The everyday life including the everyday practices, sentiments and perceptions of ordinary people who are the real subject of nationalism is the domain in which nationalist messages sent by the official state ideology, political actors or media are received, negotiated, confirmed or converted, and reproduced. Contrary to the approaches²⁴, concerned with “theorizing the internal properties and external parameters of everyday life”, the scholars of everyday nationhood see “everyday” “as a domain of inquiry” and claim that their own utilization of the term “a bit more ‘everyday’” (Fox and Jones, 2013: 395, Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 557). While the former characterize “everyday” in the framework of various dichotomies such as elite/ non-elite space, extraordinariness/ banality, self-consciousness/ unselfconsciousness and taken-for-grantedness, or resistance/ status quo, for the latter, it is “a site for investigation of other phenomena”, “a place, not spatially or temporally circumscribed, but imperfectly delineated by the individuals who people it” rather than “an object of investigation” (Fox and Jones, 2013: 395-396).

²⁴See as examples: De Certeau (1984), Lefebvre (2008), Bergen and Luckmann (1967), Garfinkel (1967), Goffman (1990).

Moreover, their use of everyday life is also different from its connotation in banal nationalism theory. In Billig's thesis, as above mentioned, the everyday has an importance as a place where the reproduction of the nation occurs by its banal flaggings (Billig, 1995: 6). The focus point, here, is these unobtrusive reminders and their role in the reproduction of the nation. However, in everyday nationhood perspective, the domain of everydayness is handled entirely with its dynamic and interactive character, and considered as an area of encounter and interaction in which people make sense of their social world (Brubaker et al, 2006; Edensor, 2002; Skey, 2011). Namely, Fox and Jones define it as "a venue for the practices through which different perspectives on difference are experienced and articulated, ignored and neglected" (Fox and Jones, 2013: 395-396). In this sense, it cannot be understood independent from other realms and institutions of social life such as the domains of politics, elites and media. (Fox and Jones, 2013: 395-396). At the same time, it cannot be considered safe from the cues of nationalization processes (Fox and Jones, 2013: 395-396). Conversely, nationhood, in this domain, is embodied in people by the way of their experiences, negotiations, articulations or ignorance. Exactly at this point, everyday turns into "the locus where people creatively and self-consciously mobilize nationhood in their social interactions" (Antonisch, 2016: 33). Precisely for this reason, in everyday nationhood perspective, it is regarded as "neither an analytical category nor an object of investigation per se, but a mere domain of enquiry into other phenomena" (Antonsich, 2016: 33). From this perspective, it is a specific area in itself for nationalism studies; and "finer grains of the nation that are embedded in the routine practices of everyday life" (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 553).

Such an understanding, that is discussing everyday life as a domain of inquiry with its all aspects, contributes to overcome the alleged gap "between 'banal' and 'hot' nationalisms, which has indeed proven empirically questionable" (Antonsich, 2016:33 Benwell, 2014; Closs Stephens, 2015; Jones & Merriman, 2009). In addition to this, it provides a fruitful framework to explore the activation of nationhood from below than banal nationalism theory (Antonsich, 2016:33). As a matter of fact, the images of banal nationalism in Billig's thesis refers to symbolic aspects of state-

oriented nationalism; and these are the part of “a top-down rhetorical strategy which conditions and constraints people’s lifeworld” (Antonsich, 2016: 33). However, everyday nationhood perspective focuses more on the everyday practices in which national identities are elaborated, confirmed, reproduced, or challenged than on top-down nationalism (Goode and Stroup, 2015: 718). If Billig’s thesis, which concentrates on “the nationalism of the state” and its banal images is completed with everyday nationhood perspective engaged in different, and often unremarkable, expressions, practices and experiences of nationalism, then it is literally possible to examine nationalism from below.

From this point forth, everyday nationalism perspective suggests concentrating on the area of everydayness with a perspective literally from below to better understand the force of nationalism; and attempts to develop a research method which focuses on the everyday life of ordinary people (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 537). According to Fox and Miller- Idriss, the daily life in which nationhood is produced and reproduced by people is examined by four ways: analyzing the discursively construction of nationhood by ordinary people (talking about the nation with the nation), considering the role of national sensibilities in the choices of these people in everyday life such as newspaper, friendship or marriage partner (choosing the nation), ritual practices performed by them in everyday life (performing the nation), and considering the role of national sentiments in the consumption preferences of these people (consuming the nation) (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 537). These ways in which ordinary people participate in this national construction should be uncovered in order to understand nationalism. Using qualitative interviewing technique in order to achieve empirical data will be appropriate for such a research (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 539).

2.3.3. Contingency and Intermittency of Nationhood

Treating everyday life “as a domain in its own right” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 554) does not necessarily entail the idea that nationalism penetrates all areas of everyday life. As a matter of fact that many scholar assert that nationhood is not necessarily omnipresent both temporally and spatially, as Billig claims (1995)

(Brubaker, 2006; Fox and Millet- Idriss, 2008; Skey, 2011; Merriman and Jones, 2016; Antonsich, 2017; Skey and Antonsich, 2017). On the contrary, their claim is that nationhood in everyday life has a contingent and intermittent nature. The question to be asked is “how and when people describe themselves with national terms instead of others” (Brubaker, 2002: 175). Mapping “when, where, and how nationhood is made salient by people during their interactions”(Antonsich, 2016:34) is the best possible way to challenge “the idea that people should be defined only in terms of narrowly circumscribed racial, ethnic or national characteristics” (Skey, 2011: 5).

Brubaker and his colleagues, in their innovative study based on a fieldwork in Cluj, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (2006), adopting an eventful perspective draw attention to “the casual significance of contingent events” in nationalization of everyday life space (Brubaker, 2006: 361). Along with saliently apparent forms of nationalism emerging in the discourses and practices of political and cultural elites, they focus on its less visible everyday ways that can be captured by observation, recording and analysis of everyday encounters to comprehend how nationhood is expressed, performed, and experienced in everyday life of ordinary Clujeni (Brubaker, 2006: 360). The endeavor to grasp the everydayness of nationalism through “multiple temporal registers...in the contingent happenings of eventful time, in the lived experience of biographical and everyday time, and in the moment-to-moment contingencies of interactional time”, undoubtedly, refers to a significant rupture from the developmentalist theoretical framework which considers nation as substance, collectivity and entity (Brubaker, 2006: 360; Brubaker, 1994: 8).

By looking at the shortcomings of Billig’s banal nationalism theory, and in line with Brubaker, Skey also offers an alternative framework for analyzing the daily ways “in which national forms of imagination and organisation have become largely taken-for-granted and, in the process, naturalized”(Skey, 2009: 343) and invites scholars “toanalyse whether, when and who takes the nation for granted” (Skey and Antonsich, 2017: 3) as follows:

...as theorists, we cannot assume that particular representations of the nation are resonant or relevant for all (and at all times) who happen to live within a particular political territory, just because they are associated with powerful institutional actors or agencies. In this respect, as Rogers Brubaker and his colleagues (2006) have argued we must try and understand whether and when a national framework is utilized in order to make sense of a particular issue. This type of approach does not, of course, mean ignoring institutional discourses or the degree to which they may dominate a particular social environment, but should make us acutely aware of the manifold ways in which different groups are addressed (or ignored) and respond to, challenge or ignore such discourses (Skey, 2009: 342).

Like Brubaker, Skey also treats nation as a contingent process, including various ways in which national imagination, interpretation and classification become possible; and offers to look at the established forms of national life more closely to understand why nationality is still vital for people today (Skey, 2011: 9- 10, 12). According to him, nation is not a reality that can be confined to a single definition (Skey, 2011: 10). Practices, rituals, symbols, as a part of social discourse, reproduce the world as a world of nation (Skey, 2011: 10). As he emphasizes, “the question of whether and when (national) ‘difference’ overrides all other factors must be analysed in relation to both the immediate context and the wider structural conditions within which those involved operate” (Skey, 2011: 33). Such an approach paves the way for a more empirical research on the interrelationship between hot and banal nationalisms.

The analytical framework sketched by Skey to understand and analyze the manifold ways in which this reproduction occurs, involves five dimension of nationalist discourse: spatial, temporal, cultural, political and self/other (Skey, 2011: 11). He argues that this way, as Brubaker says, enables scholars to “specify how – and when – people identify themselves, perceive others, experience the world and interpret their predicaments in racial, ethnic or national rather than other terms” (Brubaker, 2002: 175; Skey, 2011:10). More specifically, the question to be asked is where, how and by who the sense of national belonging is taken for granted, interiorized, challenged or totally rejected (Skey, 2009: 337). This argument necessitates inevitably capturing the various appearances of nationality in different areas and contexts; and it provides scholars an opportunity “to test empirically the significance of often taken-for-granted concepts associated with, say, identity or belonging among

the (often) diverse groups who are presumed to utilize (or perhaps reject) them in their everyday lives” (Skey, 2009: 337).

2.3.4. Diversity and Heterogeneity of Everyday Forms of Nationhood

As it can be remembered, the claim of the new approaches we discussed in the previous section was that nationalism was experienced in different ways in different parts of the world. On the one hand, the emphasis on the existing differences between the stories of nationalism from disparate parts of the world and potential differences between nationalist imaginations of separate groups within a particular nation is one of the major insights of this new paradigm. On the other hand, the perspective of everyday nationhood traces this diversity, specifically, through daily experiences and forms. In this sense, one of the most important contributions of everyday nationhood perspective to the field is its focus on the complex and heterogeneous structure of these everyday experiences and forms which make nationhood visible. The aforementioned heterogeneity is the result of variety within two separate channels of nationhood: different claims about nation and different daily ways to objectify it. Briefly, the best manner to overcome the deductive and generalizing theoretical attitude in nationalism studies is to address to ordinary people’ subjective construction of nationalism in their everyday life; and to focus on the question of how nationness works in different realms and contexts with a bottom-up perspective. How and what kind of nationalisms are reproduced in everyday realm?

Firstly, nation is not a unitary and homogeneous category; and it is not a tangible harmonious entity consisting of coherent components. Individuals who identify themselves a member of a given nation reproduce their nationhood differently and make diverse claims about the nation. For instance, diversity in responses to the question of what does it mean to be Turkish show us that nationhood does not have a fixed content. Even though nationalism has a dream of well-defined, homogenous “we”, there is no such a “we” (Özkırımlı, 2008: 23- 25). In each nation there are different imaginations of the nation and different nationalist projects. Nationalism can speak of common values that make nation. However, the individuals, as the

components of that imagined “we” perceive these values differently, and don’t feel the same degree of allegiance to their nation (Özkırmı, 2008: 2-25). The reception and reconceptualization of national narrative, which is dictated by political discourse, taught in educational system and promoted by media, is a crucial part of subjective interpretation of nationhood. “Different symbols of the nation are interpreted in different ways by different people: some in banal and unconscious ways; others in a more conscious and overt manner” (Jones and Merriman, 2009: 167). Individual construction of the meaning of concepts through perceptions, experiences, background knowledge allows for the variety of claim about how nationhood should be defined and experienced on an individual level (Cohen, 1996). For this reason, “an interpretation of the phenomenon of nationalism that fails to recognize its personal nature-that presumes its commonality of meaning among a population-must be a gross simplification and must therefore be misleading. It would also understate the creativity and agency of the individual” (Cohen, 1996: 8).

Secondly, in order to understand “why national forms of identification, imagination and organization might matter to different people and, in particular, those who form part of the dominant group within a given nation”, “the ways in which different people define themselves, and how they talk about their experiences in national terms or rely on what might be labeled as the ‘logic of nationalist thinking’” should be attentively investigated (Skey, 2011: 4-5). This logic, that “premises; the world is (and should be) divided into identifiable nations, that each person should belong to a nation, that an individual’s nationality has some influence on how they think and behave and also leads to certain responsibilities and entitlements” (Skey, 2011: 5) reveals itself in “multiple, often conflicting ways of talking about the same nation” (Skey, 2011: 5). In other saying, as a practical category, nationhood is constructed in many different ways by individuals. In a wide range of ways from talking, choosing, dancing to eating, drinking or dressing nationhood operates at the everyday level.

All in all, “inconsistencies and contradictions in how nationalism and nationhood are expressed and experienced in everyday life” imply the complex and heterogeneous structure of nationhood and its messiness (Knott, 2015: 8). Adopting this kind of outlook enables us to see how individuals embody nationality in different ways in

their own behavioral and interpretive spaces and “differences of view over what the nation is” (Cohen, 1996: 806). Jessica Jacobsen’s attitudinal study, which aims to explore young British Pakistanis’ perception of Britishness, “Perception of Britishness” (1997) is one of the early fieldworks that point out these differences. The diversity in answers to the questions about Britishness shows that “there is no single way of being British, there are indeed several widely accepted *ways* of being British; there may be no one set of criteria of Britishness, but there are various sets of criteria” (Jacobsen, 1997: 187; emphasis in original). It is the nationalist cognition of the world that brings these different ways of being British together under the same roof. The various ways in which nationhood reconstructed, expressed and reproduced, and different views about what constitutes a nation necessitate speaking of how different people feel about their nationhood.

2.3.5. Potential Challenges between Imposed and Experienced Nationhood

In addition to emphasizing discrepancies between the imagination of nation in individual level and the manifold ways in which nationhood is experienced, everyday nationhood perspective attracts attention on the limits of the relation between the imagination of nationhood in political realm and its reflection in the daily experiences of ordinary people. The transmission of political rhetoric, which includes national messages and symbols, to ordinary people is not safe from potential disjunctures. In this sense, the nation should not be considered “as a pervasively relevant social category” which is permanently reproduced by banal reminders of the nation which “ultimately reinforces nationalist politics” (Brubaker, 2006: 363). Such an approach includes a serious obstacle to seeing potential challenges between nationalist rhetoric and practices in the political domain and their reflections and experiences in everyday life (Brubaker, 2006: 363). However, in some cases, ordinary people might be unconcerned or not be fully in accord with nationalist rhetoric and discourse used in the political field by politicians (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008: 554). Hence, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, in his early work “Formal and Informal Nationalism” (1993), which mentions nationalism as “a dual phenomenon...in the formal organization of the state on the one hand, and in civil society on the other”, argues that neither formal nationalism nor informal nationalism

can be reduced to each other. The author, using empirical material from nationalist ideologies in the twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago and Mauritius, reveals that despite they complete each other de facto in practice; there are salient discursive and logical contradictions between them (Eriksen, 1993: 19).

Similarly, Anthony Cohen with his theory of “personal nationalism” focuses on the differentiations between individuals’ interpretation of experience, and attempts “to understand the personal sentiments associated with Scottish nationalism” (Cohen, 1996: 803). According to him, “it is crucial to an understanding of how individuals perceive their selves and, therefore, to how they perceive their nations that we should be alert to the difference between the regime’s representations of the nation and individuals’ interpretations of those representations” (Cohen, 1996: 803- 804). In his work based on nationalist symbols and rituals, Cohen argues that the studies that ignore the personal aspect of nationalism have failed to see the gap between the intentions of the producers of these symbols and rituals and their interpretation by audiences (Cohen, 1996: 804). Besides, there is not full coincidence between these two sides, and there is not also a substantive consensus among the individuals on the meanings of the national symbols (Cohen, 1996: 807).

Referring to some empirical studies (Brubaker et al., 2006; Fenton, 2007; Fox, 2004a) Fox and Miller- Idriss assert that “even in parts of the world characterized by intractable and polarizing nationalist politics, ordinary people are often indifferent to national(ist) claims made in their names” (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 554) and add as follows:

This popular indifference to the more stylized rhetoric peddled by politicians suggests that there is a disjuncture between nationalist politics on the one hand and the ways in which ordinary people understand and represent themselves and their predicaments in national terms on the other (Brubaker et al., 2006; Fox, 2004b; Herzfeld, 1997). Nationalism does not resonate evenly or resoundingly in everyday life. (Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008: 554)

This situation reminds us that challenges or ruptures between the nationalist political discourse and the perception ordinary people are always possible as well as continuities. Individual’s ability to build and experience subjectively her/his

nationhood at the everyday level is the underlying reason of the probable gap between these two.

2.4. Conclusion

In accordance with the nature of scientific development, every new theoretical approach in the studies of nationalism is built on the criticisms of its predecessors and the shortcomings that it claims have been overlooked in these previous approaches. Therefore, the everyday nationalism approach adopted by this thesis also benefits from the intellectual accumulation of the previous nationalism theories, but at the same time it is a criticism towards these theories.

It is no accident that everyday nationalism emerged as a theoretical approach in the 1990s. The emphasis on the cultural field and the tendency to analyze social reality with concepts of subjectivity such as meaning, consent, resistance and recognition, namely the return of culture, which has been influential in many fields of social sciences since the end of the 1980s, has been encouraged a significant theoretical shift from the constructivist paradigm to the agency-based paradigm in nationalism studies, as called relational turn. The relational turn in nationalism studies refers to a shift of perspective considering the nation as analytical category; and this new approach distinguishes from the predominant perspectives in the field, namely essentialists and constructivists in terms of its attempt to understand and explain human action by relational settings. It opposes the view of nations as static and discrete entities; and, on the contrary, it offers to focus on the challenges and dilemmas of feel of national belonging. In the light of this paradigm shift, in the last three decades, a remarkable increase has been observed in number of scholars who consider nationalism as a way of making sense of the world and a set of practices embedded in daily life, rather than a phenomenon that emerges during times of crisis and in extraordinary conditions.

Everyday nationhood approach distinguishes itself from the theoretical tradition in nationalism studies, in its own bottom-up methodology. While it is inspired by the constructivist account of nation which explains this phenomenon as an invented,

socially constructed and imagined “cultural artefact” of modernity, at the same time it questions the role of the individual in this construction process. Indeed, what is the role of ordinary people in this story? Should we consider these people as the passive recipient of nationalist rhetoric used in political area? If the nation and its derivatives are a product of a construction process, where are ordinary people surrounded by nationalist ideologies and projects taking part in this process? In the light of these investigations, everyday nationalism approach takes a critical stance towards social constructivism which focuses on the role of state or elite discourse and conceives nationalism as a mass phenomenon. Additionally, it differentiates from the Billig’s banal nationalism approach by its special focus on the agency’s centrality in the everyday reproduction of nationhood, its understanding of everyday life as a domain of inquiry in its own right for nationalism studies, its emphasis on contingent and intermittent nature of nationhood, its consideration of the heterogeneity of everyday forms of nationhood, and its concern for potential challenges between imposed and experienced nationhood.

Everyday nationhood approach provides the required perspective to fill a gap in the literature on Turkish nationalisms by examining the construction of Turkishness from below. Today, the construction of national belonging at the individual level from the perspective of everyday nationhood has aroused interest among nationalism researchers from around the world. There is now an established literature on ordinary people’s perception of nationhood as the presumed recipients of nationalist ideologies, and on the ways in which they construct, reproduce and mobilize their nationhood by the way of everyday practices and social interaction. In the light of the theoretical framework presented by this literature, the thesis examines the role of the individual surrounded by different nationalism projects in the daily construction and reproduction of Turkishness.

CHAPTER 3

TURKISH NATIONALISM IN THE LITERATURE

Turkish nationalism has always been an interesting and at the same time an obligatory stop point for the scholars contemplating the political and social structure of modern Turkey. The primary reason for this necessity is the impossibility of considering the modernization movements that started in the late Ottoman period and lived their golden age in the early republican period independently of the Turkish nationalism movement. So much so that the desire of the cadres leading the Turkish modernization project to create a homogeneous and secular nation necessitated the substitution of Turkish nationalism for Islam, which was the most important bond that held the society together until that time. Therefore, Turkish nationalism has received the attention it deserves in the literature as the most functional social engineering instrument in the political and social history of modern Turkey. On the other hand, Turkish nationalism has shown a hegemonic existence by being articulated in one way or another to the discourses of almost all political formations in the 100-year adventure of the republic. It can be said that Turkish nationalism, as a populist tool to gain legitimacy in the political arena, has managed to exist and stay on the agenda in every period and in every aspect. Finally, in the era of globalization, where the future of nation-states is discussed, it is possible to observe, paradoxically, that rising nationalist movements all over the world have accelerated in Turkey as well. Many studies that trace the hegemony of Turkish nationalism inherent in social life as well as in the political sphere have also shown that Turkish nationalism, contrary to being an outdated field of study, still constitutes an active fault line for a researcher who attempt to understand and map the world of mindset and perceptions in Turkey's political, social and cultural issues. Therefore, it is quite understandable that academic studies trying to make sense of both Turkey's past and present focus on Turkish nationalism.

In the early 1920s, the young Turkish Republic was a state that in search of its nation (Kadıoğlu, 2009: 287). Turkish nationalism was the most important constitutive ideological sources of secular and modern nation-state-society project during the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The essential aim of the Turkish nationalism in the early years of the Republic was to achieve a homogenous and modernized society creating “one prototype of Turkish citizens who would first and foremost be loyal to their own state” (Kuzu, 2019: 73) . On the one hand, the obstacle to the homogeneity targeted by this nationalist effort was the Kurds; and in order to overcome this barrier the assimilation and Turkification policies carried out against the Kurds continued until the 1950s. On the other hand, the obstacle to the modernity claim of the new Turkish nation- state was Islam. However, the relationship of the Kemalist modernization project with Islam was more complex than with the Kurds. The principle of *laïcité* adopted by the Kemalist Republic was quite different from secularism, which in the classical sense meant the separation of religion and state (Fabbe and Balıkcıoğlu, 2019: 57). Instead, the nation-state preferred to instrumentalize Islam by making it a state- controlled bureaucratic institution. Islam, which was centralized, nationalized and homogenized in this period, was placed in a position suitable to be used as a shield against possible legitimacy crises that the secular nationalism of the nation-state might encounter with nationalism (Bora, 1999; Cizre Sakallıoğlu, 1996). This pragmatic attitude of the state towards Islam did not change until the end of the Second World War (Koyuncu- Lorasdağı, 2011: 144- 145). However, in addition to this pragmatic instrumentalization, during this period, Islam was excluded from all cultural references sources such as historiography and language by the secular Republican cadres (Koyuncu- Lorasdağı, 2011: 144- 145) ; and the Islamic way of life was sharply limited by radical reforms in everyday life and in the public sphere.

In the years following the Second World War, top-down Turkish nationalism evolved in a different direction in the light of both internal and external developments. Conservative groups gaining power in politics, Islam becoming more visible in society, and the relaxation of secular policies implemented since the first years of the Republic were the important characteristics of the change in the social

and political atmosphere of this period (Kuzu, 2019: 73-74). In this context, from the 1950s, an alternative concept of Turkish nationalism which aimed to build a belonging relationship between the society and the state by the way of an alternative social identity based on religious and traditional cultural values and symbols began to challenge the imagination of Turkish nationalism of the Republic's secular cadres (Mert, 2001; Kuzu, 2019). In Turkey of the time, which has taken a side with the West in the bipolar world order and transitioned to a multi-party democratic regime, the establishment of the Democratic Party (DemokratParti, DP) was welcomed both by the liberal Western bloc, which was fighting for hegemonic supremacy against the communist Soviet Union, and by the masses with traditional and religious lifestyles and worldviews, who were angered by the secular reforms and practices of the Kemalist one-party regime (Kuzu, 2019: 74). As a matter of fact, the DP has become the representative of this alternative traditional and religious national identity claim coming from the below in a short time; it took advantage of this situation, and adopted a politically populist stance. During the rule of the DP, religious education was made compulsory in secondary schools; and private secondary schools (Imam Hatip schools) were established for the training of imams and preachers (Kuzu, 2019: 74). In this sense, the DP, promoting religion in the society with populist policies and used it as a political tool, paved the way for Islam to be present in Turkish nationalism and Turkish politics with a rising tone. This increasing trend of Turkish nationalism reinforced by Islam in Turkish politics continued in the 1970s; “because right-wing party leaders continued to use religion as a potential bulwark in their ideological battle with the left and secular leaders” (Kuzu, 2019: 74). Indeed, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the DP and its successor the Justice Party (Adaletpartisi, AP) continued to be centers of Islamist populism. Therefore, while political Islam previously existed as a wing within these conservative centre-right parties, it took its place in Turkish politics as an independent political actor in the early 1970s with the claim of an alternative national identity nourished by Ottoman-Islamic history.

Just like political Islam, ethnic nationalism did not emerge as a distinct political actor in the 1950s. However, it is possible to say that for the ethnic nationalist movement, which would become a political actor in the next period, it was a preparation period

(Bora, 2009: 21). In fact, in the 1960s, the secular national identity began to compete with religious and historical motives through right-wing nationalism. This change of discourse had a great impact on the establishment of extreme right parties. AlparslanTürkeş, who joined the conservative and nationalist Republican Peasant's Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Partisi, CKP) and took over control of the party in 1965, became one of the most important figures of Turkish nationalism. The party, which changed its name to the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) at its annual congress in 1969, played a crucial role in the intensification of political polarization between right and left wings in Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s with its radical nationalist attitude (Başkan, 2006). The MHP, which adopted a conservative nationalist ideology, became the voice of the Turkist movement in the 1960s and of the ideas of NihalAtsız on the political level (Uzer, 2002: 121). The party established its ideological framework on anticommunism, Islamic motifs, and historical essentialism. Relative to the Turkism of the 1940s, racist components lost their power in this new Turkist movement. Islam was considered an essential element of the Turkish national identity. Therefore, Turkishness began to refer to a Sunni Muslim identity in addition to the stress on ethnic and racial traits under the emphasis of the “Turkish Islamic Synthesis,” which was reinforced in the 1970s (Bora, 2003). In consequence, in the 1960s and 1970s Turkish nationalism became more eclectic and was penetrated by Islam (Uzer, 2002: 128). It was the Nationalist Action Party which was considered as the agent of this transformation at the political level (Uzer, 2002: 128). Particularly after the second half of the 1970s, the emphasis on Islam became more dominant in both the party and in Turkish politics.

The military intervention of 1980 was a turning point in the transformation of the official Turkish nationalist discourse; and the nationalist conservative ideology based on both Turkishness and Islam emerged as the dominant ideology of the 1980s and was diffused into all domains of social life. The official ideology legitimated itself in the political spectrum of Turkey, adopting a nationalist understanding based on the Turkish Islamic synthesis. Moreover, it created a defensive reflex based on the existence of fictitious enemies who had to be fought against and annihilated. While “the bad intentions of the Western powers on Turkey,” “Armenian terror,” and “the dream of Greece on the Aegean Sea” were launched as external threats, the internal

threats were leftist groups and Kurds, who were labeled “destructive and separatist elements” by the official ideology. Although the military coup of 1980 appeared as a negative development in terms of political Islam and Turkish nationalism in the short term, it created an effect that strengthened and consolidated these movements together in the long run, institutionalizing the Turkish-Islamic synthesis and making ethnic nationalism and Islam the hegemonic power in Turkish politics. (Fabbe and Balıkcıoğlu, 2019: 61)

The feelings of insecurity at both the national and international levels played a vital role in the revival of Turkish nationalism in the 1990s (Yeğen, 2007: 136). The significance of the ideological climate of this period is that the ethno-nationalist and xenophobic characteristic of the recent Turkish nationalism are being fed by the political and ideological legacy of the 1980s, which accept the superiority of the Sunni Turks unconditionally (Çırakman, 2011: 1896). Accordingly, from the mid-90s, populism and political Islam began to become more prominent and visible in Turkish politics (Akgönül and Oran, 2019: 21).

Compared to the 1990s, the early 2000s were a period when aggressive Turkish nationalism and political Islam became relatively stagnant with the liberal and democratic rhetoric adopted by the AKP, which made a glorious entry into Turkish politics as a new actor (Akgönül and Oran, 2019: 22- 23). However, the second decade of the twenty- first century is the period when an increasingly conservative and nationalistic climate began to be experienced in both political and social life in Turkey. The Islamist and nationalist policy of the AKP which put forward a liberal and democratic discourse in the first years of its rule, became increasingly authoritarian and dominated all the state's apparatuses, which gave impetus to the Turkish-Islamic synthesis in Turkish politics this period (Akgönül and Oran, 2019).

The AKP, founded in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his colleagues, defining itself as a conservative democrat party was positioned itself on the right of the traditional political spectrum. In this respect, the leading cadres of the party who started their political careers in political İslamist Erbakan’s National View Movement put some distance between the AKP’s political vision the movement’s

pro-Islamic political line (Kuru, 2006: 8; White, 2014: 78- 79; Akgönül and Oran, 2019; Fabbe and Balıkcıoğlu, 2019). Thus, the party, in the first years of its rule, as a new political formation, making an effort to stay out Turkey's Islam- secularism dichotomy, adopting a moderate and conciliatory attitude towards the Kurdish issue put forward a more liberal and flexible political discourse (Akgönül and Oran, 2019; Kuzu, 2019). In this context, the AKP, maintaining a radical stance towards "the traditional structural fears that characterized Turkish politics" (Akgönül and Oran, 2019: 22), adopted a discourse based on liberal values which emphasized the compatibility of democracy and Islam, recognized the Kurdish issue and paved the way for reforms to solve it. In the lights of these circumstances, in a long time, the relation of the AKP with nationalist ideology was ignored by many academic studies; and the ideological position of the party was analyzed in the framework of liberalism and democratization. During the first two terms of AKP's rule (2002-2011) the struggle for hegemony between AKP and official nationalist ideology and the developments such as the democratic initiative process started in 2009 and Erdoğan's sayings "We are a government that has trampled on all kinds of nationalism"²⁵ created the perception that AKP is an anti- nationalist party.

With the third term of the party's rule (2011- 2015), the Sunni- Turkish nationalism has become the focal point in the discourse of the party since the beginning of the 2010s. Particularly, this transformation in the discourse was concretized with the slogan of "one nation, one language, one state" during 2011 Turkish general elections process.²⁶ In the process, Islamic and Ottoman references, glorification of Sunni- Islamic values began to gain more weight in the nationalist discourse of the party. A common Ottoman past of the people living in Anatolia and Sunni- Islam as the dominant cultural element of this past took place as the most essential historical partnership of Islamic- conservative nationalism's conception of nation (Saraçoğlu, 2013). Additionally, The AKP's interest in the Middle East is not shaped on the basis of "ummah", but on the sovereignty area of the Ottoman Empire (White, 2014: 77,

²⁵<https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/erdogan-biz-her-turlu-milliyetciligi-ayaklarinin-altina-almis-bir-iktidariz-940447>, 24.05.2020.

²⁶<https://www.ihf.com.tr/haber-basbakan-tek-bayrak-tek-millet-tek-vatan-153321/>, 26.05.2020.

82). This situation refers to an understanding of nationalism which aims to build a relationship with Muslim countries in which Turkey assumes leadership position. This kind of nationalism, embodied in the AKP's discourses and actions, is defined and conceptualized as "Muslim nationalism" by White. Although the belief of the superiority of Turks is the common point of Kemalist nationalism and Muslim nationalism, the latter regards Turkishness as a cultural identity of Sunni- Muslim (White, 2014: 89). In other words, according to the AKP's understanding of nationalism, the source of this superiority is the religion of Turkishness, Islam. Therefore, the synthesis of Islam and Turkish culture based upon the Ottoman period constitutes the backbone of the AKP's nationalist discourse. While nationhood imagination of the AKP is based on the nostalgia for Ottomans, Islam as the most important constituents of national culture is located at the core of this imagination.

After 2011 General Elections, and particularly Gezi movement, the nationalist discourse of the AKP was consistently sharpened, and turned into a tool of polarization with the slogan of "new Turkey" (Aktoprak, 2016: 295). According to Aktoprak, the new nation of "new Turkey" is constructed by the way of a religious nationalism by the AKP (Aktoprak, 2016: 310). On the one hand, Turkish nationhood in this new Turkey, is built on the religious references, symbols and narratives; on the other hand, the "other" of this nation, the West, is described through religious differences. In the second decades of the 2000s, AKP's stance shifted towards authoritarianism as it strengthened its control over state institutions such as the military and judiciary; and the party started to use this power to politicize religion as an indispensable part of Turkish nationalism and social order (Kuzu, 2019: 76). Political Islam's alternative national identity based on Ottoman- Islamic history (Çakır, 1994; Fabbe and Balıkcıoğlu, 2019: 61) constitutes the backbone of the rising nationalist discourse in Turkish politics in the 2000s under the authoritarian regime of the AKP. This transformation in the political sphere, of course, meant that a nationalist and conservative climate became more and more dominant in social life. As a matter of fact, many central Anatolian cities, which are already strongholds of conservative nationalism and political Islam in Turkey in terms of their voting behavior and social structure due to their historical and sociological conditions, also got their share from this new wave of "political Islam

and the ethnicisation of Turkish nationalism in the 2000s” (Kuzu, 2019).²⁷ In fact, the footsteps of this rising wave of conservatism had begun to be heard in Anatolian cities since the 2000s (Çarkoğlu and Toprak, 2006; Toprak, 2008; Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, 2009). Traditional Anatolian conservatism, fed by the nationalist and Islamist spirit encouraged by the political power of the period, increasingly embraced an intolerant, oppressive and marginalizing language (Toprak, 2006).

The aim of this chapter is both to provide an overview of the scholarship on Turkish nationalism from the 1950s to present and their viewpoints towards the concept of Turkishness, and to situate this thesis, which adopts everyday nationalism approach, within this relevant literature. For this purpose, in the first part of this chapter, the early studies, which continued to dominate the field until the 1990s and approach Turkish nationalism from the perspective of modernization paradigm (Heyd, 1950; Lewis, 1961; Berkes, 1964; Karpas, 1973; Kushner, 1977; Landau, 1981; Georgeon, 1986) will be discussed. Afterwards, the second section of the chapter will focus on the studies in the field produced since the 1990s and concentrates on the different and previously ignored aspects of Turkish nationalism, its hybrid, eclectic, ambivalent and ubiquitous character and different nationalist imaginations and discourses of various political visions (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997; Bora, 2003; Çınar, 2005; Kentel et al, 2009; Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011; Özkırımlı, 2011; White, 2014; Uzer, 2016). Lastly, following the early studies that consider Turkish nationalism, in general, as an intellectual current and an inevitable necessity of modernization and more recent studies that attract attention on the presence of different Turkish nationalisms, but at the same time overlook the reflections of these different nationalist projects on the actors of everyday life, the academic studies that seek the traces of Turkish nationalism in everyday life and take into account the active role of agency in the construction and reproduction of nationhood will be evaluated.

²⁷ “Milliyetçi muhafazakar kentlerde sosyal hayat durma noktasında”, <https://t24.com.tr/haber/milliyetci-muhafazakar-kentlerde-sosyal-hayat-durma-noktasinda,254423>, 25.07.2022.

3.1. Early Scholarship on Turkish Nationalism

For a long time, Turkish nationalism has found a place in the literature as a relative issue in the works of scholars who examine the Ottoman- Turkish history rather than as a specific area of study. In this direction, it had been studied by historians such as Uriel Heyd, (1950), Bernard Lewis (1961), Kemal Karpaz (1973) and François Georgeon (1986). Concordantly, the first studies dealing with Turkish nationalism were produced within the framework of the discipline of history. Moreover, the narrative of linear progress built discursively on the concept of Western civilization, an understanding which discusses Islam and modernity from a dichotomous perspective and a method of top-down analysis focusing on macro structures, processes and elites are the prominent characteristics of the early scholarship on Turkish nationalism.

Firstly, the early scholars of Turkish nationalism, in general, approached the issue within the framework of the paradigm of modernization (eg. Heyd, 1950; Lewis, 1961; Berkes, 1964; Karpaz; 1973; Kushner, 1977; Landau, 1981; Georgeon, 1986); and they evaluated Turkish nationalism both as an inevitable and natural consequence of Turkish modernization and secularization and its particular tool (Yavuz, 1993). In fact, the most remarkable common characteristic of these studies is their attempt to analyze Turkish nationalism with generalized models, which try to explain the emergence and expansion of nationalism and nations by a single dimension of modernization. For the most part, these scholars of the early period regard nations as constructions emerged in response to the requirements of modernity. From this perspective, Turkish nationalism is a response to the historical conditions which required the transition from the Ottoman Empire to modern and secular Turkish Republic. In this sense, the Ottoman- Turkish modernization process, at the same time, constitutes an answer to the question of when Turkish nationalism emerged.

In many studies of this early period, the Western experience of nation- building and secularization is presented as the only and constant recipe for modernization and progress. According to this modernist perspective, the usual course of history is

based on progress; here, progress meant exactly western modernization. Nation-building processes in the West are inseparable part of this positive progressive historical narrative. In this context, nationalism is the most important and essential component of this formula. This viewpoint refers to an historical determinist approach (Atılğan, 2007: 28- 22).

According to this narrative of linear progress centered on western civilization, the emergence of a national Turkish Republic and Turkish nationalism pointed to a historical and inevitable necessity. As for Turkishness, it is the official national identity given to the inhabitants of this modern state; and it is mentioned as a term given to the belonging of a group that comes together around ethnic and cultural elements (Lewis, 2002: 5). From this aspect, it bears a positive meaning as well as Turkish nationalism. In these early works, Turkishness or rather the consciousness of Turkishness, as the cement for nation-building process, is embraced as a modern and progressive identity (Lewis, 2002; Berkes, 2014).

Secondly, another important characteristic of these studies is their tendency to see religion as a reactionary and outmoded power that is an obstacle to progress and development (Yavuz, 1993). According to Berkes, the greatest obstacle to modernization is the effectiveness of religious authority and view of life in fields such as economy, politics, education and technology (Berkes, 2014: 23). In this regard, Turkish modernization and the construction of the Turkish nation cannot be considered independent of the secularization movements that aim to put an end to the effectiveness of religion in these areas. Here, the meaning attributed to secularization within the framework of the modernization ideal is quite clear: this dominated dichotomous approach to modernization treats Turkish nationalism and Islam as opposite positions (eg. Lewis, 1961; Berkes, 1964; Kushner, 1977; Landau, 1981; Georgeon, 1986). In this context, Turkishness is a monolithic national identity category that contains ethnic and cultural components; and it is positioned against the religious identity that symbolizes antimodernism. Turkish nationhood, concordantly, is the significant symbol of the rupture of the secular and modern Turkish Republic from the multi- ethnic and mutli- religious Ottoman millet system. In this framework,

the secularist policies of the Turkish Republic are interpreted as progressive steps taken in favor of Turkish nationalism and the nation state.

Thirdly, another prominent characteristic of the early scholarship on Turkish nationalism is their tendency to analyze Turkish nationalism by focusing macro structures, processes and elites (Çetinkaya, 2014:6). On the one hand, overlooking the fact that nationalism, at the same time, is a social and “from below” phenomenon, Turkish nationalism is discussed only in the context of macro-historical conditions and the response of the state apparatus and elites to these conditions as the prominent part of nation- building process. In this account, the narrative of linear historical progressive necessitates the transformation of state structure inevitably. Concordantly, in these studies, as the main actor of the transformation, nationalizing, therefore modernizing state and its institutions have become the subject of work as the primary source, bearer and practitioner of nationalism. While concentrating to explain the emergence of Turkish nationalism with structural and institutional dynamics via grand historical narrative, they leave various subjective dynamics that have an impact on the emergence of different nationalisms out of consideration. The most important deficiencies of these “grand narratives” are their neglect of contextual and subjective dynamics of different nationalist imaginations; and their blind eyes to differences, discontinues, and the complexity within each of them.

On the other hand, the modernist historiography on Turkish modernization describes Turkish nationalism as an intellectual movement and puts the thought of elites in its focus (Çetinkaya, 2014:5). The activities and writings of important nationalist intellectuals of the period constitute the reference point of the sources produced on Turkish nationalism (eg. Heyd, 1950; Georgeon, 1986). The state elites, with Çetinkaya’s word “Great Men” (Çetinkaya, 2014: 6), are embraced as the only actors of human agency in this modernization and nationalization process. From this aspect, subjectivness of ordinary people is excluded from their theoretical discussions and analysis. However, nationalism is a social phenomenon; and analyzing Turkish nationalism as a social reality requires a careful examination of ordinary actors of

everyday life by the concepts of subjectivity such as meaning, consent, resistance and cognition.

It is important to note that an important part of the literature developed since the early period has been still concerned with intellectual roots of Turkish nationalism and tended towards elites (e.g. Yavuz, 1993; Deringil, 1993; Uzer, 2016; Taşkın, 2013; Soysal, 2009). In these studies, Turkish nationalism and its various aspects are traced through the imaginations of nationhood of nationalist cultural elites with their political visions. In other words, discursive construction of Turkishness embedded in the political rhetoric of elites is used as an analysis object. Similar to those who endeavor to comprehend Turkish nationalism through official ideology of the state reflected in written documents, practices and discourse, there seems to be a tendency to examine nationalism as a top-down process.

In consequence, in the Turkish academic environment, the studies which approach Turkish nationalism from the perspective of modernization paradigm continued to dominate the field until the 1990s. In this framework, Turkish modernization is mentioned as a linear process of progress “from tradition to modernity”, “from the Empire to the Republic” (Poyraz, 2006: 434). According to this perspective, in the Turkish experience, nationalism is both a precondition and a result of this grand narrative of modernization. Academic interest on locating the date of the emergence of Turkish nationalism finds the answer to the question of “when”; and they attempt to explain this emergence by the way of “grand narrative” based on the paradigm of modernization. For this modernist and progressivist tradition, religion is inevitably an element that stands in direct opposition to nationalism and the nation state. In accordance with the usual course of history, in this modern world, where human groups discover their own nations and become citizens of their national political units, namely nation- states, religion is a representation of the dark side of tradition. For this reason, in the studies of the early scholars on Turkish nationalism another striking point is the dichotomy between religion and nationalism. Lastly, their structuralist and elitist viewpoint which has a tendency to regard Turkish nationalism as a product of top-down processes makes “ordinary” invisible in their studies. Their persistent focus on the official nationalist policies of state and their

effort to understand Turkish nationalism based on the intellectual worlds of the elitesignores the fact that nationalism is a social phenomenon actively produced by individuals in daily life.

3.2. Post- Modernist Challenges to Modernist Analysis of Turkish Nationalism

Since the 1990's, the return of culture in the social sciences and the emphasis of post-modernist discourse on identity has been promoted a significant theoretical shift from constructivism to agency- based perspective within scientific studies of nationalism, called as relational turn. The most important common feature of the works produced in the last three decades is that they critically examine the previous discussions on nationalism and rectify shortcomings of the earlier theories (Özkırımlı, 2010: 169). The new approaches to nationalism which considers multidimensional structure of nationalism and its discursive hegemony emerged, have marked a new turning point also for the literature on Turkish nationalism. Focusing on the different and previously ignored aspects of Turkish nationalism, and its hybrid, eclectic, ambivalent and ubiquitous character these recent studies gave a new impulse to the field.

Firstly, unlike the previous studies centering on the conditions in which Turkish nationalism emerged and its relationship with modernism, the phenomenon of Turkish nationalism has begun to be studied from many different aspects such as minorities (eg. Aktar, 1996, 2001; Bali, 2000; Çağaptay, 2004; Oran, 2004; Bozarslan, 2005), gender (eg. Kandiyoti, 1991; Arat, 1997; Sirman, 2002; Berktaş 2010; Akşit 2010; Sancar 2014) and militarism (eg. Altınay and Bora, 2002; Altınay 2004) within this new perspective. These studies draw attention to the discriminatory and patriarchal manner of the official Turkish nationalism, and place the marginalized and excluded groups of the society which were previously neglected by scholars of Turkish nationalism at the center of their analysis. In this sense, these studies point to the effort to subject Turkish nationalism to a more sociological reading through the areas where it intersects with social life, compared to the studies of the previous period, which interpreted Turkish nationalism as an integrative and inclusive ideological tool made necessary by modernization. However, it is possible

to argue that in most of these studies on Turkish nationalism in this period the object of analysis is still the top-down actors such as the state and elites, and their discourses and policies.

Secondly, the studies on Turkish nationalism produced in this period emphasize the hybrid character of Turkish nationalism (Kadıoğlu, 1996; Canefe, 2002). As opposed to the scholars who uphold that Turkish nationhood is defined in civic terms (e.g. Turan, 1969; Tanör, 1998; Kili, 1981; Ahmad, 2003), in this period the academic works which investigate ethnic emphasis in the definition of Turkishness gained visibility (e.g. Kirişçi, 2000; Yıldız, 2001; Kadıoğlu, 2011). In this context, one of the most important focus points of these studies on Turkish nationalism produced from this period to present has been, in general, whether Turkish nationalism is civic or ethnic, inclusive or exclusive, and egalitarian or inegalitarian (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 660). In doing so, scholars tend to concentrate on the official ideology in early Republican Turkey, its roots in the late Ottoman period, and, institutional apparatuses and policies of the state which are laden with the reflection of its nationalist imagination (e.g. Kadıoğlu, 1996; Yıldız, 2001; Çağaptay, 2006; Aslan, 2007; Yeğen, 2017). In this sense, the state-sponsored nationalism in the early republican era and its understanding of what constitutes Turkish nationhood through state policies and discourse towards non-Muslim and non-Turk Muslim groups (Yıldız, 2001; Çağaptay, 2006), and civic, ancestral and cultural forms of Turkish nationhood through legal texts published and citizenship practices adopted and put into action by the state in these years (Yeğen, 2017) has examined deeply and critically in the seminal studies of the scholars of Turkish nationalism.

Thirdly, although they adopted a top-down perspective focusing on topdown institutions and actors and ignoring the role of agency in the reproduction of nationalist discourse, since the 1990's the statement that nationalist discourse in Turkey has multiple faces is widely recognized among scholars of the field (e.g. Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997; Bora, 2003; Çınar, 2005; Kentel et al, 2009; Kadıoğlu and Keyman, 2011; Özkırımlı, 2011; White, 2014; Uzer, 2016). With Özkırımlı's own words, "Tanıl Bora's attempt at 'mapping nationalism' during the 1990s provides us with several clues for navigating through the complex terrain of

nationalisms in today's Turkey” (Özkırımlı, 2011: 93). Indeed, Turkish nationalism is not a homogenous or well- defined ideology; there are number of nationalist projects in Turkey (Özkırımlı 2017: 274, Özkırımlı, 2011). The components, motivations and dominant characters of Turkish nationalisms have thus differed across time and place. Hence, what reinforces the hegemony of nationalism in the society is this complexity (Bora, 2003). Bora distinguishes four different nationalist discourses: official nationalism, left- wing Kemalist nationalism, pro- Western nationalism and racist- ethnicist Turkish nationalism (Bora, 2003). On the other hand, Özkırımlı argues that there are different Turkish nationalisms, and that they must be examined through a biaxial schema: Westernism/ anti- Westernism and secularism/ anti- secularism (2011). Additionally, both scholars insist that their categorizations are not rigid and stable. On the contrary, hybrid and complex content of Turkish nationalist discourses show us their eclectic and flexible structure. What enables us to define these very various projects or movements as nationalism is the nationalist rhetoric that imposes that the interests and values of the nation are superior to everything, and represents nation as a sole source of legitimacy and depicts the world divided into “us” and “them” (Özkırımlı, 2017: 275- 277).

In conclusion, the greatest contributions of the discussions and studies on Turkish nationalism since the 1990s to the literature is that it brings to light the previously neglected subjects, hybrid structure and multiple faces of Turkish nationalism by revealing its different aspects, reflections and imaginations. These seminal studies dealing with Turkish nationalism within the framework of competing nationalisms with different aspects and different claims, unlike the previous studies that dealt with Turkish nationalism as a monolithic whole, gave a new direction to the literature of Turkish nationalism. Particularly, the studies which concentrate on the competing nationhood imaginations of divergent political visions elaborate significantly the omnipresence of nationalism in Turkey’s social and political topography. Their main argument is that in Turkey, nationalism has had an important place in almost all political strands from the establishment of the Republic to the present day; and each political project has imagined a homogenous Turkish nation on the basis of its own ideological and cultural values. However, everyday life and its actors are ignored in these studies. It is seen that these questions which have the capacity to reveal the

complex, fluid and flexible discursive baggage of Turkish nationalism still remain unanswered in these studies: What is the role of ordinary people in these narratives? Must we consider ordinary peoples as the passive recipient of nationalist rhetoric used in political area? If nationalism and nationhood is a product of a construction process, where are they taking part in this process?

This thesis is based on the presupposition that ordinary people have the potential reply politicians' rhetoric including nationalist messages in many different ways. In this sense, it claims that ordinary actors might agree, reject, negotiate or transform the content of nationalist discourse offered by institutions, political parties, media or elites. By this way, they constitute their own perception and reconstruct nationalism and their own nationhood in their everyday life with their attitudes, discourses, everyday practices. Thereby, nationalism is socially constructed and embedded within the everyday lives of ordinary people as well as the practices and discourses of top- down actors. In this sense, adopting a bottom-up perspective following the traces of nationalism in this domain will be an appropriate attempt for revealing the construction of nationalist discourse and its force. Apart from this point, in the rest of this section, focusing on the academic studies which examine performing Turkishness in diverse everyday ways with an alternative approach, I will seek to to situate the place of everyday nationalism approach in the Turkish nationalism studies.

3.3. Empirical Investigations on Turkish Nationalism

A significant theoretical shift from constructivism to agency- based perspective in nationalism studies in the 2000's, called as relational turn, offers to focus on the challenges and dilemmas of feel of national belonging. In the light of this paradigm shift, in the last three decades, a remarkable increase has been observed in number of scholars who consider nationalism as a way of making sense of the world and a set of practices embedded in daily life, rather than a phenomenon that emerges during times of crisis and in extraordinary conditions (Billig, 1995; Brubaker, 1996; Calhoun, 1997; Özkırımlı, 2010; Skey, 2011). This new current in nationalism studies led the scholarship on Turkish nationalism to concentrate on everyday life and

ordinary actors. Accordingly, in the 2000's, the works on the quotidian ways in which particular nationalist discourses are encountered, negotiated, consumed, and reproduced by ordinary people in the society with their subjective strategies began to sprout. The interest in these ways and strategies has made it necessary to apply empirical sources of knowledge. From this perspective, since the early 2000s we witnessed the rise of academic interest in analyzing Turkish nationalism from below.

3.3.1. Banal Nationalism in Turkish Media and Cultural Texts

In academic studies on everyday nationalism in Turkey, empirical investigations of Turkishness often aim to explore images of the nation that are conveyed by the media and cultural texts (e.g. Yumul and Özkırmı, 2000; Gökalp, 2007; Gidişoğlu and Rızvanoğlu, 2011; Yüksel, 2012; Köse and Yılmaz, 2013). These studies, focusing on the nationalist rhetoric of media and press, trace the reflection of Turkishness in daily life. Inspiring Billig's "banal nationalism" thesis, Yumul and Özkırmı (2000) conducted a survey of Turkish press and examine the contribution of thirty eight Turkish daily newspapers to the process of routine formation that contributes to take the nation and nationhood for granted. Turkish press plays a crucial role in the everyday reproduction of nationhood, flagging it consistently, through Turkish flag or map in the logos of these newspapers, their slogans that address to nationhood in a direct or indirect way, their names that works as "constant reminders of our nationhood, national ideals and 'our' place in the world" (Yumul, Özkırmı, 2000: 789), their organizations, the forms of presentation of the news, their way of reporting the weather constitute a routine "deixis of homeland" which make "the world of nations familiar, even homely" (Billig, 1995: 94) In addition to this, analyzing some specific themes such as religion, Cyprus, internal- external enemies, economy etc., they show to what extent the debates on these topics are shaped around national terms and references.

Bora (2004) and Çayır (2009) trace nationalist discourse in textbooks by the means of content analysis and reveal the instrumentalization of education to render nationalist way of seeing, thinking and making sense embedded in the society. In Çayır's work, imagination of the nation by political authority is analyzed through

textbooks republished in the framework of the curriculum reform program in Turkey's accession process to the European Union. He interrogates how key topics such as the Turkish nation, nationhood, nationalism is presented and how state-centric nationalism is constructed and operated in schoolbooks. These studies illustrate how nationalist mindset which otherizes those who are considered as different with an essentialist and exclusionist attitude is reproduced and disseminated through educational system. Hence, in the last instance, nationalist references that are carefully placed in the education system, one of the most important ideological apparatuses of the state, point to the imagination of the nation of those who hold state power. However these studies tell us nothing about the discourses of different nationalisms that we know exist and how these discourses are perceived by individuals. In other words, both multiple faces and ways of nationalist imaginary are neglected.

On the other hand, Brockett explore nation- building process from quite different perspective and offers an alternative viewpoint against the widespread tendency to examine this process by focusing on political elite's discourse (Brockett, 2011). Instead, he investigates how ordinary people experienced and negotiated a series of political, legal, religious, cultural, social and economic reforms which have been considered as taken for granted by Kemalist ideology for a long time through provincial newspapers between 1945 and 1954. The construction of Turkish nationhood, in Brockett's account, is handled as an active process of negotiation which occurred with the participation of different segments of society rather than being purely an ideological imposition from above. Indeed, he claims that the Muslim Turkish nationalism, one of the most interesting issues in recent studies, which brings Islamic identity and Turkish nationalism close together, has its origin in the newspaper articles examined. Another contribution of this thesis to the literature is its emphasis on the role of the national print culture that developed between 1945 and 1954 in the construction of Turkish nationhood.

3.3.2. Everyday Turkish Nationalism: Performing Turkishness in Diverse Everyday Ways

In the developing literature on Turkish nationalism until the 2000s, predominantly consider nationalism as an ideology and the whole of nationalist imaginations, policies and practices of the state and elites. In these studies, Turkishness is embraced as a bond of citizenship, a cultural identity, or a form of ideological belonging. In this context, what defines the boundaries of Turkishness is Turkish nationalisms; as a nationality, Turkishness, is a form of static and passive identity that is idealized and imposed by the policies, practices and discourses of various nationalist visions. Competing nationalist projects imagine these boundaries differently according to their different political, social and ideological positions. However, the recent studies that empirically investigate Turkish nationalism deal with Turkishness as an active and dynamic state, a way of thinking and existence, and ultimately a performative action. Accordingly, each nationalist project has a narration of Turkishness; but in everyday life Turkishness is not only a narration, but also a performance. From this perspective, these studies turned their focus on the ways and states of Turkishness.

It is a fact that in the last two decades there has been an increase in academic studies (Çınar, 2001, 2005; Kentel et al, 2009; Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011; Çırakman, 2011; White, 2014; Çetinkaya, 2014; Çınar and Taş, 2017) that disclose the multiple ways of constructing Turkishness. With these studies, which scrutinize the contesting imaginations of Turkishness of competing political visions and their reflections on the different aspects of everyday life and public sphere, the existing literature on Turkish nationalism gained a new dimension. These pioneer endeavors, with their focus on previously neglected dimension of Turkish nationalism, namely its reflection on everyday life, opened a new door into how and in which ways different nationalist trajectories gained visibility. Even at a relatively early date, Bozdoğan (2001) examines the reflections of imagined nationhood, in the context of Turkish experience of modernity, by competing political visions on the various realms of everyday life such as architecture, urban planning, a particular kind of music, and different life styles.

According to Çınar, one of the contributors of this development, the domain of everyday life must be considered 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” (Çınar, 2005: 27) In this sense, many issues considered to be related to solely formal political processes, institutions, and organizations such as the nation-building and the formation of nationhood are also the issues of everydayness. Çınar, in her study, focusing on the interventions of competing national ideologies to public sphere to impose their own ideals for the future and their own imagined nationhood to the society reveals the multiple faces of Turkishness; but more importantly, she examines many diverse ways “ranging from dressing and dining to various acts of consumption, entertainment, and celebration” (Çınar, 2005: 28) in which nationhood is negotiated and constructed, thereby comparing secular and Islamist interventions related to bodies, places and times to public sphere. In her account, each of these ways refers to “a site of negotiation where a particular understanding of a national subject in relation to a project related to modernity is formulated, displayed, debated, or contested.” (Çınar, 2005: 28).

Kadioğlu and Keyman use the expression of “symbiotic antagonisms”²⁸ as an “analytical category for understanding the dynamics of the relationship among various nationalisms” (Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011: xi) and argues that such a viewpoint can be fruitful to grasp “how the existing nationalisms in Turkey that derive their *raison d'être* from one another can prepare the conditions for each other's continuous reproduction or downfall” (Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011: xi). They claim that different nationalisms in Turkey “derive their livelihood from each other” “in a relational and intertwined way as competing and essentially contested discourses of Turkish modernity and politics” (Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011: xi- xii, xv). In this sense, their study is one of the first studies comparing the different forms of nationalism in Turkey, analytically. The articles that compose this collaborative work and examine different aspects of each of these different nationalisms show that the daily encounters of these nationalisms play an important role in the reproduction of

²⁸ “It was first used by Barrington 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.” (Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011: xi)

nationalism as a hegemonic discourse in Turkey. The main goal of this book is “to enlarge the domain of social and political studies of Turkey by introducing one of the most neglected dimensions: critical analysis of encounters among competing claims to nationalism in Turkey” (Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011: xx).

Jenny White in her study (2013), which bears the traces of ethnographic methodology, claims that the question of “what does it mean to be a Turk and being a member of this nation?” forms the basis of many tensions among societal actors in the quotidian life (White, 2014: 6). From this viewpoint, she describes the aim of her work as presenting “sketches of competing and overlapping cultures of Turkishness and other forms of national subjectivity” (White, 2014: 18) rather than developing “a coherent definition of ‘Turks’ or Turkishness” (White, 2014: 18); because, in her account, “being Turkish, like being Balinese, is a form of knowledge acquired and filtered through socialization, education, and other life experiences” (White, 2014: 18). In this context, by addressing nationalisms “as forms of knowledge embedded in discourses” (White, 2014: 22) the author makes a clear conceptual distinction between the old secular nationalism of “those who made a point of placing a Muslim identity second to Turkishness, however they defined it” (White, 2014: 21) and the new Muslim nationalism of “those who responded to [her] questions about their identity (kimlik) by volunteering Muslim before Turk” (White, 2014: 21). She clarifies the main problematic of her work with the following statements:

This is not an attempt to reduce the present social conflict to secular versus Muslim (although these are powerful constituent elements) but, rather, to try to understand *de novo*, with as few preexisting expectations as possible, how people with different characteristics and positions in society perceive of themselves as part of a nation. That is, what forms of knowledge make up their national subjectivity, under what circumstances, and why? And, finally, what can we understand about the present social tensions—which are expressed in discourses about Turkishness—by grasping what this means to people in practice?... I hoped in this way to capture the strategic and potentially contradictory aspects of national subjectivity. (White, 2014: 22)

Such a method, as stated by the author herself, on the one hand reveals appropriate differentiations in the subjective construction of nationhood, on the other hand allows people to identify “what they know about who they are in relation to the world without reproducing preexisting nationalist categories” (White, 2014: 22) by encouraging them to locate themselves on the range of self-defined values (White,

2014: 22). In order to regard “where and how nationalist forms are produced in society”(White, 2014: 22), White benefits from a great variety of sources and very rich sample set such as the educational curriculums, rituals, military service, examples of popular culture and the interviews with many people from army officials, political figures to journalists and activists. By the way of in-depth discursive analysis of the ways in which the competing nationalist stances are constructed, the author draws attention to the distinct discrepancy between secular and Muslim nationalisms and some points in which these both converge. However, on the other hand, she carefully and sensitively underlines “the variety of possible positions” and the unexpected combinations of secular and Muslim understanding of national subjectivity (White, 2014: 10). Briefly, she regards these two different understanding of nationalism as “relatively distinct patterns of selfidentification as national subjects based on certain forms of knowledge about what it means to be a Turk relatively” rather than considering them as a “set of binary categories” (White, 2014: 11). As White states, the vast majority of the studies on identity in Turkey show that being Turk and Muslim have primary positions in expressing belonging, even if their order of priority change (White, 2014: 21). However, it is not clear “what it means to be Muslim, to be Turk- Muslim or Turkish national subject” (White, 2014: 21).

With a similar apprehension, *Ulusalci*²⁹ nationalism, as a new conceptualization of Turkish nationhood that emerged from the early 2000s, is discursively and narratively analyzed by Çınar and Taş (2017). Criticizing the prevalent academic attitude which employs the concepts like politics of nationhood or nationalism to refer “how the political elite or the state is involved in the nation-building process” (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 664), they claim as follows:

... the politics of nationhood has significance far beyond the state’s involvement in the nation-building process. Nation-building is not only always political, but also it stands as one of the core elements of politics in general. Politics is not only about governance, distribution of power, and political action—it is also, and maybe more importantly, about the ways in which contending nationalisms, expressed as rival

²⁹As stated by the authors of the article, although the literal translation of the term *Ulusalci* is “nationalist” (milliyetçi), it does not convey its full meaning because of that it has a different connotation from “milliyetçi”. For both removing this ambiguity in translation and showing “the discursive play in the Turkish wording” the authors prefer to uphold the term in its origin. (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 658)

stories of nationhood, compete to come to power and establish their own version of nationhood as the dominant one. (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 664)

In this respect, based on the conceptualization of nation as “the product of storytelling”, they purpose to extend the scope of the politics of nationhood to include also “the production, dissemination, contestation, and negotiation of different stories of nationhood, and the resulting clashes and struggles for power between rival movements and projects” (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 664). Contending national projects has always different narrations of nationhood; and their clashing conceptualizations of the nation aims to strengthen “different kinds of national subjects” (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 665). The authors of the study adopting “a narrative- based approach to the study of nationalism” (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 660) suggest to concentrate on “stories of nationhood as the main means through which national communities come into being” (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 660). From this point of view, they investigate *Ulusalçı* movement emerged in 2002 as a reaction against the power of the AKP to look closer at *Ulusalçı* imagination of the nation through an narrative analysis of the historical documentary novel *Those Crazy Turks (Şu Çılgın Türkler)* written by Turgut Özakman, one of the spokesperson of the movement that describes Turkish nationhood “as primordially secular, defined against the Ottomanist and Islamist ideology of the ruling AKP, and as adamantly anti-Western” (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 684). On the other hand, imagining and narrating a founding moment is a common strategy frequently used in all competing discursive construction of nationhood. As is the case with each competing project of nationhood, *Ulusalçı* nationalism has an appropriate claim about the founding moment of the nation to which it ascribes a special meaning and significance to establish and justify itself (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 666). In this sense, Çınar and Taş trace the displacement of the founding moment in the discourse of *Ulusalçı* movement to the War of Independence period of 1919–1922 in a different way than the other narratives of the nation of contending political visions did not only through Özakman’s novel, but also by tapping speeches of the leading *Ulusalçı* spokespersons and the articles of the *Ulusalçı* writers. The relocation of founding moment in the new narrative of nationhood does not only create a new national subject, but also “reifies the nation and legitimizes the state in everyday life” by sustaining the founding moment in public memory (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 663).

In other respects, the seminal work of Ferhat Kentel, Meltem Ahıska and Fırat Genç, "*Milletin Bölünmez Bütünlüğü*": *Demokratikleşme Sürecinde Parçalayan Milliyetçilik(ler)* (2009) tries to understand nationalism within the meaning worlds and practices of people living in nationalism per se, and investigates the concept from the perceptions and mentality structures of these people. It examines how nationalism operates at the everyday level with the critical questions such as what does nationalism mean for different individuals, how and what kind of relationship they establish with it, and most importantly, how do they experience nationalism (Kentel et. al, 2009: 14). When they do this, they concentrate neither on "the instrumentalized nationalism in the hands of nation-state and elites which reflects on history textbooks", nor on extraordinary, "hot", aggressive, and fervent nationalisms of ultra-right wing organizations (Kentel et. al, 2009: 14). However, they state that nationalism, in whose construction the top down actors and dynamics play an important role, and which is consumed, reproduced and reestablished in everyday life is their focus point (Kentel et. al, 2009: 14). According to the authors, "although a 'shared history' is often mentioned in constructing the nationalist discourse, individuals build up different "histories" mainly through their personal experiences and by "communicating" through the existing historiography. Consequently, history is formed in accordance with the "current" polarizations of the strategy of nationalism" (Kentel et. al, 2009: 5). Based on this statement, they focus on the meanings of the concept at the level of social segments while seeking an answer to the question of "how" rather than "what". Benefiting from the literature on everyday life³⁰ (Kentel et. al, 2009: 15), and having in mind the dynamic relationship between macro and micro structures, Kentel and his colleagues turn plural and tangible experiences of individuals into the source of knowledge, in a relational context. The *tactics*³¹ resorted by ordinary people in the face of *strategies* of macro formations, and their ways of making sense, understanding/ misunderstanding, interpretation,

³⁰ De Certeau, M., 1984, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, çev. Steven Rendall, University of California Press, Berkeley. Bourdieu, P., 1987, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press. Foucault, M., 2000, *Özne ve İktidar: Seçme Yazılar 2*, çev. Işık Ergüden, Osman Akinhay, Ayrıntı Yayınları, İstanbul. The common emphasis of this literature is complexity and creativity of everyday life.

³¹ Based on Michel de Certeau's conceptualization, Kentel and his colleagues treat nationalism as a "strategy", and the relation of individuals and social groups with it as "tactics" (De Certeau, 1984).

resistance, their individual narratives are used as the essential knowledge reference in order to make sense of Turkish nationalism (Kentel et. al, 2009: 16). In this direction, in-depth interviews supported by group discussions and on-site observations constitute their primary data collection method.

In a similar manner, Ünlü (2018), being nurtured from the literature on everyday life, and borrowing the term *habitus*³² from Bourdieu, concentrates on the habitus of Turkishness. Turkishness is not conceptualized by the author as an ethnicity, citizenship, national identity or ideological belonging as usual in the literature on nationalism in Turkey (Ünlü, 2018: 13). The opposite way round, according to Ünlü, the term refers to “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). Using a metaphoric concept he call “Turkishness contract” Ünlü endeavors to reveals the ways and states of Turkishness “shaped by a set of written/unwritten and spoken/unspoken agreements (the Turkishness Contract) among the Muslims of Anatolia”(Ünlü, 2016: 397). He explains this situation in his own words as follows:

The Republic of Turkey was founded on the Turkishness contract. The first condition of the contract was to be Muslim and Turkish and/or become Turkish. The second condition was not to speak of or write about the purge of non-Muslims from Anatolia and seizure of their wealth. The third condition was not to write and pursue politics with regard to other Muslim groups, who could resist against Turkification. These were the principal articles of Turkey’s unwritten constitution. (Ünlü, 2013: 25; Ünlü, 2018: 15)

The author examines the formation and functioning of this contract at two levels: political/social and individual ones. On the one hand, in his study, historical formation of the Turkishness contract is analyzed through the nation- building project and the imagination of nationhood in the official discourse. According to the Ünlü, the Turkishness contract is “secured, first and foremost, by the state’s legal, coercive, economic and ideological means” (Ünlü, 2016: 400). The role of the state

³² Bourdieu makes *habitus* the central point in his theory of practice and describes habitus as “a set of dispositions which generate practices and perceptions” (1991: 13). The term that is used by Bourdieu in order to transcend the opposition between theories and practice and to build a connection between social structure and social practice refers to unconsciously learned and internalized scheme of thought, behavior, and taste. In fact, the concept of habitus provides a useful basis for a cultural approach to structural inquiry and permits to correlate these structures with the practices of agency. Habitus plays a crucial role in the formation of person’s judgments of taste. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Harward University Press, 1991.

and political elite in the formation and the promulgation of this metaphoric contract become visible in the policies in various fields from economy to education. Additionally, as a supra-ideological and supra-periodic consensus it has the power to shape very different ideological positions and political formations in Turkey (Ünlü, 2018: 22, 359)³³ and regulate the relationships between the state and the society, and within the society itself (Ünlü, 2018: 14). In this context, Turkishness contract establishes itself as a hegemonic discourse. On the other hand, Ünlü adds that nevertheless, besides the concrete actions and policies of the political authority, individuals develop the strategies to ensure that they do not go beyond the rules of the contract (Ünlü, 2016: 400); because those who are loyal to the contract are endowed with various privileges. In this sense, Turkishness also means “a world of privilege” (Ünlü, 2016: 398- 399). Thus, this contract shapes the ways and states of Turkishness, namely the habitus of Turkishness, in everyday life (Ünlü, 2018: 16).

Each and every Turk and Turkified individual may not have actively signed this metaphoric contract. However, as per the contract, every individual can benefit from it even if he/she is not a signatory. The critical point was not to resist and breach the contract. Those who were in breach were to be severely sanctioned. Sanction could take the form of killing, torture, dismissal, unemployment and exclusion. On the other hand, those who actively supported and/or passively accepted the contract would be the actual or potential beneficiaries of various opportunities. They could be, and have become, bourgeois, judges, teachers, professors, ministers, workers, governors, musicians etc. The material basis of Turkishness was constituted by this metaphoric contract and the set of privileges offered to the contracting parties. (Ünlü, 2013: 25-26)

What ensures the reproduction and maintenance of the Turkishness contract is the privileged group’s positive ways and states of Turkishness (seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing) and their negative ones (not seeing, not hearing, not feeling and not knowing). From this viewpoint, the author conducted a fieldwork with the people who define themselves as Kurds, not Turks, to understand why and how these ways and states of seeing, hearing, knowing and feeling in which Turkishness is constructed operate. As he made it clear, this choice of the author stems from some practical conveniences. Since “privilege is far less visible to us than its absence; when we are discriminated against, it is much more painfully obvious than when we belong to the groups that benefit from that discrimination” (Kimmel and Ferber,

³³ For instance, Ünlü examines the relationship between Turkish left and Turkishness contract in this article: Barış Ünlü (2013), ““Turkishness Contract” and the Turkish Left”, *Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 3, 23- 27.

2014: x; cited by Ünlü, 2016: 398- 399), the deep-interviews held with those who are deprived of the advantages provided by the contract enables the researcher to better illustrate the importance of obedience to the contract. However, Ünlü underlines the fact that a study on Turkishness should benefit from a fieldwork with those who define themselves as Turk ((Ünlü, 2018: 26). In this sense, this thesis aims to continue from where Ünlü left off and to examine the ways and states of the Turkishness by focusing on those who objectify it, but with a different perspective and by keeping in mind probability of different forms of Turkishness other than whose limits and rules are determined by Turkishness contract which historically was constructed by the political elite.

By examining the socio- formation of Muslim- Turk state and the nation with the concept of Turkishness contract Ünlü attempts to develop a historical and sociological model which makes looking at the past and the present from a different aspect possible (Ünlü, 2018: 358). Such a model, according to him, paves the way for deeply analyzing the historical and social, intellectual, and emotional dynamics underlying this formation (Ünlü, 2018: 358- 359). One of the most important accents of Ünlü's work, and even the most important of them, is that the implementation of the Turkish contract is not only the disposition of political elite and the state; it is carried out by the partnership of ordinary actors. For this reason he prefers to use the metaphor of contract by avoiding from the concept of "dominant ideology" in order to move beyond the dichotomy of oppressor/oppressed (Ünlü, 2018: 21). With this conceptual preference, the author aims to discern the relativities between social/institutional and individual spaces, between social history and the history of emotions and thoughts, and between the most intimate, the most subjective and the most public and the most general (Ünlü, 2018: 21). However, in this story, the limits of the functioning of the contract at the individual level are determined beforehand by the understanding of Turkishness disseminated, circulated, and imposed by political institutions and formations, primarily the state. The potential challenges and alternatives in the ways in which Turkishness is reproduced at individual level are neglected once again. The implementer and guarantor of the aforementioned contract whose rules were already established by the state, also is the state. Hence, such kind of Turkishness, whose borders are determined by this contract, corresponds to a

nationalism imposed by essentially state institutions, discourse and policies. Although Ünlü adopts a counterposition against the reduction of Turkishness to a dominant ideology imposed by the state, in the last instance, Turkishness is largely handled as a part of nation building project of the ruling elite in this study. Turkishness, which is mentioned here and whose origins are based on the Turkishness contract, is described as only one of the possible ways and states of Turkishnesses. In this way, alternative ways in which Turkishness might be performed out of the frontiers drawn by Turkishness contract are left out of the scope of the study. Briefly, despite its undeniable contribution to the studies of Turkish nationalism with its special focus on the functioning of Turkishness at the everyday level, Ünlü's work ignores the capacity of ordinary people to produce the different strategies of Turkishness than that imposed on them.

In conclusion, since the 2000's empirical investigations towards Turkish nationalism have paved the way for exploring the multiple ways of constructing Turkishness. In addition to the studies focusing on the media and written materials within the framework of the banal nationalism conceptualization, the studies that question the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in everyday life have also brought a new breath to the studies of Turkish nationalism. However, apart from a very few but significant exceptions, scholarship on Turkishness is still producing work that views the construction of Turkish nationhood from top down processes, institutions and interventions.

3.4. Conclusion

On the one hand, the initial scholars discuss Turkish nationalism from the perspective of modernization paradigm and consider it as an inevitable response to the historical conditions which required the transition from the Ottoman Empire to modern and secular Turkish Republic. From their viewpoint, Turkishness, as the cement for nation-building process, is a monolithic, modern and national identity category that contains ethnic and cultural components; and it is positioned against the religious identity that symbolizes antimodernism. Turkish nationhood, concordantly, is the significant symbol of the rupture of the secular and modern Turkish Republic

from the multi- ethnic and mutli- religious Ottoman millet system. On the other hand, since the 1990's the seminal studies which brings to light the previously neglected subjects, hybrid structure and multiple faces of Turkish nationalism by revealing its different aspects, reflections and imaginations, and deal with it within the framework of competing nationalisms gave a new direction to the literature of Turkish nationalism. This academic endeavor, which focused on the hybrid and eclectic structure of Turkish nationalism, was followed by studies that focused on everyday life with empirical investigations. Thus, Turkish nationalism began to be considered as a "constructed" and "produced" consciousness and mindset rather than a phenomenon that developed as a natural result of modernization and secularization.

However, the vast majority of scholars of Turkish nationalism mostly confined their object of analysis to top-down institutions and structures. Thereby, in the literature on Turkish nationalism academic studies concerned with ordinary people's perception of Turkishness and its discursive and practical construction in their everyday life are still quite limited. Although there are eye-opening studies which deal with Turkishness at the level of everyday experience, they often traces the reflections of narratives of nationhood imposed from above, the different narrations of nationhood of contending national projects. Indeed, at the level of political visions, there are competing interpretations of Turkish nationhood; but just focusing on these different Turkish nationalisms also means to constrain the construction of nationhood to the realm of political elites. Aydın, in his article, criticizes this prevalent way of handling nationalism in Turkey (Aydın, 2015). In this context, he points out that purely historical, purely political or purely historical- political reading of nationalism is necessary but insufficient effort to understand its historical trend in Turkey and its function. According to him, addressing the practices and discourses of rulers and elites is not adequate to reveal the pervasion of nationalism into everyday life; at the same time, it is necessary to embrace nationalism as a political form which is reconstructed through via their subjectivity by those who are regarded as directly subjected to the authority and its ideology.

The emphasis on the need to study the subjective construction of nationhood through individual sense making processes and in many manifold ways marks an important

agenda of research neglected by traditional studies of Turkish nationalism, which are confined to official and institutional domains. Adopting such an approach necessitates focusing on the personal narratives, subjectivity of ordinary people and the diverse, everyday ways in which these people subjectively construct their own nationhood. From this viewpoint, in this thesis, different sense making processes and ways in which individual construction of nationhood occurs are analyzed in the framework of three dimensions: self/other, temporal, and cultural. In each dimension, individuals have divergent claims about their nationhood. However, it is possible to speak of some common strategies in their subjective construction. Being time and event sensitive, adopting eventful analysis perspective as stated by the scholars of everyday nationhood, seeing “everyday” “as a domain of inquiry” and using the term “a bit more ‘everyday’” (Fox and Jones, 2013: 395, Fox and Miller- Idriss, 2008a: 557), this thesis aim to demonstrate at which moments and instance and in which ways and with which perceptions and strategies nationhood is experienced by ordinary people. One of the main goals of this thesis is explore, not just only all contending national projects’ different narrations of nationhood, but also multipartite structure of the narration of nationhood experienced at individual level. Such a viewpoint allows us not only regarding the subjective construction of nationhood in everyday life, but also detecting some communalities in diverse imaginations of national subject in some contexts.

CHAPTER 4

EVERYDAY REPRODUCTION OF “WE”: WHO ARE WE?

This thesis argues that the key actor of the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in everyday life is ordinary people rather than contested and competing narratives of Turkishness imposed by macro structures such as state and political institutions. In accordance with this proposition, it aims to examine the everyday dimension of nationalism by focusing on those who define themselves as “Turkish” in a small and ordinary central Anatolian city, Nevşehir. In the previous chapter, attention was drawn to the prevalence of studies dealing with Turkish nationalism from a top- down perspective in the literature, and the limitation of studies examining the construction of Turkishness from below was emphasized. In this and subsequent chapters, in the light of the field study conducted between March 2017 and November 2018 in Nevşehir, a small- sized nationalist- conservative central Anatolian city, following the traces of everyday nationalism thematically, the dynamic role of the ordinary nationalized subjects will be focused on.

Islam, ethnicity and constitutionalism have been the founding elements of Turkish nationalism since the early years of the Republic; and “those constitutive elements of the Turkish nation, and their significance in politics have varied over time, depending on who was in power and which one of those elements served their interests” (Kuzu, 2019: 77). Although different narratives of Turkish nationalism agree on the superiority of Turkishness, they have always been in conflict and competition with each other about which element is decisive in the definition of the Turkish nation. Therefore, Turkish politics has historically been a site of struggle for ethnic nationalism, secular nationalism, and religious nationalism. Military interventions that legitimize themselves through the mission and purpose of protecting the secular structure of the Republic against the threat of political Islam

led to the emergence of the victimization narrative of political Islamists, the consolidation and the radicalization the movement in a long term. As a matter of fact, political Islamist parties, which were previously included as “fringe parties” in Turkish politics, have become important actors of politics with their electoral successes and the broad social base they have reached since the 1990s (Çınar, 2019). Although the AKP, which split from the National outlook movement, the representative of Islamist politics in Turkey, emerged as a liberal, conservative political actor who distanced himself from political Islam in the early 2000s and challenged the institutions of Kemalist nationalism, in the second decade of its rule, it dominated Turkish politics with its authoritarian rhetoric, combining political Islam and ethnic nationalism (Akgönül and Oran, 2019; Kuzu, 2019; Fabbe and Balıkcıoğlu, 2019). In this period, the rising Islamic and nationalist conservatism in the political atmosphere of the country surrounded the social texture and everyday life in Nevşehir, which has historically already had a conservative and nationalist political structure, like many other central Anatolian cities.

Nevşehir is a nationalist and conservative central Anatolian city in terms of its socio-cultural and political climate where political actors representing political Islam have been strongly supported by the voters of the city since the 1950s, and where the AKP has been victorious in all local elections since its establishment and has always had more support than it has obtained in Turkey (Table 1.2). In the 1957 elections, in which Nevşehir participated for the first time as a province, the liberal, nationalist and conservative DP, which became the center of the religious reaction against the secular and centralist Jacobin practices of the single-party period, received forty eight percent of the electorate in Nevşehir (Table 1.2). Considering six percent of the votes received by the ethnic nationalist right-wing party, the Republican Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Millet Partisi) CMP, in the same elections, the share of votes reached by the nationalist and conservative right parties in Nevşehir is fifty four percent (Table 1.2). When we analyze the electoral history of the city, this voting share has never fallen below sixty two percent since then, it has showed a continuous upward trend especially from the beginning of the 1990s, and consolidated in the 2000s (Table 1.2).

On the one hand, Hacıbektaş with its Alevi population and its left-leaning voting behavior, Avanos, known as the “bastion of the left” in the 1970s, and Ürgüp, which has a political stance outside the circle of conservatism with its touristic texture, are the districts that distinguish Nevşehir from other central Anatolian cities and transform it into a place where different conflicting nationalism projects are lived and reproduced together. In this sense, it is possible to follow the traces of both the pious nationalism of political Islam, the Ottomanist nationalism of the AKP, and the Kemalist nationalism of the CHP in this small city. The discourse of nationalism offers a common framework in which all dwellers of the city with different political visions meet. In this respect, it can be argued that Nevşehir is a small prototype of Turkey in the 2000s, when nationalism had a hegemonic presence in Turkish politics.

On the other hand, In Turkey, political Islamist parties, from the National Opinion parties of the 1970s to today's "religious conservative" AKP, have received political support from similar constituencies (Çınar, 2019). Despite many dynamics of social change such as migration and urbanization, “the religiously conservative provinces in Central and Eastern Anatolia and the Black Sea regions still constitute the strongest popular base for Islamist parties” (Çınar, 2019). Nevşehir is one of these provinces, despite the districts of Hacıbektaş and Avanos, where secular nationalism is relatively strong. The people of Nevşehir demonstrate that they have embraced the AKP's Islamist and nationalist rhetoric to a large extent, especially with its very strong electoral support for the party in the second half of the 2000s (Table 1.2). Since the November 2002 elections, the first general elections in which the AKP participated, all of the deputies representing the city in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, except for the June 2015 elections, are from the AKP (Table 1.2). This support of the city to the ruling party was appreciated at all levels, from the AKP's local administrators to its chairman.³⁴ It is not possible to consider the rising wave of conservatism, which is reflected both in the political behavior and social fabric of the

³⁴ "President Erdogan: “Nevşehir has always been the stronghold of the national will and the AK Party” <https://www.kizilirmakavanos.com/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-nevsehir-daime-milli-irade-ve-ak-parti-kalesi-oldu/> (26.07.2022), Hasan Ünver, the mayor of Nevşehir from the AKP at the time: “Nevşehir is one of the four cities in Turkey where the AK Party has achieved 100% success in all the elections it has participated in since 2002. In the political history of Nevşehir, there is no other political party that can show this success and have 3 deputies in a row.”, <https://www.kizilirmakavanos.com/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-nevsehir-daime-milli-irade-ve-ak-parti-kalesi-oldu/> (26.07.2022)

city, independently of the transformation of Islam and nationalism into a hegemonic discourse in Turkish politics in this period.

In this context, this chapter, drawing on in-depth interviews, participant observations and group discussions conducted between March 2017 and November 2018 in Nevşehir, attempts to understand in the 2000s, when an Islamic nationalism has dominated Turkish politics as a hegemonic and structural tenet how and with what references the boundaries of Turkishness were drawn by everyday actors in Nevşehir, a conservative and nationalist central Anatolian city where this Islamist and nationalist political discourse was widely accepted. In this sense, this chapter of the thesis, based on the conversations of the participants which include the implicit or explicit answer to the question of “Who is a Turk?” aims, inspired by White, to approach nationhood as forms of knowledge embedded in discourses (White, 2014: 45). In this direction, it interrogates how nation is talked about, experienced and given meaning in manifold ways by the participants who embody it. How and in which ways the participants, who define themselves as Turkish, make sense of and experience the Turkish nation and their Turkishness at everyday level in the context of national self/other dimension? What are the common and contrasting patterns of Turkishness in this context?

During the fieldwork, I aimed to attain different perspectives and contrasting narratives, as far as possible, by interviewing with people from all corners of the political spectrum. Those who participate in political parties were involved in the research to observe how and to what extent their party belongings play a role in their subjective construction of nationhood. In other words, the aim of this choice was to interrogate how the supporters of the different political parties, which emphasize the different elements in the imagination of Turkishness, develop an attitude towards the discourse of nationalism spreading from above. Accordingly, this decision allowed me to reveal the points of challenge and confirmation in their understanding of Turkishness. From this perspective, the local supporters of three major parties which hold substantial influence in Turkey were included in the research process. These are the AKP, the MHP and the CHP. Even though it is represented by 37 deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly today, the İYİ Party (Good Party), which was still

in the establishment phase and had not completed its institutionalization in Nevşehir at the time of the fieldwork, was not included in the thesis. Within the scope of this research, fourteen female and sixteen male participants were interviewed. Fourteen of these interviewees are the AKP voters; eight of them are MHP voters; and eight of them are CHP voters.

When the answers given to the question "Who are we" are classified during the interviews, it is seen that the construction of Turkishness was shaped around the themes of ethnic, Islamist, Ottomanist and secular nationalism understandings. Therefore, these themes constitute the sub-headings of this chapter. The findings demonstrate that in general, while the understanding of Islamic nationalism is adopted by AKP voters, ethnic nationalism is embraced by MHP voters, Ottomanist nationalism is reproduced by supporters of both parties, and secular nationalism is reconstructed by CHP voters. However, the thesis also reveals that contrary to expectations, it does not seem possible to make sharp distinction with categorical statements such as "AKP voters are Islamist or Ottomanist nationalists", "MHP voters are ethnic nationalists", or "CHP voters are secular nationalists". As a matter of fact, the perceptions of Turkishness that are fed by the different references mentioned can be found in the discourses of the participants from three different political positions. More specifically, both AKP voters and MHP voters agree on a Turkishness defined by all ethnic, Islamist and Ottomanist references. Additionally, what brings MHP and CHP voters together is a perception of Turkishness shaped on the basis of ethnic references. The secular Turkishness discourse, which is actually owned and produced by CHP voters, can sometimes, be embraced by some AKP and MHP voters. It should be noted here that the discourse of nationalism based on ethnicization, which dominates the political atmosphere of the period we live in, is clearly reflected in the statements of the interviewees from different political positions. In other words, an ethnicized understanding of Turkishness is the intersection point where participants from all three political positions meet. In addition, it also should be underlined that the definitions of Turkishness shaped by the understanding of Islamist and Ottoman nationalism are reproduced by a remarkably large proportion of the thanks to the discursive alliance of AKP and

MHP voters. Then, it is necessary to ask the question, what is it that creates this complex picture?

Nationalist rhetoric emphasizes the citizenship bond or religious components based on ethnic origin, common culture, will to live together in varying proportions according to time, place and context. What makes Turkish nationalism a “coin of the realm” in almost every different ideological strata of the society comes from the fact that it can easily meet the different sensitivities, as this point of gravity can easily change. During the interviews, it was observed that nationhood, which was created as a social structure, emerged as an ideal shaped by each individual in her/ his world of meaning according to his own sensitivities and ideological stance. In the light of the empirical data obtained for this thesis, it should be noted that as in the official ideological interpretation of Turkishness, in the discourses and experiences of nationalized subjects in everyday life, both ethnic and civic conceptualization of nationhood exist together; and their perception of Turkishness are fed by both references in a way that changes according to the place and time. Thereby, it is possible to say that in everyday construction of Turkishness, the perception of nationhood that is oscillated between emphasis on ethnicity, race and blood ties, and emphasis on citizenship and civic ties prevails.

Does ideology determine the fundamental variable in the individual's perception of nationhood, or vice versa? In other words, is a conservative rightist with religious sensitivities pointing to Islam a constituent element of nationhood because of this ideological position, or is he interested in conservative right ideologies because he writes Islam at the top of the list of components that make up nationhood? Findings from the interviews reveal that there is no one-way relationship between the individual's ideology and nationhood perception. On the contrary, there is a mutual relationship, both of which affect each other to a certain extent. Everyday nationalism approach underlines that the individual should be considered as an actor who is the main target and carrier of the nationalist rhetoric circulated by the state, media, parties and elites, rather than as a passive receptor, as an actor who interprets, transforms and continuously reproduces nationalist discourse. Here, what this approach points to is this reciprocal relationship.

The answers to the question “what do you think is what makes us Turkish” and the dialogues along the same line show that the prerequisite of being Turkish differs from one individual to another. Besides, this differentiation, let alone weakening the ideal of nationhood, on the contrary, is the main issue that makes it so strong and immanent in everyday life. Nationhood is an internalized, hegemonic belonging structure that can be reconstructed in the mind of subjects with their own world view and sensitivities, and whose existence is not open to questioning and enquiry.

Being the subject of different nationalist projects that give different answers to the question of what it means to be Turkish and be a member of this nation, that is, the individual, has the potential to blend and transform the focal points of different projects in the imagination of nationhood. Participants' opinions on who can be included in Turkishness constitute the fault lines of everyday Turkish nationalism. In this context, ethnic, religious, Ottomanist and civic understandings of nationhood appear as four different identification patterns. However, it is important to note that these identification patterns are not categories that are completely opposed to each other and separated by sharp borders. On the contrary, it should be underlined that it was witnessed that these patterns of identification are flexibly used frequently by the same individual in the construction process of everyday nationhood.

In this part of the thesis, focusing on the self/other dimension in the everyday construction of Turkishness I examine the meaning of being Turkish for the participants from different professions, aged 25 to 64, with whom I conducted a semi-structured in-depth interview within the scope of this thesis and investigate how they draw the boundaries of Turkishness. By the way of the possible dilemmas in these discourses, I trace the dynamic power of nationalized subjects for constructing her/him own perception of Turkishness, bringing together and synthesizing different narratives of Turkishness. Additionally, this chapter uncovers how the distinctive features which are considered as the basis for Turkishness emerge in the participants' discourses. Being aware of the contested meanings of being Turkish and its manifold ways of being perceived and experienced, revealing the enormous diversity among the meanings attributed to Turkishness by the participants and the ways in which it is

experienced refrains us from making mistake of treating the Turkishness as an unproblematic category. At this point, ethnic, Islamist, Ottomanist and Kemalist references frequently used in defining Turkishness become apparent; and refer to the differentiation in the perception of the participants about Turkishness.

4.1. Ethnic References

Brubaker, addressing to the primordialist/ modernist debate, say that “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). In fact, although it is no longer a popular claim that nations and nationhood are given, natural, innate and eternal realities in the academic world, it is unlikely to say that the same is true neither in Turkish politics shaped from above by elites nor in everyday imagination of nationhood by ordinary people.

An imagination of Turkishness shaped on ethnic references is one of the determining elements of Turkish politics in the last period of authoritarianism of the AKP government, which developed a hegemonic language based on the ethnicization of Turkish nationalism along with political Islam (Kuzu, 2019: 75). The alliance that the AKP has maintained since 2018 with the MHP, which has appeared in Turkish politics since the 1960s as a stronghold of ethnic Turkish nationalism, is the dominant indicator of this ethnic nationalist discursive hegemony. Interviews with the participants when the seeds of this alliance started to be planted show that ethnic nationalism is embraced and reproduced to a large extent by both the MHP supporters and the AKP supporters. Moreover, it seems that an understanding of Turkishness, whose boundaries are drawn on ethnic grounds, will continue to be a major factor both at the social base and at the institutional level of Turkish politics together with political Islam in the near future, as it is today (Kuzu, 2019).

According to many interviewees, Turkishness, such as other essentialist singular categories such as race, sex or gender, should be defined and explained by the way of an “essence” given by nature, and corresponds to a real and separately identifiable human groups. In other words, they clearly constitute a direct and unproblematic

relation between nationhood and innate racial essence in their nationalist imaginations. In this view, the world is envisioned as a world of nations composed of different, real and identifiable nations. This relationship with ethnic essence while defining Turkishness becomes evident in the references given to noble Turkish blood, common origins, Seljuk past, Turkish culture and the idea of Turkish-Islamic synthesis that brings together Islamic elements and authentic Turkish identity. On the other hand, the fear of being perceived as "racist" by the participants and therefore the need to emphasize that they are "definitely not racist" in their narratives comes to light from time to time, but this does not remove the traces of the racist tone in their perception of ethnic Turkishness. In this sense, before moving on to how Turkishness is built on the basis of an ethnic essence in the narratives of the participants through the emphasis on these discursive elements, it would be meaningful to present a few examples of how this perception of Turkishness was implicitly expressed despite the hesitations of some participants to be "perceived as racist".

What makes us Turkish is that from birth, they are reflections to you in a race sense, reflections by blood. I am not racist, but... This is important... If there is nothing in the sense of race, differentiation, it naturally makes you robot. It makes you feel, touch, that's the first. Secondly, it makes you feel because you grew up with that culture from the day you were born in the cultural sense. Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

It is possible to observe that racial reflections in the context of the meaning of Turkishness in the narrative of Ahmet, a teacher, local union representative and a MHP voter, who insisted that he was not a racist and did not believe in the existence of a pure Turkish race. Although he tries to put his nationalist position on a cultural basis, with the fear of being understood as racist, in the last instance, racial essence attributed to Turkishness by the participant is revealed with his emphasis of "blood tie". In fact, the implicit ethnic understanding of Turkishness in the imagination of nationhood in many participants whose statements begin with "I am not racist, but..." become explicit in various contexts.

What makes us Turkish, we are Turkish by birth, I don't know, our father is probably Turkish... Our blood, of course, of course it is, our blood... Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Similarly, for Gökhan, the fear of being labeled as “racist” causes that he states frequently that he has a nationalist vision which is never racist. Particularly during the interviews, besides nationally framed questions which often bring along nationally framed answers, expressions emphasizing the ethnic basis of Turkishness, as above, were captured. These expressions provide us a great opportunity for exploring racist tone in the discursive construction process of nationhood.

Q: What do you think makes us Turkish?

P: What makes us Turkish is... Difficult questions... I mean, because I've never met before... Well, coming from our genes... Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

The contradiction between the participants' effort to define Turkishness on a more civil basis due to their hesitation of being stigmatized as "racist" and their nationalist mindset that embody Turkishness around an ethnic core are inevitably reflected in their narratives. For example, although Perihan discursively constructs Turkishness with her emphasis on genetic characteristics, she claims that has a more civic understanding of nationality in the context of patriotism. The reason for this contradiction in the statements of the participant is the fear of being perceived as racist. Although she claims to have an inclusive understanding of Turkishness that is not interested in origins, Turkishness, which is encoded as a genetic qualification in Perihan's mindset, inevitably infiltrates her discourse in this way.

Q: What do you think makes us Turkish?

A: What makes us Turkish is... Difficult questions... I mean, because I've never met before... Well, coming from our genes... Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

Q: Do you think there is something called Turkish blood?

A: Sure, I believe that Turkishness is in our chemistry. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

Race is not very important to me, we have come from different places. Anyone who lives anywhere in the world and wants to do things for people is Turkish. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

The same paradox might be observed in the expressions of Ayşe. All three quotations above present a section from Ayşe's narratives. The reference point that draws the boundaries of Turkishness in the first two and the third one are quite different from each other. As a participant who often feels the need to emphasize the distance she puts between herself and racism, Ayşe's understanding of Turkishness shaped on the

basis of race and blood finds its expression in one way or another in her narrative. Although she believes that what makes her Turkish is her genes and blood, Ayşe is quite reluctant to openly use the word "race" and to define Turkishness by clearly associating it with race. However, just like Ayşe, as we can see in the quotations above, it is possible to see the traces of the imaginations of Turkishness that carry racist overtones, that is, define Turkishness on the basis of an ethnic essence and believe in its superiority, in the narratives of many participants without explicitly referring to race. Moreover, this discursive reconstruction and reproduction of Turkishness in this way is a striking commonality in the narratives of different participants who support different political parties with different nationalism projects. Regardless of which political vision they support, being perceived as "racist" is a reservation that prevents participants from clearly defining their Turkishness on the basis of race.

4.1.1. "Noble Blood in Our Vessels..."

For the participants who construct their Turkishness on an ethnic basis, nationality corresponds to an innate biological essence; and the most important thing that ensures the transmission of this essence from generation to generation is blood ties. For this reason, the emphasis on "Turkish blood" in the narratives is one of the most striking discursive forms of the ethnicist construction of Turkishness. Furthermore, an understanding of nationalism which clearly refers to an ethnic root becomes concrete with the famous citation from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's speech to youth: "the strength you need is present in the noble blood that flows in your veins". In fact, "noble blood in our vessels..." a stereotyped phrase, is often applied as a reference point for the definition of Turkishness in the narratives of some interviewees.

What makes us Turkish is the noble blood in our veins... Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

The emphasis on "noble blood" in Nazlı's expression clearly sets an example for the construction and reproduction of Turkishness on the basis of an ethnic essence. According to her, Turkishness is an innate characteristic, but also a sign of nobility and superiority. Being born as a Turk, for her, is privilege; and Turkish blood is both

symbolic and tangible proof of having this privilege. In this sense, in her narrative, blood has a symbolic significance in defining who is a Turk or not.

Our noble blood makes us Turkish. Our nativity... This is a blessing that our God has given us, if we appreciate it. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

In a similar way, Serap also describes her nationhood as a natural consequence of having “noble Turkish blood”. In her perception, Turkishness, as a blood-based ethnic national identity is a blessing; being born as a Turk is a sign of superiority, a privilege, a gift and a reason to be grateful. As described in the above quotes, according to some interviewers, the main source of Turkishness has been ethnicity, blood, their natural, inborn chemistry. In both Nazlı’s and Serap’s expressions with the reference to “noble Turkish blood” Turkishness is reproduced on the basis of an essentialist understanding.

4.1.2. Coming from the Same Roots

The emphasis on coming from “the same roots” appears as another form of ethnic understanding of Turkishness. The personal narratives of the participants demonstrated that particularly, in the context of the negotiation process of Turkey’s accession to the European Union and alternatives to the European Union and the discussions on foreign-born soccer players in the Turkish national team many interviewees tend to enact their ethnicist perspective based on common roots.

The emphasis on common origin, which has become visible in the context of the conversations on the ideas of unity that can be an alternative to the European Union, appears as a reflection of the perception of Turkishness with ethnic references that extends beyond Turkey.

P: Well, obviously, I am leaner towards Turkic republics about alternative unions...

Q: Why?

P: I mean, maybe coming from the same culture, maybe coming from the same geography. Come from the same roots...Suna, 41, attorney, AKP

Although Suna, as a lawyer, attaches great importance to and affirms the structural and reformist transformation experienced in Turkey during the European Union

membership process, she believes that a union alternative that will bring the Turkic republics and Turkey together would be more productive. Suna bases this opinion on the fact that the states that will be members of this union have a common origin and come from the same culture. The emphasis on common origin in her expressions reveals the discursive reflection of the ethnic essence reference on which his definition of Turkishness is based.

It is not an Islamic union but can be with Turkic republics, an Azerbaijan, a Turkestan, because they are Turks. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

Just like Suna, Leyla proposes a union to be established together with the Turkic republics in the context of unions that can be an alternative to the European Union, while at the same time describing who is Turkish and who is not, through common roots emphasizing ethnic origin.

An alternative unity exists in our ideal, a Turkish unity can be established. We should work on that Turkish unity, and we should be its, this is our role. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Likewise, Ahmet also wants Turkey to cooperate with the Turkic republics under the umbrella of a union, since they come from the same origin. According to him, this ideal union would be a Turkish union consisting of states with common roots. Therefore, in Ahmet's narrative, being Turkish is conditional on having a common origin; and in this sense, the emphasis on "root" reflects an ethnicist understanding of nationhood.

Another contextual deployment of Turkishness with ethnic references becomes visible in the attitudes of the interviewers towards the foreign-born soccer player who joined the Turkish national team obtaining Turkish citizenship. For example, even the participant, Ahmet, who argues that he does not believe in the existence of a racial Turkishness, in the context of these soccer players in the national team, says:

I do not approve of this. He became a citizen of another country, passed our citizenship, I disapprove of it. In other words, the national team, on its name, means a team of citizens of that country. Definitely, I think this is totally wrong! Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

In Ahmet's narrative, it is seen that an understanding of nationhood based on common ancestry emerged in the context of his criticism against the foreign-born footballers in the Turkish national team. According to him, the existence of players who gained Turkish nationality through citizenship in the Turkish national team, which should consist of Turkish players, is strangeness; because, for him, Turkishness is not just an acquired citizenship status. Rather, it is an innate characteristic.

There are many talented young people in Turkey, they play them. Let them raise them. Why the stranger... Frankly, I don't want them to play in the national team... I wish all of them were native Turkish children, original Turkish children. Dürdane, 58, retired bank employee, AKP

In the National Team, a German, a British playing ethically does not look nice or not at all nice, so I think if we say a National Team Turks should play. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

In a similar vein, for also Dürdane and Ümit, Turkishness is not a status or belonging that is acquired by citizenship. Having the same ethnic background and being from the same origin is the prerequisite for the Turkish nation imagined by them, thus Turkishness. As can be seen in their narratives, in the context of the Turkish national soccer team, with the emphasis on "native and original youth of Turks" essentialist content of nationhood in the meaning worlds of the participants once again appears.

On the other hand, although many interviewers think that the foreign-born soccer player who joined the Turkish national team obtaining Turkish citizenship is a "trick", in their opinions, this "trick" is inevitable in order not to damage the national spirit; because the loss of the national team harms the national spirit.

Actually, I do not approve this situation, so it is a national team ... But they all did, Turkey also had to adapt to this situation. So you look at the French national team, there is no French in it, they have always gathered from Africa and brought it. In the same way you're looking at the others ... Thus, if Turkish national team loses every match, and if it hurts our national soul, then you must respond to their trick with a trick. I think we should get those people into our nationality by doing a trick in some way. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

Ethnic understanding of nationhood in the above quote becomes evident in the context of the subject of the Africans in the French national team. Similarly, another interviewer gives the same example on the same subject:

When you look at a French football team, maybe 10 of the 11 players are black footballers. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

In the expressions of both Bilal and Rıfat, we can pursue the traces of an understanding of nationhood based on race and ethnicity in the context of national sportive teams. Whereas, both interviewees stated that they would not be disturbed by foreign-born soccer player to join in the Turkish national team in order to illustrate that their non-racist understanding of nationhood. However, on the contrary, with the example of the black soccer players in the French national team, their implicit ethnic understanding of the nation turns into explicit.

4.1.3. Reference to Seljuk Heritage

In the discourse of the participants who attribute an ethnic meaning to nationhood, reference to the history of Seljuk Turks constitutes one of the salient points of the issue. Indeed, in their expressions, it is possible to observe that there is an implicit or explicit comparison between the Ottoman heritage and the Seljukian heritage about which is more and pure “Turkish”.

Q: Do you feel yourself as an Ottoman grandson?

P: I feel as a Turkish grandson. The Ottoman Empire is not a race, it is the name of an Ottoman state. I describe myself as Turkish. Did Ottoman represent Turkishness? Of course... So it happens indirectly, but Seljuk is more clear. The Seljuk State is more Turkish, I think. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

As can be seen in Gökhan's statements, the Seljuk past serves as a reference point in the reproduction of an understanding of Turkishness based on ethnicity, as a symbol of an ethnically more unmixed and purer Turkishness. In this context, the Turkishness imagined and reproduced by him is to be a part of an ethnically homogenous whole.

Q: Do you feel as an Ottoman grandson? Do you establish such a cultural bond?

P: None. I feel like I am Turkish. Before that there are Seljuks, most of the works in Anatolia are Seljuks. It was not a Seljuk empire, if it was an empire, Turks were more dominant. The Ottoman Empire is a continuation of the Seljuks. However, there were many elements in the Ottoman Empire besides Turkish ones. There was Europe, the Balkans... Therefore, the Ottoman Empire behaved more imperial than Seljuk. In other words, there is no significant difference between the Christian citizen and the Muslim citizen for the Ottoman Empire. However, the Seljuk is not. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

Similarly, for also Bülent, the Seljuk past symbolizes the golden age of Turkishness. According to him, the relatively homogeneous ethnic structure in this period, when the Seljuk State, which Bülent describes as "more Turkish", ruled, describes the social structure idealized by him. In his narrative the fact that the social and demographic structures of two different periods, namely the Ottoman and the Seljuk, are subjected to such an ethnic comparison and that the latter is idealized and romanticized because it is less cosmopolitan reveals the essentialist and ethnicist meaning that the participant ascribes to Turkishness.

What about the Ottoman grandson? When you read the lives of the Sultan and their mothers, you look at them, in disgrace. Already we've lived together with all people, with Russians, Armenians....So I do not believe that you are a pure blood Turk in Ottoman. Mixed ... They were not like Seljukians...Seljuks are real Turks, in my opinion. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

The romanticization of the Seljuk period as a more Turkish period due to its ethnically homogeneous social and demographic structure, and the emphasis on the dominant position of the Turks as an ethnic group in this period, is a discursive pattern that paves the way for the reproduction of Turkishness as an ethnic belonging in also Nuriye's narrative. All in all, according to the participants who referred to the history of Seljuk as a reference point of identification because they were less cosmopolitan, purer and more Turkish than the Ottoman, the content of Turkishness become meaningful with the imagination of a unmixed and authentic ethnic group. Concordantly, multi-ethnic structure of Ottoman Empire reveals the fear of miscegenation in their understanding of nationalism. This is also the case for Bülent who insisted that he did not perceive Turkishness as an issue of race. In the last instance the essential reason behind that he defines Seljuks as more "Turkish" than the Ottomans is the ethnic meaning he attributed to nationhood.

4.1.4. Emphasis on Authentic Turkish Culture

In the narratives of some participants, the emphasis on Turkish culture appears as an important reference point that contributes to the construction of ethnic form of nationhood. The culture which is indicated here is an authentic and pure culture that is imagined to be shaped in the framework of an ethnic core and genetically transmitted from generation to generation.

What makes us Turkish is our born with this culture, that we are in these lands, in this same land, that we are living that culture in these lands. And, perhaps, genetically, we have come from within that culture. Suna, 41, attorney, AKP

According to Suna, culture is an innate part of human being that is destined, lived and even genetically transmitted. In this sense, it corresponds to a given, unchanging and inherited essence. Expressing such a cultural core as the basic element of Turkishness enables the reproduction of Turkishness on the basis of ethnicity.

So the race is not very important to me we have come from different places, but I care very much Turkism. I love that pure culture stemming from being Turkish.... This moral character and culture are in our genetic codes, I believe. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

In a similar vein, Ayşe also describe culture a sign of Turkishness inscribed in genetic codes. According to the participant, who claims that a person was born with a pure and authentic Turkish culture as an innate characteristic, it is this culture that makes a person Turkish. Therefore, in Ayşe's narrative, just like Turkish culture, Turkishness is the expression of a biological, fixed and innate essence.

The participants, ignoring the dynamic and complex structure of what we call culture, give Turkish culture a more stable, essentialist and purer meaning than any other tradition, including Islam. This culture is the main element of a discourse of nationalism that is relatively free of Islamic references. In this direction, this “pure and inborn” culture should be preserved originally just like a pure breed that must be protected from the danger of crossbreeding. If the dominant element in the imagination of Turkishness is an ethnic self, as in the above quotes, referring to the essential Turkish traditions and customs, and even secularism, rather than the Islamic

tradition, reflects one of the expression patterns of the understanding of ethnic nationalism.

Religious and national are different things. National value is not Islam; but nationality is separate. It is all kinds of customs, traditions, experiences and traditions that come from our origin and which we believe represent us. Özdemir, 57, retired teacher, CHP

In the last analysis, the nationalist discourse, which is built by emphasizing the Turkish culture, emerges as a method adopted by many interviewers who are uneasy about being perceived as racist. Those who cannot talk about the purity of race, with the fear of labeled as racist, prefer to talk about the purity of culture; those, who cannot defend the importance of race, emphasize the significance of this pure culture; and those who cannot talk about the existence of race refer to the transmission of this culture through “genetic codes”. Thereby, the belief in the existence of an authentic Turkish culture transmitted by genes constitutes one of the important reference points of racist interpretation of Turkishness.

4.1.5. “As Muslim as Mount Hira and as Turkish as the Tanrı Mountains”

Turkish-Islamic synthesis which stresses on both Islamic component and “authentic” Turkish identity is another reference point of ethnic understanding of Turkishness. The Islam referenced in the perception of Turkishness, built on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, is the Islam of the Turks, conceived as an ethnically homogeneous group. In this sense, in the narratives quoted below, it is seen that ethnic Turkishness is grasped in a way that prioritizes Islam. Therefore, the emphasis on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis is handled as a discursive motif that contributes to the reproduction of Turkishness as an ethnic category.

Now our case is the Turkish-Islamic case. Now, uh... What makes us Turks is, uh, the faith within us, the courage that the faith within us has given to our Turkishness. So, Başbuğ has a saying, he says, we are Islam, we are Turkish, we are slaves... In other words, as already known in the gray wolf symbolizing Turkishness, our index finger represents Islam, and our pinky finger represents Turkishness. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

In Ümit’s narrative, Islam is expressed as an important component of Turkishness. Here, Islam is described as an unchangeable cornerstone of Turkish culture that is

given, pure and handed down from generation to generation, emphasizing the ethnic essence, as discussed earlier.

Our national values have become traditional with both Turkishness and Islam. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

What makes us Turkish, good question, I do not know. But Alhamdulillah I am a Turk- Muslim. This is important for me. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

For also Gökhan and Ercan, Turkishness has a meaning that includes both Islam and ethnic origin. According to them, being born as a Muslim Turk is a reason for gratitude.

Turkey is our homeland, first. It is our homeland where people, the Muslim world, the Turkish-Islamic world can live, the boundaries are certain, previously cleared, drawn, homeland is our land... I am seriously reactive towards those who have their eyes on these land. I said that at the beginning. Homeland, nation, flag is important to us. İhsan, 45, graphic designer/ journalist, AKP

İhsan also imagines the Turkish homeland as the land where Muslim Turks live. In this sense he reproduces his Turkishness on the basis of Turkish- Islamic synthesis. In the world meanings of the participants who adopt the discourse of Turkish-Islamic synthesis, Islam emerges as an important component of Turkishness. The reference to national values includes references to both Turkishness in terms of race and Islam. These two components are generally intertwined. When the subjective constructions of people are deconstructed, this intertwining becomes more evident.

However, the point that should be noted here is that the meaning attributed to the Turkish race has priority over Islam. In other words, although blended with Islam, ethnic reference is much more evident; because the Islam which is mentioned here is Turkish Islam. What makes Islam acceptable is that it was kneaded with the authentic Turkish culture. In this viewpoint, what distinguishes us from other Muslim societies and make us superior is our Turkishness. Accordingly Turks' outstanding services and contributions to the Islam is another salient reference point in this interpretation of nationhood.

I am a person who has devoted himself to the Turkish-Islamic cause; but, I define myself as Turkish. Because Turkishness is fate, Islam is the choice. Today in Moldova in Chisinau, there are Gagauzes, Gökoğuzlar, they are Christians, orthodox. There are also the Karay Turks, who are Jewish or shaman Turks in the Sakhal Yakut region in Siberia. We cannot say that they are not Turkish. But Islam is our national religion. Cahit, 33, Lecturer, MHP

In Cahit's narrative, which clearly reveals his understanding of Turkish-Islamic synthesis, which puts ethnic Turkishness before Islam, attention is drawn to the existence of non-Muslim Turks as well. The participant considers Islam not as a *sine qua non* of Turkishness, but rather as a cultural motif. According to him, what actually makes Turkishness exist is the unity of origin. The groups that are not Muslims but have the innate characteristics attributed to Turkishness by Cahit, and that are believed to have the same ethnic origin and blood, are also included in the framework of Turkishness drawn by him.

I think, religion is purely a personal preference of people. Yes, I would like to raise my children as Muslims, they are already Muslims. That it is their inner spirituality, that there is no personal pronunciation of their own personal spirituality in any way.... But the priority is the Turkishness, as a Turk they must be proud. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

...(Arabs) are dirty once. Our Turks are very clean. I saw it when I went to Umrah myself. Our Turks are the best Muslims. Incredibly... One is putting his Koran under him! Do we have something like that? One is sleeping with Koran. There's no such thing! Yes, because you always have continuity in Mecca Medina may be standard, but there is no such thing. The most beautiful Muslims, the most beautiful worship there Turks. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

In a similar vein, for Leyla, although being a Muslim is an important component of Turkishness, it is not an identity element that is valued and prioritized on its own. The Islam she refers to while building his nationality is the Islam of the Turks. Therefore, according to her, Islam is a belief system that receives the care and value it deserves in the hands of Turks.

We are people who boast of our Turkishness, and being Muslim, that Turkishness contributes a lot to Islam throughout history, the things we live and know, and those who boast with them. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

We are as Muslim as Mount Hira and as Turkish as the Tanrı Mountains. But it should not be forgotten that the Turks had provided important services to Islam. It is important for the Turks; but it is more important for Islam. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

In the narratives of Gökhan and Ercan, who include Islam in the definitions of Turkishness, similar to Leyla and Cahit, the emphasis on the services of Turkishness to Islam comes to the fore. Although Islam is accepted as a cultural element of Turkishness, the role of Turks in bringing Islam to the position it has today is presented as a source of pride. Therefore, in this form of Turkishness, which they discursively reproduce with reference to the Turkish- Islamic synthesis, what is essentially glorified is not Islam but the Islam of the Turks.

In conclusion, ethnic interpretation of Turkishness, as can be seen in the above quotes, has been nourished from certain significant reference points. In this framework, the emphasis on ethnic essence, “noble blood in our vessel”, coming from the same roots, reference to Seljuk, on pre-Islamic Turkish culture and the synthesis between Turkishness and Islam by the contributions of Turks to Islam constitute the backbone in the subjective construction of ethnic nationalist discourse.

4.2. Islamic References

Koyuncu- Lorasdağı (2011) draws attention to the instrumental relationship between religion and nationalism in his work where he analyzes the symbiotic relationship between Turkish nationalism and Islam. According to the author, the form of nationalism put forward by political Islam in Turkey, with Rieffer's conceptualization (2003), should be defined as a pious nationalism in which religion is instrumentalized in favor of nationalism, rather than a religious nationalism in which religion and nationalism are intertwined. In this sense she argues that “Islam has always been an indispensable element of the discourse of nationalism in Turkey, although it has never completely subjugated nationalism, as happened in religious nationalism.” (Koyuncu- Lorasdağı, 2011: 154). This instrumentalization explains the oxymoronic relationship that Turkish nationalism has established with Islam since the early years of the republic (Kuzu, 2019: 72).

Islamist groups, which existed as a religious wing within conservative right-wing parties until the 1970s, emerged as independent actors in Turkish politics from these

years on, with the claims of an alternative form of Turkishness shaped by religious and cultural values against the ideal of secular Turkishness. With the Turkish-Islamic synthesis ideology “which has roots back to the tradition and intelligentsia of the Hearth of Intellectuals [AydınlarOcağı] founded in 1970 and assumes Turkishness and Islam as the two most essential and inseparable components of the national culture” (Çınar, 2019), and institutionalized by the 1980 military coup, political Islam settled on a relatively legitimate ground in Turkish politics. With the rise of political Islamist parties from the 1990's, Sunni Islam captured Turkish nationalism within the society step by step (Kuzu, 2019: 75). In the 2010s, in the political climate dominated by the political Islamist and nationalist discourses and policies of the AKP, which has ruled the country alone for twenty years, a narrative of Turkishness built on Islamic references has turned into a hegemonic discourse rather than an alternative claim to national identity. It should be noted that among the participants interviewed within the scope of the thesis, especially among the participants from AKP and MHP, a definition of Turkishness shaped around Islam is very popular and such an understanding of Turkishness is constantly reproduced by these participants.

In the subjective construction of Turkishness in many participants’ world of perception the relation between Turkish nationhood and Islam became more apparent and vital. In the course of the interviews, some reference points used frequently by them provided us rich and meaningful evidence for observing the particular importance attributed to this relationship. In the construction of Turkishness based on Islamic references, it is possible to encounter a wide range of the emphases on Islam, from the understanding that sees Islam above all other belongings, to the view that interprets it only as one of the important elements of Turkishness.

4.2.1. Priority of Islam

According to many participants, who place Islam in a determinant position in their imagination of nationhood, its significance stems from its inclusiveness and universality of faith, rather than ethnically being Turkish. In their definition of ideal Turk, Islam has an important place. Accordingly, the quotes presented below

demonstrate their insistence on the priority of Islam over their other belongings, particularly their ethnic roots.

Q: If you need to summarize your identity in one word, how would you summarize it?
P: Muslim. First of all, according to our religion, no racist concept is mentioned in the Holy Quran. However, by our own blood, we also come from a tribe that is highly suited to nationalism. So you should not deny it. However, in such an environment, I prioritize my religion and then my ethnic side. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

In Rıfat's narrative, his religious belief has a more important role in the construction of nationhood than his ethnic belonging. Although he claims that the boundaries of Turkishness are shaped around an innate, unchangeable and fixed essence, Rıfat states that what defines himself, his Turkishness, is Islam rather than this ethnic core. In fact, what forms the basis of his imagination of Turkishness is the belief that the nation corresponds to a primordial ethnic community. On the other hand, within the framework of his subjective preferences and dynamics, he reproduces his Turkishness through an image in which Islam is a more dominant tone.

I set up the AlperenOcakları (Alperen Hearths)³⁵ in Nevşehir. In fact, when we opened it, we did it with our brothers and sisters, with such effort. I mean, we painted it ourselves, we built it ourselves. The first picture I hung, of course, we hung the Turkish flag, but the first thing I hung after was a painting of my own design, MalcolmX. Now, every one of them said, a black person, what relevance, what's with us? However, a non-Muslim is not a Turk for me. Therefore, what I understand from Turkishness is Islam first. Islam prevails. I wouldn't have posted MalcolmX's picture, if it wasn't. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

In Ozan's narrative, who describes himself as a staunch Turkish nationalist, Islam is a prerequisite for Turkishness. According to him, even if not everyone who is a Muslim is Turkish, it is not possible for a non-Muslim to be described as Turkish. The motivation that encouraged the participant to hang the photo of MalcolmX on the wall of the AlperenOcakları is this belief that Islam is the primary element of Turkishness.

³⁵ The youth branch of a ultranationalist political party, BüyükBirlikPartisi (the Grand Unity Party) (BBP).

4.2.2. Islam- Turkish Synthesis

The priority attributed to Islam, reversing the discourse of Turkish-Islamic synthesis prioritizing ethnic origin, become concrete as an expression of a different understanding of the synthesis: Islam- Turkish synthesis. In this context, the statement of Ozan, the local director of the Foundation of Unity, known for its closeness to the AKP, provides us an opportunity to see this idea of alternative synthesis to Turkish- Islam synthesis more clearly.

Now, the people within the Unity Foundation have a national stance and a spiritual spirit. I mean, I can't say this or anything, because there are people with different ideas. But, even though we represent a cultural foundation culture, we have our own ideology, for example, if you notice the Union Foundation, it doesn't have much connection with the Nationalist Movement Party. But in my own direction, I have brothers from the Nationalist Movement Party or ÜlküOcakları and AlperenOcakları. Now, I cannot say anything political, but when I say unity foundation, I say, a community with religious beliefs, first Islam, then, let's say, a community that adopted the Islam-Turkish synthesis before the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

The participant, with the same sensibility, uses the example of the Turks living in Europe:

So I'm looking at this, are you Muslim or not. It's all about judgment. People who are Turks, Turks, but have changed their religion or belong to a different religion are highly respected in Europe. I've seen this before. But if you are a Turk and a Muslim, life in Europe is difficult for you... Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

According to Ozan, the identity that is subjected to discrimination, marginalization and injustice in Europe is the Muslim identity. However, the important thing is not to be a Turk, but to be a Muslim Turk; because, with his own words “religious sensitivities form the basis of national and spiritual feelings”.

For example, our Afghan brothers and sisters came yesterday with 100 students from the university (Here, he means the Afghan students as foreign students in NevşehirHacıBektaşVeli University). Their representatives came. That brother and his delegates came here, Afghans. They told me about the problems, and we were very very sorry... It doesn't matter if they are Turkish or not. If a Muslim comes to study in a Muslim country and suffers from these problems ... They are the charge of the Ummah to us; and we learned about the relationship between ansar (the helpers) and al-muhajir (the immigrants) from the prophet. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

This nationalist understanding, which puts Islam in front of ethnic origin, essentially refers to a pan-Islamist worldview. In this context, the matter of Syria refers to an important projections of pan-islamist nationalists ideas. For example, Ozan was benefited from the paid military service in Turkey, but at the same time participated the war in Syria as “a mujahideen”.

Our Muslim identity stands out, yes. Of course, it is disturbing, when we read from history, the history of the Seljuk Empire and the Ottoman Empire. These are our origin... Seljuk State took Palestinian territory. Of course, it took those territories with a jihad consciousness, that is, to expand their land and at the same time to reflect the beauty and peace of Islam to those lands. The main thing was the duty of communicating Islam. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

Another participant, Bilal, who emphasizes his Muslim identity in the imagination of nationhood points out the importance of the jihad consciousness in the history of “Turkish states” that he thinks that we are their successors. The participant, who argues that Turks have a historical responsibility to expand the lands where Islam reigns and to fight for this cause, in this way constructs a Turkishness as an inseparable whole with Islam. However, the dominant element of this whole, that is, a form of Turkishness based on the Islam-Turkish synthesis, is not ethnic origins, but Islam.

4.2.3. Instrumentalizing Turkishness for the Spread of Islam

For many participants, the role of Turks in the spread of Islam is a significant reference point to imagine the relationship between Islam and nationhood. In this viewpoint, what honors the Turkishness is its services to Islam.

At the time, some people placed the subject of Turkishness before Islam. However, what really comprises us is Islam. Ok, Turkishness is about us; but Islam is a situation that encompasses the whole world. Why is Turkishness so glorious? What gave him this glory is that it spread Islam, its warrior spirit. Islam is the first thing for us! Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

As shown in the above quote, here, it is a matter of the instrumentalization of Turkishness for the announcement and the spread of Islam. For Ozan, who expresses his Muslim identity as an integral part of his nationhood, what makes Turkishness

significant and unique is its role in the propagation of Islam. Similarly, the following expression of İhsan supports this mission imposed on Turkishness.

In the first place, I'm a Muslim. That's the first thing I can describe myself. Because today we know about the persecution of Muslims around the world. And we know that the true religion is Islam. And we continue to work for this from our point of view. How? We are obliged to spread Islam, we are obliged to explain, this way. As a Turk, this has a distinct pride in being a Turk. Our history, you know, world history is under the domination of the Turks, so if you look at...The task of Turks is to make Islam dominate. History shows us that. İhsan, 45, graphic designer/ journalist, AKP

This understanding leads us to the fact that Turkey is perceived as an integral part of the Islamic world as inevitable; and this perception becomes apparent in the emphasis on the necessity of an Islamic union, whose leadership is undertaken by Turkey. On the one hand, particularly, this contextual deployment of Turkishness with Islamic references become visible in the conversations about the negotiation process of Turkey's accession to the European Union and other possibilities of union which may be alternative to the European Union. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that a strong belief that Turkey should lead this desired Islamic union is quite common among the participants.

Instead of the European Union, I wish there was an Islamic union. This union should be a union that gathers the Islamic community and is led by us Turks. This is our essence, to lead Islamic society. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

In Furkan's narrative, an image of Turkishness that gathers the Islamic world under the same roof and leads it stands out. According to him, the representation of the Islamic world in the international arena is the most important mission of Turkishness. Therefore, Furkan reproduces Turkishness with an Islamic emphasis on this “divine” responsibility.

In other words, they do not want us, or no matter how much we try, they always despise us because of our Islamic identity, no matter how much I develop, no matter how much my technology develops, they will look at me as if Islam is not suitable for the European spirit. I need to create a thesis. Therefore, at that point, I would like to establish Islamic unity. It is happy to see an Islamic unity that has become more together, rather than a crushed, oppressed, Islamic geography. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

In a similar way, Ayşe, who claims that Turkey is ostracized and despised by European nations because of its Islamic identity, also thinks that it would be more appropriate for Turks to take part in a union of Islamic countries. In these narratives, Islam appears as a determinant of the position of Turkishness in the international arena. In addition, the role assigned to Turkey in a union of Islamic countries, which is desired to be established as an alternative to the European Union, is the mission of leadership. Therefore, the discourse that instrumentalizes Turkishness for the spread of Islam with its contributions to Muslim world from a historical point of view deems Turkey suitable for the leader of the Islamic world today.

4.2.4. Turkishness is Equal to Islam

In the course of some interviews, another pattern of thought which attracts attention is the tendency of certain participants to identify Turkishness with Islam. For many participants, Turkish means Muslim; and Turkishness is indistinguishable from Islam. Accordingly, non-Muslim Turks are defined as groups that have assimilated and lost their Turkishness.

P: First, I define myself as a Muslim Turk.

Q: So is the Turkish Muslim or the Muslim Turk?

P: Muslim Turk. Already saying “I am Muslim”, I think, is ridiculous in Turkey... When you say “I am Turkish” you already mean Muslim.... All the Turks are all Muslims. Erol, 64, dentist, AKP

In the above narrative of Erol, who interprets Turkishness in different contexts, from a racial-based understanding to a civic-based understanding, in various and different ways, Turkishness is described as a synonymous with Islam. The point that should be noted here is that Erol does not claim that all Muslims are Turkish, on the contrary, he argues that being Turkish means being Muslim. The nuance here is that the participant does not point to being Turkish as the basic condition of being Muslim, on the contrary, to be Muslim as the basic condition of Turkishness.

Turkish means Muslim, everywhere. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

Similarly, for Ozan, who constantly produces an Islamic-based understanding of Turkishness, In other words, in Ozan's mindset, the most significant thing that

determines the boundaries of Turkishness is Islam and there is no place for an identity like a non-Muslim Turk; because, by definition, Turkishness is equal to being Muslim.

We have some values that make us Turks and make us Muslims. When we look at these, we become a Turk, we become a Muslim. Well, we cannot distinguish Turkishness from Islam based on ideal Turkish traditions and customs. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

In Erhan's narrative, it is seen that Turkishness and Islam are concepts that are often used interchangeably. According to him, the values that are the essence of Turkishness and the values that are the essence of Islam are the same. This subjective definition of nationhood that equates Turkishness with being Muslim does not deny the importance it attributes to ethnicity, but argues that this alone does not make any sense.

In addition to these, it is necessary to note that this attitude becomes particularly evident in the context of Islamophobia and criticism of Islam. It is possible to say that the participants who argue that spreading Islamophobia in Europe directly targets the Turks perceive Turkishness and Islam as equivalent categories. As a matter of fact, many participants chose to give answers based on anti-Islamism to the questions shaped around anti-Turkishness, as shown in the following quote.

Q: How do you evaluate the discourses that you think are anti-Turkishness or the prejudices?

P: Well, in such cases we are. So in the end we are individuals who live in an 80 thousand square kilometers. In other words, we have values here. Here, both the pronunciations made about Islam, the games played on Islam, the management of perception, reconciliation with terror, for a time they did it about Turks, Turks. So I think it's a perception operation against us. Today there is an act of terrorism in Britain, we are waiting immediately and we think that they will reconcile it with Islam. I think it's just a game of external powers. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

Erhan's understanding of nationhood, which is shaped on the argument that being Turkish requires being a Muslim as a matter of course, also emerges in his expressions in which he explains actions and discourses that he interprets as anti-Turkishness with anti-Islamism. According to him, anti-Turkish and anti-Islamism are equivalent to each other.

4.2.5. Islam as a Significant Component of Turkishness

One of the salient patterns in the subjective construction of nationhood with Islamic references is the perception of Islam as a significant component of Turkishness. In the meaning world of many participants, Muslim culture and Islamic values are presented as an integral part of Turkishness.

Alhamdulillah we are all Muslims, we all open our book, read, we make our prayer. But, there are some people in this country, and we are surviving by their prayers, those grandparents' prayers. (He knocks on the table to strengthen the emphasis). I don't know how to thank them enough. I wish that God may increase those prayers. I think that our greatest national value is this religious spirit of our people. That religious spirit... It is nothing more than that, I mean, more. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

In Furkan's narrative, Islam is described as the only spiritual and inner power that keeps the Turks alive and strong. Therefore, the participant points to Islam as the most important national value that symbolizes Turkishness. The ideal Turk envisioned by Furkan is a Muslim who knows her/ his religion well, and a believer praying for her/ his nation.

I mean, if I am Turkish, I don't like an atheist Turk living in Kazakhstan, and I have no obligation to be a brother to him and to shout at him. So I see that he is identified with Islam or not. Therefore, an ideal Turk, first of all for me, should be a Muslim. Well, an ideal Muslim Turk should be called, as our religion commanded, peaceful, who respects the right of someone else, who knows how to react when he is injustice, that is not docile sheep, not aggressive, but when necessary to defend his freedom, self-defense and attack compulsory. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

In the imagination of nationhood in Bilal's mindset, a Turkishness not crowned by Islam alone does not mean much. What is divine and exalted is a Turkishness experienced with Islam. For this reason, he argues that he cannot establish a spiritual bond with non- Muslim Turks. According to him, Turkishness should be integrated with Islam; and an ideal Turk should be Muslim. Otherwise, just having a common ethnic origin is of no importance to Bilal. In this sense, it can be claimed that the participant evaluates Islam as the mortar of nationhood.

I believe that a Turkishness on its own does not mean a lot without Islam. Gagauz Turks are Turkish, only common to me is that they speak Turkish. In other words, living with Islam is an ideal Turkish characteristic, the situation, I think that. We have

trips abroad to Azerbaijan. I went to Azerbaijan. He sees himself as a Muslim, alhamdulillah says he is a Muslim, but that's all... That's just the language. He does not experience any element of Islam. Azerbaijan Turkishness, aaa, very close to us, languages close, the same Erzurum, Kars dialect, there is the same. But, there I felt also that deficiency. In other words, our values, the values of Turkishness are of course important, but with Islam. The values of Turkishness with Islam are exalted and blessed for us. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Likewise, in Gökhan's understanding of Turkishness, religion is an important component and it is not possible to establish a national bond with non-Muslims, even if it is thought that she/he has the same ethnic origins as the Turks. According to him, having the same ethnic roots and speaking the same language is not enough to have the ties of nationhood. In fact, not living according to Islam is an obstacle to being an ideal Turk. For these reasons, Gökhan's definition of Turkishness does not include the people of Azerbaijan, whom he says are "Turkish" in terms of ethnicity and culture.

Considering everyone who is deeply committed to Turkey with a sense of belonging as Turkish does not harm anyone's Kurdishness, it does not damage anyone's Laz origins. After all, we are all Muslims. So we are not mosaics, we are a whole together. We are a complete picture. I think like this. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

At the same time, this meaning attributed to Islam as a defining element of Turkishness also answers the question of who is or might be a Turk. For example, according to Gökhan, who describe Turkey as "a place where pious Turks live all together", "the acceptance of everyone who is attached to this land with a sense of belonging does not harm the Kurdishness or the Laziness of that person". In this perspective, all Muslim communities in Turkey are included in the Turkishness. In other words, the participant sees these different identities as different ethnic identities assimilated and melted within Turkishness integrated with Islam. In his mind, what determine the possibility to their being assimilated and what make them a "prospective citizen" is sharing a common religion with us, Islam. All in all, the relationship of Turkishness to Islamic faith is internalized and taken for granted by a good part of the participants in a way that leaves no room for doubt.

In conclusion, the description of Turkishness with Islamic references, as can be seen in the above quotes, has been nourished from certain significant thought patterns. In this framework, the emphasis on the priority of Islam, an alternative Islam- Turkish

synthesis, the instrumental role of Turks in the spread of Islam, the belief that Turkishness is equal to Islam and the perception that Islam are the significant components of Turkishness form the main arguments of Islamic construction of nationhood at everyday level. Although the weight of the role that each of these thought patterns assigns to Islam in the definition of Turkishness is different, they all contribute discursively to the reproduction of a form of Turkishness that brings Islam to the fore.

4.3. References to Ottoman Past

One of the important themes of the wave of conservatism, which became increasingly visible in Turkish politics in the second decade of the 2000s, is the neo-Ottomanist nationalism of the AKP. The nationalism understanding of the AKP was predominantly shaped under the influence of its conservative and Islamist vision (Saraçoğlu, 2011: 46). A common Ottoman past of the people living in Anatolia and Sunni- Islam as the dominant cultural element of this past took place as the most essential historical partnership of Islamic- conservative nationalism's conception of nation (Saraçoğlu, 2013). Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's Ottomanist and Islamist thought and his prestigious position in religious groups has played crucial role in the development of the political thought of the founding cadres of the party (Ongur, 2015: 424). Maessen, in his study, discusses the influence of the AKP on the official historical discourse and the party's challenge Kemalist historical discourse which ignored the Ottoman past. According to him, the commemoration for the conquest of Istanbul on 29 May is "one of the signals of the reintegration of the Ottoman history in Turkish national memory, which had been erased since the foundation of the Turkish Republic" (Maessen, 2014: 309). Moreover, utilizing the Ottoman past is one of the most important parts of the AKP's quest for legitimacy (Maessen, 2014: 310). Additionally, the synthesis of Islam and Turkish culture based upon the Ottoman period constitutes the backbone of the AKP's nationalist discourse. While nationhood imagination of the AKP is based on the nostalgia for Ottomans, Islam as the most important constituents of national culture is located at the core of this imagination. During the field work, it is observed that this Ottomanist interpretation

of Turkishness was internalized and reproduced by many of the participants, especially AKP and MHP voters.

In the direction of the expression, explicit or implicit, of many participants, it is possible to argue that for most of them the values attributed to the Ottoman past constitute an important reference point in the everyday construction of Turkishness. Particularly, in the framework of the contribution to the spread of Islam, the Ottoman history corresponds to a significant part of Turkishness. As will be seen in the following parts of the thesis, which handles the temporal and cultural dimensions in the everyday subjective construction of Turkishness, Ottoman historical heritage appropriated by the everyday actors constitutes the backbone of an alternative imagination of nationhood. This imagination of nationhood based on the Ottoman past is mainly fed by the struggle of the Ottomans against the Byzantine Empire and the Crusades and the military successes of the Ottoman State against non-muslim elements in Anatolia.

Now it is not possible to distinguish between Ottoman and Turkish. When you ask Westerners, it is not possible to distinguish between Muslim and Turk. When you ask Westerners, it is the Turkish he means as a Muslim. Because if it were not our nation, the Crusaders would probably have mastered many more places today. So what does the European understand from the Ottoman? He understands Turk... I also understand Turk. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

As can be seen in the above quote, just as it is impossible to distinguish between Muslim and Turkish, it is not possible to distinguish Ottoman from Turkishness. According to Bülent, According Bülent, it is impossible to define a Turkishness that is free from the Ottoman past and Muslim identity. In this context, what makes the connection constructed with the Ottoman legacy meaningful in terms of nationhood is the place of Islam in the subjective construction of Turkishness.

Bülent's narrative also demonstrates that the significance attributed to Islam emerges as the point of intersection between the imaginations of nationhood based on Islamist references and Ottomanist references. However, some discursive reference points used frequently by some of the participants, such as "being grandsons of Ottomans",

“our ancestors”, and “our forgotten history”, are required to handle the imagination of Turkishness embellished with Ottoman images under a separate heading.

4.3.1. “We Are the Grandsons of Ottomans”

During the interviews, being “the grandsons of Ottomans” appears as an important expression of pride in being a Turk. Defining themselves as the heirs of the Ottomans, most of the participants, in fact, aims to emphasize their pure and absolute nationhood; because nationalist logic’s search for a root is the only way to meet the pride expectation of the nationalized subject.

Q: Are you interested in Ottoman history?

P: More...

Q: So you think of yourself as a grandson of Ottomans?

P: Always... Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

I can literally describe myself as a grandson of Ottomans, a Muslim-Ottoman woman. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

I definitely feel myself as an Ottoman grandson. Happily I am an Ottoman grandson. What makes me happy and what makes me happy is the loyalty to the flag and the homeland. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

In the narratives of Ümit, Nazlı and Ercan the Ottoman past is glorified and presented as a proud and integral part of Turkishness. For the participants, being a grandson of Ottomans means being an heir to this past. Therefore, by positioning themselves as a bridge between this proud history and the future of the nation, they build their Turkishness in this way. In fact, the expression of “the grandson of Ottoman” which is proudly and self-confidently used by many participants, points out a conceptualization of nationhood based on a linear national history. What accompanies the claim of temporality in the participants' statements is the sense of eternity about their nationhood. Continuity and perpetuity of “national” one, provides a suitable ground for indisputability of the concept of nationhood. For this reason, the phrase "I am a grandson of Ottomans" is often followed by the "of course" exclamation. At the same time, it is used as an expression to reinforce the claim that they have rights over the past to boast of.

Q: So what do you think makes us Turkish?

P: (Silence) Our History ... That is, the fact that we are coming from the Ottoman Empire, Atatürk's War of Independence...

Q: Would you feel yourself as an Ottoman grandson?

P: I feel it, of course.

Q: Well, are there some emotional factors such as your grandfather coming from there and taking part in the conquest?

P: Surely that is the case. On the other hand, it is already clear where Turkey came from, it is clear that we are descended from the Ottoman Empire... Of course, after all...Seda, 41, project advisor/ restaurant manager, CHP

In Seda's expression, it is quite clear how Turkishness is interpreted as an intrinsic nationhood status by relating it to the Ottoman past within the linear history narrative. In this context, being a grandson of Ottomans finds its place in the narrative as a proof of the continuity claim of Turkishness imagined by her.

The link between Ottoman and Turkishness cannot be denied, we are their descendants after all. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

Do I feel as an Ottoman grandson... I feel, so I see myself as a family of this line. So I see it as a grandson of course. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

Q: Do you feel yourself as an Ottoman grandson? Can you describe it like that?

P: Well, since it is the name of my state, the name of my state, I am an heir to it. It's the name of my state. I can also describe Seljuk as Seljuk, it is the name of my state. I define myself as Hungaria, well, what was Hungarian, Huns. Because it creates my memory. It creates my national memory. I define myself with all of them. Ottomans, of course I'm a grandson. I am heir. Of course...

Q: Can you establish a bond?

P: They are our grandfather, I am the heir. I am a rights holder. Why should I leave my father's property? Erol, 64, dentist, AKP

Similarly, for also Furkan, Ozan and Erol, being a grandson of Ottomans, in other words appropriating the Ottoman past as an inheritor, appears as a remarkable discursive pattern in the triangle of historicity, continuity and pride that nationalized subject needs to be able to reproduce everyday Turkishness. In this context, it emerges as an important reference point for a part of the participants in the determination of the boundary between "we" and "us".

4.3.2. "Our Glorious Ancestors..."

"Ancestry" is an expression we have witnessed frequently used by political actors in the last decade of Turkey's political life (Tokdoğan, 2018; Şimşek, Pala, 2020).

According to Tokdoğan, with the other concepts which dominate the Turkish political jargon such as “civilization”, “conquest”, “reinvigoration”, “reascension” and “restoration” during this process, “ancestry” also serves as an important part of the JDP’s political rhetoric used to evoke the Ottoman history (Tokdoğan, 2018). Although, literally, the word means to “the older people in the past”³⁶, the past meant here is limited to the Ottoman history. The fact that among the 36 interviewers, more than 25 defined the ancestry as the Ottomans show us that this rhetoric dictated by political elites also corresponds to a reality in daily life of nationalized subjects. However, for us, here what is more important is, adhering to the everyday nationalism approach, to interrogate "why and how these ordinary people reproduce their own nationhood with this myth of ancestry".

We are the heirs of a glorious and victorious ancestor who fought for these lands. Of course, we are proud of this. Victories won, that big state ruled ... These show the power and glory of the Turk. Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

What I am trying to show with the exemplary quote above is that what is glorified and embodied is actually a masculine, militarist and strong statesman portrait before “ancestry”. In Raşit’s narrative, it is important to note that a whole history is not owned, and that elements of the past that meet the needs of nationalist logic are selected and reconstructed. The historical elements that can hurt the national pride of the nationalist subject, such as defeat, weakness and impotence are excluded from the content of the concept of the ancestor which embodies the images of wars won, lands conquered, and a prosperous state in the mind of the nationalized subject.

When we say national values, a homeland, the Republic of Turkey... On the other hand, our history, our commitment to our ancestors, praying for mercy for them, for this heavenly homeland and this glorious history to be proud of... Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

Every bad word about the Turks, well, about their past, their ancestors, for example the Ottoman, causes me a great discomfort. Maybe my reaction may not be so much when there is a comment about the current Turkishness, for example the current government or what is happening at the moment, but if there is an issue about our past and our ancestry, my reaction may be very heavy. This is our history! Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

³⁶In Turkish “ecdad”. <https://sozluk.gov.tr/>

In addition to this, the concept of “ancestry” serves as a strong myth about a common and glorious history. Ironically, the sense of being a part of a historical continuity is transformed into an individual form that the participants reproduces each time with her own perception of nationhood; because, the imagined continuity has been purged from all historical realities and disengagements. At the same time, their uncritical faith about this imagined and nationalized history reinforces and reproduces the taken-for-grantedness of the nation.

I love it very much, I love the Ottoman. We, for example, dressed up, took many places, fought in time. It is said that something happened at work, it happened with women... Either it happened, it did not, it happened or ... We should not be stuck with something. In other words, they are our ancestors in somehow or other ... Our ancestors, if they killed their child or did something else. So how can you do something of your own descendant? They are our ancestry, our ancestry. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

...My own homeland, my own nation, many ancestors, many grandfathers have suffered here, bloodshed. Inevitably there's a spiritual feeling. (talking about his feelings about Turkey) Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

Finally, sacralization of ancestors as those who fought for the sake of the nation acts as a tool to legitimize the demands and arguments put forward by nationalized subject. Being the heir of an imagined heritage also brings that they claim rights over “homeland” against “other”.

4.3.3. “The Justice and the Humanity of the Ottomans...”

One of the most remarkable points is that many participants identify pure Turkishness referring the values attributed to the Ottoman past. In this context, “the justice and the humanity of the Ottomans” emerge as a salient discursive pattern used by many participant who define their own nationhood through the identification with the Ottoman past. In this sense, many participants emphasize on some characteristics attributed to the Ottoman political culture, and that underpin this discursive pattern, such as anti-colonialism, tolerant administration, the protection of the oppressed people during the conversations about the Ottoman history. In fact, this affirmed culture represents the golden age of the values attributed to real Turkishness. In this

sense, it is possible to argue that the perception of nationhood of the participants quoted below is fed by the nostalgia for Ottoman era.

I believe, we (she is referring to the Ottoman Empire), have not developed any policy of expansion in any way with a colonial understanding. In other words, we do not have an understanding like America to bring freedom to everywhere with gold and oil. On the contrary, in the sense of saving the exploited countries... Or when we say the policy of expansion, let's go and not take away the country of this country. There is also the purpose of rescuing a crushed mob that has suffered injustice, did not live up to its desired level, has not been created. In fact, this is a bit of a policy of bringing social justice to everywhere. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

So did we (he is referring to the Ottoman Empire) have a colonial logic, we have no colony, we were never a colonial state. If we wanted to, we could be an empire that exploited the whole world, still standing. But this did not happen because we did not have a colonial idea. We were for justice, not colonialism. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

As a result, let me say, the most important thing for me is justice. When I say a Turk, the first thing that comes to my mind is the just one. Because justice is the foundation of everything. Justice is the foundation of Islam, the foundation of everything. The golden age of this is Ottoman. The justice of the Ottoman is our compass. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

When we look at Ayşe and Ozan's expressions above, it is clearly seen that it is "the Ottoman identity" that defines the boundaries of the group that they categorize here as "us". Another common point between their expressions is the emphasis on equitable and anti-colonialist character of the Ottoman era. In this sense, it is possible to say that the bond established with the Ottoman state, which is characterized as a fair, compassionate and proud father figure, is very efficient for the participants who situate themselves as its inheritor to reproduce their own nationhood. The objectification of a universal value such as justice as a characteristic attributed only to the Ottoman state plays an important role in the glorification of nationhood. This situation also provides a legitimate ground for the deep nationality connection with the Ottoman past.

Our ancestors, well, they have been in certain geographies, have moved, today, when we look at the Ottoman history today, we have come to Anatolia, that is, our history that made us here. In other words, we have never been embarrassed by our history. Here, we have reigned for many years with a form of government that distributes justice, protects and protects them, for the different nations we host. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

Erhan's claim that there is nothing to be ashamed of in our history is based on the tolerant attitude of the Ottoman state towards "other" ethnic and religious groups of the Empire. He perceives and internalizes Turkish nationhood as a continuation of a culture that takes the side of justice and tolerance, although it possesses all kinds of power.

Of course, think of a state has ruled for 600 years, has ruled the world, has had its rise and fall. Well, it is natural as it has been destroyed. But I believe that they manage good morals, equitable administration, social peace, even behave very tolerantly and tolerantly, even from people of their own religion, in general. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Based on Gökhan's statement, Ottomans are imagined as Muslim Turks who announced Islam, and save people from the Byzantine persecution and bring peace and tranquility. In this sense, in the face of other religious culture, particularly Christianity, the supremacy of Islam is crowned by the fairness of Ottoman administrative culture. There is no doubt that, while coding the Byzantine, which oppresses its subjects, as the "other", the glorification of the Ottoman as "us" that brings justice and peace does not contradict the mould of nationalist logic.

We are descendants of famous, glorious, powerful leaders. Tribes lived together as brothers in Turkey, countries have established empires. I'm an Ottoman fan. What makes us Turkish is that we stand by the oppressed, that we absorb Islam. The ideal Turk is able to bring the leaders who can live Islam fully, stand against the persecution, worry about injustice, and fight with the love of the country and the nation. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

Finally, as can be seen in the exemplary quotes above from Ayşe and Nazlı, Ottoman Empire is described as savior of oppressed societies. According to Nazlı, absorbing Islam and standing by the oppressed nations are the main characteristics of Turkishness. Therefore, exaggerated and purified from all negativity, Ottoman history narrative is used as one of the most short and effective ways to prove this. In addition to this, Turkishness is made sense of a patronage relationship established with others. The role of big brother provided to the Ottoman Empire refers to the effort of nationalized subject to refresh national self- confidence and national pride via nationalized and imagined past.

4.3.4. “Kemalism Tried to Make Us Forget Our Own History”

Another salient discursive pattern used frequently by the participants is the claim that the glorious Ottoman history was tried to be forgotten by official historiography. Glorifying the Ottoman past and holding on to it makes the pride of the imagined nation alive and strong against the portrait of envisioned “other”. Therefore, what is meant by “glorious” ottoman history is “our” history; and trying to make us forget this history is a “national” issue. Here, what is meant by “those who try to make this history forget” is the ideology of the early republic and its current representatives. In other words, the claim that the glorious Ottoman history was tried to be forgotten refers to a critical attitude against official Kemalist historiography.

I mean ... Unfortunately, our Ottoman past was ignored for many years, and tried to be forgotten...The past governments have done this. However, our young people need to know what is going on. Maybe this will be done in 2023, we have a 100-year history and I think that our political history should be taught in schools. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

So we don't really know our history, including me. Behold, others know us better. Especially those who have hostility to us know better. So we say that we are the ummah, we say that we are nation sometimes but as I said, what we have done, what we have done in the past ... It is very similar, we do not really know. As we always teach us in history lessons... We know that way, but other states know it very well. They also know what will happen to us when we grow stronger, grow older, unite. That's why they don't want us to grow, to unite, to be brothers. That is their purpose, to break it down. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

It can be seen that this argument at the same time includes a critical attitude towards official historiography of the Republic. In this sense, it can be argued that in fact these people brought up the imagination of an alternative nationhood beyond the form of nationhood dictated by the republican elites and official ideology until the 2000’s. This imagination of an alternative nationhood is a reflection of the discourse of Islamist and ethnic nationalism, which turned into a hegemonic tenet in Turkish politics in the second half of the 2000s with the AKP authoritarianism and the alliance of the AKP and the MHP. However, it is worth remembering that this form of nationhood did not exist with the power, but it became visible only with the change of power. The ordinary people who were born into a relatively small nation state, but at the same time think that they are the heir of the vast territory of an

empire are angry with those who make them oblivious to this glorious history. The interviewees accuse the Kemalist republican ideology of trying to make them forget the Ottoman past through the education system. Additionally, they argue that what is ignored is not just history but a national essence. For this reason, for them, learning the forgotten history of the Ottomans means to rediscover their national allegiance.

All in all, Ottomanist interpretation of Turkishness, has gained visibility by the way of certain significant discursive patterns. The claim of being grandson of Ottomans, the myth of ancestry, the emphasis on its unquestionable justice and humanity and the critical attitude developed against the official historiography for not giving enough room for Ottoman history are the prominent reference points in this form of construction of Turkishness. Additionally, nationalist pattern based on the identification with the Ottoman past show us this is an effort to produce an alternative form of nationhood in the face of civic nationhood. Moreover, Ottomanist imagination of nationhood consists of both ethnic and Islamist characteristics. On the one hand, the Ottoman history is glorified as the golden age of a number of values attributed to the genetic essence of being Turkish. On the other hand, the close bond established by the Ottoman Empire with the Islam, as the power that spread and represented it to a wide geography, is envisioned as an important reference point that builds it up. For this reason, none of the forms of nationhood imagined by the participants, and categorized in this thesis so far contains mutually exclusive contradictions. On the contrary, it is quite possible to find traces of all of them in the discourses of the same individual. Therefore, although they seem to contradict and conflict, these different claims and imaginations about nationhood often overlap and compromise each other as we have seen in many examples.

4.4. Civic Nationhood

In the 2010s, when political Islam and an ethnicized Turkish nationalism dominated Turkish politics, the understanding of civic nationhood at the institutional level, which drew the framework of Turkishness in the constitution in the early republican period as a citizenship and territorial belonging, significantly lost its power (Kuzu, 2019: 77). In this period, when ethnic identity politics and political Islam dominate the political atmosphere of the country more than ever under the hegemonic rule of

the AKP, religion and the Ottoman past are on the way to become the most important motif of Turkish nationalism, while belief in a secular understanding of nationhood weakens. However, the interviews with the participants within the scope of the field study reveal that, despite this conservative Islamist and ethnicist nationalist orientation of Turkish politics, an understanding of Turkishness built on secularist foundations still continues to be reproduced by some in everyday life. Although the majority of them are CHP voters, it should be noted that MHP voters, today working with AKP in important decision-making processes, also contribute to the reproduction of the understanding of civic nationhood in everyday life in various contexts.

The subjective construction of Turkishness in some participants' national imagination is shaped in the basis of citizenship. As you may see in the quotations below, for some participants, having citizenship of the Republic of Turkey is a sufficient presupposition for being Turkish. However, this understanding of nationhood based on citizenship, mentioned here, is not always built on an egalitarian basis. In other words, many of the participants, who explain their perception of Turkishness with civic references, in fact, establish a hierarchy between "real" Turks and those who are deemed to be Turk. This attitude, which can often be observed in their implicit expressions, on the one hand, connects the potential of being Turk to the condition of citizenship; on the other hand, it draws the boundaries of "essential" Turkishness with a pattern of ethnic domination and inequality.

4.4.1. Turkishness as a Superordinate Identity

Because everyone living in Turkey, I think everyone is Turkey who are Turkish citizens. Behold, it has a Kurd, a Laz, Alevis ... A lot of different ethnicity but there are people in Turkey who think Turkey with them. Direct them to, uh, to discern, actually meant to divide Turkey. We are Turkey with these colors. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

One of the most remarkable point in the perception of nationhood of those who describe Turkishness in the basis of civic references, is that they envision different ethnic groups in Turkey as a folkloric motif, as a color. Here, Turkishness is depicted

as a superordinate identity, a melting pot. What is remarkable about Ayşe is that all of the groups mentioned here, Kurds, Alevis, and Lazs, are Muslim groups.

In my opinion, Turkishness includes everyone living in these lands. Kurds are also Turkish to me. Our identity is the same. Everything we use is the same. There is only one origin which is different. But ultimately he is Turkish. He has the same rights as me. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

When talking about Kurdish question Ümit describes them as Turks in terms of their rights in this country, although he accepts them as a distinct ethnic group.

... (While introducing myself in my overseas experience) I say "I am Turkish"...I don't like to say I'm Muslim or Sunni when introducing myself. Islam is just...Frankly, I think that my Islam, my Sunnism or my Hanafism is of no concern to anyone. If she/he is a citizen of this country, whether she/he is a Kurd or something else, everyone is Turkish. I say I am Turkish, I am a citizen of the Republic of Turkey. My Turkishness is different, my religion is different... I don't particularly like the use of religious things. Leyla, 41, company executive, AKP

In a similar way, Leyla also mentions Turkishness in the framework of citizenship. According to her, Turkishness, as a nationhood, is a roof that brings together different ethnic origins. In this sense, for her, ethnicity of the people living in the Republic of Turkey, their Kurdishness or their Alevism does not make any sense; because being a member of Turkish Republic make them a Turkish. In other words, here, for Leyla, citizenship is more important. However, she previously mentioned the importance of being included in a union to be established with Turkic republics, referring to an understanding of Turkishness on an ethnic basis.

Q: How do you evaluate foreign players playing in the national team?

S: It can be. It is not a problem for me. According to me, anyone who says "I am from Turkey" is Turkish. That's my view. In other words, a French person can come and play for me, that is, if he respects my values.

Q: For example, Mehmet Aurelio...

S: Ha Aurelio, yes, exactly, exactly...Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

We see a similar contextual contradiction in Sertaç's expressions above. The participant previously presented his perception of Turkishness built on Islam in many different contexts. According to him, Turkishness is an identity, a form of belonging that becomes meaningful with Islamic past. However, as can be seen in the quote

above, in the context of football players of foreign origin in national team, with a pragmatic approach, he argues that all those who say “I am form Turkey” are Turkish. With his religious, conservative and ethnicist expressions, Sertaç, who symbolizes the ideal Turkishness created by the political climate of the last 10 years surrounded by political Islam and ethnic nationalism, does not hesitate to make a more inclusive definition of Turkishness depending on the context.

Q: How do you think about the foreign players playing in the national team?

E: Foreign players do not play in the national team.

Q: For example, there was Mehmet Aurelio...

E: Who?

Q: So we give him the citizenship of the Republic of Turkey but foreign origin ..

E: He's a citizen, but he is.

Q: You say it's enough to be connected with a citizenship bond...

E: Your citizen, but... no difference, okay... You call it a bond of citizenship. You have taken your identity. It is no different from me. Will it be? Look, then the business goes into racism. Did you understand? It does not matter. If accepted the citizenship of the Republic of Turkey, we have no difference. He earns such things for us. Now what I said is that it is not important to be born, it is important to feel. So what does it matter to be born....Erol, 64, Dentist, AKP

In the same contextual condition, talking about football players of foreign origin who played for national football team after getting citizenship, Erol who defines himself a Muslim Turk and a grandson of the Ottomans and said that “When you say Turkish you already mean Muslim.... All the Turks are all Muslims” before, describes Turkishness, now, in the basis of an equal citizenship. For him, what is important is the worldwide achievement of the national football team which represents Turkey. For the sake of this prestige, the ethnic and religious limits of Turkishness can be discursively stretched.

It could be, he could play, as he has played before ... Like Aurelio, he played. There is no problem. As I said, because we did not look at the race... It is cultural nationalism. If he said, I am Turkish, I want to be a citizen of the Republic of Turkey, there is no problem. He is also Turkish. Cahit, 33, Lecturer, MHP

Similarly, for Cahit, the provincial chairman of the Grey Wolves in Nevşehir, who is a passionate advocate of Turkish- Islamic synthesis which stresses on both Islamic component and “authentic” Turkish identity, the matter of football players of foreign origin who played for national football team after getting citizenship is a matter of cultural nationalism. In this context, Turkishness is considered as a concept of

citizenship that can be obtained without an ethnic and religious basis. The participant, who previously described Turkishness as “a fate”, now redefines it in the framework of citizenship.

Above mentioned quotes show us, how contextual deployment of Turkishness can change for the same individual. According to the context and content of talking, the nature of boundaries which shape and determine individual’s perception of Turkishness has the potential to fluctuate and modify. Additionally, the concept of citizenship defined on the basis of equality, serves as a cover for many participants who are concerned about being labeled racist because of their ideas. However, racial and superior essence attributed to Turkishness by them appears in the unequal and hierarchical relationship discursively constructed by them between ethnically “original” Turkish and other ethnic groups intended to be Turkish.

4.4.2. Reference to the Concept of Kemalist Nationalism

Some participants, who are loyal to the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic, which is shaped on secularism and modernism, subjectively construct Turkishness on the basis of Kemalist nationalism. Kemalism, claiming a new full break with the Ottoman Empire, announced the birth of a new Turkish nationalism and Turkishness nationhood based on civic nationalism (Bora, 2017; 212). In spite of the fact that the discourses and practices of Kemalist ideology in the early republican era also bears the traces of ethnic understanding of nationalism, it embraced officially the civic conception of nationalism based on citizenship and territory (Bora, 2011: 63). The attempt to create a modern and secular nation- state from the remnant of multi-religious and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire was the most important motivation of Kemalist nationalism. Under these circumstances, secularization and modernization of traditional society was the most important ideological sources of Kemalist nationalist project.

In the 2000’s, Turkish society witnessed the revitalization of Kemalist nationalism as a reaction against the rise of political Islam (Çınar and Taş, 2017: 666; Bora, 2011: 65). When this new nationalist wave is defined as *Ulusalçı* nationalism by important

scholars in the field (Çınar and Taş, 2017; Bora, 2011: 65).³⁷ Even though this new emerging nationalist tendency is basically a branch of official Kemalist nationalism, the emphasis on secularism is prominently stronger (Çınar and Taş, 2017).

The field work experience enables us to observe the markers of this neo Kemalist nationalist discourse in everyday construction of Turkishness. In general, the national imagination of the participants, who define their nationhood in the framework of the nationalism of Atatürk, are shaped around three core themes: secularism, modernism and a shared territory.

We are also a secular country compared to Asia and Asian countries, we are more conscious ... According to these other Arab countries ... Because our culture is very different. Our essence is secular! Religious fundamentalism goes against our character! We do not have Arab culture. So we are all Muslims that our religion gives.... But we are also a secular country, we have taken some things of Europe, and some things of religion. We have created a culture for ourselves. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

Firstly, as seen in the statement above, Nurdan mentions secularism as a characteristic attributed to Turkishness. Therefore, she constructs her perception of nationhood on the basis of secular citizenship. According to her, this is the main feature that differentiates Turkey from other Asia and Arab countries. Here, anti-secularism is located as a part of Arab culture. Therefore, the participant approaches secularism as an important component of the original Turkish culture, referring to the pre-Islamic life of the Turks. In other words, she mobilizes secularism as the describing component of Turkishness. In this context, Turkishness and Turkish nationhood is perceived and imagined within a secular framework.

However, in the same subjective construction of Turkishness, it is possible to catch the cues of an understanding of nationhood based on ethnicity. Since secularism is presented as a particularity attributed to an ethnic essence, being Turkish ethnically,

³⁷“The Kemalist *ulusçuluk* discourse construes nationalism as the advocate of “the process of secularization/modernization. The fact that the term *ulusçuluk* is preferred to *milliyetçilik* is part of the design that equates the concept with modernization and secularization. The terms *ulusçuluk* (derived from the word *ulus*) and *milliyetçilik* (derived from the word *millet*) are synonymous and both translate into English as “nationalism.” Although *millet* is used in modern Turkish synonymously with *ulus* (and both words signify “nation”), it was used in Ottoman times to refer to the religious communities of the empire. *Ulus*, the modernized term for “nation,” disavows the connotations of the Ottoman times (especially the connection with the Muslim community: *ummet*). In the newly formed nation-state of Turkey, nationalism took over and replaced the monopolized sacredness of religion” (Bora, 2011: 66)

in this example we see how the forms of civil and ethnic nationhood are intertwined in the everyday discourse of nationalized subject.

So I am against the headscarf in the representation of the state. Because if you represent the state, you don't represent religion. There, if it is currently the country's secular Republic of Turkey, you will represent the secular system. I am against the headscarf, so there are also these judges, for example, the police are not present at the moment, but he will come soon. I think he was paved in the military ... But I am against. Because, uh, politically and Turkey oppose the closure of the quarters representing a woman. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

Another example for the imagination of nationhood in a secular form is seen in the expression above of Perihan about headscarf. The place of the religious symbols in the public realm occupies an important place in the agenda of many nationalized subjects still not as much as before. The objection to the headscarf in the public domain is considered as a manifestation of the perception of a form of civic nationhood in accordance with the secular spirit of the state.

Q: Do you think religion is an important figure in the expression of Turkishness?

S: Now we need to separate politics from religion. Religion is something different. Politics is something different. that is, if we combine religion with politics, it would be a can of worms. Either not everyone may be a Muslim... Not everyone may be religious... Not everyone can be born as a Muslim... So we cannot exclude him because he is not a Muslim... Serap, 52, retired, MHP

Similarly, Serap, who emphasizes the necessity of the separation between the religion and the politics, describes a civic version of Turkish nationhood. However, as we saw before, at the same time, she explains Turkishness with a reference to an ethnic essence in the context of Kurds with these words:

We do not exclude the non-Turkish. 50 percent of our country is Turks and 50 percent is non-Turkish people. Do we tell them why you live in this country? Don't we go to the same schools? So the opportunities given to the Turks coming to the country, for example, say, the Kurds, is not given in this country? Everyone can live in the same, fraternal way. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

Therefore, the participant does not develop a democratic attitude which she exhibited in the context of religion when the issue of ethnic origin comes to the agenda.

Secondly, emphasis on modernity appears one of the most significant components of Kemalist patterns in the subjective construction of nationhood.

Even though they (Europeans) have prejudices in their minds, I say I am Turkish and I am a Muslim. I say that especially. Because I want them to know that a Turkish woman does not wear headscarf, but dresses modernly; and her hair may be dyed. Turks are modern people, I want them to know this. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

For Perihan, in the context of European “other”, being part of the modernity composes significantly the content of Turkish nationhood. This secular and modern interpretation of Turkishness also invokes modernity as a primordial characteristic of the Turks. In this sense, it bears actually an essentialist meaning.

If we are able to produce technology, to build our own economic sufficiency... Only then we can be able to be modern, contemporary Turkey, muslim Turkey. Of course, let's live our religion freely. But the slogan of the Turk should be modernization. I mean, I am glad that I was born a Muslim. As a woman, thank God. Because I did not choose this after all, my family was also a Muslim. I could also be born in a Christian family. Thankfully! My children will also grow up as Muslims, if God wills. This is experienced in myself. It does not concern anyone, I go to umrah, it does not concern anyone, I pray. This is our problem, this is our problem. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

My children should be proud as Turkish. They have to love Atatürk. Because I owe my everything to him. I have two daughters, if I am here at this table, if I have this freedom thanks to him. No one else has given me this freedom? ...So it's a proud event. I want my kids to get the best education. I want it to be modern, modern and Turkish. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

As can be seen in both quotes above, although the secular interpretation of Turkishness does not exclude Islam, it adopts it as an acquired identity. Additionally, it is mentioned as a part of the subjective domain. However, modernism, like secularism, is introduced as an inseparable part of Turkish nationhood. Modernization without losing their roots, in other words the claim to “be both modern and Turkish” provides a strong evidence how civic and ethnic understandings of nationhood can easily be intertwined in everyday level.

Thirdly, Turkishness is invoked as concept of civic nationhood on the basis of shared territory. Particularly, in the context of Kurds, this pattern of nationhood is enacted by the participants.

What matters, whether he is French or Greek, he should be able to say I am Turkish if he lives in that country. A Kurd should be able to say I am Turkish. Turkishness is not ethnicity here. This is an identity that the citizen has shown to be his country. So I'm talking about Turkishness in the concept that Atatürk is doing. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

Q: So how do you approach the concept of being from Turkey?

P: Well, I said... I'm Turkish nationalist. But my nationalism is a nationalism at this dose. So for me, a Kurd, a Laz is also Turkish. I do not like the concept of being from Turkey. I don't know, I don't like ...

Q: Is it artificial?

P: Yeah, it sounds artificial. Since it is a concept that comes out later ... Because I think they are malevolent. Actually, for the last 20 years, the word of Turkish in the motto of Atatürk "How happy is the one who says I am Turkish" have been assigned a different meaning, and perceived differently. In my opinion, I am against it.

Q: In your opinion, is it perceived as racism?

P: Definitely, it was perceived as racism and this was later on, you know... Racism has already emerged a lot recently. Already people in other countries or in Turkey are divided by racism. So if I was a Kurd, I would say I am Turkish. Because I live in this country, I pay taxes to this country and we all have to live in peace in this country. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

Being a citizen of the Republic of Turkey is enough to define myself, I think. Of course, everyone must have a country. They must have an identity card. This is my country, I am a citizen of this country. So of course I'm Turk. If I can define myself a citizen of this Republic, it means I am Turkish. This is the nationalism of Atatürk. Like he says, how happy is the one who says I am Turkish. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

Referring to Atatürk's motto "How happy is the one who says I am Turkish", both Perihan and Nuriye, define their Turkishness via through the pride of feeling themselves Turkish. At the first stage, Turkish nationhood is constructed discursively and explicitly in a sense that it involves everyone living in this country. In this context, living in the same territory and having the same citizenship status are the civic conditions which determine the boundaries of Turkishness based upon an inclusive understanding. However, on the other hand, being Turkish is perceived as an inevitable obligation for everyone living in Turkey and having citizenship ties with the Republic of Turkey. Particularly for Perihan, who clearly objects to the concept of being from Turkey, the self-identification of an individual as Turkish despite his/her different ethnic backgrounds is a virtue. Turkishness, here, is expressed as a grace, a quality to be boasted by the participant. This attitude provides us a great opportunity for exploring the hierarchy constructed between "real" Turks and Turks by law. On the one hand she draws a framework of Turkishness on the

basis of citizenship and a shared territory with the conformity of being a part of dominant group, on the other hand she rejects the expression of different national belongings with the pride of being “real” Turk. In this way, using both civic and ethnic references she constructs subjectively her own imagination of Turkish nationhood.

4.5. Conclusion

As argued in many studies on Turkish nationalism (Bora, 2003; Kadioğlu and Keyman, 2011, White, 2014, Özkırımlı, 2011) the sense of Turkishness does not have a fixed and homogenous content in political domain. Comparing and conflicting forms of Turkishness are reproduces and mobilized as an imagination of nationhood by different political visions through different nationalist discourses, each defining Turkishness distinctively. It is possible to say that this is a valid proposition for the everyday manifestation of Turkishness. Moreover, it is necessary to draw attention to some points that field work shows us. Therefore primarily we need to return to the question we asked at the beginning of the thesis: How and in which contexts nationhood is made significant by the participants?

On the one hand, considering the everyday reproduction of Turkishness as a discourse that marks “we” it is possible to argue that the different individual discursive and thought patterns and impressions about what it means to be Turkish, interpenetrating each other on a slippery slope, reproduce Turkish nationhood as a hegemonic and unquestionable reality. What makes it strong as a hegemonic and everyday discourse is the capability of ordinary people to bring close together different reference points about Turkishness. As can be seen in the quotes above, the participants have ability and potential to use conflicting patterns of describing the same nation and its derivatives together. Mostly, just like the expressions of Sertaç, Ayşe and Nuriye, most of the participants turn into a nationalized subject by bringing together ethnic, religious, ottoman and civilian references. The meaning of Turkishness does not have a constant content in their minds, and it can change, transform, and bring together different reference points.

Furthermore, the participants have the potential to negotiate and go beyond the description of Turkishness imposed by the political vision with which they are affiliated. For instance; Seda, as a voter of the CHP that adopts a discourse of nationalism that symbolizes the break with the Ottoman past, says that he sees himself as an Ottoman grandson and is proud of it. Another remarkable example is Erol, the old former Nevşehir provincial head of an ultra-right wing political party in Turkey, the BBP who says “it doesn’t matter who you were born, it is who you feel”. When Islam is involved, he claims that being Turkish and Muslim means the same thing. In general, most of the participants go beyond the form of nationhood imposed on them by their own political visions, as they feed on different reference points in the subjective imagination of the nation.

Additionally, in the subjective discourse of many participants fear of being labeled racist and the conformity of being a part of the dominant group is considerably remarkable. The first of these tendencies is observed mostly in the ethnic construction of Turkishness. As well as being more prominent in its civic interpretation, the later forms the common point of all the everyday forms of nationhood mentioned.

On the other hand, in this part of the thesis we sought the answer to the second focus of our initial question. When we look at the contextual deployment of Turkishness based upon the statements of the participants, it is possible to claim that conspicuously some issues play a catalyst role in the enactment of different interpretations of Turkishness by the participants. In other words, certain contexts provide a convenient ground to activate nationalist discourses of the participants. First, in the contexts of Kurds and Kurdish identity, the negotiation process of Turkey's accession to the European Union and alternatives to the European Union, the foreign-born soccer players who joined the Turkish national team obtaining Turkish citizenship and the comparative comparison of Ottoman and Seljuk history in terms of nationalist logic’s search for a root many interviewers tend to enact their subjective perception of Turkishness based on ethnicist perspective. Second, the conversations about islamophobia and problems faced by Turks living in Europe, Syrian migrants in Turkey, the negotiation process of Turkey's accession to the

European Union and alternatives to the European Union and non-Turk Muslim groups in Turkey provides most of participants a convenient contextual stratum to develop a perception of Turkishness through Islamist references. Third, the description of Turkishness with the Ottomanist references becomes evident in the context of Crusades, Byzantine Empire, colonial history of Europe, oppressed and exploited nations, the historicity of civilization and the place of Turks in the history of Europe. Finally, pursuing the traces of an individual perception of nationhood based on civic principles become easier in the talks around the secularism, modernity, the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the War of Independence, Atatürk, non-Turk groups in Turkey and the foreign-born soccer players who joined the Turkish national team obtaining Turkish citizenship.

CHAPTER 5

EVERYDAY REPRODUCTION OF “OTHERS”

As argued in the previous chapter, the enactment and embodiment of Turkishness takes place through the constant reconstruction and reproduction of the boundaries of "we" by ordinary actors in everyday life. In this process, the nation is personified; and some favorable characteristics which are thought to be unique to the nation are ascribed to it. On the other hand, the perception of “others” is another most significant source of nationalist imagination. The term “other” denotes “another nation or ethnic/ religious group that is territorially close to, or indeed within, the national community and seems to threaten the in-group’s identity, distinctiveness and/or independence” (Alayan and Podeh, 2018: 7). The duality of “we” and “they” constantly nourishes each other, because a definition of us will be meaningless where there are no others. Therefore, in the processes of subjective construction of everyday nationhood, the description of the other is as important as what are the boundaries that define us, how they can change, and separate each other via different patterns of identification. It is quite interesting that the same individual can describe nationhood in divergent contexts with emphasis on distinct elements; or similarly, individuals who define Turkishness with different reference points often refer to the same other. However, considering that nationhood is a process of subjective construction that constantly shifts and transforms according to time and context, such paradoxes and overlapping points will be unavoidable. Then, the self/other dimension emphasizes the significant and active role of people in understanding the world as “a taken-for-granted world of nations” (Skey, 2011:50) which is also main argument of this thesis. Apart from this point, in this chapter of the thesis, the narratives of "other" that the participants refer to while reproducing their Turkishness discursively will be examined. In this way, the section based on the conversations of the participants which include the implicit or explicit answer to the question of “who

is the ‘other’ of Turkishness?” aims to question how and in which ways these ordinary actors, who define themselves as Turkish, define the “other” and how and in which ways they reconstruct and reproduce their Turkishness in relation to the “other”.

According to Eriksen (1995), there are two form group identifications. The first of these is “we-hood” which is discussed in the fourth chapter, and refers to “internal principles for cohesion” (Eriksen, 1995: 427); the other is “us- hood” or “contrasting with others” (Eriksen, 1995: 427), which is described “against an external agent, which might be real or imagined enemy” (Johnson and Coleman, 2012: 865). In other respects, defining the national is only possible by defining the non-national. With Eriksen’s words, “social identities are created, strengthened and maintained through the enactment of contrasts with others” (Eriksen, 1995: 435). In this framework, the discourse that constantly produces nationhood in everyday life constructs it through the dichotomy of “us” and “them (De Cilla, et al., 1999: 154-155).

Indeed, the discursive construction of nation and nationhood always works with the use of dichotomy between sameness and difference (Hall, 1996; Martin, 1995). Nationally schemes, which are internalized by people and reified in their thoughts, attitudes and practices, take a shape on the basis of differences and similarities. While determining who is national through similarities, who is not is defined with reference to differences. While "we" is articulated in the nationalist discourse as the expression of a national whole, "they" refers to the "stranger" who is outside of this whole and even threatens it. The boundaries drawn among “we” and “they”, at the same time, refers to “the important link between the particular (individual nations) and the universal (the geo-political order of nations) to the national imagination” (Skey, 2011: 12); because, “the definition of Swedishness requires the existence of Danes, Germans and Norwegians” (Lofgren, 1993: 167; quoted in Skey, 2011: 12). In this sense, national belonging, like all other types of collective belongings, is shaped through “other” by the interaction with “other”. Nationalist discourse can be circulated by political actors such as the state, political institutions, elites and the media, but it is the individual who reproduces nationhood by using it in everyday

life. In order for a “we”, referenced by the nationalist discourse, to exist, the need of “other” in the everyday discourse of the individual must inevitably occur.

In the framework of the boundaries of nationhood insiders and outsiders, as stated by Brubaker, “may be defined and identified informally through the use of tacit, uncodified, internalized classificatory schemes, the practical mastery of which is distributed among participants in an interaction rather than monopolized by specialized administrators” (Brubaker, 1992: 30). By creating an external and internal image of ‘the other’, the nationalized agency constructs and promotes its own nationhood (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 91). The definition and boundaries of nationhood is continually reproduced through the “other”, “namely other nations or ethnic groups that are perceived to threaten the nation, its distinctiveness, authenticity and/or independence”(Triandafyllidou, 1998: 594). In other words, when the barrier between “us” inside and “them” outside is built, both the otherhood of groups within the imagined nation and the alterity of foreigners abroad became the subject of this construction process of nationhood (Beyen and Van Ginderachter, 2012: 18). In this sense, the concept of “other” may be categorized as either internal or external (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 600). The former refers to “those that belong to the same political entity with the in-group”, while the latter describes “those that form a separate political unit” (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 600). The analytical importance of this classification is that it lays stress on the different dynamics of conflict between the envisaged nation and the “other”, and the different roles of the two different types of “other” in the reproduction of nationhood. The internal “other” is perceived as a challenge to the claim of homogeneity, unity, integrity and authenticity inherent in the imagination of the nation. The external “other”, which “is easily recognizable as the other, identifiable with another state and so its contrast to the nation must be seen in the context of international relations”, on the other hand, is perceived as a threat to the nation's uniqueness and autonomy in the world of nations (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 603). So to summarize briefly, “the external significant other is perceived as threatening to ‘wipe out’ the nation, while the internal significant other is viewed as threatening to ‘contaminate’ it” (Triandafyllidou, 1998: 603).

In this part of the thesis, focusing on the self/other dimension in the everyday construction of Turkishness I examines the meaning of “other” for the participants from different corners of political spectrum, from different professions, aged 25 to 64, with whom I conducted a semi-structured in-depth interview within the scope of this research and investigate how they draw the boundaries of Turkishness in relation to “other”. Within the scope of this thesis, fourteen female and sixteen male participants were interviewed. Fourteen of these interviewees are the AKP voters; eight of them are MHP voters; and eight of them are CHP voters. While doing this, I will analyze the data obtained from the field under two sub-headings, internal other and external other, using the above-mentioned analytical categorization, in order to reveal more clearly and deeply how and in which ways the image of the other contributes to the reproduction of Turkishness.

Being secular, Hanafi, Sunni, Muslim and Turkish are the unwritten rules in the official nationalist discourse that was dominant in Turkish politics until the early 2000s (Oran, 2018; Akgönül and Oran, 2019: 18). In the 2000s, this ideal citizenship framework has continued to keep all elements except secularism. In addition to this, since the establishment of the Republic, non-Muslim minorities, Alevis, Kurds and leftist political movements have always remained outside this “ideal citizen” category (Akgönül and Oran, 2019: 18). Nevşehir, like many other central Anatolian cities, is a conservative city that historically exhibited a political behavior compatible with this general ideal citizenship scheme and reproduced Sunni, Muslim and nationalist values (Toprak, 2008; Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, 2009).

The findings obtained in the field demonstrate that firstly, the Kurds are in the position of the constant other of Turkishness, as they have been throughout the history of Turkish nationalism for more than a century. In a political atmosphere in which Turkish nationalism increasingly dominates Turkish politics in a radical and racist tone, Kurds are discursively constructed as the other of Turkishness by both AKP, CHP and MHP supporters, in keeping with the spirit of the period. Secondly, Syrian immigrants, who have caused a significant change in Turkey's ethnic demography in the last ten years, are another prominent group that the interviewees construct as the "other". The participants who voted for the Islamist AKP, which

displays an inclusive political discourse towards the issue of Syrian immigrants on the basis of religious brotherhood, approach Syrian immigrants more moderately, highlighting their religious sensitivities. However, for the CHP and the MHP voters, who have a more secular and ethnic understanding of Turkishness, Syrians are the other of Turks in both senses.

Secondly, when we look at the groups that are perceived as a threat to the nation's existence and have separate political units, the West appears as the external "other" of Turkishness in almost all nationalism understandings, whether secular, Islamic or ethnic. In addition, the other group that the CHP voters and a small number of MHP voters frequently refer to while constructing their Turkishness are the Arabs. Lastly, in line with the party's Islamist and nationalist conservative discourse, Israel and the Jews are constructed as the "other" by AKP voters.

5.1. Internal Others

As argued by Vanden Borre and Verschaffel, nationalist logic necessitates foreignness within the imagined national boundary to provide its own legitimacy (Vanden Borre and Verschaffel, 2012: 202). The image of the internal other described with various stereotypes threaten the perception of homogeneity of the nationalized subject. Nationalist logic, itself, is in need of this perception of threat; because the agency who found a legitimate ground for her or his nationalist sensibilities and sense of belonging to a well-defined and superior group in the face of this perceived threat, builds her or his imagination of nationhood on this suitable space.

Historically, Kurds and non-Muslims construct the most crowded "other" of Turkish nationalism (Çağaptay, 2006; Ünlü, 2018). As shown in the previous chapter, the focus points of different nationalist projects in political domain in Turkey have been both ethnic and religious differences, although their density varies. These two categories of otherness, which define the limits of different interpretations of Turkishness, often appear in the language of everyday nationalism in the 2000s (Toprak, 2008; KONDA, 2008; KONDA, 2022). Additionally, in this process in

which we witness that nationalist reflexes all over the world, the interest shown towards the nationalist rhetoric of the far-right parties are increasing, and migration movements is uncontrollably gaining speed because of the war climate in the Middle East, immigrants are at the top of the "other" rankings of the countries they immigrate. Today, according to the data of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 9.456 Syrians under the temporary protection lives in Nevşehir and constitute 3.23 percent of the total population of the province by November 2018. Within this picture, the city hosts the third largest number of Syrians under the temporary protection in the proportion to the local population in the central Anatolia, after Kayseri and Konya.

In the light of the empirical data obtained from the field work, it is possible to argue that Kurds, Syrians and non-Muslims are identified and employed as the internal others in the everyday appearance of Turkishness. By different ways and in different contexts the participants describe their own Turkishness through their perceptions about these domestic “others”.

5.1.1. Kurds: The Others of Turkish Nationalism in Every Period

The Kurdish question has been a historical issue that emerged with the modernization and centralization movements of the Ottoman state at the end of the 19th century (Cizre 2001; Yavuz, 2001). From the establishment of the nation-state in 1923 until the 2000s, the state adopted an assimilationist and at the same time denial rhetoric against the Kurdish question (Yeğen, 1999). In addition, since the armed conflict process that started with the PKK's first armed action in 1984, the Kurdish issue has been handled as a security issue that needs to be resolved with military intervention. In other words, in Turkish state policy and discourse, this question has been dealt with mainly as a terrorism and security issue. Therefore, Kurds have formed one of the most important and favorable enemy images of Turkish nationalism that should be destroyed.

Until the end of the 1990s the official assimilationist Turkish nationalism's argument was that there was no Kurd; even if there were, it is not more than a branch of

Turkishness (Saraçoğlu, 2009). However, in the 2000s, it is observed that the rising reactionary nationalist discourse accepted the existence of the Kurds, but labeled it by some Turkish nationalists as an inferior enemy which threatens society. In other words, the recognition of a separate Kurdish identity did not totally remove the hierarchical domination relationship between the Turks and the Kurds in the eyes of the Turkish nationalists (Saraçoğlu, 2009). On the other hand, the 2000s marked a breaking point in also the state policy and discourse regarding the Kurdish issue. In terms of the government's approach to the Kurdish issue, the most important development in the 2000s was the shift of the state's roadmap from a military struggle to a democratic and peaceful framework, with the "democratic opening process" initiated by the AKP government in 2009. In the first stage of the process, the government took steps to expand the rights and freedoms of the Kurds, mostly in the fields of education, media and culture. In this framework, TRT 6, the state-run Kurdish- language channel started broadcastin in January 2009; this development was followed by the opening of private Kurdish language courses (Öney, 2019). The most striking concrete development of the initiative process took place at the Habur border gate in the autumn of 2009. In October 2009, when the opening process continues, 34 PKK members from Northern Iraq as a "peace group" entered to Turkey and were welcomed with great enthusiasm at the Habur border gate (Öney, 2019). This event, which occupied the media, politics and public agenda for days, caused reactions from the Turkish nationalist side. During this process, the government also conducted negotiations with PKK officials and PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. However, this paradigm shift in the state policy and discourse did not last long; and in 2011, the process ended in failure. In fact, the dissolution of the DTP (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, Democratic Society Party), a pro-Kurdish political party, by the Constitutional Court at the end of 2009 and the banning of 37 members, including the party leaders, were an indication that the initiative process would reach a dead end. Finally, the 2011 elections, in which the AKP lost significant Kurdish votes, were considered the end of the initiative process (Öney, 2019).

When evaluated in terms of everyday nationalism, the role of this optimistic climate, which started in 2009 and ended in 2011, and the political actors involved in the process, in the everyday enactment of Turkishness in which Kurds are constructed as

the "other" is quite remarkable. So much so that it is possible to argue that Kurds, as an image of other, become a significant category, in the context of the PKK, the HDP, the Democratic Opening Process and Habur incident. The field study carried out from the perspective of everyday nationalism has also shown that the Kurdish identity is constructed as the most significant group of internal other in discursive patterns of Turkishness applied by many participants. There are a wide range of prejudices ranging from denial of recognition to ethnic hatred and then deal with these individually by providing examples in this part of the thesis. In this way, I aim to give insights into the diverse ways in which Kurdish identity is continuously produced and reproduced as other by the interviewees.

One of the most remarkable discursive thought patterns observed, concerning Kurds, is that "...they are not Kurds anyway; it is not clear what they are..." In this pattern of otherization, as the subject of otherness, Kurdish identity is insulted by accusing it of "being neither fish nor fowl".

We have to distinguish a nation from the traitors who are in that nation. Currently, our state does not actually have any armed conflict with this Kurdish people. This is the armed clash of the state with an insidious enemy that is hidden inside the Kurdish people, that is, the identity of which is not even known or even what it is. And I support it to continue. They are not Kurds anyway; it is not clear what they are... Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

In Sertaç's narrative, the other is described as "traitors hidden within the Kurdish people". According to him, the group categorized as the Kurdish people is divided into "true Kurds" and "traitors", so being a Kurd actually carries the potential of "being a traitor". In this sense, the Kurds are presented as a heterogeneous and controversial image of the other in the face of the Turkish nation, which is imagined as a monolithic and homogeneous whole, although they are subjected to the distinction between the "treacherous" Kurd and the "real" Kurd by the participant.

Now there are imprints from the boots of terrorists killed in recent days, there are Canadian, Russian, Belgian, French militia, terrorists who joined the YPG forces. Or whatever you say, they say guerrilla, there are guerrillas. Now, when they say, Mr. Abdullah Öcalan, they applaud loudly. This is ignorance, I think. First, research Abdullah Öcalan's village, Abdullah Öcalan's village is not a Kurdish village, but an Armenian village. It is a village of Halfeti. Go and investigate, there were Armenians

in that region in Halfeti, Gaziantep, Birecik, and Nizip. That village is also an Armenian village. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

The claim that the Kurds are not actually Kurds is one of the discursive themes that Cahit uses while constructing the Kurds as the other. The other is "Armenians disguised as Kurds" for the participant, who sees himself as having the right to determine and say who is what by making an analysis of origin. What Cahit wants to draw attention to here is that the "Turkish enemies" who present themselves as "Kurds" are actually non-Muslim Armenians. Here, both non-Muslims are labeled as the natural and eternal enemies of the Turks, and the Kurdish identity is marginalized, devalued and stigmatized as an ambiguous, hybrid category where this obvious enemy nestles.

So, this is my own opinion, which, well, ninety percent accuracy, all of those people who come from those backgrounds who adopt themselves as Kurdish Alevi are in Armenian Tunceli, for example. They are all Armenians. They are not Kurdish. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

Now these guys are already nuisance people. The second is not a group from the Kurdish people, in fact the PKK. We have seen this many times. Here, they are not Muslims, people gathered from different ethnic backgrounds. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

In a similar way, in the narratives of Ümit and Ozan, both the Armenian identity and the Kurdish identity are simultaneously constructed as the other. Both participants, like Cahit, see Islam as an important criterion of future Turkishness. Kurds, as a non-Turkish Muslim group, is seen as category that can potentially be dissolved and assimilated in the pot of Turkishness. However, from this point of view, the loyalty of Armenians to the Turkish nation "naturally" as a group not suitable for Turkification is always questionable and they are "naturally" the other. For this reason, in their narratives, where they cannot directly exclude the Kurds, they find the remedy by claiming that the Kurds are actually Armenians.

Moreover, by the way of criminalization of the Kurdish movement, Kurdish identity is reproduced, legitimized and sustained as "other" who threatens "us" and "the integrity of the homeland". Many participants tend to associate Kurds with the PKK and terrorism. Particularly in the context of "Kurdish Opening" initiated by the AKP

in the mid-2009, the anger towards the Kurds and the "other" image attributed to them is legitimized through the reaction to the PKK. Depicting an entire ethnic group as terrorists and "from the PKK", many interviewees reject the existence of a Kurdish problem. According to them, there is not a Kurdish issue in Turkey, only "terrorism" and the PKK issue.

Turkey does not have a Kurdish problem. We have no such problems. We have a PKK problem. We have a terrorist problem. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

According to Gökhan, the Kurdish issue is more of a problem of terrorism than of recognition and democratic rights. For him, the real Kurds are prospective Turks, who are loyal to the Turkish nation, assimilated and cease to be a threat. The source of the issue, known as the Kurdish question, is the terrorist acts of a criminal group that rebelled against the Turkish state.

You cannot sit at the table with them. So I don't think of them as Kurds. Don't sit at the table with a terrorist. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

In a similar way, Nurdan also accuses the Kurdish movement, which seeks legal recognition with its Kurdish identity and refuses to be Turkified, for not representing real Kurds; while doing this, she points to a group that, as the original Kurd, has surrendered to the domination of Turkishness, has become assimilated, Turkified, and can only be described as a different cultural motif, a color. Therefore, in her expressions, the Kurdish issue is described as the issue of the first group, that is, of the criminalized traitors.

On the other hand, in the context of the HDP, Kurds are labeled as "terrorist and separatist elements" by some participants. Although it is a legal and constitutional political party, it creates a productive space for the participants in othering and marginalizing the Kurds discursively.

Is HDP equals PKK? If it is not directly the PKK, its political body supports what we see as well, in these ditch incidents, pits digging events... They set up ditches and trenches with municipal vehicles. In other words, deputies attend the terrorist funeral. If it is not terrorism, what it is? Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

We are behind the political group of the PKK, the HDP in the parliament. This is a shame for us. So even separatist, terrorist elements are better than us. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

In Ayşe's and Gökhan's narratives, Kurdish identity is identified with the HDP. The HDP, on the other hand, is presented as a part of a terrorist structure rather than being an actor in the field of democratic politics. Therefore, the discourse that the HDP, which is thought to represent the Kurds, has an organic connection with the PKK, contributes to the construction of the Kurdish identity as the "other" through the criminalization of the Kurdish movement. All in all, the PKK and the HDP act directly as the subject of all the implications that cannot target the Kurds with the fear of being labeled as racist. Kurdish issue and Kurds are mentioned in relation to the PKK as part of an international conspiracy.

Another remarkable thought pattern is the way in which Kurds are constructed as "malicious people" by Turkish nationalist agent. Actually, this malevolence is associated with being Kurdish. Here, ulterior motive is constructed as an ethnic characteristic attributed to the essence of Kurdishness. Therefore, it is possible to clearly see traces of ethnic stigma against Kurds in narratives that associate Kurdish identity with "innate malevolence".

Q: What do you think about the democratic opening process?

S: I find it very wrong. We should never have done that solution process with them. That solution process ruined our country. So it was a wrong idea, it was politics. Would you sit at the table with the enemy? Forgive me; can you sit on the table with a snake? What does a snake do? Snake stings. Well, they are snakes, and snakes are better than these. They are worse. What did they do in that solution process for 3 years? They accumulated bombs, they opened trenches. We have 1500-2000 martyrs. Evil and treachery is in their soul, in their character. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

According to Serap, who considers the Kurdish issue as a problem of treason and terrorism and severely criticizes the democratic opening process, the main reason underlying this issue is that Kurds are bad and treacherous people as a requirement of their ethnic character. In her narrative, Kurds are stigmatized with pejorative labels such as traitor and troublemaker. These disparaging character traits attributed to them are presented as a normal and inevitable consequence of their being Kurds themselves. Thus, the Kurdish identity, which is subject to othering through ethnic

stigma, is constructed as the eternal enemy of the Turk in the context of the democratic opening process which according to Serap consists of a futile effort and a wrong attempt.

Moreover, handling the issue within the frame of dominance and submission, many participants converge on the perception that Kurds are “traitor” and “ungrateful”. In basis of their perception of Kurdish identity, Kurds are constructed and described as “internal enemies” who revolt against the state despite the many opportunities, rights and freedoms that Turks offer them.

We gave the Kurds an opportunity, but they couldn't evaluate it. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

According to Nazlı, the democratic opening process is a sign of the goodwill and effort of the Turks for the solution of the Kurdish issue; and Turks showed their generosity to Kurds by offering them this opportunity, despite all their betrayal. Additionally, in her narrative, the failure of the process is explained by the Kurds' ungratefulness. Here, Turkishness is presented as a supreme identity with the privilege of "offering an opportunity" in a relationship of domination, while Kurdish identity is described as the side of this relationship that one should obey and be grateful for. For Nazlı, what ends the process is that the Kurds are ungrateful people who do not have this sense of gratitude expected of them. Therefore, in the context of the opening process, the participant describes the Turks as a "noble" nation that does its part for the solution of the Kurdish issue, while stigmatizing the Kurds as an "ungrateful" nation that missed this opportunity.

The sense and claim of victimhood is another common discursive pattern for the discursive construction of Kurds as “other” among participants. In this direction, many of them argue that in order to destroy the image of the oppressed, created by the Kurds, who show themselves as victims to the world public opinion on the so-called discrimination claim, the state has actually victimized its own children, namely the Turks. It is possible to explain this position among the participant with the concept of competitive victimhood which is defined as ‘a tendency to see one's group as having comparatively suffered relative to an out-group’ (Young and Sullivan, 2016: 30). In

the narratives of many participants, the allegations of discrimination against the Kurds and the existence of the Kurdish problem are denied through this competitive victimization discourse. In fact, it is possible to say that the belief that Turks' rights are entrenched by the Kurds is very prevalent in many participants. This discourse of self- victimization provides a suitable ground to develop an attitude against Kurds in which they are otherized as “unthankful”.

A Kurdish citizen has acquired what I have not achieved on these lands, both economically and as a status. So, like everyone else on this geography, they have some rights. But I disagree that they are in different searches by bringing up some problems in the region where they live. So I am suffering from this problem, so this state against me... It is not logical, I think. Özdemir, 57, retired teacher/ journalist, CHP

According to Özdemir, for example, the fact that the Kurds rebelled against this state, despite having the same citizenship rights as him, and even having economic opportunities and positions that "even" he could never have, is the height of ingratitude. He claims that as a Turk, he is the victim rather than the Kurds, who are fed by a discourse of victimization, built on a false claim of discrimination. The participant ignores the allegations of ethnic discrimination, which constitute the basis of the rights of the Kurds, with the competitive self- victimization rhetoric.

We never allowed Kurds to do propaganda at the university. Now, when we become a police station in the solution process, privilege was given to them. They were crushing us. But, well, even if we complained, the police, the prosecutor, was not standing behind us. Nobody was taking care of us. They said that we cannot damage the solution process here. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

In a similar way, Ümit, who expresses his discomfort with the visibility of the Kurdish movement at every opportunity, also believes that the "tolerant" attitude of the government towards the Kurds in the democratic opening process made them victims. Therefore, he gives voice to his reaction to the process and the Kurdish movement through the discourse of victimhood. As a result, in the context of the democratic opening process, it reproduces its own Turkishness by marginalizing the Kurdish identity through the comparative self- victimization rhetoric.

Furthermore, in this discourse of victimization, Habur incident emerges an important reminder context that is engraved in the memories of many participants. In this

sense, the incident acts as a catalyst that activates nationalist reactions of the participants by damaging their national pride.

You can find me very nationalist about the process of democratic opening. I think both the war and the peace are made between the countries. Not with terrorists! No one can tell me about the victimization of the Kurds while the real children of this country are martyred. Women in the Southeast are better than us in terms of democratic rights... They still want some rights. I was angry when there was a Habur affair. Then I was in Mardin. Even those of Kurdish origin there swore. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

As can be seen in the above quotes, in Nuriye's narratives in which they construct Kurds as other of their nationhood through competitive self-victimization rhetoric, the Habur incident stands out as an important reference point. According to them, the Turks, whom they both describe as the "real children of this country", are a "noble and proud" nation that has shown their good intentions towards the Kurds, despite all the pain and the injustices they have suffered. In their narratives, the Turkish nation is presented as the victim side of this conflictual relationship; and the Habur incident, on the other hand, is a turning point that clearly reveals this victim position of the Turks.

One of the most widespread discursive patterns regarding Kurds is that "I have Kurdish friends too". It means "I am not racist" and "there are good Kurds also". On the other hand, this expression is usually followed by sentences beginning with "but", which include a series of arguments about why and how Kurds are perceived as the "other" of Turkishness.

So, for example, I have many Kurdish friends here in Nevşehir. I mean, I do not think, I do not remember at all, I do not remember that I think with such a racist mentality, or this Kurdish, this Armenian, this Greek ... I do not remember what I said ever. But of course I react to those who want to stir up this country. Of course I react to those who want to divide this country. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

According to Ozan, being friends with Kurds is a clear proof that he is not racist. With this expression, he argues that the reaction he felt towards the Kurds was not due to their ethnic identity, but to their intention to harm national unity and integrity. Therefore, the participant, who positions himself in an objective position,

sees the Kurds as a threat to the integrity of the Turkish nation. The Kurds are constructed as the "other" through this perception of threat.

This pattern is accompanied by the attempt to distinguish Kurdish population from the PKK; and argues that Turkish citizen of Kurdish origin do not have any problem with the Turkish state and Turks in general. This discourse of "my Kurdish brothers", at the same time, might be evaluated as a discursive strategy which establishes a hegemonic relationship discursively.

I also have Kurdish friends, maybe more nationalists than me. Not every Kurd is from the PKK. The PKK should not be understood when it comes to Kurdish. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

When the democratic opening process started, I thought it was an artificial opening. Because it was artificial, it was shelved so... It was not realistic anyway. I have many Kurdish friends, and I am talking to them. What they say is that they are not PKK members. They are Kurdish. They have a Kurdish identity, but they say they are not PKK members. So we definitely say, that they stand by the Republic of Turkey. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

The approach that considers the Kurdish issue as a terror and security problem is clearly seen in the statements of Ercan and Perihan. Such a perspective brings along a distinction between good Kurds and bad Kurds. While the good Kurds, described by the participants as our "Kurdish brothers", refer to a group that obeys the Turkish state and does not aim to exist with its own ethnic identity, the bad Kurds correspond to the image of an enemy who is PKK militant or sympathizer, aiming at the unity and integrity of the nation. Here, the expression "I also have Kurdish friends" is another way of saying "I am not hostile to good Kurds, but to bad Kurds". However, contrary to appearances, this expression includes the construction of Kurdish identity as the other rather than recognizing and empathizing with it in an egalitarian relationship and understanding. Because what makes the "brother" and "friend" Kurd here acceptable is that he is subject to the unequal hegemonic relationship established between the groups, without being visible with his own identity and demands, that is, in a sense, her/ him Turkification

Furthermore, the paranoia of division in the social memory, created by the Treaty of Sevres, signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies of the First World War in

1920, and which paved the way for the partition of the Ottoman territories among Greece, France, Great Britain and Italy, and the establishment of an independent Kurdish and Armenian states is defined as the "Sèvres Syndrome" (Kirişçi, 2003: 284-294). The term, referring to a conspiracy theory that the Western powers are planning to divide Turkey, on the one hand mobilizes anti- Western sentiments among nationalized agents; on the other hand, it contributes to embodying the domestic enemy of a nation, the collaborator of the West. In fact, the anxiety that the nation, which is imagined as a monolithic whole, will be divided and shared by the enemies, emerges as one of the most significant discursive sources of nationhood construction. The perception that there is a life and death war against those who try to divide the homeland makes the individual consciousness of nationhood and the sense of belonging to a national entity almost visible. In this sense, the paranoia of division is one of the most powerful thought patterns which nourishes the perception and sense making of Kurds as an internal other.

The problem is not that the rights of the Kurds are not given. People of Kurdish origin served as presidents and prime ministers in this country. That's not the point. The point is to divide Turkey and exploit its underground and aboveground riches by collaborating with the global power. That's why they shouldn't try to make the separatists look innocent to us... Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

In Ahmet's narrative, the Kurds represent the domestic enemy as a collaborative group that serves the West's purpose of dividing Turkey. The paranoia of division contributes significantly to the labeling of the Kurds as an "other" who is distrusted and suspected. In other words, the Kurdish identity is marginalized as a dangerous enemy that threatens the existence and integrity of the Turkish nation through the discourse of divisiveness.

As a result, Kurds are still the most significant image in the process of the subjective construction and reproduction of internal other at everyday level. They are perceived, imagined and reproduced discursively as an internal other and enemy in the mind of nationalized agency by the way of accusation of being rootless and hybrid group, criminalization and marginalization, humiliation of being treated as malevolent traitors, competitive self- victimhood rhetoric, establishment of unequal hegemonic relationship and discourse of divisiveness. Additionally, Kurds, as an image of other,

become a category, significantly, in the context of the PKK, the HDP, the democratic opening process and Habur incident.

5.1.2. Syrians

Nevşehir is the one of the 62 satellite cities that hosts the highest asylum seekers and refugees, most of whom originate in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, in Turkey (Okuyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 37-84). According to the statistics of UNHCR, at the end 2016, the population of concern to UNHCR at Nevşehir is 14.388. The number of the Syrians under the temporary protection within this figure was 5.706. Today, according to the data of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 13.867 Syrians under the temporary protection lives in Nevşehir and constitute 4.31 percent of the total population of the province by May 2022.³⁸ Within this picture, the city hosts the third largest number of Syrians under the temporary protection in the proportion to the local population in the central Anatolia, after Kayseri and Konya. Apart from this point, it is very important to examine the perceptions and practices towards Syrians in Nevşehir, which appears as a nationalist and conservative Central Anatolian city considering the voter behavior and political culture. Such an inquiry will also help us to understand the meaning of the “other” image and anti-immigrant rhetoric in the construction of everyday nationhood.

In the light of the empirical data obtained from the field work, it is possible to argue that Syrians function as the internal ‘other’ in the construction of Turkishness at everyday level through the diverse ways and in some contextual situations. The process of othering towards Syrians in nationalized agency’s attitudes behaviors and discourses happens by the way of pro-war rhetoric, perceived threat about Syrian population size in Turkey, discussions of granting citizenship to Syrians and ethnicization of crime.

³⁸ Statistical data published by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management on 26 May 2022 on the population distribution of Syrians living under temporary protection in Turkey by provinces <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

From the period of national struggle which preceded the establishment of the Republic of Turkey the army and the war have acted as a crucial discursive viaduct which is transmitted to the society by all ideologies that contain Turkish nationalism through popular culture products (Altınay and Bora, 2002: 147). As one of the cornerstones of the mindset of Turkish nationalism, the myth of warfare has infiltrated the language of everyday nationalism, apart from the nationalist discourse of the state, political actors and official ideology. Therefore, warrior rhetoric appears as one of the most frequently used tools in Turkish nationalism's crowded discursive baggage, which is too crowded just like a full-fledged toolbox. While realizing the discursive construction of their nationalism, individuals refer to the "warrior spirit" that they believe makes the Turkish nation "superior" than others, and add the "defect" of their being "not fighting" to the basis of their prejudiced attitude towards Syrian migrants. In doing so, individuals both clarify the limits of the fictional definition of nationhood through the distinction of us and them, and also continuously reproduce the Turkishness and Turkish nationalism within this framework.

Today, while Uyghur Turks are tortured in China, while those babies are stabbed, buried in the living ground, raping women in front of their husbands, while a Turk is doing this (to strengthen the meaning of hitting the table), we did not take them to our country, we could not take care of them, but today we take Syrians, a Syrian who sells their homeland, to our homeland, who knows what this guy will do to us tomorrow. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

Syrian men, who came to our country should have defended their country, they should have war for their country. But we could set up refugee camp for Syrian women and children somewhere within our borders and take them there. This is humanitarian aid. But we shouldn't have taken the men. They themselves should have gone to war, not the youth of my country. When they enjoyed themselves on our beaches, they abused verbally and visually, our youth went there and martyred. I'm sorry for these. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

Pro-war rhetoric internalized by many participants in otherizing Syrian refugees find its most concrete expression in this sentence: "If we were, we would fight our country!" Most of the participants interviewed in the scope of this research consider the case of Syrian refugees who escaped from war conditions as "traitorism". Especially, for most of them, who are uncomfortable with the visibility of young Syrian men in the public sphere, and accuse them of being pursuit of individual

pleasure when their homeland is in danger. This situation is evaluated as "the degradations and unreliability" by many. Therefore, this discourse that marginalizes and humiliates immigrants, and affirms the war through the facts of "homeland" and "martyrdom", blessed by nationalist ideology, is presented as an argument that also constitutes a basis for distrust towards immigrants.

I think they're traitors, aren't they? Didn't children fight at the age of 14 in Çanakkale? Weren't they human beings? Did they not know how to escape? 14 years old, 15 years old... I mean... Syrian men, aged between 18 and 40 should not have been allowed to enter Turkey. They had to stay at their country and fight. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

Our love of country and nation is very different. For Syrians who came to Turkey the love of homeland and flag is not like us. I criticize this. Al in all, our culture and history are glorious. They don't have that. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

I wouldn't be disturbed by my children studying with immigrant children. Because children have a special place for me. Children are innocent, pure and sinless. I wouldn't be bothered by it, from studying together. But especially when I see Syrian young people, I get very nervous. They are unemployed. They left their country and came here. I'm sure that as Turks we wouldn't leave our country. So, we wouldn't have escaped. Yes, the war is very difficult, people may come to protect their children, maybe their families, but we wouldn't have left. Leyla, 41, company executive, AKP

On the other hand, the "treason" of the Syrians, the other, is a discourse that is made sense of the "patriotism" of the Turks, the "us" category. While most of the participants discursively build nationhood through the dichotomy of "us" and "them", they develop, at the same time, a kind of cultural hierarchy by emphasizing the "warrior", "patriotism", "glorious history" and ultimately "superior cultural characteristics and nobility" of the Turks. This instrumental relationship with history in the mind world of the nationalist perpetrator is filled with images of victory.

What makes us Turkish is our warrior spirit, I think. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

According to the participants, what distinguishes the Turkish nationhood from the others is the loyalty to a piece of land which they call "homeland" enough to die for it. Undoubtedly, this definition of "Turkishness", which refers a description of a "homeland" based on official ideology and war narratives, and the sanctity of the war for its sake, also contains a different reflection of the unequal relationship established

with Syrians coded as “the other” in their minds. Because “fighting”, as one of the characteristics that are unique to Turkish culture and attributed to superiority, is an occasion of honor that does not exist in their culture. This deprivation is instrumentalized by participants who have adopted anti-immigrant discourse in a way that legitimizes the humiliation and even rejection of the culture of immigrants.

Secondly, the fear of losing the majority of population in the participants who place themselves as a part of the dominant ethnic group find its expression in this sentence: “Syrians are constantly giving birth to children!” In the encounters of different ethnic identities, the fear of losing its status and privileges in the dominant group, causing an increase in nationalist reflexes, paves the way for coding this situation as a threat to their nationhood and articulating this fear to their anti-immigration rhetoric. The socio-psychological explanation of the positive correlation between the relative size of ethnic groups that have become the target of discrimination in the total population and the discriminatory attitudes they face is based on the perception of threat and competition (Semyonov, et al., 681- 701). In this context, the increase in the perception of competitive threat can be interpreted as the striker of the discriminatory attitude towards refugees and immigrants in the settled people. The emphasis placed on the population size of the refugee and immigrant groups and the fact that this is considered a danger can be seen as a precursor of the rise of discriminatory and even racist attitudes and behaviors in society (Quillian, 1995: 586-611).

They are already reproducing, increasing. They will forget us too, too, and they will forget us here, if you dig up the land, the Syrian comes out! We became strangers in our own country! Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

...For example in Nevşehir, our women are using birth control methods. But unfortunately this is not the case in Syrians. They will shortly exceed our population, as times go. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

As can be seen in the above quotes from the narratives of Raşit and Nuriye, the increase in the population size of the targeted subgroup may also lead to an increase in discriminatory and hostile attitude towards the group in question, fed anger and dissatisfaction. Anger and fear of population growth becomes an important argument for marginalization and otherization, which plays an important role in the construction of nationhood.

They have to be educated, I think so, just because I'm human, frankly. How can you distinguish? But still...Because they're very different culturally to us. At least, different schools should be opened... It can be like, if we can do this as National Education, if you can teach these children, our culture, Turkishness, the history of the Russians as they did to the Turkic Republics, it's okay. Let's say this is your history, we succeed. Let them feel Turkish too. But if we can't do it... They have to live assimilation, they have to live. But my children should not undergo assimilation, so let her go, what can I do... Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

In addition, as can be seen in Leyla's expressions, the desire to "assimilate" that arises in the encounters of nationalized agency with "other" can easily find place in the anti-immigration rhetoric. In this context, the nationhood is discursively reproduced by individuals with the belief of the existence of a hierarchical order that legitimates and justifies the assimilation of others for its sake.

Furthermore, discussions of granting citizenship to Syrians constitutes one of the important themes of the marginalizing discourse towards Syrians. Nationalism is defined as an ideology that a group has developed to legitimize their dominant status by some modernist theoreticians (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983). The boundaries of the nation-state mean not only separating those living within those boundaries and those who stay outside, but also creating a space where those who are identified as the members of dominant national groups are "superior" than others within those boundaries. Where a hierarchical structure between groups begins to form in the minds, we cannot talk about an egalitarian relationship. However the principle of citizenship provides a conceptual framework based on equality in terms of rights and duties before law. As a matter of fact, discussions of granting citizenship to Syrians during the fieldwork demonstrate that for the participant who expresses her/ his nationhood through "non-nationhood" of Syrian refugees, having certain rights based on citizenship that is not even shared with the "other" within the boundaries of Turkey, is the expression of "privileged status" that she/ he does not want to lose. In other words, the fear of being equal with "non-Turkish" Syrians plays a crucial role in the enactment of Turkishness in her/his nationalized mindset. In this context, the discussions of granting citizenship to Syrians reveal the fear of losing the privileged status arising from being Turkish in society; because even if citizenship is based, any idea of equality means a conflict with the nationalist thought patterns of the agency.

I do not want Syrians. So I don't want a Syrian to live in my hometown. I do not want to have the same rights with them in my country. Yes, they are our neighbor; and a neighbor needs a neighbor's ash. Let's do our help. But it doesn't have to be registered in my country. Yes, of course, what should the man do, you know, he is coming, I am very upset with the children, especially the children. I feel so sorry for women. But a Syrian is incompatible with my culture. It is just my neighbor culture. I think it hurt me. I do not want my child to marry with a Syrian. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

I wouldn't be very happy (From studying at the same school with my child). Why? I wish there was another school that was suitable for them ... I mean, if they didn't get into us. Either in every respect... Cultural difference, our food, our clothing... You cannot come together for example. It's so uncomfortable ... Side by side with them ... Because there are so many disturbing things. Their odours disturb us. So, I don't know, I don't like their moral status either. They also derange our moral order, they disrupt everything. I wish peace and harmony to their home as soon as possible, then everybody go to their country. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

It can be argued that many of the interviewees participating in the research are concerned and strongly opposed to granting citizenship to Syrians. For Leyla and Serap, who evaluate citizenship from an understanding based on ethnicity rather than a civil understanding, it is not an acceptable situation that people from different cultures have the same citizenship status with them; because even such a possibility causes a break in the "us" and "them" categories, and it challenges nation- centered arguments that feed the nationalist thought schemes.

Nevşehir is a very small place and people are seriously affected by this Syrian issue. They have discomfort. What discomforts are there? They say that after transitioning to the settled order, these people are unemployed, although they receive salaries from the state, help at work, I don't know, whatever it is, we are still hungry or we need it. It does not end, they are in a better position in the health sector than us, they can get examined without paying any fees, without waiting for a line. But our people are waiting for their turn here. These are negative things, not good things. İhsan, 45, graphic designer, AKP

When I go to the hospital, it feels like we are refugees. They are very happy... We became second class citizens in our own country. Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

I am disturbed by the fact that Syrians are privileged about health, for example. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

As seen in the examples above, many interviewees, who are disturbed by a number of rights and privileges given to immigrants regarding the distribution of resources, have expressed their intolerance to having the same conditions with those who are

“not from them”. Apparently, the granting of a number of rights that only he can enjoy within the nation-state borders to Syrian refugees through citizenship contradicts both the “blood ties” and “common culture” elements that they define as components of nationhood. It is clearly criticized with nationalist motives that Syrian refugees also benefit from some basic services such as education and health, which the state is obliged to offer to its citizens.

Will they be citizens? For example, while my own child is trying so hard, they will be admitted to universities without exams, I don't know if it is right or wrong... But I want to learn a lot. Leyla, 41, company executive, AKP

You know, they led them to university without exams. Many rights were granted to them... For this reason, they are awoken, now. It shouldn't be that much. We can't feed ourselves. Will we also feed them? Belgin, 58, retired bank employee/ manager at a Common Health and Safety Unit , CHP

The claim that Syrian refugees can enter without examination to universities in Turkey emerges as an urban legend in many interviews. However, international student quotas which are granted to all other foreign nationals and are allocated in different numbers for each university and each department of each university, have been in our higher education system since long time ago. This claim, which is often placed on the legitimacy basis of anger towards Syrian refugees, is used to form and reproduce the boundaries of nationhood through the dichotomy of "us" and "them" together with the words "while my children are standing ..."

Lastly, “ethnicization of crime”, defined as “to specify in an insistent way the origins of the persons who committed crimes” (The report of ICERD, 2012)³⁹ appears one of the most salient ways in which most participants imagine and label Syrian refugees as the other of Turkishness. The assumption that Syrians refugees are the source of many crime and problem in the society is one of the most important basis of their stigmatization as “enemy” by some participants.

All kinds of scum in Syrians ... When they came here, Nevsehir was corrupted. They degenerated our culture. For example, we learned how to make drugs from Iran and drugs. Is it possible to expect any favor from the people who left their homeland and

³⁹<https://www.unionedirittiumani.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Information-paper-on-racist-hate-speech-Italian-network-on-racial-discrimination.pdf>

nation? Theft, corruption, extortion, harassment, rape, whatever is there. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

Syrian refugees disrupted and regressed the social fabric of Nevşehir. Already going back, we got on a slightly faster train. Drug addiction has increased, so has increased. Because those who do this job, those who come from outside do not do this job anyway. Particularly, it increased in children, I do not know what morality is, nor did they deteriorate. The escapes from the house have increased, I will say without discrimination in girls and boys here. There was a difference in disguise, a lot of difference in orientation to religion, an increase in abuse cases. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

One of the most frequent points of the marginalizing and exclusionary language directed towards Syrian refugees is the perception and belief that Syrians are the basis of all kinds of public order problems occurring in the city. This thought pattern is presented as an obvious reality, which is almost absurd even to be discussed by almost all of the interviewees who have a negative attitude towards immigrants.

In conclusion, the most prominent frequent points of anti-immigrant rhetoric are the accusations of treason, the fear of losing population superiority, the fear of citizenship and the ethnicization of the crime directed by Syrian refugees by many of the participants. It is the definition of the nation, the “we”, which lies in the subtext of each of these topics, where discourses are concentrated. This definition is manifested as the constant reproduction of nationhood throughout the discursive building processes mentioned above. Describing Syrian refugees as traitor, sly, uncivilized and crimer “other” who take away jobs and privileged status from loyal Turkish citizens nationalized agency, in fact, build and reproduce her/his perception of Turkishness.

5.1.3. Non-Muslims

The nationalized subject, “who owns primary loyalty to the community of national belonging” (Spina, 2018: 4), tends inevitably to define her/himself as a member of a nationally homogeneous group. Religion is one of the most important lines that determine the limits of being a member of this group. Historically, Turkishness was described as an identity which associated Islam by the official hegemonic nationalist discourse (Çağaptay, 2004; White, 2014). In this framework, both individual

narratives and knowledge about historical events related to non- Muslim groups in Turkey and the manners and attitudes of the participants towards non- Muslims currently living in Turkey explain us a lot about the place of Islam in defining Turkishness and the perception of non- Muslim as “other” in everyday nationhood.

On the one hand, although it is a social phenomenon (Halbwachs, 2018), “collective memory is not history, though it is sometimes made from similar material” (Kansteiner, 2002). The author continues as follows:

It is a collective phenomenon but it only manifests itself in the actions and statements of individuals. It can take hold of historically and socially remote events but it often privileges the interests of the contemporary. It is as much a result of conscious manipulation as unconscious absorption and it is always mediated. And it can only be observed in roundabout ways, more through its effects than its characteristics. (Kansteiner, 2002)

Considering this definition, it is possible to argue that the domain where a collective memory, which is open to be manipulated by political elites and media, exposes itself is the mundane everyday space of individuals. From this perception, the attitudes and expressions of individuals are both producers and consumers of collective social memory. A social context and membership (belonging-possessiveness) is required for the individual memory to be formed cumulatively (past, present, future continuity, accumulation of memories). The reciprocal relationship between social memory and individual memory inevitably plays a crucial role in shaping the belonging consciousness of human groups. In this connection, as well as being remembered, the demonstrated resistance against changes and breaks, which are significant turning points in social history, and the desire for forgetting them tell us something. This silent attitude adopted towards significant social events such as migration that transforms the identity of the locality, and which reveals itself in the stories of individuals, should be considered as a part of the nationhood building process; because social memory is processual, determined by remembering, by elimination, by selection.

This part of the thesis aims both to trace the remnants of the lost cosmopolitan structure of Anatolia, where has historically been the scene of many encounters

between different cultures and identities, in the local social memory and to thought patterns about non- Muslims currently living in Turkey in the mind of nationalized agent. In this framework, the reflection of the non- Muslim migration that changed the demographic structure of Nevşehir in the beginning of the twentieth century in the social memory will be analyzed through individual narratives of the participants. Undoubtedly, tracing the remains of non-Muslims in the memory of the local through the stories, biographies, experiences passed down from generation to generation helps us analyze how the subjective nationhood building process works.

The desire to imagine a homogeneous national belonging, less than heterogeneity, necessitates breaking the memory flow about different cultural identity groups. According to the findings obtained in this thesis, it is possible to talk about a non-Muslim image that operates in very different ways in the collective memory of Nevşehir from the denial of their history to the neighborhood nostalgia. These various images in the minds of the participants also play an important role in the construction of non-Muslims as the "other" and even accompany the different ways in which they are constructed as the other. On the other hand, the manners and attitudes of the participants towards non- Muslim groups currently living in Turkey say us a lot about their perceptual construction of these groups as internal other. The process of othering towards non- Muslim groups in nationalized agency's attitudes, behaviors and discourses may happen in many different ways. However, in the scope of this thesis, the subjective discourses and tendencies of the participants about both historical image and the current status of non- Muslim groups clustered around five salient ways, arguments and perceptions about non- Muslims: the unity of religion as precondition of living together, rhetoric of betrayal, the belief that non-Muslims are pawns of the West, neighborhood nostalgia and the neglecting strategy.

Firstly, the claim that religion is an important criterion in determining who is a member of the nation and who is the other is the shortest way to construct non-Muslims as the other of Turks. Considering the unity of religion as a prerequisite for living together indicates imagining the Turkish nation as a homogeneous population free from non-Muslim elements in a way that leaves no doubt.

I don't know how it would have happened if there were so many non-Muslims living in Nevsehir today. Today, how do we treat our neighbor who is a Muslim and a Turk today, how could we treat them. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

We exclude Syrians even though they are Muslims. Although we belong to the same religion with them ... Imagine you are in the same neighborhood as a Jew. I think it would not be very healthy. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

The above expressions show that according to Ayşe and Ozan, belonging to the same religion, in other words, being a part of Islamic ummah is perceived as the precondition of Turkish nationhood. Therefore, for many participants, in the hierarchical order between others, non-Muslims occupy a more "other" position than Syrian immigrants. The centuries-old history of these groups in these lands is ignored; and Islam is presented as the most important constituent element of Turkishness.

As I have just mentioned, many ethnic groups and religious groups in our country live in peace. We don't have the slightest discomfort at this point. So, either Armenians or other people from different countries especially living in the coastline, or foreign residents especially settled in Istanbul... We see them as our own citizens, unless they contribute to this country, are not hostile, comply with legal rules, do not take any action or discourse that disturbs society. We do not refrain from living with them. Erhan, 46, Tax professional, AKP

There are many Armenians and Greeks still living in Turkey. This is a fact, and we see them as our own citizens. Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

Furthermore, the above expressions demonstrate how the hierarchical relationship between non-Muslims and Muslim Turks imagined and formed in the perceptions of the individuals reflects on and even penetrate the discourse through the duality of Turks-by nationality and Turks by citizenship. These statements reveal how even the participants who are willing to live together with non-Muslims discursively construct non-Muslims as the "other" with this hierarchy they have established. Discursively, while Muslim Turks are considered to be the "natural citizens" as "the real owners of the country", non-Muslims are depicted as the residents of the country who can only be accepted as "like" citizens by these original citizens in everyday nationalism. Here, what determines the boundaries of nationhood is not having citizenship of the Republic of Turkey. On the contrary, subjective construction of Turkishness by everyday actors is nourished from the perception of distinction between originary

and so-called citizenship. Non- muslims, who are treated as citizens, as a favor, because they are not Muslims, even if they have citizenship, are marginalized by nationalist agency, discursively.

Secondly, the rhetoric of betrayal emerges as one of the most frequently used discursive tools in the construction of the non-Muslim image in social memory. In the personal narratives of many participants, non-Muslims are described as the West's collaborators who "shot the Turks in the back" in the First World War. Through this image in the collective memory, non- Muslims are discursively reproduced as "the other" who always has the potential to betray the Turks.

Actually, I think, in the Ottoman period, especially during the Dardanelles war, while Muslims were martyred, they survived. Then, I think that the remaining minority, non-Muslims, and their mind structure have ruled us, the country for almost 80 years. Of course I don't trust them. After all, these are people who betrayed us in one way or another and shot us in the back. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

For instance, in the narrative of Sertaç, non-Muslims are described as the subject of an almost century-old project of betrayal. According to him, they, who are accused of being part of a secret plan against the Turks in a process starting from the last period of the Ottoman Empire and including the republican period, are the internal enemies against which the Turks should always be on alert.

When I was there (Greece) , I saw those some Greeks who still maintain the megali idea and who say that Turkey is their homeland. Well, we have to exclude these people. In other words, there are still some people who have some bad intentions on this country. They say 'these lands are ours, you have come from outside'. They constantly provoked disturbance at the time. It's called treason! They betrayed this bread. Özdemir, 57, retired teacher, CHP

Another attitude, in which we can clearly see the effect of official history and official ideological discourses, becomes concrete in the expression "if they were obedient enough they would have remained". This rhetoric of betrayal acts as a defense mechanism for the sorrow felt internally for the groups of people displaced by the migration process.

On the other hand, the rhetoric of betrayal brings together the collective memory of non-Muslims and the current controversial issues of today, the discourse of terrorism.

You know, Abdullah Öcalan is an Armenian. In fact, this country is in trouble ... They never gave up. They made it a Kurdish issue ... Their main purpose is to smash us. They are not Kurdish, they are Armenians.” Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

PKK members who died in clashes are always uncircumcised! Why? Because they are Armenians. They are not Kurdish. Anyway, a Muslim will never do what they do. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

In the non-Muslim groups in Turkey, Armenians, who are targeted and labeled as the perpetrator and actor of any threat against national security, constitute the most demonized ethno-religious group. For example, as can be seen in the above expressions of Raşit and Sertaç, the claim that the PKK, that has been carrying out an armed struggle against the Republic of Turkey for more than thirty years, is a terrorist organization composed of Armenian people is shared by many participants. The Armenian identity is coded here as a symbol of the treason and the threat to the survival of Turkishness.

Thirdly, the prevalent belief that non-Muslims are the treacherous collaborators who have been made a cat's-paw by the West is another pattern which reflects one of the ways in which participants marginalize non-Muslim identity to imagine and define Turkishness. Non-Muslims, who once lived in this land and now are accused being of the cat's-paws of the West, are constructed as a part of the process of nationhood building. Additionally, in the minds of many interviewees, the expression non-Muslim is associated with missionary activities of western origin aiming to promote Christianity. Therefore, non-Muslims are domestic "others" produced by this pattern of thought, which identifies Turkishness with Islam and the West with Christianity.

Now of course it would be nice to live with non-Muslims together. But I don't know to what extent we would be in safe... Look at the Western countries! They are still trying to make a fuss in Turkey. What are they doing now? They are trying to utilize even our Alevi citizens to reach their goal... History shows us that non-Muslims were always used as the cat paws of the West in this country. That's why it's so hard to live together. Erol, 64, dentist, AKP

According to Erol, living together with non-Muslims, who have been used as pawns by the West to confuse Turkey throughout history, is a threat to national unity and integrity. In this sense, there is no room for non-Muslim elements in Erol's imagination of a homogeneous nation. They are only "the other" who draws the lines of this monolithic nation.

Well, when I consider the current world order, increasing racial polarization and conflicts, and the game of global powers, I don't approve of living together with those who have utilized as pawn by the West for centuries. Already, in today's world, the countries that inflate, support, and provoke minorities in nation-states are certain. In this sense, I consider being hand in glove with non-Muslims dangerous in terms of the survival of Turkey. Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

Similarly, for Ahmet, Non-Muslims pose a serious threat to Turkey's national interests in the current world order, where minorities in nation-states are provoked by global actors. This claim is reinforced by the image of non-Muslims as "pawns of the west" in the historical narrative. According to him, the non-Muslim communities in Turkey, which has already been used as a tool of the West against the Turks throughout history, is a national security problem; and today they are non-national elements that needs more attention for the survival of Turkey in the era of globalization, in which minorities within nation-states are provoked.

Do not think that non-Muslims mostly stayed in Istanbul, we still know many missionaries here and also in Nevşehir. These activities are said to be under the state surveillance. The state already has the necessary knowledge and research in this regard. But does what we see disturb us, of course. Of course, we said that we are obliged to spread Islam inevitably, and now you think that they have to spread their religion and language. But, this is like trying to sell refrigerators to the Eskimos ! Turkey is a muslim country. It is not possible to accept this. Ihsan, 45, graphic designer/ journalist, AKP

They can live their own religion as they wish. There's nothing wrong with that. Turkey is a country that should be secular, secular country. Secularism is the freedom of religion and conscience... but if it comes to missionary activity, the shape of the question changes there. Here, they cannot sell refrigerators to the Eskimos. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

As can be seen in the above quotes, the expression of "non-Muslim" evokes directly missionary activities in the mind of Ihsan and Cahit. The fear of losing the religious majority and the comfort and privileges of being a part of the dominant group brings with it the constant view towards non-Muslims as a threat and coding them as the

other. Another remarkable point is that it is a Turkish type of secularism⁴⁰ that guarantees the social domination of the Muslim identity that the participants understand from the principle of secularism. In this framework, every belief does not have a chance to exist in social life under equal conditions. Non-Muslims are imagined as enemies which attempt against national unity and integrity with the missionary weapon in a “Muslim country” by many participants. When Islam is described as “the essence of self- being”, the desire for religious homogeneity and maintaining comfortable privilege of Islam within the imagined nation appears as the unwritten laws of Turkishness. Therefore, as emphasized by Çağaptay (2006: 139), Christianity is perceived as a “challenge to their national identity” by many people who define themselves as Turkish nationalists. Another important point that should be emphasized here is that, missionary activities are a threat to the secular part that regards non-Muslims as the cat’s paw of the West, as well as participants with Islamic sensitivity.

Furthermore, the nostalgia for neighborhood with non-Muslims is based on the claim that Turks are the architects of a social order that is inclusive and tolerant enough to live together with people from different cultures and faiths for many years.

I have some things left in my ears from my old relatives. They say, for example, we would not lock the doors during that period. There are many different races. But we have such trust in society that they can even entrust each other their honor. Which, you know, is one of the hardest things for people in our structure. For example, there are those who give the key to the Armenian family next to the door. It was lived in unity and solidarity with very humane attitudes. Right now, maybe we can't trust our door neighbor and give the key. But at that time, you could hand over the keys of your house to a Greek neighbor. You can sleep with the windows open. For example, such a time is mentioned. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

I think it would be great to live with non-Muslims. It's a very nice feeling. In other words, they lived together for years ... A common culture has been formed. It's a very nice feeling. Yesterday, I hosted a deputy in our hotel yesterday, our deputy in Istanbul, even when I told him, I said that the mosque, the church on the opposite side ... What a beautiful event. This is a complete East-West synthesis. The attraction of our country already comes from here. For example, there is a chapel in my hotel. It's a very nice event. The mosque across the street, the church on the other side. And we can live with it. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

⁴⁰ Turkish secularism does not promote a strict separation between state and religion but rather the control of a institutional religion by the state. For more information, see Özgür Heval Çınar and Mine Yıldırım (2014), *Freedom of Religion and Belief in Turkey*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing; Nilüfer Göle (2015), *Islam and Secularity: The Future of Europe's Public Sphere*, Duke University Press, London.

In the context of neighborhood nostalgia, the emphasis that people of different cultures and beliefs once lived “smoothly” in these lands is in the statements of many interviewees who refrain from the perception of nationalism as a kind of racism. As can be seen in the expression of Ayşe, neighborhood nostalgia is, at the same time, a nostalgia for the Ottoman cosmopolitanism. It is also remarkable that many participants, such as Leyla, who talked about non-Muslims with a sympathetic language with a neighborhood nostalgia pattern, used hate language against Syrians. Their nostalgic longing for Ottoman cosmopolitanism and respect and affirmation for the togetherness of different cultures suddenly disappeared when the topic of interviews moves towards Syrian refugees in Turkey.

My late father would talk about non-Muslims ... He would say their names and tell them. They were very rich families. But they were very good people. For example, you know that non-Muslims know that they have a lot of helpfulness to people. They arrived on time, many of the unemployed have been working door in Turkey. They taught people culture so ... Dürdane, 58, retired bank employee, AKP

In this sense, the expression of Dürdane also reveals a striking reality: while hating Syrian refugees so much and seeing them as a cultural threat, embracing the nostalgia of a common culture formed with non-Muslims indicates a class-based dilemma. Non-Muslim figure described with an economic power is not seen as a threat to national welfare as much as Syrian refugees who are labeled as unemployed and uneducated.

The immigration of non-Muslims is related to historical events. In other words, the Ottoman State was not a nation-state. Since it was not a nation-state, it had a wide range of subjects. it was the conditions of that period, this is the conditions of this period. I can live with or without them, this is my hometown after all. It makes no difference to me. In other words, since I have internalized my own country, I live here very well, if this neighborhood is the Armenian neighborhood, the other neighborhood is the Greek neighborhood. Because they were the children of this country. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

On the other hand, the statements of Cahit, as the provincial chairman of Grey Wolves, which a ultranationalist youth organization linked to right-wing nationalist MHP has built all its discourse on the Turkish- Islam synthesis, and his subjective and nostalgic narrative about non- Muslims, show that nationalist discourses imposed by top- down political formations may not be directly and uninterruptedly

received even by the local administrators of the organization. Subjective construction of nationhood, including processes of perception, of evaluation, and of experience, occurs dynamically and perpetually at everyday level.

Fourth and the last of the ways in which most of participants build their Turkishness through non- Muslims is the strategy of ignorance. This nationalized thought pattern, which is observed for non-Muslims in many of the participants, sometimes appears as a state of ignorance and sometimes of indifference. This attitude, which can be summarized with the statement “I am not interested in these issues,” is actually related to the fact that memory ignores what it wants to forget. All the elements that are thought to be a threat to a homogenous social structure in which the individual feels comfortable are excluded from the field of social memory with their past. In the last instance, the expressions such as “seeing Armenians and Greeks living in Turkey as Turkish citizen” or being oblivious from the ancient history and civilizations of non- Muslim groups in Anatolia point to a conscious ignorance hidden behind this fear.

Q: It is known that there was a very large non-Muslim population in the region until the beginning of the 20th century. Do you have any information on this subject?

S: No.

Q: What you hear and know...

S: Oh, they tell, but we don't get much attention. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

For instance, Serap's indifference and ignorance about the non-Muslim population, which has an important place in the history of the city and the region, is a clear example of conscious ignorance. The fact that the participant, who was born and raised in Nevşehir and came from a family from Nevşehir, was not interested in this subject stems from her ideological and nationalist position. According to her, like the society, the historical narrative should be free from non-Muslim elements. Therefore, ignoring these "heterogeneous" elements of a social and cultural history that includes non-Muslims is a conscious choice, a way of constructing non-Muslim identity as the "other".

There are Armenians still living in the region and there are Greeks. We see them as our own citizens. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

They already have our culture. They took some of our things. But only religion is different. But they took our culture because they lived here. They have come here from now on. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

In Erhan's and Nurdan's narratives, there is a different form of this strategy of ignorance. Erhan states that he sees Armenians and Greeks living in Turkey as "like" Turkish citizens, while Nurdan states that she does not feel any discomfort from the existence of these groups, who settled in Anatolia later and adopted Turkish culture. With these statements, both participants actually ignore the ancient history of non-Muslims in Anatolia, and in fact, purify Anatolian history and social structure from non-Muslim traces and make it Turkish. As a result, it is possible to say that Nevşehir has a non-Muslim history that has disappeared in its collective memory. In this case, which is depicted based on the personal narratives of individuals, all four mentioned strategies are interpreted as part of the identity building process. Social memory, which includes "forgetting" of things as well as remembering, tends to cleanse itself from the traces of non-Muslims in these lands, combined with the imagination of a homogeneous social structure.

In conclusion, subjective narratives, perspectives and discursive strategies of the participants about non-Muslims show us that religious categories are used to refer a non-Turkish, potential enemy which treat national unity and homogeneity. In this framework, both individual narratives and knowledge about historical events related to non-Muslim groups in Turkey and the manners and attitudes of the participants towards non-Muslims currently living in Turkey show us in determining the frontier between "we" and "they", in other words "national" and "non-national", religion forms a crucial reference point. The perception of non-Muslims as "other" of Turkishness in everyday nationhood occurs by the way of the discourses of neighborhood nostalgia, betrayal, cat's paw of the West, the neglecting strategy, the unity of religion as precondition of living together, the anger and fears towards missionary activities, the perception of distinction between Turks-by nationality and Turks by citizenship and Armenian phobia.

5.2. External Others

Besides an internal “other” for establishing an imagined nationhood, the existence of an external other which lies outside both geographical and cultural boundaries of what is defined as national has a vital importance. Dichotomy between national and foreign as the ultimate enemy outside the country’s borders paves the way for sharpening the meaning and the limits of nationhood.

Accordingly, this part of the thesis, which investigates the experienced meanings of nationhood in a small and ordinary central Anatolian city, Nevşehir and tries to explore the agency of ordinary people in the reproduction of Turkishness through their own discourse and everyday practices, examines the reconstruction and reproduction of external “other”. In other words, the significant role of the external "other" in the embodiment of Turkishness in everyday life by ordinary actors is investigated. Here, the participants aged between 25 and 64, with different professions and ideological backgrounds, are defined in this thesis as ordinary actors who reproduce Turkish nationhood with their discourse and practices.

In the light of the data obtained from this research, it is possible to argue that in the subjective construction of Turkishness in daily life, three external “other” images, which are outside the borders of the nationally defined geographical area and are defined as a “threat” targeting the survival of Turkishness, come to the fore. In this context, the West, Arabs and Israel appears as the images of external other which play crucial role in the definition and experience of Turkishness in everyday life.

5.2.1. The West

Historically, significant contradictions have been observed in the relationship of the mainstream Turkish nationalism with the West since the nineteenth century. This oscillating relationship between hostility and emulation is described as an important paradox of Turkish nationalism (Kadioğlu, 1996). The fundamental reason of this historical paradox is that on the one hand, while Western civilization is regarded as the unique guide for the Turkish national identity that is tried to be created, on the

other hand, it, the same West, symbolizes the most important "other" in the political and cultural field with regards to the Turkish nationalism (Gökalp, 2010). The ideal of reaching the level of modern civilizations in the early republican era is the underlying motivation for admiration for the West. On the other hand, the profound marks in the collective memory of the society which stemmed from the experiences of the First World War and the War of Independence, brought an inevitable anger towards the West. Especially, the Sevres Syndrome⁴¹ plays a crucial role in the suspicious attitude of the Turkish nationalism towards the West and in the anti-Western tendency in the construction of official mainstream nationalist discourse.

Furthermore, in the 2000s, some developments that nourished and strengthened the negative attitude towards the West in politics and the society occurred. The United States' policies in the Middle East and most especially intervention to Iraq in 2003 that caused the emergence of a Kurdish authority right next to Turkey, the reforms demanded by the European Union in the accession process, the debates and some parliament decisions on the "events of 1915" in many states of the US and many European countries and unresolved Kurdish issue and the position of the West towards this issue prepared the ground for the expansion of anti-Westernist reactions (Bora, 2003; Gökalp, 2010). Therefore, the European Union and the United States became the clear target in the nationalist protestations; and both of these powers were accused of supporting the domestic enemies who want to divide Turkey in nationalist discourses of political elites. As a result, anti-Western nationalist rhetoric became a very strong hegemonic discourse in both public and political spheres in this period.

However, in this section, for the purposes of this thesis, which adopts everyday nationalism approach, it is aimed to understand what the participants mean from the Westerners. In other words, where does the image of the West correspond to in the subjective construction of Turkishness? In this context, the empiric data obtained in the field showed that the description of the Western image as an "external other" has been nourished from certain significant thought patterns. In the light of the findings,

⁴¹ The term refers to Treaty of Sèvres which was signed in 1920 by the Ottoman Empire and Allies of the First World War and sought to division of former Ottoman Empire to create an independent Kurdish, and Armenian states and to add the west of Turkey to Greece (Kirişçi, 2003: 284-294).

it is possible to argue that the claims that the West has a deep historical grudge against Turkey, that the West begrudges Turkey's recent economic and democratic progress, that a perception operation against Turkey is carried out by the West, that Islamophobia is the real reason of the West's hatred of Turkey and the paranoia of division constitute the main arguments of othering of the West in everyday construction of nationhood.

In the discursive repertoire of Turkish nationalism, the image of the "west" gains a meaning within the dichotomy of West and East. This discursive pattern while defining the former as advanced, modern and civilized, describes the latter as backward, primitive and uncivilized, and establishes a hierarchy between these two. For the participants, the West does not only mean Europe and the United States, but also refers the societies believed to represent a set of values rooted in the European enlightenment, including universal principles such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. In this sense, the participants, who built their Turkishness on the otherness of the West, are actually nourished by this orientalist point of view. According to them, the West is a set of nations that claim to represent civilization and development, and in this sense, sees the rest of the world as inferior to them. The imagination of a Turkish nation, which this "advanced" civilization envies, fears and hates, strengthens the proud sense of belonging of the participants. In short, the claim that the Turks are always at the target of the civilized and developed West also includes the claim that the Turkish nation is an equal and important power with the West.

As can be seen in the following quotes, the rhetoric of "the West's revenge against us" appears as one of the most salient nationalist thought pattern which reproduces and nourishes the perception of the West as potential external threat during the field work. This historical grudge is interpreted as the main cause of the hostility and fear of the West, the dangerous other of nationhood, against Turkishness.

Turkey is a country which is always followed by the eye. They are afraid of us. Is it not? As before, there is only one society that the West cannot rule within Eastern societies. They are also Turks. For this reason, they have a grudge against us once.
Erol, 64, Dentist, AKP

In Erol's narrative, the West is presented as an enemy that has been trying to dominate the Turks from time immemorial and hates the Turks because it failed to do so. In addition, the claim that the West is afraid of the Turks places Turkishness in a superior position against this enemy. Additionally, it is possible to argue that the expression of "the west is afraid of us", as a catchword which is frequently encountered in the AKP's neo-Ottomanist nationalist discourse, is adopted and used by many participants like Erol.

The West is still very afraid of Turkey. Look, maybe Westerners are not afraid of Turkey, but they are afraid of the Turks. They are afraid of Azerbaijan, afraid of Turkey. The West is afraid of Turanian states. After all, they know the power of the Turks and what they can do ... Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

The slogan "The West is afraid of us" appears as an important part of Ümit's narrative of Turkishness based on the otherness of the West. This emphasis on fear means a claim of superiority nurturing national pride and self-confidence over the other, that is, the West. Additionally, as we can clearly see in his statements, the conception of Turkishness mentioned here refers to the perception of nationhood based on ethnicity. At the same time, "the power of the Turks", as a powerful and popular nationalist slogan, reveals a racial essence attributed to Turkishness with the emphasis of "blood tie".

Westerners are afraid of us, because they also know that we have Ottoman blood in our blood. We love to rule, to be a leader. Now, there is a growing and strengthening Turkey are now on the face of them. This scares them. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

I'm not an Ottomanist. But we cannot deny our past from the Ottoman Empire. The West does not like our past. We were strong on time, we managed them, we dominated them. Even if we are not very strong now they know our past and they are afraid of it. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

Furthermore, as can be seen in the above quotes, many participants who build his/her own nationhood by the way of embracing the historical legacy of the Ottoman identity, refers the glorious history of the Empire as the main reason for the fear of the West from the Turks. The six hundred years history of the Ottoman Empire which ruled in a wide geography is presented both as a pride and a superiority in the face of the western, which is imagined as the other. The belief that this "other" is

afraid of this history not only strengthens the nationalized agency's perception of "we", but also encourages it; because this belief, at the same time, points to a prestige inequality between parties.

What do Westerners think about us... I mean, as I said, they have a grudge from the Ottoman Empire. In other words, the Ottoman Empire reached Europe until Vienna. Let's think about the Crusades at that time, that is, the Ottoman Empire achieved many victories until the Republican era... So Westerners have a grudge against us, they have an ambition on our lands ... So every state sometimes becomes friends, sometimes enemies but does not give up on their ambitions. So I think they have ambitions on us. So I think they speed up their work. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

Especially, the emphasis on the borders of the Ottoman Empire extending to Central Europe, to "the gates of Vienna" with the words of Sertaç, demonstrates how the annexation of land and military power, which are blessed by the nationalized subject, and combined with the subjective creation of the past, contributed to the subjective construction of nationhood by becoming a point of pride.

The West knows better than us how we will pose a threat for them in the future. For this reason, they will try all kinds of instruments that will make us subject to them and make them dependent on them. In the geography that we have both social and cultural ties with, especially in the Middle East, it is likely that Turkey will be more powerful and to return to the good old days. Westerners will do everything to delay this. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

In addition to the power that the Ottoman Empire once had in Europe, in their own territories, its erstwhile domination in the Middle East, where is on the agenda of the world as a war zone today, is one of the reference points of the past in the mind of nationalized subject. Here, it is important to highlight that drawing an image of Westerner, who fears Turkey's gaining power in the geography where is regarded as Turkey's backyard in terms of social and cultural ties based upon the Ottoman legacy, mainly, means to imagine a national power that is desired in these geographies. The assertion to be an influential and feared national force in the Middle East become a salient part of the construction of nationhood.

Secondly, in the construction of everyday nationhood it is possible to argue that the grudge of "Western enemy" in the meaning world of nationalized subject does not

only originate from the past. On the contrary, the West's envies about today are also one of the main arguments for many participants to describe it as "the other."

They always wanted to see us as sick men. But Turkey demolished this sick man profile in the last fifteen years. For this reason they are jealous of us. The reason of this grudge is this jealousy. Because they cannot interfere with our internal affairs, like in the old days. Rifat, 32, attorney, AKP

Turkey has recently made significant strides. We can say that the number of uneducated people has decreased very much, so everyone started to read. Today, the only reason of their envy is this progress of Turkey. Ihsan, 45, graphic designer/journalist, AKP

The West is jealous of Turkey, this is very clear. Because Turkey is growing and getting stronger now. They cannot no longer keep Turkey under their own hegemony. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

One of the prominent themes in the discourse of "the West is jealous of us" is the dichotomy of old and new Turkey, which is also quite often used by the ruling party in the periods of the AKP government. In fact, the AKP is not the first to invoke this dichotomy.⁴² Although the concept is used in different meanings, in different ways, by different parties from time to time, the right-wing political discourse in Turkey has always employed such a conceptualization (Türk, 2014). The AKP, which declared its slogan in the 2014 presidential election campaign as "On the pathway to a New Turkey", started to use the concept after 2010 (Bora, 2018). Parlak and Aycan argue that the dichotomy of new and old Turkey produces a symbolism which reveals the AKP's effort to reinterpret the past (Parlak and Aycan 2016). This new reinterpretation of the past, which embrace Ottoman and Muslim components excluded by Kemalist republican historiography, "converted secular Kemalist nostalgia into a "cultural trauma" characterized with the discrimination, inequality, injustice, poverty and cruelty caused by secular republican military and civil bureaucracy" (Parlak and Aycan: 85). In this sense, the old Turkey represents the country's tragic republican history, whereas the new Turkey represents the country's hopeful future under AKP government (Parlak and Aycan: 85).

⁴² Tanıl Bora (2018) refers to *The New Turkey*, a book written by Chris Morris, a BBC Turkey reporter, in 2005. During the AKP's first term in power, the Western media, which followed the steps of democratization within the framework of Turkey's harmonization with the European Union and its integration into the global economy with a hopeful eye, described this change in Turkey's roadmap with the concept of "New Turkey".

The West uncomfortable with Turkey's progress, that's a fact. Right now, when we look at the 45-50 developments after the Second World War ... We have to be strong in our geography. For us, the European Union may be a target, but it is not everything. At this point, we continue on our way with certain steps. After all, the West knows very well how Turkey with a strong leader can bring together Islamic countries and upset the balances in this region. But now they have a new Turkey in front of them. They are jealous of this power and potential of Turkey. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

The West does not want us to step. They want us to stay in our old Turkey, they want us to go crawl. But we want to run now. Therefore, even though the West looks good to us, they look unfriendly. Because Turkey has progressed in terms of the economy and the development of our country. There is much difference between the new and the old Turkey in many fields. The West is jealous of this, of course. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

It seems that this discourse of the government provides a very favorable ground for the reproduction of nationalism by glorifying the nation in the minds of nationalized subject. In both Erhan and Furkan's expressions, the "strong Turkey" narrative symbolized by the new Turkey is presented as the main reason for the West's hostility and hostility towards Turkey. Additionally, it is possible to interpret the claim that Turkey's development trend is envied by the West as the result of the complex of modernization and civilization vis-a-vis the West for centuries.

Moreover, the emphasis on "Turkey's geopolitical importance" is a way to portray Turkish nation as a power center positioned at a critical point in terms of international power balances in the world. At the same time, this discourse feeds the images of enemy and is also frequently used in the curriculum of Turkish education system (Üstel, 2009). A considerable amount of the participants consider that the country battles to stay alive under the threat of "others" because of its geographical position and strategic characteristics.

The West is jealous of Turkey, I think. Especially they are jealous of the geographical position of our country. Maybe it's not the economy, of course, but they are definitely jealous of our geographical location. Seda, 41, project advisor/ restaurant manager, CHP

S: Actually, Turk has no friend other than Turkish.

Q: What is the reason?

S: Our lands. They hate us.

Q: Is the geopolitical importance of Turkey?

S: Of course Turkey's everywhere .. Our important ... Look ... We do not know the value of one of the world's seventh wonder of fairy chimneys. Is there anyone who

does not see? We do not appreciate it, we do not travel. But the whole world flock here. So let's say Antalya side. They have already bought all over us. Foreigners took even half of our Uçhisar. Serap, 52, retired, MHP.

In the narratives of Seda and Serap, the West's ambitions on Turkey, is presented as a major source of threat to Turkish nation, to its national presence and survival. Turkey's strategic geographical location constitutes one of the undisputed dimensions of this threat. For the nationalized subject who locates her/ his homeland, which she/ he imagines as the expression of her/ his national presence, in the center of the world, maintaining this important position as required by national interests is a kind of struggle to stay alive. This ethnocentric attitude⁴³ in the expressions of the participants, as a reflection of “a strong sense of ethnic group self-importance and self-centeredness” (Bizumic and Duckitt, 2012: 903) inevitably includes the beliefs and arguments that “assume that the ingroup is more important than other groups” (Bizumic and Duckitt, 2012: 903). Accordingly, they construct discursively Turkey and the Turkish nation as a national entity whose position and importance in the world is indisputable, which the West has always envied and harbored animosity against.

From a political point of view, you are at a strategic point, we are at a distance of 1200 km to the Middle East, we are a bridge. Of course, they don't want us to be strong. We must have a say, however. It is not bad to be the co-chair of the Great Middle East Project. I think the most important reason for their jealousy is our geopolitical position. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

As can be seen in the example above, the persistent emphasis on the strategic importance of Turkey's geographical position with regards to the West, “the other”, thought- provoking and nourishing the perception of national security, plays a catalyst role in the enactment of Turkishness. When we look at the educational and cultural capital of the participants, who attach importance to Turkey's geographical and strategic position and claim that it is a target of the West due to this particularity, we see that almost all of them are qualified professionals with university degrees.

⁴³ Although ethnocentrism is a concept described in many different ways in the literature, it is considered here, following Taylor and his colleagues' definition, as “belief that the ingroup is the center of everything” (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 1997, p. 179). In a similar way, Brislin argue that “ethnocentric judgments ... are based on feelings that one's own group is the center of what reasonable and proper in life” (Brislin, 1993, p. 38). Also according to Balabanis and his collaborators, “ethnocentrism focuses on a 'we group' feeling where the ingroup is the center and all outgroups are judged in relation to it” (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, & Melewar, 2001, p. 159).

Therefore, the emphasis on "Turkey's geopolitical position" appears as a catchword that is embedded in the discourse of the nationalized subject, regardless of variables such as education and occupation. It can be thought that the reason why this stereotyped expression is used so frequently in the construction of Turkishness in everyday life through the otherness of the West is that it is a frequently emphasized theme in the Turkish education curriculum and official nationalist discourse.

Thirdly, the image of the West, coded as the other of the national, is perceived as a threat against the Turkish nation's survival on the grounds that it manipulates the perception towards Turkey as well as a deep historical grudge from the past and its envies about today. According to many participants, Western countries have some prejudices against the Turks and they spread them in the world public opinion throughout the media campaign against the Turks. This pattern of thought appears as a reflection of mindset of nationalized agency that puts her/ his own belonging at the center of the world, and its expression in the catchword of "perception management operation".

The term of "perception management operation", introduced and defined by the United States Department of Defense, refers to the control of social perception, and therefore of social behavior, through the production and spread of manipulative information (Bora, 2018: 148). This has been used frequently in the discourse of the AKP since the December 17-25 investigations, when the power struggle between the party and its former ally the Gülen movement became apparent (Bora, 2018: 148). Although, the term was initially used to refute the claims of the community against the AKP, it has turned into a label that discredits the views and actions of all opposing groups over time (Bora, 2018: 148). At the same time, every criticism of the government from the international arena is presented as a perception operation of the West with a conspiratorial point of view. Thus, the catchword, which indicates who the enemy at home is, also frames who is an enemy who is engaged in malevolent activities against Turkey abroad. In this sense, it is not a coincidence that the term is emphasized by many AKP voters as a means of constructing the West as the other. It is obvious that the perception management operation, as a catchword in the discursive repertoire of the ruling party and used so frequently, strongly influenced the nationhood rhetoric of everyday actors.

Westerners have a claptrap and so-called perception of human rights, democracy and so on. They try to make us look like a backward country. I think this is a perception management operation. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

West shows Turkey as a bugaboo, as a witch to their citizens through the media. For example, my friend came abroad, we hosted him. He knows Turkey very wrong. He says, "you are behaving the Kurds badly" or something. These are always the perception management operation of the West. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

On the one hand, Bilal and Ercan agree that Turkey is subjected to a prejudice in a way that it does not deserve in terms of universal values and standards such as democracy and human rights. These participants, who defend that the claim that Turkey is insensitive towards the demands of different ethnicities, particularly the Kurds, with an anti-democratic understanding and repressive attitude is groundless, argue that this attitude of the West is a part of its ongoing hostile perception management operations against Turkey. The expression of perception operation, which is one of the cornerstones of the AKP's nationalist populist discourse, is articulated to the participants' narratives; and it plays an important role in the construction of the West as the other. In addition, for the interviewees, the unrealistic labeling of Turkey as "the country of bans" by the "Western others" is a part of their manipulative and disinformative propaganda. The belief that the Turks are victims of such black propaganda campaign stimulates national sentiments of the participants. The feeling of being subjected to unfair treatment allows the individual to more strongly internalize the dichotomy of us and them; and in this way Turkishness is enacted once again in the subjective discourse of everyday meaning-making process.

Westerners do not want us because they see us as bigot because we are introduced as such. In fact, the Turkish nation is not such people. We are introduced differently. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

They see Muslim Turkish women as people wearing black sheets. This is a serious bias. I think it's a perception management operation. But we are just like them. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

On the other hand, as can be seen in the statements of Nurdan and Perihan, there is a serious feeling of being subjected to injustice in individuals who think they are labeled as "bigot" by Westerners. This sense of being perceived and launched different than what exist by the West is shared by the followers of many different

political visions. The above words emanated from woman participants show that they feel the need to prove that they are at least as modern as the “other” who is accepted as the cradle of modernity, with their identity of Muslim Turkish women. This situation also draws attention to how nationhood is put on the scene in the context of being labeled as non-modern and bigotry.

Fourthly, religious diversity constitutes one of the most important, even the most important one, fault lines in the construction of the West as an external Other and a permanent threat. This pattern of marginalization, which is sometimes fed by references from history, actually points to the Islamophobic tendency that bases its back on the rising nationalist movements in Europe and America.

Although we have completed all the criteria for being member of the European Union, the guys say that you cannot be a member of this union as long as you are a Muslim. This is islamophobia itself. Rifat, 32, attorney, AKP

That's because they don't know about Islam... They think that Muslims are always terrorists. Perhaps they think about us biased not because we are Turkish but because we are Muslims. I think we are affected by the hatred of the Westerners because they think negatively about Muslims. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

The participants interviewed in the field frequently employ the discourse of hostility in the construction of the European countries and the United States. The embracement of nationalism is presented as a natural result of the hostile attitude towards Turkishness in the subtext of the debates on the West. According to many participants, one of the most salient reasons for this hatred is that Turks are Muslims. So much so that Ozan, who claims that non-Muslim Turks are not exposed to the grudge of the West, sees, thinks and makes sense of the world of today as the world of religions.

The games played on our country since the Ottoman Empire are obvious. We have to break the games together. I think the West's view against us is all about the matter of the cross and the crescent. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

Westerners do not think good things about Turkey. They tried it during the Balkan Wars, it didn't. More precisely, how do I explain... They write it since 1453... Since 1453... Actually, their grudge against us started in 1071. This is the battle of the cross and the crescent. So they did not think good things, nor will they. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

On the other hand, as seen in the examples above, many participants create an eternal enemy from the West by referring to the Battle of Cross-Crescent in their othering nationalist rhetoric. From this perspective, the Western world identified with Christianity is imagined and perceived as a diabolical enemy, who has permanent devastating plans on Turkey, and tries to prevent Turkey to fly the flag of Islam on this land.

Lastly, the paranoia of division constitutes one of the main arguments of othering of the West in everyday construction of nationhood. It is necessary to bear in mind that the fear of being divided, fragmented and possessed among Western states has turned into a powerful paranoia for a century, since the Treaty of Sevres. This separation paranoia, which often nourishes different nationalist projects in the field of political discourse, also finds a response in everyday life.

Westerners have ambitions and claims, they have ideals. Having this geography is their biggest ambition... they want to divide and share us. Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

Also, as you know, Anatolia is a place that has hosted a lot of civilizations for years. They can still say Pontus, you know an Istanbul... It is still addressed in that way. You also know the latest map, the Middle East map. According to this so-called map, Turkey is divided into 7 regions, something tiny middle, there is an Islamic republic, Konya, Nevşehir, such as Ankara ... this is still their plan. They still want to have this land. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

The fear of being separated, expressed by the followers of almost every different political vision, corresponds to an important contextual element in the construction of the West as the other. The assertion that the invasion of the Anatolian lands where today Turkey is located by the Westerners is a long-term project, and that this situation constitutes a serious threat against the survival of the nation is one of the crucial arguments of the participants who locate the West as the other.

As a result, in the subjective construction of Turkishness, the nationalized subject is often nourished by the five patterns of perception and thought while labeling the West as Other and threat. In this context, the West is discursively embodied as an

invisible and eternal enemy figure, who is afraid of Turks, is jealous of Turks, hates Turks because of Islam, and wants to divide and share Turkey.

5.2.2. Arabs

The imagery of Arab- Muslim has a special place in the imagination of modern and secular Turkish identity in the early Republican period (Copeaux, 1997; Aktürk, 2010). The efforts of the founding cadres to eliminate all elements which can remind Ottoman and Islamic past from the narrative of Turkish history and to concentrate on the pre Islamic Turkish history paved the way for the description of Arabs who are accused of stabbing Turks in the back as the subject of a historic betrayal in the official nationalist historiography. On the one hand, in the last three decades, this discourse of betrayal by Arabs has been rejected and abandoned in the rhetoric of the political power.⁴⁴ It would not be wrong to argue that the intimate relations of the AKP governments with the Arab world based on their foreign policy approach and their Islam- referenced understanding of politics played a crucial role in the abandonment of this discourse.

On the other hand, the identity of Arab occupies a special place in the imagination of external “other”. Today, for some participants from the CHP and the MHP, the imagery of Arab still corresponds to a non-national “other” in the language of everyday nationalism. In the subjective construction of Turkishness in the participants interviewed in the scope of this thesis, besides the discourse of "betrayal", which is a historical cliché, Arabs are otherized through pejorative stereotypes and the accusation of being primitive.

These Arabs are all enemies to us. So how can we unite with them? Just like before, if they find an opportunity today, they stab us in the back. Belgin, 58, retired bank employee/ manager at a Common Health and Safety Unit, CHP

I always look at the Islamic Union with suspicion, because they stabbed us in the back in the past. They are not friends of the Turks. I never trust Arabs. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

⁴⁴<https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/43802/milletimizin-binlerce-yillik-tarihini-neredeysse-1919-yilindan-baslatan-tarih-anlayisini-reddediyor.html>

As seen in the above quotation, the rhetoric of official nationalist historiography that the Arabs betrayed the Turks in the First World War is still fresh in memories. This argument of betrayal provides a suitable context for describing Arabs as a hostile and threat in the subjective construction of Turkishness. It is important to note that the discourse of that “Arabs stabbed us in the back” is a way in which the Arab identity is otherized even for the AKP’s own voters, which is a political movement that rejects this discourse.

Well, I am against the Islamic Union. The Islamic union has no meaning. There is no country that loves us in the Islamic Union anyway. Arabs stabbed us in the back in time. Now we are struggling for Syria. Is there any Muslim country which is fighting for Syrians with the exception Turkey? Does Saudi Arabia love us? Iraq, Iran, Palestine... We shed so many tears for Palestine. Do we have any value in their eyes? If we go to war today, they stab us in the back one again. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

Moreover, it should be noted that there is a stronger emphasis on the discourse of betrayal in the statements of the participants who remain closer to a understanding of secular Turkishness based on ethnicity. With reference to the past, today's “Other” is also depicted; in this context the discourse of betrayal by Arabs accompanies the othering attitude towards Syrian immigrants. Many of the participants such as Serap, who react to Turkey’s opening borders to Syrians and sending troops to Syria, deal with the Syrian issue the context of the disloyalty unreliability of Arabs as a nation.

Secondly, the imagery of Arab, as the other, is often built on pejorative national stereotypes in the repertoire of everyday Turkish nationalism. While the Arab identity is defined as the other through the negative and insulting connotations attributed to the whole “nation”, actually, the question of what the Turkishness which is located opposite to this is answered.

For example, what an Englishman is in my eyes, it is the same for a Saudi. I think they are bigotters who exploit Islam. Arabs have no use for the Islamic world. For this reason, Mecca Medina lands should be taken from the hands of Sudi. It should be given to the Islamic Cooperation Conference, and should be managed by an Islamic country every year. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

My both grand grandfathers have Arabian roots, but I don’t like Arabians. Once they are dirty people. It is either very poor or very rich. There is no middle class. For one thing, there is no class in Islam, it shouldn't be. Oil revenues of rich Arab sheikhs are enough to feed all hungry people in the world. But they have no such problems. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

The participants sharpen discursively the dividing line between “We” Turks and “They” Arabs through the dichotomy of “clean” and “dirty”. Another point that should be highlighted here is that the emphasis on “Turkish Islam” appears as an important reference point in the subjective construction of the Turkish nationhood. For the participant, who considers Islam as a founding element of Turkishness, the reasonable and favorable one is “Turkish model of Islam”. In this sense, Islam, rather than being cement that brings Arabs and Turks together in terms of religious belief, appears as an element that further clarifies the border between “us” and “them”. The distinction between Turkish Islam and Arab Islam is a striking example of the nationalization of religion and the role it plays in the imagination of nationhood.

In the 7th-8th century, when the Arabs went to the region where the Turks lived to explain the Islam, the Turks said that we already have no adultery and no theft. Whatever they said was not attractive... Look, it was not attractive, we don't have any sins that have been forbidden to them... In a lake, women are bathed there, men are bathed there, they don't look back. So pure and clean Turkish nation. Are the Arabs like that? Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

In the statement above, the Arabs, labeled as a nation devoid of moral values attributed to the pre-Islamic Turkish culture, are accused of being inclined to crimes such as adultery and theft. So much so that it is claimed that these behaviors, which are forbidden by Islam, do not exist in the pre-Islamic Turkish culture, and that Turks have a superior moral awareness than Arabs. On the one hand, this alleged superiority is a feature attributed to Turkishness; on the other hand, at the same time, it becomes an important reference resource when drawing the border between us and them.

Thirdly, one of the most frequently used ways in which the other of Turkishness is imagined is to attribute negative connotations and characteristics which the nationalized subject wishes to dissociate from Turkishness to the targeted group. In this context, it can be argued that when the imagery of Arab is portrayed as an uncivilized group in the mind of many participants, in fact, it is endeavored to prove the civilization of the Turks.

Our difference from other Islamic countries is that we live Islam with more tolerance and that we are more egalitarian. There is a very important civilization difference

between us and the Arabs. There is a huge gap about civilization between us and them. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

The participants, who put the gap of civilization between Muslim Turks and other Muslim societies at the center of their discourses, otherize and marginalize the Arab world as a community, far from contemporary and universal values. The dichotomy of Turkish Islam and Arabian Islam, as seen in the above quotation, serves as a convenient discursive tool to build the categories of us and them through the distinction of modern and moderate Islam of Turks and barbaric, uncivilized and backward Islam of Arabs.

Some of our people take Arab countries as an example, they want to be so, they are arabicised. We are slowly losing our own self. We cannot be us. We have to be us. We have our own values, our own culture. We must be like ourselves. Already, I don't think we are friends with the Arabs. Because Arabs are much different. Okay, our religion is common, Islam, but Arabs are not suitable for us at all. A very backward society. Unity of religion does not save us. Because, as I said, our culture is very different. We don't have Arab culture. We are also a secular country, we have taken some things of Europe, and some things of religion. We have created a culture for ourselves. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

I think the standards stipulated by the European Union are important to us. The adjustment laws... I think these regulations are necessary in countries like us. Otherwise we will be like Arabs, God forbid! Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

The construction of Arabs as other in the context of civilization also reveals the claim of westernization and having European values and principles which penetrates the capillaries of Turkish nationhood. "Being like Arabs" for the participants who have a secular understanding of Turkishness, at the same time, means to move away from the achievements of the modern Republic of Turkey. This fear of Arabization reveals a visible sympathy for Europe, even in the participants who code Europe as an eternal enemy in different contexts.

In consequence, the imagery of Arab appears as one of the most salient portraits of Other in the subjective construction of Turkishness. In the scope of this thesis, the subjective discourses and tendencies of the participants cluster around three specific ways in which the Arab identity is concretized as the other of Turkishness in the discursive repertoire of many participants. These are the discourse of "betrayal of Arabs", pejorative stereotypes and the accusation of being a primitive community.

5.2.3. Israel

Jews and Israel are one of the most prominent images of dangerous enemies, which were built as "other" in the discursive repertoire of Turkish nationalism. Israel, in the language of everyday nationalism, is constructed as an external enemy, a threat and a potential source of all kinds of nuisance and of the problem of national security for many nationalized subjects. The field work demonstrates us that in the experience of everyday nationhood Israel and Jews are perceived, imagined, and reproduced as an eternal and insidious enemy, who always has bad ambitions on the Turkish nation, by the way of some prominent discursive patterns in the embodiment of Turkishness. In this sense, the claim of that Jews run the world, the Palestine issue and Grand Middle East Project provide a large contextual area for the construction of Israel as an external other.

Primarily, Israel is described by many participants as a secret and insidious enemy that rules the whole world, and is thus transformed into an important object of the "them" category. This frequently asserted claim of that Jews rule the world build a connection between jewishness and international powers; and as White stated, this discourse paves the way for anti-Semitism (White, 2014: 146). This claim, which provides a very favorable context and way for expressing racist feelings towards Jews, embodies them as the head of a world order which exploits the whole world and especially Muslims. The assertion of nationalized agency to "see the big picture", and "be aware of everything" undoubtedly makes Israel the lead actor of conspiracy theories.

You know, Jews run the world today. Without their knowledge, the bird does not fly, they are so dangerous. Their aim is to take these lands someday. Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

Well, Israel is the leading external power which is hostile to us. They are the rulers of the world so far. They are the forces that play us a trick. They want to attract us to play, to war. But as I said, we will not be deceived. Rifat, 32, attorney, AKP

The claim that Turks and their lands are under constant threat by Israel are presented as the main motivation to keep the nationalist consciousness awake and ready for war. Therefore, the construction of other and the perception of threat are kept alive

and constantly reproduced. The discourse of “Israel runs the world” is presented a secret cabal; and by this way, Turkishness is constantly embodied in the face of an insidious enemy that does not manifest itself.

Furthermore, for many participants, with or without Muslim sensitivities, the Palestinian issue is both an important context and an important way in which Israel was built as a threat to Turkishness. In this context, the Palestinian issue offers a suitable context for the expression of anti- Israel sentiments and the nationalist feelings of many participants. In fact, during the field work, any debate on Israel and Jews in which the Palestinian issue was not raised was hardly witnessed.

Jerusalem is the first Kaaba of Muslims. So it is sacred to all religions, that is to say, for Christianity and for Jews. If the Jews are able to worship as they wish right now, if Christians can do as they want, there is also their owners in that land, why can't they worship? By the owner, I mean the Palestinians whose lands have been forcibly occupied. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

The Palestinian lands ruled by the Ottomans for 400 years are under persecution today. Israel is persecuting Palestine. It does this in front of the whole world; and everybody keep their mouth shut. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

Palestinian territories, which is embraced with the reference of the history is considered as part of the Ottoman legacy. It is clearly seen in the expressions of the participants that the fact that these lands are under Israeli occupation harms the national pride fed by the glorious Ottoman past. For this understanding, which stretches Turkishness in the context of the borders reached by the Ottoman Empire, the Palestinian issue is a reference point in the definition of Turkishness; and Israel is an image of an enemy.

Moreover, the Turkish Prime Minister at the time Recep Tayyip Erdogan's "one minute" outburst⁴⁵ at Israeli President Shimon Peres at the Davos World Economic Forum continues to be relevant in the minds of many participants; and this famous slogan makes serious contributions to the transformation of Israel into an image of Other.

⁴⁵ In 2009, The premier minister at the time, Recep Tayyip Erdogan chided Israeli president Shimon Peres for "knowing well how to kill people" at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos.

Well, there is an “one minute” story. So there, in Davos, our leader was able to say stop to all big boys of the world. It was a charisma. It was a demonstration of Turkish power. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

Whether you like it or not... Tayyip Erdoğan was the voice of the nation in Davos that day. It was a clamor against the oppression occurred there. That is the clamor of all Islamic world. It is not only related to Turkey is, or not only concerned with the Palestinian ... So, this outburst was a reproach and stance against global powers whose *raison d'être* is their own interests, and which have the 50-year 100-year projects on Turkey. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

As seen in the quotations above, Erdoğan's outburst in Davos, interpreted by many participants as Erdogan's “putting Israel in its place”, is not only a political maneuver in which national pride is fostered, but also becomes an epic narrative that keeps the power of Turks alive in memories. Thus, the belief and the perception that the power of Turkish nation was proven to the world in Davos takes its place as a suitable instrument in the toolbox of Turkish nationhood to be used and reproduced in situations where national self-confidence in the face of an imagined Other, especially Israel.

Lastly, the reference to the Palestine issue and the case of Davos, which we often encounter in the expressions of the participants who positioned the Ottoman and Islamic history as an important component of Turkishness, are replaced by the discourse of the “Great Middle East Project” in the participants who make sense of Turkishness on the basis of a more secular understanding. Indeed, this claim of “seeing the big picture”, which is shared by many of the agents of everyday nationalism, reveals the deep roots of conspiracy theories in Turkish nationalism and its important role in the reproduction of Turkish nationhood in everyday life.

They want to make space for themselves in the Middle East geography with the great Israel project. This is the cooperation of America and Israel. Their main purpose is to establish a state for the Kurds and to expand the territory of Israel. Look at what happened to Syria today. They want to do the same in Turkey. Divide, smash, manage tactics! Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

As seen in the statements of Gökhan, For the participant, who points to the existence of a long-term expansionist plans of external others that threatens the existence of the Turkish nation in the Middle East geography, the “Greater Middle East

Project"⁴⁶ or in other saying "Greater Israel Project" forms the cornerstone of nationalist vocabulary. The categories of "We" and "They" and the discourse of enemy are constantly circulated, reproduced, embodied; and thus these patterns play a crucial role in everyday discursive construction of Turkishness through the nationalist imagination which always positions Turkey at the focus of all insidious plans conducted by global powers.

All in all, Israel appears as one of the most important imageries of external other in the discursive repertoire of everyday Turkishness. The belief that the world is ruled by the Jews, the Palestine issue and the discourse of the Greater Middle East and Israel Project are the themes frequently used in the construction of Israel as an external enemy. Although the participants from different political visions concentrate on different reference points, they shared the perception that Israel is a threat against Turkishness. In other words, both for Rıfat, who builds his own perception of Turkishness on Ottomanist and religious sensibilities, and for Nurdan, who define her Turkishness on the basis of a more republican understanding, Israel refers to one of the only enemies of Turkishness.

5.3. Conclusion

The discursive construction of other constitutes a crucial part of the performance of everyday nationhood. The nationalized agent, who mentally and discursively builds the image of other whose existence is not open to question, mainly constructs and promotes her/his own nationhood. As a continuation of the previous section, this chapter investigated the significant role of the "other" in the embodiment of Turkishness in everyday life by ordinary actors. In this framework, it analyzed how Turkishness is reproduced; in which contexts and in what ways the image of the other was grasped, through the answers given to the question of who is the other of the Turk, indirectly and in manifold ways.

⁴⁶ The term refers to "Partnership for Progress and Common Future With the Broader Middle East and North Africa Region" which is declared at the G8 summit held in Sea Island, Georgia, the United States, on June 8- 10, 2004.

The definition and the description of the imageries of other, which threaten the survival of Turkishness, is typically reproduced by the way of the discourse of “foreign enemies and domestic collaborators”. For this reason, this section of the thesis is divided into two broadly defined thematic groups: the internal other and the external other of Turkishness in its everyday construction. While the former refers to “foreign enemies”, the latter indicates “their domestic collaborators”.

The findings for this part of the thesis reveal that the Islamist and ethnic nationalist conservative atmosphere that dominates Turkish politics is also reflected in Nevşehir. In fact, if one of the important factors that makes this atmosphere so strong is its reproduction by ordinary actors in everyday life, Nevşehir, as a typical conservative middle Anatolian city, appears as one of the important channels of this reproduction process. On the one hand, the expressions of the participants demonstrate that the Kurds are in the position of the constant other of Turkishness, as they have been throughout the history of Turkish nationalism for more than a century. In fact, as a result of the abandonment of the inclusive language that political Islam developed against conservative Kurds in the 1970s and its merging with ethnic nationalism under the AKP umbrella, one can say that the Kurds are subjected to discursive discrimination today more than ever before in Turkey. In this sense, in a political aura in which Turkish nationalism increasingly dominates Turkish politics in a radical and racist tone, Kurds are discursively constructed as the other of Turkishness by both AKP, CHP and MHP supporters, in keeping with the spirit of the period. Secondly, in the city which hosts the third largest number of Syrians under the temporary protection in the proportion to the local population in the central Anatolia, after Kayseri and Konya, Syrian immigrants, who have caused a significant change in Turkey's ethnic demography in the last ten years, are another prominent group that the interviewees construct as the "other". The participants who voted for the Islamist AKP, which displays an inclusive political discourse towards the issue of Syrian immigrants on the basis of religious brotherhood, approach Syrian immigrants more moderately, highlighting their religious sensitivities. However, for the CHP and the MHP voters, who have a more secular and ethnic understanding of Turkishness, Syrians are the other of Turks in both senses. Thirdly, non-Muslims constitute another group which is identified and employed as the internal others in

the expressions of the interviewees. It should be noted that it is very difficult to find traces of this history in everyday life in Nevşehir, which had a considerable non-Muslim population until the Turkish- Greek Population Exchange in the 1920s. Because, both the exclusionary discourse and discriminatory policies adopted against non-Muslims since the establishment of the republic, and the Islamist discourse, which has increased its dose recently, encourage the reproduction of non-Muslims as the "other" in the construction of Turkishness. Therefore, one can claim that the participants from all three political views construct non-Muslims as the other of Turks. On the other hand, when we look at the groups that are perceived as a threat to the nation's existence and have separate political units, the West appears as the external "other" of Turkishness in almost all nationalism understandings, whether secular, Islamic or ethnic. In addition, the other group that the CHP voters and a small number of MHP voters frequently refer to while constructing their Turkishness are the Arabs. Lastly, in line with the party's Islamist and nationalist conservative discourse, Israel and the Jews are constructed as the "other" by AKP voters.

It is possible to argue that the images of enemies immanent to the official historical narrative, imposed on the individual through education as one of the most important ideological apparatuses of the state, are still the "other" figures in the everyday construction of Turkishness by the participants. The reproduction of Kurds and non-Muslims as internal others, the West and Arabs as external others through many different discursive ways leads us to this inference.

On the other hand, the conservative attitude reinforced by the political Islamist and ethnic nationalist right-wing coalition in Turkish politics, is quite evident in the construction of the other in also Nevşehir. It is not a coincidence that the stereotypical expressions such as "new Turkey" and "perception operation" that the individual resorts to while discursively constructing and reproducing these others are the catchwords in the nationalist rhetoric created by the AKP, which has been in power for the last twenty years, backed by the media power. The others in the imagination of the nation idealized and imposed by the AKP especially in the second decade of the 2000s, as a political actor, are received and approved by a large section of the nationalist population of Nevşehir. In the current years when an Islamist,

nationalist and conservative political atmosphere is experienced, individuals, the actors of everyday nationalism in Nevşehir, reproduce the hegemonic and othering discourse of the political power with the discursive patterns used by it. However, this does not place the individual in a passive receiver position; because what makes the rhetoric of the party so permanent, powerful and effective is that it is constantly reproduced by the actors of everyday life. In other words, the reproduction of the imagination of nationhood imposed and disseminated from above by the individual is a process that reveals the active role of the individual in the reproduction of Turkishness.

CHAPTER 6

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAST: TEMPORAL DIMENSION IN EVERYDAY REPRODUCTION OF NATIONHOOD

The complex and involved relationship between the past and the present becomes visible in “the construction of national history generally reflects present concerns and beliefs about the past” (Özkırımlı, 2005: 183). With Skey’s own words, this is temporal dimension “whereby the past is articulated in national terms and the present embodied through daily and mass ‘national’ rituals, thus enabling a (relatively) secure future to be envisaged” (Skey, 2011: 11). Accordingly, the definition of national “now” is expressed by the subject in relation to the past and the future.

Temporal dimension of nationalist discourse provides important insights into different contents of nationhood and their contexts. As one of the most important self-evident presuppositions of a national subject, the temporality of a nation plays a critical role in the taken-for-grantedness of the nation; and national past might be imagined and constructed in more than one ways and with diverse references. For example, imagining and narrating a founding moment is a common strategy frequently used in all construction of nationhood of competing national projects; and each of them has an appropriate claim about the founding moment of the nation to which it ascribes a special meaning and significance to establish and justify itself (Çınar and Taş, 2017). Sometimes, the same historical memories are envisaged and discursively reproduced and transmitted with diverse contents; therefore, they serve as the mortar for the construction of different forms of nationhood. For this reason, the concentration on the temporal dimension of nationalist discourse of people, similar strategies pursued by the participants, differences and communalities among them provide us a suitable area for following the traces of subjective construction of nationhood in everyday life.

Apart from this point, this chapter focuses on the definition of national “now” in relation to the past in the everyday construction and reproduction of Turkishness. Particularly, the role of historical narratives in this process is explored in this part of the thesis. The manifold historical references given by the participants when defining the nation allow us to uncover the different ways in which the historicity of Turkish nation is imagined and discursively constructed. Thus, the object of this chapter is to examine thoroughly in which contexts, and with which contents they construct a national history on the basis of their understanding of nationhood and their political positions using these events discursively. In this way, it aims to reveal the ways in which the participants articulate themselves to the past in national terms.

6. 1. Reproduction of the Historical Narratives

On the one hand, some events belonging to the distant or recent past, such as the Battle of Dardanelles or the assassination of Hrant Dink, are articulated to the discourse of Turkishness in very different manners. For example, Gezi movement is described by some as a treacherous conspiracy and by others as a patriotic stance. For example, Davos is a historical moment to be proudly remembered for some and a fiasco for others. However, on the other hand, the participants widely share the same beliefs, perceptions and attitudes about some historical events such as Battle of Malazgirt and Armenian genocide. Almost all of the participants, who give place to these events in their imagination of nationhood, construct these events discursively in a similar way. For example, the Armenian genocide is strictly rejected by the participants, albeit in different terms, and is interpreted as a "state measure" taken "on justified grounds" even if it is accepted as an "incident".

In this part of the thesis, these historical narratives, which the participants reconstruct and reproduce discursively while expressing their Turkish imaginations, will be discussed under two headings: historical events belonging to the distant past and the incidents resonated in social and political life of Turkey in the recent past.

6.1.1. Discursive Construction of Historical Events

Discursive construction of the past by ordinary people plays a major role in the subjective imagination of nationhood at everyday level. Based on the data obtained from the field, it is possible to argue that the ways in which historical events are imagined and constructed by subjects appear as both the reproduction and consumption form of nationhood. It is seen that the uniqueness attributed to Turkishness is emphasized through certain historical events that are frequently included and referenced in the individual narrative. On the one hand, this claim of uniqueness contributes to the reproduction of nationalism by preparing a legitimate ground for Turkish nationalism; on the other hand, the consumption of nationalist discourse is realized through the discursive transfer of these historical events without objectivity.

Based on this determination, in this part of the thesis, we examine in which context and with which contents the four historical events frequently mentioned in expressions defining Turkishness during the interviews, namely Battle of Malazgirt, the conquest of Istanbul, Armenian genocide and Dardanelles Battles are used.

6.1.1.1. Battle of Malazgirt 1071

The image of the homeland and the belonging to a territory with definite borders occupy an important place in everyday construction of nationhood. In this sense, defining Anatolia as “the homeland of Turks” provides an important discursive space that draws the boundaries of the nation envisioned as a homogeneous community and excludes the other.

Turkey word mean too much to me. For one thing it is my homeland. Let me tell you since Malazgirt ... So, after 1071 Malazgirt, our ancestors came here, this was our homeland, we accepted this place as our homeland. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

The Battle of Malazgirt, which is described in the official narrative as the starting point of the history of the Turks in Anatolia, is reproduced in Sertaç's expression as an important discursive anchor that serves the historicization of the nation. According to him, this battle is the irrefutable proof of the historical past and

existence of Turkishness in Anatolia. In this sense, the battle of Malazgirt, which made Anatolia "our ancestors'" and therefore "our" homeland, is presented as one of the cornerstones of the narrative of Turkey's history dominated by Turkish national existence.

Anatolia was considered as the homeland of the Turks who settled here, especially in 1071 and after, as a homeland... Özdemir, 57, retired teacher, CHP

Similarly, also for Özdemir, the Battle of Malazgirt, in conformity with the official Turkish historiography, symbolizes Anatolia's becoming a Turkish homeland. The way in which the Battle of Malazgirt is narrated in the imagined Turkish history, at the same time, includes the emphasis on the Turkish presence on the existing territory for centuries and the historicity of Turkishness. The claim of the discourse of Turkishness to be the owner and ruler of Anatolia is nourished by this historicity of Turkishness on these lands.

Now in Europe, people refer to the period before Christ, the crusades that took too long, saying: this geography, Anatolian geography was our geography. They say that you somehow bought this geography from us. It may be true, but historians say that Turks have traces of up to 7000 years in Anatolia. We may not have been a majority at that time. It can be said that the majority of us came out of the depths of Siberia in Russia. But we came to this geography many years ago, there were Turks living here, but later, it was officially opened after the Battle of Malazgirt in 1071, it became our geography. Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

In Ahmet's narrative, the Battle of Malazgirt is imagined and reconstructed as an historical event that reminds the Christian European societies, which have historical claims on the geography of Anatolia, "who is the real owner of Anatolia". In other words, this discursive construction, which divides the history of Anatolia into two as before and after the Turks, also contributes to the normalization of the invisibility and denial of the history of the "others" of Turkishness in these lands. The role attributed to the battle in the Turkification of Anatolia, as "the historical event which opened the doors of Anatolia to Turks" points out a founding moment in terms of Turkish history. In addition to being glorified as a founding moment that provides a legitimate ground for the domination of Turkishness over Anatolia, which is perceived as homeland, in the context of proving the Turkishness of Anatolia, the Battle of Malazgirt provides a useful reference point.

So now, it is 1071 to open the door of Anatolia to Turks. Of course there were Seljuk raids before. There were Turkmen raids in the 900s and 700s, after the Turks became Islam, they started to be called Oghuz and they were called Turkmen. There are already Turkish tribes and Turkmen tribes in this region, especially in Iraq and Syria. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

In Cahit's expressions, the Battle of Malazgirt becomes a founding moment in the context of the Islamization of Anatolia. From his perspective, in addition to historicity and legitimacy of Turkishness on existing territory and the Turkification of Anatolia, this historical event is considered as a milestone for its islamization, an important turningpoint and success in the war of crescent and crescent between the Turks and the West. All in all, the Battle of Malazgirt, which offers a suitable context for an imagination of Turkishness based on both ethnicity and Islam, is used as an important discursive anchor in the historical construction of Turkishness.

6.1.1.2. The Conquest of Istanbul 1453

The celebration of the conquest of Istanbul on May 29 and coding the conquest as a founding moment of the nation by Islamist groups and political parties as an alternative to the secular national historical narrative has been previously subject of academic interest (Çınar, 2001; Brockett, 2014). The commemoration of this alternative founding moment was interpreted as an attempt for the construction of an alternative national identity referring to Ottoman- Islamic past and the embracement of Ottoman period into national memory (Çınar, 2001). In fact, the interviews illustrate that when focusing on the temporal dimension in the construction of everyday nationhood, the conquest of Istanbul constitutes one of the important reference points in the expression of an understanding of nationalism which has an Ottomanist and Islamic content

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The West still cannot accept the 1453. They are still bearing a grudge against us for the conquest of Istanbul. This is the clash between the crescent and the cross since 1453. Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

On the one hand, in Raşit's narrative, the conquest of Istanbul is coded as a constitutive event in the context of the imagination of Turkishness regarding to the West, as an external other and "the enemy of Islam". According to him, in the

endless battle of the cross and the crescent, the conquest of Istanbul is a turning point in which the Islamic world, symbolized by the crescent, proved its superiority over the Christian world. In this sense, Islam, as an important component of Turkishness, becomes even more visible in the context of the conquest of Istanbul.

Turks have been given an important task within the Islamic ummah. With the conquest of Istanbul, that is, thanks to a commander who has already received the praise of our prophet, this duty has been assigned to us for 600 years. This is really the nobility of our race. In other words, since the Turks serve Islam well, my God has honored us with the conquest of Istanbul. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

On the other hand, Sertaç's statements demonstrate that the narrative of the conquest can turn into a very convenient instrument for the reproduction of the understanding of nationhood, which comprehends Turkishness as a racial essence. In fact, the conquest of Istanbul by a Muslim commander marks a very important founding moment in the historical narrative of an understanding of nationalism with predominantly Islamic content. However, as seen in Sertaç's narrative, in the context of "Turks' services to Islam", the conquest of Istanbul by a Turkish sultan, Mehmed II, at the same time, is presented as a basis, an evidence for the characteristics attributed to the Turkish race such as courage, nobility and combatant spirit. Turkishness is glorified by using this victory over the Christian West in the name of the Islamic world as evidence for the claim that Turkishness is blessed by God. In this sense, it is possible to argue that Islam is instrumentalized for the glorification of Turkishness.

6.1.1.3. Armenian Genocide 1915

The forced Armenian deportation of 1915 has been one of the most sensitive taboos of the Ottoman- Turkish political and social history, perhaps the most important one. However, Armenian issue draws attention as one of the most striking issues among the historical events that are articulated to subjective discourse in the construction of everyday nationalism; and this issue is closely related to a historically suspicious attitude towards the West (Akçam, 2004: 1).

The paranoia of division in the social memory, created by the Treaty of Sevres, signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies of the First World War in 1920,

and which paved the way for the partition of the Ottoman territories among Greece, France, Great Britain and Italy, and the establishment of an independent Kurdish and Armenian states is defined as the "Sèvres Syndrome" (Kirişçi, 2003: 284-294). The term, referring to a conspiracy theory that the Western powers are planning to divide Turkey, on the one hand mobilizes anti- Western sentiments among nationalized agents; on the other hand, it is frequently used in the expression of these feelings in their everyday discourse. As can be seen in the examples below, we witness that this anti-Western discourse is frequently performed especially in the context of the Armenian issue.

Additionally, the claim of Armenian genocide is either rejected referring to the moral purity ascribed to Turkishness and Turkish ancestry or the sense and the claim of victimhood; or it is interpreted in the framework of the trivialization or banalization of the event and with the claim of legitimacy. Apart from the absolute denial of genocide or the reluctant acceptance of it through justification, the state of conscious ignorance is a common pattern of thought and behavior that we often encountered in the field.

Firstly, on the basis of the deep admiration for the Ottoman past and the eternal trust in the Ottoman ancestors, Armenian genocide is definitely rejected by some participants. In fact, for many, the impossibility of the event is so obvious that it is not even worth talking about it. The rhetoric of ancestry and the purity attributed to the nature of Turkishness constitute the content of the nationalist attitude adopted in the context of the Armenian issue.

Our ancestry doesn't commit genocide. Never! We do not do such a thing. If we did, I say it again, today there would be no Armenian in this land. We called them as the faithful nation ... Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

For Cahit, who vehemently denies the Armenian genocide allegations, this claim is so baseless that it does not even deserve to be discussed. This denialist attitude and rhetoric, which is reflected in his words above, is based on the alleged innocence he ascribes to his ancestors and Turkishness, rather than an objective knowledge of history. According to Cahit, the most important proof that the Turks did not commit

a genocide against the Armenians is the existence of Armenians who are still alive today. The basic belief underlying this inference is that the Turks themselves have the power to destroy another nation if they want. Therefore, in the context of the Armenian Genocide, Cahit is building discursively the Turkish nation as an ethnic essence that is so pure and innocent that it is impossible to commit genocide, and that if it does, it will not leave even a single Armenian alive. In other words, Cahit's words contain a challenge that can be translated as "The Turks did not commit genocide, but they always have the power to do so, if they want to do it".

We did not commit an Armenian genocide. This is against our nature. We are not barbarian people. Turkish society certainly does not do this. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

In a similar way, Leyla's denial attitude towards the Armenian genocide claims stems from her perception of Turkishness, which corresponds to a noble ethnic community "by nature" with high moral and humanitarian values that cannot be the perpetrator of a genocide.

In fact, we have achieved unity and solidarity within the Ottoman Empire. And now they claim that the Turks committed the Armenian genocide. I absolutely do not believe in genocide. We do not do such a thing to people who we entrusted the key of our door. So where did the Ottoman commit genocide in history? Genocide is not in our history, it is not in our culture. I remember, there were the statements made by Orhan Pamuk, he made statements in the style that supported the Armenian genocide. His explanations hurt me, for example, because he was a Turk, but he accepted such a thing and reflected it to the foreign press. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

Furthermore, in the expressions of Ayşe, daily life in the Ottoman Empire is envisioned as a cosmopolitan area where people of different ethnic and cultural identities live together without any problems. Besides of the nostalgia for Ottoman cosmopolitanism, the unreality and impossibility of the genocide allegations is tried to be explained and defended by the glorification of the history, culture and lifestyle of Turks. In addition to this, according to the participant, anyone who accepts, defends the truth of these claims or mentions the existence of such a possibility is a "traitor". Especially, discussing this issue in the international arena, as Orhan Pamuk, an internationally recognized writer, did, is an attitude that damages national pride, hurts, and humiliates the feeling of Turkishness; and this is unacceptable for the participant.

Q: What do you think about the Armenian issue?

S: I think the ancients are just as tolerant as I am. So I don't think our nation can commit a genocide or something. We are a nation that does not attack, unless it is attacked. I do not mean the Turks when I say our nation, even the Kurdish citizens there do not do anything like this. We cannot do such a thing because of our belief. Our belief is what makes us Turkish anyway. In other words, after Islam, we get the virtue of being a Turk more. We started to experience Turkishness more nobly. Therefore, I do not think that any Muslim take the lives of innocent people.” Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

I do not believe that there is an Armenian issue, of course. This is the fabrication of the bad West, the media sold to the West. As Muslim Turks, we do not kill anyone as an Ottoman. Even when the Ottomans ruled seven continents, they did not hurt anyone. Massacre is the work of the crusaders. The aim of the West is to divide Turkey and to create an Armenia on our lands. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

Moreover, as can be seen in the expressions of Sertaç and Nazlı, in the context of Armenian issue, Islam is presented as the most important obstacle for Turks to commit genocide. According to Sertaç, superior moral character of Turkish society and the adherence to Islamic law in the Ottoman state administration eliminates the possibility of such a genocide being committed by the Ottomans. In addition to this, for him, the virtue that will prevent "even Kurdish citizens" in the empire from committing such genocide is to be members of the Islamic faith. Likewise, Nazlı, who regards the genocide issue as a part of the deep rooted conspiracy planned by the Christian West against Muslim Turks, emphasizing the Islamic content in his subjective definition of Turkishness as well as exalting the Ottoman past, strictly denies the Armenian genocide.

Secondly, the sense and claim of victimhood is another common discursive pattern for the Armenian issue among participants. In this direction, many of them argue that in fact they (Armenians) actually massacred (against Turks). It is possible to explain this position among the participant with the concept of competitive victimhood⁴⁷ which is defined as ‘a tendency to see one’s group as having comparatively suffered relative to an out-group’ (Young and Sullivan, 2016: 30). Many interviews illustrate

⁴⁷ For an interesting study on Turkish and Armenian narratives of competitive victimhood and Turkish- Armenian relations see Cagla Demirel& Johan Eriksson (2020) “Competitive victimhood and reconciliation: the case of Turkish–Armenian relations”, *Identities*, 27:5, 537-556.

that the denial of Armenian genocide allegations or legitimizing past acts of violence on various grounds stems from this competitive sense of victimization.

We are not perpetrator of genocide, in fact, they are real mass murderers. They actually did the genocide. History also writes this. They killed people, children, women... They laid the blame on Turks. So, I don't accept the claim of genocide. We are the real victims. There are more Turkish graves than Armenians in the region called, even when looking at the graves. Dürdane, 58, retired bank employee, AKP

One of the best examples of the reproduction of Turkishness in the context of the Armenian issue with the sense of competitive victimization is the narrative of Dürdane. For her, who displays a denigrating attitude towards the traumatic experiences and losses of Armenians in the past, if there is a genocide, the Turks are the victims, not the perpetrators. So much so that Turks, according to her, are the victims of both the Armenian uprisings and the false accusations of genocide.

I think that the debates on the Armenian issue are purely political. The Turks did not massacre. Because, in fact, Armenians did massacre us. But unfortunately, today in Turkey, some presumptuous people who call themselves intellectuals are partners in this lie. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

In also Nurdan's narrative, even though the real victims of the massacre are Turks, accusing Turks of genocide against Armenians and demands for the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Republic of Turkey are interpreted as part of a political trick.

Actually they committed massacres against us! They killed the Turks in Erzurum and Van, sworded them in the chests and tandir. Despite this, they still play the victim. But if maybe 100 of them died, thousands, millions of us died. But we went and also apologized to the Armenians! Our politicians are gone, apologized to the Armenians! Why? Because the west wants it. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

Serap, just like Nurdan, also considers the genocide allegations as a political stunt. For both participants who attempt to explain the claim that Turks are being shown as perpetrators of the genocide with political reasons this is a matter of "foreign powers and domestic collaborators". This attitude is nourished by the official dominant narrative emphasizing the role of the western imperialist powers and non-Muslim minorities in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Sevres syndrome. Additionally, as can be seen in both Nurdan's and Serap's narratives, it is possible to speak of an

anger against the Turkish intelligentsia and political elites who recognized the Armenian genocide. These people, who are accused of treason against Turkishness and the Turkish nation, are portrayed as collaborator and the stooge of the West.

My grandmother told me that actually Armenians had tortured us so much. They could not go beyond the bridge in Nevşehir because of their fear of Armenians. For his reason, I never believe in the Armenian genocide. In reality, they committed genocide against us. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

As I said before, my origin is Kars, Sarıkamış. In the stories I listened to from my elders, I heard that the Armenians were people who raped and killed our women, our people. They are the ones who committed the actual massacre. I did not see it with my eyes. But when you read, when you read backwards, I think, there is truth to these stories. But we cannot prove it. Belgin, 58, retired bank employee/ manager at a Common Health and Safety Unit , CHP

As can be noticed in the statements of Nuriye and Belgin, the discourse of victimhood is passed down from generation to generation and functions as a shield against genocide allegations. In this sense, personal history stories articulated to the narrative of national history reinforce the feeling of victimhood and serve as evidence to refute the genocide allegations on the Armenian issue. At the same time, historical prejudice and hostility towards “the other”, description of “them” as “historical enemy” is mostly fed by these competitive victimization narratives transmitted through generations.

Thirdly, besides the discourse of denial and victimization, a discursive content that normalizes the Armenian issue is frequently encountered in the subjective construction of nationalism by the participants.

...that is, we know that non-Muslims lived in this country in peace during the Ottoman period. Here, especially Armenians. They were more numerous in Turkey. As for the events of 1915, I think that this work, that transfer, and displacement are very agitated and diverted from its purpose. Because, they have always lived in peace on these lands. At this point, we have nothing to be ashamed of from our history. We are always proud of our ancestors. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

As can be seen in the statement of Erhan, who suddenly took a defensive position while talking about non-Muslims in Turkey and brought the Armenian issue to the agenda, the view that a simple relocation measure in 1915 is exaggerated by the public today contributes to the trivialization and banalization of the issue. This

normalization also brings with it depersonalization towards the "other" and thus sharpening the border between us and them.

Q: Well, do you have any knowledge about the events of 1915? What do you think about the Armenian issue?

P: A little bit. Well, of course we are being treated unfairly. Because this is a war process. During the war, everyone is doing everything. It is not mentioned at all. Unfairness is done ... Because mainly Armenians killed Turks in Kars, Central Anatolia, Çorum and there. I say, I am not interested in history a lot, but as far as I can see, I heard Armenians killed the Turks. While it was never mentioned, Armenians killed by the Turks are always mentioned. Besides, this is a war process. In the war, we see it now, it can be done, that is, everyone is doing everything. Why are we pushed? Seda, 41, project advisor/ restaurant manager, CHP

Moreover, in Seda's narrative, the war process and its extraordinary conditions are presented as the legitimate basis for the banality of the event. Although the claim that the Turks were also killed by the Armenians also includes the admission that the Turks committed the crime of genocide against the Armenians, the normalization of mutual massacres under war conditions reinforces the discourse that trivializes the Armenian genocide. In other words, even if the massacres are accepted, as can be seen in Seda's narrative, they are justified by the Armenian treachery or the slaughter of Turks by Armenians.

Q: So what are your thoughts on the Armenian issue?

P: A very abused subject. I absolutely do not believe that the Ottoman committed massacres, genocide. At the time of the Russian War, the issues we know ... There is an Armenian rebellion issue, there is a suppression of it. It is nothing other than that. Imagine I watched it in the morning today, one man in France took the security guard, a woman hostage at the airport, the other police came, shot, killed him. This is it. In other words, it does not go unpunished against the state. This can be Muslim, non-Muslim, doesn't matter. Revolts against the state are suppressed, should be suppressed. In the Armenian issue, the state did not act for a massacre, genocide. The behavior here is the state's self-defense mechanism. This uprising was suppressed. It is perfectly normal to suppress an uprising against the state. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Similarly, in Gökhan's narrative, Armenian rebellions are incorporated in the discourse as a legitimate ground to present the issue as an ordinary case. The participant, who refrains from describing the policies implemented by the state against the groups that rebelled against the state as genocide or massacre, interprets the issue as suppressing the rebellions that threaten the existence of the state as a legitimate power. In short, the subjective nationalist discourse built in the context of

the Armenian genocide gains a content which banalizes the events that happened to Armenians in 1915.

Fourthly, another discursive content that is frequently encountered in the context of the Armenian issue is the implication that "they deserve what happened to them". This thought, expressed clearly by some participants and implicitly by others, presents an argument based on the claim of legitimacy rather than denial.

About the Armenian issue, I cannot say that we did not, that is, I cannot say we did not kill, but if we did, there is a reason. This is not a massacre. It is necessary to approach the event realistically. The state took measures for its own survival. Because the Armenians betrayed. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

For example, Mahmut, who cannot say "Turks did not commit genocide", produces a discourse based on the argument that "if we kill Armenians, there is a justified reason". According to him, who stated that he views the issue from an objective and realistic perspective, even if the Ottoman state implemented painful policies towards Armenians in the past, there were certainly justified reasons for it. In this framework, the emphasis of "the betrayal of Armenians" provides the necessary ground to reinforce the discourse of justifiability.

P: If we had committed genocide, would there ever be an Armenian on earth? For example, there are still a lot of Armenians in Kayseri. There is still a small population. If there was genocide or genocide, nothing would be left.

Q: Why is that so called?

P: Well, the West's logic wants to see it that way. This is a justified relocation. What am I going to do? He's going to hit my army from behind, I'm right if I kill them at that moment. But I did not kill but I deported. While deporting Kurdish tribes cut them all on the way and the soldiers overlooked them. This is the case. Such things happen in such war, mutual reciprocity. Erol, 64, dentist, AKP

In a similar way, according to Erol, deportation of Armenians, who deserved to be killed for their betrayal of the Ottoman state, is extremely common under war conditions. Another notable point is that the participant tends to take the official granted for granted unquestionably; and support and reproduce it using the concepts of state language such as "Armenian atrocity" or "justified relocation". It can be argued that almost all of the participants, in parallel with the official narrative, argue

that the main reason for the deportation in 1915 is the Turkish victimhood caused by Armenian betrayal and the slaughter of Turks by Armenians. While they never accept the genocide allegations, they justify the losses of the Armenians based on this basic belief.

Q: What do you think about the 1915 Armenian issue and the deportation?

P: Armenians were provoked. We would call Armenians as the faithful nation as Ottomans. Is it correct? I have extensive knowledge about classical Turkish music, I like it very much, I was the president of the music community here. There are at least 50 Armenian composers in our music. We lived with them together in peace throughout centuries. Could I explain... Our neighborly relations were fine. But after the 1800s, Britain especially scratched it, France scratched it, provoking the Armenians to give them independence, it was actually to shatter the Ottoman ... They evacuated and the Armenian population rebelled. I consider the name of this as a comparison. Mutual combat! Besides, the Ottoman did not do this with the intention of committing genocide, they tried to do it by displacement, which we call relocation. If the Ottoman had an intention to destroy the Armenians, would the Armenian population remain in 500 years? We have lived for 400 years in peace. Then why didn't we destroy it? Is there any trace in the Balkans which shows that the Ottoman committed genocide? No. Because the Ottoman was not perpetrator of genocide. The Ottoman state responded to the betrayal of the Armenians. This is mutual fight. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

In the statements of Erol and Bülent, a claim of legitimacy that accompanies the strategies of denial and trivialization is noticed. According to them, the Turks did not slaughter the Armenians, but if they did, they were right; because Armenians stabbed Turks in the back. As a matter of fact, it was a war, for them, and in such wars, these are quite common things. This compact discourse which contains all the patterns of content that stand out in the context of the Armenian issue, namely denial, trivialization and legitimacy, is important in terms of showing the coexistence and the intertwinement of strategies and contents in the subjective construction of everyday nationhood.

Lastly, conscious ignorance appears as another remarkable discursive patterns in the context of the Armenian issue. In his seminal study in which he treats Turkishness as an habitus, in addition to the certain states of seeing, hearing, knowing and interesting that bring Turkishness into existence, Ünlü describes the states of not seeing, not hearing, not knowing, not being interested as negative states of Turkishness (Ünlü, 2018: 17). According to the author, these states are a privilege given to the dominant group; and they play major role in the construction of

Turkishness in everyday life. This state of conscious ignorance emerged as a pattern of behavior observed in most of the participants in the context of the Armenian issue.

Frankly, I do not know much about the Armenian issue and deportation. I was sorry when Hrant Dink was killed. Because he had been assimilated, I think. He was living as a citizen of the Republic of Turkey in these lands. If I had an idea that he threatens the Republic of Turkey, I have never thought that. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

Ercan's indifferent attitude towards the Armenian issue, who previously said he was interested in Ottoman history, is one of the best examples of the state of conscious ignorance. For him, the historical presence of Armenians in Turkey became visible with the murder of Hrant Dink. He places Hrant Dink in an "acceptable" status as a Turkified and assimilated citizen of the Turkish republic; and this "acceptable" status, that is, not posing any threat to Turkishness, is a prerequisite for being able to feel sorry for the death of an Armenian.

P: Let me say frankly, I think that a very good research should be done to talk about this subject. The people who will speak can be historians or people interested in history. Frankly, I would not prefer to talk about this subject without doing a good research. Why, because I don't know what happened. What was the essence of the matter...If there is a problem, of course nobody wants to accept it in a human sense. But everyone is talking, so I don't know who did what to whom. Maybe it's mutual, I don't know that either... Suna, 41, attorney, AKP

In a similar vein, a state of conscious ignorance stands out in the narrative of Suna. This state of conscious ignorance, the state of not preferring to know, is the shortest way to avoid the earthquake and questioning that the possibility of facing the reality of the genocide and accepting it will cause in her mindset shaped by nationalist categories and assumptions. The denial attitude adopted as a state policy on the Armenian Genocide and national sensibility in the society on the issue offer a comfortable space that allows the participant to consolidate their perception of Turkishness. Suna strategically prefers to display a state of conscious ignorance in order not to move away from this comfortable and safe area where the claim that the Turks are the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide is completely rejected.

Q: What do you think about the Armenian issue?

P: Well, I haven't read much about it. Frankly, I like to investigate them if I have some doubts in my head. But if there is no doubt in my mind, reading a few sentences from one or two sources can also satisfy me... So I haven't researched so much. I didn't

need it. We always say ‘open your archives, let’s face it!’, but they do not approach. That's why I didn't feel much for research. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

Bilal is another interviewee who adopts and reproduces the state of conscious ignorance as a strategy for constructing his own Turkishness. In his narrative, the Armenian issue is not seen as a question worth pondering and researching about by some participants. The hearsay information shaped by the official historical narrative on the subject creates a comfort zone for them. The nationalized subject, who does not want to leave this safe space, contributes to the subjective construction of everyday nationalism with this state of conscious ignorance. In other words, the individual is afraid that the effort to reach objective information may cause contradiction with nationalist rhetoric and exclusion from the comfort zone of nationhood.

In conclusion, the Armenian issue and the collective memory framed by the official historical narrative on this topic provide a convenient context for the enactment of Turkishness and the reproduction of nationhood. The participants, who essentially expressed their subjective imagination of Turkishness through the discursive construction of the past and the discussions on Armenian genocide allegations, adopt and internalize the strategy of externalization of crime. In this sense, denial, trivialization, claim of legitimacy and conscious ignorance are the main lines which constitute the content of the discourse.

6.1.1.4. Battle of Dardanelles 1915- 1916

The Battle of Dardanelles points out a fertile historical moment that every ideological position adds to its national history narrative within the framework of its own imagination of Turkishness. In this framework, it is important in showing how different political visions construct the same history differently in their discursive construction of nationhood. On the one hand, in supporting this statement, it has been observed that the participants from different ideological backgrounds also included the Battle of Dardanelles in their subjective narratives of Turkishness in accordance with and supporting their own perception of Turkishness. On the other hand, it is possible to say that these participants with different ideological positions agree to attribute mystical meanings to the Battle of Dardanelles.

Firstly, it is observed that many participants who narrate the Battle of Dardanelles as a struggle around the Turkish ethnic identity reproduce a perception of Turkishness emphasizing ethnic origin.

When we look at the Dardanelles War, we see that there are martyrs from Hakkari, Mersin, Muş, Trabzon, Artvin, Central Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia. So when you are fighting at that time, nobody's origins are considered saying you are Kurdish, or you are Aşağı. This is what we mean, everyone fought under the name of Turkishness in Çanakkale. Today, everyone can live under this flag, in this country under the name of Turkishness. Their origins may be Aşağı, their origins may be Kurdish, but what is the need to classify this? Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

Ümit describes the Dardanelles War as a war waged for the sake of Turkishness and uniting all different ethnic groups living in the Ottoman state under the roof of Turkishness. In this sense, he constructs discursively the narrative of the war as a founding moment of the Turkish nation state. For the participant who defines Turkishness in a way that includes everyone living in this country, the Battle of Dardanelles is a crucial turning point in the Turkification of other ethnic groups within the borders of the empire and the awakening of the Turkish consciousness.

The Turkish flag makes me very excited. It takes me back to the Dardanelles victory. It takes me back to the times when our peoples gave up their own lives. Then we were together with Kurdish, Arab, Circassian, Laz and Turkish. We were always together on those fronts, on the Yemen front, on the Dardanelles front. Today, we need to learn to live together. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

Similarly, in Bilal's subjective narration of the Battle of Dardanelles, it is imagined as a founding moment that melts different ethnic identities into the pot of Turkishness and marks an important historical turning point in the formation of Turkish superordinate identity.

Furthermore, in some participants' narrative of nationhood, the Battle of Dardanelles is constructed and reproduced as a historical reference point representing the togetherness of Muslims. This discourse contains nostalgia, longing and admiration for the coexistence of ethnic identities united under the Islam. In this sense, in the examples you will see below, it is possible to notice the existence of an imagination of Turkishness that emphasizes the Islamic content through the subjective narration of the Battle of Dardanelles by the participants.

The ultimate goal of the Westerners is to fight us out of here, to move us away from our own being. This is the battle of the cross and the crescent. They tried this in Çanakkale, but they failed. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

As can be seen in the Cahit's statement, the participants who have a perception of nationhood which defines the other of Turkishness through religion attribute an Islamic meaning to the Battle of Dardanelles. As we have seen before, the slogan of "the battle of cross and the crescent" points clearly a perception of nationhood which is shaped through an Islamic content.

We are such a nation that this ummah fought together in Çanakkale. We won a victory with the power of faith. We won an important victory in the war of truth and the falsehood. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

Accordingly, as exemplified in the statement above of the Ozan, the Dardanelles Battles is narrated as the resistance of Ummah against invaders and the victory of the Islamic world by some participants. In other words, the victory won in Dardanelles against the Christian West, the other of Turkishness, forms the basis of the national meaning attributed to this war. In the last instance, such a narration of the Battle of Dardanelles reflects an imagination of Turkishness with a predominant Islamic content.

Thirdly, another meaning attributed to the Dardanelles War in the construction of Turkishness is that it is depicted as a mystical place while the emergence of the Turkish flag is narrated. Regardless of their political views, in the perception of Turkishness of many participants, it serves as an important exciting historical setting that is articulated to the narration of Turkishness with mystical elements.

The Turkish flag tells me! Flag is us, I think it means our country... I mean, we think as if it was earned very easily. In fact, how hard our flag was won... With the blood of our martyrs... Those wars... For example, think of a Çanakkale War. How many martyrs we have... Think about the blood of those martyrs... It is the blood that gives that flag its color. Those who sacrificed their blood in the Çanakkale victory are the ones who gifted us this flag... Serap, 52, retired, MHP

In the example above, the transcendent love of the flag is legitimized through the Battle of Dardanelles by Serap. The story of the Turkish flag blessed with the blood of soldiers who lost their lives in Dardanelles. In this context, the flag, the blood of

the martyrs and the Battle of Dardanelles are used as discursive elements of attributing a mystical and sacred meaning to Turkishness as parts of an inseparable whole.

The color of our flag comes from the color of the blood of the soldiers who fought with the power of faith in Çanakkale. For this reason, our flag symbolizes the reflection of the crescent and a star on the lake of blood of our martyrs. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

Similarly, Ozan also incorporate the Battle of Dardanelles as a historical setting into her narrative about the emergence of the Turkish flag. Their discursive construction of the story of the Turkish flag generally summarizes the relationality that many participants have established in the context of the Battle of Dardanelles and the Turkish flag, which has mystical elements. According to this narration, the flag represents the reflection of the moon and a star in pools of blood of Turkish martyrs during the Dardanelles War. This crescent, at the same time, symbolizes Islam and therefore the faith of the martyrs. In this sense, it is important for the construction of the religious and spiritual meaning ascribed to the flag.

6.1.2. Interpretation of the Recent History

The perception and expression of social and political events that occupy a place in the memory of the society by individuals themselves constitute one of the building fields of everyday nationalism. Ordinary nationalized individuals who refer to these events while defining the nation or who reproduce their nationhood while expressing their thoughts on these events become active subjects of the nation. From this point forth, in this part of the thesis, it is investigated in which way the events that marked the recent history of Turkey are used and discursively reproduced by the participants in the subjective construction of everyday nationhood.

6.1.2.1. Assassination of Hrant Dink, 2007

The assassination of Hrant Dink in January 2007, an Anatolian Armenian journalist and intellectual who was put on trial with the accusation of insulting Turkishness is one of many political murders etched in collective memory of the Turkish society.

The publication of the photographs of Ogün Samast, an ultranationalist teenager, who was arrested as the perpetrator of the murder, with police officers in front of the Turkish flag caused great reactions in a part of the society.⁴⁸ The sentence of “we are all Hrant, we are all Armenians” became the slogan of anti-racist groups who took to the streets to express their reaction to murder.⁴⁹ This slogan resounded among Turkish nationalists as much as murder, even more. The assassination of Hrant Dink, although not a pre-planned topic to be discussed at the meetings, is one of the recent events that the interviewees mentioned under the headings of non-Muslims in Turkey and the Armenian issue.

Q: So how did you feel when Hrant Dink was killed?

P: I didn't feel anything. Killing people is not in our culture. In other words, killing people is a distant concept in both our religion and Turkish culture. Allah says in the Qur'an that killing a person is something that a Muslim should not do. A person with a truly Muslim identity does not do this. I'm just sorry in this respect. I try to remember that period a bit. Well, it was not true, for example, yes, I feel sorry for a person being killed, but I do not see it as a correct attitude to go out on the streets saying “we are all Armenians”. Again there is a racist approach. So a person was killed, yes, but we are not all Armenians. I believe that the killing of an Armenian person is a conscious propaganda, a chaos to be created in the society. Hrant Dink was a conscious target, I think. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

In Ayşe's narrative, although the murder was condemned as an act incompatible with Islamic tradition and Turkish culture, this planned assassination is narrated as an ordinary murder. Rather than the perpetrators of the assassination, those who carried out the protests against the assassination with the slogan "we are all Hrant, we are all Armenians" are being questioned. It is claimed that Turkishness is denied and humiliated over this slogan. In this context, the assassination of Dink is taken out of its context and evaluated as a means of black propaganda against the Turkish nation, and a perception of competitive victimization is built.

I am really sorry for Hrant Dink, look at his books, read his articles, he is patriotic, his perspective on the world is very different, it is not forgivable to be killed or murdered by human eyes. Whoever did it, whoever gave the order was still not exposed, but it should be exposed. I think whoever is served by the deterioration of the social peace in the country did this job. But I do not approve of the actions taken afterwards. They took to the streets saying "We are all Armenians". For example, this is very wrong.

⁴⁸<https://web.archive.org/web/20070210231131/http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/02/01/son/sontur74.asp>

⁴⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20070216211656/http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/397580.asp>

None of us are Hrant Dink. I am Ahmet, he is Mehmet... To be sad is something different, to claim something is a different thing. To say we are all Hrant Dink is something different. We are Muslim, we are Turkish, he is Armenian, Christian, that is different, something different... Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Similarly, for Gökhan, the assassination of Hrant Dink is an intolerable event that should be "humanely" condemned. However, according to him, another situation that is as unacceptable as this heinous attack is the identification of Turks with the Armenian identity of the victim. In fact, as can be seen in the statements of both Ayşe and Gökhan, there is no criticism of Turkish nationalism's aggressive attitude towards non-Muslims. From the point of the participants who define themselves as Turkish nationalist, the crucial point of this murder is the reaction embodied in the slogan that we are all Armenians, rather than the assassination of an Armenian accused of insulting Turkishness by a Turkish nationalist. Personal identification and empathy of a Turks, as a member of the dominant group, with an Armenian, in any case, contradict with nationalist logic and motives. In other words, for the participants who prefer to avoid meddling and trivialize the murder of Hrant Dink, the slogan "we are all Armenians" constitutes the area where Turkishness is built.

6.1.2.2. Habur Incident, 2009

In the summer of 2009, when the opening process continues, 34 PKK members from Northern Iraq as a "peace group" entered to Turkey and were welcomed with great enthusiasm at the Habur border gate.⁵⁰ This event, which is engraved in the memory of the nationalized individual as the "Habur incident" emerges an important reminder historical context that paves the way for the enactment of the discourse of victimhood. In this sense, the happening acts as a catalyst that activates nationalist reactions of the participants by damaging their national pride. In other words, the feelings, thoughts and emotions expressed by the participants about Habur incident, are discursive materials that often contribute to the everyday construction of Turkishness. In this respect, as can be noticed in the examples below, the Habur incident offers an important historical context both for those who supported the democratic opening process and for those who did not, as a traumatic breaking point for the construction of nationalism.

⁵⁰ <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/34-pkk-li-habur-sinir-kapisindan-girip-teslim-oldu-1151953>

I think the Democratic Opening process was correct, but there were mistakes in practice. Many compromises were made. Good will was abused. The government lost the thread, it was not bearable anymore. For example, I was very angry about the Habur incident. There are Kurdish people there, and there is the HDP / PKK structure that tries to pull them into a certain ideological structure by pressure. The whole region is not HDP or PKK. The love of the state should be instilled in Kurds who want to have a good faith and end the war. State power should be felt in the region. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

On the one hand, for Mahmut, who supports the initiative process despite his opposition to the government, the Habur incident provides a context that triggers the construction of the Kurdish question as a terrorist issue through the PKK. The interviewee interprets the Habur incident as an happening that humiliates the sense of Turkishness and harms the absolute sovereignty of the Republic of Turkey. In fact, the Habur incident is described by many participants of all political views as an important breaking point, a traumatic memory that damages national pride and activates nationalist reflexes. Even by the interviewees who expressed their support for the government's Kurdish initiative policies, it is described as “the moment when push comes to shove”.

The Habur incident made us very hurt. So we all felt offended. Terrorists who martyred our soldiers for years, came with drums, came with shingles. İhsan, 45, graphic designer/ journalist, AKP

On the other hand, the Habur incident is interpreted as a betrayal of the national cause, even by İhsan, an ardent supporter of the AKP, which started and led the democratic opening process. In his narrative, the feeling of betrayal and injustice created by the event in the participant turns into the belief that the Turkish nation is humiliated and victimized, rather than anger against those who manage the process. In this sense, the Habur incident presents a context, a breaking point, which paves the way for İhsan's anger to emerge, who is caught between his nationalist reactions and the opposing policies of the party he supports.

You can find me very nationalist about the process of democratic opening. Neither war nor agreement occurs between countries. I was angry when there was a Habur incident. Then I was in Mardin. Even those of Kurdish origin there swore. The PKK does not represent the Kurdish people. There are no parties other than AKP and HDP in the region. I go to the area frequently about women's studies. I know, this problem cannot be solved with war, with military methods. The state has responsibility, yes, it

is an uninvested region. But the terrorist is not welcomed with a flourish of trumpets!
Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

In the narrative of Nuriye, who stated that she was against the democratic initiative process from the very beginning, the Habur incident is described as a concession made by the state to the PKK. She interprets the initiative process as the state's meeting with a terrorist organization that claims to allegedly represent Kurdish population; and views the Habur incident as a result of the weakening of the state's power and the irresponsible attitude of the government. Although she emphasizes that she adopts a humanitarian approach towards the Kurdish issue, her anger towards the Habur issue shows that she considers the steps taken for a non-military solution to this question as a betrayal of a national cause. As a result, in Nuriye's narrative, the reaction to the Habur incident, which is considered a terrorist show, turns into a way in which nationhood is enacted.

Q: What do you think about the democratic opening process carried out?

P: I never confirmed. Because I did not approve of the judge and prosecutor of our state going to the mountain. I did not approve the establishment of courts there. I also love citizens of Kurdish origin, and my mother-in-law is also Kurd. So it was Kurdish, Turkish, Alevi, it doesn't matter to me. Right party, left party doesn't matter. A person must be human, I think. But if we were the state, we were not supposed to go there. The Habur incident was really a disaster. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

It is seen that Nurdan, who sees the Habur incident as the humiliation of the state, similar to Nuriye, equates the state with the Turkish nation discursively. This attitude implicitly sets Turkishness in a superior position to all other ethnic and religious belongings of the society. According to Nurdan, the state did not fulfill its duty to establish and protect this superior and proud position, which was expected of it as the state of the Turks. Therefore, this criticism towards the state and the disappointment caused by this attitude of the state in the participant emerges as a way in which nationhood is built.

It was a complete chastity, disgraced. The state sends a court to the terrorist's foot in Habur, asks if you regret it, the terrorist says "I am not!" Again, he will take my gun again and take it to the mountain and the state forgives it. Where do we put this! How we will forget! Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

Similarly in Cahit's expressions, the feeling of national hurt, which is expressed by the anger against those who rule the state as those responsible for the Habur incident,

draws attention. In this sense, the Habur incident appears as an important recent historical moment in which nationhood is reproduced through this language of anger.

To sum up, the reaction against the democratic opening process and Kurdish identity is usually expressed through this incident. For the participants who do not approve the idea of solving the Kurdish problem through dialogue and conciliation, Habur incident provides the ground of legitimacy for their objection and anger to the democratic opening process. The Habur event is reenacted as the place where the honor of the state dominated by Turkish nationalism was damaged.

6.1.2.3. Davos Incident, 2009

In 2009, the Turkish Prime Minister at the time Recep Tayyip Erdogan chided Israeli president Shimon Peres, saying "One minute! ... When it comes to killing, you know well how to kill" at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos.⁵¹ This "one minute" outburst finds its place in the minds of many participants as a proud historical moment. As a matter of fact, the Davos incident paves the way for the ground for the enactment of nationhood by provoking national feelings and evoking nationalism.

In Davos, our leader was able to say stop to all big boys of the world. This was charisma. This was a sign of strength. Before, our prime ministers, presidents had waited hand and foot on the leaders of other countries. But now I think our leader is respected, whether at the European Union Summit or other summits. I do not know, sitting with an American president, even in body language of our leader, his comfort can be noticed. This makes me proud. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

For Rıfat, who thinks that the Turkish nation was not adequately represented and even discredited by the previous governments, the Davos incident as a serious challenge of a strong leader representing the Turks to the world. In his narrative, Erdogan, who embodies the power of Turkishness by raising his voice in the face of the president of another State, is described as a "charismatic" leader. His "one minute" outburst represents a national stance that reinforces Turkey's power and image in the international arena and gives the Turks the national reputation they

⁵¹ Katrin Benhold, "Leaders of Turkey and Israel clash at Davos panel", *New York Times* (29 January 2009) <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30iht-30clash.19795420.html>

reserve. In this context, this “proud” moment provides a context in which nationhood is reproduced through the discourse of prestige and distinction.

At that time, we were very impressed by Tayyip Erdoğan's outburst in Davos. Not just me but everyone else was affected. We didn't think about Tayyip Erdoğan's political identity there. We like that there is a brave person there to represent the Turkish state, the Turkish nation and that he reacts to the president of Israel in this way. İhsan, 45, graphic designer/ journalist, AKP

In a similar way, in İhsan's narrative, Erdoğan's aggressive and accusatory attitude in Davos is praised as a national challenge showing the power and courage of Turkish nation. In other words, the Davos incident as a manifestation of courage, bravery and heroism becomes a narrative in which Turkishness is discursively constructed.

The outburst of Tayyip Erdoğan in Davos seemed like an incredible heroism not only for us but in all of Europe, but also in all Muslim countries. Of course, it was also a great heroism for me. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

For Ozan, who sees Islam as an inseparable part of Turkishness, Erdoğan proved that he is the voice of all Muslims in the world. Therefore, in Ozan's expressions, the Davos incident turns into a narrative in which an imagination of Turkishness that represents the Islamic world by leading it is reproduced.

When Tayyip Erdoğan said "one minute" in Davos, I was very proud. We took our flag and went out on the street ... Because we are not a nation that tolerates frustration. There is a whole history behind us. That great Ottoman history, or that until the era of Atatürk, that is the Dardanelles War... We always saw ourselves as a superior nation, because we are. It is with the honor given by Islam. So, frustration is not for us. Living under the mandate, the control of others... Bowing down to other countries, being conducted by them... These are not pleasant situations for us. In such cases, we would rebel. Davos is such a revolt in my opinion. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

In also Sertaç's narrative, the Davos incident is the place in which his imagination of a superior nation with a glorious past is embodied. According to the interviewee, who claims that Islam is the central motif of this glorious history, the image of a weak and helpless Turkey in the face of western countries has been destroyed with Erdoğan's bold stance in this international platform, where he participated as the representative of a glorious nation leading Islamic countries.

As seen in the quotations above, Erdoğan's outburst in Davos, interpreted by many participants as Erdogan's "putting Israel in its place", is not only a political maneuver in which national pride is fostered, but also becomes an epic narrative that keeps the power of Turks alive in memories. Thus, the belief and the perception that the power of Turkish nation was proven to the world in Davos takes its place as a suitable instrument in the toolbox of Turkish nationhood to be used and reproduced for the expression of national self-confidence. The participants who are proud of the outburst of Erdoğan in Davos construct Turkishness through the sense and perception of superiority in the face of other nations.

6.1.2.4. Gezi Movement, 2013

Gezi protests which began as a reaction against the AKP's authoritarian intervention into urban space in May 2013, in a short time, turned into a country-wide social movement that brought the various components of the society that have different political and ideological tendencies together around a demand for democratic and pluralistic governance. The young, mostly educated and secular-minded middle classes constituted the main body of the protestors (Uzgel, 2012). During the fieldwork for the thesis, it was observed that as one of the most significant social movements in Turkish social and political history, Gezi movement has a crucial place in the subjective construction of nationhood both for those who support the movement and those who oppose it.

I do not support what they do in Gezi Park. I don't find it right either. I think Gezi Park is also one of the conspiracy games played on our country. I think it was a silent coup attempt. In other words, it was a non-military coup attempt. It was a troublesome process, but we survived it thanks to the faithful people who believe in this land.
Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

Considering the Gezi Park protests as a silent coup attempt, Ayşe, an AKP supporter, describes it as a part of a treacherous conspiracy against the Turkish nation. To describe the people who came together to protest the government as enemies of the nation corresponds to a perspective that embodies the nation in the personality of those who run the state, beyond equating the nation with the state. In this context, this attitude accusing the protesters of being anti-national is an important example of

how the boundaries of nationhood are drawn by everyday actors in the context of the Gezi Park protests.

Gezi movements, the July 15 coup attempt proves that in fact Turkey's how much stronger. These events were a game of the West, which did not want us to get stronger. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

Nazlı also draws a similarity between the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, and sees all these events that marked Turkey's political and social life as a game of the West, which is uncomfortable with Turkey's successes.

The events in Taksim, the Gezi events... These are all tricks of the Western world, the Western mind. Finally, they tried to make their last move with the FETÖ terrorist organization, but again they failed. I think these were always the conspiracies of the West. Because we say that these Westerners have 50 years and 100 years of projects... They are constantly trying something new. So they try to do this but they don't take account the nation. In other words, the biggest reason for their failure is our astute, faithful beloved nation. Because this nation always gives their shows in the elections. Finally, on the 15th of July, on the instructions of the commander-in-chief, this nation disrupted this game. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

Similarly, Erhan describes the Gezi Park events as an attack on the will of the nation, a coup attempt. Just like in the narratives of Ayşe and Nazlı, Erhan's narrative of Gezi Park fully coincides with the polarizing and marginalizing language used by the ruling party, which he supports. The other in Erhan's imagination of the nation built in the context of the Gezi Park protests is the protesters, whom he accuses of being traitors and collaborators. From his point of view, the voters who vote for the AKP, which maintains its power despite all the conspiracies of the West and its collaborators, are the nation itself. In this sense, Gezi movement provides a convenient context for the discourse of conspiracy theory which is built around anti-Western sentiments. In this sense, the common point seen in the statements of Ayşe, Nazlı and Erhan is the claim that Gezi protests is a trick planned and staged by the West and its local collaborators, serving non-national interests and purposes. According to this understanding of nationhood which describes those who participate and support the Gezi protests as non-national, this movement functions as a historical context that defines the limits and definition of the nation. Thus, the nation is here depicted as a concrete entity of "faithful people" who did not fall for "this dirty trick of the West".

On the other hand, also for the participants, the CHP voters, who promote the Gezi protests in 2013, it paves the way for the determination of the boundaries of the nation and reproduction their own nationhood in a different way.

Look, I say this as a true Turkish nationalist, that The Gezi movement was the pride of this country. Of course I supported. The Republic of Turkey is a secular, democratic constitutional state. But unfortunately, our rulers have forgotten this. For this reason, I think it was a defense of the homeland... There, people came together and showed their reactions against the reactionary and oppressive policies of the AKP. It is to be a nation, to love the country, to protect it. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

Perihan describes herself and other supporters of the Gezi Park protests as true Turkish nationalists who resisted the reactionary policies of the government and defended their homeland. In her narrative, the Gezi Park incident is depicted as a resistance against the threat to the imagination of a secular nation. Thereby, in her subjective imagination of Turkishness, the movement is a litmus paper that detects what is national and what is not. In this sense, her expressions is the disclosure of a more secular form of nationhood in the face of the government that imposes its own form of nationhood based on religious consideration on society with oppressive policies.

There has been a power that does not recognize you, your values and democratic rights and says you are not my citizen. Moreover, they are determined to erase your lifestyle from living space, and you too. However, this country is ours... We are true nationalists... In my opinion, the Gezi Park resistance is a national resistance in this sense. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

Nuriye also feels excluded from the sphere of nationhood by the discourses and practices of the ruling party. According to her, within the image of nation shaped by the AKP's nationalist discourse and practices, there is no place for Nuriye and those who think like her, with their own values and lifestyle. In her narrative, the Gezi Park incident is narrated as a symbol of protesting and resisting this ignorance. For the participant, who reinforces his sense of nationhood through this narrative, what makes this resistance meaningful and legitimate is that it is "national".

It is important to note that the common motivation of the interviewees to support the protests is a strong objection towards the AKP's authoritarian and interventionist

discourse on different ways of life. The participants mention their fear and anxiety in the face of the discourses and practices of Erdoğan himself and his government, for the last couple of years, such as legislative attempts to restrict abortion, the ruling party's plan to raise "pious generation". In the face of all these developments, they express that what they contest are injustice, oppression and despotic language of Erdoğan, and state that this situation created a powerful sense of othering in their own. Against the ruling party's discourse of nationhood that marginalizes them, they reconstruct another form of nationhood, which they idealize with their more secular worldview and lifestyle, in their narratives of Gezi Park. In this sense, the Gezi Park movement provides a context that opens up space for them to reproduce their nationhood against a political power that marginalizes them.

In short, The Gezi Park incident appears as a narrative in which different forms of nationhood, which draw the boundary between the national and the non-national with different references, clash. In this sense it is contextually functional in the everyday construction of different understandings of nationhood and prepares the appropriate ground for the enactment of different forms of nationhood.

6.1.2.5. July 15 Coup Attempt, 2016

On 15 July, 2016 Turkey witnessed one of the major events in the country's political and social history. A group within the Turkish armed forces, calling themselves the "Peace at Home Council" (*Yurtta Sulh Konseyi*), attempted a coup d'état against the institutions of the state organizing in major cities of Turkey. Bloody clashes took place between the civilians who took to the streets at the request of President Erdogan to resist and the soldiers who participated in the coup. The picture emerged after the suppression of the coup attempt was quite heavy: 241 people were killed and 2,194 were injured. The ruling party accused its former ally, the Gülen movement, of organizing this "kamikaze coup attempt" (Taş, 2018). The government declared a state of emergency following the coup attempt, which lasted for around two years. Under the circumstances of the state of emergency, the government issued 32 emergency decrees, dismissing nearly 100,000 people from government jobs and permanently closing nongovernmental organizations, universities, and other entities

with alleged ties to Gülen movement or who were otherwise opposed to the AKP (Acar and Reicher, 2021).

The July 15 coup attempt was presented in different ways in the contending narratives built by different political actors (Taş, 2018). On the one hand, according to the narrative of the Gülen community, which was accused of coup plotting by the government, the July 15 was a “staged” coup attempt planned by the government to lay the groundwork for its authoritarian policies. On the other hand, according to opposition leaders Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and Selahattin Demirtaş, this was a controlled coup attempt that Erdoğan was aware of beforehand and yet did not intervene to increase the pressure on the opposition⁵². However, among these contending narratives, the most widely accepted one was constructed by the ruling AKP and imposed on the public using all propaganda tools.

The AKP constructed a 15 July narrative based on a conspiracy theory that pointed to foreign powers and their local collaborators, namely those who are related to Gülen movement, as the perpetrators of the coup attempt and imposed it on ordinary people through pro- government media (Taş, 2018). In addition to the Gülen movement, anyone who was skeptical of these allegations and interpreted the July 15 in a different way was declared a traitor. In this context, the coup attempt paved the way for the strengthening of the emphasis on a number of discursive themes, such as the survival of the state, anti-Westernism, treason, external enemies and domestic collaborators, which are inherent in the nationalist rhetoric of the ruling party (Adisönmez and Onursal, 2020). Accordingly, July 15 coup attempt provided a convenient opportunity to step up the pressure on the social and political opposition reinforcing the populist rhetoric of liberation war to which the AKP resorted for the first time in 2013 to counter the Gezi opposition (Taş, 2018: 8).

The July 15 coup attempt, which is depicted as a founding moment in the narrative of the “New Turkey” that emerged victorious from a second liberation war (Taş, 2018:

⁵²Interview of Monica Ricci Sargentini with Selahattin Demirtaş in 2018, <https://hdp.org.tr/tr/demirtas-erdogan-15-temmuz-darbe-girisiminin-ardindan-turkiyeyi-ohal-ile-yonettigi-bir-yari-acik-cezaevine-donusturmeyi-secti/12138/>

“Kılıçdaroğlu: 15 Temmuz kontrollü darbe girişimidir”, April 2, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39478777>

12) is also narrated in the discourses of many of the participants from the AKP and the MHP as a new founding moment that forms the basis for the reconstruction of the nation and the reproduction of nationhood. Therefore, it appears as one of the most remarkable narratives among which the participants built their Turkishness.

In my opinion, July 15 became the symbol of national unity. I was proud of my Turkishness. Erol, 64, Dentist, AKP

In Erol's narrative, the July 15 coup attempt is an incident that is handled with its results rather than its reasons. According to Erol, who understands the nation as a concrete and homogeneous whole, what happened after this coup attempt is the most concrete proof of this unity and integrity. The pride that Erol feels for being a part of this whole that won in a war against its national existence is the main motivation that stimulates the consciousness of Turkishness that he reproduces in the context of the coup attempt.

July 15 was a local and national awakening, I think. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

In Bülent's narrative, the July 15 coup attempt marks a turning point. It is seen that his imagination of a strong nation that rediscovered its own power and existence in the face of the 15 July coup attempt is reflected in his discourse. As exemplified by the statements of both Erol and Bülent, July 15 coup attempt is depicted as a founding historical event by many participants in their imagination of national history. By the way of describing the resistance to coup attempt as the symbol of national unity and awakening Turkishness is enacted discursively. In addition to this, the fieldwork conducted for this thesis also showed that it is possible to encounter the examples in which July 15 coup attempt is narrative by the participants with particular contents. However, it should be noted here that in general, the main theme of these narratives is "enemy West" as the other of the nation.

July 15th is a second War of Independence for this nation. Raşit, 35, employee at university, MHP

This grand and noble nation went down on the field with the instructions of its leader on 15 July and again disrupted the game of the West. He made an history once again.

It has once again proved the power of the Turks to the world. Because, it was a war of independence for us. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

Making an analogy between the July 15 coup attempt and the War of Independence is one of the most frequently encountered patterns of discursive construction of nationhood through the 15 July incident. In fact, this tendency demonstrates the desire to build an alternative narrative of national history. The narration of the incident as a struggle for independence against the enemy West in the statements of Raşit and Erhan fosters the epicization of the incident as a new national founding moment.

The war of truth and falsehood never ends. We are on the right side of this war, alhamdulillah. In this respect, I consider July 15 as a crusade attack against us. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

The leader position of Turkey in the Muslim world disturbs some groups in the world. Who are these groups? Who are they? Undoubtedly, these are the ones who fear the rise of the Islamic world. They are afraid of Turkey's growth. We saw this on 15 July. We fought against these enemies of Islam, against the crusaders, on 15 July. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

Moreover, the tendency to place the July 15 coup attempt in a larger historical context finds its expression in the emphasis of “struggle against the crusaders”. For example, according to Furkan and Ozan, the July 15 coup attempt was an attack by the enemies of Islam against Islam. Here, the nation, imagined as “us”, is described as “the leader of the Muslim world” and defined with an Islamic content. In this sense, the coup attempt provides a suitable context for the construction and reproduction of a form of nationhood in which Islam is the dominant marker of Turkishness. In short, Turkishness is enacted by defining Muslim “us” and “non-Muslim” West in the context of the July 15 coup attempt.

Westerners are afraid of us, because Turkey is growing, getting stronger. They also know that we have Ottoman blood in our blood. The July 15 coup attempt proves this. These events were a game of the West, which did not want us to get stronger. However the July 15 showed the power of Turkish people. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

Similarly, with the reference to the Ottoman past, and by using the cliché of “the dirty trick of the West” Nazlı employs nationhood and reproduces her own

Turkishness through her subjective narration of the July 15 coup attempt. In her expression, “the powerful Turkish people”, namely the nation who have “Ottoman Blood” in their veins, whose other is defined as the “West”, shapes in flesh and bones, become a concrete reality in the context of the July 15. All in all, as one of the most traumatic events of the recent political history of Turkey, the July 15 coup attempt is presented as a heroic epic showing the power of the nation in the face of the enemy West, sometimes described as imperial, sometimes as an infidel. In this manner, it provides the participants the contextual and situational framework for the employment of nationhood.

6.2. Reproduction of the Historical Figures as the Symbol of the Nation

Particular historical personalities have been an indispensable part of the narration of the past in which nationhood is embodied and reproduced consistently. In the everyday discourses of the real agents in which nationhood is enacted these personalities are characterized as the symbol of the nation. In this sense, it can be argued that these figures attributed to the imagined nation are the suitable tools which enable nationalized individuals to concretize and deploy their nationhood.

In fact, the fieldwork conducted for this thesis demonstrates that Turkishness is constructed discursively around some historical figures by the participants. There is no doubt that the number of historical figures mentioned in the interviews with the participants is greater than those that will be discussed here. However, in general, five figures that the participants refer to while envisioning a nation stand out among the others: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Abdülhamit, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Attila, and Metehan.

6.2.1. The Father of Turks: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Firstly, the main actor of the national official history narrative, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, also appears as a historical figure, which is frequently get out from the dusty pages of history and articulated by the participants in the construction of everyday nationhood. In fact, for many participants, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk personifies the imagined great and glorious Turkish nation beyond being a personality cult.

I went to Umrah and circumambulated the kaaba for Atatürk before anyone else. Atatürk is my ancestor after all. Is there more! My daughter asked, “Who is Atatürk? Is he our father?” I said yes! That's right! He is the founder of Turkish Republic! So I have to respect him, and I don't let anyone insult him. Every Turk has to love Atatürk. Because I have him to thank for everything I have. If I am here at this table as a modern woman, I have this freedom thanks to him. This is a very proud event. Sometimes I ask my children, who is the biggest Turkish, they say Atatürk. I must make them say it. They have to learn this. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

For Leyla, Turkishness and the support for the independent Republic constitutes an inseparable whole. In fact, according to her, it is an obligation, a duty for any Turk to love and respect the founding leader of this Republic to whom the Turkish nation owe everything. In her discursive imagination, on the one hand the nation is depicted as the whole of agents of Atatürk's westernist modernization project; on the other hand, national independence is considered as the gift Atatürk made to the nation. Turkishness is a source of pride that finds its true expression in the republic; and in this sense the founder of the Republic, “the father of Turks” the only symbol that represents this proud belonging.

I am an Atatürk fan. There are roughly over 1200 books in my library. I'm still reading. I have read many sources and tried to research many nations. Let me put it this way, I did not say it in a racist sense, I never thought in a racist sense, I really love to live by feeling Turkish and saying how happy is he/she who says I am Turkish. I openly say, I do not think there is a pure race, a pure Turkish race. Because in the history there has been a lot of interaction. But if we talk about Turkish history, I think Atatürk is the most important figure. Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

The great commander Mustafa Kemal Atatürk did not say how happy is she/ he who is Turkish, but he said how happy is she/he who says I am Turkish. Therefore, this concept of Turkishness, which I describe myself, is actually a concept of culture. A cultural definition is my definition of Turkishness. Or else I don't know if we were Turkish before eight generations. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

Moreover, the famous saying of Atatürk “how happy is he/she who says I am Turkish” is one of the main reference points that many participants use to express the meaning they attribute to Turkishness. It serves as a front for the participants who are afraid to openly talk about the privilege and superiority of being a Turk to be regarded as racism. Paradoxally, this reference, which was included in the expressions of the participants, who underlined that they does not assign a racist meaning to Turkishness, in fact, has a the racist resonance in itself. As can be seen in the statements of both Ahmet and Cahit, the definition of Turkishness, constructed

with reference to Atatürk, reveals the effort to place Turkishness in a cultural context. For these participants who claim that Turkishness has a superiority stemming from its history, the understanding of nationalism in Atatürk's statement, in other saying the nationalism of Atatürk, certainly does not define Turkishness on the basis of ethnic origin. On the contrary, its alleged emphasis on the history shared under the roof of Turkishness demonstrates cultural dimension in its interpretation of Turkishness. However, here, what is presented as the occasion of pride for those who identify themselves as Turks is Turkishness in itself. For this reason, attributing a special importance and honor to Turkishness refers to an essentialist understanding of the nation. In this sense through Atatürk as a historical figure and his saying “how happy is he/she who says I am Turkish” a perception of nationhood that claims to be cultural but at the same time emphasizes the essence of Turkishness is enacted.

6.2.2. The Caliph of the Faithful: Abdulhamid II

Sultan Abdulhamid II, who ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1876 to 1909 and adopted the policy of Pan- Islamism to keep the Empire alive, has been one of the most controversial figures of the Ottoman- Turkish political life. He, as a figure belonging to the Ottoman period, which has been excluded from the official historical narrative since the early republican period, is a profile that is frequently referenced and exalted by political actors especially in the last quarter of the AKP government. This nationalist- conservative stance, which points to the imagination of a national identity that includes the Islamic geography through the imperial past of the Ottoman state, has been interpreted by many researchers as neo-Ottomanist nationalism (White, 2014; Saraçoğlu and Demirkol, 2015; Bora, 2017). In fact, in the light of the data of the field study conducted within the scope of this thesis, it is possible to say that this understanding has a counterpart among the everyday producers of nationalism.

Everyone says that Abdulhamit ran away, but Abdulhamit is not running away. Abdülhamit sends Atatürk himself to Samsun. And Abdülhamit then comes again by sea. If you ask me who is the real Turkish nationalist, I would say Abdulhamit is. In other words, it is not possible for him to escape, to sell his country, that is not possible. This man is a person who cannot step on the ground without ablution. He is a faithful person. He didn't run away, I'm sure of that. There is no way for a Turk to escape anyway. I cannot accept this. That's why I think Abdulhamit was a nationalist

and he didn't run away. Abdulhamit helped establish the republic for the survival of the state. Ümit, 23, undergraduate student, MHP

In the statement of Ümit, by creating an alternative- historical narration, Abdulhamid II is portrayed as a conscious Muslim and therefore an acceptable Turkish nationalist. The participant regards the vision of a nationhood based on Islamic morality attributed to Turkishness as a necessity of being a Turk. In the context of Abdulhamid, Umit builds discursively a form of Turkishness based on faithfulness, courage and heroism.

As an Ottoman grandson, I am interested in Ottoman history. I am good at history, I also like to read, there is a period of Abdulhamit Han, which is a period that needs to be examined very much. I know Abdulhamit Han's belief and love for Mustafa Kemal. Abdulhamit Han is a man of brain and an intelligent statesman. He is a great Turk, a Turkish nationalist in my opinion. Some say we wouldn't have been without Atatürk, I don't believe this. Some of my friends do not accept what I think about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk like that, they say, how do you think so. I say, too, could Mustafa Kemal Atatürk set foot in Samsun, if the Ottoman did not want it, it was not possible. Whose ship did he go on? For example, they told us for years that Mustafa Kemal went to Samsun on a ship, the ship was broken, they glued chewing gum there, they blocked their fingers and so on ... Whose ship went? He went there on Abdulhamit Han's gold-embroidered ship. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

Similarly, the Ozan, who is the manager of the Nevşehir Branch of the Birlik Foundation, known for its proximity to the government, by offering an alternative narrative outside the classic narrative of the war of independence in which Abdulhamid II is presented as a supporter of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the War of Independence, expresses the imagination of nationhood that blends the Ottoman and the Republican figures. When claiming that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's contribution to the struggle for existence of Turkishness is exaggerated by Kemalists, at the same time, through the glorification of Abdulhamid II, he constructs an imagery of nationhood which embraces the Ottoman past and emphasizes Muslim identity.

When I look at it today, I personally think that something is being made to forget. Just as Mustafa Kemal is our ancestor, Abdulhamit Han is our ancestor. We are all grandchildren of the Ottomans. So we cannot ignore it. Abdulhamit is an important figure in Turkish history. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

Lastly, as can be clearly seen also in the expression of Erhan, the imagination of nationhood which praises Abdulhamid II as a historical figure of Turkishness, in fact,

includes a serious critical stance against the official historical narrative based on the dichotomy between the Ottoman past and the Republic. In this framework, it is possible to argue that the glorification of Abdulhamit II as an important figure in Turkish history and a conscious Muslim appears as one of the most salient symbolic discursive elements of the construction of an alternative nationhood narrative which includes also Ottoman and Islamic legacy in the face of the secular nationhood narrative of the Republic.

6.2.3. The Symbol of Justice and Tolerance: Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror

In his seminal work, Bora describes the history as a “reservoir of valor” in which contains the roots of conservative worldview and tradition (Bora, 2017: 361). In the lexicon of conservative Turkish nationalism, and even all Turkish nationalisms, the history of Turkishness has been a history of heroism and triumph. In this context, national consciousness and pride built on the great victories of historical figures appear as strategic and emotional resources that are frequently employed in the discursive everyday construction of nationhood.

Activities to commemorate the conquest of Istanbul initiated by the national visionist the Welfare Party municipalities in the 90s and continued by the AKP municipalities and governments is evaluated as a reflection of the neo- Ottomanist policies of a political elites in the cultural field (Çınar, 2001; Yavuz, 2020). In fact, the enthusiastic annual celebrations of the conquest of Istanbul on May 29, 1453 by Sultan Mehmed II are the expression of the nostalgia for the glorious days of the Ottoman Empire and of the attempt to revive the Ottoman legacy. In addition to this, symbolically, these commemorating celebrations are the public revelation of an alternative historical narrative that embraces the Ottoman identity as opposed to the official historical narrative of the republic that excludes the Ottoman past. Sultan Mehmed II, the architect of this heroic narrative, which is polished by the alternative Turkish history narrative as the founding moment, occupies a particular place in the participants' narratives of Turkishness. The symbolization of Sultan Mehmed II as a historical figure particularly around the themes of courage, tolerance and justice

contributes to the discursive construction of Turkishness benefiting from the revitalization of the past.

We are the grandchildren of Sultan Mehmet, the great Turk who conquered Istanbul at the age of 14. As the Turkish nation, we have such a responsibility towards our ancestors. We have to protect this homeland at all costs. Dürdane, 58, retired bank employee, AKP

For Dürdane, who characterizes the Turkish nation as the grandchildren of the great Turkish Sultan Mehmet, who conquered Istanbul at a young age, defense of the homeland is above all a responsibility against this glorious past. In her narrative, Fatih Sultan Mehmet is a historical figure who builds the bridge between the past and the present of the nation and in which Turkishness is proudly reproduced.

Fatih Sultan Mehmet was a great leader. He has opened an age and closed an age. He made many conquests that many sultans and kings could not. He ruled with his justice, he did not choose to excommunicate, exile, or send people of different nations by exchange. He chose the way of living together. Our idol must be such a person ... We should imitate Fatih Sultan Mehmet. We must rule with justice... This is a requirement of Islam and therefore Turkishness at the same time. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

Furthermore, in the statement of Bilal, the most important characteristic that a Turk should have is defined as justice, which is claimed to be the basis of Islam. As the symbol of the virtue of "justness" attributed to Turkishness, Sultan Mehmed II emerges as a reference point in his definition of Turkishness. In other words, while the participant forms and expresses his description of Turkishness, he envisions an ideal "Turkishness" centered on the value of fairness and compasison around the image of Sultan Mehmet, who is narrated as an ideal Turkish figure as a just and compassionate sultan. Another point that should be underlined here is that this construction of nationhood is also fed by the vein of Islam with the emphasis of the Muslim identity of the Sultan Mehmed II.

6.2.4. The Combatant Figures of the Pre- Islamic Turkish History: Attila and Metehan

Another discursive pattern appeared frequently during the interviews is the storification of Turkishness through the important figures of pre-Islamic Turkish history. Particularly Atilla and Metehan, the commanders who have an important

place in the description of Turkishness with the motifs of courage and warrior spirit, are historical characters, the symbol of Turkishness that is frequently used in the discourse.

When I entered the barracks in the army, I felt like I was in the armies of Atilla or Mete. Because, as you know, when we look at the history of Turkish military service, it is Metehan who established the decimal system in army. Then, of course, we have a figure called Atilla, the wrath of God. The ruler of the European Hun State... I felt like I was in his armies. I felt like I was Turkish. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

Pointing to the West, especially Europe, as the other of his imagination of Turkishness in many different contexts, Cahit's military memories are also adorned with the pride he felt for being descended from Atilla, who once ruled Europe. For the participant who frequently resorts to the myths of war, military service and martyrdom in his narratives describing Turkishness, the figures of pre-Islamic Turkish history, Metehan and Atilla, are symbols of the warrior spirit that he attributes to the essence of Turkishness.

Let me say this now, look, the Turkish nation has had a political stance and strategy ever since it appeared on the stage of history. Even from Metehan's period... For example, even the General Staff did not accept it for a long time, but it has recently accepted that the Turkish army system has builded in Metehan's period and it is now publishing on its website. Metehan is an important figure in Turkish history, very important. Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

In his narrative, Ahmet describes the Turks as a nation with a military intelligence and skill, as the architect of an army whose foundations date back to Metehan. According to him, the figure of Metehan is the most important symbol of this superior virtue of the Turkish nation. First of all, the common point in both quotations above is the emphasis on the historicity of Turkishness and the effort to place Turkishness in a long historical tradition crowned by military glory. For this claim, the narratives contented with pre-Islamic Turkish historical figures provide a convenient context. Secondly, these popular figures portrays the silhouette of a common past full of military achievements; and in this way they contribute to build and enact discursively Turkishness upon the myth of "superior abilities of Turks in the military field". Third and lastly, the imagery of "Attila who brought Europe to its knees" in the statement of Cahit, enable the participant to cling to a history that

makes possible to cope with the feeling of inferiority and deficiency in the face of Europe, the coveted other of the present.

All in all, just like the historical events belonging to the distant past or the incidents resonated in social and political life of Turkey in the recent past, the historical characters constantly referenced during the interviews, points out one way in which the agents of the nation maintain the connectedness of nationhood with the past. The symbolization and glorification of these figures, at the same time, means the blessing of power, war and domination which are the cornerstones of the lexicon of nationhood.

6.3. Glorification of the Past

Nationalism, in its simplest definition, is to believe in the existence of a nation that is formed by people with a common and ancient past and that has national interests which exceeds the interests of individuals. What reveals different forms of nationalism and different interpretations of nationhood are how the category of nation is filled in and how it is interpreted (Saraçoğlu, 2011: 46). In this framework, the concept of “common past” plays major role in the subjective construction of nationhood in everyday life.

As previously mentioned, the reconstruction and recontextualization of the past has been one of the manifold ways in which ordinary people became “nationalized agents”. Individuals’ unobtrusive, explicit or implicit expressions about the past in everyday conversations serve to grasp the traces of their own perception of nationhood and to make sense of everyday nationhood. By the way of the expression of the experience of the “now” in relation to the past, the nation is represented and reproduced as a concrete reality moving through history. In this sense, instrumentalizing the past as an object of belonging and glorifying a specific period of the past by individuals, namely by the real agents of nation-building, point at the employment of nationhood as a meaningful category. Apart from this point, this subsection focuses on the ways in which the past, or more precisely, “which” past, is glorified, instrumentalized, and incorporated in the building process of everyday nationalism.

6.3.1. Glorification of the Pre- Islamic Turkish Past

As suggested by many academic studies focusing on different Turkish narratives of different ideological visions, pre-Islamic Turkish history is a period that also serves as a source for the official historical narrative of the early Republic elites, who attempt to create a new secular national identity by keeping a distance from the Islamic/ Ottoman past (Copeaux, 1996; Çağaptay, 2006; Uzer, 2016; Bora, 2017). Indeed, the desire to build a secular and modern nation in the newly established nation-state necessitated to foster among the citizens of the young Republic an authentic consciousness of Turkishness, and to draw attention to the ancient Turkish history and the continuity of this history. Thus, the invention of the pre- Islamic Turkish past promised an important historicity in terms of the process of building Turkish national identity from above. However, although defining Turkishness as a form of belonging that includes the pre-Islamic period with reference to an authentic Turkish history was a part of an ideological project and a strategic move for the young cadres of the nation state, it appears as a pattern in which individuals express and reproduce their own imagination of Turkishness in everyday life. Therefore, the historical narration of Turkishness with the reference to the glorification of a pre-Islamic Turkish past, within the scope of this thesis, is an example of how history is instrumentalized in the construction of nationhood as a discourse that is constantly reproduced and embodied by individuals in everyday life; because it should be highlighted once again that it is this process of reproduction that makes nationalism visible and embedded in the contemporary social and political world.

The world is very complicated right now. All states, nations are digging each other's grave. In such an environment, there is a distinct honour of being Turkish. Our past is obvious, as you know. We, as Turks, have a glorious history. Ever since Central Asia... The world history is full of the stories of the Turkish sovereignty. İhsan, 45, graphic designer/ journalist, AKP

According to İhsan, the world history consists of a history shaped by the heroic stories of the sovereign Turks. Accordingly, he envisions Turkishness as a superpower that dictates the destiny of the world and places it at the center of history. By this way, he makes sense of his own Turkishness as being part of a community that has an important place in world history. This sense of being important and being

the heir of a “glorious” past provides a comfort zone for him in the today’s fluid, elusive and uncanny worlds of nations. In one sense, he expresses his hope and expectations from the future through the discourse of glorious Turkish past.

Whenever the Turks dominated a part of the world, peace and prosperity came. History is full of examples of this. You can see this in the Seljuks, you can see it in the Ottoman Empire. After that, you can see this in the Göktürk State. You can see this in the domination we established in Central Asia... Here you can see this in the European Hun State. Here we are the inheritors of such a nation. Okay, we missed the industrial revolution. However, there were Turks before the Ottoman Empire, Turks had a history. We cannot ignore this glorious Turkish history! Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

Similarly, for Ahmet, the place of Turkishness in world history is remembered with peace and prosperity. It is no coincidence that these concepts are among the most emphasized ideals in the age of modern nation-states. The emphasis on the historical domination of Turks over other communities, on the one hand, reinforces the national pride, on the other hand, it renews the self-confidence required to cope with the historical complex created by the technological and industrial backwardness against the Western civilization. Furthermore, the claim of the existence of an authentic Turkish culture and civilization free from Ottoman Empire and Islam mean expanding the boundaries of Turkishness to include the pre-Islamic period. This is also an effort to make sense of Turkishness not as the remnant of a collapsed empire, but as a continuation of a tradition that has established many states throughout history.

P: If Turkey is involved in an alternative international union, it should be in a leader position. Definitely!

Q: Why? What is it that compels Turkey to be a leader?

P: History, its historical acquis, accumulation. Look at the pre-Islam period, look at the Gokturks, for example... Look at the Huns... Look at the Seljuks after Islam, look at the Ottomans, look at the period of principalities... All of them have a tradition, such as bringing justice to where they go, spreading civilization, loving the created for the creator’s sake... What we did is actually the guarantee of what we will do...Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

Lastly, as can be seen in all above quotes, the glorification of Turkish history with the reference to the pre- Islamic period, in fact, offers the participants an opportunity to imagine themselves as the heir of an alleged eternal civilization. The glorified pre-Islamic and pre- Ottoman period is described discursively as the story of coming out

of nothing and appearance on the stage of history. Defining Turkishness as the subject who continues to write that story today also means not doubting the future of the nation.

6.3.2. Glorious Islamic- Ottoman History

For many participants interviewed in the field, when a common past of the nation is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is the Ottoman past. Accordingly, the glorification of this particular period of the history, which forms the setting of a common and ancient historical narrative belonging to the whole categorized as a nation by the participants, emerges as one of the frequently used discursive tendencies in the enactment of everyday nationhood.

We wouldn't have been, if the Ottomans hadn't been. Our history is very strong. We are the descendants of an empire that spread Islam all over the world. Dürdane, 58, retired bank employee, AKP

Our origin is Ottoman, thank God. We are always proud of it, a structure that has many successes and has dominated the world. It's not easy ... We are talking about an empire that waved the flag of Islam on three continents I know that all countries in the world know very well the Ottoman history. And they have investigated this very seriously, or it is already in their archives. İhsan, 45, graphic designer/ journalist, AKP

The thought of a “golden age” in the past, which draws attention in the above quotes, is a point that many participants, who glorified the Ottoman past as the common past of the nation, agree on. The longing for this “golden age” can also be interpreted as an expression of the hope for the future of the imagined nation. The paranoia of “the whole world keeps its eye on us” and the complex of economic and social backwardness after the collapse of Empire encourages the desire to one day return to the mighty and brilliant days imagined in the Ottoman period. In addition to this, for both Dürdane and İhsan, the Ottoman past, built as the common past of the nation, points to the rise of Islam. Therefore, Muslim identity as an instrument always ready to be used in the crowded discursive baggage of Turkish nationhood appears once again in the context of the glorious Ottoman past.

I went to Hungary, saw the places where the Ottomans ruled for a period and I was proud. I am also proud of it. We have given our culture to its people. Maybe the Ottoman state had its own mistakes, maybe... As I said before, if your child is doing

wrong, do we throw it out? No. But I was so proud. These geographies are the legacy of the Ottomans. Because they learned lots of things from us. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

The expansion policy of the Ottomans, reaching the people, feeding the people, dressing the people, the understanding of the social state, the ability to govern non-Muslims and Muslims at the same time... These are things that could hardly be achieved even today, and were achieved at that time. These are things that really excite people. Of course, it is very proud to have such a history. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

As you know, the Ottoman State is a state that implements its expansion policy very well. It sends Turkmens to the lands it conquers to Turkify and Islamize it. It is a pride to be the heiress of such a successful state. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

As can be observed in the quotes above, the imperial past of the Ottoman State is glorified and praised by many participants. Firstly, as can be seen in the expression of Nurdan, the Ottoman period is romanticized as a golden age of Turkishness when Turkish culture was transported to different geographies. Seeing the traces of “a culture that belongs to us” in different countries is interpreted as a sign of superiority; and this situation brings to light the desire to define the boundaries of the imagination of Turkishness with the borders reached by the empire. In other words, the longing for the respectable days of the Ottoman Empire, refers to the reproduction of a perception of Turkishness that gained superiority by carrying its culture and traces to other countries. Particularly, the expressions of Cahit show that with the pride in talking about the Ottoman policies of Turkification and Islamization a form of nationhood that aims to make its own culture and religion dominant over different identities, accompanied by an imagination of the expansionist nation, is built in his mindset.

Furthermore, in the statement of Nurdan, the emphasis on the Ottoman tolerance and accommodation for religious differences emerges as the backbone of the discourse in which an imagination of Turkishness inspired by Ottoman past is constructed. In fact, for him, one of the things that makes the Ottoman past worthy of being glorified as the common past of the nation is the thought that the Ottoman State had an approach of compassionate administration which takes into consideration the welfare of its subjects. This rhetoric of “Ottoman tolerance”, in a sense, can be thought of as the participant's attempt to purge the Ottoman Empire from the pejorative meanings of imperialism while praising its expansionist policies. In other words, the Ottoman

State, which occupied the territories of people of different languages and religions by fighting, is not considered by the participants as an invading imperial force due to its tolerant administration and respect for differences. The glorification of the Ottoman period on the basis of this positive description as the common past of the nation reveals the discursive construction and the enactment of the perception of Turkishness that incorporates different religions and languages, but also dominates them.

They say, for example, that we would not lock the doors during that period. There are many different races. But we have such trust in society that they can even entrust their honor to each other. You know, it's one of the hardest things for people of our own nature. For example, there are those who entrust the keys to their doors to the neighboring Armenian family. They lived in unity and solidarity with very humanitarian attitudes. Now maybe we can't trust our next-door neighbor and give the key. But at that time, you can hand over your house keys to a Greek neighbor and sleep with the windows open. There is such a time that we are talking about... Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

It is possible to witness the ambition and longing for “domination” that is felt between the lines of the rhetoric of Ottoman tolerance also in the above mentioned quote. In fact, it is the Ottoman domination in itself that creates the image of Ottoman tolerance; because the concept of tolerance mentioned here does not mean a compromise between equals. On the contrary, here, the concept of tolerance evokes a grace of the privileged and dominant group. Therefore, what is glorified here under the name of Ottoman tolerance is actually the power and privileges of the Turkish image, which is referred to with reference to the Ottoman past, over the others. It is obviously seen in the quote above from the interview with Ayşe that this “other” is mostly described as non-Muslims. On the one hand, there is a strong emphasis on Ottoman cosmopolitanism in her expressions. According to her, the experience of living together with non- Muslims in the Ottoman period proves the tradition of tolerance “we” have as “Muslim Turks”, namely Ottomans. At first glance, the idealization of the Ottoman social structure as a multicultural and safe environment seems to refer to an understanding of Turkishness which rejects the role of ethnic origin in the definition of nationhood. However, on the other hand, this nostalgia for Ottoman cosmopolitanism is not enough to hide the imagination of nationhood that the participant constructs discursively, which includes ethnic origin and religion as defining factors. The word “even” in the expression of the participant,

who romanticized the Ottoman past as the days when we could trust “even” an Armenian, a Greek the keys to our houses, is not an incidentally used detail and points to an understanding that defines Turkishness in an area where the religious element is dominant. For this reason, it can be argued that the nostalgia for the Ottoman cosmopolitanism, as can be seen in this example, corresponds to a discursive pattern frequently used by nationalized agents who construct Turkishness as a privileged dominant group in an unequal relationship but refrain from expressing it.

We are the grandchildren of famous, glorious, powerful leaders. We, the brothers lived together in Turkey, have established empires, countries... So of course I'm an Ottoman fan. But our history has been distorted before, they did not tell us correctly. After joining the Ak Party, I felt how important it was for us, Turkishness, and the Ottomans. My love for the sultans increased. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

Ottoman history has been overshadowed and neglected in history books for years. They didn't teach us that glorious history well enough. Why? When the Republic was founded, he had to write his own story for the innovations it brought to take root, and he wrote it. That is the point... Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

Lastly, the discourse in which the Ottoman past is glorified contains a serious critique of official republican historiography and its imagination of Turkishness based on secular values and representing a definite break from the Ottoman heritage. For Nazlı who interpret the rediscovery of a glorious history that has been ignored for years as the awakening of national consciousness the architect of this revival is the AKP. In this sense, it is possible to say that the AKP's neo- Ottoman vision, which imposes its own imagination of nationhood on the masses through a glorious Ottoman historical narrative, has found a response in the society. The embodiment of this discourse as a reality by both consuming and reproducing at the same time occurs in the everyday construction processes, as can be seen in the examples above.

6.3.3. The Epic of the Turkish War of Independence

Imagining and narrating a founding moment is a common strategy frequently used in all construction of nationhood of competing national projects; and each of them has an appropriate claim about the founding moment of the nation to which it ascribes a special meaning and significance to establish and justify itself (Çınar and Taş, 2017). The War of Independence has also been narrated as the founding moment of the Turkish nation as a threshold and an historical turning point in the national narratives

of different political projects (Çınar and Taş, 2017). However, the taken for grantedness of Turkish nationhood in political, social and everyday life derives its motive force from the reconstruction and reproduction of these claim about the historicity of the nation in which the contending imaginations of the nation of different political visions reveal themselves. Indeed, the narrative of the War of Independence is one of the discursive instruments that we often encountered during this research, which aims to examine the subjective construction of everyday nationhood. In addition to this, it is observed that it provides suitable context for the construction of different forms of nationhood by being narrated with different contents. For this reason, investigating how and with which contents Turkish nationhood is constructed and reproduced through the narrative of the Turkish War of Independence in the discourses of nationalized subjects provides important clues about how everyday nationalism is enacted in a temporal dimension.

I think what makes us Turks is the struggle for independence. It is Atatürk's War of Independence, it is a heroic epic and a turning point for us. But they, external powers, could not digest this defeat. Seda, 41, project advisor/ restaurant manager, CHP

I am not very interested in Ottoman history. I care more about the history of the War of Independence. From time to time I question what the 600-year Ottoman period has contributed to us, what we have left. We all came from there, of course, we are Ottoman grandchildren. However, what Central Anatolia was back then is still today, it has not changed much. Therefore, it is the struggle for independence that changes the fate of the Turks. It is a glorious War of Independence against both imperial powers and traitors in us. Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

In the quotes above from Seda and Mahmut, the War of Independence is described as a founding moment which changes the fate of the nation. In this context, the participants reproduce and enact an imagination of nationhood, also including a sharp break from the Ottoman past, through the war which is narrated as a heroic epic that determines the fate of the nation. Indeed, more particularly, as can be seen in Mahmut's statement, the War of Independence points a moment when the Ottoman legacy is abandoned as well as the turning point of the imagination of Turkishness in the mindset of the participants. In short, in the quotes above, the War of Independence serves as the historical threshold of a narrative of nationhood which shaped within the framework of the republican values and the personality of Atatürk.

For me, the War of Independence is a war against the crusaders. This is how I define this epic. It is a glorious struggle at the cost of our lives to protect Islam with our strength of faith... This shows the strength of the Turks, I think. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

On the other hand, in the narratives of Ozan, the construction of a form of nationhood which also incorporates Islamic references and is imagined through the War of Independence draws attention. According to their narrations, the War of Independence, as “a war against the crusaders” has a religious meaning; and it signifies a victory gained with the force of faith in “us”, Turks. The success of the Turks in this war means the protection of Islam and its safety. This situation shows us once again that it is quite possible that the same historical event can be interpreted differently by the way of different narratives, and thus serves as a catalyst in the construction of different perceptions of nationhood.

Moreover, another point that should be highlighted is that an anti- Western rhetoric accompanies both two processes of making- sense mentioned above. The War of Independence, in the expressions of Seda and Mahmut, is narrated as a combat against global powers, and their domestic collaborators, namely traitors. In this context, an imagination of Turkishness which is made sense and nourished by anti-Western sentiments and the paranoia of “external powers and internal enemies” also find its expression in such narrative. On the other hand, it is possible to observe the same anti- Westernist content in the Islamic interpretation of nationhood in the narratives of Erhan and Ozan. All in all, the “other” of both two perception of nationhood which is reproduced through the epic of the War of Turkish Independence is the same; it is the West, although it is the “imperial” West for the former and the “Christian” West for the latter.

Every country has its flag, our country also has it, but our difference is our heroism in the War of Independence. It is an exemplary war for all countries of the world, you know, the War of Independence. This makes our past different from others. No other nation has the courage and patriotism this nation has. The War of Independence shows this, I think... Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

Lastly, when we consider the statements of Nuriye and all the participants whose words are quoted above, it should be noted that an imagination of nationhood that glorifies and praises war, courage and “militaristically patriotism” (Çınar and Taş,

2017) is built through the epicization of the War of Independence. Turkish nationhood, in both two differentiating and competing contents, is described as being a member of a nation that does not hesitate to fight, die and kill for its homeland. In this framework, despite their different emphasis and sensibilities about the definition of Turkishness, the common point of the different subjective narratives that epicizes the War of Independence is that they are full of the themes of patriotism and martyrdom.

6.4. Conclusion

The past has created a suitable context for the expression of nationalized world vision by ordinary people in everyday conversations. For this reason, while constructing and reproducing nationhood, the agents of the nation use frequently the ways in which the historical events, historical figures and the past in itself are subjectively interpreted and narrated. By this way, everyday nationhood is situated and enacted in an historical context.

The fieldwork conducted for this thesis provided an opportunity to observe how the construction of everyday nationhood takes place in various ways in the context of some historical events belonging to the distant past and the incidents resonated in social and political life of Turkey in the recent past. In this framework, the Battle of Malazgirt, the Conquest of Istanbul, Armenian Genocide and the Battle of Dardanelles appears as historical events which are frequently articulated in subjective discourse in the context of the reproduction of historical narratives. Furthermore, the research demonstrates how the events which resonated with the political and social life in the recent history of Turkey are incorporated into this process with different contents and meanings. Within this scope, it is possible to argue that the assassination of Hrant Dink, the Habur Incident, the Davos Incident, the Gezi Movement and the July 15 Coup Attempt occupy a major place in participants's world of perception who refer to them while defining the nation or who reproduce their nationhood while expressing their thoughts on these events become active subjects of the nation. In other words, these events set the groundwork for the participants to become active subjects of the nation.

The findings show that in the reconstruction of the past, while the positions that all forms of nationalism that have existed in Turkish political life, such as the denial of the Armenian genocide, are preserved, the dominant ideology of today, which can be characterized by the emphasis on Islam and ethnic nationalism, is reproduced with everyday nationalism. The conquest of Istanbul, which started to be celebrated as a part of the national past with the AKP government in the 2000s, presents an important historical narrative that the participants from the AKP and MHP refer to while constructing their Turkishness. On the other hand, the Dardanelles War is re-circulated by the same group with a religious reference, as the struggle of the Crusaders and the Crescent, as a national founding moment in line with the Islamic narrative. In short, Islam and ethnic nationalism, which dominates Turkish politics today, are both reproduced within daily nationalism and determine the atmosphere in which daily nationalism is produced.

The interpretation of recent history also occurs as the manifestation of the Islamist and ethnic nationalist understanding of Turkishness. For example, the assassination of Hrant Dink is on the agenda of AKP and MHP voters with the marches organized under the slogan "We are all Armenians" to protest the murder rather than the assassination itself. With an Islamist and racist motivation, these rallies are criticized and the limits of Turkishness are reminded. On the other hand, the Davos incident is an expression of national confidence and pride for AKP voters. While Gezi was an anti-national attempt against national will and a "conspiracy of the West and its collaborators" for AKP voters, the July 15 coup attempt is one of the turning points of the narrative of Turkishness shaped on the basis of Islam and ethnic nationalism for both AKP and MHP voters. However, it should be noted that although this Islamist and ethnic nationalist attitude is dominant in the construction of recent history, an alternative reconstruction of nationhood is still occurring apart from the historical narrative imposed by the dominant ideology. As a matter of fact, the Gezi event symbolizes a national awakening for CHP voters. Additionally, it seems that the Habur incident is still quite vivid in the minds of both CHP, MHP and AKP participants, as an event that damages national pride and humiliates Turks.

As well as historical events, particular historical personalities have been an indispensable part of the narration of the past in which nationhood is embodied and

reproduced consistently. In the everyday discourses of the real agents in which nationhood is enacted these personalities are characterized as the symbol of the nation. In this sense, it can be argued that these figures attributed to the imagined nation are the suitable tools which enable nationalized individuals to concretize and deploy their nationhood. In this sense, this thesis demonstrates that Turkishness is constructed discursively around some historical figures by the participants. In general, five figures that the participants refer to while envisioning a nation stand out among the others: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Abdülhamit, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Attila, and Metehan.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as the father of the Turks, is a historical figure that participants from all political positions refer to while reproducing the national history. Apart from this, the figures that individuals refer to while constructing the national history generally reflect their political positions. In this context, Sultan Abdulhamid, as the caliph of the faithful, is a historical figure who is embraced and glorified by AKP and MHP voters in accordance with the neo-Ottomanist rhetoric of the dominant ideology of the period. Similarly, Sultan Mehmet II, just like the conquest of Istanbul, appears as an important reference point for the Islamist and neo-Ottomanist nationalism of this period. The combatant figures of the pre-Islamic Turkish history, Atilla and Metehan, are historical characters included in the national history narratives of MHP supporters from the ethnic nationalist idealist movement.

Ultimately, the reconstruction and recontextualization of the past has been one of the manifold ways in which ordinary people became “nationalized agents”. Individuals’ unobtrusive, explicit or implicit expressions about the past in everyday conversations serve to grasp the traces of their own perception of nationhood and to make sense of everyday nationhood. In this sense, instrumentalizing the past as an object of belonging and glorifying a specific period of the past by individuals, namely by the real agents of nation-building, point at the employment of nationhood as a meaningful category. In addition to this, the search for an answer to the question of which past is glorified, instrumentalized and incorporated into the building process of everyday nationalism leads to concentrating on the reproduction of three historical periods: the Pre- Islamic Turkish Past, the Islamic- Ottoman History and the Turkish

War of Independence. The glorification of these periods as the common past of the nation in manifold ways plays an important role in the construction of nationhood as a historical reality in everyday discourse.

Different conceptions of Turkish nationalism glorify different periods of history as the golden age of national history narrative. For example, Islamic Ottoman history, which was excluded from the national history narrative of the early republican period, today constitutes the backbone of the AKP's national historical fiction. It seems that this fiction attracts a lot of attention and is embraced by the party base and plays an important role in the discourses of the party supporters that they are building their Turkishness. On the other hand, pre-Islamic Turkish history appears as a period that is frequently referenced by the supporters of the AKP and MHP who have an ethnic nationalist understanding of Turkishness. Today, a dominant ideology that merges these two different national narratives built on two different periods of history in its rhetoric prevails in Turkey. On the one hand, it is possible to say that the participants who support the AKP, which brings together all the Islamist, Ottomanist and ethnicist national history narratives in its conservative and nationalist discourse, also embrace and reproduce this eclectic language. On the other hand, just as in the interpretation of historical events, secular narratives still continue to be reproduced in everyday life, apart from the national history narrative imposed by the dominant ideology. The narrative of the epic of the Turkish War of Independence, which draws attention in the statements of the participants from the CHP, is the proof of this claim.

CHAPTER 7

SYMBOLIC AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS IN EVERYDAY REPRODUCTION OF NATIONHOOD

The cultural dimension of the nationalist discourse refers to a symbolic system formed by a set of images, objects and rituals that are believed to have a national meaning and define the boundaries of the national reality and national values in nationalized mindset (Skey, 2011: 11). This symbolic and cultural field in which the boundaries and the content of the perception of nationhood is shaped and justified, “create ‘maps’ for social actors” in order to make sense of their own national belongings (Özkirimli, 2005: 188). From this point forth, in this chapter of the thesis, the cultural dimension of the everyday construction of Turkishness is explored through national images, symbols, rituals and collective experiences.

In this framework, this chapter searches for answers to the following questions: Firstly, what meaning do the participants attach to the flag, the national anthem, and the Turkish language, which they see as a symbol of their nationhood? Besides, what objects do they use in their everyday lives, believing that they have a national meaning? Secondly, how do the participants relate to national days and the democracy watch rallies, what meanings do they attribute to them, and how do they build their own nationhood through these experiences? Thus, in this chapter, we will see the different meanings that national symbols used and collective experiences, which are interpreted by individuals as national unifying values and moments, can take on at the level of daily life and individual. From this point forth, the symbolic and cultural dimension, which plays an important role in the construction of Turkishness as a reality embodied in the minds of individuals, will be examined under two headings: national symbols and national rituals and collective experiences.

As claimed at the beginning of the thesis, different nationalism projects in Turkish politics have different claims on the themes of us, them, past and national culture while defining the Turkish nation. Indeed, Turkish nationhood has been constructed in both top- down political discourses and in everyday life from below by ordinary actors within the framework of us, them, the past and culture. In this context, in the previous empirical chapters of the thesis, the everyday reproduction of “we”, “they” and “national past” were analyzed through the expressions of the participants from different political parties, namely the AKP, the CHP and the MHP.

National symbols, rituals and collective experiences attributed to a national meaning are considered as elements that constitute the cultural dimension of the everyday construction of nationhood. This part of the thesis aims to explore how national symbols, rituals and collective experiences emerge in the discourse of the participants from different political positions.

In the increasingly conservative political climate of the 2000s dominated by Islam and ethnic nationalism, the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in everyday life through national symbols, rituals and collective experiences that have a national meaning has gained increasing visibility. In Nevşehir, this visibility manifests itself with Turkish flags hung on the balconies of houses and workplaces, the abundance of cars decorated with Turkish flags, Ottoman sultan’s signature, and writings in old Turkic script and ostentatious "national will" rallies. In this context, another aim of this section is also to understand what these national symbols and collective experiences permeating the everyday atmosphere of the city mean for the participants and how this increased visibility relates to the rising wave of nationalism and conservatism in Turkish politics in the 2000s.

In accordance with this purpose, the performative area in which nationhood is embodied through symbolic forms of expression such as images, objects and rituals is investigated in order to trace everyday contents and contexts of Turkishness experienced by different people. During the interviews with the participants, it is observed that the flag, anthem, language and some personal objects used in daily life play an important role in the performative construction of Turkishness and the Turkish nation. In addition to this, national holidays and democracy watch rallies

held after the coup attempt of 15 July appear as collective experiences for many of the participants in which they reproduce their nationhood. From everyday nationhood perspective, these performative acts have been an undeniable part of the embodiment of the nation; but the sense and value attributed to these symbols by individuals are not fixed and uncontested. In this context, in this chapter, the multiple meanings attributed to Turkish flag, national anthem, language, nationalized objects, national days and the democracy watch rallies are subjected to a scrutiny; and their role in the everyday construction of Turkishness is investigated. This attempt shows how the diverse connotations of these symbols and experiences challenge the claim, shared by all nationalist rhetoric imposed by above, that these are “common values of the nation”; because these performative components, just as the nation, do not carry fixed and stable meanings for different nationalized subjects. Additionally, addressing the construction of nationalist discourse with its cultural dimension makes possible to map their different and similar sense-making strategies.

7.1. National Symbols

The most important instruments of the nation-state's aim to create a homogeneous nation from individuals with different ethnic and religious affiliations have been the state- constructed national symbols. These national symbols such as the flag and national anthem, as the embodiment and reminders of the nation, play a crucial role in the creation of a collective consciousness by making individuals feel like members of the imagined community. These symbols, whose most important function is to promote national unity, are the fixed and constant signs of the national space organized by the ideology of the nation state. From a top down perspective, it can be argued that the meanings attributed to these symbols are determined and fixed by the nation-state itself and dictated to the actors of the society through its ideological tools. However, contrary to this claim that considers the nationalization of everyday actors as a construction process realized by the state, institutions and elites, the sense and value attributed to these symbols by individuals are not fixed and uncontested. In this sense, the fieldwork provides a suitable opportunity to map the different and similar strategies of everyday actors to make sense these symbols. In the same vein, language has been one of the most important markers of nationhood. What makes a

language a national language is the nation-state's motivation to create a nation from subjects who speak and think in that language. In addition to being accepted as a national language by the nation-state, what makes a language national is its becoming a hegemonic cultural capital in the society and its dominance over other languages spoken by the actors of the society. Although national language is one of the most powerful weapons of nation-state ideology, it is reproduced as a national code and value by the actors of everyday life who use and give meaning to it. As a matter of fact, one of the cultural codes that the participants applied in the process of constructing their Turkishness in the interviews held during the field study in which we traced the construction of nationhood is language. Moreover, symbols that are believed to have national value and meaning in everyday life are not limited to the flag, national anthem and language. The research shows that the participants are constructing their own Turkishness through different symbols that they use in their everyday lives and that they believe have a national meaning. Therefore, the picture of a gray wolf that some hang in their office, the necklace with the figure of Atatürk on the neck of some, and the Qur'an, which is displayed by some in the living room of their house, as the cultural motives of different meanings attributed to nationhood, provide us a rich material to trace different perceptions of Turkishness.

7.1.1. Turkish Flag

During the research, the Turkish flag emerged as an important cultural motif used in the imagery of nationhood in different contexts with different contents. It appears in the minds of the participants as one of the cultural codes of Turkishness, as a national value that sometimes gives confidence and honor, sometimes reminds the history of the nation, and sometimes carries a religious meaning.

When I see our flag, I relax, I find peace of mind. I feel safe, that gives me confidence. Of course, each country has its own flag, but I don't know this is ours... Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

For Furkan, who stated that the Turkish flag evokes a sense of confidence in him, it is an object that gives peace by reminding him of his belonging to the nation. By the way of this emotional bond that the participant establishes with the flag, the feeling of nationhood is reinforced and reproduced.

Q: What does the Turkish flag mean to you?

P: Now... It is indisputable, as I said, pride, pride, I mean... If you live in this country, if it represents independence, if I think I am independent as long as it fluctuates, I would be proud. Özdemir, 57, retired teacher, CHP

As an indisputable symbol of freedom and a source of pride, in Özdemir's discourse, the flag plays a crucial role in stimulating his national feelings and constructing the participant himself as a part of the imagined national whole. Along with the values it symbolizes, the flag is respected as the embodiment of the nation, and in fact, the nation itself is depicted, not the flag, with these expressions of love and devotion.

The Turkish flag is a must for us. Our flag is our everything. In other words, if we attribute only one meaning to it, as I said, we would be disrespectful. I told you, our honor, our everything. It is the symbol of our existence... Rifat, 32, lawyer, AKP

The Turkish flag is the honor of this nation. This is my honor, my everything... My honor! The flag is what honor is to me. One of the most sacred things for me... Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

The embodiment of the nation and the enactment of nationhood through the flag is also salient in the expressions of Cahit and Rifat, just as it is in Özdemir's. In the expressions of these three participants, whose worldviews and political stances differ from each other, the flag is described with feelings of confidence and pride, and with these feelings it arouses, it functions as an important and stimulating motif of the imagination of the nation.

In addition to feelings such as pride and confidence, the flag appears as a symbol that is referenced by some participants in the subjective construction of nationhood, with a meaning emphasizing the historicity of the nation.

Every time I look at the Turkish flag, I see my ancestors and their national struggles. I remember my ancestors who made me proud with their victories... Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

In Ozan's statement, the flag is an image that establishes, produces and reminds the nation's bond with the past, and is a discursive code that embodies and fixes nationhood in this history. The flag, whose semantic content is filled with concepts with which we are familiar with in the repertoire of the discursive construction of

nationalism, such as ancestry, struggle, victory and pride, describes and glorifies the historical existence of the nation. In other words, it functions as an expression of a nationally constructed history.

For me, the flag means my Turkey, it means Çanakkale. It means the shadow of the moon and star falling on the blood of our martyrs in Çanakkale. While singing our National Anthem, I look for the flag. I think of my ancestors, our martyrs... I get very emotional... Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

When I look at our flag, I think of the blood of our martyrs in the Çanakkale War, I think of my homeland. So many people died for this flag in Çanakkale. After death, when the blood started to flow like a flood and a star and crescent was born on it, this is how our flag became. It is something from our ancestors. The blood of those who gave us this land... Dürdane, 58, retired bank employee, AKP

As can be seen in above statements, Both Dürdane and Nazlı incorporate the Battle of Dardanelles as a historical setting into their narrative about the emergence of the Turkish flag. Their discursive construction of the story of the Turkish flag generally summarizes the relationality that many participants have established in the context of the Battle of Dardanelles and the Turkish flag, which has mystical elements. According to this narration, the flag represents the reflection of the moon and a star in pools of blood of Turkish martyrs during the Dardanelles War. This crescent, at the same time, symbolizes Islam and therefore the faith of the martyrs. In this sense, it is important for the construction of the religious and spiritual meaning ascribed to the flag.

All of our grandfathers and uncles were martyred in Çanakkale. And a lot of lives have been lost for this country. The Turkish flag reminds me of them. I see it as a great legacy left to us. Every country has a flag, our country has it too, but ours has a difference. We fought a War of Independence for this flag. It is an exemplary war for the world, you know, the War of Independence. Of course, this makes our past a little different from the others. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

In Nuriye's discourse, the flag appears as a motif that emerges from the heart of the nation in Çanakkale, makes the nation visible and tangible, and makes the history of the nation provable. It functions as a reflection of the historical narrative needed by the construction of nationality, always ready to be used and reproduced. In addition to sanctifying the flag as a mystical expression of the nation's existence with the Çanakkale narrative, she also reinforces her sense of nationhood stimulated by the

flag with the discourse that "every flag is sacred, but ours is more sacred", which establishes a hierarchy among equals. Here, the claim of superiority, which is inherent in the construction of nationhood, comes to light once again.

In the examples above, the transcendent love of the flag is legitimized through the Battle of Dardanelles. The story of the Turkish flag is sanctified with the blood of soldiers who lost their lives in Dardanelles. In this context, the flag, the blood of the martyrs and the Battle of Dardanelles are used as discursive elements of attributing a mystical and sacred meaning to Turkishness as parts of an inseparable whole.

The religious dimension of the relationship established by the participants, who embellish the construction of Turkishness with Islamic references, with the Turkish flag also contributes to its content diversity as a cultural code.

For example, I went to Arakan, I wore my T-shirt with the Turkish flag on it. I wore the same shirt in Somalia and in Sierra Leone. There was a bond of brotherhood between us and people who saw the Turkish flag everywhere we went. They understand that we are Turkish. For them, being Turkish means being Muslim. Even if he is a Christian, it doesn't matter... They think that Turks are Muslims. Therefore, the Turkish flag symbolizes my Islam in this sense. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

For Bilal, the Turkish flag has a meaning that includes his Muslim identity. This meaning attributed to the flag by the participant, who interprets Islam as an integral part of Turkishness, is an important symbolic instrument that makes his nationality visible and establishes a bond of brotherhood with other Muslims.

S: The flag is important to me. The flag is not just a symbol of Turkishness for me. Because there were all kinds of nations in the Ottoman Empire, but their flags were also Turkish flags after a certain point and a certain period. Because the Turkish flag, our flag has a religious meaning. So I just don't see it as a piece of cloth like someone else uses it. I think that even the moon, crescent, star and color there have a meaning.

Q: What does it mean to you?

S: We gave thousands of martyrs in the Çanakkale War. The blood of thousands of martyrs has shed on these lands, you know, it's a bit of an epic thing, but... I think that's the case, in fact, that's when the moon and the star coincided, and when it was reflected in that bloody environment, a red flag was formed. Of course, that crescent is the symbol of Islam for us. For example, there were three crescents in the Ottoman Empire, then there was only one crescent. I think that flag is not only Turkish. For me, it is a symbol representing the whole ummah. For me, the Turkish flag is the flag of the Ummah. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

In Sertaç's statements, the Turkish flag has a meaning that symbolizes the unity of the Islamic Ummah. For Sertaç, nation is a concept that expresses the Islamic Ummah rather than only Turkish ethnic identity. For the participant, who built his nationhood with reference to Islam, in line with the Ottoman nationalist rhetoric of the AKP he supports, the Turkish flag is an important symbolic tool of this construction process. In this sense, in Sertaç's discourse, the flag, with the Islamic meaning he attributed to it, is the manifestation of the understanding of nationhood built on Islam.

The Turkish flag is the symbol of my independence. It is the symbol of my existence. It is the symbol of my past. It is the memory of our martyrs... There is also a crescent and star on the flag. Do you know what it symbolizes? The word crescent and the word Allah are written with the same letters in Arabic. Since Allah is majestic in space, Muslim countries that place the crescent instead of putting Allah directly, symbolize Allah. The meaning of the star is this: If you write the word Muhammad in Arabic, it is five-pointed. The star on our flag symbolizes our prophet Muhammad. That's why there is a crescent moon in all Muslim countries. It also represents Islam. In short, it represents us. Our flag is our incarnate state, the embodiment of our homeland and nation. It also symbolizes Islam. In short, it symbolizes us. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

Similarly, for Bülent, there is an identity between the concepts of nation and ummah. The expression of this identity is the Turkish flag. The participant, who constructs Islam as an important reference point in the definition of Turkishness through the symbols on the Turkish flag, adds it to his discourse as a clear expression of his construction of nationhood fed by Islam. In short, the Turkish flag appears as an important national motif, with its content symbolizing Islam, in the expression and reproduction of the perception of Turkishness, including Islam, of all three participants, all of whom are AKP voters.

Furthermore, in the light of the data obtained in the field study, it can be claimed that the flag, in which the participants embody their Turkishness as a symbol of confidence, honor, the history of the nation and Islam, is widely transformed into an expression of nationality in the context of victory and reaction. The enactment of nationhood is realized by making the nation visible over the flag in moments of enthusiasm or anger, which are described as national.

For example, when Turkey achieves a victory, for example, when we win a match, we immediately hang a flag on our balcony. That flag makes me so excited. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

Q: So when do you hang the flag more?

I: More in moments when national feelings come to the fore... For example, on special days...

Q: Like?

I: For example... It could be after a national match, it could be during the international match... İhsan, 45, graphic designer, AKP

International sportive organizations appear as a context in which a sense of victory that is attributed to the nation stimulates the enactment of nationhood, and the evocation of national belonging. Both Ayşe, who states that she has no interest in football, and İhsan, who is a keen follower of football, both express that they celebrate Turkey's victory in international football competitions by hanging a flag on their balcony. In the context of victory, the nationhood is built and reproduced by making the nation, which is embodied on the flag, visible in the private sphere.

Q: Do you hang a flag on your home?

L: Of course I do.

Q: Constantly or some days?

L: No. On certain days, I don't hang all the time.

Q: On what days?

L: It's mostly April 23, August 30 Victory Day...

Q: What does the Turkish flag mean to you?

L: It reminds me of my essence, it makes me proud... Leyla, 41, company executive, AKP

I have a flag and a few photos of Atatürk in a room in my house. I hang the flag on the balcony on special days and holidays. The aim is to reflect the national feelings outward... Otherwise, it is not to show or prove something to the outside... Mahmut, 43, landscape architect, CHP

Similarly, as seen in the statements above, for both Leyla and Mahmut, national holidays are the days of "victory" in which nationhood is built by incorporating the flag into everyday practices. The participants share the victory and enthusiasm they attribute to the nation with the flag they hang on their balconies, in this way they become a member of the extended family they imagined of and express it. Thus, they build their own nationhood through the flag, which they describe as a symbol of a national victory. In these days of "victory", which is believed to have a national

meaning, the flag has a meaning that draws the boundaries of who is a part of the nation and who is not, reveals the loyalty to the nation in the public arena, and as such, both unites and divides. In addition to this, anger also provides a context as convenient and strong as victory for the reproduction of nationhood through the flag.

For example, during the 15th of July, our flag was always hung on our balcony. It hung in my father's car every day. It was the symbol of our resistance, so... Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

Anger and hatred towards the "other" as well as deep love and devotion to "us" play crucial role in the construction of nationhood. In this sense, the flag becomes a tool for some participants to express their anger and reaction towards the other when they think that national unity is under threat. For Ayşe quoted above, the flag symbolizes the nation's resistance and reaction to the threat posed to it. In Ayşe's narrative, this threat is the July 15 coup attempt.

There is always a flag in the house. It stands on the bookshelf... But especially after these terrorist incidents, we hung it on our balcony to show our reaction. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

In a similar vein, in Bilal's subjective construction of Turkishness, the Turkish flag serves as a weapon against the danger that threatens the existence and integrity of the nation. Bilal, who expresses his reaction to the terrorist threat against the sanctified national survival by hanging a flag, thus makes his nationhood visible.

For example, I hang it on special occasions. I hang it on holidays. I also have my flag in my office. It is also in my house. For example, when the news of martyrs increases, when the funerals of martyrs arrive, I show my reaction by hanging our flag on my balcony, I show my sadness. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

In Gökhan's discourse, the flag hung on the balcony emerges as a way of participating in the sense of national mourning that was created collectively through the martyrs. He builds himself as a subject of sadness and reaction, which should be shared with the nation, with the flag he hangs on his balcony.

In other words, if there is something about the country, that any foreigner does, then I get emotional and hang my flag on the balcony of my house. But I don't always hang. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

With the same motivation, Nurdan also builds herself as a loyal and sensitive part of the nation by hanging a flag on her balcony to make her reaction to the other visible. The nationhood that Nurdan makes visible with the flag reifies the imagined national unity.

E: I have a big flag. I hang it on the balcony of my house on certain days. Not constantly, but as I said, on national holidays, in difficult times that Turkey went through, for example on July 15, when the Gezi events took place before that. I am honored and proud to share our flag, which symbolizes our unity and solidarity, which makes us who we are, which is the symbol of our Republic of Turkey, which represents our martyrs, and which takes its color from the blood of martyrs, both in the sense of a message and because it symbolizes our unity and solidarity.

Q: What exactly do you think is the message there?

E: The message here is that no matter what games you play, whatever you do here, we are one and together. Our ancestors were martyred in the past. We are ready to be martyrs if necessary. But we are one and together. You can never separate us. You can never polarize us. I think it symbolizes that you can never distract us from our advanced goals, our goal of a strong Turkey. Erhan, 46, tax professional, AKP

In Erhan's nationalist rhetoric, the flag appears as a symbolic representation that contains all the discursive motifs that it is fed while envisioning the nation, such as national unity, survival, and martyrdom. The participant builds nationhood reactively over the flag during the periods when a threat perception towards national existence and integrity emerges, as well as on holidays when national existence and integrity turn into a ritualistic performance. In his perspective, all kinds of social movements that reveal the heterogeneous nature of society make a strong reproduction of nationality inevitable. In this sense, for example, the Gezi Park protests, as the challenge of social homogeneity imagined by nationalized mindset and the perception of the unity of the state and nation, become the focus of nationalist anger. The transformation of this anger into a reaction takes place through the flag. While the addressee of the reaction is the other of the nation, the flag hung on the balcony, in which the most basic claims of nationalist rhetoric, we, the other, unity, past and future are embodied, is the nation's manifestation against this imagined enemy.

7.1.2. National Anthem

National anthem has been one of the most familiar institutionalized symbols of the nation-state which promotes the evocation of national spirit. As one of the symbolic

motifs that make the nation visible, the national anthem plays an important role in the construction and reproduction of nationhood by individuals. The Turkish national anthem, which is interpreted by the participants interviewed as an expression of transcendent feelings, challenging the enemy, gratitude and respect to the martyrs, the spirit of national struggle and the longing for the past, appears one of most frequently used ways of embodying Turkishness and performing nationhood in everyday life.

I'm definitely excited when our national anthem is being played. I have been unable to control myself. I'm very, very emotional so... Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Q: How do you feel when the National Anthem is being sung?

A: Ooo... I stand up straight, my eyes fill with tears like this, I get very emotional.

Q: Do you really stand up at home?

A: Straight! Such reflexively! It's not a conscious thing. This is how it is for everyone in our family. We all have that feeling. Even if the National Anthem was sung on that television, we would stand up immediately. It's a very intense feeling. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

As can be seen in both Gökhan and Ayşe's expressions, the Turkish national anthem is almost the voice of the nation, and the care shown to it is equivalent to the deep love for the nation. Participants construct themselves as a national subject with the emotions provoked by the anthem. At the same time, the ritual of standing in silence while listening and singing the national anthem points to the construction of nationhood as a bodily practice. In this sense, it becomes an ordinary form of the practice of nationhood in everyday life.

Well, we get goosebumps when we hear our national anthem being sung in national matches... We are really proud here, especially when that flag is waving there and the anthem is played there, especially in national matches abroad. We get goosebumps, honestly. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

While our national anthem is being played, I always feel this, I get goosebumps. And when the anthem is sung in unison, it attracts and affects people, so I am very impressed. İhsan, 45, graphic designer, AKP

Described with an emotional intensity that gives goosebumps, the anthem opens the door to the world of emotions that the participants share by envisioning themselves as part of a national whole. For Furkan and İhsan, who express that he gets goosebumps while listening and singing the national anthem, it is this intensity of

emotion that makes the nation and nationhood real. In this respect, listening and singing the Turkish national anthem, as a collective action, paves the way for the construction of Turkishness with this feeling created in Furkan.

Q: How do you feel when the National Anthem is sung?

R: I'm proud. Well...

Q: Will you join or stand up?

R: No, I'd be lying if I said I'm doing that. After all, the person who hears the National Anthem and says I stand up even though he is not in that environment, is putting on a show in my eyes. So this is not a verse. But, am I proud, of course I am. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

I get very emotional while the National Anthem is being sung, really... I get goosebumps and cry. I mean... I get emotional, I'm very proud. May Allah not let this nation write the National Anthem again. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

I accompany the National Anthem wherever it is. When we sing our anthem, I feel proud, I get emotional, I think of my freedom. Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

Moreover, as can be seen in the quotes above, for many participants, the national anthem is an expression of pride attributed to the nation. As an ideological tool for nation building in which the epic narrative of the nation is constantly reproduced, the Independence anthem provokes the revival of a glorious past in the consciousness of the individual. The feeling of pride in this glorious history evoked by the national anthem is common for Rıfat, who built his perception of the nation on a more Islamic basis, and for Serap and Ercan, who did not include religious references in their imaginations of nationhood.

While singing our national anthem, I always feel like this: there is an enemy in front of me, I am proudly singing that anthem against that enemy, looking into his eyes. I used to feel that way when I was a kid, and it's the same now. I'm always excited. At that time, it is not possible for us to experience the emotions of those who experienced those events. But I feel as if I am pitting against such an enemy, or making a show of strength. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

Furthermore, in Rıfat's expression, the national anthem symbolizes the challenge to an imaginary enemy, namely to "other". He interprets the national anthem as an expression of the fearless and confident stance of the nation against its enemies. In this sense, it turns into a kind of show of strength, a representation of the power and courage of the nation. Therefore, Rıfat experiences his own nationhood through this

representational meaning he attributes to the anthem and the theatrical encounter of us and the other he imagined.

Our national anthem tells the importance of this country and reminds us of this. Because you know there is nothing worse than being without a country. The national anthem creates a sense of belonging in me. It is a revolt and challenge against the enemy... Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

Similarly, while talking about the feelings that the national anthem evokes in her, Nurdan also emphasizes the image of the enemy. In this sense, the national anthem emerges as a tool of the construction of nationhood that sharpens the boundary between us and them and closes the ranks.

The National Anthem reminds me of the martyrs who were given for this country, the girls whose fiancées died in the war, the women who lost their children and the women who lost their husbands. It reminds us of our martyrs. It tells about those who were martyred in order to be able to leave these lands, the lands we live in, to us now. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

It should be noted that the projection of the martyrdom motif, which is one of the main themes of the national anthem, in the minds of the participants is quite strong. As can be seen in Bilal's statement, respect and gratitude to the martyrs is the dominant emotion that the national anthem evokes in the participants. In this framework, the national anthem is sung and listened as an expression of this respect and gratitude; in short, it is performed as a ritual of nationhood.

I am proud of myself when I sing the National Anthem. And I have a feeling of gratitude, of course, about those who gave us this country. Not only Atatürk, but his friends, the people who died there, the self-sacrificing and patriotic people... Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

For example, the feeling of pride and gratitude awakened in Perihan's mind and heart while singing the national anthem stimulates her to reproduce herself as a national subject. The anthem constantly reminds her of her debt as a national subject to the martyrs and her homeland.

After all, after learning how to write the National Anthem, it is necessary to respect and be grateful for it. Everything described there is true, lived events... A writer, a poet, who wrote this as well, while the ancestors paid such a price... Because it represents me there... It tells me my history and our martyrs. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

In a similar vein, respect and gratitude to the rank of martyrdom, one of the dominant codes of the discursive construction of the nation, constitute the main theme of nationhood, which Cahit also enacts in the context of the national anthem. For Cahit, who identifies the epic narrative of the nation with his own history, the national anthem is the indisputable proof of this history.

While singing the national anthem, the past comes to my mind like a movie frame. I'm proud. I mean, I see the National Anthem as a manifestation of starting when it's over. In other words, it is an exhausted, collapsed state, and then it comes back to life again... Our anthem gives me the spirit and atmosphere of that period. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

The Independence anthem, which portrays the nation's past in Sertaç's mind like a film strip, is a kind of theatrical setting that presents the atmosphere and spirit of the national struggle period. As the actor of this scene in which the national fighting spirit becomes apparent, Sertaç is building his own nationhood by doing his role justice.

Every time I read Mehmet Akif's National Anthem, I actually relive that atmosphere, that period. I mean, I get excited, I get sad, I experience many emotions together. The troubles of the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic... A great national struggle... For example, while I feel sad in some of the lines, I think that we should struggle more and work harder in some of the lines. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

In a similar way, the articulation of the national anthem to the discourse of nationhood as a narrative and reflection of the spirit of national struggle also appears in Ozan's expressions. Additionally, for him, the national anthem is not only the story of the past full of struggles, but also the recipe for the imagined future of the nation.

No matter where or under any circumstances, of course, I listen to our National Anthem with emotion. This is my duty. When I listen to the National Anthem, I remember the countries we lost, and our tragic situation. Anatolia has become our homeland, but let's not forget that Trabzon was not ours when we had the Balkans. In the Balkan War, we closed our 500-year-old Balkan adventure in a miserable and humiliated situation. I remember that very sad event. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

Sometimes the national anthem contributes to the imagination of nationhood as an expression of nostalgia for the past and the sadness for the lost lands. For instance,

according to Bülent, the national anthem tells the story of the collapse of the empire. For the participant, who describes the transformation of a great empire to a small nation state by losing territory as a sad story, in this sense, the national anthem is the symbol of the closing of an era. In this context, he reproduces his perception of Turkishness, which embraces the Ottoman past, through this meaning that he attributes to the national anthem.

While the National Anthem is being sung, I stand up and accompany. I am proud to sing the National Anthem. It reminds me of the martyrs of Çanakkale, my freedom. Especially after the 15th of July... I am honored, the blood flowing in my veins is rushing. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

The national anthem gives me enthusiasm and excitement... It reminds me of my Turkishness. Belgin, 58, retired bank employee/ manager at a Common Health and Safety Unit, CHP

Lastly, the national anthem is a symbol of nationhood that brings together the participants, who are the supporters of different political visions with different national conceptions, in the idea of a homogeneous nation. Although they have drawn the boundaries of the nation with different motives, the claim of all of them is the existence of a national whole free from heterogeneity. For example, the reality of the feelings created by the national anthem is indisputable for both Belgin, who enthusiastically remembers her Turkishness while singing the national anthem and describes herself as a "woman of the republic", and for Nazlı, the "servant of the Ummah", who remembers the martyrs of Çanakkale and described July 15 as a turning point for the Turkish nation.

7.1.3. Language

The issue of language is one of the most prominent contextual frameworks in which the nationalist sensitivities of the participants become significantly visible, in which they construct and reproduce their own nationhood. As a concrete means of differentiation that draws the line between us and them, language, on the one hand, allows the individual to include herself/ himself as a national subject in the nation she/ he imagines as a homogeneous whole; on the other hand, it reinforces marginalization by providing a basis for the expression of xenophobic intolerance.

Language is a culture. Now let me talk about our expats again. What do Europeans say when they go abroad, don't come without learning our language. They take courses here, and he also teaches there. Because that's how they instill their own culture. Let's think about the Syrians who came to Turkey now. If they're going to live here, they have to follow us. They have to adopt our culture. Because if we're going to make them citizens, let's do it right if we're going to do it that way. They should not keep their own culture alive and impose their own imposition on me, this is my country. Nurdan, 53, merchant, CHP

According to Nurdan, language is an important reflection of culture, or even itself. Language appears in her discourse as the most direct way of evoking the other, therefore indeed herself, who is the real owner of this country. The other of the nationhood that Nurdan builds on the basis of language is the Syrians. The imposition of Turkish language as an element of national culture on the groups of the society speaking different languages, namely others, thus the cultural assimilation of the other is vital for the survival of Turkishness. As a context in which Nurdan's xenophobic and intolerant attitude towards these groups gains visibility, language emerges as both a source and a tool of social stigmatization and discrimination based on their ethnic background. The participant reinforces her nationhood by establishing a hierarchy that makes her language superior and privileged over other languages. In this sense, Nurdan's statements are a striking example of the discursive construction and reproduction of language subordination by nationalized subjects in everyday life.

N: Well, we can't see anyone speaking Turkish on the street anymore. I'm really not exaggerating. So we can't see.

Q: Does this bother you?

N: Well, of course it does, in my own country... I can't find anyone speaking Turkish. Especially in my neighborhood. It's like we don't live in Turkey... Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

Similarly, speaking Turkish is a natural consequence of living in Turkey for Nuriye. The widespread use of languages other than Turkish in her own country, that is, in the country of Turks, disturbs her. The main reason for this discomfort Nuriye expressed is that her vision of a homogeneous nation is incompatible with a multilingual social environment.

On the other hand, the dominance of the Turkish language provides a comfort zone for a nationalized subject who identified herself/ himself as Turkish. Being exposed

to a different language, especially the other's language, Kurdish, means stepping out of this comfortable space. In fact, the use of Kurdish in the public sphere is interpreted by some participants as a sign of potential treachery. As can be seen in the quote above, the traces of the construction of Turkishness, in which the other of the Turk is embodied as the Kurd, appear in the expressions in which the Kurdish language is described as a potential threat to the survival of the nation.

Q: Does it bother you to use a language other than Turkish in public?

S: (after a while of silence) So... Well, it doesn't bother me, frankly... So let me put it that way. Because I look at different languages as much as English is pleasing to us. But of course I have bottom lines too. I mean, if I think that the man in front of me is a traitor, for example, I get uncomfortable...

Q: What do you mean by traitor?

S: That is, if he shares different things on social media, shares that trample Turkishness and the ummah, and then comes across and speaks in Kurdish, then I would be worried, I would be suspicious of what he said... Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

The language issue is a subject where Sertaç adopts a double standard by distinguishing the internal other and the external other. While speaking English is not an inconvenience for Sertaç, who lives in a touristic area like Cappadocia, Kurdish is the participant's "bottom line" as a symbol of betrayal. Through this suspiciousness and hostility towards the Kurdish language, it is underlined once again who the other is, who has the potential to humiliate Turkishness and the Ummah; therefore the boundaries of Turkishness are reproduced.

Q: How do you feel when you witness that people are speaking a language other than Turkish on the street?

L: English is spoken more in touristic places, in our hometown. In Çavuşin, in Göreme... English is mostly used there. It doesn't bother me much.

Q: Does it bother you that many immigrants and asylum seekers are spoken in a language other than Turkish?

L: (Silence) It does. So learn Turkish. Why should I learn their language? Let them learn mine. Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

Similarly, it is possible to see Sertaç's contextual inconsistency, which makes Kurdish more foreign and dangerous than English, in Leyla's discourse. However, here, it is Arabic that symbolizes the cultural existence of the other and lays the groundwork for the construction of Turkishness through language. For Leyla, the issue is not about speaking a language other than Turkish. The context that makes the

sensitivity of the participant, who is not disturbed by speaking English, about Turkish, adorned with nationalistic motives, visible is the issue of immigrants and especially Syrians. The tolerance shown for English is not shown for the languages of immigrants and asylum seekers who are expected to be assimilated.

On the other hand, the double standard that emerged in the views on language also gives an idea about the basic assumptions on which the participant's perception of Turkishness is based. For example, Furkan, who is uncomfortable with people who speak Kurdish, can sympathize with Syrians who speak Arabic.

We also have citizens of Kurdish origin here. I am disturbed by the fact that they speak Kurdish in a community. Because you live in this community, and the majority of this community is Turkish and speaks Turkish. I feel uncomfortable when two or three people speak Kurdish there. But when a Syrian person speaks Arabic... They are trying to speak Turkish. They are also trying to learn. I don't feel uncomfortable when Syrians speak their own language, because that's how they communicate. But on the other hand, one of our Kurdish brothers speaks Turkish better than you, perhaps most of them. But even though he speaks Turkish well, he speaks Kurdish, switching to the second channel, it bothers me. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

In Furkan's statements on language, the construction of nationhood that is tolerant of Arabic while demonizing Kurdish draws attention. While Syrian immigrants with their own mother tongue find a place for themselves as an oppressed Muslim group in his imagination of nation, the Kurds constitute the uncanny and unreliable "other" of this nation vision. This positioning, which reveals the limits of Furkan's conception of the nation, is clearly visible in his views on language quoted above.

I think that Syrians should receive education in their own language in fields such as mathematics, chemistry and physics. As the Republic of Turkey, I think the state should provide this opportunity. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

In a similar way, Ozan, too, does not feel any discomfort with Arabic and even argues that it is a responsibility of the state to provide education in their mother tongue for Syrians.

For example, today I saw an article on facebook, someone wrote it, why is Kurdish forbidden in our schools where English is not prohibited. Now what can you say to this guy? So the two are not the same thing. It bothers me a lot that these Kurds separate themselves. They are manipulated by foreign powers. Otherwise, I think they

are very comfortable in Turkey. For example, now we have TRT 6. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

However, as seen in the quote above, for Ozan, who advocates education in mother tongue for Syrians, Kurdish demands for education in mother tongue are part of a grand plan designed by foreign powers to confuse Turkey. According to him, the launch of the TRT 6, the state-run Kurdish- language channel is a testament to the comfortable conditions the Kurds have in this country. In this context, he argues that despite this opportunity conferred on the Kurds by the state, their demands for mother tongue education is ungratefulness and betrayal.

Q: What do you think about mother tongue education?

B: Official language, one language... Two languages inevitably lead to division. There is no such thing in any country in the world. If you're willing to live as a confederation, I have no objection. But if you say one homeland, one nation, the official language should be one. Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

Q: How do you meet the Kurdish demand for education in mother tongue?

N: I say we will break it off. Language is what binds people to each other. Education in the mother tongue divides this country. Nuriye, 58, retired, CHP

I never find education in mother tongue right. The language of the state is one. However, the development of local languages should not be blocked, but when you say education in the mother tongue, this divides. Never, we are against it, we are against it as a union, I am against it personally. But let him speak Kurdish, go to Kurdish courses. Let them speak Kurdish among themselves. But when you say education in mother tongue, it goes to a different point, it goes to division. Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

The discussions on the Kurdish language and the education in the mother tongue provide an important contextual basis for the enactment of nationhood by stimulating the fear and the paranoia of division. What brings Bülent, Nuriye and Ahmet, who have different ideological positions and support different political parties, to the same point is that they formulate their objections to the demands for education in the mother tongue with the discourse of the threat of division. For many participants, language is the disclosure and expression of the nation, which is conceived as a homogeneous whole, and nationhood, which is perceived as an innate identity. Beyond being a tool of communication, as a symbolic and cultural form of nationhood, it plays a crucial role in the enactment of Turkishness. In this sense, the language issue functions as an important reference point in marginalizing groups with different ethnic identities and pushing them out of the boundaries of

Turkishness. Kurdish language in which many participants construct, reproduce and display their nationhood, and the line of us and them becomes clear. Even in the expressions of those who treat language as a cultural wealth, it emerges as a part of nationalist rhetoric filled with the danger of division and the matter of survival for Turkey, and as an image of the enemy.

Moreover, it has been observed that the language issue has often turned into an area where the reaction to the wave of immigration is expressed. The language issue, as one of the most important and visible elements that draws the boundaries of nationhood, also emerges as a tool of stigmatization and pejorative labeling. This marginalizing discourse, to which Syrians, Iranians and Afghans living in the region are exposed through the language they speak, reveals the racist face of the construction of Turkishness.

S: On the bus, for example, they speak Arabic or something. I witness this a lot. They talk very loudly and annoyingly on buses. Sometimes I even feel the need to warn him to shut up. Because they are talking loudly, and it is so irritating... I mean... They don't shut up...

Q: Does it bother you that it is loud?

S: Both being loud and talking a lot. You speak one word and two words, we all get on public transport. But they are not like that. They talk all the time... And loudly. This bothers me. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

As seen in the quote above, Serap's derogatory attitude towards Syrian immigrants becomes visible in the context of her thoughts on the use of languages other than Turkish in everyday life. According to her, speaking loudly in public transport is a characteristic feature of Syrian immigrants. The participant who accuses Syrian immigrants of being noisy actually expresses the intolerance of the language that these people speak. In this sense, her attitude and statements obviously demonstrate how she reproduces her own nationhood by drawing the boundary between us and them through language, through this intolerance and stigmatization.

Q: How does it make you feel to be spoken in different languages?

İ: Well... I want their numbers not to be more than us.

Q: Is it uncomfortable?

I: Of course it's annoying. As I said, we don't have any problems with people being here, from a humanitarian point of view, but... After a certain period of time, they should return. If he is going to fight, he will go and fight, so people should go away now. Here is an Afghan... Afghans came and they are dealing with drugs in Nevşehir,

I am absolutely against such people. I am against anyone who will enter into such different relationships that will poison the public, that is, all foreign people. İhsan, 45, graphic designer, AKP

Similarly, İhsan employs language as a tool to stigmatize and marginalize immigrants. For him, who constructs and stereotypes “the other” of the nation with pejorative prejudices against immigrant groups speaking a mother tongue other than Turkish, language is a significant determinant of envisioning the nation as “us”. Particularly, Afghan immigrants living in the region are marginalized and labeled as criminal in the participant's expressions. This othering, to which Afghan immigrants are subjected through the language they speak, appears as a part of İhsan’s enactment of nationhood in the context of language.

It bothers me a lot when people talk in Arabic and Kurdish on the street. I don't know what they are talking about. I even quarreled with someone at the hospital a few months ago... I'm sure he cursed me... They are noisy and quarrelsome people anyway. It bothers me, it bothers me that it is spoken in another language in my own country. Seda, 41, project advisor/ restaurant manager, CHP

At first glance, Seda, who emphasizes her fear of being perceived as racist at every opportunity, explains the reason for her discomfort with people who speak Kurdish and Arabic by “not understanding what they are talking about”. However, in the continuation of the conversation, she openly expresses her reaction to speaking a language other than Turkish in her “own country”. In this context, it is Turkish that defines the boundaries of Seda's “own country”. In other words, the language is a significant determinant in Sibel's imagination of nationhood; and it is the language, which Arabs and Kurds speak, that makes “the other” visible in Sibel's experience. The “nationalized” area refers to a comfort zone where Sibel feels “at home”. Accepting and internalizing the visibility of different languages requires stepping outside of this predictable and familiar realm. However, the participant, who prefers to consolidate her nationhood rather than leaving this comfortable space, labels Arabs and Kurds as “quarrelsome and noisy”, and codes them as “other”.

As a result, language contributes contextually to the discursive construction of nationhood as the easiest and shortest way of marginalization and stigmatization. It is remarkable that many participants, who are afraid of being perceived as racists and

therefore refrain from targeting Kurds and immigrant groups directly, distinguish these groups based on the language they speak and include them in their imagination of nation with pejorative prejudices.

On the other hand, however, their number is relatively limited, for some participants who are able to tolerate linguistic differences, the language issue does not become a decisive context in which nationhood is enacted.

A: There are Iranians in Nevşehir, there are Syrians now... They can also speak Turkish, albeit with a smattering. Arabic is spoken, sometimes I hear it.

Q: What are you feeling? Did you feel any inconvenience?

A: No, I'm not bothered, I'd like to help. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

In Ayşe's expressions, who draws attention with her nationalist discourse that she reproduces in the context of state constructed national symbols such as national anthem and flag, the language issue seems far from being a contextual ground that catalyses the reproduction of nationhood.

There are many Kurds in Nevşehir. I know many of them. I have good relations with all of them. I trade with many. Frankly, it doesn't bother me that they speak Kurdish among themselves. I consider this normal. Let people speak their own language. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

In a similar vein, Gökhan, who was the provincial director of the MHP, which has adopted a political rhetoric that completely ignores the Kurdish identity and Kurdish culture, also displays a tolerant attitude towards Kurdish. As a reflection of the visibility of Kurdish identity in the public sphere, Kurdish language is not a catalyst that sharpens the category of Turkishness in the mind of the participant.

I think it is necessary to empathize, my brother lives in Germany, my aunt's children live in France. If they do not come to Turkey for 3-5 years, and then they come to Turkey with their children, if I have nephews who do not speak Turkish, I would react. I would say that you have never taught Turkish or you have never spoken Turkish at home... Therefore, everyone should know and speak their native language, of course. This is true for Syrians as well as Kurds. Therefore, I cannot say to this man why you do not learn Turkish, brother. Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

Additionally, it is seen that the flexible attitude about language is mostly nourished from personal experiences and narratives. On the one hand, for Bilal, an important

component of Turkishness is language, and every Turk should know and speak Turkish. On the other hand, his personal experiences offer Bilal to empathise with Syrians and Kurds; and this empathic attitude developed through the example of Turkish immigrants in Europe prevents him to employ the language issue as a tool of marginalization in his construction of nationhood.

7.1.4. Everyday Symbols

The symbols used, carried or displayed by the participants in everyday life play a crucial role in the construction and reproduction of nationhood. Different perceptions and imaginations of nation become apparent through different symbols such as Old Turkic symbols, Seljuk symbols, Islamic- Ottoman symbols and Atatürk symbols. The diversity of these symbols actually demonstrates the subjectivity and the heterogeneity of everyday forms of nationhood.

I am a very religious person. I am a person who believes in both worlds. In the living room of my house, on one side, there are figures of a gray wolf and Kürşat, and a Turkish flag embroidered with gold. There is a Quran right next to it. The Quran is our holy book. Kürşat and gray wolf already express the exit of the Turkish nation from the depth of that Siberia, Ergenekon. We have already told about the Turkish flag, I see it as a value that surrenders my independence and identity to me in this land watered with the blood of our martyrs. Ahmet, 57, teacher, MHP

The objects and figures which Ahmet displays in the living room of his home are an interesting example of how nation and nationhood is enacted and invoked through symbols. Quran, flag and the image of grey wolf, one of the symbols of Turkic mythology, are the image of the performative space in which Ahmet visually reveals and declares the limits of his perception of Turkishness. In this sense, he constructs and reproduces an interpretation of nationhood which embraces both the narrative of pre- Islamic Turkish history with Old Turkic symbols and Islam with the reference of the Quran in his daily living space.

I am very interested in Seljuk history. The double-headed eagle is the symbol of the Seljuk State. I like to use that symbol too, I like it so... (He shows her ring) That's why I like to wear these types of rings. (He shows the painting hanging on the wall of his office) As you know, the grey wolf is the symbol of Turkishness... Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

Considering Turkishness as a historical reality, Gökhan reinforces this emphasis on historicity through the objects and symbols which he uses in his daily life. The symbols he uses, for the participant who reproduces his nationhood as the continuation of a proud past, have the meaning of reference to the history of Turkishness. According to him, the gray wolf image symbolizes the beginning of this history. The reference to the Seljuk period, which is referred to as the pioneer of the Turkification of Anatolia in the official historical narrative, points to the spatiality of Turkishness in Gökhan's mind, as well as its historicity. Briefly, in accordance with nationhood's promises of historicity and spatiality, he reproduces his Turkishness by fixing it on the stage of history with the gray wolf, as well as to the Anatolian lands with the double-headed eagle, the symbol of the Seljuk state.

On my car there is an Ottoman tughra sticker. I think of it as a symbol of Turkishness. So I like it... Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

One of the most frequently encountered images in the symbolic construction of nationhood is the Ottoman signature, namely tughra. This situation points out the reproduction of the AKP's neo- Ottomanist nationalist rhetoric by ordinary people in everyday life.

B: I put an Ottoman tughra sticker on my car. Why? Let me put it this way, I see it too, some people stick the signature of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk or the signature of Tayyip Erdoğan etc on their cars. But not everyone has to have the same ideological viewpoint. If you stick a leader's signature on your car, then the trouble starts there. Therefore, I love Recep Tayyip Erdoğan very much, but if I put his signature on my car, it would not be appropriate. There are also people who don't like him. I consider it as disrespectful to those men. Instead of this, I put the tughra, why, it is a symbol of national spirit. It is a more unifying, integrating symbol, I think. I thought of sticking the symbol of Kayı as well. But, that sign means Turkish directly. Here, too, our main aim is not to bring Turkishness to the fore and to create tribalism. If there is a problem in this country today, there are Kurds, there are Arabs who will run before me, maybe. Therefore, if I write Turkish, he will write Arab today, the other will write Kurdish, right! In order to avoid such a false message, I put a tughra in the form of a "bismillahirrahmanirrahim". No one will react to this, and it will not upset anyone.

Q: So you think that the Ottoman tughra also corresponds to the identity of the Arab?

B: They will, I think they will meet the Kurdish identity too... Bilal, 37, journalist, AKP

Bilal, a staunch supporter of the AKP, claims that the tughra affixed to his car is a unifying and integrating symbol of the national spirit. The participant, who thinks that this tughra in the form of basmala is at an equal distance from all ideological

stances, draws the boundaries of Turkishness in a way that it includes Kurds, Arabs, in short, all people living in these lands. In his imagination of nation based on Islamic and Ottoman values Turkishness is constructed and reproduced as an inclusive upper identity.

I wear the ring occasionally, there is no symbol. It has the Turkish flag on one side and the Ottoman state coat of arms on the other. Other than that, none. Yeah, I don't use symbols. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

Just like in Bilal's expressions, the internalization and banalization of symbols attracts attention in Cahit's as well. According to him, a symbol is a sign with an ideological meaning. However, in his discourse, the Turkish flag and the Ottoman state coat of arms are images that represent the homogeneous and monolithic nation that he envisions, free from all ideological contexts. In this sense, the Turkish flag and the tughra are not seen as ideological symbols, but as the representations of taken for granted nation itself.

I don't like using symbols... There is only Mustafa Kemal's signature on my car... After all, a common value for all of us... Özdemir, 57, retired teacher/ journalist, CHP

The claim that the symbols used are above ideologies and politics is the most striking and concrete example of the internalization and normalization of nationhood mentioned above. As a matter of fact, just like Bilal, who interprets the Ottoman signature as a "natural" representation of Turkishness and thinks it represents everyone, for Özdemir, the Mustafa Kemal signature affixed to his car does not represent any ideology or political stance as an "expression of a common value". Or, in other words, it is too "normal", "ordinary" and "inclusive" to be controversial in that it represents everyone. For this reason, for Özdemir, it is not an ideological symbol that is open to discussion, but the immanent figure of Turkish nationhood.

I like to wear my Atatürk figure watch that I bought from Anıtkabir. Atatürk's portrait is a must in my workplace. The founder of this republic, the ancestor of this nation, after all... Leyla, 41, Company executive, AKP

For example, I have a T-shirt with Atatürk's picture on it... It makes me proud to wear it. I feel better. Seda, 41, project advisor/ restaurant manager, CHP

Clothes and objects designed with the silhouette and signature of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk are another theme that is most frequently encountered in the construction of nationhood through symbols. The common point of Leyla and Seda, who support different political parties with different national designs, is their interest in objects with Atatürk figures. The figure of Atatürk is an important reference point in the nationhood imagination of both participants. Thus, the nation is embodied performatively by them through these objects on which its ancestor and savior are.

7.2. National Rituals and Collective Experiences

National holiday commemorations and international sport organizations have been key venues for the experience of collective national belonging (Fox, 2006). In this sense, these mass national rituals have provided a significant opportunity for performative reproduction and expression of nationhood in different ways. As stated by Fox (2006), despite of the fact that there has been many academic studies which focus on the top-down production of national days and sporting events (see, e.g., Mosse, 1975; Gillis, 1994; Spillman, 1997; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Eriksen, 1993), “the creative ways in which their audiences consume them” (Fox, 2006: 217), or in other ways “the actual ways in which such forms are popularly negotiated or understood by those in attendance” (Fox, 2006: 219) have been largely overlooked in the literature. From this point forth, in this part of the thesis, with the everyday nationalism approach that centers the individual as an active subject in the analysis of the construction and reproduction of nationhood, the ways in which the participants interviewed within the scope of fieldwork construct their nationhood in the context of national days and international sports competitions will be examined. In addition to this, democracy watch rallies held after the coup attempt of July 15, 2016, which were observed to emerge as an important collective experience that laid the groundwork for the subjective construction of nationhood, will also be discussed under this title.

7.2.1. National Days

National days as mass rituals in which the sense of national belonging becomes a shared reality and the nation is experienced as a concrete and visible entity have been

a crucial part of the imagination of nation. These ceremonies, in which nationhood is built with a performative visibility, are, in Hobsbawm's term (1983), invented traditions that serve as catalyst for the recognition, reproduction and mobilization of the imagined community. In this sense, just like the nation, national days are cultural artefacts invented, socially constructed and imagined by nationalist ideology. Many studies questioning the meaning and function of celebrations of national days from a top-down approach reveal that these days, which were institutionalized during the construction of the nation-state, were invented in order to create a nation from the masses and to promote national cohesion (Elgenius, 2011). However, in these studies, the question of how these celebrations were perceived and interpreted by the participants was left unanswered. The interpretations and applications that ordinary people create of national holiday commemorations cannot be determined solely by the architects' objectives (Kligman, 1983). The individuals who envision themselves as members of this imagined community are not passive recipients of the function and meaning that hegemonic nationalist discourses and actors ascribe to national days. Conversely, they always have the potential to negotiate, confirm or convert, and reproduce nationalist messages or patterns imposed from above in many different ways. In this sense, this part of the thesis has demonstrated that national days contribute to the subjective construction of nationhood by being articulated by the participants in different ways and with different meanings.

Our national holidays mean a lot to me. All of them have a different meaning. The establishment of the parliament, the proclamation of the republic, the August 30 Victory Day... It means a lot, but it has always been celebrated with a military order and as a state protocol. However, the nation's holiday should be celebrated with the people. I believe that our national holidays should be valued at least as much as our religious holidays. National holidays are the days when national enthusiasm is at its peak for me. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

National holidays are described by many participants as special days accompanied by "national enthusiasm" and experienced as a whole as the nation is imagined. For Gökhan, who likes to make his nationhood visible through the symbols that he attributes to the national meaning in his daily life, national holidays are also times of enthusiasm in which belonging to the nation is celebrated. In his expressions, national holidays are idealized as the performance of the nation enacted with the

participation and enthusiasm of the public rather than the solemnity of state ceremonies.

When I say holidays, my childhood comes to mind. I used to take part in the shows every holiday and I did it with love. Because at the age of 7, we made a promise under the rain, that our existence would be a gift to the Turkish existence... We recited our pledge... Therefore, we are people who have given their existence to the Turkish existence, and we did it with great love. It was a very nice holiday celebration. We used to join torchlight processions on August 30, we watched torchlight processions. In other words, we used to experience that holiday ambiance on national holidays. However, today we see that national holidays are not given the necessary importance. Of course, as a Turkish nationalist, I am sad... Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

It is possible to observe the contribution of national holidays to the discursive construction of nationhood by being articulated with childhood nostalgia in Cahit's narratives. For those who start talking their childhood memories when it comes to national holidays, their longing for the past stems from the lost enthusiasm of the celebrations over time. The rich descriptions Cahit used to narrate the holidays of his childhood serve to emphasize his sadness that the national days are not celebrated with the enthusiasm they deserve today. While national days are expressed as a time of enthusiasm that should be celebrated and shared by the nation, nationhood is constructed by the reproach that this enthusiasm has left its place to dull celebrations today.

...Nevşehir has such a shortcoming. National holidays without enthusiasm... In our childhood, we were always at the stadiums on national holidays in Ankara. On May 19, until we came to university, we would wear our short shorts and perform. Look, my eyes are shining on my childhood... Now, on April 23, my children will come here for the weekend. Now what did I do to my grandchildren, I took their flag. I bought red and white dresses. In other words, in our childhood, the holiday atmosphere was different in our house, and the national holidays were all different... The holidays were enthusiastic, we went to the celebrations. In those days, there were flags and balloons everywhere... So we lived in such a period. Not so now, unfortunately. Later we came back to this situation. It hurts, but I still do my best to instill that enthusiasm in my grandchildren. Belgin, 58, retired bank employee/manager at a Common Health and Safety Unit, CHP

In Belgin's statement, the longing for the holidays in his childhood days actually includes a judgment about today's holidays. She attaches special importance to national holidays; and according to her, the fact that the holidays are not celebrated with enthusiasm means that the society has lost its nationalist sensitivities. For

Belgin, who wishes that the feast days when the nation is glorified and celebrated become a family ritual, because this is a requirement of her perception of nationhood. What she wants to convey to his grandchildren is essentially a form of nationhood that she idealizes; because, for Belgin, family is an area where the acceptable practices and performances of Turkishness are taught and internalized. Thus, national day celebrations ritualized with balloons and red and white clothes are one of the most enthusiastic and visible of these practices.

I think that national holidays should be celebrated more enthusiastically. It is necessary to explain the meaning of holidays to children very well. It is necessary to distribute flags to children... It is necessary to instill a love of flags in them. Holidays are the days of national unity. I believe that such activities should be done in terms of increasing relations with people, increasing dialogues and providing integrity. İhsan, 45, graphic designer, AKP

Similarly, for İhsan, the most important function of national holidays is to teach children the meaning and importance of being a "nation". In this sense, national days are instrumentalized as one of the most important means of imposing and transferring the idea of being a nation and the nationalized mindset to future generations that will reproduce it. Therefore, national days, apart from commemorating the past and celebrating the nation's present, also contain a claim about the future.

I have taken all my children to the holiday celebrations. It's May 19th, April 23rd, October 29th... Our children have already grown up with that love. These are special days when national values are remembered. Serap, 52, retired, MHP

National holidays are important days for me. If I am in Ankara, I will definitely go to Anıtkabir and take my children. Children should learn those spiritual values and experience the joy of national holiday. Perihan, 47, pharmacist, CHP

In fact, in the expressions of both İhsan, Serap and Perihan, children are described as the main subject of celebrations, because the internalization of the idea of nation as a concrete reality enables the continuity of the reproduction of nationality patterns and practices. National holidays are places where nationhood is performed for adults, as well as where children are taught and rehearsed to be an acceptable Turk. Therefore, they are seen as indispensable for raising national subjects who are loyal and devoted to their nation.

However, in accordance with the fragmented, flexible and heterogeneous nature of everyday nationalism, it should be noted that national holidays do not serve as the same catalyst for the construction of nationhood for all participants. In other words, for some participants, national holidays are as meaningful as official and hegemonic nationalist visions preach.

So, if there are programs to attend, we attend them on national holidays. But on national holidays, there is no such thing as a family or something we say let's do this or that. Furkan, 26, public servant, AKP

For instance, according to Furkan, national holidays refer to formal meetings that he participates perfunctorily, rather than a day of national unity that activates his nationalist feelings and is shared by the nation.

Well, national holidays... Normally, they are public holidays, the days when we do not have a job due to our profession. In other words, we go to the meetings where we need to be politically, we also attend the ceremony of laying a wreath on the Atatürk statue. In general terms, we are there wherever we go in terms of protocol in our city. Apart from that, something we do special is to recite Surah Al Fatiha to our past, nothing more. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

In a similar way, for Rıfat, who took charge in the executive level of Nevşehir's provincial organization of the AKP, national days do not have a special meaning. In fact, this stance we see in both Furkan and Rıfat includes a critique of the official founding ideology, which defines Turkishness by pointing to a break with the Islamic and Ottoman past. The emphasis of both participants on Islam and Ottomanism, which played an important role in the construction of nationhood of both participants, once again comes to the fore with this distant attitude they adopted towards the national holidays that they identified with the republican period.

National holidays, so frankly, it's not very different for me. I mean, April 23, May 19, August 30... So... Okay, for a moment, we get excited by the effects of the shows on television, that is a separate situation, but apart from that, there is nothing I do individually. Eid-al-Adha and Eid-al-Fitr are more national and spiritual holidays. Okay, April 23 and May 19 are also national holidays, but I mean, it's not the same... Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

To tell the truth, I was never interested. April 23, May 19, only at school, uh, forced sports movements, making them wait in the rain, these come to my mind. Nothing

else... I do not want my children to participate in these shows, so I will not send them.
Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

As seen above, for both Ozan and Sertaç, national holidays institutionalized in the process of building the nation-state do not carry the meaning attributed to them by the nationalist project. As a matter of fact, both participants think that national holidays consist of far-fetched celebrations. Sertaç, who gives a more national meaning to religious holidays, thus defines and reproduces his nationhood from a more Islamic basis. Although he states that he is influenced by the ideologically determined content circulated through the media, he clearly emphasizes that this feeling did not last very long. Also for Ozan, who shaped his nationhood from a similar perspective, national holidays are just school events that he reluctantly attends due to the pressure of the authority. In short, national holidays do not evoke a sense of nationhood in the participants, which reminds them of their Turkishness and makes them feel as a part of the national unity they imagine.

7.2.2. Democracy Watches After the Coup Attempt on July 15, 2016

There is no doubt that July 15, 2016 coup attempt is one of the most controversial and striking events in the recent Turkish political life.⁵³ Democracy watch rallies, organized by the government in many cities, especially in Istanbul and Ankara, after the coup attempt and encouraging the people to show their presence on the street in order to "show the power of the nation", were used by the government to mobilize the masses and impose its 15 July narrative and its nationalist discourse strengthened with this narrative. This invitation of the ruling party was answered by crowds; and hundreds of thousands of people attended these state-sponsored rallies. In Nevşehir, the governor of Nevşehir, mayors, members of the protocol, representatives of non-governmental organizations as well as many citizens participated in these rallies held in the "Resurrection" Square of the city for 26 days following the coup attempt. Fethullah Gülen was symbolically executed with his effigy hung on the gallows set up in the middle of the square with the slogans of "the execution for traitors". On the one hand, the people gathered in the square came together against the same enemy

⁵³ For more information see M. Hakan Yavuz and Bayram Balci (2018), *Turkey's July 15th Coup: What Happened and Why*, University of Utah Press.

and performed the nation they envisioned. On the other hand, while making sense of this collective experience, they reproduced the 15 July narrative imposed on them with different references.

In fact, it has been observed that these events served as a crucial collective experience that laid the groundwork for the subjective construction of nationhood in different ways. In other words, Democracy Watch rallies emerge as a performative experience of nationhood in which many participants reproduce their nationhood. The participation in these gatherings becomes the manifestation of nationhood. The thoughts and experiences of the participants interviewed within the scope of this thesis about these rallies provide a convenient context for analyzing their subjective construction of nationhood against the top-down narratives imposed on them. In this context, while in the experiences and narratives of those who participated in the rallies, national pride and unity, national awakening, the war of liberation and religious references come to the fore, in line with the AKP's narrative, and reproduced; the statements of the interviewees who did not attend the rallies show once again that in everyday life in which nationhood is reconstructed and reproduced by the subjects, ordinary people always have the potential to negotiate, reject or transform top-down narratives and discourses.

Firstly, the rallies after 15 July are presented as an indisputable proof of the unity and pride of the nation which is imagined by the participants who reproduce their own nationhood in their personal narratives about these gatherings. In fact, national unity and pride appear as the significant discursive patterns through which the interviewees participating in the rallies perform and manifest their nationhood.

After this July 15 process, at the democracy watch rallies, I felt that when it comes to the homeland, the rest is details. You may be an idealist, a rightist, a leftist, nothing political matters... It doesn't matter if you are a villager or an urbanite. There you are a Turkish citizen, a Turkish person and an individual who takes care of your homeland. Just you there. It was so nice to experience that feeling. Uniting for the homeland, living it is a completely different thing. What you are not experiencing, you can only envision, you can imagine, but you cannot feel. I felt it there and it was a very happy feeling indeed. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

For instance, in the expression above, Ayşe narrates democracy watch rallies through the discourse of national unity that eliminates all economic, social and political differences. This is exactly the narrative of the transformation of the homogeneous nation which she envisions as a monolithic whole into a visible and tangible concrete reality in these gatherings. In other words, for Ayşe, these rallies are the venue where the nation she imagined came into being. In this context, she reinforces her nationhood by reproducing it as a part of the nation embodied in these crowds.

I attended the July 15 rallies, with my children. I am proud to be Turkish. I was proud to be all together, Turkish citizens. I am really proud to share the spirit of national unity... Ercan, 43, pharmacist, MHP

Q: Did you attend democracy rallies after 15 in Nevşehir?

I: Yes, I did.

Q: What did you feel?

I: I was proud, so at first I was proud... Maybe we couldn't do anything for the defense of the country, well, we couldn't do much, but we tried to do our best, we showed our unity. We went there with our friends, our family, our children... There was a reason for this. No matter what, we had to be there for the homeland, the nation, the flag... İhsan, 45, graphic designer, AKP

In a similar way, in the expressions of both Ercan and İhsan, it is possible to argue that there is a form of nationhood construction which is revealed through the discourse of national unity and pride in the context of democracy watch rallies. The embodiment of national unity at the rally square paves the way for individuals to reproduce their nationhood by positioning themselves as a part of that unity and to enable them to be sure of their Turkishness. In addition to this, in the quotations above, remembering that the family is one of the significant cultural codes of everyday nationalism, it is seen how the rally narratives create a contextual basis for the discursive construction of nationhood by frequently giving place to the themes of child, homeland, flag and pride.

Secondly, the emphasis of national awakening is another discursive pattern which is frequently used in the construction of nationhood through the narrative of the democracy watch rallies.

At least we achieved national unity in the democracy watches. I am happy that the society has awakened against the coups, for example. Because it was always the Janissary revolts that destroyed the Ottoman Empire. Coups, raise the sultan, put the

sultan down, you know the history... The outside did not destroy us, the inside destroyed us. And this disease continued in the republic. This is the disease of putschism that exists in our society... And I am happy that the society has reached a certain level of awareness and sensitivity here, and that from now on, it is able to say no to the putschists. It was the national unity... And an awakened society made me proud, my own nation. I was afraid that this nation would be defeated again, strictly, at first. But these meetings gave me hope. No one can destroy this nation anymore... Erol, 64, dentist, AKP

For Erol, who finds national holidays insincere and contrived, Democracy Watch rallies are the symbol of a domestic and national awakening and national unity against the coup d'état attempt. These rallies are the embodiment of his imagination of the nation as a whole that fights for existence with great awareness against the enemy both inside and outside.

Democracy meetings after July 15 made me think of the coups in the past... In the past coups, we as a nation retreated to our homes and cried. The same situation did not happen in this attempt, because this nation have woken up. This is the awakening of a nation. Awakening in terms of being local and national... Bülent, 64, doctor, AKP

In a similar way, Bülent also considers Democracy Watch rallies as the sign of the awakening of Turkish nation. In this sense, for both Erol and Bülent, these rallies held after 15 July point to a breaking point where all the coups in Turkey's history and foreign powers and local collaborators, shown as the perpetrators of these coups, have been reckoned with. They reproduce their own nationhood through the discourse of the awakened nation which withstands the coup attempt.

I mean, when I was at home first, I always thought of this, are we going to go back? I mean, are we really going to experience these blows again? I felt a fear, but when I attended those rallies, seeing that unity, that is, seeing many people coming together regardless of their views, made me feel comfortable. Because when one sits at home, one wonders whether they will separate, will there be turmoil like they used to be, whether they will shoot each other... When you are afraid of attacking each other, when you go outside, on the contrary, people do no harm, and there is a show of unity with each other, that is. When I saw it, I felt more peaceful. So yes, I felt that nothing can happen here, no one can do anything there. Suna, 41, attorney, AKP

In also Suna's experience, democracy watch rallies are described as an environment where nationhood and national coherence are deeply felt. Accordingly, these rallies, which are interpreted as an image of national awakening against the coup attempt, are a stage of nationhood that eliminates fear, chaos and uncertainty, and makes

differences invisible under the umbrella of national unity. In this context, she makes sense of and experiences her nationhood reproducing her imagination of nation as a static and monolithic entity through these gatherings.

Thirdly, in a widespread manner, the reproduction of Turkish nationhood in the context of the 15 July is nourished by the discourse of liberation struggle against the enemies of the nation. In the rallies held afterwards, it is observed that although the danger was eliminated, this discourse was reproduced by the participants and in this way nationhood was consolidated.

Well, I felt like I was on the front line against the enemy at the rallies. I felt like I was at the front and I was fighting. You know, people can't see anything, and they don't care about dying. People are willing to be a martyr, that is, for the country! Because it was a liberation struggle, I think. Dürdane, 58, retired bank employee, AKP

Dürdane's narrative of democracy watch rallies is shaped on the basis of the rhetoric of a war of existence against the enemy. In her expression, it is seen that the national meaning attributed to the rallies is reinforced by the metaphor of the struggle for independence. With this analogy, the purpose of democracy rallies is placed on a national and legitimate ground by the participant, who describes the people gathered there as a community that does not hesitate to fight the enemy and die for their nation. Through this narrative, in which the image of the nation blessed with death is enacted with a collective experience, the participant also makes sense of her own nationhood.

These were the days when the emotions were extremely intense, which was the manifestation of the national mobilization after a liberation struggle. Our feelings when the National Anthem is sung, that is, our feelings when the Quran recitation is recited, our emotional load when there is a speech there... It was our organization that organized the meetings here for 27 days, down to the smallest detail. We performed morning prayers there in the open air. So they were very different feelings. Do I live that day every day, believe me I do. Rıfat, 32, attorney, AKP

Similarly, in the rallies where masses mobilized through the discourse of liberation struggle came together Rıfat builds his nationhood in the way that he defines himself as part of this national struggle. In his eyes, the July 15 coup attempt was a threat to both the nation and the Ummah, and the nation that stood by their state in the face of this threat has put up a great struggle for existence. The winner of this struggle is the

nation, and these rallies are the mark of the nation's victory. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the form of nationhood reproduced in the context of democracy watches is blended with Islam through religious rituals such as morning prayers performed collectively. In fact, the religious references in the narratives of the democracy watch rallies also function as another discursive anchor frequently used in the enactment and reproduction of Turkish nationhood.

I was in Diriliş Square until the chief said to enter the house, I prayed the morning prayer in the square. I felt strong during the rallies, I saw that no one can destroy this country. July 15 showed the power of the Turks. Nazlı, 32, geological engineer, AKP

In a similar way, in Nazlı's narrative, morning prayers performed collectively in the rally square emerges as a significant discursive component. This emphasis, which reveals the role of Islam in her imagination of the nation, turns into an instrument of description and interpretation which is used while making sense of democracy rallies.

My father attended the democracy watches with the Koran in his hand... We prayed together for the well-being of our country. Thank God he heard us. Ayşe, 30, unemployed, AKP

In also Ayşe's narrative, democracy watch rallies appear as a venue where the form of Turkish nationhood built on Islamic references is performed. In fact, our participant observation carried out during the rallies shows that the construction of nationhood based on Islam through religious practices such as hymn and Quran recitals and morning prayers performed collectively gained visibility in these gatherings. In other words, it has been observed that the religious-based perception of nationhood, which is visible in Ayşe's, Nazlı's and Rıfat's expressions in the context of the democracy watch rallies, is reproduced by many people attending the events. In this sense, these gatherings provide a contextual ground for the performance of a nationhood whose boundaries are drawn by religion.

Briefly, it seems that the participants, who conveyed their thoughts and experiences about the democracy watch rallies through their narratives embellished with the themes of national unity, pride, national awakening, the struggle for independence

and Islamic motifs, construct a form of nationhood in accordance with the rhetoric of nationalism imposed on them from above, internalizing the meaning and discursive descriptors used by the AKP, which called for and organized these rallies. The critical point here is the active role of the people participating in the rallies in the reproduction process of the nationhood discourse. On the other hand, there are also narratives and experiences about these rallies that demonstrates that the political rhetoric, which presents them as a nation's manifestation, is not always received unquestionably by the everyday actors.

I did not attend the democracy watch rallies after 15 July. I mean... I always stay away from things that I think are fake and not sincere. I swear, there were more MHP members on the street than AK Party. I saw it with my own eyes. But I also saw that none of the MHP members were on the podium. Or I saw that no other political party members other than the AK Party were on the podium. I saw the members of the AK Party and the NGOs of the Ak Party on the podium. So frankly, it turned to party propaganda. I do not like this. That's why it didn't sound very sincere, and it still doesn't feel sincere. Ozan, 31, software developer, AKP

For instance, Ozan, who is a loyal AKP voter and the head of the Youth Organization of the Birlik Foundation, known for his closeness to the AKP, criticizes the democracy rallies turning into a tool of propaganda for the ruling party. Despite the rhetoric of the government that presents the democracy watch rallies as a feast of national unity, he claims that these gatherings are far from reflecting the general public. In this sense, with this objection, he discursively reproduces the understanding of nationhood in a more inclusive form. Thereby, Ozan's attitude and expressions prove that even everyday actors who come to terms with top-down rhetoric in many ways have the potential to negotiate, transform or even reject the discourse of the political actors they supports.

On the other hand, for some of those who claim that the rallies turned into a show for the ruling party, these meetings reflect an imagination of a nation that excludes them due to their ideological orientation. From this point of view, they oppose the rhetoric of the political power that defines the nation through the participants in these rallies.

I did not attend the democracy rallies after 15 July. I did not attend because I did not find it right to organize a rally under the hegemony and propaganda of a party. This is the lack of other parties, that the AKP did it alone, other parties were not involved... All parties should have organized these rallies jointly. This would be appropriate in

order to ensure social peace, social cohesion, not to break the unity, on the contrary, to register and confirm the bonding and togetherness, and to give this message to the citizens and the whole world. Gökhan, 46, tax professional, MHP

According to Gökhan, democracy watch rallies are the product of exclusionary and divisive political propaganda, as opposed to being an expression of national unity, integrity and cohesion. In his view, a platform where other political parties other than the AKP are not represented does not have a national mission; because nationalism corresponds to a meaning that covers all political positions and is supra-partisan at the same time.

On July 15, we went out to the street as a family. I even said goodbye to my wife. because we didn't know what was in front of us. I left not knowing what to expect. But after that, I didn't go out because it turned into a bit of a show... The day before, we were arm in arm, we walked here... But two days later, everyone was in the trouble of advertising and showing themselves... I mean, they always give an example of this, that day at the President's Complex in Beştepe, Şahin and Toros brand cars the next day, mercedes and bmws filled up... The same thing happened here as well. I mean, I never saw the rich people of Nevşehir, for example, here that day. I haven't seen any. No matter who the politician is, but three days later, they all took the podium and talked as if they had lived it. I mean, frankly, I didn't attend the rallies in this sense. Concerts or something, so it turned into a little more enthusiasm. On the first day, there was a spiritual atmosphere. But then people started playing, eating, drinking and having fun. It deviated from its purpose, and I didn't go anyway. Sertaç, 30, receptionist, AKP

Just like Ozan, Sertaç also takes a stance outside the discourse imposed on him in the context of democracy watch rallies although he is a loyal AKP voter who frequently includes many discursive anchors inherent in the AKP's imagination of nation and nationhood. On the one hand, according to Sertaç, who defines himself as a true Turkish nationalist, these rallies appear to exclude the socio-economic layer to which he belongs. In other words, Sertaç reproduces the imagination of a more egalitarian and inclusive nationhood through the criticism he brought to these rallies, which turned into a show where the notables and capital owners of the city made their own propaganda. On the other hand, Sertaç's discomfort with the festive atmosphere in the rallies stems from the belief that the spiritual spirit he attributes to the perception of the nation is damaged. According to him, it is an attitude that harms the essence of nationhood for national subjects who have come together around a sacred purpose such as the defense of the homeland to experience worldly pleasures such as eating, drinking and having fun. Therefore, through these two fundamental objections,

Sertaç reinforces his imagination of a nationhood that makes all socio-economic differences invisible and offers individuals a spiritual reason for existence beyond worldly and mundane pleasures.

It turned into fun... Businessmen and politicians showed up at those rallies. They distributed bread, cheese, water. It became a fairground. People went to have fun... These are not nice things. So, on the first day, we just went out like I said, we asked the governor, is there anything we can do. We made our preparations, whatever needed...But, I did not approve of the events there either. Cahit, 33, lecturer, MHP

For also Cahit, the carnival atmosphere reflected in the democracy watches rallies held after an important threat such as the July 15 coup attempt diluted the seriousness of this national issue. In this context, these meetings are interpreted as a venue where the sanctity attributed to the nation is destroyed, rather than a place where a divine and deep loyalty to it is reproduced.

7.3. Conclusion

Flag, anthem and national days are symbolic and cultural elements invented by the state and elites in order to create a nation and establish a national cohesion during the nation-state building process. Likewise, the discourse, attitudes and policies of the nation state on language serves as an important cultural instrument in nation building. However, the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in the symbolic and cultural field is a process inherent in everyday life, and the most important actors of this process are ordinary people. The answer to the question of how these instruments, which are imposed as the symbol of the nation, are perceived by individuals in daily life, and how nationhood is reproduced through these symbols, is hidden in the attitudes and discourses of individuals. Such that, apart from these instruments, individuals can also make sense of their Turkishness through different objects to which they attribute national meaning, and they can reproduce it. Moreover, apart from these symbolic and cultural instruments that the nation-state uses in the construction of the nation, there are other performative ways that play an important role in the construction of nationhood. The field study has shown that the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in everyday life is a process that includes collective experiences such as democracy watch rallies, as well as these

symbols, ceremonies and commemoration days that serve to transmit the narrative of the national past to the future and to keep it alive.

In the 2010s, when political Islam and an ethnicized Turkish nationalism dominated Turkish politics, the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in everyday life through national symbols, rituals and collective experiences that have a national meaning gained increasing visibility. In Nevşehir, this visibility manifests itself with Turkish flags hung on the balconies of houses and workplaces, the abundance of cars decorated with Turkish flags, Ottoman sultan's signature, and writings in old Turkic script and ostentatious "national will" rallies.

The findings of the thesis show that firstly, the Turkish flag, the National Anthem and the Turkish language, which are one of the most basic symbols of the nation-state ideology, are national symbols that both AKP, CHP and MHP supporters agree on and attach importance to. However, it should be noted that the Turkish flag, which is a symbol of national pride and history for many of the participants, also carries a religious meaning for some AKP participants with high Islamic sensitivities. The Turkish flag, once used by secular groups as an expression of a reaction against political Islamists⁵⁴, is today reproduced as an expression of Turkishness in an Islamic context, as political Islam occupies the official and central discourse. Moreover, both AKP, CHP and MHP voters express their national sensitivities about language with their discomfort from those who speak Kurdish. The nationalist attitudes of CHP and MHP voters on this issue also reveal through their anger towards Arabic-speaking Syrians. However, participants who support the AKP express that they do not feel uncomfortable with Arabic-speaking Syrians, in line with the party's moderate policy towards Syrian immigrants. This situation demonstrates how the Islamist tone in AKP's nationalism is embraced and reproduced by their supporters. However, it should be noted that despite the AKP's embracing rhetoric towards Syrian immigrants, there are AKP voters who voice their

⁵⁴ Prior to the 2007 Turkish presidential election, large demonstrations under the name of "republic" or "flag" rallies were organized in metropolitan cities by the secular segments, who were concerned about the then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan or another politician from the Milli Gorus Movement being shown as presidential candidates.

"One million Turks against the government", Reuters, April 29, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070501065240/http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSL2910950920070429>, 29.07.2022

intolerance towards Syrians. Lastly, different perceptions and imaginations of nation become apparent through different symbols such as Old Turkic symbols, Seljuk symbols, Islamic- Ottoman symbols and Atatürk symbols. On the one hand, the diversity of these symbols actually demonstrates the subjectivity and the heterogeneity of everyday forms of nationhood; on the other hand the prevalence and popularity of the use of Ottoman and Old Turkic symbols also shows how the dominant Islamic and ethnic nationalism understanding in Turkish politics is reflected heavily on the symbols used in everyday life in Nevşehir.

Secondly, national holidays, as one of the important tools used by the nation-state building project to mobilize the masses, have an important symbolic meaning in which nationhood is reproduced by the MHP and CHP voters, although they are not embraced by the AKP voters. However, Democracy Watches held at the call of the government after the coup attempt of July 15 emerge as collective experiences in which AKP voters reproduce their Turkishness in Nevşehir. In the experiences and narratives of those who participated in the rallies, national pride and unity, national awakening, the war of liberation and religious references come to the fore, in line with the AKP's narrative, and reproduced.

In conclusion, nationhood emerges in this thesis as a state and discourse enacted by ordinary people through the symbolic and performative ways of constructing and reproducing Turkishness in everyday life. Participants attribute meanings to these symbols and collective experiences, which are frequently referenced in interviews, sometimes in parallel with their political affiliation, and sometimes contrary to the discourses of the political organizations they support. In other words, although the world of meaning of this cultural space where Turkishness is enacted by individuals is dominated by political discourses imposed from above, it cannot be fixed.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to understand in a period in which Islamist and ethnicist nationalism become a dominant paradigm in Turkish politics in a small- sized nationalist and conservative central Anatolian city, Nevşehir, where right-wing political parties representing political Islam and ethnic nationalism have historically always been strong, how Turkishness is discursively reproduced by everyday actors from different political positions. For this purpose, a field study, including in-depth interviews, participant observations and group discussions was conducted in Nevşehir between March 2017 and October 2018 to trace the reflections of rising Turkish nationalism in the 2000s on the everyday life of the city dwellers in a social and political atmosphere increasingly occupied by a conservative nationalist discourse. In this framework, thirty semi-structured, in-depth interviews were held during this period with everyday social actors of diverse age, gender, political affiliation and occupation in Nevşehir. During the fieldwork, it was taken care that the number of participant from each gender was in balance. The age of the participants ranged from 25 to 64 years old; and the average age of them was 42. Five of the interviewees were high school graduates and twenty-five were university graduates. Fourteen of these interviewees were the AKP voters; eight of them were MHP voters; and eight of them were CHP voters.

The main finding of the thesis is that Turkishness, which is constructed and reproduced by ordinary people in different ways and with different contents in everyday life, at the same time, embodied through some common motifs and schemes in the narratives of the participants, which I call “discursive anchors and strategies”. As claimed in the previous sections of this thesis, Turkish nationalism owes its ubiquity and hegemonic presence in Turkey’s social and political culture to

the constant reproduction of Turkishness and Turkish nationhood by ordinary actors in everyday life in different contexts and in different ways. However, this determination does not mean that the construction and reproduction of everyday nationhood does not take place through some common discursive codes and paths. Beside the fault lines which reproduce the Turkishness, it is also important to examine through which discursive anchors and strategies these lines become visible at everyday level. Such a viewpoint allows us detecting some commonalities in diverse imaginations of national subject in some contexts.

This thesis is theoretically based on the everyday nationalism approach that argues nationalism is not just rhetoric and politics constructed, reproduced and propagated by actors and institutions in the political arena, on the contrary, mental schemes and frameworks embodied in the discourse and experiences of ordinary actors in everyday life also play a very crucial role in the reproduction of nationhood and nationalism as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Accordingly, ordinary people have the potential reply politicians' rhetoric including nationalist messages in many different ways. They might agree, reject, negotiate or transform the content of nationalist discourse offered by institutions, political parties, media or elites. By this way, they constitute their own perception, construct and reproduce nationalism in their everyday life with their attitudes, discourses, everyday practices. This situation makes the persistence of nationalism more clear and understandable. In addition to this, such a theoretical perspective contributes to our understanding of the nationalist wind blowing in world politics, the Islamist and ethnic nationalist wave that has turned into a hegemonic language in Turkish politics, and the omnipresent and dominant character of nationalism itself that permeates everywhere in politics, social life and everyday life. In this thesis, also inspiring from Özkırımlı (2005) and Skey (2011), different sense making processes and ways in which individual construction of nationhood occurs are analyzed along three dimensions: self/other, temporal and cultural. The main reason why this thesis focuses on these three dimensions is that different nationalism projects in Turkish politics actually have different claims on the themes of us, them, past and national culture while defining the Turkish nation. Indeed, Turkish nationhood has been constructed in both top- down political discourses and in everyday life from below by ordinary actors within the framework

of us, them, the past and culture. In this context, this thesis is structured to explore how and when national “we/ they”, national “now” and national “symbols and collective experiences” emerge in the discourse and experiences of ordinary people in the area at everyday level.

In Turkey, nationalism has had an important place in almost all political strands from the establishment of the Republic to the present day. Each political project has imagined a homogenous Turkish nation on the basis of its own ideological and cultural values. Accordingly, every political formation used a form of Turkish nationalism idealized in accordance with its own values as a means of reaching the masses. Thus, Turkish nationalism has shown a hegemonic existence by being articulated in one way or another to the discourses of almost all political formations in the nearly hundred-year history of the Republic. It can be said that Turkish nationalism, as a pragmatist and populist tool to gain legitimacy in the political arena, has managed to exist and stay on the agenda in every period and in every aspect. Finally, in the era of globalization, where the future of nation-states is discussed, it is possible to observe, paradoxically, that rising nationalist movements all over the world have accelerated in Turkey as well. In the second decades of the 2000s, AKP's stance shifted towards authoritarianism as it strengthened its control over state institutions such as the military and judiciary; and the party started to use this power to politicize religion as an indispensable part of Turkish nationalism and social order. Political Islam's alternative national identity based on Ottoman- Islamic history constitutes the backbone of the rising nationalist discourse in Turkish politics in the 2000s under the authoritarian regime of the AKP. This transformation in the political sphere, of course, meant that a nationalist and conservative climate became more and more dominant in social life. As a matter of fact, many central Anatolian cities, which are already strongholds of conservative nationalism and political Islam in Turkey in terms of their voting behavior and social structure due to their historical and sociological conditions, also got their share from this new wave of conservatism. Traditional Anatolian conservatism, fed by the nationalist and Islamist spirit encouraged by the political power of the period, increasingly embraced an intolerant, oppressive and marginalizing language.

Nevşehir, like many other central Anatolian cities, has become increasingly conservative in terms of both voting behavior and social life, within the nationalist and Islamist discourse that has become a hegemonic characteristic in Turkish politics in the 2000s. Particularly in the last ten years, in the city, where the AKP has achieved a performance that exceeds its electoral success in Turkey, the total votes of conservative, nationalist and Islamist right-wing parties have been consolidated by over eighty percent. This political attitude of Nevşehir voters is also reflected in daily social life. Kindergartens that provide religious education to pre-school children under the name of “values education” have become widespread, restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages have been closed one by one, and even market owners who sell alcoholic beverages have difficulty finding a rental house for their families due to “neighborhood pressure”. The political climate created by the Islamist, conservative and nationalist discourses and practices of the government, of course, also formed the habitus of the everyday life of the city and its everyday actors. Islamist, nationalist and Ottomanist symbols in public transportation vehicles and public spaces such as cafes and restaurants, and cars decorated with similar symbols, pointed to this conservative and nationalist new wave that penetrated all the capillaries of the city's everyday life; because everyday life was the area where the nationalist discourse dictated and imposed by political actors was transformed into the determinant of social life, sometimes by transforming it, sometimes by changing it, but by constantly reproducing it.

As argued in the previous sections of this thesis different nationalism projects construct the nation, the other of the nation, the history and culture of the nation in different ways; and to a significant extent, they have the potential to shape their target audience's perceptions of nationhood. Moreover, the construction and reproduction of nationhood is such a dynamic, active and daily process that it can be carried out with different contents in different contexts, even for the same individual. The different political affiliations of the participants are interpreted as one of the reasons for the differentiation in the way they build their nationhood. In addition to this, the different personal experiences of the interviewees are also very decisive in terms of how and in what way they imagine Turkishness. However, the major finding of this thesis is that besides these differences, Turkishness, which is

constructed and reproduced by ordinary people in different ways and with different contents in everyday life, at the same time, finds its expression through some common discursive codes and schemes, which I call them “discursive anchors and strategies”, in their narratives, regardless of their political positions and subjective experiences. Here, I will try to present these anchors and strategies, which are common in the expressions and discourses of the participants interviewed within the scope of this thesis, in an analytical framework.

On the one hand, the thesis demonstrates that some key motifs that are frequently referenced while describing national culture and values, offer us some codes, while following the process of construction and reproduction of nationalism by individuals in everyday life. I define these motifs as “discursive anchors”. Capturing these codes, which have become inherent in the language and discourse that individuals use while constructing Turkish nationalism is an important step in the deconstruction of everyday nationalism. On the other hand, the thesis shows that, in addition to common discursive anchors, it is possible to speak of some common discursive schemes in the enactment of nationhood at everyday level. I define these common schemes in which different perceptions of nationhood are reproduced as “discursive strategies”. From this point of view, the fieldwork demonstrates that the everyday construction and reproduction of nationhood from below takes place through five discursive anchors of everyday Turkishness and nine everyday discursive strategies that constantly reproduce the Turkishness. In this sense, on the one hand, the concepts of family, war, martyrdom, religion, tradition and modernity frequently used by the interviewees while describing the Turkishness during the interviews appears as important discursive cornerstones of many of the interviewees’ perception of Turkishness.

Firstly, during the interviews, the family was presented by many participants as a structure, a concept that expresses the basis of Turkishness. The importance given to the family is at the forefront of the characteristics that are thought to be unique to the Turks and attributed to the Turks. Moreover, for many participants who sanctify the family as the place where the consciousness of Turkishness is instilled, the care and success they show in raising children is a requirement of being an acceptable

Turkish. In other words, having “well-raised children for this country” is both a debt and a responsibility of every Turk to “this nation”.

Secondly, as one of the important cornerstones of the mindset of Turkish nationalism, the myth of warfare has infiltrated the language of everyday nationalism, apart from the nationalist discourse of the state, political actors and official ideology. Therefore, in the scope of this thesis warrior rhetoric appears as one of the most frequently used tools in the discursive repertoire of the construction and the reproduction of everyday Turkish nationhood. War, military service and martyrdom are the salient discursive reference points that are frequently touched while describing national culture and values. These discursive codes, which have become inherent in the discourse of some participants, play a crucial role in the everyday reproduction of Turkish nationhood and nationalism. The instrumental relationship of the mindset of nationalist ideology with history is full of images of victory. The importance attributed to these images of victory, to places, times and personalities associated with victory, inevitably manifests itself in references to the past. In this framework, war and martyrs are the only narrative elements that make possible the present of the nation, which is presented as a concrete reality, beyond being just historical elements, and to be grateful for. Therefore, they do not belong to the past but to the present, to the present of the nation. In addition to this, military service has a considerable place in the discursive codes used in the everyday construction of Turkish nationhood, with the power it derives from the myth of the military- nation. Thus, the participant plays an active role in the reproduction of the myth of the soldier nation. Another point that should be underlined here is that the sanctity attributed to military service both is nourished by the myth of the military- nation and reproduces and feeds it. Moreover, the rank of martyrdom appears as the anchor of the legitimacy of the myth of military- nation and the war rhetoric in the statements of many participants. In other words, the nation is embodied as a transcendent reality worth dying for, through the dignity attributed to martyrdom.

Thirdly, the only means of sanctifying of what belongs to the mundane and secular world with otherworldly elements is the religious elements that are articulated to discourse. While a sanctity is attributed to Turkishness through the identification

established between Turkishness and Islam, on the other hand, Islam is instrumentalized with the judgment that Turkishness is obliged to protect it to reproduce nationhood. Under favor of their mobilizing power, both Turkishness and Islam allow each other to be reproduced at the discursive level as even stronger realities. In this sense, religion is one of the most prominent reference points that make the cultural boundaries and reflections of Turkishness visible. In this sense, Islamic components in the everyday discourse appear as an important part of the cultural dimension in the imagination of Turkishness of many interviewees. The nation is perceived as a structure composed of uniform national subjects. What lies behind this perception is the world of common values and practices believed to ensure social homogeneity. The reason why religion is one of the first elements that come to mind when it comes to common values is that it is visible through concrete practices. This visibility makes religion one of the most convenient cultural references to embody and strengthen the imagination of the nation.

Fourthly, in the expressions of the participants, the founding role of the concept of tradition in the reproduction of Turkishness at both the discursive and performative level is remarkable. Traditions, described by many of the participants as an indispensable component of the common national culture, express concrete experiences or intangible values on which Turkishness is built. Traditions are a set of unwritten rules that are thought to bind each member of the nation, which is imagined as a homogeneous whole, and to be common for this entity with the consent of each individual. The eternity of the nation and its close relationship with the past, emphasized through these experiences and moral norms attributed to Turkishness, provides a convenient way for the reproduction of nationhood. In this context, traditions constitute one of the important cornerstones of the reproduction of the Turkish habitus, which we examined through the expressions of the participants.

Lastly, the fieldwork has shown that the problematic relationship of Turkish nationalism with the West in the official ideology has also spread to individuals' perceptions of Turkishness and the way they reproduce it discursively. It is a fact that the West, especially for participants who reproduce nationhood on the basis of a secular worldview, is one of the important cultural resources of the subjective

construction processes of Turkishness in everyday life. Modernity and the values it preaches function as important discursive and cultural codes that both shape the Turkish image in the minds of some participants and are frequently invoked in the production of this image. It is seen that Western modernity and the universal values dictated by it, such as rationality, progress and democracy, are instrumentalized in the construction of Turkishness through the perceptions and discourses of individuals.

On the other hand, the thesis reveals that in the construction of everyday nationhood, the reproduction of the distinction between us and them is carried out through various discursive schemes. These discursive schemes, which I define as “discursive strategies”, essentially point to important patterns of thought that reveals in the enactment of nationhood in the context of “national time” and “national culture”. In this framework, for the vast majority of participants who defined themselves as Turkish nationalists,

1) Nations exist and the history of nations is as old as the history of humanity. Thus, **“the taken for grantedness of nationhood and nationalism”** is at the forefront of the language and thought patterns inherent in the discourse and attitudes of everyday actors. Nationalism, as a way of seeing, thinking and making sense of the world as the world of nations (Calhoun 1997, Özkırımlı 2010) is constructed, articulated, performed and finally reified by ordinary people in their everyday life. However, nationalized subjects who normalize and interiorize the interpretation of the world within a nationalized framework are not aware of this process of construction and reification and the role they play in it. In their perception and discourses, nation and nationhood emerge as tangible and visible realities that do not depend on any condition or reason, whose origins are not questioned, which exist by itself. Under these conditions, for them, it is not possible to imagine a world without nations, which are given realities. In this context, taken for grantedness of nation and nationhood, as a quiet but effective way in which nationhood is reproduced, appears as a frequently used reproduction strategy.

2) State means nation, the identity between these two requires blessing the state at least as much as the nation. In this respect, state emerges as an innate and eternal mechanism that is glorified by many of the everyday actors without questioning its existence. This general attitude of the participant signalizes **“the glorification of the state”** as a discursive strategy through which nationhood is reproduced. It is observed that the participants who glorify the state often reproduce Turkishness by equating the state with the Turkish nation or identifying themselves with the state. In other words, the equation of Turkish nation with the state and self-identification with the state are two distinct thought patterns that accompany the discursive strategy of sacralizing the state. Firstly, the perception that the nation and the state are identical plays a crucial role in the sacralization of the state. A mindset that equates the state to the Turkish nation both emphasizes Turkishness as the essential element of the state and redefines the state as the state of Turks. Secondly, the definition of the state as a Turkish dominated state is accompanied by the emphasis of self-identification with the state. In fact, the stress on “we” in the words of some participants, while talking about the state is the most obvious expression of this perception of identicalness.

3) In the world of nations, which is divided into national units with concrete, fixed and visible borders, naturally, each nation has a homogeneous structure within itself. While some have superior characteristics, others are more passive and need to be managed "by nature". In this context, presupposing that nations are homogeneous structures within themselves, namely **“presupposing social homogeneity”** appears as another discursive strategy applied by many participants reproducing their Turkishness. This strategy at the same time refers to another way of marginalizing differences and otherizing those who do not belong to the nation; because the imagination of a homogenous society is an important component of the construction of nationhood. Ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic purity are the desirable elements of the national whole envisioned by the nationalized agency.

4) There are many negative images of the "other" against the positive images that describe "us". These differences make some of them more power, courage, nobility, etc. It is an indisputable proof that **“emphasizing differences between nations”** is

another important discursive strategy that accompany the tendency to present nations and states as innate and unquestionable formations. Positive self-presentation and negative- other presentation are described by Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach (1993) as two important complementary discursive strategies which are employed in the construction of ideology and serve to justify inequality. The former involves expressing and emphasizing "positive" information about "us", while the latter means expressing and emphasizing "negative" information about "they" (Oktar, 2001: 319). It is observed that these two discursive strategies are frequently used in the narratives of the participants who construct and reproduce their nationhood through the emphasis on differences between nations. Many participants explain the pride of being a Turk through the positive characteristics they attribute to Turkishness. Positive stereotypes about the Turks in their minds, in fact, reveal what a Turkish nation they envision. The enactment of Turkishness in their expressions occurs through a discursive strategy that embraces the Turkish imagery with many positive features such as love of independence, bravery, patriotism, intelligence and hospitality. It is possible to argue that the main claim of the discourse built on the positive self- presentation of Turkishness is national uniqueness and superiority. In addition to this, the reference to the past is the most suitable way to emphasize these characteristics attributed to Turkishness and its alleged distinction from other nations. On the other hand, while emphasizing the differences between nations, it is generally negative stereotypes that fall on the share of the other. The construction of Turkishness takes place simultaneously with the construction of the other; and the latter, typically, is depicted through the pejorative characteristics assigned to a whole community. This strategy works in two ways: expressing and emphasizing negative information and judgment about the other; or ignoring and trivializing positive information about the other (Oktar, 2001: 319). In this way, the unequal relationship established between "us", which is constructed as superior and powerful by positive representations, and "them", which is described as an inferior group by negative representations, is justified.

5) It is inevitable that the world of nations should be considered as a hierarchical whole as a result of the superior characteristics that nations have or do not have from birth. **"The naturalization of hierarchical power relations"** thought to exist

between nations is another common discursive strategy. It seems that the basic belief underlying the demand for obedience to Turkish sovereignty is that Turkishness has superiority over different ethnic affiliations. This claim of superiority and taken for granted hierarchy always identifies what should be respected as the Turkish nation. The respect mentioned here is not subject to the principle of reciprocity. The role given to others here is to obey the rules set by the Turkish nation that is the ablest.

6) Turks are above this hierarchy due to many innately superior characteristics they possess; and for them, this is an unquestionable reality that should be respected and proud. In this way, **“the sense of national pride and demand for national prestige”** is detected as a strategy that emerges in the discourses of ordinary actors and contributes to the construction of everyday nationhood. In the discursive reservoir of subjective construction of everyday nationhood, the emphasis of being proud of Turkishness occupies a crucial place. In fact, many interviewees tend to express their pride of being Turkish with great enthusiasm. The presentation of Turkishness as a source of pride, for many interviewees, is an unproblematic, internalized and thus taken for granted manner that there is no need to think about it. The desire of being flattered, playing a catalyst role, contributes to the enactment of national pride. Particularly, the position and the reputation of those who represent the Turkish state in international platforms flatter the nationalized agency and turns into a photo frame which concretizes the imagination of Turkishness in her/ his mind. On the other hand, the discourse of the rise of Turkey in recent period refers to a populist demand for national prestige. Many interviewee share this view that Turkey gained ground in terms of development and recognition and proved itself in international area. In fact, as shown in the quotations above, with the discourse of “the inexorable rise of new Turkey” the imagination of a powerful is represented as a tangible reality. Development, reputation, prestige, having a say in international matters are the key words of the strategy of national pride which is frequently accompanied by the discursive construction of Turkishness. Additionally, the leading role provided for Turkey in the statements of many interviewees points an alternative way to express the imagined superiority of Turkishness and the pride in being a part of this entity. In fact, desire for reputation, prestige, status and dominance in the discourse reveals itself in the expressions which always place Turkey in a position of

leadership. The prestigious status of Turkey which is positioned as the leader of both Muslim countries and Turkic countries constitutes the source of pride. In the last instance, in the subjective construction process of nationhood, Turkishness is employed by the way of the emphasis on pride, prestige and reputation.

7) The belief that the injustices to which the Turkish nation is exposed are mainly due to its superior character and strength came up frequently during the interviews. Thus, **“self-victimization”** is also determined as another discursive strategy used by them. Self- perceived collective victimhood is described as "a mindset shared by group members that results from a perceived intentional harm with severe and lasting consequences inflicted on a collective by another group or groups, a harm that is viewed as undeserved, unjust and immoral and one that the group was not able to prevent" (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009, p. 238). In this sense, the term refers to “the belief that one’s own group has been intentionally and undeservingly harmed by another group” (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009). In social psychological literature on collective victimhood, the constant self-victimization of one’s own in-group is regarded as an efficient and suitable strategy to keep a positive image of “we”, in other words a positive self-presentation, by delegitimizing the other’s treatment (Mijić, 2020, Shnabel and Noor 2012; Noor et al. 2012; Shnabel, Halabi, and Noor 2013; Bar-Tal et al. 2009; Bar-Tal 2000; Andrighetto et al. 2012; Ferguson, Burgess, and Hollywood 2010; Baumann 2010; Vollhardt 2009). Self- victimization strategy contributes meaningfully to the construction and reproduction the sense of national belonging by sharpening group boundaries, strengthening internal cohesion and outward demarcation and stimulating feelings of moral superiority (Mijić, 2020). Self- victimization emerges as a discursive strategy that many participants frequently appeal while constructing and reproducing both their own Turkishness and the others of the nation. Accordingly, it is possible to discuss the victimhood narratives of the participants under two headings. In the first, there is a victimhood allegedly caused by the external other; and a victimization narrative shaped on the claim of unfair and unjust treatment of the West towards Turks stands out. On the other hand, the discursive pattern that forms the second group is related to the internal other. Here, in general, there is a competitive victimization that emerges on the basis of intergroup relations

with non-Muslims living in Turkey. These narratives are shaped by the claim that the "real" victims are the Turks, both in the past and today; both inside and outside.

8) The superior characteristics of the Turkish nation are indisputable, even though it seems weakened in the face of Western civilization. By this way they build and reproduce Turkishness through the expression of an **“inferiority complex felt against the West”**. Nationalist rhetoric is an ethnocentric narrative which promises the compensation of all shortcomings and weaknesses to its audience (Bora, 2017: 195). In fact, the field work of this research shows that for many participants, the enactment of Turkish nationhood is a way to deal with the sense of backwardness in the face of Western civilization. The boundaries drawn between us and them while Turkishness is being constructed discursively, are further sharpened by the perception of belatedness and frustration of not being able to reach the living standards in the West. In this sense, inferiority complex in the face of the “West” and western values emerges as a discursive pattern that is frequently used in the reproduction of Turkishness.

9) Lastly, the Western enemies and their local collaborators, who know and cannot digest this superior position of the Turkish nation, are constantly plotting to harm this nation. Thus, **“conspiracy theories”** emerge as the last of the discursive strategies frequently encountered in the construction and reproduction of everyday nationhood during this thesis. Interviews with participants indicate that conspiratorial thinking plays a significant role in the employment of Turkishness at everyday level. Nourishing the imageries of enemy, war and attack perpetually, conspiracy theories which invite to keep awake national consciousness make it possible for nationalized subjects to constantly remember the existence of the order of nations and the necessity and vitalness of nationalism in such a world.

All in all, this thesis demonstrates us that it is these common discursive anchors and strategies inherent in the perceptions and the expressions of the participants about their Turkishness that make the omnipresence of nationhood construction visible. These patterns of meaning and thought reveals in the enactment of nationhood in the context of “boundaries of the nation”, “national history” and “national culture”

which were discussed in the previous chapters. On the one hand, it is observed that some discursive anchors around which the definition of national culture and value are shaped are frequently included in the narratives of the participants. Even though these concepts are interpreted in different ways by individuals, they appear as common discursive codes that play an important role in the construction and reproduction of Turkishness in everyday life in terms of their articulation as superior and unifying elements, which are frequently used when describing Turkishness. On the other hand, in the construction of everyday nationhood, the reproduction of the distinction between us and them is carried out through various discursive strategies. These discursive schemes essentially point to important patterns of thought that reveals in the enactment of nationhood in the context of “national time” and “national culture”; and they give an idea of how participants' perceptions of Turkishness relate to the rest of the world.

This thesis demonstrates that the rising wave of conservatism and nationalism in Turkish politics is quite evident in Nevşehir's voter preferences, social fabric and everyday life. Islamist and ethnic nationalist dominant ideology is effective in shaping the way individuals build their Turkishness. Especially AKP and MHP voters tend to define Turkishness within the framework drawn by the government, to describe the other of Turkishness within this framework and to reproduce national history narrative in this way. Therefore, the use of many catchwords that constitute the hegemonic rhetoric of power is also quite common in everyday nationalism. In addition to this, although not always valid, those who take part in the institutional organizations of the parties are more likely to adopt the imagination of nationhood imposed by the parties. In other words, it has been observed that as the link of affiliation with the party becomes institutionalized, the tendency to develop a perception and practice of nationhood in line with the rhetoric of the party increases.

Furthermore, although the neo-Ottomanist conservative discourse, nourished by Islam and ethnicist nationalism, which became the hegemonic ideology in Turkey in the second decade of the 2000s under the authoritarian rule of the AKP, was dominant and widespread in the construction of everyday nationalism in Nevşehir, it has not been able to completely control and monopolize this field; because people,

who are the actors of everyday nationalism, still have the potential to negotiate, change, transform and nourish from different forms of nationhood, as well as reproducing and preserving the forms of nationhood imposed on them from above.

Lastly, one of the most remarkable empirical findings of this thesis is that the patterns of nationhood presented and disseminated by different political visions through their own narratives of the nation hybridized by everyday actors. As individuals can develop a practice of nationhood independent of the rhetoric of the parties they belong to, they also have the potential to change and transform the definitions of nationhood imposed on them. Therefore, everyday actors in the reproduction process of nationhood are not passive receivers. They can create their own subjective and hybrid forms of nationhood by referencing the different discursive assumptions of the multiple nationhood conceptions. In this context, although the discursive hegemony of Islamist and ethnic nationalism dominates the language of everyday nationalism, it has not completely captured it. As a matter of fact, a perception of Turkishness, which is based on the understanding of secular nationalism, still continues to be produced by a group, albeit limited, in everyday life. In addition, it has been observed that individuals who voted for the ruling party in some contexts approach the nationalist rhetoric of the AKP critically and enact a different nationhood understanding. Therefore, as active producers of everyday nationalism, individuals always have the potential to imagine and embody nationhood outside the framework imposed on them and society by the political parties they are affiliated with. Regardless of what kind of nationalism it is, this is why nationalism itself is a hegemonic ideology. However, in the last instance, the major finding of this thesis is that although the agents of everyday nationalism, ordinary people, construct their Turkishness in different ways and with different contents, they resort to common discursive anchors and strategies in doing so. On the one hand, the traces of a narrative of Turkishness based on some significant themes such as family, tradition and war appear in the discourses of almost all participants, regardless of their political stance. On the other hand, another process as important as defining boundaries between us and others, reproducing a national past and culture is the functioning of reproduction strategies embedded in nationalist discourse which constructs the dichotomy of the nation and “others. So much so that

these strategies embedded in discourse also reveal themselves when constructing a national past and performing Turkishness symbolically through images, objects and ceremonies. In addition to this, Today, Turkish nationalism owes its dominant and hegemonic position in Turkish politics owes to these discursive anchors and strategies that emerge in everyday nationalism as well as the pragmatic nationalist discourse and policies of political actors. In other words, the fact that these discursive anchors and strategies, which are agreed upon and employed by everyone who considers themselves as nationalists, to be reproduced and used by them, is at least as effective as the discourses of political power in the hegemonic presence of nationalism. Therefore, it is not possible to consider the hegemony established by the nationalist conservative language that shaped Turkish politics in the second half of the 2000s, independently of the discourses and strategies of everyday actors that reproduce this nationalism.

All in all, the prevalent way of handling nationalism in Turkey, purely historical, purely political or purely historical- political reading of it, is necessary but insufficient effort to understand its historical trend in Turkey and its function. Addressing the practices and discourses of rulers and elites is not adequate to reveal the pervasion of nationalism into everyday life; at the same time, it is necessary to embrace nationalism as a political form which is reconstructed through via their subjectivity by those who are regarded as directly subjected to the authority and its ideology. The emphasis on the need to study the subjective construction of nationhood through individual sense making processes and in many manifold ways marks an important agenda of research neglected by traditional studies of Turkish nationalism, which are confined to official and institutional domains. Adopting such an approach necessitates focusing on the personal narratives, subjectivity of ordinary people and the diverse, everyday ways in which these people subjectively construct their own nationhood. Such a theoretical perspective will contribute to our understanding of the nationalist wind blowing in world politics, the Islamist and ethnic nationalist wave that has turned into a hegemonic language in Turkish politics, and the omnipresent and dominant character of nationalism itself that permeates everywhere in politics, social life and everyday life.

Everyday nationhood approach provides the required perspective to fill a gap in the literature on Turkish nationalisms by examining the construction of Turkishness from below. Thus focusing the construction process of nationhood by everyday actors is an appropriate attempt for revealing the construction of Turkish nationalist discourse and its omnipresence in the 2000s. Concordantly, in this thesis, which adopts the everyday nationalism approach, it has been revealed how vital the discourses and practices of everyday actors who are active in processes and contexts such as defining "us", determining "them", constructing and nationalizing the past, using cultural elements and participating in collective actions in the construction and reproduction of nationhood. In this sense, the thesis humbly contributes to the existing literature on Turkish nationalism by revealing how and in what way different perceptions of Turkishness are reproduced in everyday life.

However, most importantly of all, this thesis contributes to the everyday nationalism approach in terms of showing that everyday nationalism is an area where not only differences and subjectivities emerge, but also similarities that bring different perceptions of nationhood together around the same themes and strategies. In other words, it reveals that everyday nationalism approach provides an efficient space for observing how different perceptions of nationhood are reproduced through the same discursive anchors and strategies. With this humble contribution, this thesis highlights that the nationalist winds blowing in a conservative central Anatolian city, Nevşehir, in the second decade of the 2000s, is not only explained by the hegemonic nationalist rhetoric in Turkish politics or the subjective and different appearances of everyday nationalism, but also by common discursive anchors and strategies which are employed by ordinary actors.

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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARASTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

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09 AĞUSTOS 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç.Dr. Aslı ÇIRAKMAN DEVECİ ;

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Sezen RAVANOĞLU YILMAZ'ın "*Everyday Nationalism in Turkey: The Case of Conservative Voters of Nevşehir*" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2017-SOS-133 protokol numarası ile 01.09.2017 – 30.03.2018 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL
Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR
Üye

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI
Üye

Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK
Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK
Üye

B. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Ravanoğlu Yılmaz, Sezen

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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ph. D.	Middle East Technical University Political Science and Public Administration	2022
MS	Boğaziçi University Modern Turkish History	2013
BS	Galatasaray University Political Science	2010

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2012- Present	Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University Department of Public Administration	Research Assistant

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Advanced French

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Clashing Turkish Nationalisms through Gezi Movement: Reflections on Everyday Nationalism, paper presented at XIX International Sociological Association (ISA) World Congress of Sociology, 15- 21 July 2018, Toronto, Canada

Toplumsal Belleğin Göçle İmtihanı: Nevşehirlinin Hafızasında Gayrimüslimlerin İzlerini Aramak, paper presented at International Congress on Social and Economic Researches (UTIAK), 10- 12 May 2018, Nevşehir, Turkey

Türk Milli Kimliği'nin Öznel İnşasında Batılı İmgesi, paper presented at International Conference on Social Sciences- Cappadocia (ICOSS), 16- 20 April 2018, Nevşehir, Turkey

Milli Kimliğin Sokaktaki İzleri: Gündelik Milliyetçilik Yaklaşımı, paper presented at International Conference on Social Sciences- Cappadocia (ICOSS), 16- 20 April 2018, Nevşehir, Turkey

Gündelik Milliyetçiliğin Yeniden İnşasında Savaş Retoriği: “Biz Olsak Savaşırıldık!”, paper presented at I. International Symposium on War and Culture, 17- 19 November 2017, Amasya, Turkey

Grup Tehdidi Algısı ve Nüfus Boyutu Arasındaki İlişki, paper presented at I. International Symposium on Migration and Culture, 1- 3 December 2016, Amasya, Turkey

PUBLICATIONS

Ravanoğlu Yılmaz, S. (2017). The Role of Social Media Activism in New Social Movements: Opportunities and Limitations. *Uludağ University International Journal of Social Inquiry*, 10(1), 141-164

C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Bu tez, Trkiye siyasetinde İslamcı ve etnik milliyetiliğın egemen paradigmaya dntğ bir dnemde, siyasal İslamı ve etnik milliyetiliğı temsil eden siyasal partilerin tarihsel olarak her zaman gl olduğ kk, milliyeti ve muhafazakr bir Orta Anadolu kenti olan Nevehir’de, Trklğn, farklı siyasal pozisyonlara sahip sıradan insanlar tarafından gndelik hayatta sylemsel olarak nasıl ve hangi biimlerde ina edildiğini ve yeniden retildiğini anlamayı amalamaktadır. Milliyetiliğı hem Trkiye’de hem de dnyada hegemonik bir sylem ve ilke haline getiren eyin, siyasal arenada egemen olan milliyeti retoriğın yanı sıra, milliyetiliğın gndelik aktrler tarafından srekli olarak yeniden retilmesi olduğ kabulne dayanan bu tez, Trk milliyetiliğının kompleks ve dinamik doğasının zmlenebilmesi ve daha iyi anlaşılabilmesi iin milliyetiliğın asıl hedefi ve taşıyıcıları olan gndelik aktrlerin deneyimleri zerine yoğunlaştırılması gerektiğini iddia etmektedir.

Trk milliyetiliğı, tm milliyetilikler gibi, heterojen, esnek ve btn ideolojilere eklemlenebilen bir karaktere sahiptir. Trkiye siyasetinde gemiten bugne sınırları, baskın unsurları, motivasyonları ve Trklk tanımını zamana ve mekna gre farklılık gsteren birok milliyeti siyasal projenin varlığından sz etmek mmkndr. Bu projelerin her birisi kendi znel milletlilik tasavvurları erevesinde bir Trklk anlatısının bayraktarlığını stlenmektedirler. Bu erevede, erken cumhuriyet dneminin resmi milliyetilik anlayışı, 1950’lerin sağ milliyetilik sylemi, 1970’lerde saldırganlaşan radikal etnik milliyetilik hareketi, 1980’lerde devletin resmi sylemi haline gelen, İslam ile harmanlaşmış Trk milliyetiliğı ve Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi’nin (AKP) yirmi yıllık iktidarı boyunca gittike daha da grnr hale gelen Osmanlıcı milliyetilik yaklaşımları farklı ideolojik karakterlere ve birbirleri ile rekabet eden farklı milletlilik anlatılarına sahiptirler. 2011 Genel Seimleri ve zellikle Gezi hareketi sonrasında AKP’nin milliyeti sylemi srekli keskinleşmiş ve “yeni Trkiye” sloganıyla bir kutuplaşma aracına dnmtr.

(Aktoprak, 2016: 295). “Yeni Türkiye”nin “yeni milleti” AKP tarafından dinsel bir milliyetçilik yolu ile inşa edilmektedir (Aktoprak, 2016: 310). 2000’li yılların ikinci on yılında AKP’nin siyasal pozisyonu, ordu ve yargı gibi devlet kurumları üzerindeki kontrolünü güçlendirdiği ölçüde otoriterliğe doğru kaymış; parti bu gücünü Türk milliyetçiliğinin ve toplum düzeninin vazgeçilmez bir parçası olarak dini siyasallaştırmak için kullanmaya başlamıştır (Kuzu, 2019: 76). Siyasal İslam’ın Osmanlı-İslam tarihine dayalı alternatif milli kimlik anlatısı (Çakır, 1994; Fabbe ve Balıkcıoğlu, 2019: 61), 2000’li yıllarda AKP’nin otoriter rejimi altında Türk siyasetinde yükselen milliyetçi söylemin belkemiğini oluşturmaktadır. Siyasal alandaki bu dönüşüm, elbette, toplumsal hayata milliyetçi ve muhafazakâr bir iklimin giderek daha baskın hale gelmesi anlamına gelmektedir. Nitekim 2000’li yıllardan itibaren Anadolu kentlerinde yükselen bu muhafazakârlık dalgasının ayak sesleri duyulmaya başlanmış (Çarkoğlu ve Toprak, 2006; Toprak, 2008; Çarkoğlu ve Kalaycıoğlu, 2009), tarihsel ve sosyolojik koşulları nedeniyle oy verme davranışları ve toplumsal yapısı itibarıyla Türkiye’de muhafazakâr milliyetçiliğin ve siyasal İslam’ın hali hazırda kalesi konumunda olan birçok Orta Anadolu kenti de bu yeni “muhafazakarlık” dalgasından nasibini almıştır (Kuzu, 2019). Dönemin siyasi gücünün teşvik ettiği milliyetçi ve İslamcı ruhtan beslenen geleneksel Anadolu muhafazakârlığı, giderek hoşgörüsüz, baskıcı ve ötekileştirici bir dile bürünmüştür (Toprak, 2006).

Nevşehir, Türkiye siyasetinde hegemonik bir nitelik kazanan milliyetçi ve İslamcı söyleme paralel olarak (Kuzu 2019; Fabbe ve Balıkcıoğlu, 2019) gerek oy verme davranışı gerekse sosyal yaşam açısından 2000’li yıllarda giderek muhafazakârlaşan Orta Anadolu şehirlerinden (Toprak, 2008; Çarkoğlu ve Kalaycıoğlu, 2009) birisidir. Seküler milliyetçiliğin görece güçlü olduğu Hacıbektaş ve Avanos ilçelerine rağmen, 1950’li yıllardan itibaren siyasal İslam’ı temsil eden siyasi aktörler kentin seçmenleri tarafından güçlü bir şekilde desteklenmektedir. Nevşehir halkı, özellikle 2000’li yılların ikinci yarısında AKP’ye verdiği çok güçlü seçmen desteği ile AKP’nin İslamcı ve milliyetçi söylemini büyük ölçüde benimsediğini göstermektedir (Tablo 1.2). AKP’nin katıldığı ilk genel seçim olan Kasım 2002 seçimlerinden bu yana, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi’nde şehri temsil eden milletvekillerinin tamamı Haziran 2015 seçimleri dışında AKP’denir (Tablo 1.2). Kentin iktidar partisine

verdiği bu destek, AKP'nin yerel yöneticilerinden genel başkanına kadar her düzeyde takdir görmüştür. Özellikle son on yılda AKP'nin Türkiye genelindeki seçim başarısını aşan bir performans gösterdiği şehirde muhafazakar, milliyetçi ve İslamcı sağ partilerin toplam oylarının yüzde seksenin üzerinde konsolide olduğu görülmektedir (Tablo 1.2). Nevşehir seçmeninin bu siyasi tavrı günlük sosyal hayata da yansımıştır. “Değerler eğitimi” adı altında okul öncesi dönem çocuklarına din eğitimi veren anaokulları yaygınlaşmış, alkollü içecek servisi yapan restoranlar birer birer kapatılmış, alkollü içki satan market sahipleri aileleri "mahalle baskısı" nedeniyle ile yaşayabilecekleri kiralık ev bulmakta zorlanmaya başladıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Örneğin dünyaca ünlü market zinciri Migros'un Nevşehir şehir merkezindeki iki mağazasında da alkollü içecek satışı yapılmamaktadır. Saha çalışması sırasında görüşülen mağaza yetkilileri bu durumu "alkollü içecek satışından, hedeflenen müşteri grubunun hissedebileceği rahatsızlık" olarak açıklamıştır. Hem şehrin siyasi davranışına hem de sosyal dokusuna yansıyan yükselen muhafazakârlık dalgasını bu dönemde Türk siyasetinde İslam ve milliyetçiliğin hegemonik bir söyleme dönüşmesinden bağımsız düşünmek mümkün değildir.

Tezimin teorik temeli, öncelikle milleti, modernitenin icat edilmiş, sosyal olarak inşa edilmiş ve hayal edilmiş bir “kültürel ürünü” olarak açıklayan yapısalcı millet tanımına dayanmaktadır (Smith, 1995: 4). Ancak sadece milletin ve türevlerinin inşa edildiğini iddia etmek onların nasıl inşa edildiğini belirtmek için yeterli değildir (Brubaker, 2004: 17-18). Milliyetçilik, dünyayı milletlerin dünyası olarak görmenin, düşünmenin ve anlamlandırmanın bir yolu olarak (Calhoun 1997, Özkırımlı 2010) sıradan insanlar tarafından günlük yaşamlarında inşa edilir, ifade edilir, icra edilir ve nihayetinde şeyleştirilir. Bu anlamda, milliyetçilik ve millet, sosyal olarak inşa edilmiş ve sıradan insanların günlük yaşamlarına yerleştirilmiştir. Bu tezde benimsenen gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımı, bu temel iddiaya dayanır ve milliyetçiliğin içselleştirildiği ve rutinleştirildiği gündelik süreçlerde sıradan insanların aktif rolüne odaklanır. Buna göre bu tez, sıradan insanların, siyasal elitler ve kurumlar tarafından dolaşıma sokulan milliyetçi söylem ve politikalara birçok farklı şekilde yanıt verme potansiyeline sahip oldukları öncülüne dayanmaktadır (Fox ve Miller- Idriss, 2008a, 2008b; Skey, 2011; Goode ve Stroup, 2015;

Antonsich, 2016). Bireyler; kurumlar, siyasi partiler, medya veya seçkinler tarafından sunulan milliyetçi söylemin içeriğini kabul edebilir, reddedebilir, müzakere edebilir veya dönüştürebilirler. Bu sayede kendi algılarını oluştururlar ve milliyetçiliği tutumları, söylemleri, gündelik pratikleriyle günlük yaşamlarında yeniden inşa ederler.

Bilimsel gelişmenin doğasına uygun olarak, milliyetçilik araştırmalarında her yeni kuramsal yaklaşım, kendinden önceki yaklaşımların eleştirileri üzerine inşa edilmekte ve bu yaklaşımlarda gözden kaçırıldığını iddia ettiği eksiklikleri ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu tezin benimsediği gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımı, önceki milliyetçilik teorilerinin entelektüel birikiminden de faydalanmakla birlikte, aynı zamanda bu teorilere yönelik bir eleştiridir. Gündelik milliyetçiliğin 1990'larda teorik bir yaklaşım olarak ortaya çıkması tesadüf değildir. 1980'lerin sonundan itibaren sosyal bilimlerin birçok alanında etkili olan kültürel alana vurgu ve anlam, rıza, direnme ve tanınma gibi öznellik kavramlarıyla toplumsal gerçekliği analiz etme eğilimi, milliyetçilik çalışmalarında yapısalcı paradigmadan fail temelli paradigmaya önemli bir teorik kaymayı teşvik etmiştir. Milliyetçilik araştırmalarındaki “ilişkisel dönüş” (*relational turn*), milleti analitik bir kategori olarak ele alan bir bakış açısı değişikliğine atıfta bulunur; ve bu yeni yaklaşım, insan eylemini ilişkisel düzenlemelerle anlama ve açıklama çabası açısından alandaki baskın bakış açılarından, yani özcülerden ve yapısalcılardan ayrılmaktadır. Milletlerin statik ve somut varlıklar olduğu görüşüne karşı çıkar; aksine, milli aidiyet duygusunun çelişkilerine ve açmazlarına odaklanmayı teklif eder. Bu paradigma değişiminin ışığında, son otuz yılda milliyetçiliği kriz zamanlarında ve olağanüstü koşullarda ortaya çıkan bir olgu olarak değil, dünyayı anlamlandırmanın bir yolu ve gündelik hayatın içine yerleştirilmiş bir dizi pratik olarak gören bilim insanlarının sayısında kayda değer bir artış gözlemlenmiştir (Fox ve Idriss, 2008a; Goode ve Stroup, 2015; Skey, 2009; Skey, 2011, Brubaker, 1996; Antonsich, 2016; Jacobsen, 1997; Mann ve Fenton, 2009; McCrone, 2002; Eriksen, 1993; Fenton, 2007; Condor, 2000).

Gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımı, milliyetçilik çalışmalarındaki teorik gelenekten, benimsediği “aşağıdan yukarıya” metodolojisiyle ayrılmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım,

milliyetçiliği, modernitenin icat edilmiş, toplumsal olarak inşa edilmiş ve tahayyül edilen bir kültürel ürünü olarak açıklayan yapısalcı millet anlayışından ilham alırken, aynı zamanda bu inşa sürecinde bireyin rolünü sorgular. Gerçekten de, bu hikâyede sıradan insanların rolü nedir? Bu insanları siyasal alanı tahakküm altına alan milliyetçi söylemin pasif alımlayıcıları olarak mı görmeliyiz? Millet ve türevleri bir inşa sürecinin ürünüyse, milliyetçi ideolojiler ve projelerle çevrili olan sıradan insanlar bu sürecin neresinde yer almaktadırlar? Bu sorgulamalar ışığında gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımı, devlet ya da elit söyleminin rolüne odaklanan ve milliyetçiliği bir kitle olgusu olarak gören toplumsal inşacılığa karşı eleştirel bir duruş sergilemektedir. Aynı zamanda, gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımı, failin, yani sıradan insanın, milletliliğin gündelik hayatta yeniden üretimindeki merkeziliğine odaklanması, gündelik hayatı milliyetçilik çalışmaları için başlı başına bir araştırma alanı olarak kavraması, milletliliğin rastlantısal ve kesintili doğasına vurgu yapması, gündelik milletlilik biçimlerinin heterojenliğini dikkate alması ve dayatılan ve deneyimlenen milletlilik algıları arasındaki potansiyel çelişkilere dikkat çekmesi ile Michael Billig'in (1994) banal milliyetçilik kavramsallaştırmasından da ayrılır. Bu bağlamda, gündelik hayatta milliyetçiliğin izlerini takip eden aşağıdan yukarıya bir bakış açısını benimsemek, milliyetçi söylemin inşasını ve gücünü ortaya çıkarmak için son derece elverişli bir akademik çaba olarak görünmektedir.

Türkiye'de milliyetçi siyasal projelerin her birisi Türklüğün sınırlarını farklı belirleyenlere referans vererek çizmektedir. İşte, Türk milliyetçiliğinin monolitik bir bütün olarak ele alınmasının imkânsızlığını gösteren bu çeşitlilik, başka bir deyişle, Türk milliyetçiliğinin bu çatışan ve birbiri ile rekabet halinde olan formları son yıllarda gittikçe artan bir akademik ilginin de odağını oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışmalar, farklı siyasal projelerin farklı Türklük anlatıları üzerine yoğunlaşarak Türk milliyetçiliğinin her ideolojiye eklemenebilme potansiyelini ve esnekliğini gözler önüne sermektedir. Peki, gündelik hayat ve gündelik aktörler bu hikâyenin neresinde durmaktadırlar? Bu sorudan yola çıkarak, bu tez, sıradan insanların milletlilik algılarının ve gündelik deneyimlerinin üzerine yoğunlaşarak Türk milliyetçiliğini anlamlandırmayı amaçlamıştır. Dolayısıyla, bu tez, devletin ideolojik aygıtları aracılığıyla yayılan ve dayatılan devlet destekli resmi milliyetçi söylemi ya da çatışan milliyetçi vizyonların milletlilik tasavvurlarını, başka bir deyişle, resmi

ideoloji ve seçkinler/ yukarıdan aşağı aktörler tarafından siyasi olarak araçsallaştırılmış milliyetçiliği incelemekten ziyade, Türk milliyetçiliğinin bu çekişmeli yorumlarının kuşattığı sıradan insanların Türklük duygusunun yeniden üretilmesindeki rolüyle ilgilidir. Bu amaçla, bu tezde “gündelik milliyetçilik” (Good ve Stroup, 2015) ve “gündelik milletlilik” kavramları (Fox ve Miller-Idriss, 2008a) “milletliliğin ‘aşağıdan’ nasıl aktifleştirilebileceğini” (Antonisch, 2016: 33) araştırmak için kullanılmıştır.

Gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımı, Türklüğün inşasını aşağıdan inceleyerek Türk milliyetçiliği literatüründe önemli bir boşluğu doldurmak için gerekli bakış açısını sağlar. Türk milliyetçiliği, modern Türkiye'nin siyasi ve sosyal yapısı üzerine çalışan araştırmacılar için her zaman ilgi çekici ve aynı zamanda zorunlu bir durak noktası olmuştur. Bu zorunluluğun başlıca nedeni, geç Osmanlı döneminde başlayan ve altın çağını erken cumhuriyet döneminde yaşayan modernleşme hareketlerini Türk milliyetçiliği hareketinden bağımsız olarak ele almanın imkânsızlığıdır. Öyle ki, Türk modernleşme projesine yön veren kadroların homojen ve laik bir ulus yaratma arzusu, o zamana kadar toplumu bir arada tutan en önemli bağ olan İslam'ın yerine Türk milliyetçiliğinin geçmesini zorunlu kılmıştır. Dolayısıyla Türk milliyetçiliği, modern Türkiye'nin siyasal ve toplumsal tarihinde en işlevsel toplum mühendisliği aracı olarak literatürde hak ettiği ilgiyi görmüştür. Öte yandan Türk milliyetçiliği, Cumhuriyet'in yüz yıllık serüveninde hemen hemen tüm siyasi oluşumların söylemlerine öyle ya da böyle eklenilerek hegemonik bir varlık göstermiştir. Siyasi arenada meşruiyet kazanmanın popülist bir aracı olarak Türk milliyetçiliğinin her dönemde ve her yönüyle var olmayı ve gündemde kalmayı başardığı söylenebilir. Son olarak, ulus-devletlerin geleceğinin tartışıldığı küreselleşme çağında, paradoksal olarak tüm dünyada yükselen milliyetçi hareketlerin Türkiye'de de hızlandığını gözlemlemek mümkündür. Türk milliyetçiliğinin siyasal alanda olduğu kadar toplumsal hayatta da var olan hegemonyasının izini süren pek çok çalışma da göstermiştir ki, Türk milliyetçiliği, çağdışı kalmış bir çalışma alanı olmanın aksine, Türkiye'nin siyasi, sosyal ve kültürel meselelerindeki zihniyet ve algı dünyasını anlamaya ve haritalamaya çalışan bir araştırmacı için halen aktif bir fay hattıdır.

Türk milliyetçiliği üzerine yapılan ilk çalışmalar (Heyd, 1950; Lewis, 1961; Berkes, 1964; Karpat, 1973; Kushner, 1977; Landau, 1981; Georgeon, 1986) Türk milliyetçiliğini modernleşme paradigması perspektifinden ele almakta ve onu Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan modern ve laik Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ne geçişi gerektiren tarihsel koşullara kaçınılmaz bir cevap olarak görmektedirler. Onlara göre Türklük, ulus inşa sürecinin çimentosu olarak etnik ve kültürel bileşenleri içeren yekpare, modern ve ulusal bir kimlik kategorisidir; ve antimodernizmi simgeleyen dini kimliğe karşı konumlanmıştır. Buna paralel olarak Türk milleti, laik ve modern Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin çok etnikli ve çok dinli Osmanlı millet sisteminden kopuşunun önemli bir simgesidir. 1990'lı yıllardan itibaren Türk milliyetçiliğinin farklı yönlerini, yansımalarını ve tasavvurlarını ortaya koyarak daha önce ihmal edilen konuları, melez yapısını ve çok yönlü yüzünü gün ışığına çıkaran ve onu rakip milliyetçilikler çerçevesinde ele alan çığır açıcı çalışmalar literatüre yeni bir yön vermiştir (Bozdoğan ve Kasaba, 1997; Bora, 2003; Çınar, 2005; Kentel vd., 2009; Kadioğlu ve Keyman, 2011; Özkırımlı, 2011; White, 2014; Uzer, 2016). Türk milliyetçiliğini melez ve eklektik yapısına odaklanan bu akademik çabayı, ampirik araştırmalarla gündelik hayata odaklanan çalışmalar (Çınar, 2001, 2005; Kentel vd., 2009; Kadioğlu ve Keyman, 2011; Çırakman, 2011; White, 2014; Çetinkaya, 2014; Çınar ve Taş, 2017) takip etmiştir. Böylece Türk milliyetçiliği, modernleşme ve sekülerleşmenin doğal bir sonucu olarak gelişen bir olgu olarak değil, "inşa edilmiş" ve "üretilmiş" bir bilinç ve zihniyet olarak kavranmaya başlanmıştır.

Ancak, Türk milliyetçiliği üzerine çalışan araştırmacıların hala büyük çoğunluğu, analiz nesnelerini çoğunlukla yukarıdan aşağıya kurum ve yapılarla sınırlandırmaktadırlar. Bu nedenle, Türk milliyetçiliği literatüründe sıradan insanların Türklük algısı ve onun günlük yaşamlarındaki söylemsel ve pratik inşası ile ilgili akademik çalışmalar hala oldukça sınırlıdır. Hâlbuki muktedirlerin ve seçkinlerin milliyetçi pratik ve söylemlerine odaklanmak, milliyetçiliğin gündelik hayata nüfuzunu ortaya çıkarmak için yeterli değildir; aynı zamanda milliyetçiliği, doğrudan otoriteye ve onun ideolojisine tabi kabul edilen gündelik aktörlerin kendi öznellikleri üzerinden inşa ettikleri ve ürettikleri bir dünyayı anlamlandırma biçimi olarak kavramak gerekir. Bu bakış açısıyla, bu tez, milletliliğin öznel inşasının gerçekleştiği farklı anlamlandırma süreçlerini ve biçimlerini, biz/öteki, geçmiş ve

kültürel alan olmak üzere üç boyut çerçevesinde analiz etmektedir. Bu tezin bu üç boyuta odaklanmasının temel nedeni, Türk siyasetindeki farklı milliyetçilik projelerinin, Türk milletini tanımlarken aslında biz, onlar, geçmiş ve milli kültür temaları üzerinde farklı iddialarda bulunmasıdır. Nitekim Türk milleti, hem yukarıdan aşağıya siyasi söylemlerde hem de gündelik hayatta sıradan aktörler tarafından bizler, onlar, geçmiş ve kültürel semboller çerçevesinde inşa edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda bu tez, milli “biz ve onlar”ın, milli “tarih”in ve milli “semboller ve kolektif deneyimlerin” sıradan insanların söylemlerinde ve deneyimlerinde gündelik düzeyde nasıl ve ne zaman ortaya çıktığını araştırmak üzere yapılandırılmıştır.

Bu tez, biz ve onlar ayrımının, ulusal geçmişin, kültürel ve sembolik alanın öğelerinin ve deneyimlerinin nasıl anlamlandırıldığını ve söylemsel olarak nasıl inşa edildiğini anlama çabasıyla Mart 2017 - Ekim 2018 tarihleri arasında Nevşehir'de gerçekleştirilen bir saha çalışmasına dayanmaktadır. Bu tarihler arasında, farklı siyasi görüşlere ve mesleklere sahip otuz kişi ile yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlar ve dört odak grup görüşmesi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu kişilerin birçoğu Nevşehir Ülkü Ocakları, Birlik Vakfı Nevşehir Şubesi, Türk- Eğitim- Sen Nevşehir Şubesi, Eğitim- Bir- Sen Nevşehir Şubesi, Eğitim- Sen Nevşehir Şubesi, Nevşehir Gazeteciler Cemiyeti, Kapadokya Kadın ve Dayanışma Derneği, Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Derneği, Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği Nevşehir Şubesi gibi sivil toplum kuruluşlarının gönüllüleridir. Saha çalışması sırasında kadın ve erkek katılımcı sayılarının dengede olmasına özen gösterilmiştir. Katılımcıların yaşları 25 ile 64 arasında değişmekte olup; yaş ortalaması ise 42'dir. Görüşülen kişilerin beşi lise, yirmi beşi üniversite mezunudur. Bu görüşmecilerin 14'ü AKP, sekizi MHP, sekizi CHP seçmenidir. Bunlara ek olarak on dokuz aylık saha çalışması sürecinde şehirde düzenlenen parti mitingleri, bayram kutlamaları gibi birçok sosyal organizasyonda katılımcı gözlem yapmak amacıyla aktif olarak yer aldım.

Yaklaşık ellibeş saatlik görüşme kayıtlarının transkripsiyonları bizzat tarafımdan yapılmış, sahada elde edilen ham veri iki aşamalı bir analiz sürecine tabi tutulmuştur. Analizin ilk adımında, elde edilen bu geniş ölçekli ham ampirik veriyi anlamlandırmak ve kategorize etmek amacıyla, tüm görüşme dökümleri ve saha notları “milli biz/ gayrimilli öteki”, “milli geçmiş” ve “milli kültür” başlıkları altında

organize edilerek incelenmiş ve içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Her bir tema başlığı altında ilgili ifadeler ve gözlem notları hem önceki literatüre dayalı kodlar hem de metinden türetilen kodlar kullanılarak sıralanmıştır. Örneğin “milli biz/ gayrimilli öteki” teması altında analiz edilecek veriler “biz”, “Türkler”, “onlar”, “diğerleri” gibi daha önceki çalışmalardan yola çıkarak tespit edilmiş bazı anahtar kelimeler kullanılarak tasnif edilmiştir. Öte yandan bu temaya ilişkin “Osmanlı torunu” veya “Cumhuriyet çocukları” gibi tematik kodlar da daha detaylı okuma ve inceleme sürecinde metinden türetilmiştir. Bu aşamanın sonunda ampirik materyal yukarıda bahsedilen üç boyuta göre analiz edilebilecek şekilde düzenlenmiştir. İkinci adımda, yani odaklanmış kodlama sürecinde, tematik olarak kodlanmış veriler, katılımcıların algılarını, düşüncelerini ve deneyimlerini belirleyen temel noktalar bazında ayrıntılı olarak satır satır analize tabi tutulmuştur. Bu süreçte, verileri sıralamak, sentezlemek, bütünleştirmek ve yeniden düzenlemek için en dikkat çeken ve sık kullanılan kodlar kullanılmıştır. Başlangıç kodlarından daha spesifik ve kavramsal olan odaklanmış kodlar aracılığıyla, katılımcıların önceden bilinen tema altındaki ifadelerindeki ana kategoriler yakalanmış ve sentezlenmiştir. Katılımcıların Türk milletine ve Türklüğe yükledikleri anlam ve Türk milli kimliğinin öznel ve söylemsel inşası, içeriklerine göre tasnif edilen metinlerde takip edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda katılımcıların Türk milletini ve Türklüğü nasıl inşa ettiklerini ve yeniden ürettiklerini tespit etmenin en iyi yolu olarak söylem analizi kullanılmıştır.

Yürütölen saha araştırmasından elde edilen bulgular, öncelikle AKP'nin son on yılda giderek keskinleşen İslamcı ve etnik milliyetçi söyleminin toplumsal düzeyde, önemli ölçüde karşılık bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Bu durum, kurulduğu günden bu yana seçmen davranışları açısından partiye güçlü bir destek veren Nevşehir'de de güçlü bir şekilde gözlemlenebilmektedir. AKP ve MHP'ye oy veren katılımcıların, Türklüğün İslamcı ve etnik motiflerle yeniden üretilmesinde aktif rol oynadıklarını söylemek mümkündür. Ancak Türk milliyetçiliğini daha seküler bir anlatı ile kurgulayan bir damarın da cılız da olsa varlığını koruduğunun altı çizilmelidir. Pek çok MHP ve CHP seçmenin ortak noktası bu görece seküler Türklük anlayışıdır.

Ayrıca saha çalışması göstermiştir ki, farklı siyasi görüşlere sahip katılımcılar söylemsel olarak Türklüğü inşa ederken, destekledikleri partilerin milletin tasavvurlarına meydan okuyarak kendi bireysellikleri ile sübjektif milletlik anlayışları üretebilmektedirler. Örneğin, millet tahayyülü Osmanlı geçmişinden keskin bir kopuşu temsil eden CHP seçmenleri arasında bile AKP'nin neo-Osmanlıcı milliyetçilik anlayışının zaman zaman özümsenebildiğini gözlemlemek mümkündür. Veyahut etnik milliyetçilik anlatısının dışında bir Türklük inşa eden MHP seçmenlerinin ya da Türklüğü İslam üzerinden tanımlamayı reddeden AKP seçmenlerinin varlığı bu iddiayı desteklemektedir. Tüm bu farklı Türklük anlatılarına farklı bağlamlarda atıfta bulunarak kendi Türklüklerini üreten katılımcılar gündelik hayatta Türk milliyetçiliğinin hegemonik varlığının asıl failleridir. Bu anlamda gündelik hayatta farklı milliyetçi projeler arasında keskin ve aşılabilir sınırların olmadığı söylenebilir. Bireyler, farklı bağlamlarda birden fazla milliyetçi anlatıya atıfta bulunarak melez ve öznel millet algılarını ifade edebilirler. Bu bize, gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımının iddia ettiği gibi, milletliliğin parçalı ve öznel doğasını gösterir.

Ancak tezin sonuç bölümünde vurgulamaya çalıştığım gibi, bu araştırmanın en önemli bulgusu, gündelik milliyetçiliğin bu farklı görünümüne rağmen Türklüğün, benim “söylemsel çapalar ve stratejiler” adını verdiğim bazı ortak temalar ve düşünsel şemalar üzerinden üretilmesidir. Milletliliğin gündelik hayatta inşası ve yeniden üretimi, beş söylemsel çapa etrafında ve dokuz söylemsel strateji aracılığıyla gerçekleşmektedir. Burada, bu tez kapsamında görüşülen katılımcıların söylem ve söylemlerinde ortak olan bu çapaları ve stratejileri analitik bir çerçevede sunmaya çalışacağım.

Bu tez, gündelik aktörlerin milleti, milli tarihi, kültürü ve değerleri tanımlarken sıklıkla başvurduğu bazı kodların varlığına dikkat çekmektedir. Ben bu motifleri “söylemsel çapalar” olarak tanımlıyorum. Bu anlamda görüşmecilerin Türklüğü tanımlarken sıklıkla kullandıkları aile, savaş, din, gelenek ve modernlik kavramları, görüşmecilerin birçoğunun Türklük algısının önemli söylemsel köşe taşları olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bireylerin Türk milliyetçiliğini inşa ederken kullandıkları dil

ve söyleme içkin hale gelen bu kodların tespit edilmesi, gündelik milliyetçiliğin yapıbozumunda önemli bir adımdır.

Öncelikle görüşmelerde aile birçok katılımcı tarafından Türklüğün temelini ifade eden bir yapı, bir kavram olarak sunulmuştur. Türklere has olduğu düşünülen ve Türklere atfedilen özelliklerin başında aileye verilen önem gelmektedir. Ayrıca aileyi Türklük bilincinin aşılandığı yer olarak kutsallaştıran birçok katılımcı için çocuk yetiştirmede gösterdikleri özen ve başarı, makbul bir Türk olmanın gereğidir. Yani “bu vatan için iyi yetişmiş evlatlara” sahip olmak, her Türkün “bu millete” hem borcu hem de sorumluluğudur.

İkinci olarak, Türk milliyetçiliği zihniyetinin önemli köşe taşlarından biri olan savaş miti, devletin milliyetçi söylemi, siyasi aktörler ve resmi ideolojinin dışında gündelik milliyetçiliğin diline de sızmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu araştırmada savaşçı retorik, Türk milletinin gündelik inşasının ve yeniden üretiminin söylemsel repertuarında en sık kullanılan araçlardan biri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Savaş, askerlik ve şehitlik, milli kültür ve değerlerden bahsedilirken sıklıkla değinilen, belirgin söylemsel referans noktalarıdır. Birçok katılımcının söylemine içkin hale gelen bu söylemsel kodlar, Türk milletinin ve milliyetçiliğinin gündelik yeniden üretiminde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Milliyetçi ideolojinin zihniyet dünyasının tarih ile kurduğu araçsal ilişkisi zafer imgeleriyle doludur. Bu zafer imgelerine, zaferle ilişkilendirilen yerlere, tarihlere ve şahsiyetlere verilen önem, kaçınılmaz olarak geçmişe yapılan göndermelerde kendini gösterir. Bu çerçevede savaş ve şehitler, somut bir gerçeklik olarak sunulan milletin sadece tarihsel unsurlar olmanın ötesinde bugününü mümkün kılan ve şükredilmesi gereken yegâne anlatı unsurlarıdır. Dolayısıyla onlar, geçmişe değil, bugüne, milletin bugününe aittirler. Bunun yanı sıra askerlik, “asker millet” mitinden aldığı güçle Türk milletinin gündelik inşasında kullanılan söylemsel kodlarda önemli bir yere sahiptir. Burada altı çizilmesi gereken bir diğer nokta da, askerliğe atfedilen kutsallığın hem askerlik mitinden beslendiği hem de onu yeniden üretiler beslediğidir. Ayrıca şehitlik mertebesi, birçok katılımcının ifadelerinde askerlik mitinin ve savaş retorığının meşruiyetinin çıpası olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, millet, şehitliğe atfedilen yüce mertebe aracılığıyla, uğruna ölmeye değer aşkın bir gerçeklik olarak cisimleşir.

Üçüncü olarak, dünyevi alana ait olanı uhrevî unsurlarla kutsallaştırmanın tek yolu, söyleme eklemlenen dini unsurlardır. Türklük ile İslam arasında kurulan özdeşlik ile Türklüğe bir kutsallık atfedilirken, öte yandan İslam, milletliliği yeniden üretmek için Türklüğün onu korumakla yükümlü olduğu yargısıyla araçsallaştırılmaktadır. Hem Türklük hem de İslam, söylemsel düzeyde birbirlerini yeniden üreten, güçlü ve sorunsallaştırılmaktan azade gerçeklikler olarak inşa edilmektedirler. Bu anlamda din, Türklüğün kültürel sınırlarını ve yansımalarını görünür kılan en önemli referans noktalarından biridir. Gündelik anlatılardaki İslami unsurlar, görüşülen birçok kişinin Türklük tasavvurunda kültürel boyutun önemli bir parçası olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Millet, tek tip milli öznelerden oluşan bir yapı olarak algılanmakta, bu algının arkasında toplumsal homojenliği sağladığına inanılan ortak değerler ve pratikler dünyası yatmaktadır. Ortak değerler denilince ilk akla gelen unsurlardan birinin din olmasının nedeni somut uygulamalarla görünür olmasıdır. Bu görünürlük, dini, milletin tasavvurunu somutlaştırmak ve güçlendirmek için en uygun kültürel referanslardan biri haline getirir.

Dördüncü olarak, katılımcıların ifadelerinde gelenek kavramının Türklüğün hem söylemsel hem de edimsel düzeyde yeniden üretilmesindeki kurucu rolü dikkat çekicidir. Katılımcıların birçoğu tarafından ortak milli kültürün vazgeçilmez bir parçası olarak tanımlanan gelenekler, Türklüğün üzerine inşa edildiği somut deneyimleri veya somut olmayan değerleri ifade etmektedir. Gelenekler, homojen bir bütün olarak tasavvur edilen milletin her ferdini bağladığı ve her bireyin rızasıyla bu bütünün yekpare bir biçimde üzerinde mutabık olduğu düşünülen yazılı olmayan kurallar bütünüdür. Türklüğe atfedilen bu tecrübeler ve ahlaki normlar üzerinden vurgulanan milletin ebediliği ve geçmişle olan yakın ilişkisi, milletliğin yeniden üretilmesi için uygun bir izlek sunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda gelenekler, katılımcıların ifadeleri üzerinden incelediğimiz Türklük habitusunun yeniden üretilmesinin önemli köşe taşlarından birini oluşturmaktadır.

Son olarak saha çalışması, Türk milliyetçiliğinin resmi ideolojideki Batı ile sorunlu ilişkisinin, bireylerin Türklük algılarına ve söylemsel olarak yeniden üretme biçimlerine de yayıldığını göstermiştir. Batı'nın, özellikle seküler bir dünya görüşü

temelinde milletliliği yeniden üreten katılımcılar için, Türklüğün gündelik hayattaki öznel inşa süreçlerinin önemli kültürel kaynaklarından biri olduğu bir gerçektir. Modernite ve onun vaaz ettiği değerler, hem bazı katılımcıların zihninde Türk imajını şekillendiren hem de bu imajın üretiminde sıklıkla başvurulmuş önemli söylemsel ve kültürel kodlar olarak işlev görmektedir. Batı modernitesinin ve onun dikte ettiği rasyonellik, ilerleme ve demokrasi gibi evrensel değerlerin, bireylerin algı ve söylemleri üzerinden Türklüğün inşasında araçsallaştırıldığı görülmektedir.

Öte yandan bu tez, ortak söylemsel çapaların yanı sıra, milletliliğin gündelik hayatta yeniden üretilmesinde bazı ortak söylemsel şemalardan bahsetmenin mümkün olduğunu da göstermektedir. Benim “söylemsel stratejiler” olarak tanımladığım bu şemalar, “milli biz/ gayrimilli öteki”, “milli tarih” ve “milli kültür” bağlamlarında milletliliğin sahnelenmesinde ortaya çıkan dikkat çekici düşünce kalıplarına işaret etmektedir.

İlk olarak, milletlerin, tarihi insanlık tarihi kadar eski somut gerçeklikler olduğuna dair kati inanç ve algı, tüm katılımcıların ortaklaştıkları bir düşünsel şablonu ortaya koymaktadır. Dolayısıyla, “milletliğin ve milliyetçiliğin verili kabulü”, gündelik aktörlerin söylem ve tavırlarına içkin dil ve düşünce kalıplarının başında gelmektedir. Milliyetçilik, sıradan insanlar tarafından inşa ve icra edilen, nihayetinde şeyleştirilen, dünyayı ulusların dünyası olarak görmenin, düşünmenin ve anlamlandırmanın bir yoludur (Calhoun 1997, Özkırımlı 2010). Ancak, dünyayı millileştirilmiş bir çerçevede algılayan, yorumlayan ve içselleştiren özneler, bu inşa ve şeyleştirme sürecinin ve bu süreçte oynadıkları rolün farkında değildirler. Millet ve milletlik, onların algı ve söylemlerinde, hiçbir koşula bağlı olmayan, kökeni sorgulanmayan, kendiliğinden var olan somut ve görünür gerçeklikler olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu şartlar altında, “verili gerçeklikler” olarak idrak edilen milletlerin olmadığı bir dünyayı tasavvur etmek mümkün değildir. Bu bağlamda, “milletin ve milletliliğin verili kabulü”, milletin yeniden üretildiği sessiz ama etkili bir yol olarak sıklıkla kullanılan bir yeniden üretim stratejisi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

İkinci olarak, katılımcıların üzerinde uzlaştıkları bir diğer yargı, devlet ve millet özdeşliğidir. Onlara göre, devlet millet demektir, bu ikisi arasındaki özdeşlik, en az

millet kadar devleti de kutsamayı gerektirir. Bu yönüyle devlet, pek çok gündelik aktörün söyleminde, varlığı sorgulanmadan yüceltilen, ebedi ve ezeli bir mekanizma olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Katılımcıların bu genel tavrı, “devletin yüceltilmesini” milletliliğin yeniden üretildiği söylemsel bir strateji olarak işaret etmektedir. Devleti yücelten katılımcıların çoğu zaman devleti Türk milleti ile özdeşleştirerek veya kendilerini devletle özdeşleştirerek Türklüğü yeniden ürettikleri görülmektedir. Birinci durumda, milletin ve devletin özdeş olduğu algısı, devletin kutsallaşmasında önemli bir rol oynar. Devleti Türk milletiyle özdeşleştiren bir zihniyet, hem Türklüğü devletin asli unsuru olarak vurgular hem de devleti Türk devleti olarak yeniden tanımlar. İkinci durumda ise, devletin Türklük hegemonyasını garanti altına alan bir kurumsal yapı olarak tanımlanmasına, kendini devletle özdeşleştirme vurgusu eşlik etmektedir. Bazı katılımcıların devletten bahsederken ifade ettikleri “biz” vurgusu bu özdeşlik algısının en açık ifadesidir.

Katılımcıların zihnindeki somut, sabit ve görünür sınırlarla milli birimlere ayrılan milletler dünyasında, doğal olarak her millet kendi içinde homojen bir yapıya sahiptir. Bazıları üstün özelliklere sahipken, diğerleri daha pasiftir ve "doğası gereği" yönetilmesi gerekir. Bu bağlamda milletlerin kendi içlerinde homojen yapılar olduğunu varsaymak, yani “toplumsal homojenlik varsayımı”, birçok katılımcının Türklüğünü söylemsel olarak yeniden üretirken başvurduğu bir başka söylemsel strateji olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu strateji aynı zamanda farklılıkları marjinalleştirmenin ve millete ait olmayanları ötekileştirmenin başka bir yolunu ifade eder; çünkü homojen bir toplum tasavvuru, milletin inşasının önemli bir bileşenidir. Etnik, kültürel, dini ve dilsel saflık, tasavvur edilen milli bütünün arzu edilen unsurlarıdır.

Dördüncü olarak, katılımcıların zihniyet dünyalarında ve söylemlerinde "bizi" tanımlayan olumlu imajların karşısında "öteki"ne dair birçok olumsuz imaj dikkat çekmektedir. “Biz” ve “onlar” arasındaki doğuştan gelen farklılıklar değiştirilemez ve gerçekliği inkâr edilemez somut karakteristikler olarak kavranmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, milletler arasındaki farklılıklara yapılan bu ısrarcı vurgu, onları verili ve sorgulanamaz gerçeklikler olarak sunma eğilimine eşlik eden bir diğer önemli söylemsel strateji olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Örneğin, pek çok katılımcı Türk

olmanın gururunu, Türklüğe atfettikleri olumlu özellikler temelinde açıklamaktadır. Katılımcıların zihinlerindeki Türklerle ilgili olumlu klişeler, aslında nasıl bir Türk milleti tasavvur ettiklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Türklüğün ete kemiğe bürünmüş bir gerçeklik olarak cisimleşmesi, bağımsızlık tutkusu, yiğitlik, vatanseverlik, misafirperverlik gibi birçok olumlu özellik çerçevesinde Türklüğü imgeleştiren söylemsel bir strateji ile gerçekleşir. Öte yandan, milletler arasındaki farklılıklara vurgu yapılırken, diğerrinin payına düşen genellikle olumsuz klişelerdir. Türklüğün inşası, ötekinin inşası ile eş zamanlı gerçekleşir; ve ikincisi, tipik olarak, bütün bir topluluğa atfedilen aşağılayıcı özellikler aracılığıyla tasvir edilir. Bu strateji iki şekilde çalışır: diğeri hakkında olumsuz bilgi ve yargıları ifade etmek ve vurgulamak; ya da diğeri hakkındaki olumlu bilgileri görmezden gelmek ve önemsizleştirmek (Oktar, 2001: 319). Bu şekilde, olumlu temsillerle üstün ve güçlü olarak inşa edilen "biz" ile olumsuz temsillerle alt bir grup olarak tanımlanan "onlar" arasında kurulan eşitsiz ilişki meşrulaştırılmaktadır.

Milletlerin doğuştan sahip oldukları üstün veya vasat özelliklerin bir sonucu olarak milletler dünyasının hiyerarşik bir bütün olarak kavranması kaçınılmazdır. Bu nedenle, milletler arasında var olduğu düşünülen “hiyerarşik güç ilişkilerinin doğallaştırılması” sahada karşımıza çıkan bir diğerk ortak söylemsel stratejidir. Görünen o ki, Türk egemenliğine itaat talebinin altında yatan temel inanç, Türklüğün farklı etnik aidiyetler karşısında üstün olduğuna dair kati inançtır. Bu üstünlük iddiası ve verili bir gerçeklik olarak kabul edilen milletler arası hiyerarşik ilişki, her zaman saygı duyulması gerekeni Türk milleti olarak tanımlar. Burada bahsedilen saygı, karşılıklılık ilkesine tabi değildir. Burada “ötekine” biçilen rol, bu hiyerarşik düzenin en üst mertebesinde konumlandırılan Türk milletinin koyduğu kurallara biat etmektir.

Katılımcılara göre, Türk milleti, doğuştan sahip olduğu birçok üstün özellik nedeniyle bu hiyerarşinin en tepesindedir; ve bu durum, saygı ve gurur duyulması gereken tartışılmaz bir gerçekliğin ta kendisidir. Böylelikle “milli gurur hissi ve milli itibar talebi” sıradan aktörlerin söylemlerinde ortaya çıkan ve gündelik milletliliğin inşasına katkıda bulunan bir diğerk söylemsel strateji olarak karşımızda durmaktadır. Gündelik milletliliğin öznel inşasının söylemsel repertuarında, Türk olmaktan gurur

duyma vurgusu çok önemli bir yer tutar. Görüşmecilerin büyük bir çoğunluğu, Türk olmaktan duydukları gururu büyük bir coşkuyla ifade etme eğilimindedir. Türklüğün bir gurur kaynağı olarak sunulması, birçok görüşmeci için sorunsuz, içselleştirilmiş ve dolayısıyla üzerinde düşünmeye gerek kalmayacak şekilde kabul edilmiş bir tavidir. Özellikle devleti uluslararası platformlarda temsil edenlerin konumu ve itibarı, dünyayı milletlerden müteşekkil bir bütün olarak algılayan bireyin zihninde Türklük tahayyülünü somutlaştıran bir fotoğraf çerçevesine dönüşmektedir. İlerleme, büyüme, gelişme, itibar, prestij, uluslararası meselelerde söz sahibi olmak, Türklüğün söylemsel inşasına sıklıkla eşlik eden milli gurur stratejisinin anahtar kelimeleridir.

Öte yandan, Türklüğün katılımcıların söylemlerinde sürekli olarak bir mağduriyet anlatısı üzerinden yeniden üretildiği gözlemlenmiştir. Türk milletinin, sahip olduğu üstün karakteristik özellikleri ve gücü yüzünden tarihsel olarak birçok haksızlığa ve adaletsizliğe maruz kaldığı iddiası görüşmelerde sıkça gündeme gelmiştir. Böylece “kendini mağdurlaştırma” da katılımcıların Türklüğü söylemsel olarak inşa ederken ve yeniden üretirken başvurdukları kullandıkları bir başka söylemsel strateji olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Kendini mağdur gösterme stratejisi, grup sınırlarını keskinleştirerek, iç uyumu ve dış sınırları güçlendirerek ve ahlaki üstünlük duygularını teşvik ederek milli aidiyet duygusunun inşasına ve yeniden üretilmesine anlamlı bir şekilde katkıda bulunur (Mijić, 2020). Dolayısıyla mağduriyet söylemi, birçok katılımcının hem kendi Türklüğünü hem de ulusun ötekilerini inşa ederken ve yeniden üretirken sıklıkla başvurduğu söylemsel bir stratejidir. Buna göre katılımcıların mağduriyet anlatılarını iki başlık altında tartışmak mümkündür. İlkinde, dışsal ötekinin neden olduğu iddia edilen bir mağduriyet söz konusudur; örneğin, Batı'nın Türklere karşı önyargılı olduğu ve Türklerin bu nedenle Batı'da haksız muamelelere maruz bırakıldığı iddiası bu tip bir mağduriyet anlatısına örnek teşkil etmektedir. İkinci grubu oluşturan söylemsel örüntü ise içsel öteki ile ilişkilidir. Burada genel olarak Türkiye'de yaşayan gayrimüslimlerle gruplar arası ilişkiler temelinde ortaya çıkan rekabetçi bir mağduriyet söz konusudur. Örneğin Ermeni soykırımı meselesi bağlamında “asıl onlar katliam yaptı” iddiası etrafında Türklük, rekabetçi bir mağduriyet anlatısı üzerinden yeniden üretilmektedir.

Dolayısıyla bu anlatılar, hem geçmişte hem de günümüzde, hem içeride hem de dışarıda "gerçek" mağdurların daima Türkler olduğu iddiasıyla şekillenmektedir.

Sekizinci olarak, “Batı karşısında duyulan aşağılık kompleksi” katılımcıların Türklüklerini yeniden üretirken sıklıkla başvurdukları bir diğer söylemsel stratejiye işaret etmektedir. Milliyetçi söylem, hedef kitlesine tüm eksikliklerini ve zayıflıklarını telafi etmeyi vaat eden etnosentrik bir anlatıdır (Bora, 2017: 195). Aslında, bu araştırma da, birçok katılımcı için Türklüğün inşasının, Batı medeniyeti karşısında hissedilen geri kalmışlık duygusuyla başa çıkmanın bir yolu olduğunu göstermektedir. Türklük söylemsel olarak inşa edilirken bizimle onlar arasına çizilen sınırlar, Batı karşısında geç ve geri kalmışlık duygusunun yarattığı hayal kırıklığı ile daha da derinleşmektedir. Batı, katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğu için, kendisine atfedilen her türlü negatif imaja rağmen, ulaşılmaya çalışılan ancak bir türlü ulaşılamayan bir dizi çağdaş yaşam standartlarının ifadesidir. Bu anlamda Batı ve batılı değerler karşısında duyulan aşağılık kompleksi, Türklüğün yeniden üretiminde sıklıkla kullanılan söylemsel bir kalıp olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Son olarak, Türk milletinin, doğuştan sahip olduğu üstün özelliklerin ve tarihi başarılarının farkında olan ve bundan çekince duyan “yabancı düşmanlar ve onların yerli işbirlikçilerinin” komplolarıyla karşı karşıya olduğu ifadesi katılımcıların Türklüğü inşa ederken ve yeniden üretirken sıklıkla atıfta bulundukları bir iddiaya tekabül etmektedir. Türklük, “yabancı düşmanların ve yerli işbirlikçilerinin” daimi tehdidi altında verilen bir yaşam mücadelesinin öznesi olarak cisimleştirilmektedir. Böylece “komplo teorileri”, bu tez boyunca gündelik milletliliğin inşasında ve yeniden üretiminde sıklıkla karşılaşılan söylemsel stratejilerin sonuncusu olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Düşman, savaş ve saldırı imgelerini sürekli besleyen, özneleri milli bilinci uyanık tutmaya davet eden komplo teorileri ve anlatıları, öznelerin, birbirine düşman farklı milli birimlerden müteşekkil bir dünyanın varlığını ve böyle bir dünyada milliyetçiliğin gerekliliğini ve yaşamsallığını sürekli hatırlamasını mümkün kılmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, bu tezin en önemli bulgusu, millet inşasının her yerde mevcutluğunu görünür kılanın, katılımcıların Türklüklerine ilişkin algı ve ifadelerinde içkin olan bu

ortak söylemsel çapalar ve stratejiler olduğunu göstermesidir. Bu anlam ve düşünce kalıpları, tez kapsamında ele alınan “milletin sınırları”, “milli tarih” ve “milli kültür” bağlamlarında milletliliğin sahnelenmesi ve yeniden üretilmesi süreçlerinde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Öte yandan, bu tez Türkiye siyasetinde yükselen muhafazakârlık ve milliyetçilik dalgasının Nevşehir’in seçmen tercihlerinde, sosyal dokusunda ve gündelik yaşamında oldukça belirgin olduğunu göstermektedir. İslamcı ve etnik milliyetçi egemen ideoloji, bireylerin Türklüklerini inşa etme biçimlerinin şekillenmesinde etkilidir. Özellikle AKP ve MHP seçmeni, Türklüğü ve Türklüğün ötekisini iktidarın çizdiği çerçeve içinde tanımlamaya ve milli tarih anlatısını bu şekilde yeniden üretmeye meyillidir. Dolayısıyla iktidarın hegemonik retoriğini oluşturan birçok sloganın kullanımı gündelik milliyetçilikte de oldukça yaygındır. Bunun yanı sıra, her zaman geçerli olmasa da, partilerin kurumsal örgütlenmelerinde görev alanların, partilerin dayattığı milletlilik tahayyülünü benimseme eğilimleri daha yüksektir. Diğer bir deyişle, parti ile aidiyet bağı kurumsallaştıkça partinin söylemine uygun bir milletlilik algısı ve pratiği geliştirme eğiliminin arttığı gözlemlenmiştir. Ancak yine de altını çizmekte fayda vardır ki; 2000’li yılların ikinci on yılında AKP’nin gittikçe otoriter bir karaktere bürünen iktidarı altında Türkiye’de hegemonik ideoloji haline gelen İslam ve etnik milliyetçilikten beslenen yeni Osmanlıcı muhafazakâr söylem, Nevşehir’de gündelik milliyetçiliğin inşasında baskın ve yaygın olmasına rağmen, bu alanı tam anlamıyla kontrol edememiş ve tekelleştirememiştir. Zira gündelik milliyetçiliğin aktörleri olan sıradan insanlar, yukardan kendilerine dayatılan milletlilik biçimlerini muhafaza etme ve yeniden üretmenin yanı sıra, farklı milletlilik biçimlerini müzakere etme, değiştirme, dönüştürme ve besleme potansiyeline sahiptir.

Bu tezin en dikkat çekici ampirik bulgularından biri, farklı siyasi vizyonların kendi millet anlatıları aracılığıyla sunduğu ve yaydığı milletlilik kalıplarının gündelik aktörler tarafından melezlenmesidir. Bireyler ait oldukları partilerin söylemlerinden bağımsız bir milletlilik pratiği geliştirebildikleri gibi kendilerine dayatılan millet tanımlarını da değiştirme ve dönüştürme potansiyeline sahiptirler. Dolayısıyla gündelik aktörler, milletliliğin yeniden üretim sürecinin pasif alımlayıcıları değil, aktif öznelidirler. Milletliliği inşa eden ve yeniden üreten failer, birden fazla millet tahayyülünün farklı söylemsel varsayımlarına atıfta bulunarak kendi öznel ve melez

milletlilik biçimlerini yaratabilirler. Bu bağlamda İslamcı ve etnik milliyetçiliğin söylemsel hegemonyası gündelik milliyetçiliğin diline hâkim olsa da, onu tam olarak ele geçirememiştir. Nitekim seküler milliyetçilik anlayışına dayalı bir Türklük algısı günlük hayatta sınırlı da olsa bir grup tarafından üretilmeye devam etmektedir. Ayrıca bazı bağlamlarda iktidar partisine oy veren kişilerin AKP'nin milliyetçi söylemine eleştirel yaklaştıkları ve farklı bir milliyetçilik anlayışını hayata geçirdikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Dolayısıyla gündelik milliyetçiliğin aktif üreticileri olarak bireyler, bağlı oldukları siyasi partilerin kendilerine ve topluma dayattığı çerçevenin dışında milleti tasavvur etme ve somutlaştırma potansiyeline her zaman sahiptir. Ne tür bir milliyetçilik olduğundan bağımsız olarak, milliyetçiliğin bizatihi kendisinin hegemonik bir ideoloji olmasının temel nedeni budur. Ancak son kertede bu tezin temel bulgusu, gündelik milliyetçiliğin failleri olan sıradan insanların Türklüklerini farklı biçimlerde ve farklı içeriklerle inşa etmelerine rağmen, bunu yaparken ortak söylemsel çapalara ve stratejilere başvurmalarıdır. Bir yandan aile, gelenek, savaş gibi temalara dayanan bir Türklük anlatısının izleri, siyasi duruşu ne olursa olsun hemen hemen tüm katılımcıların söylemlerinde karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Öte yandan, “biz” ile “öteki” ile arasındaki sınırların belirlenmesi, milli bir geçmişin ve kültürün yeniden üretilmesi kadar önemli bir diğer süreç ise, millet ve “ötekiler” ikiliğini inşa eden milliyetçi söylemin içine yerleşmiş yeniden üretim stratejilerinin işleyişidir. Öyle ki, söylemin içine işlenen bu stratejiler, milli bir geçmiş inşa ederken ve Türklüğü sembolik olarak imgeler, nesneler ve törenler aracılığıyla gerçekleştirirken de kendini gösterir. Bugün Türk milliyetçiliği, Türk siyasetindeki baskın ve hegemonik konumunu, siyasi aktörlerin pragmatik milliyetçi söylem ve politikalarının yanı sıra gündelik milliyetçilikte ortaya çıkan bu söylemsel çapalara ve stratejilere borçludur. Dolayısıyla 2000'li yılların ikinci yarısında Türk siyasetini şekillendiren milliyetçi muhafazakâr dilin kurduğu hegemonyayı, milliyetçiliği sürekli olarak yeniden üreten gündelik aktörlerin söylem ve stratejilerinden bağımsız düşünmek mümkün değildir.

Tüm bu yönleriyle bu araştırma, hem mevcut Türk milliyetçiliği literatürüne hem de gündelik milliyetçilik perspektifine katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımı, Türklüğün inşasını aşağıdan inceleyerek Türk milliyetçiliği literatüründe bir boşluğu doldurmak için gerekli bakış açısını sağlamaktadır. Bu

nedenle, milletliliğin inşa sürecini gündelik aktörlerin söylemleri ve deneyimleri üzerinden okumaya çalışmak, 2000'lerde Türkiye'de milliyetçi söylemin her alana sıyan hegemonik mevcudiyetini ortaya çıkarmak için uygun bir girişimdir. Buna paralel olarak gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımını benimseyen bu tezde, milletliliğin yeniden üretildiği "milletin"ın tanımlanması, "ötekilerin" belirlenmesi, geçmişin kurgulanması ve millileştirmesi, kültürel unsurların kullanılması ve kolektif eylemlerin deneyimlenmesi gibi süreç ve bağlamlarda aktif rol üstlenen gündelik aktörlerin söylem ve pratiklerinin ne kadar hayati olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Bu anlamda bu tez, farklı Türklük algılarının gündelik hayatta nasıl ve ne şekilde yeniden üretildiğini gün yüzüne çıkartarak Türk milliyetçiliği üzerine mevcut literatüre mütevazı bir katkıda bulunmaktadır. Ancak hepsinden önemlisi, bu tez, gündelik milliyetçiliğin sadece farklılıkların ve öznelliklerin değil, aynı zamanda farklı milletlik algılarını aynı tema ve stratejiler etrafında bir araya getiren benzerliklerin de ortaya çıktığı bir alan olduğunu göstermesi açısından gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımına da katkı sağlamaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, bu tez, gündelik milliyetçilik yaklaşımının, farklı millet algılarının aynı söylemsel çapalar ve stratejiler aracılığıyla nasıl yeniden üretildiğini gözlemlemek için verimli bir alan sağladığını iddia etmektedir. Bu tez, bu mütevazı katkısıyla, 2000'li yılların ikinci on yılında, muhafazakâr bir Orta Anadolu kenti olan Nevşehir'de esen milliyetçi rüzgârların, yalnızca Türk siyasetindeki hegemonik milliyetçi söylemle ya da gündelik milliyetçiliğin öznel ve farklı görünümüleriyle değil, aynı zamanda sıradan aktörler tarafından kullanılan ortak söylemsel çapalar ve stratejiler yoluyla da açıklanabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır.

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