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**The European Union and First Years AKP: Popular Nationalism in Turkey**

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**Abstract**

Nationalism is one of the important ideologies; it is too difficult to express what nationalism is in one sentence, because it is a multidimensional, debatable ideology. In Turkey, nationalism is also an important issue because of its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure. Moreover elites have an important roles on constructing a type of nationalism, especially popular nationalism. Critiques and opposition of the political and intellectual elites against the governmental policies indicated the escalated atmosphere in nationalist discourse in Turkey until 2010. Therefore, this work empowered the theories of popular nationalism, which contribute the relationship between the elites and nationalism to the body of theoretical knowledge. However, some other issues may escalate the popular nationalism in Turkey. Turkish public thinks on that way; 29 percentages of the sample group think that the cause of escalating nationalism in Turkey is PKK terrorism, and secondly 17 percentages of the sample group suggested that EU demands led the increase. On the other hand some may claim that even those issues are interrelated.

**Keywords:** Popular Nationalism, Turkey, The AKP, The EU Process

Nationalism is one of the important ideologies; it is too difficult to express what nationalism is in one sentence, because it is a multidimensional, debatable ideology. It can be converted to radical nationalism very easily because of its characteristics which escalates the tension among the people. In Turkey, nationalism is also an important issue because of its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure in which approximately fifty different Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic groups such as Sunni Turks, Alleviate Turks, Sunni Kurds, Alleviate Kurds, Circassians, Lazis, and so on, live together.

Moreover, Turkish nationalism is an unending debate because of its determining character in Turkish politics since the foundation of the Republic in 1923. Homogenizing

formal state policies under the shadow of the nationalist Turkish history thesis of 1932, placing the Turks into the center of world with the popular nationalist education pave the way for the consolidation of the Turkish state with these exclusivist policies. Therefore, in Turkish politics, leader parties are obliged whether they desire or not to conform this existing nationalist tradition. Also, this is an easiest way to capture the voters to make them believe their promises.

However, on November 3, 2002 the Turkish society is experienced a striking election; the AKP comes the power by stressing concrete reasons, deep-rooted problems such as poverty, inequality, democracy etc. It did not use the nationalist populist jargon to gain support and have the right to administer the Turkish society. It is perceived as a surprising scene because the religion-centered party points out that their desire is the full membership to the EU with opposition to binary oppositions such as Alleviate-Sunni, Turks-Kurds.

By the time, the EU policy of governments is opposed by many writers, scholars, thinkers, politicians and so on. Therefore, this oppositional atmosphere stimulates some people to show their nationalist loyalties through the “popular nationalism” in the society.

Furthermore, to investigate the affects of governments’ EU policy on popular nationalism seems as an important issue because of its shaking influences on three segment of the Turkish Republic. Firstly, the society is easily affected by the popular nationalist words, manners, demonstrations which cause the separations, divisions among the people. Moreover, through the ultra nationalist speeches, the identities, ethnical or national are begun to be interrogated again; this discontent is also a carrier of danger which we are familiar these kinds of exclusivist manners from our political history. Secondly, the rising of popular nationalism in the society affect the internal policy of government. The opposition parties try to refute the credibility of the government by using their EU policy, and try to escalate the people against the governmental policies. Therefore, this package of opposition against governments must be seen as determining elements in the next elections, for instance government may fail because of its EU policy in the next elections. Lastly, to consider about the rising popular nationalism with the governments’ policies is important because, through the popular nationalism the foreign affairs of the government are reshaped. Especially, in the EU negotiation process Turkey is gazing whether there are any turbulences in the society or any violation to the human rights. In other words, the Europe evaluates the appropriation of Turkish society with their

criteria such as democracy, human rights and so on. Thus, because of all these reasons this issue is worth to be evaluated as important.

Moreover, to search the ultra nationalism in Turkish society may be interesting in order to show four important points. Firstly, this remarkable issue demonstrates us that the different sides from the left or the right uses the same instrument “popular nationalism” to support their ideas, beliefs of desires. They do not want to be expressed in the same categories but both sides’ uses the same instrument “popular nationalism”. For instance MHP and TKP have meetings against the EU at the same time in different places. Also, this shared instrument show the importance of the concepts one more time; the people who do not define themselves as ultra-nationalist shows their anger with using this ultra nationalist way. Moreover, this issue is interesting because we can get some clues about whether the opposition is actually against the EU or governments. We may look at the picture from bottom; if any government from right of left follows this path in EU process, these popular nationalists’ tension would rise from the people who criticize the governments’ policy now. And lastly, it may be interesting to point out that the ideology of nationalism can be easily converted to the popular nationalist style; therefore it is important to be careful and awake not to believe the provocations in the society.

### **Theories of Nationalism**

The nineteenth century was very fertile for the beginning of the ideologies; and nationalism was only one of the children of this period. It is too difficult to express what nationalism is in one sentence, because it is a multidimensional, debatable ideology. Amount of literature has been produced on this subject. No doubt, the term is related to the “perception”; and it has different meanings in different people’s or scholars’ mind. Therefore, scholars are challenged by the meaning and nature of Nationalism and nationalism discussion reaches its mature stage in the second half of the twentieth century, more specifically since 1960s. These debates are named as Nationalism Theories and especially presented in three different types; Primordialism, Modernism and Ethno-symbolism. During my study, I will briefly explain the theories of nationalism for better understanding of the terms such as Primordialism or “imagined community”, then I will mention the article of Thomas Eriksen, and lastly I will try to show the reflections of formal-informal nationalism in Turkey.

Primordialism is the earliest paradigm of Nationalism. For the Primordialists Nationalism is a “natural” part of human beings, as natural as speech, sight or smell and for them Nations have existed since the immemorial. Also, it can be identifying three different versions of Primordialism; these are Naturalist approach, Socio-biological and Culturalist approaches. The Naturalist Approach is the most extreme version of Primordialism. National identities are natural parts of the people. For instance, a man has a nationality as he has two ears. In this type of approach the term of “golden age” or “national hero” concepts are very important. The superiority of the national culture is tried to be showed; a national hero comes and awakens the nation, ending the “accidental” period and provides to return the “golden age. Moreover, the source of the socio-biological approach was “reproduction”. For this reproduction, kin selection or mating with relatives is powerful cement. Also the sociality of the human being can be realized by this way. Socio-biologists investigate the origins of ethnic and national ties in genetic mechanisms and instincts. Then they see the “nation” as an extension of the “kinship” or a kind of super family. Furthermore, the Culturalists focused on the “perceptions” and “beliefs” of the individuals. For their literature belief is sacred and indicates the belief of common religion, language, past consist the Nation. For instance, Walker Connor believes that the nation means “a group of the people who feel that they are ancestrally related”<sup>1</sup>.

Moreover, the most prominent claim of the Modernists is the understanding of “Nationalism comes before Nations.” However they are not identified with a single factor in the explanation of Modernism; they prioritize different factors in their theories. The key factors can be divided into three categories such as economic, political and socio-cultural and these determine the core point of their studies. In reality, the approaches cannot be understood without the scholars who defense them; therefore I will try to explain these three factors with the most prominent guardians. Tom Nairn was one of the important Modernists who prioritize the economic factors in forming of Nationalism. He claims that the roots of nationalism should not be investigated in the internal dynamics of individual societies, but in the general process of historical development since the end of the eighteenth century. The only explanatory framework is “world history”; nationalism can be understood only by the certain features of the world political economy. Nairn’s view is greatly influenced by the dependency theory, especially Andre Gunder Frank and

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<sup>1</sup> Özkırımlı, 2000

Immanuel Wallerstein. Nationalism is occurred in the shadow of the international capitalist exploitation. The world is divided the core countries and the periphery. There is a hegemonic relation between these countries. The periphery is under the dominance of the core countries; therefore the periphery tries to become capitalists to catch the core countries. And he believes that the socio-historical cost of the rapid implantation of capitalism into world society was “Nationalism.” The elites of a country persuade the masses to become developed; the aim is progress and in this path nationalism is used. The periphery has to copy the progressive countries but they should take their speeches from the ethnical, cultural, religious bondages. Therefore, Tom Nairn defines Nationalism in the core-periphery relations as a “Janus faced”.

Moreover, another key factor in the Modernism approach is the “politics”. One of the prominent figures of that type of nationalistic understanding is Eric Hobsbawm. According to Hobsbawm nationalism comes before the nations. Also nationalism is the concept of the modern times but it does not occur suddenly. He defines the social movements’ existence in three stages. One is the stage of cultural, literary and folkloric social movements with no particular political or even national implications. In the second stage, the body of pioneers and militants of the national idea occur and the political campaigning begins for this idea. This stage is called “proto-nationalism in the literature of Hobsbawm. Moreover, he gives four criteria for the development of proto-nationalism; these are language, ethnicity, religion and the national consciousness. However, these components are not enough to construct “nationalism” on their own; the combination of all ensures the transition to the third stage in which nationalist programs acquire mass support, or at least some of the mass support that nationalists always claim they represent. Also, Hobsbawm believes that nationalism is a phenomenon of “social engineering”. That means the political elites invent the traditions, customs, and myths for the people; because they do not want the mass to join the decision making process in the politics. Hence Nationalism is a tool to create loyal citizens to the state or to the existence authority and it is an invented tradition.

Nevertheless, the last group stresses the social and cultural reflections on the nationalism. One the important figure who gives an important role to the culture in the explanation of nationalism is Benedict Anderson. He suggests that nations are neither natural nor eternal, but modern constructions and nationalism occurs in these types modern nations. Here, although the people cannot have face-to-face contact with their

fellow citizens, the feeling of group solidarity combines them. In his view that is called an “imagined community” but “imagined” does not mean “unreal”. In his argument he pays attention to the capitalism and specifically “print capitalism”. He believes that “printing” is a base to create nationalistic consciousness and at that point newspaper plays an important role to create an imagined community. Newspaper resembles a mass ceremonial ritual because thousands of people read it that hour, only this day<sup>2</sup>.

Lastly, we must look at the theories of ethno-symbolism. The term “ethno-symbolist” is used for the scholar who uncovers the symbolic legacy of pre-modern ethnic identities for today’s nation and this type of scholars see ethnicity is a prominent figure in the rising of nationalism. The most important supporter of that theory is Anthony Smith. Smith’s main idea is that modern nations cannot be understood without the pre-existing ethnic components and in these modern nations the rise of nationalism exactly relates to the ethnic background. For him nationalism is “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential “nation”. This definition is worth to mention because it carries three significant words in it. Here, the word of “autonomy” refers to “national will”, and collective effort to realize the truth. Second word, “unity” means the territorial unification and the harmony in the shadow of brotherhood. And lastly, “identity” denotes national genius which means the members of group see themselves different from non-members and call them “other”.

Moreover, in Smith’s view “nation-formation” potential of the “ethnicity” forms the communities and these communities are divided into two; lateral and vertical. In the lateral communities, the bureaucratic incorporation is at the core of all types of relations. Western Europe exemplified this type of communities very well with the ‘revolutions’ in political, cultural and economic such as decline of ecclesiastical authority or dominance of market economy. Also, the other community is called “vertical community” by the scholar. Here, the communities are subject and the ethnic bondage reflects in the shadow of religion. The religious myths, the concept of a savior from God, sacred texts, scripts and such as ensure the survival of the community. Furthermore, in these communities elites play important role and they use different ways to mobilize their people. These ways are classified in three types by Smith. Firstly, the intellectuals try to convince the people to support modernization to return the “traditional order”, then they make the people accept

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<sup>2</sup> ibid.

to be assimilated into the modernization and lastly they impose synthesizing elements of tradition and Western modernity.<sup>3</sup>

“Popular nationalism” refers to the speeches, manners of the elites to mobilize, motivate or provoke the people against the governmental policies especially through the media such as newspapers, television. Here the important thing to indicate is popular nationalism is constructed by the speeches of the elites and the flows of the nationalistic thoughts are accepted popularly by the people. We will measure how the rising of popular nationalism occurred. Popular nationalism will be measured by searching the oppositions of the elites through the newspapers.

### **Turkey’s Reforms towards the Membership**

Turkey’s reforms towards EU full membership started to clearly seen by the 2001 constitutional reforms. With a broad based political association, nearly one-fifth of the Turkish Constitution had been changed in the 2001. The changes mostly related with freedom of expression and idea, prevention of torture, democracy and civil authority, individual security and freedom, right of association, and et cetera.

New Turkish Civil Code harmonized with the EU standards in 2002, especially on equality of men and women, childcare, and right of association.

Harmonization packages started in 2002. First harmonization packages legislated in 19 February 2002, in which some amendments made in Turkish Penalty Code, The Prevention of Terror Act, National Security Courts, and some procedural laws. Same year on 9<sup>th</sup> of April the second Harmonization Package legislated in the TGNA. The main aim of the package was expanding the freedom of expression, freedom of associate, and freedom to arrange peaceful meetings. The following package was legislated at 19<sup>th</sup> August in same year. The most crucial legislation was about the abolishment of the penalty, and the religious foundations’ immovable property.

After these legislative laws, Turkish politics confronted with a crucial change, both in parliament and in public. Almost all structure of parliament changed, except the AKP all parties eliminated from the parliament.

Right after the elections on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January of 2003 the fourth harmonization laws package legislated by the AKP PMs. By this packages sixteen laws had been legislated, also the judicial restrictions for the leader of the AKP to be elected as a PM eliminated.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

After three weeks the fifth of the legislation packages was introduced to the TBMM; on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January. On 19<sup>th</sup> June 2003 the sixth harmonization laws accepted in the parliament. The seventh legislation package for harmonization was approved in the TBMM on 30 July of 2003. The last harmonization laws package was the complementary of the other packages and legislated on 14 July of 2004. There was also a constitutional change made by the AKP on seventh May of 2003.

Forth package brings some improvements on the democratization reform of Turkey as other packages aimed. By this legislation package, the prevention on the party membership of the ideological guilty was eliminated by the renewal of the Political Party Code. Additionally, rearrangement on the Press Law permits the journalist that not to declare the news resources. Another renewal by this package is the expansion on the scope of the right to petition for the foreigners who live in Turkey. The most important legislation of this package was on the law on association, which eases the associations to establish branch offices abroad, and for foreign associations to open branch offices in Turkey. Also with parallel to the 2001 constitutional change, associations bounded to use Turkish only in their official correspondence.

The fifth package mainly includes some changes in the code of civil procedure, by which it is given retrial opportunity if there is a violation on human right contract of the EU. By this rearrangement Leyla Zana and three other Kurdish parliamentarians, who were jailed after the closure of the DEP in 1994, were retried in March 2003 and leased in 2004 which was recommended by the EU since their detention.

The next harmonization package brings very crucial innovations for the nationalist in Turkey. The most controversial issue in this package is that by which regarding minority rights, cultural rights and the protection of minorities, the Constitution was amended to lift the ban on the use of the Kurdish language. Changes were introduced after some delay allowing radio and TV broadcasting in languages and dialects other than Turkish including Kurdish and the possibility to teach such languages was introduced. There is another very controversial issue in this package; the seventh article of the Anti-Terror law which includes the punishment for the separatist propaganda. Also the cultures of the minorities had more rights by the changes in the Population Code. Moreover this package recognizes non-Muslim minorities to build places to worship without the approval of the competent administrative authorities.



In 30th July the seventh reform package introduced in the TBMM. By these amendments, the general secretary of the National Security Council became civilized and the duties are reshaped according to the 118<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution. The scope of the education in own language was expanded with the amendment in the Code of Education of Foreign Languages. Moreover changes in the Turkish Penalty Code and the Anti-Terror Laws, the limits of the right to expel and though was expanded.

On 14<sup>th</sup> July, as a result of the harmonization to international laws, the death penalty punishment completely abolished including the case of war. The progress report towards accession used to indicate this point repeatedly.

In practice in the period of the AKP, A Kurdish association was established in Diyarbakır in February 2004. Six private schools started teaching Kurdish in Van, Batman, Şanlıurfa in April 2004, in Diyarbakır and Adana in August 2004, in İstanbul in October 2004. Moreover, the Prime Minister voiced the Kurdish issue as Kurdish problem in September, 2005.

The Turkish government expressed its support for efforts to find a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem through the continuation of the UN Secretary General mission of good offices. In 24 July 2004, Turkey supported Annan Plan on a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem and the subsequent referendum which took place on the island. Turkey also supported the referendum, calling the Turkish Cypriot community to a yes vote to the plan. On 29 July 2005, Turkey signed the Additional Protocol adapting the EC Turkey Association Agreement to the accession of 10 new countries but Turkey declared not to recognize of the Republic of Cyprus.

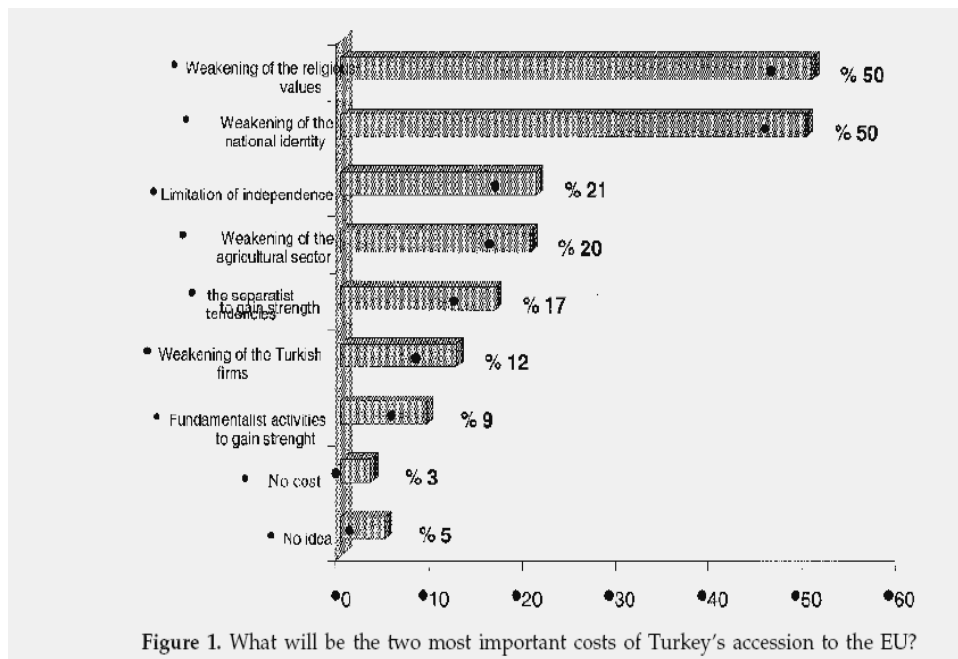
### **The Popular Nationalism**

According to a survey conducted by Ali Çarkoğlu<sup>4</sup>, Turkey ranks lowest in knowledge of the EU among the candidate countries; 58 per cent of the respondents knew nothing about the Copenhagen criteria. There are great significant oppositions to the acceptance of the Copenhagen criteria except the freedom of expression and religious rights. The abolition of the capital punishment is the issue, which is the most opposed, because of the case of Abdullah Öcalan. For instance; 56 per cent of the people who are surveyed said that they would not approve of broadcasting in minority languages,

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Ali Çarkoğlu, 2003, Who Wants Full Membership? Characteristics of Turkish Public Support for EU Membership.

including Kurdish, even if this was the single condition for EU membership. Similarly 58 percentage of the sample opposed the education of the language other than Turkish. The opposition to the abolition of the capital punishment is 54 percentages. Nearly half of the population (49 per cent) thinks the EU is a Christian club, so there is be no place for a Muslim country like Turkey, and also the EU does not accept us a member. On the other hand, 58 percentages of the sample expect positive gains in their personal lives with the full membership. According to Çarkoğlu's study, those who expect development, look forward to see a development in the economy, improvement on democracy, decrease in corruption and a free circulation of labor. Despite these positive expectations, the main issues on which people put their reservations are religious and national values, national security and independence. The table below<sup>5</sup> indicates the sensitiveness of the issues within the society.



On the other hand, the nationalism research<sup>6</sup> made by Umut Özkırmılı<sup>7</sup>, indicated that 63.1 percentage of the sample group<sup>8</sup> supports the EU, and only 30.6 of them is opposed the full membership. However, all of those, who oppose the EU, did not think

<sup>5</sup> Taken from Ali Çarkoğlu, 2003, Who Wants Full Membership? Characteristics of Turkish Public Support for EU Membership, *Turkey and The European Union*.

<sup>6</sup> The research was funded by Istanbul Bilgi University and Infakto Research Workshop, held in urbal and rural areas of 15 cities. Result of the research publish in Tempo on 9<sup>th</sup> of April in 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Assoc. Prof. in Istanbul Bilgi University

<sup>8</sup> Sample group was 800 who are over 18.

that the EU is a union, who will damage the benefits of Turkey. Those who think that it will damage is only 22.9 percentage of the population.

73.9 percentages of the AKP voters support the full membership and the 72.3 percentages of the CHP did. On the other hand 49.2 percentages of the MHP voters supports the EU. 45.3 percentages of the sample declared that the most danger of the full membership of EU is that threat towards Turkish custom and tradition, and 50.3 of them stated that the EU tries to divide Turkish unity, and only 15.4 of them claimed that the EU would abolish Turkish national sovereignty.

The elites would emphasize on the issues pointed out by Ali Çarkoğlu and Umut Özkırımlı, and create a popular nationalism within the society. It is very easy to see a headline and column, which criticize the AKP and the EU on these aspects and on the expectations of the population.

The nationalist elites become more alienated from the EU day by day, while emphasizing the issue of multiculturalism, the PKK, Cyprus issue and minority rights. According to the nationalist elites, the EU underestimates the conditions of Turkey's internal and external problems. Although they did not reject the project of the membership to the EU and even sometimes support it, the main opposition is the aim of the EU is not positive but to divide the country. They claim that the AKP does not understand the real intentions of the EU.

The nationalists display skepticism about the demands and criteria of Europe arguing that the EU will accept Turkey as a member when and if this suits its own interest. Therefore, the criteria and conditions set for membership proposed by the EU are just excuses until it feels ready to have Turkey. Turkey should protect its honor and power by the process of entering to the EU according to those elites.

According to the euro-skeptics during the period of Turkish accession to full membership, the EU does not play the game according to its written and unwritten rules. The AKP government plays a great gamble on some issues which related to nationalistic tendencies and which are preliminary for the candidacy to the full membership; such as Kurdish and Cyprus issues, minority rights and non-Muslim organizations. The AKP government is facing a growing opposition even within the party. Turhan Çömez, the MP of the AKP, stated that the EU imposes the issues within the lines, which make Turkey's position very formidable, to Turkey and his wish to make reforms within the Turkey, not

with the pressure of the Western states<sup>9</sup>. The Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi- the CHP) declares its criticism on the AKP's policies on the EU membership, and even after the 17<sup>th</sup> December<sup>10</sup>, and stated that in 18<sup>th</sup> December, Turkey had been deceived with three points; the possibility of a membership with a lesser statue membership, the demand on the recognizance of the Cyprus, and the permanent prevention of some rights of the membership.<sup>11</sup> The Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi- the MHP) moderated a public meeting in 3<sup>rd</sup> October<sup>12</sup> by the attendance of some leftist and communist groups. Devlet Bahçeli, who is the leader of the party stated its criticism on the EU membership and maintained that as a result of the negotiations' start, concessions would be given, the demands for division would increase, Turkey would get pain from ethic divergence, and the south part of the Cyprus would be recognized<sup>13</sup>. Additionally, Bahçeli asked the Erdogan not to go the negotiations on 3<sup>rd</sup> October to not take the responsibility of that evil demands.<sup>14</sup> Bekir Coskun, who is a columnist in Hurriyet which is the one of the most popular newspaper, analyzed the results of the 17<sup>th</sup> December, and criticized the prevention on the free transportation, indefiniteness of the negotiation results and the limits ad preventions on agriculture and services. He also thinks that all those negative aspects are underestimated because of the Cyprus problem.<sup>15</sup> Emin Colasan, another columnist of that newspaper, criticized the AKP for overlapping the red lines of the Turkey. In his column, he repeatedly talks about the Cyprus issue, Kurdish and minority problems, and described Turkey as injured state by the EU. He also

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<sup>9</sup> In Aksam, 27.12.2005, "Çömez bildiğini okudu", his original statement is "Görünen o ki Türkiye bu satır arası dayatmalarla, bu gizlenen tüm mayınlarla epey zorlu bir sürece sürdürmek zorunda kalacak. Keşke Türkiye kendi bünyesinde yapacağı reformlar için Batılı ülkelerden talimat almasaydı." pp. 14

<sup>10</sup> muzakerelere tarihi alındığı gün

<sup>11</sup> Qouted from Milliyet, 18/12/2004: Baykal: 2. sınıf üyeliği Meclis kabul edemez.....

1- "Ucu açık" sözü onur kırıcıdır. İkinci sınıf üyeliği içimize sindiremeyiz.  
2- Türkiye, Kıbrıs konusunda aldatıldığı duygusunu yaşamaktadır. Kıbrıs'ın tanınması, Londra ve Zürih anlaşmalarını geçersiz hale getirir. KKTC'nin hukuki temeli ve siyasi dayanağı ortadan kalkar. Bu kabul edilemez.

3- Kalıcı nitelikteki hak kısıtlamaları gündeme getirilmiştir. Bunların öngörülmesi, tam üyeliğin önünde engeldir.

<sup>12</sup> Date of completion of negotiations.

<sup>13</sup> Zaman, 03.10.2005. Verilecek tavizler, bölücü talepleri artıracak ve Türkiye'nin karşısına etnik ayrışma olarak fatura edilecektir. Kıbrıs Rum Kesimi, beyaz bayrak çekmiş AKP yönetimince tanınacaktır.

<sup>14</sup> Zaman, 03.10.2005. "Sayın Başbakan, yeni bir ağır vebalin altına girmeyiniz, görüşmelere gitmeyiniz."

<sup>15</sup> Hurriyet, 18.12.20005. Serbest dolaşım öyle kolay değil, müzakerelerin ucu açık, tarıma ve hizmetlere sınırlamalar ve kısıtlamalar var.... Bunların tümü bir anda öne çıkartılan Kıbrıs sorununun arkasında kaybolup gitti

opposed to call 17 December as a festival or celebration day.<sup>16</sup> Umit Ozdag, who is a columnist in a nationalist newspaper –Yeni Çağ– and an opposition power within the MHP, opposed the negotiation tactics of the AKP, and described the AKP’s privileges very different from the Turkish Nation. Because of this, he concludes that the results of the Belgium meeting would deeply hurt the national interests of the Turkish nation.<sup>17</sup> It is very clear that some political and intellectual elites are not in favor of the EU under these circumstances. As a result of their urgency to the public by media, the conscious of nationalism increase within the citizens, it is not important that they are leftist rightist or at the center. The AKP continues its policies very decisively, and thinking to win the EU membership and the next elections.

However, the popular nationalism is increasing because of some reasons which have been the subject of the newspapers and politicians especially on Cyprus issue, Kurdish problem and other minor issues<sup>18</sup>; such as Armenian issue, religious and ethnic problems.

After the rising in the PKK’s terrorist attacks tensions had increased and some may argue that because of the provocations or not, the conflicts rose within the Turkish society. Sensitivity of the Turkish citizens decreased crucially; by the addition to the demand of the EU and the way of these news appeared in the news.

Yeniçağ’s news, in 23<sup>rd</sup> September, stated some demands of the EU for the ethnic rights of the Kurds. The newspaper makes a prediction and than accused the Verheugen for asking to Turkey give Kurdish nation the right of self determination and declare Kurdish as a second official language of the Turkish state. It is resulted that this demands’ aim is to threaten the unitary structure of the Turkish state, and would lead a Kurdish federation in the Southeastern Anatolia.<sup>19</sup> This type of news and comments made by elites creates negative attitudes among the public towards the EU and day-by-day, nationalism takes more place in the political agenda. Some popular elites within the rightist and leftist

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<sup>16</sup>Hurriyet, 18.12.20005. Kırmızı çizgiler çiğnendi! Gelecekte neler olacağını, nasıl rencide edileceğimizi göreceğiz, bu ‘ucu açık, sonu belli olmayan’ süreci hep birlikte yaşayacağız. Eğer bu koşullarda tarih almak bir zaferse, bayramsa, çünkü 17 Aralık tarihi kutlu olsun!

<sup>17</sup> Yeniçağ, 07.10.2004 Tabii AKP'nin menfaatleri ile Türkiye'nin menfaatlerinin aynı olmadığını bilenler için bu hiç şaşırtıcı değildir. Brüksel'den çıkacak olan karar Türkiye'nin millî menfaatlerine ağır bir darbe vuracaktır.

<sup>18</sup> The author here, by ‘minor’, did not mean the low importance of these issues, but the pages they had been seen in the newspaper.

<sup>19</sup> Yeniçağ, 23.09.2004. İstekler Verheugen tarafından “Kürtlere de kendi kaderlerini tayin hakkı verilmeli, Kürtçe resmi dil olmalı ve okullarda Kürtçe de eğitim verilebilmeli” şeklinde iletilecek.... bu isteklerle... Türkiye’nin uniter yapısını tehlikeye girecek ve Güneydoğu Anadolu topraklarında kurulması öngörülen Kürt federasyonunun yolu açılacaktır.

national front take same side in those issues. Sadi Somuncuoglu, who was the nationalist minister of the 57<sup>th</sup> government, in an article which is published in a leftist newspaper's supplementary, states that the EU's final intention is to divide Turkey to smaller groups. According to him, the Southeast project of the EU to indicate Kurds as minority first, and than a separate nation. Somuncuoglu states that Turkey abused with empty promises and by its hand, Turkey goes through the division and federation.<sup>20</sup> A strong nationalist article was published in a strong leftist newspaper, because these tow ideas firstly come together firstly. Therefore, nationalism does not limit itself in right or left wing. The CHP behaves as a preventive role for Turkish national unity and became a nationalist party; even some call them nationalist and fascist party<sup>21</sup>. Nationalist elites and the CHP's elites give more importance to represent the states than to represent the society.<sup>22</sup> The news and events generally appears and are evaluated in same ways by leftist and rightist on those issues, so this cause a one single national discourse in the society.

In Cumhuriyet it is indicated that the European Parliament's demand is Kurdistan, a group of members of the EP, went to the Diyarbakir and their statement includes "We will continue our support to your struggle and Kurdistan... those who use the Kurd and Kurdistan which came possible after 1999, does not want to any division and discrimination". The news comments' on this statement was the calling the region Kurdistan as gaffe and this is the real intention of the European Parliament.<sup>23</sup> This event became a headline in Ortadoğu newspaper, which is known as the MHP's main supporting gazette. According to the newspaper the chairman of the EU, said that he would go to Kurdistan from Ankara. This statement called as gaffe as Cumhuriyet did<sup>24</sup>, so the same approaches bear similar nationalistic discourses. The denominations are very important, because the readers of these comments would probably feel that the EU did not want the democratization or economic development, but the division of the state. According to

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<sup>20</sup> Cumhuriyet Strateji, AB'nin Güneydoğu Projesi: Önce Azınlık, Sonra Ayrı bir Ulus. ... AB'nin nihai hedefi Türkiye'yi bölerek küçültmek, ...Bütün bunların anlamı da Türkiye'nin kendi eliyle ve aldatılarak, silahsız savaşız parçalanmaya veya federasyona götürülmesidir.

<sup>21</sup> Radikal, 08.03.2004 Nese Guzel interviews with Hasan Bulent Kahraman, CHP, milliyetçi ve faşizan bir parti

<sup>22</sup> Radikal, 08.08.2005 Nese Guzel interviews with Fuat Keyman, Devlet milliyetçiliği yapan CHP, devleti temsil etmeyi toplumu temsilin önünde görüyor.

<sup>23</sup> Cumhuriyet, 27.11.2004. AP'nin isteği Kürdistan: Parlamenterler 1999'da Türkiye'ye geldiğimizde Kürt ve Kürdistan kelimelerini kullanmak sorun yaratıyordu. Artık rahatlıkla kullanıyoruz. Bu gelişmeyle gösteriyor. Bu kelimeyi KONGRA-GEL dahil kimse ayrımcılıktan bahsetmiyor."... Miloslav Randsdorf Kurdistan gafını savundu.

<sup>24</sup> Ortadoğu, 3.12.2004. AP Başkanı'ndan Kürdistan Gafı... Başkan, "Ziyaretim sırasında Ankara'dan sonra Kürdistan'a gideceğiz" dedi.

readers, the newspapers point out the real intention of the EU and their gaffes indicates their disgrace. Ortadoğu states the demand of the EU to make peace with the PKK-KONGRA GEL, as an awful demand; “while we approach the 17 December Brussels summit, the EU’s awful demands is increasing day by day.”<sup>25</sup> In Cumhuriyet, in 8 December 2004, it is stated that the chairman of the EP agitates the Kurds for division<sup>26</sup>. Popular newspapers, sometimes includes same claims which create a conscious in the society. In Hürriyet, news included a French minister’s statement in which he states that Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey shared the Kurdistan by the Treaty of Lausanne and suppress the Kurds, claims the minister to be provocative and making gaffe.<sup>27</sup>

The Turkish public’s sensitiveness on Abdullah Ocalan and on the PKK issue is very clear, and some newspapers’ comments sometimes were ignition for nationalism within the public. In 15 October 2005, in Yeniçağ newspaper treat of the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s promise to the EU to approve the Rome Statues and Treaty of International Criminal Courts, and comment that this promise would make Abdullah Ocalan, who was the killer of babies, a leader and the general of the Turkish Army would arrested as an international guilty of war<sup>28</sup>. Stating the possibility of Ocalan became an MP in Turkish parliament, and the trial of the army forces as a guilty for a war, is a clear indicator of the mobilization aim of these elites.

Political elites, too, tries to get benefits from the increasing nationalism. Bahçeli, as political elite, oppose the right to use Kurdish broadcasting and education in Kurdish language, because these rights are just a start, and as a result the unity of the Turkish nation would be under the threat of the Kurdish separation with the support of the EU.<sup>29</sup>

Elites criticize the AKP leader to help the Kurdish problem’s tension to increase and give the opportunity to the EU and the Kurds to divide Turkish nationhood. Erdogan

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<sup>25</sup> Ortadoğu, 3.12.2004. PKK ile Masaya Oturun. 17 Aralık Brüksel zirvesi yaklaştıkça rezil isteklere her gün bir yenisi ekleniyor.

<sup>26</sup> Cumhuriyet, 8.12.2004. AP’den Kürt kışkırtması.

<sup>27</sup> Hürriyet, 19.05.2005. Fransız bakandan Lozan Gafı... provokatif bir konuşmayla Lozan Antlaşması’nı gündeme getirdi... Lozan Antlaşması’yla 4 ülke İran, Irak, Suriye ve Türkiye arasında bölüştürülen Kürdistan...

<sup>28</sup> Yeniçağ, 15.11.2005. Önce İpten Aldıra, Şimdi Lider Yapacaklar. Avrupa Birliği, 57. Hükümet’in de katkılarıyla ipten kurtardığı bebek katili Abdullah Öcalan’a parlamento yolunu açmak için düğmeye bastı...Bununla yetinmeyen AB, terörle mücadele eden Türk generalleri de hapsedecek.

<sup>29</sup> From Bahçeli’s speech: Vatandaş Verhaugen gibi ne anlama geldiği meçhul pankartlarla karşılanan Verhaugen yaptığı konuşmalarda Kürtlerin siyasal haklarından ve siyasi çözümden bahsetmiştir. Kütçe yayın ve eğitimin sadece bir başlangıç olduğunu söyleyen Verhaugen daha geniş bir perspektif geliştirilmesi gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Bunların anlamı çok açıktır. Bu ifadeler AB’nin bu konudaki emelleri hakkında ukarıdaki tespitlerimizi bütünüyle doğrulamaktadır. Bu gerçeği artık herkes görmelidir. Quoted from: <http://www.mhp.org.tr/genelbsk/gbskkonusma/2004/11092004.php>

called the Kurdish issue as 'Kurdish problem' which was not mentioned before by a state official. The elites' mobilization started again which aims to create an increase in nationalism. A columnist claims that the members of the government can attend the funerals of the martyrs. However, this would not be last so long, because the people are very angry to the government.<sup>30</sup> Whether it is true or not that people are angry to the government, the reader of this column as a believer of the author's comments is ready to take a part against to the government, by having national tendencies. Some columnist claim the Prime Minister to be non aware of the truth of the Turkish state and using same term –Kurdish Problem- used by Abdullah Ocalan, on the edge of terrorist attacks.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, some columnists, who are on the favor of the EU, declared its support to the EU and the government, and accused the nationalist elites for triggering the rebellions. He stated that it is very easy to make people applaud your comments on Copenhagen criteria, which claim this criteria being for only Kurdish interest.<sup>32</sup> As Birand states, caressing the nationalism feeling of the public is very easy, and these elites who are successful on this, are able to create popular or radical nationalism in the society.

The other sensitive issue for Turkish nation is Cyprus, as the Turks have martyrs given for the independence of the Turks in the island. Popular nationalism indicated its roots in this issue by the support of the political and intellectual elites. The newspapers' comment helps the popular nationalism's interest.

Sometimes the comments go extreme; Yeniçağ newspaper calls Papadopoulos as an enemy, who claims Turkey as occupier in the Island<sup>33</sup>. Being a member of the nationalist discourse, a reader of this headline would get angrier to Papadopoulos and may show its nationalist and even extreme attitudes towards Cypriots and these issues. The idea of having enemy is an escalator of the nationalism tendencies.

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<sup>30</sup> Yeniçağ, 09.08.2005, Ozdag Umit. Şehit ailelerinin tepkisi, İmralı"daki elebaşının hala avukatları aracılığı ile gazetelerde makale yazabilmesine ve çeteyi yönetebilmesine. Evet, bu halk çok kızgın. Kızgınlığı gittikçe de artıyor. Hükümet üyeleri hala şehit cenazelerine gelebiliyorlar. Ancak bu çok sürmez. Bir süre sonra cenazelere gelen hükümet üyeleri cenaze törenlerinden kovulacaklar.

<sup>31</sup> Yeniçağ, 13.08.2005, Ozdag Umit. Terör sürekli yükselirken, Türkiye gerçeklerinden tamamen kopuk olan Başbakan Erdoğan "aydınları" kabul ederek "demokratik Cumhuriyet" gibi Öcalan'ın kullandığı kavramlarla "Kürt sorununu" çözeceğini ifade ediyor.

<sup>32</sup> Hurriyet, 06.04.2005. Birand, Mehmet Ali. Üstelik, yaşadığımız şu dönemde, ayaklanmak için gerekçe bulmakta son derece kolay. Avrupa Birliği Kopenhag Kriterlerine uyum çalışmalarının bu ülkeyi savunan ve koruyan güvenlik güçlerini zayıflattığını ileri sürdünüz mü, yeter... Hatta biraz daha ileri gidip, Kopenhag Kriterlerinin sırf Kürtlere destek vermek için icat edildiğini dahi söyleyip alkış ve taraftar toplayabilirsiniz.

<sup>33</sup> Yeniçağ, Düşmandan İnciler. 28.05.2005 Papadopoulos, Kıbrıs'ın kuzeyinin işgal Türk işgali altında olduğunu ileri sürerek, "İşgal bölgelerinden giriş yapmak yasadı" dedi.



Sadi Somuncuoglu, stated that the AKP, who claims to have win-win policies, lost everything, and this policy in Cyprus resulted with a failure of the Turkish state's *long duree* policy and the collapse of a nation's future<sup>34</sup>.

Another national elite Umit Özdağ, maintains that the AKP has secret negotiations with the European imperialism and Greek Cypriot nationalism.<sup>35</sup> This blame on the AKP is very serious and the nationalism discourse would increase its tension towards the AKP's policies with its nationalistic feelings. He also states that Denktas is attending conferencing in different cities of the Anatolia, and makes people cry and angry.<sup>36</sup> Denktas, as a nationalist political elite create important conditions for the creation of the popular nationalism.

On Cyprus issue, the EP prepared a report in which Turkish army called as occupier according to Gunes newspaper. It is stated that there are aspersions towards Turkey<sup>37</sup>. These comments stated only in the headline. Nevertheless, there was not any description on the issue and the report's statement, which accuses the Turkish army. It is enough for the people to read the headline and start to think about national feelings in national discourse.

The conspiracy of the renewal of the Sevres Treaty is another tool used by the elites to create a popular nationalism. In Yeniçağ, the claims of the comments are about the demand to recreate the Sevres' intentions especially on Cyprus and Greece issues.<sup>38</sup> The Sevres issue, as it arrives at the indepenence war, is very easy to used by the national elites to create popular nationalism, as the newspaper does.

Again M. Ali Birand resists on the intention to create a popular nationalism by stating that the high treason is not to release the Cyprus and Turk in the island in long term, or the denial of the most possible solution in the Cyprus<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Akşam, 05.04.2004, ..kazan-kazan formülü ile yola çıkanların ve hala kazandıklarını iddia edenlerin en azından ilke bazında kaybettiklerinin bilançosudur. Sonucu ise bir devletin politikasının iflasından bir milletin geleceğinin politikasızlığından.... başka birşey değildir.

<sup>35</sup> Yeniçağ, 09.08.2005, Özdağ, Ümit. Kıbrıs'da, Avrupa emperyalizmi Yunan-Rum milliyetçiliği ile işbirliği halinde, Kıbrıs'dan kuzu kuzu çekilme ruhu ve hazırlığı içinde olan AKP iktidarı ile örtülü pazarlığı tamamlamış durumda.

<sup>36</sup> Yeniçağ, 09.08.2005, Özdağ, Ümit. Denktas'ın Anadolu'da şehir şehir dolaşarak verdiği konferanslar Türk milliyetçilerini kızdırıyor ve ağlatıyor.

<sup>37</sup> Güneş, 09.03.2004. Türkiye'ye resmen hakaret ediyorlar! Avrupa Parlamentosu'nun hazırladığı ve Strasbourg'da masaya konulacak Kıbrıs Raporu'nda, ordumuza işgalci iftirası atıldılar.

<sup>38</sup> Yeniçağ, 25.02.2005. Sevri Kabul Edin: Avrupa Parlamentosu'nda sözde Ermeni soykırımını, Yunanistan ve Kıbrıs konularını günedeme getiren Parlamenterler Türkiye'nin Sevr Anlaşması'nı kabul etmesini istedi.

<sup>39</sup> Hürriyet, 17.01.2004. Kıbrıs'ta şehit verdiğimiz gerekçesiyle uzlaşi için gerçekçi adımları "vatana ihanet" olarak görüp ayaklananlara sormak isterim: Türkiye'yi tarihinin en güç dönemlerine sokma pahasına,

## Conclusion

The role of the elites has become dominantly visible in Turkish politics from past to the present. Political parties are obliged whether they desire or not to conform this existing nationalist tradition because this is the easiest way to capture the voters and to make them believe their promises. By the time, Turkish governments' EU policy on the sensitive issues of the Turks, especially Kurdish and Cyprus polices which are shaped under the influence of the EU cause the rising of "popular nationalism" that is constructed by the elites in Turkish society.

Therefore, this study tried to show the rising of popular nationalism by the elites against the governments' EU polices which are shaped according to the EU. Here, it is necessary to clarify or narrow down the specification of elites with political elites and intellectual elites who are columnists in different newspapers. These types of elites are more able to promulgate the society than ordinary people, and their speeches, thoughts provoke the people against the government. Also, the popular nationalism refers to nationalism, which has potential threat to manipulate the people easily through the media such as television or newspaper. Thus, the tension of society increases easily by the effects of popular nationalist speeches by the elites.

Critiques and opposition of the political and intellectual elites against the governmental policies indicated the escalated atmosphere in nationalist discourse in Turkey. Therefore, this work empowered the theories of popular nationalism, which contribute the relationship between the elites and nationalism to the body of theoretical knowledge.

However, some other issues may escalate the popular nationalism in Turkey. Turkish public thinks on that way: according to Özkırımlı's research; 29 percentages of the sample group think that the cause of escalating nationalism in Turkey is PKK terrorism, and secondly 17 percentages of the sample group suggested that EU demands led the increase. On the other hand some may claim that even those issues are interrelated.

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