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The Hypocrisy of Official Nationalism: Who is Turk?

This study aims to touch one of the most problematic points of national identity crisis in Turkey, which has been a political and social breakpoint nearly for a century. As a result of establishment period of modern Turkey as a nation state, ‘Turk’ was defined according to a particular ethnic origin; and this ‘new’ definition not only was imposed as a constitutional obligation to all citizens without concerning ethnic, religious or lingual concerns but also has been one of the most prominent bases of national discourse and ideology of Turkish nationalism. However, it has been witnessed in times of social and political crisis regarding with the issues of citizenship and national identity that the definition of the nation as an ethnic identity has been drawn back as a precaution and it has been argued that ‘Turk’ is actually referring to a ‘citizenship’ notion that means; “Everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship”. This paper argues that this discourse of ‘Turk as the citizen’ has only been an official tale leaning on no real policies; and aims to put forward this with a critical discourse analysis of content of three most circulated newspapers of Turkey within the time period of ‘democratic opening’ process when the national identity based on citizenship was frequently sounded by officials.