IDENTITY FORMATION AND THE POLITICAL POWER IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EARLY TURKISH REPUBLIC

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Abstract: This article examines the reasons, consequences and penetration ways of the nationalist movement in the lands that made up the Ottoman Empire. But if many academics have studied this issue and offered an agreed vision of the disruptive effect that nationalism had in the heart of the Ottoman Empire, an evaluation of the impact and consequences that this process had in the population and the political configuration of the new states that appeared after the end of the Turkish domination has not been made. This complicated process, distinguished by the ethnical conflicts in the Balkans and Anatolia in the late Ottoman Empire, led to the elimination of certain ethnical groups from the central territory of the Turkish State, Anatolia, and to its foundation as principal consequence. This paper will focus on the nature of political power in the Ottoman empire with the purpose of, first, exposing how transformation of the political power generate radically different resolution to ethnic conflict and its management and, secondly, demonstrating the impacts of imperial practices in dealing with multi-cultural society on inheritor nation-state practices in the Turkish case.
Keywords: Turkey, Ottoman Empire, Nationalism, ethnical groups, disintegration, millet system.

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Scholars familiar with the modern history of Turkey are fully cognizant of the vital importance of ethnic and national issues throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Numerous studies, general histories and monographies, have attempted to comprehend and explain the dimensions of such very complicated issues through examining various aspects of the process that is considered to begin with the penetration of nationalism into the Ottoman lands and ended with the Ottoman collapse[1]. Although there can be a mention of a consensus on the disruptive impact of such a penetration on the Ottoman territorial integrity and how nationalism became a modernizing force in the Ottoman empire, it is not possible to observe a similar agreement on the final consequences of this development. Characterized by ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and Anatolia in the late Ottoman Empire, this intricate process led the elimination of some ethnic groups from the core territory of the Ottoman state, Anatolia, and the foundation of the Turkish nation-state on its legacy.

Many causes can be underlined for ethnic conflicts that were prevalent in the Ottoman domain at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Disintegration of the Ottoman millet system which classified the population according to religion and provided each recognized religious community to enjoy a high degree internal autonomy and preservation of their ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities[2], social and economic change in the Ottoman society which led the rise of an ethnic division of

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1. For a general overview of various aspects of the period see Zürcher, Erik Jan, *Turkey A Modern History.* London and New York, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1993; Lewis, Bernard, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. London, Oxford University Press, 1968; Berkes, Niyazi, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey.* Montreal, McGill University Press, 1964; Quataert, Donald, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000; Keyder, Çağlar, *State and Class in Turkey A Study in Capitalist Development.* London and New York, Verso, 1987.
2. For the millet system see Ercan, Yavuz, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Gayrimüslimler: Kuruluştan Tanzimat'a Kadar Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Hukuki Durumları* [*The Non-Muslims under the Ottoman Rule: Their Social, Economic and Legal Situation from the*

labor and a bifurcated bourgeoisie[3], intervention of the Great Powers into the Ottoman domestic affairs and their exploitation of ethnic and national questions with the purpose of the establishment of political and economic influence, and, finally, dissemination of nationalism itself among communities with distinct religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics with confusing political agendas over the same territory[4]; all can be considered, together or separately, as major factors for the break out of ethnic conflicts in the late Ottoman Empire. However it is difficult to conceive why these conflicts resulted in the removal of almost all of the Christian population such as the Greeks and Armenians from Anatolia, and why the Turks could succeed to fullfill their political agenda in the final days of the empire by founding a nation-state on the last remained part of the Ottoman territory. There is no doubt that the question that who hold the power and able to mobilize resources of the state during this process has vital importance in answering these questions.

For this reason, this essay will attempt to find answers to such questions by focusing on the nature of political power in the Ottoman empire and the change it underwent during the modernization process with the purpose of, first, exposing how transformation of the political power generate radically different resolution to ethnic conflict and its management and, secondly, demonstrating the impacts of imperial practices in dealing with multi-cultural society on inheritor nation-state practices in the Turkish case.

1. OTTOMAN PATRİMONİALİSM AND THE MİLLET SYSTEM

When the Ottoman Empire came face to face with nationalism, the political power was still in a patrimonial nature that based on the personal delegation of authority by the Sultan. Strengthened and legitimized theoretically by an Islamic ideology, the Sultanate subdivided the society remained out of the rulers' class along the religious lines. While the Muslim communities formed one millet, religious community, the non-Muslims formed three principal communities. These were the Orthodox Greeks, the Armenians and the Jews. These communities had a legally protected status, in which they were granted an extended internal autonomy in financial, judicial and cultural affairs. Religious leaders were the sole representatives of their communities to the Ottoman state. Overviewing the principal characteristics of the millet system, it can be claimed that it organized the multi-cultural Ottoman society on the basis of inequality legally and socially. It is because in this system, the non-Muslim communities had to accept a second class, inferior status as they were granted their lives and given a kind of communal autonomy. In addition, they had to live and behave in a designated manner not to be confused with the Muslims. For example, they had to wear different clothes and live in different neighbourhoods[5]. As Davison aptly states:

"The semiautonomy of the Christian millet's did not, however, mean complete equality among the subjects of the empire. The Muslim millet was dominant. This did not lead to any systematic persecution of Christians by Muslims, nor to any systematic oppression of Christians by the Ottoman government... Despite, all this it was still incontestable that Christians were looked down upon as a second-class citizens both by the Muslim public and by the government"[6].

Foundation to the Tanzimat]. Ankara, Turhan Kitabevi, 2001; Bozkurt, Gülnihal, *Gayrimüslim Osmanlı Vatandaşlarının Hukukî Durumu (1839-1914) [The Legal Situation of the non-Muslim Ottoman Citizens]*. Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1996; for socio-economic basis of the transformation of the system see Karpat, Kemal, *An Inquiry Into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State: From Social Estates to Classes, From Millets to Nations*. Princeton, Center of International Studies, 1973 and his article "Millets and Nationality: the Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the post-Ottoman Era", in Benjamin Braude; Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*. New York, Holmes & MeierPublishers, 1982, 141-169; for the reorganization of the system in the modernization process see Davison, Roderic H., *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*. New York, Gordian Press, 1973, 114-135.
3. Müge Göçek, Fatma, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996.
4. Id., "The Decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Emergence of Greek, Armenian, Turkish, and Arab Nationalisms," in *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*. Albany, State University of New York Press, 2002, 15-84; id., "Ethnic Segmentation, Western Education, and Political Outcomes: Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Society". *Poetics Today*, XIV-3, 507-538.
5. Ortaylı, Ilber, "The Ottoman Millet System and It's [sic] Social Dimensions," in Larsson, Rikard (ed.), *Boundaries of Europe*. Uppsala, Ord & Form, 1998, 121.
6. Davison, Roderic, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century". *The American Historical Review*, LIX-4 (July 1954), 845.

This system did work and provided relatively stable relations among the non-Muslim communities, Muslims and the central government until the nineteenth century when socio-economic and political change within and outside the Ottoman empire forced restructuring of the Ottoman system. Nationalism, as proved by the Serbian uprising of 1804 and Greek rebellion in 1821, became the language of social and political discontent from the Ottoman rule, particularly among the Christian communities.

2. TRANSFORMATİON OF THE OTTOMAN STATE AND THE RİSE OF A NEW ALTERNATE CENTER OF POWER

One of the driving forces for the Ottoman modernization therefore became the nationalist threat toward its integrity. The attempts at modernization began with the initiative of the sultans who still held a patrimonial power. The modernization process which began in the military field in the eighteenth century and covered administrative, educative and legal reforms in the nineteenth century would create an alternative power center within the state in a period of four decades; namely the bureaucracy, which would develop allegiance to the state itself rather than the Sultan himself. As a result the major purpose of reforms aiming at modernization became the salvation of the state, that is preventing the state from decay and preserving its integrity by a modernized, trained by a western outlook bureaucratic elite called Jeunes Turcs (Young Turks), who would led the foundation of contemporary Turkish state[7]. This purpose became the major drive of all reforms until the collapse of the Empire.

With regard to nationality issues, the Ottoman power-holders, beginning with the the so-called Tanzimat Era[8], dated back to 1839 when the Ottoman sultan declared all his subjects as equal, until the end of the empire, followed two main policies. First, resorting to the modern concept of nationhood, they attempted to create a secular supra Ottoman identity and citizenship without distinction of belief, creed or race. In other words, all religious and ethnic groups in the empire were regarded first and foremost Ottomans, regardless of their distinct identities. Second, as this attempt failed and its failure was proved by the constant disintegration of the empire, they strived to ethnic restructuring of the remained territory through a distinct ideology from the imperial rule. In other words, they viewed salvation of the state in a nationalist ideology which would steer them toward removal of other nationalist potentials competing for the same territory.

In sum, management of the ethnic conflict in the Ottoman lands was evolved from creating an inclusive citizenship denoting any ethnic affiliation to an informally exclusive one which, in 1910s, would be a mixture of Muslim-Turkish and by 1923 only Turkish. It was during this transformation that the demographic composition of Anatolia would radically be changed through the deportation and uproot of the Armenian population and expatriation of the most of the Greeks through an exchange of population with Greece[9].

3. THE COMMİTTEE OF UNİON AND PROGRESS İN POWER

Shift from an inclusive to an exclusive polity in dealing with questions emanating from nationality was not a sudden one. It directly related to the rise

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7. For the Young Turks see Mardin, Şerif, *Jön Türklerin Siyasî Fikirleri 1895-1908 [The Political Thinking of the Young Turks]*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1992; Akşin, Sina, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki [The Young Turks and Union and Progress]*. İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi, 1987; Hanioğlu, M. *Şükrü, The Young Turks in Opposition*. New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.

8. The Tanzimat era is usually considered as the one begins with the declaration of Gülhane Charter (1839) which stimulated modernization process and ends with the declaration of Kanun-ı Esasi, the First Constitution (1876). The reforms of this era is distinguished by the focus on judicial renovation and the development of consultative procedures by the establishment of central and provincial councils as well as the attempt to improve the position of non-Muslim communities. See Zürcher, Erik Jan, *Turkey...*, op. cit., 52-74 and Davison, Roderic, *Reform...*, op. cit.

9. In January 1923, for the first time in history, authorities of two states, the Turkish and Greek states signed a Convention on compulsory exchange of populations. Internationally sanctioned, the Convention stipulated the exchange of "Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory." For the full text of the Convention see Hirschon, Renèe (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*. New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2003, 282-287. As a result of the Convention, over a million Orthodox population of Turkey exchanged with approximately four-hundred thousand Muslim of Greece. See Ladas, Stephen P., *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1932.

of Turkish nationalism[10] which would influence mainly the civil and military cadres of the Ottoman state who were predominantly Muslim Turks and gathered under the umbrella of the Committee of Union and Progress [hereafter CUP], a society that had been founded secretly as İttihad-ı Osmani (Ottoman Union) by Ottoman military cadets in 1889. Although at its foundation and during its initial development, the Committee could not be labeled as Turkish organization, by July 1908, when it seized the power through a constitutional revolution, it had almost entirely took a Turkish character[11]. Nevertheless, the Committee seemed as a firm supporter of Ottomanness (Osmanlıcılık), the ideal of creating a supra Ottoman identity, following the revolution.

Therefore, creating a citizenship in modern sense basing on individual rights and responsibilites seemed the official policy of the CUP just after holding the power. However Ottomanist ideal of the Unionists encompassed, on the contrary of previous Ottomanist implementations which, rather than omitting the communal barriers of the millet system, strengthened them and led the reproduction of the system within changing circumstances, complete socialization of every subject into an Ottoman citizen. This was attempted to be done through a more centralized administrative and educational system imposing the Ottoman Turkish as the offical language and curbing internal autonomies as well as privileges of the communities embedded in the millet system. To this end, through a series of laws enacted in the Parliament, the CUP had banned the establishment of political clubs or associations having an ethnic or national resonance, imposed Turkish as compulsory language in all elementary educational institutions and decided for the conscription of non-Muslims into military service by the end of 1909[12].

Communities with distinct ethnic identities comprising even the non-Turkish but Muslim Ottomans reacted to the central government and claimed that such measures aimed the Turkification of the non-Turks due to the "dominant" role assigned to the Turkish element[13]. Resisting to centralizing measures of the CUP, the Albanians, for example, led an insurrection beginning in 1910, which ended with the foundation of independent Albania. This was actually the most important signal for the power-holders that preserving the empire through the creation of an Ottoman identity was impossible since the Albanians, who had a good share in the so-called Young Turk Revolution of 1908, were the first Muslim group to rebel with nationalist claim in the empire.

On this occasion, the CUP, though covertly, leaned more to Turkish nationalism. However its rupture from creating an inclusive Ottoman identity came off when the Ottoman state confronted with domestic and international crisis in 1912-13. Domestically challenged by the rise of opposition and internationally squeezed by both the Balkan states, which had declared war against it, and the Great Powers setting forth the Armenian Reform issue, the Unionists seized the power by a coup d'etat in January 1913 and monopolized it until the end of the First World War in 1918. Having full control of the political power and a firm control on the milita-

10. For Turkish nationalism see Kushner, David, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism.* London, Frank Cass, 1977; Georgeon, François, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935) [The Origins of Turkish Nationalism: Yusuf Akçura]*. Ankara, Yurt Yayınları, 1986; Heyd, Uriel, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp.* London, Luzac&Company Ltd and the Harvill Press, 1950.

11. Ottoman Union was not founded as Turkish organization; rather, it reflected multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-religious framework of the Ottoman Empire. Actually, none of its founders were ethnically Turk. It composed members of Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Jewish, Armenian, Bulgarian and Albanian origin. See Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü, *The Young...*, op. cit., 168; Karpat, Kemal H., "The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism". *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 6 (1975), 279. However following the split of the Committee into two in 1902, nationalist faction began to dominate and focus on Turkish nationalism increased. Merging with the Ottoman Freedom Society which composed of the army officers situated in Macedonia and Thrace in 1906 completed its shift to Turkish nationalism. Those who engaged in the constitutional revolution belonged primarily to the nationalist faction of the CUP composing Muslim-Turkish officers whose aim was to invigorate the Ottoman state within Turkish nationalist aspirations. Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü, *The Young...*, op. cit., 211; Zürcher, Erik Jan, *Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement.* Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1984, 22-23.

12. Feroz, Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914.* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 61-62.

13. Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü, "Turkish Nationalism and the Young Turks, 1889-1908", in Fatma Müge Göçek (ed.), *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*. Albany, State University of New York Press, 2002, 94.

ry and bureaucracy as well as being the only party with a widespread local organization provided the Unionist leaders with a free hand for decision-making and implementation in a time when they were unequivocally determined to rest the Ottoman state on a Turkish foundation.

As the Great War broke out and the Ottoman State allied with the Central Powers, the CUP found the opportunity to implement its nationalist program which, above all, aimed providing the demographic superiority of the Turkish ethnicity in Anatolia and strengthening this ethnicity economically. Demographic superiority of the Turks was to be provided through coercive measures against the non-Muslims with a sizeable population in Anatolia, the Greeks and the Armenians. The deportation of these groups and resettlement of Muslim refugees in evacuated places were the principal means to this end. Ethnicity was still the most important criterion in resettlement as the resettlement program even stipulated the dispersion of non-Turkish Muslim ethnic groups among the Turks in a way that their population should not exceed five or ten per cent of the Turkish population[14]. Economic nationalism of the CUP, which was invoked at the same time, was to develop Muslim/Turkish enterprises at the extent of the Greeks and the Armenians who were occupying commerce and industrial professions in the Ottoman Empire, and to form a Muslim/Turkish bourgeoisie which was to be the basic foundation of the state[15]. This was the

requirement to be "economically independent of internal and external rivals"[16].

Implementation of such a nationalist program by a civil-military elite with a social Darwinist outlook that had been procured by militarist and nationalist German military doctrines[17] and experienced in competing ethnic nationalisms in Macedonia in the earlier years of the twentieth century and accompanying foreign intervention, and in constant struggle of suppressing rebellions and of wars against irredentist expansion of neighbor states led to a widespread use of violence by the Ottoman state against its citizens as it can clearly be seen in the Armenian case[18]. It was probably because, all these experiences proved to the political elite that the state was in a struggle for survival and taught them to adopt "a culture and politics of violence" as instruments of achieving their goals[19].

The CUP's Turkification policy of Anatolia seemed to be quite successful, especially when the demographic composition of Anatolia is considered in 1920s. Execution of a full-scale demographic engineering policy led to the creation of the Turkish nation-state on territory inhabited by ninety-eight per cent Muslim population in the aftermath of an interregnum era during which the Turkish nationalists gave a hard struggle to preclude ethnic remapping of Anatolia. Then, the question arises is that: Did the end of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual Ottoman Empire as a political enti-

14. Dündar, Fuat, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskân Politikası (1913-1918) [The Muslim Settlement policy of the Union and Progress]*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

15. Ziya Gökalp's words criticizing Ottomanism exhibits well the nationalist outlook. He claims that it was the Turks who had most suffered from Ottomanism since the Christians and Jews had occupied economic key positions in commerce, industry and the crafts while Muslims who were the ruling millet in the Ottoman Empire remained as peasants, government officials and soldiers. As a result, "while the poor Turks inherited from the Ottoman Empire nothing but a broken sword and an old-fashioned plough, there arose among the non-Muslim communities, which had no part in the Government, a wealthy bourgeoisie with European education. The Muslims produced no such class possessing the qualifications required of rulers, notably education, initiative and organizing abilities". Heyd, Uriel, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp*. London, Luzac&Company Ltd and the Harvill Press, 1950, 73-74.

16. Berkes, Niyazi, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. Montreal, McGill University Press, 1964, 335. For the details of this policy see Toprak, Zafer, *Millî İktisat Millî Burjuvazi [National Economy National Bourgeoisie]*. İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995.

17. For the socialization of the Young Turks along with militarist and nationalist German doctrines see Nezir, Handan, *Aspects of the Social and Political Thought of the Ottoman Military, 1908-1914*. Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the University of Manchester, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, 2001.

18. During the First World War, the Ottoman government decided to deport the Armenian population. Legitimized by military reasons, the deportation caused the death of about six-eight hundred thousand of Armenians through massacres, epidemics, starvation, etc. Whether the tragic end of Armenian existence in Anatolia by the act committed by the government was a genocide or not is still the hottest issue between the Armenians and the Turkish government. A wide literature exist on the deportation and massacres of the Armenians.

19. Gawrych, George W., "The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish Society, 1903-1914". *Middle Eastern Studies*, XXII-3 (July 1986), 307-330.

ty mean the end of these aspects of the society in Turkey?

4. NATION-BUILDING IN THE EARLY TUR-KISH REPUBLIC

The answer is naturally no. The official census of 1935 demonstrates well the religious and linguistic diversity in Turkey. It counts 16.157.450 people in Turkey. While the Muslims were an overwhelming majority, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Gregorian Armenians, Catholics, Protestants were represented with considerable numbers. Linguistically, the Turkish language was the most spoken one. Besides Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Greek, Circassian, Laze, Armenian, Georgian, Judeo-Spanish, Pomak, Bosnian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Tatar, Spanish, Abkhazian, Romanian and French were the languages spoken by various ethno-religious communities[20]. Management of such a society, which undoubtedly had distinct cultural, creedal and linguistic traits besides ethnicity, until recent years when Turkey began to endeavor for the integration with the European Union, was accordingly with the principles settled by the founders of Turkish nation-state, the so-called principles of Kemalism, with a strong nationalist fervor in 1920-1930s. On the contrary to the Ottoman state which had formally recognized multi-cultural characteristics of its society, the nationalist elite of the early Turkish Republic rejected such aspects and led an assimilation program in order to create an "imagined" Turkish identity under the impact of the late Ottoman experiences and the legacy of the millet system.

With its founding treaty, namely the Treaty of Lausanne (July 1923), Turkey accepted all its non-Muslim citizens as minorities. In the constitution which was enacted in 1924, citizenship was defined as Turkish and claimed to be a constitutional supra-national identity for the inhabitants of Tur-

key: "The people of Turkey, regardless of religion and race, are Turks as regards citizenship"[21]. With this definition, one of the ethnic groups of Turkey actually became the appellation for all inhabitants; however, as stated in the Constitution, ethnic origin was not a precondition to be accepted as Turk and being a Turk came to mean dependence to a political community. However this did not necessarily satisfy the criteria for being accepted as "Turk". In other words, coming ethnically from Turkish origin was more important than being a citizen of Turkey as many practices proved this[22]. Therefore, Turkish nationalism of 1920s and 1930s seems both inclusive and exclusive one or by Poulton's words, it was "a mixture of [Anthony] Smith's two variants –the 'ethnic' and the 'territorial'[23]. It was inclusive because it was not based entirely on ethnicity or racial origin and formally left opened the way for becoming "Turk" through cultural and linguistic assimilation. It was exclusive at the same time since it was overtly based on ethnicity and defined the "Turk" in ethnic, cultural, linguistic and moral values of the Turks in Central Asia. This definition emerged out of "a series of official conferences" which eventually were systemized in Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory[24].

Turkish History Thesis signified the significant role attributed to history in nation building in Turkey on the one hand, and the particular focus given to racial characteristics in defining nationality on the other. The main institution that led studies on the History of Turks was the Society for the Study of Turkish History (Türk Tarihini Tetkik Cemiyeti), which was founded upon Mustafa Kemal's instruction in 1931. Besides disseminating Turkish national history to the Turkish people, the Society was also to lead historical research on Turkish language, through establishment of a committee, the Society for the Study of the Turkish Language (Türk Dili tetkik Cemiyeti), with the purpose of

20. *İstatistik Yıllığı [Statistical Yearbook].* Vol. X. Ankara, Başbakanlık İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1938-1939, 64-65, quoted in Cagaptay, Soner, "Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s". *Middle Eastern Studies*, XL-3 (May 2004), 93. A study which appeared just sixteen years ago counted about forty-seven ethnic groups in Turkey. Among these, there are Turks, Jews, Christians, Kurds, Arabs, Albanians, Circassians etc. See Alford Andrews, Peter, *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey.* Wiesbaden, Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1989.
21. Kili, Suna; Gözübüyük, Şeref, *Turk Anayasa Metinleri [Turkish Constitutional Texts].* İstanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2000, 138.
22. For an analysis between the relation of citizenship and ethnic origin in Turkey see Yeğen, Semut, Yurttaşlık ve Türklük" [Citizenship and Turkishness]. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 93 (Summer 2002), 200-217.
23. Poulton, Hugh, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic.* London, Hurst & Company, 1997, 97.
24. Cagaptay, Soner, "Race..", op. cit., 86.

demonstrating that "the Turkish language was the most influential factor in the development and progress of all the world languages"[25]. To these efforts, books on Turkish history were written by leading intellectuals and History and Language Congresses were convened as a result of which Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory was formulated. While the History Congress suggested that the Turks were the descendants of the founders of important civilizations in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Egypt and the Aegean and thus implying that many major nations descended from the Turks and claimed that all inhabitants of Anatolia were Turks, the Language Congress asserted that most major languages in the world were of Turkish origin[26].

Thus the historical and linguistic studies in 1930s demonstrated that race and language would be inseparable components of Turkish national identity. Viewing the society as an organic whole, a homogenous entity, in a corporatist manner, this identity was also suggested to be a secular, modern and Western oriented one highlighting Turkish culture as the most important tie that bound the society together[27]. In this respect, what expected from the non-Turks, both Muslims, particularly the Kurds, and non-Muslims, was a complete assimilation to this identity. In other words, they were to be Turkified.

In 1920s and 1930s, it is possible to trace the practices of a culturally and linguistically assimilative policy rendered by civil but military originated political cadre which firmly established its power through a mono-party regime[28]. An illustrative example of this kind of policy can be seen in 1925 when the Turkish political elites held a systematic pressure on the leadership of the non-Muslim communities to renounce their internationally guaranteed privileges granted in the Lausanne Treaty, specifically Article 42, which regulated the individual and family status of non-Muslims in Turkey. Permitting non-Muslim minorities to settle their familial or personal affairs, such as marriage, in conformity with their customs and stipulating the Turkish Government to undertake measures to this end, this article was demanded to be null and void by the government with the claim for modernization[29]. As a matter of fact, modernity and nationalism went hand in hand in the context of the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic. Whenever political leaders aimed to curb the privileges or internal autonomy of ethnic, linguistic and cultural communities, they attempted to do it in a modernization discourse. The above case is not an exemption in point. The Turkish government laid its claim for renunciation of Article 42 from the Greek, Jewish and Armenian communities on the adoption of a universal code in civil affairs; namely, the Swiss Civil Code, which necessitated a new family and personal status as it made civil marriage compulsory. For this reason, it pressed the religious leaders to renounce formally the right of their community rights on family and personal affairs, which was one of the most important minority rights that had been granted centuries ago by the Ottomans. On the pressures coming from the government, the Jewish, Armenian and Greek communities announced renunciation of Article 42 respectively in September and October 1925[30].

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25. Ibid., 87-88.

26. Ibid., 88-90, Poulton, Hugh, *Top hat...*, op. cit., 102; also see Ersanli Behar, Büşra, İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye'de "Resmi Tarih" Tezinin Oluşumu (1919-1937) [Power and History: The Formation of "Official History" Thesis in Turkey]. İstanbul, Afa Yayınları, 1992.

27. For an analysis of Turkish national identity as formulated in 1930s see Bora, Tanil, "İnşa Döneminde Türk Millî Kimliği [Turkish National Identity during its Construction Period]", in *Türk Sağının Üç Hâli [Three Casts of the Turkish Right]*. İstanbul, Birikim Yayınları, 1998, 13-52.

28. From 1923 to 1931 there were mainly two attempts at the establishment of multi-party rule, which failed. By 1931, the Republican People's Party, founded by Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] in 1923 and today the main opposition party in the Assembly, became the sole power. It was an alliance of civil-military bureaucracy, intellectuals, enterpreneurs and big landowners. Its monopoly of power ended in the aftermath of the end of the World War II. For the establishment of mono-party regime see Tunçay, Mete, T.C'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931) [The Establishment of Mono-Party Rule in the Turkish Republic]. İstanbul, Cem Yayınevi, 1992.

29. For clauses of the Lausanne Treaty concerning minorities see Meray, Seha L. (trans.), Lozan Barış Konferansı Tutanaklar Belgeler [Lausanne Peace Conference: Minutes Documents]. İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001, 10-13; for English version see Alexandris, Alexis, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974*. Athens, Center for Asia Minor Studies and Alexis Alexandris, 1992, 320-323.

30. For details on the Greek community see ibid., 135-139; on the Jews see Levi, Avner, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler [The Jews in the Turkish Republic]*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1996; Bali, Rifat N., *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri:*

Another field of assimilation was language. Turkish had been the official language since 1876, when the first constitution was declared in the Ottoman Empire. During the nation-building process, besides being the official language, speaking the Turkish language was viewed the most important precondition to be qualified for Turkish nationality. This is clear from the words of the founder of the Turkish nation-state; namely, Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk][31], which read:

One of the significant characteristics of the nation is language. One, who regards himself as a member of the Turkish nation, should first of all and in every case, speak Turkish. If, someone, who does not speak Turkish, claims membership to Turkish culture and community, it would not be right to believe in this[32].

In accordance with this understanding, the usage of other languages rather than Turkish in public was banned and campaign for the usage of Turkish were inaugurated under the motto "citizen, speak Turkish" by the Turkish Hearth Organization[33], in 1928 and maintained throughout 1930s with the involvement of the Turkish dailies. Although the chief target was the Jews, non-Turkish Muslims such as Kurds, Arabs and Circassians also felt the impact of the campaign[34].

Turkification policy in the early Turkish Republic was not restricted to legal, linguistic and cultural fields. It also covered the economic field. As the continuation of the policy of the CUP, which had triggered nationalization of economy through creating a Muslim-Turkish class of entrepreneurs at the extent of non-Muslim bourgeoisie, the Republican regime adopted also a nationalist policy in economic life aiming to curb the influence of non-Muslim minorities, particularly the Jews, in commercial life and open place to the Turks[35].

The most influenced ethnic group from assimilative policy of the Turkish government among the Muslims was probably the Kurds. Although their affiliation to the Ottoman central state had largely been provided through the Islamic bond symbolized by the Caliphate and a common non-Muslim threat marked by the Armenian nationalist movement in the eastern Anatolia[36], the Kurds appeared as the most resisting ethnic group against radical measures taken by the Republican elites for secularization and Turkification. Both removal of the Caliphate in March 1924 and an inclination to Turkish nationalism by the power-holders following the end of the National Struggle in 1922 shattered the tie between the central government and the Kurds[37]. Resistance to such measures came in 1925 when a religious and nationalist rebellion broke out in Southeastern part of Turkey, largely inhabited by Kurdish population, under the leadership of a religious leader named Şeyh Sait[38]. The rebellion was suppressed harshly and its leader was executed. In

Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945) [The Jews of Turkey during the Republican Years: A Venture of Turkification]. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2000, 59-77.

31. For a comprehensive bibliography of Mustafa Kemal see Mango, Andrew, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*. Woodstock and New York, The Overlook Press, 1999.

32. Quoted in Cagaptay, Soner, "Race...", op. cit., 89.

33. From its foundation in 1912 until its closure in 1931, this organization carried on the mission of popularizing the Turkish nationalist ideology through social and cultural activities. See Üstel, Füsun, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931) [Turkish Nationalism from Empire into Nation-State: The Turkish Hearths]*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1997.

34. Bali, Rifat N., *Cumhuriyet..., op. cit.*, 105-109, 131-164; Cagaptay, Soner, "Race...", op. cit., 93-96.

35. Bali, Rifat N., *Cumhuriyet..., op. cit.*, 196-242. see also Okutan, M. Çağatay, *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları [Policies toward Minorities during the Mono-Party Era]*. İstanbul, Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004, 195-226.

36. The Ottoman government began to use efficiently the Kurds as a balancing power against the Armenian nationalists in the late nineteenth century. See Duguid, Stephen, "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," Middle Eastern Studies, IX-2 (May 1973), 139-155. This policy was maintained by the the CUP, especially during the First World War. As a result, the Kurds were largely involved in the Armenian massacres of 1915-1916. Madhar Ahmad, Kemal, *Kurdistan During the First World War*. London, Saqi Books, 1994. Following the end of the war, they closely cooperated with the Turkish nationalists against a possible establishment of an Armenian state comprising eastern Anatolia.

37. For an evaluation see Bozarslan, Hamit, "Türkiye'de Kürt Milliyetçiliği: Zımnî Sözleşmeden Ayaklanmaya 1919-1925 [Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: From Tacit Contract to Rebellion]", in Erik Jan Zürcher (ed.), *İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete Türkiye'de Etnik Çatışma [From Empire to Republic: Ethnic Conflict in Turkey]*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2005, 89-122.

38. Olson, Robert, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1989; Van Bruinessen, Martin, Agha, *Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan.* London and New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd, 1992, 265-305.

the following the Turkish government attempted to control the regions inhabited by the Kurds through centralizing and military measures. At the same time, it triggered a resettlement program aiming to disperse the Kurdish population among the Turks. Targeted the tribal chieftains initially, this measure was generalized to include all Kurds through an enactment of law in 1934[39]. Although the law remained far from an efficient implementation, it theoretically designated dislocation of population of non-Turkish culture with the purpose of assimilating them into Turkish culture.

CONCLUSION

It is possible to increase the examples aiming assimilation of non-Turkish groups in Turkey. At this point, however, it seems more convenient to argue that the power elite of the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic favored pragmatic, insincere, assimilative and repressive measures in dealing with a heterogeneous social fabric. Therefore, state and nation-building process in Turkey, as probably in many other places in the world, was signified by the quest for the definition of the constituencies of "imagined" nation. Such definition inevitably depended on the type of nationalism that the power holders had ultimately adopted. In the late Ottoman and Turkish case, an oscillation between civic-territorial and ethnic nationalisms can be observed. While legal transformation within the modernization process and the political discourse of the elites referred to civic-territorial nationalism, their practices indicated an overtly ethnic nationalism.

In this framework, it can be concluded that the concept of citizenship promoted by the founders of the Turkish nation-state was actually in accordance with the Ottoman pragmatic concept of citizenship.

In Ottomanism, although all communities were equal on paper, the Muslims were considered as the dominant and ruling community. For this reason, many reforms aiming to provide equality of non-Muslims with Muslims failed. Actually, many of the leading reformers were not convinced that a non-Muslim could be equal to a Muslim. At this point, it has to be underlined that Islamic identity is considered as proto-Turkish identity since Muslim was usually identified with Turkish and vice versa. Therefore, it is not surprising to see positioning of the Turkish ethnicity as the supreme and therefore preponderant to rule in 1930s as the Muslim identity had been done within the framework of egalitarian citizenship in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Secondly, Ottomanism was essentially an assimilative policy aiming political integration of separatist elements to the state by granting them some rights in pragmatic manner, which actually provided the maintenance of distinct communal identities but with little share of political power as the army and the bureaucracy never ceased to be filled with Muslims and actually Turks. Similarly, Turkish nationalism of 1920-1930s was assimilative but with a subtle difference. It aimed entirely to socialize non-Turks as "Turks" through changing their cultural and linguistic traits without allowing them to maintain their distinct identities.

Finally, as a mark of the barrier that the Turkish power-holders put in relations of the state to ethnically non-Turks, it should be pointed out that they have rarely allowed non-ethnic Turks to join higher ranks of the military and civil bureaucracy although legally there is no restriction. As a matter of fact, such sections of the government have exclusively been reserved to ethnically Turks.

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39. *İskân Kanunu [Resettlement Law],* 14 June 1934, Law nº 2510. Düstur [Code of Laws], 3rd Series, vol. XV, 1156-1175.