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Compulsory religion education and religious minorities in Turkey

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Citation for published version (APA):

Müftügil, A. S. (2011). Compulsory religion education and religious minorities in Turkey.

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Chapter 2

Religious education during the Late Ottoman Period: Historical Background

This chapter examines the development of Ottoman education policies from the early Tanzimat era to the end of the Empire. It also looks at the creation and evolution of a notion of ‘citizenship’ based on its Western conceptions, one that had important implications for education policies. Although my overarching arguments are related to compulsory religion education and its specific consequences for religious minorities in modern Turkey, this chapter places that problem in historical context by showing the dynamics of the formation of the modern Turkish education system. To make sense of the larger development of Turkish education policy, it is important to note that there were both continuities, and breaks, between the various policies adopted by Tanzimat (1839-1876) reformers, Abdulhamid (1876-1908) and the Young Turk (1908-1918) regime. Moreover, it was during these particular historical periods that the education system was secularized and centralized, and the problem of how to deliver religious education came under greater scrutiny.

In this section, my main focus will be Ottoman Public Education. However, I will briefly examine the education policies of the different *millet*s, Jewish, Armenian and Greek, in order to look at the ways in which these differing policies interacted with, and helped to shape Ottoman Public education. I will also look at developments in Alevi education policy. Although the Alevis did not constitute a *millet* with its own internal organization, their experience of religious education is treated extensively in this thesis and therefore, some understanding of Alevi policy is important.

I propose to analyse all these debates against the backdrop of rising nationalisms in the late Ottoman era. More specifically, I argue that the legacy of these nationalisms contributed to the collapse of the Empire and also impacted on the behavior of the modern Turkish state towards its religious minorities. This chapter is organized in accordance with the three main historical periods it covers: the Tanzimat era, the Abdulhamid era and the Young Turk era. The reason for this periodization is that each of these periods can be associated with particular ideological developments that had clear implications for education policies. This does not mean that the boundaries between these ideologies were always clear. Indeed, each set of discourses evolved out of the previous ones, as can be seen, for example when we examine the close similarities between education policies in the Abdulhamid and Young Turk periods.

2.1 Westernization and the Ottoman Empire

Westernization in the Ottoman Empire has been regarded as one of the key factors in influencing the religious component of the education system. Prior to the changes brought by process of Westernization, education consisted mainly of religious instruction. Therefore this section begins with an analysis of Westernization in the Ottoman context, examining the military and civil reforms that would eventually impact on thinking about education.¹

During the Tulip era² (1718-1730), the effects of war, commerce and the Enlightenment concept of civilization began to shape the parameters of Ottoman social change. Increasingly, the Ottoman sultans acted in response to processes of, also shaped by these parameters, were cast within the context of Ottoman Westernization and the eighteenth and nineteenth century adoption of Western goods, institutions, and ideas.³

The first deliberate attempts to imitate and adopt selected elements from the societies of Western Europe began in the early eighteenth century.⁴ The treaties of Carlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) drew attention to two important defeats of the Ottoman Empire by the Austrians and their allies. “On the other hand, the example of Russia under Peter the Great suggested that a vigorous program of Westernization and Modernization might enable the

¹ The term ‘westernization’ also requires explanation. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the increasing role of science and technology that defined the West, westernization became a measure of those societies deemed to be “developed and progressive” and those seen as ‘underdeveloped’. (Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996, p. 6) A Euro-centric perspective, the meaning of “Westernization evolved to refer to the transformations societies underwent to become like the West” (ibid p. 5). Thus, westernization has come to mean the adoption of the socio-economic and cultural attributes of the West. However, Westernization can also be seen as an “imagined construct with each receiving society defining it to its own experience”. (Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, p.5) Here, the term appears to grant greater agency to individual states, allowing for a more localized and culturally specific historical course. In this respect, I agree with Fortna's assertion that Ottoman Westernization should be understood not only by examining the Ottoman adoption of western values, but also the *adaptation* of those values according to the Ottoman context. This premise becomes much more meaningful when we look at the realm of education because here it becomes clear that, in the Ottoman context, educational reform was not an external concept that inevitably “happened” to a passive Ottoman Empire. According to Fortna, “if the concept of new-style education served as a shared panacea, it was the state's pragmatic fusion of the new pedagogy with Ottoman and Islamic elements that informed educational developments on the ground”. (Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, p.5) In sum, my reading of Ottoman education policies will operate with a broader conception of westernization that does not see Ottoman modernization as the outcome of the struggle between the enlightened elites and the backward/corrupt military, societal and religious forces in Ottoman society.

² The Tulip Era lasted from 1718 to the rebellion of Patrona Halil in 1730. This was a relatively peaceful period during which the Ottoman Empire began to turn towards Europe. The name of the period derives from the tulip craze among Ottoman court society.

³ Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996, p. 4.

⁴ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford UP, 1961, p. 45.

Empire to throw off its weakness and once again become the terror of its enemies”.⁵ Thus the earliest Westernization efforts occurred in the military realm during the reign of Selim III who sought to modernize the army along European lines. These efforts were hampered by reactionary movements led partly by religious figures, but primarily by the Janissary⁶ corps. Selim's efforts to discard the Janissaries were unsuccessful, eventually costing him his throne and his life. In 1826 Mahmud II abolished the Janissary corps and instituted the modern Ottoman army known as “The Victorious Mohammedan Soldiers” (*Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*). Following the loss of the Ottoman *Vilayet* of Greece after the Battle of Navarino against the combined British-French-Russian fleets in 1827, Mahmud II gave top priority to rebuilding a strong Ottoman naval force.

Alongside the newly established institutions, the formation of a system of public secular education was identified as a key objective. Selim III and Mahmut II had developed technical academies to train officers, administrators, engineers, doctors, and other professionals. It soon became clear that students needed better training in the essential areas of mathematics, science and foreign languages.⁷ There was a growing appreciation for a more secular approach to education, not only for the military and governmental realms, but also for the range of professions and institutions that make up civil society. “Ottoman reformers regarded the basic aim of a modern school system not merely in practical terms, but also from the political (to create patriotic sentiments), cultural, as well as from the economic (to increase the industrial and artisanal production) points of views. Such an at least “ideally” comprehensive outlook is indicative for the civil character of the school system envisaged by Ottoman bureaucrats”.⁸

2.2 Ottoman public education before and during Tanzimat

During the 18th century, the weakening of central government exacerbated the tendency of the Ottoman state to rely on Islamic orthodoxy as a source of political legitimation.⁹ Both Selim III and Mahmud II passed decrees emphasizing religious firmness.¹⁰ Somel argues that in the early Mahmudian era, religious education was used as a means of

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Janissaries were infantry units that formed the Ottoman sultan's household troops and bodyguard. The force originated in the 14th century; it was abolished by Sultan Mahmud II in 1826.

⁷ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II*, New York: Cambridge UP, 1977, p. 106.

⁸ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 30.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

¹⁰ Ibid.

political control. He concludes that the decree (*ferman*) on compulsory religious education, dated 1824-1825, may be considered as part of the policy of social discipline.¹¹ The *ferman* stated that at the level of the traditional Koran Schools, compulsory public education must be introduced in Istanbul and its vicinity, in order to strengthen religious knowledge among the population. Although Somel accepts that the *ferman* may have been a reflection of *ulema*¹² opinion or that the sultan sought the expansion of literacy through the teaching of religious discourse, this decree certainly indicates that, “in contrast to the conventional historiography, Islam as a culture and institution was not viewed by the early *Tanzimat* reformers as a hindrance or burden to overcome”.¹³ Indeed, in this early phase, the ruling elites could probably only conceive of primary education as part of the larger project of religious education. Until 1856, there was state support for the increase in the number of traditional Koran schools, a fact which helps to explain “why an efficient educational administration was never tried to be set up before 1856, why early government schools had a clearly professional character, or why the issue of education was never touched upon in the reform edict of 1839”.¹⁴

In the Ottoman Empire, traditional *sibyan/ibtidai* schools, which lasted for four years, were considered to be the primary level of education where pupils were taught reading, writing, which taught how to read and write and the main teachings of Islam. While some *sibyan* schools were exclusively for boys or girls, there were also *sibyan* schools that offered mixed-sex education. These schools were generally established near the mosques of every district. After the *sibyan* schooling, pupils could either go on to study in *medreses* or enter directly into work. *Medreses* offered education in today’s high school and university level which raised the needed statesmen, scholar, judges, doctors and the like for the Empire. The teachers at *sibyan* schools ordinarily had to be graduates of *medreses*. Since women were not accepted to the *medreses*, it was common for those who wanted to pursue further education to take private lessons in desired subjects.

During the reign of Mahmud II, another level of school was added to the *sibyan* schools; originally called *sinif-i sani*, these were later renamed *rüşdiye* schools. It was not until 1848 that these schools came into being which lasted for different time of periods in different times: for four years when it was established, six years after the opening of

¹¹ Ibid., p. 25.

¹² Ulema refers to the educated class of Muslim legal scholars engaged in the several fields of Islamic studies.

¹³ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 25.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

*Darulmaarif*¹⁵, five years in 1863, four years in 1869 and then shortened for a period of three years with the arrangements in 1892.¹⁶ The aim of *rüşdiyyes* was to provide an intensive educational experience that built upon the education given in *sibyan* schools. The specific objective was to produce civil servants who not only mastered religious knowledge, but also practical and secular knowledge of various subjects. When first established, these schools only offered courses in the Koran, Arabic, accountancy, geometry and writing. After 1869, the number of courses increased dramatically and included foreign language options. However, because of shortages of funding and trained personnel, fewer than sixty new schools opened during the first half of the nineteenth century. Until 1859, there was no educational institution for girls above the level of *sibyan* schools. In 1859, *rüşdiyyes* for girls were finally established, with the first one located in Sultanahmet, Istanbul.

In 1845, one other level of school, *idadis*, was established as a preparatory for young boys who wanted to attend the War Academy in Istanbul. Mehmedoğlu asserts that by contemporary standards, these schools would fall somewhere between *rüşdiyyes* and professional schools.¹⁷ After 1863, in these schools French as a foreign language was introduced from 1863 onwards and the curriculum was geared to preparing boys for military careers.

Until 1839 and Tanzimat, there is no known document addressing the need to reform public education. However, following the Tanzimat, there was a growing tendency to abandon traditional approaches and to create new institutions in the educational field.¹⁸ In 1846, before the Reform Edict, a “Council of Public Education” (*Meclis-i Maarif-i Umumiye*) had been formed to act as a permanent, central body for the consideration of educational issues. In the same year, a “Directorate of Public Schools” (*Mekatib-i Umumiye Nezareti*) had been formed in order to add an additional executive body to supervise the various reforms. In 1857, after the Reform Edict, the “Ministry of Public Education” (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti*) was founded and empowered to establish an Empire-wide school system.¹⁹

The *medrese* served as a basis of *ulema* power, taught traditional subjects in traditional

¹⁵ Darülmaarif was designed as a higher-level institution that lasted for three years and prepared students for Darülfunun (today's University level education). It was established in 1850 and it was under the network of government secondary schools.

¹⁶ Yurdagül Mehmedoğlu, *Tanzimat Sonrasında Okullarda Din Eğitimi [Religion Education in Schools in the Aftermath of the Tanzimat]*. Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, 2001, p. 134.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁸ For a thorough study of religious education during Tanzimat, see: Zengin, Zeki Salih. *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Örgün Eğitim Kurumlarında Din Eğitimi ve Öğretimi, 1839-1876 [Religion education and instruction in the formal education institutions during the Tanzimat]*. Ankara: MEB, 2006.

¹⁹ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 43.

ways, and continued to monopolize elementary education for Muslims. Their graduates were not adequately prepared for the new technical education. The solution was to establish a secular elementary school system.²⁰ As Tanzimat bureaucrats began to press for a secularized system of education, the *ulemas* began to lose influence over policy decisions relating to Islamic primary education.²¹ As a result, both formal and vocational educational institutions began to take priority over *medreses*.

In this context, the Reform Edict of 1856 (*Islahat Fermani*) takes on an added importance for Ottoman public education. The Reform Edict was followed by a series of reforms that led to the passage of the “Regulation of Public Education” (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) in 1869.²² The Reform Edict stated that previous reforms were to be applied to all subjects of the Empire, without distinction of class or religion, for the security of their persons and property and the preservation of their honor. In the educational realm, this meant that all subjects of the Empire must have equal opportunity to be admitted to Ottoman civil and military schools. In addition, the Edict proclaimed the right of every recognized religious community to establish its own schools, provided that these schools operate under state supervision.

Thereafter, moves to establish a modern school system accelerated, with the development of state education, including non-Muslim schools, under better-coordinated government control.²³ In 1856, the “Mixed Educational Council” (*Meclis-i Muhtelif-i Maarif*) was founded—again as a result of the Reform Edict—in order to enable non-Muslim communities to open their own schools. This body was composed of Muslim and non-Muslim representatives (six members: one Muslim, one Greek Orthodox, one Gregorian Armenian, one Catholic, one Protestant and one Jew), and had the authority to determine the quality of schools, the curricula and the selection of instructors.²⁴ In relation to this development and as I have already noted, the Council of Public Education organized Ottoman education into three levels. At the level of primary education (*sibyan* schools) the language of instruction was determined as the language of the community.²⁵ The curricula should consist primarily of religious subjects, with Muslims and non-Muslims taught separately during the period of

²⁰ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II*, New York: Cambridge UP, 1977, p. 106.

²¹ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 15.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

primary education.²⁶ At the secondary, *rüşdiye* level, the language of instruction was Ottoman Turkish, since graduates of *rüşdiye* schools were seen as potential civil servants.²⁷ Finally at the tertiary level, consisting of professional schools, the language of instruction should be in keeping with the requirements of specific fields or professions. Schools at the secondary and tertiary levels would accommodate students from the different religious groups.²⁸

It is clear that the Reform Edict and these various related developments reflected the Ottomanist policy to consider non-Muslims as users of government schools and to integrate non-Muslim, foreign and Muslim schools into a legal framework. Moreover, such moves should work to weaken the social barriers between religious communities.²⁹ The Reform Edict of 1856 played an essential role in this process, forcing Ottoman bureaucrats to take more decisive steps to reform the Koran schools.³⁰ Between 1838 and 1869, early reforms were achieved on a piecemeal basis, without taking into consideration larger administrative, financial and professional questions. However, the Regulation of Public Education, which will be examined in the next section, provided a legal and institutional framework for Ottoman public education, which lasted until the Young Turk period.³¹ Despite uncertainties as to how the act should be *applied*, the 1869 decree promoted secular knowledge and worked to integrate state, private, non-Muslim and foreign schools within a cohesive legal framework.

2.2.1 1869 Regulation of Public education

The ruling political cadre led by Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha³², strongly favored the Westernization of the Empire. The government actively promoted a policy of ‘Ottomanism’ as a means of keeping the population of this multi-ethnic Empire together. An important outcome of this strong will shows itself in the Regulation of 1869 which is a significant step in the secularization of education. Specifically identified as a “Regulation of Public Education” (*Maarif-i umumiye Nizamnamesi*), it was circulated on 1st September 1869 in the surveillance of Saffet Pasa and was prepared under the instruction of French Minister of Education, Jean Victor Duruy.

According to this decree (*Nizamname*), every Ottoman citizen was henceforth to be educated according to a common curriculum promoting “Ottomanism”, setting aside religious

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

³¹ Ibid., p. 51.

³² Ali Pasha and Fuat Pasha were the most famous Tanzimat Pashas who pursued program of westernization, secularization and the expansion of Ottomanism, especially in the years between 1867 and 1871.

and denominational differences. Education was to be based upon this ideal, in a concerted effort to counter rising nationalisms and preserve the Empire from disintegration. The motto for Ottomanism was “İttihad-i Anasır” (‘Union of the peoples’ or ‘Unity of ethnic elements’) which corresponded to the prevailing political view that all ethnic groups should be regarded as equal citizens.

In order to achieve this through education, the decree called for religious instruction to be retained *only* at the *sibyan*³³ and *rüşdiye* levels, together which formed the first eight years of education. In every village or neighborhood of more than one hundred households, *sibyan* and *rüşdiye* schools for Muslims and non-Muslims were to be established in order to offer children religious education from their own religious authorities.³⁴ Because primary education in these schools maintained religious instruction at its core, the creation of separate schools for Muslims and non-Muslims was seen as the best solution at the time. Another provision of the decree stated that the teachers for all *rüşdiyes* were to be trained in Darulmuallimin, an institution established for teacher training for public schools, including the non-Muslim teacher candidates. After attendance at *rüşdiyes*, all students regardless of their religious background could go to *idadiyes* or *Sultaniyes*³⁵ where there were few religious courses.³⁶ These schools were deliberately designed to be places where both Muslims and non-Muslims could be educated, thereby meeting the objective of the Reform Edict to bring equality between the ethnic groups of the Empire. The Regulation also made provisions for separate schools for girls.³⁷ For example, teacher training schools for girls were established, and in villages of more than five hundred households, Muslim or Christian *rüşdiyes* for girls might be established, depending on the religious demography of the location.³⁸ During the reign of Sultan Abdulhamit that followed, the network of primary and secondary schools spread rapidly. Two *sultaniye* schools were established, both in the capital: one in the old palace school of Galatasaray in 1868 and one in the Aksaray district in 1873, the Darussafaka for Muslim orphans.³⁹ More than any other legislation, the 1869 decree revealed a gradual shift

³³ Sibyan schools constituted the first four years of *rüşdiyes* and were therefore seen as the first level of education before it was incorporated into the *rüşdiye* system.

³⁴ Yurdağül Mehmedoğlu, *Tanzimat Sonrasında Okullarda Din Eğitimi [Religion Education in Schools in the Aftermath of the Tanzimat]*. İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, 2001, p. 130.

³⁵ See footnote 38 in Chapter 1.

³⁶ Zeki Salih Zengin, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Örgün Eğitim Kurumlarında Din Eğitimi ve Öğretimi, 1839-1876 [Religion education and instruction in the formal education institutions during the Tanzimat]*. Ankara: MEB, 2006, p. 73.

³⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey, A Modern History*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1998, pp. 62-63.

³⁸ Hasan Ali Koçer, *Türkiye’de Modern Eğitimin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi, 1773-1923 [The Birth and the Growth of Modern Education in Turkey, 1773-1923]*. 2nd ed. İstanbul: MEB, 1991, p. 93.

³⁹ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey, A Modern History*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1998, pp. 62-63.

toward the secularization of primary education, with schools increasingly supervised by the government.⁴⁰ Somel asserts that this regulation is best seen not merely as a legal document, but as an educational project reflecting the complex political views of the Tanzimat bureaucrats, as well as the currency of French educational ideas.⁴¹

2.2.2 The spirit of Tanzimat: an ideal Ottoman ‘citizen’

In this section, I set out the main characteristics of Ottoman Public Education and the education of Greek, Jewish and Armenian children in their religious communities. I argue that following Tanzimat, there was a tendency to abandon traditional curricula in the face of growing demands for knowledge of Europe and in particular, European developments in the fields of science and technology. I also argue that efforts to modernize education must be seen in the larger context of centralization and the attempt to monitor and control religious community schools and the non-Muslim population in general.

Ottomanism was the dominant ideology of this era and had profound effects on the education system. Informed by an orientalist mode of thinking, the Ottoman intelligentsia sought to promote a new understanding of ‘citizenship’ based on its European republican conceptualization, and to seed this understanding in the new education system. However, this was a failed project and the result was an increase in ethnic and social segregation.

In his article ‘Citizenship After Orientalism’, Işın warns against the dangers of limiting the ‘analysis of citizenship in the Ottoman Empire to only those moments when ‘it’ was imported from Europe during Westernization and Europeanization.⁴² He argues that one should not approach Ottoman citizenship with an already-defined and understood notion of citizenship and look for its traces, development and emergence.⁴³ This he says, clearly converges toward an orientalist modes of thought that grant the existence of citizenship only on condition of being found in a particular form in the occident.⁴⁴ While asserting these he also warns against making claims about the existence of citizenship in the Ottoman Empire defined by a series of presences and argues that it is rather problematic to have in mind a nostalgic Ottoman citizenship that through its *millet* system accommodated and recognized

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 86.

⁴² Engin F. Işın, Işın, Engin F. “Citizenship After Orientalism, Ottoman Citizenship”. *Challenges to Citizenship in a Globalizing World: European Questions and Turkish Experiences*. Eds. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu. London: Routledge, 2005, p. 42.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

minorities and enabled certain autonomous institutions as an example of tolerance, etc.⁴⁵ He argues that “it is both anachronistic and dangerous to create an Ottoman Empire that is somehow more authentic and originary than Europe by using the contemporary language of European sociology and thought.”⁴⁶ Işın’s approach to the problem of Ottoman citizenship is to investigate it as a historical problem of otherness.⁴⁷

Like Işın, I aim to avoid any overarching narrative of citizenship that begins with the self-conscious Westernization of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century and culminates in the Turkish Republic in the 20th. However, recent research suggests that it was during this era that western European notions of republican citizenship began to circulate in military and intellectual circles, notably in the Young Ottoman and Young Turks movements. Therefore, it is clear that during this period, the debates on ‘citizenship’ tended to incorporate various orientalist assumptions from the start. Although a detailed history of ‘citizenship’ in the Ottoman context is beyond the scope of this project, it is nonetheless important to take note of the evolution of orientalist notions of ‘citizenship’ and how the changing meaning of the term impacted upon education policies.

Most studies of the period treat the 1839 Tanzimat Edict and the 1856 Reform Edict *together*, citing them as the first legal steps towards the creation of a “community of citizens” guaranteeing the security of life, honour and property of Muslims and non-Muslims on equal terms.⁴⁸ In fact, the creation of a community of citizens who are equal before the law and equal in representation was rooted in a series of new regulations, including the 1851 Ceza Kanunnamesi (Penal Law), the 1871 İdare-i Umumiye Vilayet Nizamnamesi (Vilayet Administration law of 1871) and in 1879, the Dersaadet ve Vilayet Belediye Kanunu (Dersaadet and Provinces Municipality Law).⁴⁹ The Tabbiyet-i Osmaniye Kanunnamesi (Nationality Law, 1869) is generally treated as the legislative act that created a common Ottoman citizenship irrespective of religious and ethnic divisions. Yet according to Üstel, the law was passed as a means of reducing the numbers of non-Muslims who took on foreign nationalities in order to benefit from capitulations.⁵⁰ Thus it was a reactionary law that did not actually point the way to new formulations of ‘citizenship’. In fact, it was the Kanun-i Esasi

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴⁸ Ayhan Kaya and Turgut Tarhanlı, eds, *Türkiye’de Azınlık ve Çoğunluk Politikaları AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları [Minority and Majority Policies in Turkey: the Discussions about Citizenship in the EU Process]*. İstanbul: TESEV, 2006, p. 33.

⁴⁹ Füsun Üstel, *Makbul Vatandaş’ın Peşinde, II.Meşrutiyet’ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi, [In Search of the Good Citizen, Citizenship Education from II.Meşrutiyet to Today]*. İstanbul: İletişim, 2004, p. 25.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

(1876) that introduced the most comprehensive regulations with respect to the rights of Ottoman nationals. The decree states that 'All citizens of the Ottoman State are called Ottomans regardless of their religion and denominations'.⁵¹ According to Üstel, the decree's emphasis on the *individual* in fact determined the quality of the social contract. After this point, Ottoman conceptions of citizenship were caught between modern republican conception of citizenship and the actual/lived experience of 'belonging', which was still communitarian (*cemaatçi*) in nature.⁵² Indeed, this dualist conception persisted for some time, acting as a barrier to the 'constitutional citizenship' desired by Ottoman elites.⁵³

Before these developments, Islamic law largely defined the relation between citizen and state. The concept of '*tabiiyet*', which translates into 'citizenship' in modern Turkish, but connotes a sense of 'belonging' rather than a Western view of citizenship, was based on the premise that people could change their *tabiiyets* through free-will and can be analyzed in two groups: Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover, in Islamic literature, the world has been divided between the world of Islam (*daru'l Islam*) and the rest (*daru'l harp*). Because it is religious belief which determines the quality of the relation between the person and the state, a Muslim, whether he lives in *daru'l Islam* or *daru'l harp*, is considered to be from the 'tebaa' of the Islamic state.⁵⁴

In Muslim law and practice, the relationship between the Muslim state and the non-Muslim communities to which it extended its tolerance and protection, was conceived as regulated by a pact called *dhimma*. Those benefiting from this pact were known as *ahl al-dhimma* (people of the pact), or more concisely, *dhimmis*.⁵⁵ A *dhimma* is a non-Muslim subject of a state governed in accordance with Islamic law. The term connotes an obligation of the state to protect the individual, including the individual's life, property, and freedom of religion and worship, in exchange for "subsistence and loyalty to the Muslim order", and a poll tax known as the *cizye*.⁵⁶ There are two further categories that define the relation between the Ottoman state and its inhabitants: *mustemens* and *harbis*.⁵⁷ However, as Rodrigue argues

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p. 27.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Cihan Osmanoğlu, *Tanzimat Dönemi İtibarıyla Osmanlı Tabiiyyetinin (Vatandaşlığının) Gelişimi [The Development of the Concept of Ottoman Citizenship starting from Tanzimat]*. Istanbul: Legal, 2004, p. 83.

⁵⁵ Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System." *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*. Eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis. Vol. 1. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982, p. 71.

⁵⁶ Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*. Trans. Zoryan Inst. New York: Metropolitan, 2006, p. 23.

⁵⁷ *Mustemens* were also non-Muslim foreigners who lived temporarily in the dominion of Islam as *eman*, in other words, on condition that they submit to canonical law, to engage in activities such as commerce. These

any analysis of the Ottoman treatment of non-Muslim groups requires moving away from the rather essentialist view of *dhimma* and the implicit assumption that because Islam treats non-Muslims according to the stipulations of the *dhimma*, then the Ottoman Empire, as an Islamic state, continued to follow these stipulations in exactly the same way.⁵⁸ Although these concepts provided a framework for dealing with non-Muslims, there was also a day-to-day reality in which this discursive paradigm was continuously molded and shaped.⁵⁹

Alongside the Muslim *millet*, the main *millets* were the Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Armenian and Syrian Orthodox communities. However, other *millets* were created in the nineteenth century for several Uniate and Protestant Christian communities. Before World War One, the number of *millets* reached seventeen. According to Göçek, as the Ottoman state organized the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews around their own patriarchates and rabbinate in Constantinople, the character of these communities transformed.⁶⁰ Göçek found that the Ottoman demarcation of religious communities, which was based on Islamic principles, translated into social practice as these communities endured and reproduced themselves within Ottoman society.⁶¹ In the process of reproduction, the members of each community acquired a cognitive sense of their difference in relation to the other communities and to the Muslims (thus perceiving themselves, and being perceived, as a minority group).

In sum, the growth of nationalism during this period put pressure on Ottomanism and the Empire. In particular, the presence of non-Muslim ethnicities and identities began to reveal itself more strongly, impacting on local and state discourses and practices. The creation of minority communities through the structured *millets* brought perhaps the greatest hindrance to the institution of a modern republican concept of citizenship.

2.2.3 Attaining Ottomanism through education

As stated above, the changing conception of citizenship in the Ottoman Empire was to be consolidated by the promotion of a new kind of education. The Ottoman state passed a

foreigners were called *mustemen*, 'under protection', and they enjoyed the legal status of the *zimmi* as long as they did not commit treachery or disturb public order. (Cihan Osmanoglu, *Tanzimat Dönemi İtibarıyla Osmanlı Tabiiyyetinin (Vatandaşlığının) Gelişimi* [The Development of the Concept of Ottoman Citizenship starting from Tanzimat]. Istanbul: Legal, 2004, p. 87.) *Harbis* referred to non-Muslims who do *not* live under Muslim rule, as opposed to a *zimmi*. The *Harbi* is the inhabitant of the *darul harb*. A *harbi* has no rights, not even the right to live and if a *harbi* wants to enter the territory of Islam (*darul-islam*), he needs a safe conduct called *aman* (Ibid., p. 88.)

⁵⁸ Nancy Reynolds. Interview with Arond Rodrigue. "Difference and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire." *Stanford Electronic Humanities Review* 5.1 (Spring 1996). Web

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.1.

⁶⁰ Fatma Müge Göçek, "Ethnic Segmentation, Western Education, and Political Outcomes: Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Society." *Poetics Today* 14.3 (Fall 1993), p. 514.

⁶¹ Ibid.

series of decrees intended to integrate minorities into government service and the education system. However, very contrary to what was seen as the solution for the complete dissolution of the empire into different ethnic polities, namely the Western style education and reformation of the schools, brought further segmentation.

As a result of nineteenth century changes in education policy, there were now four types of school in the Empire. The first included the traditional Islamic schools, *sibyan* schools, and the hierarchy of *medreses*, which taught the traditional curriculum of Islamic sciences. The second type consisted of the secular state schools created during Tanzimat and extended during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamit II (1876-1909). Although they did not offer high quality education, it was from these schools that the reforming cadres emerged, and eventually founded the Turkish Republic. The third type was the schools founded and funded by the *millets*. Finally, there were schools run by foreign Catholic and Protestant missions and by the Jewish Alliance Israelite Universelle; these schools were attended by small, but increasing numbers of Muslim children too. This was a complex and fragmented provision of education, and as Zurcher has convincingly argued, it “was not an educational system designed to stimulate a feeling of national solidarity or even a common identity among the literate elite of the empire”.⁶²

First of all, the educational institutions sponsored by the state had difficulties in retaining minority enrollment. Although policymakers actively promoted mixed education, it was never fully achieved. Zengin notes that religious minorities were reluctant to send their children to Ottoman public schools; most preferred their own minority schools or the option of sending children abroad for education.⁶³ Shaw also asserts that non-Muslims often refused the new equality that was being offered, preferring to remain in their *millet* schools while complaining to their foreign protectors about the Tanzimat's failure to do more for them.⁶⁴ Moreover, minority leaders disliked and often actively resisted the new reforms aimed at centralizing education.⁶⁵

Secondly, the schools established by the Ottoman state differed from those established by Ottoman minorities and Western powers, creating inconsistent types of students who “interpreted and applied their acquired knowledge differently separately seeking solutions to

⁶² Erik Jan Zurcher, *Turkey, A Modern History*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1998, p. 63.

⁶³ Zeki Salih Zengin, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Örgün Eğitim Kurumlarında Din Eğitimi ve Öğretimi, 1839-1876* [Religion education and instruction in the formal education institutions during the Tanzimat]. Ankara: MEB, 2006, p. 67.

⁶⁴ Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II*, New York: Cambridge UP, 1977, p. 112.

⁶⁵ Cihan Osmanoğlu, *Tanzimat Dönemi İtibarıyla Osmanlı Tabiiyetinin (Vatandaşlığının) Gelişimi* [The Development of the Concept of Ottoman Citizenship starting from Tanzimat]. Istanbul: Legal, 2004, p. 169.

the common problematic of the future direction of Ottoman social transformation”.⁶⁶

Göçek argues that Western-styled education typically entailed the analysis of history and culture in terms of the separate origins of different social groups.⁶⁷ Hence, the Ottoman students could not avoid an assessment of where they stood in their respective contexts. The Ottoman religious minorities must therefore have become more conscious, through Western education, of their minority status subordination, their limited access to social resources, and the structural imbalances in their relations with the larger Ottoman society at large. They were also undoubtedly made aware of their “separateness”, of their ethnic status, shared culture, heritage, and identity. The adoption of Western values took on an increasingly politicized ethnic form as the Ottoman minorities aspired to greater legal recognition and rights. Moreover, when state attempts to incorporate the minorities into Ottoman polity failed, the minorities looked to their own communities for guidance and inspiration. They began to demand the right to self-determination, embracing ethnic identities which could potentially extend beyond Ottoman societal and cultural boundaries.”⁶⁸ In sum, while Enlightenment ideas provided incentives to reform the Ottoman state, those same ideas empowered minorities to expand their communal identities into broader and more politically charged discourses.

2.3 Non-Muslim and Alevi education before and during Tanzimat

Thus far, we have only examined developments relating to the Ottoman Public Education system. However, to gain a complete picture of in the Empire, it is important to scrutinize the education of non-Muslims in their own *millets* and to consider how their education systems were influenced by socio-political developments inside and outside the Empire. In this context, it is also important to consider the foreign and missionary schools attended by many non-Muslim students. Because this thesis addresses the main religious groups, this section will treat the Jewish, Armenian and Greek *millets* respectively.

During this period *millet* schools existed throughout Anatolia and the members of *millets* opened them wherever they were considered to be sociologically and strategically necessary. Thus while Armenians gave weight to the Eastern part of Anatolia, Greeks worked in Istanbul, Izmir and the Black Sea region and Jews placed importance in Istanbul, Beirut and Jerusalem. The related non-Muslim communities controlled *millet* schools.

⁶⁶ Fatma Müge Göçek, “Ethnic Segmentation, Western Education, and Political Outcomes: Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Society.” *Poetics Today* 14.3 (Fall 1993), p. 519.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 529.

Patriarchates, churches and rabbinate opened and managed schools themselves or through sub-organizations completely outside the control of the Ottoman state.⁶⁹ Those opened by the churches were generally elementary schools and managed by local communities. The secondary and higher schools were directly related to the patriarchates and rabbinate. It was common that every church used one of its rooms as a school. Besides benefactors, western countries and non-governmental organizations and the state itself, the sponsors of the schools included some Ottoman statesmen and even the Sultans.⁷⁰ The supervision of the minority schools was neglected for a long time and it began only during Tanzimat. Before this period as there were no rules that governed the ways *millet* schools were supposed to work, they were independent as regards to employing teachers.⁷¹ The teachers were mostly the priests of the churches controlling the schools. There were also some missionaries who worked as teachers.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, out of a total population of 15,339,000, there were approximately 150,000 Jews, 2,000,000 Greeks and 2,400,000 Armenians living within the Empire's borders.⁷² Apart from these three *millets*, the situation of the Alevis is of crucial importance to this research. Finally, because the Alliance Israelite Universelle, a French educational organization, operated with the support of local elites, it can be considered in the context of Jewish education, rather than in the context of foreign and missionary schools.

2.3.1 Jewish education

Traditional Jewish education consisted, first and foremost, of religious instruction. The aim of the elementary schools, known as *meldars* or *Talmud Torahs*, was to transmit knowledge of Hebrew and the sacred texts. The relative poverty of these institutions meant that by the middle of the nineteenth century, the traditional Jewish school system was in decline.⁷³ According to Rodrigue, it is impossible to confirm the number of schools in Turkey's Jewish communities before the introduction of European style institutions in the middle of the nineteenth century. However, we know that by 1958, there were 44 Jewish

⁶⁹ Hidayet Vahapoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Azınlık ve Yabancı Okulları [The Minority and foreign schools from Ottoman times to the present day]*. Istanbul: MEB, 1997, p. 98.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁷¹ Feyyat Gökçe and Nilüfer Oğuz, "Minority and Foreign Schools on the Ottoman Education System." *Uluslararası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1.1 (Summer 2010): 22, pp. 42-57.

⁷² Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 26 ; Stanford J. Shaw, "The Ottoman Census System and Population, 1831-1914." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9.3 (Oct. 1978), p. 334.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

schools in Istanbul (with 2552 students) and 3 Karaite⁷⁴ schools (with 100 students).⁷⁵

In the middle of the nineteenth century, there were 150,000 Jews in the Empire, with the Judeo-Spanish communities of the Balkans and Western Asia Minor constituting about half of this population.⁷⁶ The consensus among scholars is that by this period, the Ottoman Jewish community was in economic and social decline. It had lost the distinction enjoyed in the sixteenth century, in the sphere of international trade and commerce. Western Jews, along with Jews in the Empire, saw that the acquisition of European languages were essential for success in both international and local markets. In the international context, access to Westernized education provided a means for Jews to re-establish economic links (with the West) that had been weakened during the previous two centuries.⁷⁷

By the 1850s, both the Western Jews and *Francos* (foreign Jews, mostly of Italian origin and long settled in major cities around the Mediterranean) were determined to reform education for all Ottoman Jews. In 1854, Albert Cohn, with the support of Abraham Comando, a wealthy Istanbul banker, and a group of Austrian Ashkenazi Jews raised sufficient funds to open Turkey's first Jewish school. The Istanbul Hasköy School opened with seventy-six students in the same year, and offered instruction in European languages and secular subjects, as well as Hebrew and Turkish.⁷⁸ Along with general measures encouraging Westernization, the Reform Decree of 1856, with its stated directive to non-Muslim communities to reform their institutions, encouraged the reformers among the Jewish elite.⁷⁹ At the same time, the erosion of the traditional educational system irritated many rabbis whose main incomes were coming through these schools and the problems between the traditionalists and reformists severed by the end of 1862.

Although local Jews had prepared the way, Western Jews, most notably the Alliance Israelite Universelle, undertook the main work of Westernization in the domain of education. Established in 1860 in France, the Alliance aimed to raise the educational standards of "Eastern" Jews by means of French secular culture. The organizers believed that a more progressive education would improve the lot of Jews in the Ottoman Empire, bringing modernization and active citizenship.⁸⁰ The Alliance school program began as an elementary

⁷⁴ Karaism is a Jewish movement characterized by the sole reliance on the Tanakh as scripture, and the rejection of oral law as a required religious practice.

⁷⁵ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 37.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁸⁰ Eyal Ginio, "Jews in the Ottoman Empire." *JBooks.com* n.d. Web.

education, with the possibility of two additional (kindergarten) classes for younger children. Taught subjects included religious instruction, biblical history, Hebrew, written and spoken French, arithmetic, geography, history, the rudiments of physical and natural sciences. The girls' schools would also teach needlework. The language of instruction in all the schools was French. However this program gradually expanded, and often the four-year schools stretched to seven or eight years, attaining the level of junior high school.⁸¹ The teachers, referred to as “secular missionaries”, were all graduates of the Alliance teacher training school in France. In sum, the Alliance ethos was to combine the teaching of Judaism with processes of Westernization.⁸² As these schools were mainly established during the Hamidian era, they will be examined in greater detail in later chapters.

2.3.2 Armenian education before and during Tanzimat

Until the eighteenth century, there was no formal Armenian education system in the Ottoman Empire. The oldest known school, “Amlorti”, was founded at the beginning of the fifteenth century near Bitlis, a city in the southeast of Turkey today. At Amlorti, pupils were given instruction in theology, philosophy and logic. After 1710, the school was sometimes described as a university for its advanced studies in religion and science. Moreover, as Taşdemirci states, the graduates of this school would eventually open Armenian schools throughout the Empire.⁸³

In the early 18th century, educational institutions were directly linked to individuals who possessed power, and therefore, the ‘life cycle’ of each school tended to follow that of its patron or benefactor. For example, in 1706, Bishop Apraham turned his house in Üsküdar, Istanbul into a school providing religious education for young pupils. In 1710, Mihitar from Sivas gave lessons to the Armenian children of Beyoğlu, Istanbul. In 1715, Patriarch Ohannes Gölod, again in Üsküdar, opened a theology school for bishopry candidates. Under the tutelage of Patriarc Nalyan (1741-1745), a girl school was founded. Finally in 1752, Simon opened a school in a church in Balat, Istanbul. In these institutions, education was mainly religious, although the detailed curricula are not known.

In 1790, Snokr Mugurduc and Amira Miricinyan established the first known Armenian *millet* school in Istanbul. A document (circulated by the Bishop of Kumkapı Church and the

⁸¹ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 71.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁸³ Ersoy Taşdemirci, “Türk Eğitim Tarihinde Azınlık Okulları ve Yabancı Okullar” [“Foreign and Minority Schools in the history of Turkish Education”]. *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 10 (2001), p. 22.

teacher of Kumkapı School) states that during the Patriarch Ohannes Camasirciyan (1703-1812), numerous *millet* schools were established in Istanbul.⁸⁴

After the Armenian Patriarchate issued a decree calling for more *millet* schools in Armenian communities, there were numerous new institutions founded in Istanbul and other regions of the Empire. According to a statistical study conducted by the Patriarchate, by 1834 there were 120 Armenian *millet* schools distributed throughout the Empire, in cities such as Adapazarı, Izmit, Merzifon, Manisa, Bafra and Erzurum.⁸⁵ During the same period, at the Nersesyan school at Hasköy, Istanbul pupils were given education in Armenian, Turkish, French, Italian, and the sciences. By the middle of the century, Armenian leaders increasingly stressed the importance of learning French.⁸⁶ This was due to the general reforms relating to Westernization and more specifically to increased interaction with the Western powers in trade and in various professional fields. In 1853, the communal leadership established a commission to supervise the Armenian education system. Under its influence, there was added emphasis placed on secular subjects in the school curricula, and French began to be taught as a second language in the upper levels of all elementary establishments.⁸⁷

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Medical School of the Empire was annually accepting forty students from the Armenian *millet*. In 1861, with growing numbers of Armenian students seeking to pursue further studies, Cemeran School, boarding school for Armenian Higher Education, was opened in Üsküdar, Istanbul.⁸⁸ According to Ergin, the Tanzimat Decree was also influential in the expansion of Armenian education through opening up the way to *higher* education facilities.⁸⁹ Especially the Armenian associations with the aim of helping schools, cultural activities were fostered in different places of Anatolia. By 1871, there were eighteen schools for boys, thirteen for girls and seventeen mixed schools, all catering for an Armenian student population of six thousand students.⁹⁰

In the 1830s, the Armenian newspapers were instrumental in setting the ideological parameters of Armenian nationalism. By the 1840s, there were regular calls for the Armenian nation to follow the examples of other enlightened nations.⁹¹ Moreover, many Ottoman

⁸⁴ Remzi Kılıç, "Osmanlı Türkiye'sinde Azınlık Okulları 19.Yüzyıl" [Minority Schools in the Ottoman Turkey 19th Century]. *Webhattı* n.d. Web. 6 May 2008.

⁸⁵ Ekmelleddin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p. 509.

⁸⁶ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 45.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁸⁸ Ekmelleddin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p.509

⁸⁹ Osman Ergin. *Türk Maaarif Tarihi [History of Turkish Education]*. Istanbul: Osmanbey Matbaası, 1940, p.758.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Ayla Göl, "Imagining the Turkish nation through 'othering' Armenians." *Nations and Nationalisms* 11.1

Armenians were prosperous enough to send their children to Europe for religious and secular education. These Armenian students produced revolutionary discourse and activity, which intensified from the 1860s onwards. In 1863, they assisted in the creation of what is frequently known as the Armenian Constitution, a document hugely influential in developing a sense of national consciousness. The Constitution outlined and mandated the formation of a religious and political council and a National Assembly, under which an educational council also came into operation. The educational council worked to standardize the curriculum, the administration of exams, textbook preparation, and the award of diplomas.⁹² These developments furthered the transmission of nationalist sentiment and brought greater unity to Armenians from different sects (Protestants and Catholics) and different regions.⁹³

2.3.3 Greek education before and during Tanzimat

The Greeks were the first of the Ottoman Empire's subject peoples to secure recognition as an independent sovereign power. As the first explicitly nationalist revolution, the Greek revolution (1821-1832) provided a model for later nationalist struggles. However, the discourses of Greek national consciousness had earlier roots, most notably in education.

In the eighteenth century, an influential merchant class generated the wealth necessary to found schools and libraries, and to pay for young Greeks to attend the universities of Western Europe. These students came into contact with the radical ideas of the European Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Educated and influential members of the large Greek diaspora tried to transmit these ideas back to the Greeks, with the double aim of raising educational levels and strengthening national identity. It should be noted that the Greeks were the first non-Muslims to enjoy the benefits of publishing and teaching in their own language. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the ideas of the French Revolution changed the agenda of the Greek print media by drawing attention to secular issues. For example, there were debates about rights for Balkan Christians and about aspirations for an independent Greek nation, all of which helped to foster a Greek independence movement.⁹⁴ Achieved in 1832, Greek independence served as an example for the Ottoman Armenians, who were also

(2005), p. 128.

⁹² Henry Finnis Blossie Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies: Volume II: The Turkish Provinces*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1901, pp. 445-467.

⁹³ It is important to note that until the nineteenth century, in the eyes of the Ottoman government the Armenian community was united under a single *millet* but in fact this changed when the government recognized first the Catholics and then the Protestants as separate *millets*.

⁹⁴ Ayla Göl, "Imagining the Turkish nation through 'othering' Armenians." *Nations and Nationalisms* 11.1 (2005), p. 128.

allowed to use their language in the print media earlier than other groups.⁹⁵ However, the newly established Greek state had a population of 800,000, three times smaller than the Greek population of the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁶ The development of Ottoman Greek education was nonetheless heavily informed by Greek nationalism.

Greek education was provided by a number of schools scattered throughout the Ottoman Balkans, the most prominent being the princely academies of Bucharest, founded between 1678 and 1688, and Jassy, founded in 1707 to offer which provided religious education.⁹⁷ These schools did not advocate identification with the Ottoman state so much as a heightened student awareness of Greek heritage.

The Phanariot School, the oldest Greek school in Istanbul, was founded under the auspices of the Patriarchate. Here, pupils could study Greek, Philosophy, Theology, Mathematics and Physical Sciences. Some of the graduates of these schools would work in Greek churches and *millet* schools, while others found employment in the bureaucratic cadres of the Ottoman Empire. The Halki Seminary, operating next to a monastery, provided further educational opportunities for Greek students.

Roudometof notes that prior to 1750, education was predominantly religious in nature. After this period, there was increased commercial interaction between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe, a change that facilitated the circulation of secular literature.⁹⁸ Eighteenth century (Western Enlightenment) discourses brought a revival of interest in classical antiquity. These changes impacted strongly on the secularization of the Greek *millet*.⁹⁹

Greeks were often more active than Armenians in the educational field. Secular educational institutions such as the Izmir gymnasium, the Ayvalik and Kuruçeşme academies were already functioning in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The Kuruçeşme Greek School (Helleno Philosophical School) offered education in languages, literature and mathematics and was organized as a large complex, which included a hospital, an orphanage and a medical school.¹⁰⁰

The education and literacy societies, the *syllogoi*, founded from 1861 on in all the major Greek centers of the Empire, embarked upon a major drive and founded or subsidized

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Steven W. Sowards, "Lecture No. 6: The Greek Revolution and the Greek state." *Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History*. 12 June 1996 (11 June 2009). Web. 5 Jan. 2009.

⁹⁷ Victor Roudometof, "From Rum Millet to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society 1453-1821." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1998), p. 22.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁰ Ekmelleddin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p. 508.

hundreds of schools which dispensed a secular as well as a religious education in the early 1870s.¹⁰¹ Istanbul alone had 105 Greek schools serving 15,000 students.¹⁰² By the end of the century, there were also a number of *lycees* teaching business skills and modern languages to Greek students. It was largely through these institutions that Greeks avoided further Ottomanization through education. Community leaders believed that education would encourage Greek students to identify with symbolic rituals and cultural traditions. In this way, the expansion of schooling worked to create greater cohesion in the community.

Besides the Greek *millet* schools, wealthy Greek families often sent their children to Italian and other European universities where it was possible to study more secular subjects such as medicine, languages and philosophy.¹⁰³ Upon their return, many of these educated students became active participants in Ottoman diplomacy. Increasingly, Greeks saw themselves as Greek first and Ottoman second.

2.3.4 Foreign and missionary schools

Besides the *millet* and Ottoman Public schools, Armenians, Greeks and Jews could also attend foreign and missionary schools. The foreign schools were opened to meet the educational needs of the citizens of the western countries living in the Ottoman lands. Religious institutions like churches and missionary organizations patronized by different countries played the major role in opening those schools. Thus it was actually the foreign countries that were very influential in the management of these schools. The directors and teachers were appointed either by missionary organizations or by the countries they belonged to. Until the Education Regulation of 1869 the schools were never supervised by the state even though most of them were unlicensed and the attempts to supervise them in accordance with the Regulation ended in abject failure.¹⁰⁴

Historically these educational institutions established by foreigners in the Ottoman Empire were made possible by a series of concessions granted to foreigners (*imtiyaz-i ecnebiyye*).¹⁰⁵ The first of these consisted of a number of special privileges granted in 1535 by

¹⁰¹ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 46.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ These more secular schools, founded by a group of wealthy merchants, were not well received by the Greek Orthodox Church. The schools were subject to interference from religious Greeks, and there were arguments reminiscent of the power struggles in Jewish communities.

¹⁰⁴ Feyyat Gökçe & Nilüfer Oğuz, "Minority and Foreign Schools on the Ottoman Education System." *Uluslararası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1.1 (Summer 2010): 22, p. 48.

¹⁰⁵ These capitulations designate the economic privileges granted especially to the non-Muslim foreign citizens living in the country and the authorizations and rights growing out of those privileges. Despite not including any precise provisions about education, the capitulations gained some religious, political and social aspects and were

Süleyman the Magnificent to the French King Francois I.¹⁰⁶ In 1583, French Jesuits founded the first foreign missionary school to benefit from these privileges, locating it in the Church of St. Benoit in Galata.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Catholics owned the initial schools. İhsanoğlu notes that whereas other Christian *millet* schools confined teaching to religious subjects, this new school belonging to Catholics offered instruction in mathematics, French, Greek, Latin and the liberal arts.¹⁰⁸ There were two other schools resembling Saint Benoit: Saint George's and Saint Louis Ecole des Enfants de langue, both founded in 1629. In the nineteenth century, there was a notable increase in the numbers of French schools: St. Pierre (1824), Notre Dame de Sion Girls Lycee (1839), Saint Joseph (1864), Saint Esprit (1871) and the Immaculee Conception or St. Marie School (1894). These missionary schools had established schools catering to over 87,000 students by 1909.¹⁰⁹

In 1819, Protestant missionaries from the United States began to travel to the Ottoman Empire. The goal of these missionaries was to bring about a religious 'awakening' through Bible teachings. Initially, they sought to convert Muslims to Protestantism. However, they soon turned their attention to the more achievable goal of working with Christian minority populations. The missionaries established primary, secondary and theological schools, as well as colleges, which were geared to the entrance requirements for American and European universities.¹¹⁰ The first of these institutions was the Protestant Robert College, followed by colleges established in Harput, Beirut, Tarsus, Kayseri, Antep and numerous other provinces. Many Armenians and Greeks sent their children to these schools because the quality of education was considered to be higher than at the national institutions. However, some Armenian and Greek parents rejected the missionary schools on the grounds that they threatened minority communities and traditions. In the case of Armenians, there was a fear among church and communal leaders of the missionaries, which did not emphasize teaching of Armenian language, literature, or history and thus created a denationalizing effect.¹¹¹

“The ‘secularization’ movement which emerged in the nineteenth century in these

extended to the field of educations especially when Ottomans became weaker. Missionaries benefited greatly from the privileges granted by the capitulations.

¹⁰⁶ Ekmelleddin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p. 511.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Pamela J. Young, *Knowledge, Nation, and the Curriculum: Ottoman Armenian Education (1853-1915)*, unpublished PhD submitted to The University of Michigan, 2001, p. 66.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ For more information on the subject see: Markham, R.F. “Adapting Education in Missionary Schools to New Conditions in Turkey”. MA thesis Columbia U, 1928; Grabill, Joseph L. *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1971.

minority schools which had been pursuing a religious education was initiated at almost the same time as the modernization of the Ottoman education system”.¹¹² The numbers of missionary schools increased dramatically during this period and they pursued programs similar to those adopted by Ottoman schools. This was certainly the case with respect to Galatasaray Sultanisi.¹¹³ As became clear in the Hamidian era, these schools intentionally and sometimes unintentionally fostered anti-Ottoman political activity among non-Muslim subjects. In Syria and Beirut especially, they were influential in promoting Arab nationalism and separatism.

2.3.5 Alevi education

Since Alevi communities are important to this research, it is necessary to examine briefly the Alevi social and religious position in Ottoman society. Unfortunately, non-Sunni Islamic communities are rarely cited specifically in historical documents. This is because the government did not officially acknowledge these communities. Alevis were not treated as a separate community, but were officially characterized as in a state of “ignorance” (*cehalet*) or as practicing corrupt beliefs (*akaid-i faside*). Somel argues that in the bureaucratic language of the Hamidian period, “to civilize” probably meant a “correction of the faith” into Sunni belief, “the inculcation of the notion of loyalty to the Sultan-Caliph and thus the acknowledgement of the Ottoman central power, and finally the learning of the Ottoman Turkish language”.¹¹⁴ Thus Alevis were ‘named’ only in times of crisis, for example when the establishment of foreign schools raised the possibility of their Christianization.

The name Alevi refers mainly to those populations in Anatolia and Syria that have displayed an allegiance to the fourth Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib as strong as any allegiance shown to the Prophet Muhammed. In general, the Alevis refuse the political and religious legitimacy of the first three caliphs and do not recognize the legitimacy of the Umayyad and the Abbasid Caliphs. There are also differences *between* Alevi communities, manifested mainly through the localized beliefs and traditions associated with rural folklore, and the lack of an institutionalized, comprehensive system of education. The Anatolian Alevi communities, often referred to as “*Kızılbaş*”¹¹⁵ were largely Turkish speaking, but with some communities

¹¹² Ekmelledin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p. 512.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 219.

¹¹⁵ The term “*Kızılbaş*” [Red heads] refers to the Shia-Islamic groups that flourished in Anatolia from the late 13th century onwards and it is derived from their distinctive twelve gored crimson headwear indicating their

speaking Kurdish or Zaza.¹¹⁶ Religious propaganda typically reviled the Alevi as immoral unbelievers “without Holy books”, (*kitapsız*), and therefore worse than Christians or Jews. They were forced to live at the edge of society and in remote regions. Kieser argues that without mosques, the villages inhabited by Alevi were clearly recognizable until Sultan Abdulhamid II and his successors constructed mosques for them.¹¹⁷

The few official documents to openly name the Alevi reveal their relative isolation within the Ottoman political system. The government distrusted the loyalty of the Alevi of central Anatolia and Sivas. The increase in Armenian revolutionary agitation in Anatolia, together with Protestant missionary activities, induced the Sublime Porte to adopt special educational policies with the aim to “sunnify” the Alevi. However, the lack of written evidence prevents us tracking these policies in detail.

2.4 Hamidian era (1876-1908)

During this period, state bureaucrats realized that Ottomanism was not going to hold the Empire together. Abdulhamid deliberately and consciously strove to create a uniform empire composed of preferably by Muslims who should be loyal to the sultan as khalif. I argue that in this period education policymakers were increasingly influenced by a feeling that the Empire was vulnerable and under attack from various quarters. Non-muslim and foreign schools were viewed as enemies of the Empire, and were monitored closely. The state redoubled its efforts to fund and build schools in which education was informed by Enlightenment notions of progress, but retained strong Islamic elements.

Abdulhamid’s accession to power brought renewed hope for equality. However, this excitement dissipated in a short time. Abdulhamid's reign (1876-1909) marked a serious reduction in the power and extent of the Empire that ended with his deposition. In 1876, Abdulhamid announced the advent of the new system of constitutional monarchy, called Meşrutiyet and the parliament it provided. The Parliament was to consist of two assemblies: the Chamber of Deputies, elected by a two-stage system and with non-Muslims making up half of its membership, and the Chamber of Notables (Senate) appointed by the Sultan. This proved to be short-lived arrangement. In 1878, Abdulhamid dissolved Parliament, using the Russo-Ottoman War as an excuse. He put into place an absolute monarchy that would last for three decades.

adherence to the twelve Imams and Safavids.

¹¹⁶ Zaza is an Iranian language, which is a prominent Kurdish dialect.

¹¹⁷ Hans Lukas Kieser, “Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th-20th cc).” *Columbia International Affairs Online*, Mar. 2001. Web.

The dominant trends of thought in the Hamidian period (1878-1908) were opposed to those of the Tanzimat. Lewis asserts that although traditionalism, apologetics, anti-Westernism, and pan-Islamism had appeared before Abdulhamid took power, they were further consolidated after his arrival.¹¹⁸ In sum, the Hamidian period meant a renewed stress on Islam, while educational modernization continued to be promoted.¹¹⁹

Mehmed Said Pasha, the Grand Vezir of Abdulhamid, was a key figure in the Sultan's reforms. In a lengthy preamble¹²⁰, Said Pasha explains that education is necessary for the efficient conduct of public affairs, for the life of a civilized community, for defense against foreign enemies, and even for the management of Christian populations, whose minds are now being opened by education".¹²¹ As educational reform was seen to be a prerequisite to all further improvements, the Hamidian regime made great efforts in this area. In addition to the existing schools, new ones were created, including schools of finance (1878), law (1878), fine arts (1879), commerce (1882), civil engineering (1884), veterinary science (1889), police (1891), customs (1892), and an improved new medical school (1898). In 1900, after a long period of preparation, Darulfunun (later known as the University of Istanbul), opened its gates.

As already noted, Hamidian education policies were influenced by a widespread feeling that the Empire was under attack. Fortna argues that in the field of education, the threat emanated from various competitors, including foreign missionaries, neighboring states, and indigenous minority groups. Unlike the countries of the West, where educational strategies were geared to regional homogenization and nation building, the Ottoman Empire, due to its weakened position, had to fight a double battle. On the one hand, policymakers worked to meet the demands of the modern age. On the other hand, they had to fend off a number of challenges—military, diplomatic, economic, ideological, and cultural—that most of their foreign counterparts did not face.¹²²

Increasingly, foreign institutions were viewed as agencies where native children, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, were subjected to political indoctrination, which weakened

¹¹⁸ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Turkish Secularism*. London: C. Hurst, 1998, p. 261.

¹¹⁹ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, p. 3.

¹²⁰ A good indication of Said Pasha's ideas and policies can be obtained from the lengthy memorandum on the reforms needed by the empire, which, in accordance with what had become an established Ottoman custom, he submitted to the sultan in 1880. (Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press: London, 1961, pp. 179-180)

¹²¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford UP, 1961, p. 180.

¹²² Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, p. 47.

loyalty to the state and the sultan.¹²³ In fact, the regime's fears were not unfounded because in those regions without sufficient numbers of public schools, Muslim children attended foreign or minority schools.¹²⁴ In 1886, the Ministry of Education established a specific inspectorate to monitor non-Muslim and Foreign Schools. Despite these efforts, the desired degree of control over such schools was not attained and the number of foreign schools increased dramatically between the 1880s and 1890s.¹²⁵

The state redoubled its efforts to fund and build schools wherever possible, in keeping with the aims set out by the Education Regulation of 1869. The larger objective was to change education policies in a manner "informed by a very enlightenment notion of progress that relied heavily on Western European models but cut them with a strong dose of Ottoman and Islamic elements that were deemed capable of meliorating the deleterious side effects of Western influence."¹²⁶ Thus education policy was based on Ottoman and Islamic tradition *and* on Western discourses of modernity. The process of combining these various elements altered each of them in distinct ways. As a result, the "secular curriculum was infused with large doses of religious content, while various aspects of the Islamic tradition were distilled to fit the curriculum and regimented life of the new schools."¹²⁷ The shaping of the public school curricula occurred gradually, according to the reforms of 1880, 1891-1892, 1901 and 1904.¹²⁸

As a result of these efforts, the number of Muslim students attending secondary schools increased fourfold to 33,469 students, during the period 1867 to 1895.¹²⁹ Yet despite this increase, more than twice as many non-Muslim students (76,359) attended secondary schools.¹³⁰ Since the total Muslim population was three times that of the non-Muslim population, it follows that the ratio of educated non-Muslims to Muslims was six to one. In short, advances were made in the field of education, but they were insufficient.¹³¹

Under the terms of an edict passed in 1895, Turkish language instructors who would teach Turkish as a subject were to be assigned, at state expense, to non-Muslim *rüşdiye*

¹²³ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 15.

¹²⁴ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Ekmelleddin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p. 513.

¹²⁶ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, p. 3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹²⁸ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 180.

¹²⁹ Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II*, New York: Cambridge UP, 1977, p. 116.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford UP, 1961, p. 181.

schools in Rumelia and Anatolia.¹³² Although it put some pressure on non-Muslim schools, the edict was never fully implemented. Moreover, non-Muslim religious leaders, along with the European states and missionary groups, took a stand against Ottoman policy with respect to foreign and non-Muslim schools. Various European states began to give political support to different religious communities. The Russians gave support to the Orthodox Greek; the French and Germans supported the Catholic Armenians; and the British backed the Protestant Armenians. These alliances hindered state attempts to impose Turkish as the language of instruction in foreign and non-Muslim schools. Indeed, it was not until the Second Constitutional period that the state achieved a measure of success in this area.¹³³

The modifications made to the curriculum of the Galatasaray Lycee in 1877 provide perhaps the best example of how education policy changed after the Tanzimat era. Ali Suavi¹³⁴ altered the school's curriculum in a way that foreshadowed the broader changes that the Hamidian era would bring to the entire Ottoman education system.¹³⁵ Alongside the 'European' subjects, there were new courses added (for example, *kalam*, *adab*, *insha*, and *fiqh*) in order to give the Lycee a stronger Muslim foundation.

Thus, it can be argued that Abdulhamid deliberately and consciously strove to create a uniform empire composed of Muslims who should be, as far as possible, united in their aims and loyalty to the sultan as khalif. According to Deringil, Abdulhamid's efforts heightened the role of the state religion, which was the Hanefi school of Islamic jurisprudence.¹³⁶ This had inevitable consequences for the heterodox branches of Islam, including the Alevi communities living in Anatolia.

2.4.1 From Ottomanism to Islamism: changing dynamics of citizenship

The Tanzimat government strove to change the narrowly based, and segregated administrative apparatus into a broad political association based on a new popular foundation.¹³⁷ It implemented measures intended to centralize services and create a more unified citizenry, but refrained from interfering directly with the religious, ethnic, linguistic,

¹³² Ekmelleddin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p. 513.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 514.

¹³⁴ The director of the Galatasaray lycee from 1876-1877.

¹³⁵ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, p. 108.

¹³⁶ Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1998.

¹³⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, *Politicization of Islam, Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in late Ottoman State*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001, p. 320.

and local identities of Ottoman subjects. As already noted, local and specific expressions of minority difference were by no means subordinated to an overarching narrative of Ottoman identity.¹³⁸

According to Karpat, Islamism sought to counter the idea of the nation-state introduced under the Berlin Treaty. It also served as justification for the separation of various Christian entities in the Balkans from Europe.¹³⁹ In order to prevent further dissolutions of Muslim lands and to achieve unity among Ottoman Muslims, Abdulhamid adopted the ideology of Islamism after 1878. Regarding all the Muslims of the Empire as an *ummet* (from *ummah* or the universal religious community), the sultan tried to make them the political foundation of his state.”¹⁴⁰ In addition, Islamism could be used to invoke the threat of *cihad* in order to prevent further interference in Ottoman domestic affairs on the pretext of protecting the “rights” of the other groups.¹⁴¹

Karpat argues that Islamism supplied ideological content to Ottomanism, and the two became facets of a single ideology that bound Muslims together for a while. Accompanied by modern education and class differentiation, Ottomanism worked to stimulate the growth of regionalism and local culture, and as such, it also imparted a powerful ethno-linguistic bias to the Christian view of civilization. At the same time, it provided Ottoman political and intellectual elites “with a window through which to look at the historical origins of their state; thus they came to define it as the patrimony, not of the sultan, but of a new, rather vague ethnic type of *millet* (nation), which they claimed to represent, challenging therefore the sultan's authority.”¹⁴²

As stated above, Ottoman education policy during this reign was an attempt to safeguard the Empire's future. The students raised in this period were thought to be loyal to the state and possess strong Islamic values. From this perspective, we can say that Hamidian schooling ended in failure because these young students mounted the first organized opposition to the Sultan in 1889. In this year, a group of young students in the army medical school founded a secret committee, which would later become known as the *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, (Committee of Union and Progress, C.U.P.) and which had as its express goal to restore constitution and parliament.¹⁴³ The members of this group had been educated at the

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.12.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 324.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁴³ Eric Jan Zürcher, “The Young Turks, Children of the Borderlands?” *Turkology Update Leiden Project Working Papers Archive*. Leiden: U Leiden Dept. of Turkish Studies, Oct. 2002. PDF file

institutions established by Abdulhamid. In 1908, the group openly rebelled against Abdulhamid's rule and in doing so, enjoyed substantial support, especially among the Young Ottomans who were in exile. When he attempted a counter-revolution in April 1909, Abdulhamid was deposed and exiled to Salonika. Several political parties were formed following his departure, but in 1913, the Committee of Union and Progress seized power. Three army officers led this from the Young Turks movement: Enver Pasha, Mehmed Talat and Ahmed Cemal (1872-1922). These men supported the central powers during the First World War, but lost control when the Allies achieved victory in 1918. To sum up the central difference between the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods, we can see that the Tanzimat reformers tended to use citizenship as a means of integration, whereas Abdulhamid used faith.

2.5 The education of Jews, Armenians, Rums and Alevis in the Hamidian era

In general terms, education grew rapidly during the reign of Abdulhamid, with the state taking a leading role in its development. In 1895, out of a total population of 19 million (about 14 million Muslims and 5 million non-Muslims), 1.3 million were students, with a larger proportion of non-Muslims than Muslims attending school.¹⁴⁴ In a period of heightened nationalism, the autonomy and independence of non-Muslim educational infrastructures increasingly met with suspicion and they were gradually eroded as a result of state intervention.¹⁴⁵

In order to gain greater control over non-Muslim schools, the government implemented two precautionary measures in 1881. The first was to make the schools financially dependent upon the state. The second was to police the schools closely.¹⁴⁶ The measures remained in place until the end of Abdulhamid's reign, although such efforts to safeguard the unity of the state had detrimental consequences for society.

A 1902 decree banned all Muslims from attending non-Muslim schools.¹⁴⁷ In addition, the education authorities created more and more difficulties for teachers who were foreign citizens. During the Tanzimat era, Ottoman bureaucrats sympathized with the new secular trends—especially in the education field—in non-Muslim communities. They regularly allied themselves with reformers in these communities, in the hope that the reformers would attach themselves to Ottoman identity. Such efforts were largely unsuccessful when set against the

¹⁴⁴ Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II*, New York: Cambridge UP, 1977, p. 113.

¹⁴⁵ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 157.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

leadership of reformers and secularists, many of whom were teachers. If anything, the sense non-Muslim ethnic identity grew stronger and increasingly rivaled notions of Ottoman identity. In this context, Somel correctly argues that Ottoman bureaucrats failed to understand that a sense of religious belonging was more powerful than any allegiance to Ottoman governance.¹⁴⁸ It is also worth pointing out that in non-Muslim communities, there were tensions between the religious/traditional members who resisted secularization and cooperated with Ottoman officials and the reformers who saw the traditionalists as traitors to the nationalist cause.

2.5.1 Jewish education

Between 1875 and 1882, a network of eleven Alliance schools was created, locating schools in different places throughout the Empire.¹⁴⁹ In the late 1870s, the organization began to expand its network to cover the smaller communities. By the end of the century, the Alliance was no longer perceived as an external force imposed upon local communities, but as an integral part of Jewish communal existence.

The late 1880s and the 1890s saw the emergence of the language question in Jewish education. In 1895, the state passed a decree making Turkish a compulsory course in all non-Muslim schools. Turkish teachers, paid by the government, were assigned to these schools.¹⁵⁰

In fact, Turkish had been taught in the Alliance schools from the beginning. However, due to a lack of trained language teachers, it was taught rather badly. Some Alliance teachers supported this addition to Jewish education, believing that Armenians had advanced in the Ottoman administration because of their knowledge of Turkish. Other teachers were less enthusiastic, arguing that few students were interested in a career in the civil service. Nonetheless, these debates must be seen in the larger context of socio-political changes at the end of nineteenth century and the growing involvement of the state in local services and schooling. Although some Jewish children attended non-Jewish schools during the Hamidian era, the Alliance was the single most important force in Jewish education. Hamidian state involvement in Jewish educational provision was relatively restrained in comparison to Catholic and Protestant foreign and missionary schools. This is probably because there were strong links between the state and local Jewish communities. That said, after 1886, the

¹⁴⁸ Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Ermenilerinde kültür modernleşmesi, cemaat okulları ve Abdülhamid rejimi" ["Modernization of culture among Ottoman Armenians, community schools and the regime of Abdulhamid"]. *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 5 (Aug. 2007), p. 8.

¹⁴⁹ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 57.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Alliance schools were regularly inspected along with all foreign schools. Textbooks were scrutinized and censored, and as the Hamidian regime grew more and more suspicious of all foreigners, censorship increased greatly and was a constant source of complaint by Alliance teachers.¹⁵¹

2.5.2. Armenian education

With the Ottoman constitution suspended during the Hamidian period, Armenian political parties began to develop. The Hnchakian Revolutionary Party formed in 1887 by seven Russian Armenian students in Geneva. This association clearly desired an immediate revolution and the independence of Ottoman Armenia. In the party's first congress in 1892, the topic of education assumed paramount importance.¹⁵² The party called for the assistance "in every manner the intellectual progress of the people. Make education compulsory".¹⁵³ Therefore, the framing ideology included mass education and knowledge attainment in providing freedom to the Armenians.

After the 1880s, the Armenian *millet* schools faced growing financial difficulties. Many Armenians opted out of the *millet* schools to attend missionary and foreign schools, as well as private schools such as "Ali Mekteb" in Galata, Istanbul or Eseyan School, established in 1895. Portugalyan, the prominent Armenian leader, founded a modern teacher training college in Anatolia in 1878, but the college was closed in 1881 by the state, on the grounds that it was providing military training to Armenian youths. Another lycee, also founded by Portugalyan, closed in 1885. After 1885, the Armenian ruling elite had almost no control over the schools in Anatolia and this caused divisions in the community, with the more radical teachers opposing any religious instruction in the classrooms.¹⁵⁴ However, by the end of the nineteenth century, substantial changes had been made to the religious curriculum. In 1897, the Education Council divided the curriculum into two branches: religious study of the Armenian Church and ethics. According to the Elias, the curricula of Armenian schools in this period were heavily influenced by Enlightenment ideas.¹⁵⁵ Textbooks included material on

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁵² Pamela J. Young, *Knowledge, Nation, and the Curriculum: Ottoman Armenian Education (1853-1915)*, unpublished PhD submitted to The University of Michigan, 2001, p. 71.

¹⁵³ Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the nineteenth century*, Berkeley: U of California P, 1960, p. 167.

¹⁵⁴ Henry Finnis Blossie Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies: Volume II: The Turkish Provinces*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1901, p. 97.

¹⁵⁵ For more information on the subject see: Elias, John.L. *Moral Education: Secular and Religious*. Malabar (FL): Krieger, 1989.

social ethics and responsibility to family, society, nation, land, and religion.¹⁵⁶ In sum, although education was highly secularized when compared to preceding ages, the study of religion continued to find a place in Armenian schools.

Although some schools were abolished during the Hamidian period, others (especially those that retained traditional curricula) managed to survive. After 1890 however, government harassment of Armenian schools accelerated, stimulating Armenian student animosity towards the Ottoman state. By 1914 and the outbreak of the First World War, there were 2500 schools for Armenians, including the state, patriarchate, *millets*, and private schools.¹⁵⁷

2.5.3. Greek education

During and after the Hamidian regime, the network of Greek schools spread rapidly. As early as the 1870s, the Greeks in Istanbul had 105 schools with 15,000 pupils.¹⁵⁸ By 1912, the number of schools increased to 113.¹⁵⁹ Wealthy Greek children could attend lycees that specialized in languages and business studies. The lycee in Kuruçeşme was supported by donations from wealthy Constantinopolitan Greeks (*Polites*). In 1890, a lycee (Zoğrafyan Rum Erkek Lisesi) for boys opened at Beyoğlu. Finally, a commercial college established in 1892 enabled graduates to enter any European or Greek university without entrance examinations. In most of these Greek schools, the motivating ideal was the Helleno-Christian tradition. The curriculum was designed to transmit Hellenic heritage and the Orthodox faith to students.¹⁶⁰ Until the Ottoman government made Turkish a required subject in 1895, the Greek schools offered little, if any, Turkish language studies. In fact, during the second half of nineteenth century, Ottoman Greek education relied heavily upon Greece. Those Ottoman Greeks who studied in Athens returned home eager to spread the ideas of Greek nationalism and Hellenic culture. Ottoman Greeks collectively participated in the development of educational, communal and welfare institutions, and not surprisingly, these activities mostly took place in Istanbul, since the “Ottoman capital continued to be the center *par excellence* of the Greek *millet*”.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ersoy Taşdemirci, “Türk Eğitim Tarihinde Azınlık Okulları ve Yabancı Okullar” [“Foreign and Minority Schools in the history of Turkish Education”]. *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 10 (2001), p. 22.

¹⁵⁸ A.Synvet, *Les Grecs de l'Empire Ottoman: Etude statistique et ethnographique*. Constantinople: L'Orient Illustre, 1878, pp. 32-33.

¹⁵⁹ Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974*. Athens: Ctr. for Asia Minor Studies, 1983, p. 45.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 49.

2.5.4 Alevi education

During this period, there were Armenian revolutionary activities in Anatolia and Protestant missionary attempts to proselytize central Anatolian Alevis. These factors induced the Sublime Porte to pursue policies of ‘Sunnification’ aimed at the Alevis and other heterodox groups, such as the Yazidis. After 1850, the Protestant missionaries and Alevis enjoyed relatively good relations, causing Abdulhamid to fear the possibility of an Alevi-Armenian alliance, which would destabilize the established system in Central and Eastern Anatolia.¹⁶² At this time, a missionary named George Nutting intervened on behalf of the Alevis. Nutting found that the Alevis were more disadvantaged than the Christian minorities and as a result, he called for an extension of the Reform Edict of 1856, thereby guaranteeing the Alevis the same protection given to the *millets*.¹⁶³ In this context, Protestantism became an important source of ideological resistance, precisely because it had the potential to encourage an Alevi renaissance.¹⁶⁴

In 1891, the government founded a number of schools in the small district of Tokat, with the specific objective of converting Alevis to Sunnism. The village imams, who were to act as instructors, were compelled to attend local *rüşdiye* schools for training to teach Sunnism. For conversion of the population of the village of Mihaliccik, five Muslim scholars were appointed in 1899, with a monthly salary of 1000 kuruş. This was a high salary, indicating the government’s commitment to converting the central Anatolian Alevis to Sunni Islam.¹⁶⁵ The same assimilatory education policies were pursued in Dersim where Zaza and Kurdish speaking Alevis populated the area. Here, the Sublime Porte deployed a long-term strategy to proselytize the Dersim Alevis in order to gain their loyalty. As a part of this policy, free Korans and Sunni catechisms were distributed during the 1880s and 1890s. In the 1900s, the government sought to establish primary schools in the region.¹⁶⁶

2.6 The Second Constitutional Period and Turkish nationalism (1908-1918)

The lack of a well-established ethnic identity among the Ottoman elites, together with their openness to contemporary civilization, facilitated the emergence of a composite identity that was called Turkish. I argue that this new expression of Turkish national identity had

¹⁶² Hans Lukas Kieser, “Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th-20th cc).” *Columbia International Affairs Online*, Mar. 2001. Web.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908 Islamisation, Autocracy and Discipline*, Leiden: Brill, p. 221.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 238.

important ramifications for education policy. Young Turks combined ethnic identification of ‘Turkishness’ with older, Islamic interpretations of Ottomanism. As a result, non-Muslims were increasingly excluded from the emerging Turkish nation.

Early in the twentieth century, the Young Turks’ ascent to power brought expectations of peace in the Empire. The Young Turks, with their promises of equality for all inhabitants of the Empire, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim, were initially greeted with rapture. This second constitutional regime lasted longer than the first, but it too ended in failure, bitterness, and disappointment. Although the constitution remained in force and elections were held, the regime degenerated into a kind of military oligarchy of the Young Turk leaders, which ended only with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918.¹⁶⁷

The populist phase of Ottoman Islamism flourished between 1875 and 1878.¹⁶⁸ However the war of 1877-78—with atrocities inflicted by the Orthodox Slavs and the danger of state disintegration—gave the Ottoman Muslims added self-awareness and an interest in new forms of sociopolitical organization.¹⁶⁹ In fact, this interest preceded the war of 1877. As early as the 1850s, Ottoman governors had been engaged in a search for new organizational forms. These efforts effectively led to reevaluations of Ottoman history and to attempts to bolster the state with narratives of Ottoman ethnicity. According to historian Cevdet Pasha, Reşit and Fuat Pasha claimed that the Ottoman state rested on four pillars: Islam, the dynasty (which was Ottoman and embodied in the caliphate), the *hükümet* (government, the executive or administrative branch, which was Turkish), and the permanent capital of the state (Istanbul). This formulation appears in a variety of Ottoman documents. Indeed, Sultan Abdulhamid claimed that “the great Ottoman state was founded on faith, after Yavuz Selim absorbed the caliphate. But since the original state was established by Turks, in reality this is a Turkish state.”¹⁷⁰

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Turkish language was used increasingly in communications between the center and the provinces. This added to the growing perception of the state as ‘Turkish’. In fact, rather than campaign for the use of Turkish *per se*, Abdulhamid hoped to increase administrative efficiency through the use of a single language. Turkish thus became the language of the state, higher education and the professions and as such, was associated with modernity and progress.

¹⁶⁷ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford UP, 1961, p. 211.

¹⁶⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, *Politicization of Islam, Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in late Ottoman State*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001, p. 129.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

Undoubtedly, the growing use of Turkish language helped to promote the vision of a coherent and modern Turkish identity. “The Young Turks took power swiftly, without at first realizing that they no longer governed over an empire of diverse ethno-religious groups, but over a conglomeration of emerging ethno-*national* groups”.¹⁷¹ “They knew that sooner or later, they would have to take charge of one of these, the Turks, -who by virtue of their geography, history and association with the early Ottoman state, could claim its legacy and so claim to be both the oldest and newest nation to emerge from this matrix”¹⁷²

During the second constitutional period, and indeed, up to the end of the Empire, public thinking about education was shaped by this newly emerging paradigm of Turkish nationhood. Between 1908 and 1913, Turkish nationalism was in the ascendant. However, Turkification, as a distinct program of nation building in the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, only occurred from 1913 until the end of World War I.¹⁷³

Ülker notes that after Albanian independence, it was impossible to reconcile different interests and attain a unified empire through Ottomanist policy.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, Lewis argues that once in power, the Young Turks were divided between the two tendencies.¹⁷⁵ The liberals favored a degree of decentralization and of some autonomous rights for religious and ethnic minorities; but the nationalists called for a strong central authority and Turkish domination. In time, this second view became more dominant, especially when the Young Turk cadres were confronted by a series of challenges from inside and outside the Empire.¹⁷⁶

Thereafter, the Young Turks pursued Turkification with greater enthusiasm. They introduced measures and policies designed to bring about cultural assimilation and geographical cohesion. In sum, the Young Turks combined new notions of Turkishness with the older, Islamic interpretations of Ottomanism. This had the problematic result of excluding non-Muslims from the emerging Turkish nation, while at the same time, pressing for their assimilation into the new ethnic and cultural category of Turkishness.¹⁷⁷ The genesis of Turkish nationalism was a multi-faceted process, occurring in several stages of identity accretion and proceeding from universal Ottomanism to Islamism and finally to ethnic

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 351.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Erol Ülker, Contextualizing 'Turkification': nation-building in the late Ottoman Empire, 1908-18, *Nations and Nationalism* 11.4 (2005), p. 616.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford UP, 1961, p. 214.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Erol Ülker, Contextualizing 'Turkification': nation-building in the late Ottoman Empire, 1908-18, *Nations and Nationalism* 11.4 (2005), p. 632.

Turkishness and Turkism.¹⁷⁸

Exploring the causal link between the policies of Ottoman modernization and the emergence of Turkish nationalism, Göl argues that “modernist theories of nationalism-based on the work of Benedict Anderson, John Breuilly, Ernest Gellner, John Hall and Elie Kedourie provides an explanatory framework for the emergence of Turkish nationalism”.¹⁷⁹ According to her ‘modernists’ argue that there are three main causes behind the reality of nationalism: the psychological losses of identity caused by the erosion of tradition; the demands of modernization and industrialization; and the development of communication and print capitalism.¹⁸⁰ Göl asserts that in the late Ottoman context these three causes were already prevalent. First, the erosion of traditional Ottoman identity created a desire for a separate Turkish nation. In addition, the emergence of Turkish nationalism coincided with the need for modernization in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, a separate Turkish national consciousness gradually developed in parallel with print capitalism, as part of modernization policies.¹⁸¹ I think that Göl’s application of modernist theory to the Ottoman context is apt, especially because it treats nationalism as an ideology which constructs an ‘imagined community’ through the agency of a nation state. During the final years of the Young Turk era, imperial policy was to remove non-Muslims from Anatolia, and work to imbue Muslims with a sense of Turkishness. In addition, the Young Turks endeavored to assimilate the Kurds, Arabs, Lazs, Circassians, and other non-Turkish Muslim groups residing on lands regarded as important to Turkish nationalism.

In sum, at the beginning of this era in this era, Ottomanism and Turkish nationalism did not stand as two different alternatives to the Young Turks at the beginning. It is more appropriate to argue that Ottomanism was *reformulated* by the Young Turks under the influence of a Turkish national core. Deringil argues, and I would also concur, that Turkification policies relied on the changing ideological content of Ottomanism that gradually singled out Islam as the base of identification during the period of Abdulhamid.¹⁸²

2.6.1 Education policies during the Constitutional Period

The Young Turks viewed education as extremely important. Building on the work of

¹⁷⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, *Politicization of Islam, Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in late Ottoman State*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001, p. 13.

¹⁷⁹ Ayla Göl, “Imagining the Turkish nation through ‘othering’ Armenians.” *Nations and Nationalisms* 11.1 (2005), p. 122.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 123.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 123-124.

¹⁸² Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1998.

their predecessors, they created a new system of secular primary and secondary schools, teachers' training colleges and specialized institutes, along with the reorganized University of Istanbul. From 1904 to 1908 the Ministry of Education was apportioned 200,000 liras from the budget; this amount was increased to 600,000 in 1909, 940,000 in 1910 and 1,230,000 in 1914.¹⁸³ At the time of the Declaration of Freedom, there were seventy-nine secondary schools, rising to ninety-five in 1914, with huge growth in the numbers of teachers and pupils.¹⁸⁴ In a major development, educational opportunities were extended to girls. Women of the highest classes of society had always had access to a good, private education; the Tanzimat reformers had added a few girls' schools, women's training colleges, and art schools. The Young Turk regime opened the doors to middle and secondary schools, then to university, thus enabling girls to prepare for entry into the professions and public life.

With the increasing dominance of Turkish elements in the society, the Young Turks' political program of 1908 included clauses that declared the official language of the Empire. They also made Turkish language a compulsory subject in elementary schools. However, the 1876 constitution had already designated Turkish as the official language of the Ottoman Empire. Ülker suggests that because Turkish had been incorporated into elementary education before 1908, this subsequent act does not necessarily show assimilation to be a primary objective in the Second Constitutional era. Instead, he finds that the primary aim of the act was the consolidation of imperial administrative and social systems.¹⁸⁵

In 1911, the Empire's non-Muslim communities joined together and requested that a new set of regulations be issued for their schools. The government accepted the request and established a commission to address this. The commission decided that non-Muslim and foreign schools were to be independent, but they must also emphasize Turkish language instruction. Because of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, these decisions were never implemented. The subject was taken up again in 1913, with permission granted for local language instruction on condition that Turkish would also be taught. Yet despite these decisions and the enactment of some regulations, no real supervision of these schools took place until World War I. Therefore, the schools continued to operate as they always had.¹⁸⁶ However, Rodrigue argues against this conclusion, finding that although the 1908 revolution

¹⁸³ Sina Akşin, *Turkey From Empire to Revolutionary Republic, The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to Present*, New York: New York UP, 2007, p. 81.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Erol Ülker, Contextualizing 'Turkification': nation-building in the late Ottoman Empire, 1908-18, *Nations and Nationalism* 11.4 (2005), p. 620.

¹⁸⁶ Ekmelleddin İhsanoğlu, *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002, p. 514.

ended censorship, this only intensified state efforts to control the education of all its subjects. He notes that the government dramatically increased the numbers of inspections, especially in the non-Turkish Muslim provinces, and launched a campaign of Turkification in education.¹⁸⁷ I believe that Rodrigue's analysis is more apt because there is evidence that the schools continued to be inspected regularly, legitimized through a new elementary instruction law in 1913.¹⁸⁸

In 1914, the capitulations were abrogated, and following the War, the concessions to foreign schools were also annulled. The Balkans and Rumelia were lost to the Empire as were the schools in those areas. In the end, all non-Muslim and Muslim schools were attached to the Ministry of Education. Perhaps because of wartime conditions, no objections to this decision were raised. In 1915, the Regulations for Private Schools were issued and according to article 20, permission to open a school in Ottoman territory was to be granted by the Ministry of Education. According to article 6 of the Regulations, certain conditions would apply to the establishment of schools by the various religious communities. In addition, a requirement was placed on these schools to provide instruction in Turkish language by Turkish teachers in subjects such as Turkish and Turkish history and geography.¹⁸⁹

2.7 Education of Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Alevis in the Second Republic

During the Second Republic, Turkish Jews, especially those in Istanbul and Salonica, began to take an interest in Zionism. Rodrigue notes that most historians find that Zionism met with little or no response from Turkish Jews; however, he argues that after 1908, there was significant local support for the Zionist movement.¹⁹⁰ This development threatened the existence of the Alliance institutions, making them targets for those who upheld an ideology of Jewish nationalism; the aim of these institutions was to bring emancipation to Eastern Jews through integration of the Jews into the countries in which they lived. Members of the Alliance viewed Zionism as a radical, utopian movement that would upset the status quo and jeopardize Jewish emancipation. Yet by 1911, ninety percent of the Alliance youth claimed to have become Zionists.¹⁹¹ Just as the graduates of the schools founded by Abdulhamid became increasingly nationalistic to the point of opposing the Sultan himself, the graduates of

¹⁸⁷ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 158.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 127.

Alliance schools too, forged new links with modern political ideologies.¹⁹² Upon Turkey's entrance into World War I, many foreign and secondary institutions were forced to close. Following these closures, the Istanbul lodge created a Jewish lycee in 1915, the first such institution in Turkey. The lycee taught in French and filled an important gap in Jewish education, since the Alliance schools did not provide secondary education. The advent of the new Turkish Republic eventually drove Zionism underground, removing it from public view.

Following Turkish military defeats in the 1912 Balkans War, many of the minority populations had emancipated themselves. One exception was the Armenians, a fact which appeared to block the progress of Turkism. Armenian schools inculcated in students a conscious identification with the Armenian nation, such that they developed a clear allegiance to their heritage and people. In April 1914, mass deportations and the massacre of the Ottoman Armenian population occurred, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people, including many students. Properties were destroyed, students were killed and schools were closed never to reopen.¹⁹³ However, 321 Armenian students, including 204 girls, still managed to graduate from Ottoman public schools between 1908 and 1921.¹⁹⁴

The pressure on non-Muslim communities continued during the War. In an interesting example of this, there is a 1913 article written by an Ottoman Greek in which he complains about the uneven distribution of taxes. He argues that most of this money went to the development of Muslim schools, rather than to existing non-Muslim schools.¹⁹⁵ During this period, Greek members of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies were fiercely resisting a new law that would have placed non-Muslim schools under closer state supervision. The law was postponed following Greek arguments that it constituted an outright attack upon the right of the *millets* to maintain their own school systems. In 1910, a fierce debate between the Ministry of Education and the Greek community was sparked by state plans to expel teachers from Greece who were working at Greek *millet* schools. A new elementary instruction law, passed in 1915, reasserted the principle that the state could inspect and control the establishment of all private and non-Muslim schools.¹⁹⁶ This new elementary instruction law, *Mekatib-i Hususiye Talimatnamesi*, brought many constraints for opening new minority

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 137.

¹⁹³ Pamela J. Young, *Knowledge, Nation, and the Curriculum: Ottoman Armenian Education (1853-1915)*, unpublished PhD submitted to The University of Michigan, 2001, p. 74.

¹⁹⁴ Süleyman Büyükkaracı, *İstanbul Ermeni Okulları [Armenian Schools of Istanbul]*. Yelken Yay: Konya, 2003, p. 22.

¹⁹⁵ Panayotis P. Okonomos, "Rum Okulları" [Greek Schools]. Trans. Ali Haydar, *Muallim Dergisi* Vol. 5 (1913): 144-148; Vol. 6. (1913): 168-170; Vol.7. (1914): 212-217. Istanbul.

¹⁹⁶ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990, p. 158.

schools. Some of these constraints are; the schools can only be opened in areas where the particular religious minority group was populated, that the number of population is enough to demand a school, and also that the noise that is created by the school would not be heard by any other minority school or any worshipping area.¹⁹⁷ This law, which was initially designed to prevent animosities between different religious groups inevitably made the opening of schools really hard. During this period, there was also an immense desire to establish Greek schools and to repair the damaged ones, as is evident in the petitions sent by Greek Churches to the Ottoman authorities.¹⁹⁸

In sum, the conditions created by war and Turkish nationalism had an important impact on non-Muslim minority education during this second constitutional period. From a non-Muslim perspective, the Empire was undoubtedly a less welcoming environment. The watershed of 1908 led the Alevis to an open and collective reaffirmation of their identity. “It facilitated the enhancement, and possibly also the spread of their oppressed religion, and aroused Alevi willingness to support the new state”.¹⁹⁹ According to George E. White, this desire manifested itself as a commitment to construct village schools.²⁰⁰ However, these plans were soon frustrated by the response of the Young Turks. The Alevis were accused of being influenced by Armenian propaganda and of emphasizing their own identities as separate from Sunni identities. It is fair to say that most of the Alevis in this period felt threatened by the nationalist politics of the Young Turks.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the main characteristics of Ottoman Public School Education together with Jewish, Armenian and Greek education policies during the Tanzimat, Abdulhamid and Young Turk eras. In addition to these three main *millets*, the experience of the Alevis living in Anatolia has also been addressed. The specific periodization deployed in this chapter was selected in order to indicate that the Ottoman state did not pursue a single or constant education policy towards these groups. In the Tanzimat era, with the prevalence of Ottomanism, the state aim was to integrate non-Muslims into Ottoman Public Education. Though all education laws reflected this objective, they were never fully implemented. Education policy for minority groups was destined to remain one of “laissez faire or

¹⁹⁷ Mustafa Çapar, *Türkiye’de Eğitim ve ‘Öteki Türkler’* [Education in Turkey and the ‘Other Turks’]. Ankara: Maki, 2006, p. 355.

¹⁹⁸ Süleyman Büyükkarcı, *Türkiye’de Rum Okulları* [Greek Schools in Turkey]. Yelken Yay: Konya, 2003, p. 113.

¹⁹⁹ Hans Lukas Kieser, “Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th-20th cc).” *Columbia International Affairs Online*, Mar. 2001. Web.

²⁰⁰ George E. White, “The Alevi Turks of Asia Minor.” *Contemporary Review* 104 (1913), p. 698.

controlled toleration”.²⁰¹

This period also witnessed the secularization of education in almost all *millets*. In the Hamidian era, with the realization that Ottomanism would remain an unattainable ideal, Islamism began to be promoted, with very different consequences for Muslims and non-Muslims. The Alevi were subjected to much more oppression during this second period, which marginalized them even further. Finally, the Young Turk movement introduced policies of Turkification; these were met with resistance and indignation from the non-Muslim communities. Although stripped of its previously unchallenged authority, religion remained important in non-Muslim schools, often functioning as a source of knowledge about ethnic identity and status, shared culture and heritage. In all these periods, non-Muslim education policy was strongly influenced by the growing nationalism in their communities and by Turkish nationalism.

I argue that out of the myriad legacies of the late Ottoman era, three emerged that continue to govern compulsory religious education today. Firstly, the state possessed increasing power to challenge the authority of religion in the education realm. Newly established schools became a concern for the state, whereas before this period, they would have concerned the *wakfs* (foundations). Increasingly, the policies and conditions set for new schools were considered a state responsibility. As early as 1864, we see the establishment of two committees, ‘mekatib-i sibyan-i muslime’ and ‘mekatib-i rüşdiye ve ilmiye’, the first of which was responsible for the content of religious courses and textbooks for Muslims, the second for all other students in the Empire.²⁰² I argue that the state’s increased control over religious education was a direct legacy of the Tanzimat period. Religion was thought to be an arena that must be managed by government and was thus gradually subsumed under state control. This change, achieved during Tanzimat, emanated from the persistent aim to create an omnipotent state that could counter the spread of liberation movements throughout the Empire. In modern Turkey, however, state control of religion and religious education is generally legitimized by citing the “potential” threat of Islamic fanaticism or reactionary Islam, which could turn secular Turkey into a country with shari’a law.

Secondly, it was during this period that Islam became a marker of Turkishness, along with the popular conviction that ethnic Turks should be the sole ‘owners’ of the Empire. This

²⁰¹ A.M.Kazamias, “The Education of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1923: A Case Study of ‘Controlled Toleration’.” *Schooling, Educational Policy and Ethnic Identity*. Eds J. Tomiak and A. Kazamias. New York: New York UP, 1991, p. 348.

²⁰² Yurdagül Mehmedoğlu, *Tanzimat Sonrasında Okullarda Din Eğitimi [Religion Education in Schools in the Aftermath of the Tanzimat]*. Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, 2001, p. 123.

had unavoidable, negative consequences for all non-Muslims and for ethnic groups other than the ethnic Turks. Later, this conviction would harden as it began to be applied to the modern Turkish education system. When the Turkish Republic was founded, the Alevis—as Muslims—benefited from new definition of Turkishness that relied heavily on Islam as compared to their previous socio-economic conditions in the Ottoman Empire, which was worse than non-Muslims. In this respect, although the intentions might be questionable, it is striking to note the state attention given to non-Muslim education who were both enrolled to *millet* or missionary schools and also to state schools. With the perceived threat coming from non-Muslims diminished, in the early years of Turkish Republic issues pertaining to the education of non-Muslims were dismissed as being specific to ‘religious minorities’ thus falling outside the primary duty of the state to mingle with.

A third legacy of the late Ottoman era was the importance given to the role of education in shaping the “ideal citizen”. This idea directly informed subsequent debates and policies concerning state education. In upcoming chapters, I turn to the specific role of religious education in these discourses, especially with reference to developments in the late 1970s and 1980s.