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2. Nationalism and population politics in the late Ottoman Empire

How did the Turkish nation-formation process develop from the nineteenth into the twentieth century? This chapter will give an account of the eastern provinces, in particular Diyarbekir province, from an anthropological and sociological perspective. It will then address how the process of nation formation in the Ottoman Empire shifted from a relatively inclusive Ottoman patriotism to a relatively exclusive Turkish ethnic nationalism. This shift will be analyzed through the prism of processes of identification and disidentification. The chapter will then examine the advent of the notion of population politics. The Young Turk movement's 'discovery of society' and plans for carving out a nation state from the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire is another prime focus. Finally, the chapter will return to how these ideas of nationalism and population politics, formulated and discussed at top political levels, trickled down to the provincial level, where they became the subject of bitter conflicts.

An introduction to Diyarbekir

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire straddled three continents and encompassed remarkable diversity among the estimated thirty million people living within its borders. A military-agrarian peasant society with relatively low levels of integration in economy, administration and culture, the empire allowed for local leaders in disparate regions such as Egypt, Macedonia, the Gulf, or Wallachia to operate with relative autonomy, away from each other and the authority of the Sultan. At the height of its power, the empire contained 29 provinces, organized into districts with district governors, counties with mayors, and communes with directors. Diyarbekir was a relatively large province (42,100 km²) locked in between the Euphrates in the west, the Tigris in the east, the Armenian highland in the north, and the Mesopotamian desert in the south. Its continental climate made for mild winters and hot summers. The region became part of the Ottoman Empire during Sultan Süleyman I's campaign against Iraq and Persia in 1534. The city of Diyarbekir became the administrative center and the headquarters of the sixteenth-century governorship from where large parts of the broader region were ruled.¹²² Although there were regional variations in the economic conditions of the province, generally it thrived due to its favorable location on the ancient Silk

¹²² Martin van Bruinessen, "The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbekir and the Administrative Organisation of the Province in the 16th and 17th Centuries," in: Martin van Bruinessen & Hendrik Boeschoten (eds.), *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbekir* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp.13-38. Alpay Bizbirlik, *16. Yüzyıl Ortalarında Diyarbekir Beylerbeyliği'nde Vakıflar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002). Nejat Göyünç, "Diyarbekir Beylerbeyliğinin İlk İdari Taksimati," in: *Tarih Dergisi*, vol.22 (1969), pp.23-24.

Road.¹²³ There were copper mines in Maden county, and the border regions with Bitlis province were known for being oil-rich, though no large-scale steps had been taken to exploit either. Like the rest of the empire, Diyarbakir was a pre-industrial region where subsistence farming and cyclic pastoralism were the dominant economic occupations for peasants and nomads in the countryside.¹²⁴

The city of Diyarbakir is a turbot-shaped walled citadel, situated on a basalt plateau nested in a meander of the Tigris river. Within the city walls, the urban structure consists of a square in the center of town, surrounded by a bazaar and a labyrinth of streets and alleys running criss-cross through the city.¹²⁵ The city consisted of several neighborhoods, and although the city was known to have a Christian neighborhood and a Muslim neighborhood, the overlap of ethnicity and settlement was never complete. To a significant degree, historically the various communities lived in mixed neighborhoods. Typically, Diyarbakir's houses are closed towards the outside world and have courtyards where social life transpires.¹²⁶ Until the 1950s, Diyarbakir lacked a central refuse collection system, waterworks, underground sewerage, and other services. Nevertheless, foreigners traveling to the city were often impressed, and recognized that "the streets are cleaner than those of many Turkish towns, and the houses better built".¹²⁷ The Ottoman state made its presence felt through the governorship, the Second Army, a court-martial and one of the largest prisons of the Ottoman Empire. In the nineteenth century Diyarbakir's central prison gained infamy throughout the Ottoman Empire as a site where political prisoners such as Bulgarian nationalists were sent to serve harsh sentences for advocating national freedom.¹²⁸

¹²³ İbrahim Yılmazçelik, *XIX. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Diyarbakır* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995); Abdulhalık Bakır, "Osmanlı Öncesinde Diyarbakır'da Sanayi ve Ticaret," paper presented at the conference *Oğuzlardan Osmanlıya Diyarbakır*, Dicle University, 21 May 2004.

¹²⁴ Hellmut Christoff, *Kurden und Armenier: Eine Untersuchung über die Abhängigkeit ihrer Lebensformen und Charakterentwicklung von der Landschaft* (Hamburg: dissertation University of Hamburg, 1935), pp.19-73.

¹²⁵ For a description of the city see: Mehmet Alper, "Diyarbakır, sa citadelle et ses remparts," in: *Albert Gabriel (1883-1972): Mimar, Arkeolog, Ressam, Gezgin* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), pp.93-109.

¹²⁶ Gülay Zorer Gedik, "Climatic Design: An Analysis of the Old Houses of Diyarbakir in the Southeast Region of Turkey," in: *Architectural Science Review*, vol.47, no.2 (2004), pp.145-54; Müjgan Şerefhanoglu Sözena & Gülay Zorer Gedik, "Evaluation of Traditional Architecture in Terms of Building Physics: Old Diyarbakır houses," in: *Building and Environment*, vol.42, no.4 (2007), pp.1810-6. For descriptions of daily life in Diyarbakir in the first half of the twentieth century see: M. Şefik Korkusuz, *Eski Diyarbakır'de Gündelik Hayat* (Istanbul: Kent, 2007); Id., *Bir zamanlar Diyarbakır: zamanlar, mekanlar, insanlar* (Istanbul: Yeditepe, 1999).

¹²⁷ Mark Sykes, *The Caliphs' Last Heritage: A Short History of the Turkish Empire* (London: n.p., 1915), p.358.

¹²⁸ Veselin Sariev, *Диярбекѝр и българите: По следите на заточениците* (Sofia: Khristo Botev, 1996); Tone Kračhov, *Диярбекѝрски дневник и спомени* (Sofia: Izdvo na Otechestveniiia front, 1989).

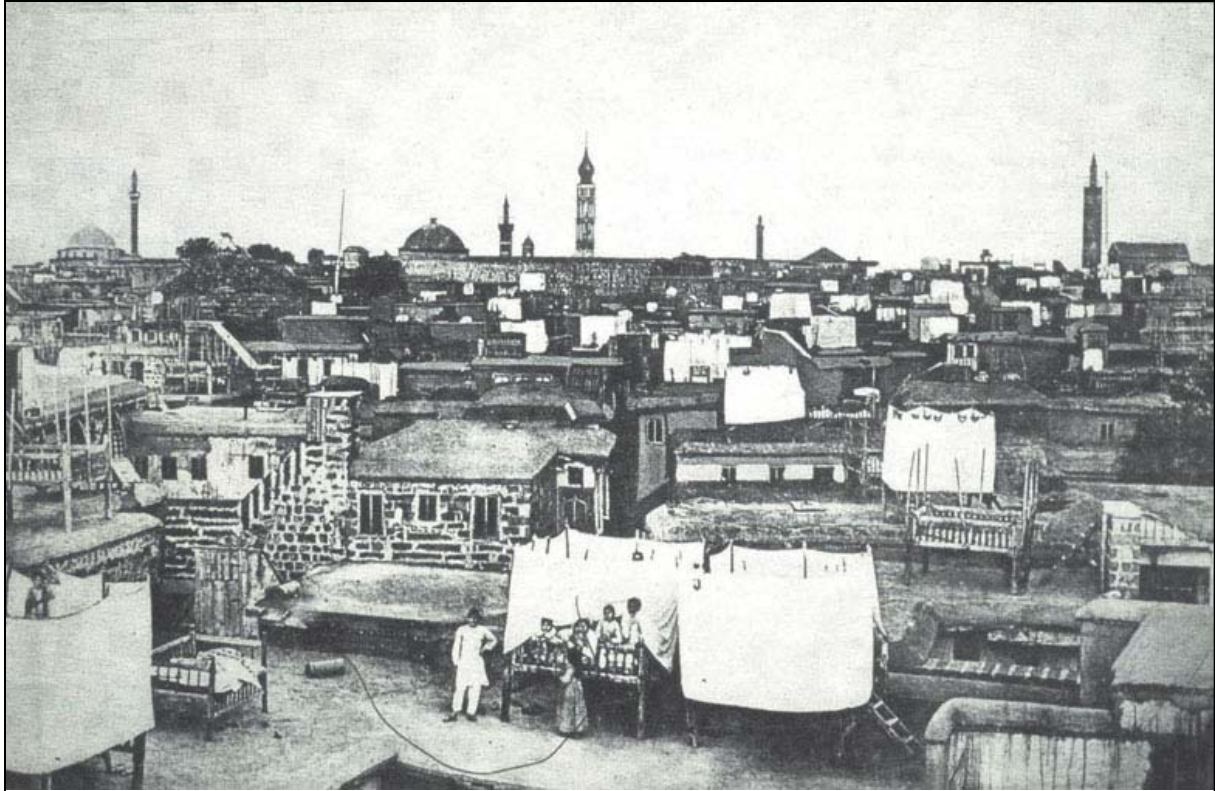


Photo 1: A bird's eye view of Diyarbekir city in 1911 (Kévorkian & Paboudjian, 1992)

Diyarbakir province boasted a formidable diversity of ethnic and religious groups, small and large, scattered and concentrated, urban and rural. Religious affiliation was decisive in one's identity within Ottoman society, which was organized into the *millet* system, the official macro-organization of religious communities that were partly autonomous in their decision-making.¹²⁹ The Ottoman Muslims, later denominated 'Turks', were the majority in most urban areas, for they had been occupying most administrative positions for a long time. Armenians inhabiting the cities made their livings as merchants or craftsmen and in most bazaars the majority of tradesmen were indeed Armenians. Some of these men were quite prosperous, having family members abroad and being active in politics. But the bulk of Diyarbakir Armenians were peasants organized in large extended families (*gerdastans*) in villages, most specifically in the Lice, Silvan, Beşiri, and Palu districts.¹³⁰ The Kurdish population of the

¹²⁹ Within the Ottoman Empire the four main *millets* were the Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. Most ethnic groups were categorized under one of these rubrics. Kamel S. Abu Jaber, "The Millet System in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," in: *The Muslim World*, vol.57, nr.3 (1967), pp.212-23; Macit Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi* (Istanbul: Klasik, 2004); Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," in: Benjamin Braude & Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), vol.1, *The Central Lands*, pp. 69-90; Kemal H. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era," in: *Ibid.*, pp.141-69; Roderic H. Davison, "The Millets as Agents of Change in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," in: *Ibid.*, pp.319-37; Michael Ursinus, "Zur Diskussion um 'millet' im Osmanischen Reich," in: *Südost-Forschungen*, vol.48 (1989), pp.195-207.

¹³⁰ Raymond H. Kévorkian & Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman à la veille du génocide* (Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1992), p.392.

province, all Muslims, can be divided into several categories: tribal versus non-tribal Kurds, and (semi-) nomadic versus sedentary. The dozens of large and powerful Kurdish tribes in the region were generally commanded by a chieftain (*ağa*), and *de facto* controlled extensive territories. All were able to mobilize thousands, sometimes tens of thousands of mounted warriors, often to combat each other in pursuit of power, honour, and booty. Non-tribal Kurds could be powerless peasants (*kurmanç*) or Kurds from noted clergy families (*meşayih*).¹³¹ It is important to point out that most peasants, irrespective of ethnic or religious background, paid tribute and taxes to Kurdish chieftains and landlords.¹³² The mere 1000 Jews of Diyarbekir province owned one small synagogue, and were generally an inconspicuous ethnic group among the much larger Christian and Muslim populations. They mainly engaged in small-scale trade and some horticulture.¹³³ The Yezidis, a monotheist religious group, inhabited villages in the south-eastern regions of the province. Ottoman state discrimination and oppression pushed them into a marginal social status, which caused them to frequently engage in organized brigandry.¹³⁴ The Kizilbash were both Turkoman and Kurdish heterodox Shi'ites and inhabited only a few villages in the province, whereas others were semi-nomads.¹³⁵ The Zaza, an until recently unexplored ethnic group socially close to the Kurds were villagers and occupied themselves with agriculture and horticulture. Concentrated in the north and west, the Zaza in Diyarbekir province were and are Muslims, and several important Muslim clerics emanated from them.¹³⁶ The Arabs of the province were also named Mahalmi because of the peculiar dialect they spoke. Most of them lived in Mardin but also in the villages in and around Midyat, though they numbered no more than a few thousand.¹³⁷ The Syrians (alternatively named Assyrians or Arameans), an embracing denomination including all Aramaic-speaking Syrian-Orthodox, Syrian-Protestant, Syrian-Catholic, Nestorian and Chaldean Christians, inhabited many villages, especially in the southeastern parts of the

¹³¹ Paul White, "Ethnic Differentiation among the Kurds: Kurmanç, Kizilbash and Zaza," in: *Journal of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.2, nr.2 (1995), pp.67-90.

¹³² Hamit Bozarslan, "Remarques sur l'histoire des relations kurdo-arméniennes," in: *The Journal of Kurdish Studies*, vol.1 (1995), pp.55-76; Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed, 1992), chapters 2, 3, and 4. Many communities in Diyarbekir lived under the supremacy of powerful Kurdish tribes, that were relatively autonomous in their affairs. The Ottoman crisis of the late nineteenth century strained the relationship between Kurdish tribes and peasants, a relationship that resembled a type of feudal serfdom. The persistent economic malaise induced the chieftains to levy an extra tax on top of official taxes to sustain their dominance, threatening neglecters and resisters with violence. The appeals of Armenian nationalists to the Western powers would politicize this situation.

¹³³ Walther J. Fischel, "The Jews of Kurdistan a Hundred Years Ago: A Traveler's Record," in: *Jewish Social Studies*, vol.6 (1944), pp.195-226; Erich Brauer, *The Jews of Kurdistan* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993); A. Medyalı, *Kürdistanlı Yahudiler* (Ankara: Berhem, 1992), p.58.

¹³⁴ Ralph H.W. Empson, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel: A Short Account of the Yezidi Tribes of Kurdistan* (London: AMS Press, 1928).

¹³⁵ Erdal Gezik, *Dinsel, etnik ve politik sorunlar bağlamında Alevi Kürtler* (Ankara: Kalan, 2000).

¹³⁶ Karl Hadank, *Mundarten der Zâzâ, hauptsächlich aus Siwerek und Kor* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1932).

¹³⁷ Hans-Jürgen Sasse, *Linguistische Analyse des arabischen Dialekts der Mhallamiye in der Provinz Mardin (Südosttürkei)*, Ph.D. Thesis, Ludwig-Maximilians University of München, Department of Semitics, 1970.

province. The mountainous region around Midyat, also known as Tur Abdin, was a Syriac stronghold with dozens of often exclusively Syriac villages.¹³⁸ A demographically and politically insignificant group were the Gypsies, who lived in urban centers and were ostracized by most other groups. In the eastern provinces the Gypsies were named Poşa or Kereçi.¹³⁹ Finally, there is evidence of the existence of Shemsi communities, although their numbers seem to have shrunk dramatically by the late nineteenth century. These archaic sun-worshippers were most probably the religious offspring of the ancient Zoroastrian religion, and used to worship in several temples all over what became the Ottoman province of Diyarbekir.¹⁴⁰ All in all, the population of Diyarbekir province had a very heterogeneous ethnic and social composition.

This taxonomy of the ethnic, religious, and cultural composition of Diyarbekir province is not unproblematic. It may well be possible to categorize people based on ethnic markers such as language, culture, religion, class or political orientation. But by focusing on the differences between people, such overviews of classificatory criteria often risk essentializing and reifying, and often constructing and amplifying the ostensibly objective characteristics.¹⁴¹ Such biases emanate from a “tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis... as if they were... unitary collective actors with common purposes.”¹⁴² Besides significant patches of overlap between groups, there were often multiple versions of one identity. The heterogeneity of the ethnic and social composition of the province was further complicated by two additional complexities: the vagueness of identities and the presence of multiple loyalties as tribal cleavages and ethnically mixed villages produced competing loyalties. This complex social reality of overlap, vagueness, and multiplicity withstands simple classifications, and

¹³⁸ The Tur Abdin region was particularly famous for its strong tribal cleavages. The two main tribes reigning in Tur Abdin were the Dekşuri and Hevêrkan, the latter originating from the Botan emirate that was violently dismantled in the mid-19th century. Both tribes had hereditary chieftains of Muslim-Kurdish descent and both tribes treated their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects (such as Syriac Christians and Yezidis) alike. Tribal interests and loyalties were superordinated to religious interests and loyalties. The continuous competition between these two tribes often escalated into assassinations and plunder. Hans Hollerweger, *Turabdin* (Linz: Freunde des Tur Abdin, 1999).

¹³⁹ Sarkis Seropyan, “Vatansız tek ulus Çingeneler ve Çingenelerin Ermenileşmişleri Hay-Poşalar,” in: *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol.33, no.202 (2000), pp.21-25.

¹⁴⁰ Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia and Mesopotamia* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1840), vol.2, pp.284-85.

¹⁴¹ Alan B. Anderson, “The Complexity of Ethnic Identities: A Postmodern Reevaluation,” in: *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, vol.1, no.3 (2001), pp.209-23; Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.57-68; Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London: Sage Publications, 2004); Johan van der Dennen, “Ethnocentrism and In-Group/Out-Group Differentiation,” in: Vernon Reynolds (red.), *The Sociobiology of Ethnocentrism: Evolutionary Dimensions of Xenophobia, Discrimination, Racism and Nationalism* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), pp.1-47.

¹⁴² Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity Without Groups,” in: *Archives européennes de sociologie*, vol.43, no.2 (2002), pp.163-89, at 164.

needs to be taken into consideration before any narrative or analysis of the history of this region.

These anthropological subtleties were not peculiar to either Diyarbekir or the Ottoman Empire in general. Sociologically, in peasant societies cultures that seem distinct at first glance are mostly locally organized. Objective differences exist mostly *between* regions separated by natural or administrative borders rather than between groups *within* a region.¹⁴³ In other words, people perhaps resembled each other more than they differed. The British officer Mark Sykes wrote about Kurdish villages in a valley where “side by side with these low Kurds live Armenians, who are much the same as their Moslem neighbours,”¹⁴⁴ providing one concrete example:

The village of Dibneh is inhabited by Armenians, who are independent and wealthy. According to their own account, they are a lonely colony, and have dwelt there from time immemorial. They are identical in physiognomy, habit, and dress with the Tiriki Kurds, by whom they are surrounded, and bear not the slightest resemblance to the ordinary Armenians one meets in the districts of Bitlis, Van, or Diarbekir.¹⁴⁵

Locality was a tribal matter as well since most tribes lived in one region. Most Kurdish tribes had hereditary Muslim chieftaincy, but they treated their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects equally.¹⁴⁶ The interests of the tribe or the village always superseded ethno-religious interests and loyalties and produced cultural contact between various groups. For all these reasons, it might be more correct to speak of a distinct culture of the Diyarbekir region rather than coexisting national cultures.

For many of these ethnic communities Diyarbekir province bore more than average importance because of the concentration of pivotal religious sites and presence of the highest clerical authorities. Since religion defined communal boundaries in the Ottoman theocracy, this only added to the portentousness of Diyarbekir. For example, the two main monasteries of the Syriacs, Mor Gabriel and Deyr-ul Zaferan, were located in the Mardin district. These were not only offices of bishops and patriarchs, but in general the heart of Syriac religion, culture, and education in seminaries (*madrashotos*).¹⁴⁷ Diyarbekir city harboured the Syrian-

¹⁴³ See: Teodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasants and Peasant Societies: Selected Readings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin books, 1971).

¹⁴⁴ Mark Sykes, *The Caliphs' Last Heritage: A Short History of the Turkish Empire* (London: n.p., 1915), p.357.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.361.

¹⁴⁶ Martin van Bruinessen, “Les Kurdes, États et tribus,” in: Hosham Dawod (ed.), *Tribus et pouvoirs en terre d’islam* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2004), pp.145-68.

¹⁴⁷ Gertrude Bell, *The Churches and Monasteries of the Tur Abdin and Neighbouring Districts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter’s Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1913).

Orthodox Virgin Mary Church, the Chaldean church, the Armenian Apostolic church which was one of the largest and most sophisticated churches in the Ottoman Empire, and a Protestant church, while dozens of Armenian villages had churches and schools.¹⁴⁸ For the Muslims of Diyarbakir province the many mosques and seminaries (*medrese*) were important as places of worship, education, and socializing. In a society with very low literacy rates, information circulated mostly by word of mouth, as newspapers were often read out aloud in coffeehouses and bards roamed the countryside updating the people on new developments.



Photo 2: A coffeehouse in Diyarbakir city, 1909 (Fraser, 1909).

Moreover, influential Islamic orders like the Nakşibendî, Kadirî, Rufaî, and Küfrevî were active all over the province among large Zaza, Arab, but especially Kurdish families. These orders were lodged in large medreses even in small counties, where students were taught religion, languages (Arabic, Persian, Kurdish, Ottoman), and history. Some of these were quite famous for the quality of their education, such as the Red Medrese (*Medreseya Sor*) of Cizre, the *Hatuniye*, *Zinciriye* and *Sitti Radviye* medreses of Mardin, and the *Mesudiye* and

¹⁴⁸ Orhan Cezmi Tuncer, *Diyarbakır Kiliseleri* (Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür ve Sanat Yayınları, 2002).

Sitrabas medreses of Diyarbekir city.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, local saints, cults, and shrines (*ziyaret*), visited by people of all religious groups, were scattered all over the province. One example is the Sultan Şeyhmus cult, located at the Şeyhan caves between Diyarbekir and Mardin.

A limited number of Western Europeans lived in the province. Diyarbekir had a French consulate and a British vice-consulate (that were recalled when the Ottoman Empire declared war on France and Britain), and an American Protestant mission. The German government considered the deployment of a vice-consulate because of the possibility that Diyarbekir could become a hub along the Baghdad railway, but instead decided to found consulates in Mosul and Aleppo.¹⁵⁰ Several dozens of American, German and French missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, were active in education and health care in the province, as well as in missionary work. However, due to its rugged and inaccessible terrain like most eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, much of the province was *terra incognita* for Western observers. The West also exerted its presence through former Ottoman subjects who had acquired Western passports. Mostly these were Christian notables who had become Russian, French, or British subjects, often to evade high taxes and derive benefit from the political immunity Western citizenship offered in many instances.

It is very difficult to come to grips with the demographics of Diyarbekir province, due to the absence of reliable quantitative data on all the ethnicities inhabiting the province before the war.¹⁵¹ Figures from various sources contradict each other, which has hampered academic efforts undertaken to chart the demography of the province. According to the 1913-1914 census carried out by the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, the Armenians numbered 106,867 in 249 localities in the province.¹⁵² An Armenian almanac estimated the pre-war number of Armenians at 124,000.¹⁵³ Johannes Lepsius (1858-1926), Protestant missionary and director of the *Deutsche Orient Mission* in the empire, diverged from this calculation:

¹⁴⁹ Zeynelabidin Zinar, *Xwendina medresê* (Stockholm: Pencinar, 1993); Orhan Cezmi Tuncer, *Diyarbekir Camileri* (Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür ve Sanat Yayınları, 1996).

¹⁵⁰ *Politisches Archiv Auswärtiges Amt* (German National Archives, Berlin, hereafter cited as *PAAA*), R14078, Notes of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Zimmermann, 5 March 1913, enclosure no.2.

¹⁵¹ The study of early twentieth-century Ottoman demography demands careful scrutiny as it is not only difficult to produce concrete and reliable statistics, but it is also very often a political minefield in which contemporary and present-day partisan scholarship plays a role. See Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University, 1983); Levon Marashlian, *Politics and Demography: Armenians, Turks, and Kurds in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Zoryan Institute, 1991). Also, the Ottoman government often revised its provinces and altered borders. It is possible to interpret this practice of redistricting as an effort to reduce the demographic proportion of Christians to the benefit of Muslims, although no systematic research has been conducted with respect to this subject. Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of the Turko-Armenian Conflict* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), pp.139-44.

¹⁵² Kévorkian & Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman*, p.59.

¹⁵³ Theodig, *Mius Merelotzu: Amenoun Daretzoutzu* (Istanbul: n.p., 1921), p.261, quoted in: Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire 1860-1908* (London: Routledge, 1977), pp.19, 117 footnote 6.

Of its total population of 471,500 inhabitants there were 166,000 Christians, namely 105,000 Armenians and 60,000 Syrians (Nestorians and Chaldeans) and 1000 Greeks. The remaining population is composed of 63,000 Turks, 200,000 Kurds, 27,000 Kizilbash (Shi'ites) and 10,000 Circassians. In addition there are 4,000 Yezidis (so-called devil worshippers) and 1,500 Jews.¹⁵⁴

Ottoman archival material diverges even further from these numbers:

Table 1: Ottoman demographic data for Diyarbekir province, 1913¹⁵⁵

Ethnicity	Number
Jewish	1954
Protestant	5417
Chaldean	4783
Greek Catholic	113
Greek	1815
Syriac Catholic	3582
Syriac	28,699
Armenian Catholic	9004
Armenian	51,405
Muslim	434,236
Total	541,203

Source: *BOA*, DH.EUM.MTK 74/51, 3 December 1913.

According to this demographic classification, Diyarbekir province in 1913 was inhabited by 1954 Jews, 104,818 Christians, and 434,236 Muslims. On the one hand, it is very likely that in this table the demographic balance between Muslims and Christians is skewed in the advantage of the Muslims, and on the other hand there is no mention of marginal social groups such as Yezidis or Alevis living in the province. All in all, the provincial statistics clearly contradict each other and contradictions and vaguenesses such as these apply to

¹⁵⁴ Johannes Lepsius, *Der Todesgang des Armenischen Volkes: Bericht über das Schicksal des Armenischen Volkes in der Türkei während des Weltkrieges* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), p.74.

¹⁵⁵ *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* (Ottoman Archives, Istanbul, hereafter: *BOA*), DH.EUM.MTK 74/51, 3 December 1913, enclosure on p.3. Justin McCarthy rectifies another official Ottoman figure of 73,226 to 89,131. Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), pp.69-70.

Diyarbakir's districts as well.¹⁵⁶ For the bulk of the population it seems reasonable to contend that for approximately one third it was made up of Christians and two thirds Muslims.¹⁵⁷

Social relations within and between these groups remains a topic that is vigorously debated. Essentialistic ideas of homogeneous and hermetically bounded national units in collective action and conflict ('*the Kurds versus the Syrians*' or '*the Turks against the Armenians*') are quite ahistorical and need to be critically deconstructed. On the other hand, the same critical gaze needs to be cast over rosy utopian images of an ostensibly peaceful society basking in multicultural coexistence in a era when nationalism had not yet poisoned the minds of neighbors.¹⁵⁸ In his travel account of 1895, the British ethnographer Parry wrote about his experiences in Diyarbakir province:

It is most striking, when one first visits the East, to find a mixed company thoroughly enjoying each other's society, which, when analysed, would be found to contain an Old Syrian or two, a Protestant, half-a-dozen Moslems, and a substantial quota of the Papal varieties. Yet they are all talking together in perfect good-fellowship, smoking each other's cigarettes, and discussing with quite marvellous tact the latest political news.¹⁵⁹

In Mardin city, for example, serenity ruled when the British traveller and photographer Gertrude Bell visited the citadel town, which she qualified as "more splendid than any place I have ever seen." According to her, all the ethno-religious communities peacefully coexisted in perfect harmony.¹⁶⁰ Mark Sykes, who had conducted fieldwork and several studies on the Ottoman Empire, visited Palu in 1913 and wrote that there was no trace of enmity between the local Zazas and Armenians.¹⁶¹ Sykes also wrote that İbrahim Pasha (d. 1909)¹⁶² of the Mîlan tribe had

¹⁵⁶ For example, according to a German consular report, the ethnic distribution in Mardin district was as follows: 27,000 Muslims, 10,000 Armenian Catholics, 10,000 Syriac Christians, 1500 Syriac Catholics, 1400 Protestants, 100 Chaldeans, summing up to a total of 50,000 inhabitants in the entire district. *PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel* 170, Aleppo consul Rößler to special ambassador Hohenlohe-Langenburg (Istanbul), 27 September 1915. Conversely, the Armenian Patriarchate calculated the total number of Armenians in Mardin to be 14,547 whereas according to the German consulate they numbered no more than 11,400, assuming that all Protestants were ethnic Armenians. Theodig, *Mius Merelotzu: Amenoun Daretzoutzu* (Istanbul: n.p., 1921), p.261, quoted in: Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire 1860-1908* (London: Routledge, 1977), pp.19, 117 footnote 6.

¹⁵⁷ This is confirmed by Lepsius: "Die christliche Bevölkerung betrug also reichlich 1/3, die muhammedanische 2/3 der Gesamteinwonerschaft des Wilayets." Lepsius, *Der Todesgang*, p.74.

¹⁵⁸ For an introduction to inter-ethnic relations in the nineteenth century see: Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, "Introduction", in: Benjamin Braude & Bernard Lewis (red.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), vol.1, pp.1-34.

¹⁵⁹ Oswald H. Parry, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery: Being the Record of a Visit to the Head Quarters of the Syrian Church in Mesopotamia With Some Account of the Yazidis or Devil Worshippers of Mosul and El Jilwah, Their Sacred Book* (London: Horace Cox, 1895), p.41.

¹⁶⁰ *Gertrude Bell Archives* (Robinson Library, University of Newcastle upon Tyne) [hereafter cited as *GBA*], Gertrude Bell to her mother, 25 April 1911.

¹⁶¹ Sykes, *The Caliph's Last Heritage*, p.366.

encouraged Christians (Armenians and Chaldaeans) to take refuge in the vicinity of Viranshehr, and established a bazaar in that town, which rapidly increased in size. While other tribes and chiefs plundered and massacred Armenians, Ibrahim protected and encouraged Christians of all denominations. It is estimated that during the great Armenian massacres he saved some 10,000 Armenians from destruction.¹⁶³

The British army major Ely Soane, who was fluent in Kurdish and had traversed the Diyarbekir region in native disguise, commented two years before World War I that the Diyarbekir Chaldeans “were on excellent terms with their ferocious neighbours,” referring to the Kurdish tribes dwelling north of Diyarbekir city.¹⁶⁴ Benevolent Muslim notables wrote optimistic articles to the effect that in Diyarbekir Armenians and Kurds had always got along well and that the Ottoman government was to blame for any possible mutual distrust between these two peoples, who had lived in “eternal brotherhood” (*vifak-ı kadîm*) and even “consanguinity” (*yekdestî*).¹⁶⁵ According to these views, pre-war interethnic relations were peaceful and the atmosphere was congenial.

The interethnic and interfaith relations in Diyarbekir province in the years before 1914 were in fact not as idyllic as some of these observers portrayed. They were frail due to the prolonged political and economic crisis that afflicted the Ottoman Empire. The gradual crumbling of Ottoman rule in the imperial peripheries throughout the nineteenth century had co-occurred with massacres perpetrated against Muslims in the Balkans and the Caucasus.¹⁶⁶ Among Ottoman Muslims, these events began to lead them to question the loyalty of Christian citizens to the Ottoman state. Moreover, the hundreds of thousands of refugees (primarily Circassians and Chechens from the Caucasus) who poured into the eastern provinces added to the existing tensions between Muslims and Christians. Local authorities often ignored, approved, or abetted encroachments on Armenians by these impoverished

¹⁶² İbrahim Paşa was born into the Milan tribe in the Urfa area, became chieftain in 1863, and managed to build a reputation for himself by amassing prestige in his tribe. When Sultan Abdulhamid II established the mounted Hamidiye regiments in 1891 he joined them and acquired even more respect from the population. He soon became the single most powerful commander of the Hamidiye regiments in the eastern provinces, boasting fortified headquarters and many thousands of mounted warriors of the 41st, 42nd and 43rd regiments. When the CUP wrested the 1908 revolution İbrahim repudiated the new cabinet and declared his independence. The Ottoman army was deployed and İbrahim was definitively defeated and forced to flee into the mountains south of Urfa, where he died. M. Wiedemann, “İbrahim Paşas Glück und Ende,” in: *Asien*, vol.8 (1909), pp.34-54.

¹⁶³ Sykes, *The Caliph's Last Heritage*, p.324.

¹⁶⁴ Ely B. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise: With Historical Notices of the Kurdish Tribes and the Chaldeans of Kurdistan* (London: J. Murray, 1912), p.66.

¹⁶⁵ Hüseyin Paşazâde, “Kürdler ve Ermeniler,” in: *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, 30 January 1909, pp.3-6; Mehmed E. Bozarlan (ed.), *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi: Kovara Kurdî-Tirkî 1908-1909* (Uppsala: Deng, 1998), pp.431-4.

¹⁶⁶ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1995).

refugees. The Abdulhamid era massacres, which struck Diyarbekir on 1 November 1895, saw massive destruction of human lives and property.¹⁶⁷ Approximately 25,000 Armenians were forcibly converted to Islam across Diyarbekir province, 1100 Armenians were killed in Diyarbekir city and 800 or 900 more in the outlying villages, while 155 women and girls were carried off by Kurdish tribesmen. In Silvan district 7000 Armenians converted and 500 women were carried off. In Palu 3000 and in Siverek 2500 converted to escape being massacred. In Silvan, along with Palu (where 3000 Armenians converted), “7500 are reduced to destitution and 4000 disappeared: killed, died of cold, etc., or escaped elsewhere”.¹⁶⁸ According to another source, 2000 houses and 2500 shops and workshops were burnt down in the province during the 1895 massacres.¹⁶⁹ An unknown percentage of these converts reconverted to their faiths, returned to their villages, reclaimed their possessions, and rebuilt their homes and businesses once the persecution was discontinued.

Still, the memory of the atrocities was very much alive among the population of Diyarbekir. Ely Soane wrote in his travel account,

[...] it is, among the underworld of western Kurdistan and northern Mesopotamia, a common subject of talk in the cafés how much the Sultan and the Government paid the ruffians of the town to do their dirty work, and how much the Kurdish Aghas presented to the authorities to be allowed to finish unhindered the blood-feuds that existed between themselves and Armenians sheltering in Diyarbekir and the towns of Armenia. A very reign of terror overshadows the apparently peaceful and prosperous town.¹⁷⁰

The province was beset by various tribal, ethno-religious, and political conflicts. The heavily armed Kurdish tribes of the province frequently engaged in armed combat to overpower each other and spared few lives when they defeated a rival tribe. In the Hazakh district (present-day İdil) Serhan II,¹⁷¹ chieftain of the Mala Osman dynasty of the Hevêrki tribe, perceived a threat in the person of Khalife Meso of the Mala Meso dynasty of the Şeroxan tribe. In 1913 tribesmen loyal to Serhan carried out a raid against Kîwex village, where Meso, his brother Cercur, and his nephew Kato were living. In the ensuing massacre twenty-four men including

¹⁶⁷ Gustave Meyrier, *Les Massacres de Diarbakir: Correspondance diplomatique du Vice-Consul de France 1894-1896* (Paris: L'Inventaire, 2000).

¹⁶⁸ *Blue Book Turkey*, No.8 (1896), enclosure in document no.140, p.127.

¹⁶⁹ Kévorkian & Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens*, p.398.

¹⁷⁰ Ely B. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise: With Historical Notices of the Kurdish Tribes and the Chaldeans of Kurdistan* (London: J. Murray, 1912), pp.65-66.

¹⁷¹ Serhan II was a notorious Kurdish brigand, whose ruthlessness was only matched by his greed. In the pre-war years his power gained momentum as he succeeded his father as chieftain of the Mala Osman. Fed up with his terror, a group of Tur Abdin Syrians filed a complaint against him at the Syriac Patriarchate in Istanbul, requesting a parliamentary inquiry and prosecution of Serhan. Contrary to their expectation, the case was neglected and no legal action was undertaken. *BOA*, DH.MUI 77-2/15, 9 August 1910.

young boys and two women were killed. Although Serhan was a Muslim and Meso of Yezidi descent, there were both Yezidis among Serhan's adherents and Muslims among Meso's adherents, thus clearly rendering this a tribal conflict.¹⁷² An unknown number of inhabitants were killed in the Syriac village of B'sorino in 1907 during a punitive campaign by Midyat Kurds who feared that the local chieftains were becoming too influential. The church was burnt down and the houses were destroyed, but inhabitants proclaiming loyalty were allowed to work for the Midyat chieftains.¹⁷³

When Gertrude Bell toured the southeastern part of Diyarbekir province in the years before the war, she was robbed at night in the village of Khakh.¹⁷⁴ Since the theft was committed in the area ruled practically autonomously by the very powerful Çelebi dynasty of the Hevêrki tribe, their chieftain İsmail was brought in from Mzizah village. İsmail was furious about the breach of cultural norms of hospitality. Having no suspects, he arbitrarily rounded up five men and the mayor of Khakh, a man named Melke, threatening them with incarceration. Soon, it became known that rival tribesmen around chieftain Abdîkê Hemzikê of the semi-nomadic Zakhuran tribe¹⁷⁵ were responsible for the theft.¹⁷⁶ The Çelebi chieftain used the opportunity to settle tribal scores and join forces with local government to assassinate Abdîkê Hemzikê, disperse the Zakhuran, and pillage their villages, seizing all of their cattle.¹⁷⁷ The uncrowned master of social banditry, however, was Alikê Battê of the Haco dynasty of the Hevêrkan tribe, whose name alone struck fear into the hearts of the locals.¹⁷⁸ Alikê Battê behaved like a warlord in a region he considered to be his dominion, and his propensity for killing was matched only by his lust for pillage. In August 1913, he engaged in a skirmish with gendarmes during an attempt to rob the Ottoman post carriage in

¹⁷² Ömer Şahin, *Komkuji li hemberi Ezidîyan* (Heidelberg, 2001), unpublished private manuscript.

¹⁷³ *GBA*, diary entry for 17 May 1909.

¹⁷⁴ For details on Khakh village see: Hollerweger, *Turabdin*, pp.164-75.

¹⁷⁵ According to tribal myths, the Zakhuran were remnants of a huge tribe commanding a vast area in Northern Mesopotamia, until they split up and formed the two major tribes in the region: Hevêrkan and Dekşurî. Due to their conflicts with the Çelebi core, they sided with Haco Ağa of the Hevêrkan tribe and became active in Kurdish nationalism in the Republican era. Their power crumbled, and in the 1940s they numbered a mere 500 tribesmen. *Aşiretler Raporu* (Istanbul: Kaynak, 2003, second edition), p.250. Presently the Zakhuran are a relatively small tribe, centered in Zakhuran village, 40 kilometres east of Midyat. They own the villages of Harebreş, Gundê Keportî, Ömerê Ahu, Sîvok, Sabrîka, İstavran, Gelîta, Mêvenka, Hirabehorî, Hirabegura, Hirabecibra, Çalkagundo, Hasakor, Ancik, and Hirabehala. For data on the Zakhuran tribe see: Cevdet Türkay, *Başbakanlık Arşivi Belgelerine Göre Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Oymak, Aşiret ve Cemaatlar* (Istanbul: İşaret, 2001), 146.

¹⁷⁶ *GBA*, diary entries for 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 May 1909.

¹⁷⁷ This is confirmed by Abdîkê Hemzikê's grandson. Interview conducted with Aslan family (Zakhuran tribe), Midyat (Mardin province), 28 July 2004.

¹⁷⁸ Alikê Battê was relatively young when he became one of the most charismatic and fierce chieftains in Kurdish tribal history. He avenged his uncle Haco II by killing his murderer Cimo with his bare hands. He waged a guerrilla war against the Ottoman government for two decades, only to perish during a skirmish in 1919. For more on Alikê Battê see: Mustafa Aldur, "1850-1950 yılları arası Turabdin'e Hevêrkan ve Mala Osmên," in: *Özgür Politika*, 15 September 2002; *Public Record Office* (National Archives United Kingdom, London, hereafter cited as PRO), Foreign Office (FO) 371/107502, 149523, 163688, 3050.

Nusaybin. The post was delayed for some time and the brigand escaped into the Tur Abdin mountains.¹⁷⁹ At the end of 1913 Ali and his accomplices were arrested and incarcerated but profited from the general amnesty the government granted soon after.¹⁸⁰ Although they were threatened with re-imprisonment if they continued their brigandage after being released, they resumed their unlawful activities.¹⁸¹

Clashes of a tribal nature did not only occur in the Mardin district. The north and east of Diyarbekir province were other peripheral regions with influential Kurdish tribes competing for power. Most specifically, the Xerzan (Garzan) valley in the Beşiri district was torn by tribal warfare. The largest conflict was that between the Reşkotan and Etmankî tribes, which was settled through a victory won by the former.¹⁸² The feud between the Elikan and Pencînar tribes was another source of violence in the Garzan region.¹⁸³ It was provoked by Pencînar chieftain Bişarê Çeto, a loose cannon, who had telegraphically expressed his joy over the 1908 revolution in the hope of being left alone by the government.¹⁸⁴ Together with his equally trigger-happy brother Cemil Çeto they were known for their extortion of Armenian, Kurdish, and Syriac villagers in the region.¹⁸⁵ These two brigands had been robbing and murdering at will, but legal action was suspended in July 1914 and the Çeto brothers evaded prosecution.¹⁸⁶

There were also intra-tribal intrigues and power struggles, most notably in the Reman tribe. Its famous female chieftain Perikhan, widow of İbrahim Pasha, had six sons who competed for succession: Mustafa, Said, Emîn, Abdullah, İbrahim, and Ömer.¹⁸⁷ In order to succeed their mother, the sons had to outclass each other in the ability to exert power and express leadership qualities. Of all her sons, Ömer was known for his ferociousness. Before the war, Ömer's campaign of plunder, provocation of government forces, and bravado did not go unnoticed. In the summer of 1914, the government declared him *persona non grata* and ordered him arrested and incarcerated. Ömer escaped prosecution and retreated into the

¹⁷⁹ BOA, DH.İD 145-2/38, 13 August 1913.

¹⁸⁰ BOA, DH.EUM.EMN 38/7, 1 December 1913.

¹⁸¹ BOA, MV 194/22, 8 November 1914.

¹⁸² "Li Çiyaye Qîre, Delana Paşo, şerê Reşkotîyan û Etmankîyan: Şerê Filîtê Qûto û Mamê Elê Etmankî," in: Salihê Kevirbirî, *Filîtê Qûto: Serpêhatî, Dîrok, Sosyoloji* (İstanbul: Pêri, 2001), pp.59-75. In this war Reşkotan chieftain Filîtê Qûto gained a reputation for ferocity and fearlessness as a warrior. His saga was immortalized in a long lamentation (*kilam*) equally named "Filîtê Qûto" by Kurdish folk singers such as Dengbêj Şakiro, Karapetê Xaço, and Dengbêj Reşo. Salihê Kevirbirî, "Deng û Awaza Xerzan," in: *Özgür Politika*, 3 January 2000.

¹⁸³ "Şer û kilamak ji herêma Xerzan: Şerê Pencînar û Elikan," in: *Ibid.*, pp.11-18. This conflict had been raging since the 1890s, when Hamidiye regiments had threatened the Elikan's domination in certain areas around Xerzan. İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğu'da Değişim ve Yapısal Sorunlar (Göçebe Alikan Aşireti)* (Ankara: Sevinç, 1969), pp.78-79.

¹⁸⁴ Bişarê Çeto and 5 other chieftains to the editor, Diyarbekir, 28 December 1908, quoted as "Telgrafât-ı Hususiye," in: *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, 9 January 1909, p.26. Cf. Bozarşlan, *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, p.302.

¹⁸⁵ BOA, DH.EUM.EMN 38/30, 6 December 1913.

¹⁸⁶ BOA, DH.EUM.EMN 89/5, 28 July 1914.

¹⁸⁷ "Ji birakujiya nava eşîran nimûneyeke sosret: Emînê Perîxanê - Evdilê Biraşîm," in: Kevirbirî, *Filîtê Qûto*, pp.49-58.

Garzan region.¹⁸⁸ Finally, the Zirkî tribe in Lice had been fighting off the aforementioned Mîlan tribe to gain control over parts of the northern region of Diyarbakir province. In order to combat their rivals, the Zirkî chieftain Aziz Sabri had aligned himself with the Ottoman government.¹⁸⁹ These power relations would play a role in the unfolding of events during the First World War.

Ethno-religious conflict was another form of strife. Missionary activity among the various Christian churches was one source of discontent and conflict. When a young Jacobite Syriac dared to convert to Catholicism, one of his fellow villagers reported this and the convert was interned at the Syriac monastery Deyr-ul Zaferan. When he refused to reconvert the monks beat him up and chased him out.¹⁹⁰ This type of violence intended to maintain social closure and reinforce ethno-religious boundaries between groups. Within the Armenian community there was rivalry as well. A Protestant Armenian remembered well that before the war, there were weekly brawls between Catholic and Protestant Armenians in his town. On several occasions even the clergy joined the fighting.¹⁹¹ In Lice, Syriacs and Armenians squabbled over an old abandoned monastery which both communities aimed to appropriate. The government mitigated the conflict and a compromise was reached.¹⁹² However, the severest conflicts seem to have raged between Muslims and Christians. When Gertrude Bell visited Diyarbakir she noticed that

the nervous anxiety which is felt by both Christians and Moslems – each believing that the other means to murder him at the first opportunity – is in itself a grave danger and very little is needed at Diarbekr to set them at each other's throats. During the 3 days that I was there tales of outbreaks in different parts of the empire were constantly being circulated in the bazaars. I have no means of knowing whether they were true, but after each new story people went home and fingered at their rifles.¹⁹³

These ethnic tensions may well have been conflicts partly based on economic interests, since the labour market was arranged along ethno-religious lines. Therefore many occupations were practically monopolized by one or another group.¹⁹⁴ For example, most merchants in the

¹⁸⁸ *BOA*, DH.İD 80/5, 8 August 1914.

¹⁸⁹ Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Anıtları ve Kitabeleri ile Diyarbakır Tarihi* (Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür ve Sanat Yayınları, 1996), vol.2: *Akkoyunlular'dan Cumhuriyete Kadar*, p.773, footnote 17.

¹⁹⁰ Yves Ternon, *Mardin 1915: Anatomie pathologique d'une destruction* (special issue of the *Revue d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine*, vol.4, 2002), p.163.

¹⁹¹ James Sutherland, *The Adventures of an Armenian Boy* (Ann Arbor, MI: The Ann Arbor Press, 1964), p.33.

¹⁹² *BOA*, DH.İD 162-2/51, 16 August 1913.

¹⁹³ *GBA*, Gertrude Bell to her mother, 6 June 1909.

¹⁹⁴ Alphons J. Sussnitzki, "Zur Gliederung wirtschaftlicher Arbeit nach Nationalitäten in der Türkei," in: *Archiv für Wirtschaftsforschung im Orient*, vol.2 (1917), pp.382-407.

Diyarbakir bazaar were Armenians and Syriacs, who also worked as cobblers, jewellers, carpenters, millers, stonemasons, and blacksmiths. Both groups were also very active in the production of cloth, including the silk for which Diyarbakir was famous. Kurds controlled the livestock trade and most Zazas were woodcutters or skippers on the Tigris. Due to the Abdulhamid era massacres, no love was lost between the Christian and Muslim merchants in the pre-war years. Many Muslim shopkeepers, outnumbered by Christian tradesmen, harboured jealousy and resentment towards their colleagues.¹⁹⁵ This opportunism was reported by the German vice-consul in Mosul, Holstein, as follows:

In general, the Kurd of the Diyarbakir region does not care much about the politics of a single Kurdish shaikh, he just profits from the opportunity to enrich himself through robbery and pillage and sees in the sometimes therewith connected murder [*Ermordung*] of a couple of Armenians no further crime. Thus a Kurdish wood cutter in Diyarbakir explained to me, upon my question how many Armenians he already had on his conscience, very naively: he could not say it precisely, but it must have surely been around half a dozen.¹⁹⁶

Possible palliatives and mitigations were dismissed. When Süleyman Bey of the noted Cemilpaşazâde dynasty urged the Muslim market people of Diyarbakir to treat the Armenians with respect and bury the hatchet, he was met with resistance and ridicule, and experienced great frustration.¹⁹⁷ The Armenians, in their turn, boycotted all Muslim-owned shops at Christmas 1908.¹⁹⁸ The Diyarbakir bazaar faced far graver situations when Muslim merchants were simply allowed to seize Christian property during periodic pogroms.

Deeply embedded within the social structure of Diyarbakir were overlapping and competing networks of rich, influential families of Muslim notables who had historically played the role of local power wielders in the city. These were for example the Cizrelizâde and Ekinci families, who lived near the square. The very powerful Pirinçizâde dynasty lived near the Great Mosque, the Ocak family near the Melik Ahmed Mosque, whereas the chieftain of the Cizrelizâde, Mustafa Bey, lived in a large mansion next to the Iskender Pasha Mosque. His neighbors were the powerful Yasinzâde Şevki Bey of the Ekinci family on one side, and the Iskender Pasha family on the other. Several important Kurdish dynasties such as

¹⁹⁵ Beysanoğlu, *Diyarbakir Tarihi*, pp.760-1.

¹⁹⁶ PAAA, Holstein to Bethmann-Hollweg, 22 May 1913: "Im allgemeinen bekümmert sich der Kurde in der Gegend von Diarbakir nicht viel um die Politik einzelner Kurdenscheichs, er profitiert nur von der Gelegenheit, sich durch Raub und Plünderung zu bereichern und erblickt in der manchmal damit verbundenen Ermordung einiger Armenier weiter kein Verbrechen. So erklärte mir ein Kurdischer Holzhacker in Diarbakir, auf meine Frage, wieviel Armenier er schon auf dem Gewissen habe, ganz naïv: Genau könne er es nicht sagen, aber rund ein halbes Dutzend würden es wohl schon sein."

¹⁹⁷ GBA, diary entry for 30 April 1909.

¹⁹⁸ GBA, diary entry for 9 February 1909.

the Cemilpaşazâde, Hevêdan, Zazazâde, as well as major chieftains from Hazro, Kulp and Lice had houses in the Ali Pasha neighborhood. They often commuted between their region of origin and the city. The Cemilpaşazâde were in particular important as pioneers of Kurdish nationalism.¹⁹⁹ To various degrees, all these local elites were connected to each other through multiple familial ties: the Cizrelizâde were in-laws of the Yasinzâde, the Müftüzâde were related to and partly overlapped with the Direkçizâde, several women of the Zazazâde had



Photo 3: The Cemilpaşazâde family in Diyarbekir before the First World War (Malmisanij, 2004)

married into the Gevranizâde family, the Cemilpaşazâde were relatives-in-law of the Azizoğlu, and the powerful Pirinçizâde dynasty was connected to most of these families through marital ties.²⁰⁰ The ebb and flow of Diyarbekir city's politics was often decisive for provincial politics as well. The competition between these families could rise to boiling point as they engaged in fierce competition over local government. This often resulted in forms of corruption and nepotism, witnessed by the British traveller David Fraser, who argued in 1909 that in

Diyarbekir “misgovernment is at its height, and within its walls there is neither justice for the righteous nor protection for the weak.”²⁰¹ Competition within the urban landed notable class coupled with relatively weak central state authority produced these conditions.

The problems in the countryside were equally severe. Ever since the break-up of the Kurdish emirates in the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottoman eastern provinces has remained ‘wild’ and were never fully pacified. The absence or very feeble presence of the state’s monopoly of violence in rural areas allowed for the existence of quasi-state structures such as tribal regions with their own laws, and the maintenance of many conflicts. Therefore living conditions were relatively insecure, with arbitrary exertion of even mortal violence by certain powerful tribes and state agents. By the turn of the twentieth century, inequalities, injustices, and violence continued to exist at all levels of society because the private use of violence was

¹⁹⁹ Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp.103-7.

²⁰⁰ Şeyhmus Diken, *İsyân Sürgünleri* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2005), pp.134-5, 204-5, 209.

²⁰¹ David Fraser, *The Short Cut to India: The Record of a Journey along the Route of the Baghdad Railway* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1909), pp.180-1.

widespread and was often followed by partial or full impunity. David Fraser witnessed this personally about “the mountains of south-western Kurdistan, a region where everybody is a robber according to his ability. The aghas of each tribe levy blackmail on all who pass through their country, the little people kill and murder whenever they dare... These people live in such inaccessible places that the Turks have practically no control over them.”²⁰² The farther away one travelled from Diyarbekir city, the more depacified conditions became. According to Fraser, Diyarbekir province’s south-eastern border region was particularly troublesome: “Here is a sort of no-man’s-land, where Arabs and Kurds of different organisations lord it over hapless Christians, Jews, and Yezidis. Robbery and murder are mere pastimes for those strong enough to indulge in them, and retribution by the law is practically unknown, for the Turk either cannot or does not want to enforce obedience.”²⁰³ These conditions did not contribute to a pacified society but could only have added to an atmosphere of tension, distrust, and sectarianism among the rural inhabitants of the province.

The advent of nationalism

In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire went through two interrelated processes: decline and modernization. The empire had reached an apex in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, when it rose from a small principality to become the foremost state in the Mediterranean and Europe. But the empire stagnated and declined slowly as a result of external pressures such as Western imperialism and internal pressures such as nationalist separatism. Due to technological innovations and economic developments, West European states were able to catch up and by the early nineteenth century had surpassed the Ottoman Empire in economic, military, and political power. Western states penetrated into the Ottoman realm by means of both armies and ideas. One of the most significant Western ideas imported to the Ottoman Empire was undoubtedly nationalism. As it swept through Europe during the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire did not remain immune to it and was forced to deal with nationalism both within and beyond its borders. The number of nationalist political parties and uprisings in the empire significantly increased and soon enough became the most important problem determining much of Ottoman politics. Greece was the first country, in 1829, to declare its independence from the Empire. In 1875, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Wallachia, and Moldova unilaterally declared their independence. Following the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877-78, the Ottomans were forced to grant independence to Serbia,

²⁰² Fraser, *The Short Cut to India*, pp.193-4.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp.205-6.

Romania, and Montenegro, and a form of autonomy to Bulgaria. The remaining territories in the Balkans remained under Ottoman control. In 1878, Cyprus was lent to Great Britain in exchange for favors at the Congress of Berlin. Under the cloak of bringing order, Britain also occupied Egypt in 1882. The rest of Ottoman North Africa was lost between 1830 and 1912 in an eastward direction: France occupied Algeria in 1830 and Tunisia in 1881, and Italy invaded Libya in 1912.²⁰⁴

By 1900, Ottoman politics was plagued by a crisis so severe that future prospects for the empire seemed gloomy. It tried to catch up to the Western world by passing a series of reforms (in 1839, 1856, and 1863) aimed at adopting Western modes of administration and culture. The reforms had immediate effects such as agricultural and industrial innovations, and brought changes in military, architecture, finance, legislation, institutional organization, and land reform. They also introduced European cultural practices such as clothing and consumption. The promulgation of a constitution in 1876 was a major watershed in Ottoman political history and represented a gradual shift from absolute monarchy to a form of constitutional monarchy. It was Sultan Abdulhamid II who during his reign (1876-1909) formulated a more sustained and coherent Ottoman response to the challenges of Western domination. Under his rule administration, transport, communications, education and health care were significantly developed. But in the long run, the reforms did not produce much result as the empire kept on crumbling at its peripheries.²⁰⁵ They neither halted the rise of centrifugal nationalism nor improved the economy. Nationalism continued unabated, influencing other Ottoman peoples like the falling of dominoes. The more nations broke away from the empire, the more Muslim-dominated Ottoman society became, a process that pointed in a certain homogenizing direction and conjured images of a future in which the empire would simply break up into contiguous nation states.

The most decisive political changes in the empire would emerge from revolutionary activities by a range of people alternately called the Young Ottomans and later Young Turks. Three phases can be discerned in the development of the Young Turk movement. The first phase may be termed the “Ottoman patriotic citizenship”, roughly running from the 1860s to 1889. The second was the phase of “Muslim nationalist activism”, approximately from 1889 to 1913. The third and final phase was the apex of the Young Turk movement, that of “Turkish nationalist hegemony”, from 1913 to 1950. In the following chapters, this thesis will

²⁰⁴ Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Decline,” in: *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, vol.4, no.1-2 (1997-1998), pp.30-75.

²⁰⁵ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: Tauris, 1999).

concern itself mostly with this third phase of the Young Turk movement. This periodization is rudimentary and serves only to bring some basic structure to what was a highly complex process of ideology and political practice. There was considerable overlap in the periods and actors, as well as some overlap in the three ideologies.²⁰⁶ The following overview is aimed at sketching the contours of this tripartite process.

Although it is difficult to pin down a precise date for the first phase of “Ottoman patriotic citizenship”, its beginnings can be placed in the 1860s, more precisely at around 1865. It was at that time when for the first time organized opposition began to formulate liberal criticism in favor of constitutional reform and against the Ottoman sultanate. A group of men established a secret society comprised of intellectuals, teachers, and authors who were unsatisfied with the Sultan’s reforms and, influenced by the legal writing of Montesquieu, the politics of Rousseau, and the economics of Smith,²⁰⁷ developed the concept of Ottomanism. This ideology aimed at the creation of an overarching common Ottoman citizenship irrespective of religious or ethnic affiliation. Authors like Nâmık Kemal (1840-1888) pioneered the nationalist interpretation of the concepts of “nation” (*millet*) and “homeland” (*vatan*) to Ottoman readers. In their search for an Ottoman equivalent to the nationalist movements in Europe, they imitated Young Italy, Young France, and Young Germany, and named their movement *Jeunes Turcs*.²⁰⁸ Ultimately, Ottomanism failed due to rejection and repression. In the long run, the ideology was rejected by many Muslims and non-Muslims alike. To the latter, it was perceived as a step towards dismantling their traditional privileges. Meanwhile, the Muslims saw it as the elimination of their own superior position. Ottomanism was mainly a literary tradition in that the intellectuals who espoused it rarely went farther than authoring theoretical articles about the need for a conception of Ottoman citizenship. Because of this relative weakness, the Sultans simply exiled and imprisoned the Young Ottomans, depriving them of strength by the last decade of the nineteenth century. Their demise heralded

²⁰⁶ For two contrasting views on the periodization of Turkish nationalism, see: M. Şükrü Hanioglu, “Turkism and the Young Turks, 1889-1908,” in: Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp.3-19; Erik-Jan Zürcher, “Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908-1938,” in: Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today’s Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp.150-79, at p.173: “a peculiar brand of Ottoman Muslim nationalism, which was to a very high degree reactive. It was defined in a particular and antagonistic relationship between Muslims who had been on the losing side in terms of wealth and power for the best part of a century and Ottoman Christians who had been the winners... But the nation for which they demanded this political home was that of the Ottoman Muslims – not that of all of the Ottomans, not only that of the Turks and certainly not that of all the Muslims in the world.”

²⁰⁷ Hamit Bozarslan, “La révolution française et les Jeunes Turcs,” in: *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, no.52-53 (1989), pp.148-62.

²⁰⁸ For a history of the Young Ottoman movement see: Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

the rise of the second phase of Young Turk opposition, spearheaded by a new generation of nationalist intellectuals who espoused Turkish cultural nationalism.²⁰⁹

A century after the French Revolution, in the spring of 1889, five young Ottoman Muslim students founded a secret organization in opposition to the rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II. Their prime aim was to overthrow the Sultan and re-establish the constitution and parliament. Whereas these students convened in the military medical college in Istanbul, many Ottoman oppositionists were living in exile in Western Europe and were to play a decisive role in the movement. In time, after several reorganizations the diaspora and indigenous movements merged into the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, CUP).²¹⁰ Despite Abdulhamid's effective tactics of repression and co-optation, the CUP grew across the empire. The organization branched out into secret cells all over the empire, published articles and books propounding their ideology and striving against the Sultan, accumulated weapons, and especially in the Balkans developed into an activist party defending Ottoman Muslims from Macedonian and Bulgarian nationalist attacks. The CUP also worked with other opposition groups and convened two congresses of opposition to the Ottoman regime, one in 1902 and the other in 1907. Their efforts produced the Constitutional Revolution of July 1908, and launched the Young Turks into the Ottoman parliament and to power positions. Ottomans of all denominations marched in the streets under banners bearing the slogan "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité" in various languages, and welcomed the age of freedom and democracy.²¹¹ An unprecedented freedom reigned in the press and parliament, where new ideas and methods of government were devised, discussed, and examined. But like many other revolutions, the Young Turk revolution betrayed its initial aspirations and in the third phase of Turkish-nationalist hegemony led to dictatorship, war, and genocide.

Two important aspects of state formation and nation formation need to be considered in describing and explaining this process: political attitudes towards violence, and processes of identification and disidentification.²¹²

The second phase in the Young Turk movement was characterized by competition with liberals, Islamist conservatives, and Armenian revolutionaries. Gradually, the Young Turks gained the upper hand and ultimately pushed through a conquest of Ottoman political

²⁰⁹ David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp.20ff.

²¹⁰ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.71-8.

²¹¹ For two detailed histories of the revolution see: M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

²¹² The twin concepts of identification and disidentification are theorized in: Abram de Swaan, "Widening Circles of Identification: Emotional Concerns in Sociogenetic Perspective," in: *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.12, no.1 (1995), pp.25-39; Id., "Widening Circles of Disidentification: On the Psycho- and Sociogenesis of the Hatred of Distant Strangers – Reflections on Rwanda," in: *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol.14, no.2 (1997), pp.105-22.

culture. They owed this victory mostly due to superior force and their recourse to violence. The Young Turk movement was never a pacifistic one, but throughout these three phases a certain radicalization in their use of coercion and violence occurred. The roots of this violence can be traced, first and foremost, to years of persecution and repression. The Young Turks were deported to the empire's peripheries (such as Libya's southwestern desert region), forced to go into exile in Europe for years, and incarcerated in prisons where they met ordinary criminals such as murderers and brigands. If this in itself did not strengthen their resolve and evaporate any hesitation they might have had about using violence, their response was a second important stage that significantly lowered the threshold for violence. This was the Young Turks' turn towards activism, decided upon at the 1902 congress in Paris. Articles in the Young Turk press argued that "a nation's salvation depends on the sacrifice it will make and the blood it will shed. Until now no nation has obtained the freedom that is its natural right through printing journals. In fact, theories are tools for preparing the way of evolution. Weapons, however, accelerate this evolution."²¹³

In addition to a more activist stance, from 1905 on the movement began establishing groups of self-sacrificing volunteers (*fedâîs*) based on the tactics of Macedonian and Armenian revolutionaries. Their contacts in prison proved useful as this move caused ordinary criminals to be co-opted by the party.²¹⁴ The brutalization of political culture in the Balkans, particularly Macedonia, was indeed considerable and added to the Young Turks' proclivity for using violence. In the second phase of the Young Turk movement, their paramilitaries and hitmen became known for avenging the death of every Muslim by killing ten Bulgarians in retaliation.²¹⁵ From 1906 on, the movement entered a third phase on the path towards violence as countless numbers of young military officers, including some influential ones, joined the Young Turk movement. Young Turk politicians had actively sought this alliance, declaring that "by propaganda and publications alone a revolution cannot be made. It is therefore necessary to work to ensure the participation of the armed forces in the revolutionary movement."²¹⁶ Ambitious Young Turks could now use the force, discipline, and cohesion of the army to destroy an old social order and initiate a new societal order through "revolution". The result was terror, threats, and assassinations. On the eve of the 1908 Revolution, Ottoman

²¹³ Hanioglu, *Preparation*, p.221.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.217-27.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.223.

²¹⁶ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.202.

political culture was polarized and depacified to the degree that it left little space for negotiation or moderation.²¹⁷

The history of the Young Turk movement can be viewed as a complex process of identifications that went through two important shifts. The movement's transformation from the first phase into the second was a shift from Ottoman nationalism to Muslim nationalism and saw a process of disidentification with non-Muslims. The shift from the second phase of Muslimism to the third phase of Turkish nationalism produced a process of disidentification with non-Turks. These two shifts were crucial for the process of Turkish nation formation. It would be misleading to suggest that from its inception, the Young Turk movement actively steered towards a direction of Turkish nationalism and ethnic unmixing of Ottoman society. Firstly, a demographic Turkification crept into society throughout the nineteenth century as persecution caused large groups of Muslims from the Balkans and the Caucasus to seek asylum in the Anatolian remnant of the empire. Such an external shock to Ottoman society could not have been expected to pass without a disturbance. It brought hundreds of thousands of immigrants over the years and brought tensions consisting of distrust and suspicion between people of different backgrounds and interests. Secondly, Armenians and Greeks already had established political parties closely relating ethnicity with politics although many Armenians and Greeks did not join these parties, but multi-ethnic liberal parties instead. The 1902 Paris conference of the Ottoman opposition had already seen a 'voluntary' ethnic unmixing as the Armenian delegates walked out after a harsh remark about Christian loyalty to the Ottoman state.²¹⁸ In time, two scholars remark correctly, "it did not take long for the non-Turkish parliamentarians to relinquish their support for the CUP and join the liberals."²¹⁹ Ethnic separatism on the part of non-Turks and the rise of Turkish nationalism were two processes that only served to strengthen each other. These processes of disidentification represented the contracting shifts from Ottoman to Muslim to Turkish nationalism. They are richly documented in the sources and examples of this shift are plentiful. The third section of this chapter will illustrate at micro-level how this process developed in Diyarbakir.

To the outer world, at least discursively, the Committee of Union and Progress maintained an image of defender of the pro-Ottomanist principle of "Unity of Elements" (*İttihad-ı Anasır*).²²⁰ Their understanding of this philosophy of unity was "for all Ottomans

²¹⁷ George W. Gawrych, "The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish society, 1903-14," in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.22, no.3 (1986), pp.307-30.

²¹⁸ Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, p.195.

²¹⁹ Feroz Ahmad & Dankwart A. Rustow, "İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Meclisler, 1908-1918," in: *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no.4-5 (1976), p.252.

²²⁰ Hüseyin Cahid, "Türklük, Müslümanlık, Osmanlılık," in: *Tanin*, 29 September 1908, no.387.

without distinction of race” (*bila tefrik-i cins ve mezhep bütün Osmanlılar*) to unite for the “peace and safety of the common homeland” (*vatan-ı müşterekenin huzur ve selameti*), while abandoning their “particular purposes” (*mekâsid-i mahsusalar*).²²¹ According to Young Turk journalists, the nations constituting the state had to “unite around the ideal of Ottomanism, that is a common, indivisible, and strong homeland” (*Osmanlılık yani müşterek gayr-ı kabil-i taksim ve kuvvetli bir vatan fikri etrafında iştirakleri*). This would facilitate the spread of “prosperity and justice in the most distant corners of the country” (*memleketin en ücra köşelerine bile refah ve adalet*).²²² To Ottoman Christians they would write reassuring messages such as the one sent to a Bulgarian politician: “This country belongs neither to the Turk, nor to the Bulgarian or Arab. It is the asset and domain of every individual carrying the name Ottoman... Those who think the opposite of this, namely those who try to sever the country into parts and nations, even if they are Turks, are our adversaries, our enemies (*düşmanımızdır*).”²²³ According to one Young Turk writer, “Turkism” (i.e. Turkish ethnic nationalism) was compatible with Ottomanism, and pursuing the latter would only serve to strengthen the former.²²⁴ Thus, the CUP either denied or downplayed their adherence to Turkish nationalism. But their outward composure of Ottoman unity and progress stood in sharp contrast with their internal discourse of Turkish nationalism. Indeed, it would be misleading to suggest that the CUP merely reacted to ongoing, large-scale processes of unintended and unorganized population unmixing in the late Ottoman Empire. The central committee of the party foresaw a much more pro-active stance on issues of identity politics. Recent scholarly research into the party’s internal correspondence clearly reveals a radical and activist Turkish-nationalist core around Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir (1874-1922), Dr. Mehmed Nâzım (1872-1926), Mehmed Talaat (1874-1921), and İsmail Enver (1881-1922), who had given up hope of the ideal of Ottoman unity and citizenship already in the 1900s.²²⁵ Two prominent ideologues of this shift were the sociologist Mehmed Ziyâ Gökalp (1876-1924) and the historian Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935).²²⁶ More than anyone they laid the ideological foundations of the shift from Ottoman patriotism to Turkish nationalism.

²²¹ *Tanin*, 20 February 1910, no.886.

²²² Hüseyin Cahid, “İttihad ve Terakki Politikasına Avdet,” in: *Tanin*, 6 November 1912, no.1434.

²²³ Cengiz, *Dr. Nazım ve Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir*, p.248.

²²⁴ İzzet Ulvi, “Türklük Duygusu Osmanlılık Fikrine Mani Mi?,” in: *Türk Yurdu*, vol.1, no.16 (June 1912), p.269.

²²⁵ Haniöğlü, *Preparation*, pp.173-81.

²²⁶ François Georgeon, “Deux leaders du mouvement national: Ziya Gökalp et Yusuf Akçura,” in: François Georgeon, *Des ottomans aux turcs: Naissance d'une nation* (Istanbul: Isis, 1995), pp.55-66.

Mehmed Ziyâ Gökâlp was a sociologist, writer, and poet from Diyarbekir.²²⁷ Deeply influenced by contemporary European thought on nationalism, he was most formative in the overhaul of Ottoman Muslim identity and the emergence of Turkish nationalism, and his work was particularly influential in shaping Young Turk ideology. His philosophy was based on a rejection of Ottomanism and Islamism in favor of a unique synthesis of a Muslim Turkish nationalism.²²⁸ This nationalist ideal not only entailed the dismissal of civic interpretations of nationalism but also espoused a collective disidentification with non-Turkish Muslims such as Albanians, Arabs, Kurds, and Persians living in the Ottoman Empire. Gökâlp embraced the work of Émile Durkheim, and reinterpreted the French sociologist's thought into a distinct set of ideas that laid the foundations of modern Turkish nationalism. Rather than a rigorous academic exercise, he took elements of Durkheim's theories that he deemed politically useful



Photo 4: Ziyâ Gökâlp (Beysanoğlu, 1956)

for Turkish nation formation by selecting and applying quotes and data that seemed to confirm his positions. Gökâlp's thought was a blend of ideas. He rejected the individualism of liberal capitalism (without rejecting capitalism itself) and Marxist categories of class struggle. In doing so, he followed Durkheim in believing that society is composed not of individuals, classes, or other interest groups clashing and working for their own good, but of interdependent occupational segments working harmoniously for the public good. This form of "populism" (*halkçılık*), partly influenced by the Russian Narodnik movement, viewed society as an organic whole and discredited the

individual.²²⁹ This approach embodied an axis of tension between scholarship and politics: Gökâlp's philosophy was not only a sociological theory of society, but also very clearly an ideological stand: for corporatist nationalism and against liberal democracy. His choice to abandon pure scholarship and engage in politics as well launched him into power as the ideologue of the Young Turk party.²³⁰ As a result, he ended up articulating, underpinning, as well as legitimizing the policies of the Young Turk regime.

²²⁷ Ziyâ Gökâlp (1876-1924) was perhaps the most influential intellectual of the CUP era. He was born in Çermik (Diyarbekir) of a Zaza mother and a Turkish father. He studied in Istanbul but was sent back to Diyarbekir because of his support for the constitutional movement. He published countless articles in many journals, founded the CUP branch in Diyarbekir and quickly rose to become a member of the Central Committee of the CUP. After the war he was interned on Malta and began working for the Kemalists. For a political biography see: Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: the Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp* (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1979).

²²⁸ M. Sait Özervarlı, "Transferring Traditional Islamic Disciplines into Modern Social Sciences in Late Ottoman Thought: The Attempts of Ziya Gökalp and Mehmed Serafeddin," in: *The Muslim World*, vol.97 (2007), pp.317-30.

²²⁹ Zafer Toprak, "Osmanlı Narodnikleri: 'Halka Doğru' gidenler," in: *Toplum ve Bilim*, vol.24 (winter 1984), pp.69-81.

²³⁰ Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp 1876-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), p.36; Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981, transl. Niyazi Berkes).

A second ideologue who made a coherent attempt at analyzing nationalism in the Ottoman Empire was Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935), who was born in the Russian Empire as a Tatar. Akçura founded the journal *Turkish Homeland (Türk Yurdu)*, which he saw as the major intellectual force behind the development of Turkish nationalism. His definition of the Turkish nation was more along ethnic lines and included other Turkic peoples, such as those in the Caucasus and Central Asia.²³¹ In 1904, Akçura published a seminal article titled *Three Types of Politics*, an assessment of Ottomanism, Muslimism, and Turkism. In this pamphlet Akçura pointed out that the impossibility of forging a nation out of the Ottoman minorities precluded the ideology of Ottomanism from being successful. Akçura then targeted Muslimism and declared it problematic because of the genesis of nationalism among Muslim minorities. (In their turn, the Islamist movement criticized Turkish nationalism since “Islam does not allow nationalism.”²³²) He pointed out that “the dominant current in our contemporary history is that of nations,” signaling that Turkish nationalism was the only feasible ideology.²³³ The major point of contention with his colleague Ziyâ Gökalp was the degree to which Islam was allowed to become a component of Turkish identity. But Gökalp ultimately agreed with Akçura and clearly stated that “it becomes clear that our nation consists of Turkophone Muslims”.²³⁴ Also, much like Gökalp, Akçura also called for the creation of a “national economy” (*millî iktisad*) that would sustain a Turkish nation state.

The efforts of Gökalp and Akçura functioned as a catalyst for the shifts from Ottomanism to Muslimism to Turkish nationalism. In a secret speech he gave in Salonica in 1910, the leader of the Young Turk party, Mehmed Talaat Bey, addressed his colleagues in a way that represented a definite departure from Ottomanism:

You are aware that by the terms of the Constitution equality of Mussulman and Ghiaur [infidel, non-Muslim] was affirmed but you one and all know and feel that this is an unrealizable ideal. The Sheriat [Islamic law], our whole past history and the sentiments of hundreds of thousands of Mussulmans and even the sentiments of the Ghiaurs themselves, who stubbornly resist every attempt to ottomanize them, present an impenetrable barrier to the establishment of real equality. We have made unsuccessful attempts to convert the Ghiaur into a loyal Osmanli and all such efforts much inevitably fail, as long as the small independent States in the Balkan Peninsula remain in a position to propagate ideas of Separatism among the inhabitants of Macedonia. There can therefore be no question of equality, until we have succeeded in our task of ottomanizing the Empire – a long and laborious

²³¹ François Georgeon, *Aux origines du nationalisme turc: Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935)* (Paris: ADPF, 1981).

²³² Babanzâde Ahmed Naim, *İslâm'da Davayı Kavmiyyet* (Istanbul: Tevsi-i Tiba'at Matbaası, 1332 [1914]), pp.5ff.

²³³ Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Istanbul: n.p., 1909).

²³⁴ Ziyâ Gökalp, “Türkçülük ve Türkiyecilik,” in: *Yeni Mecmua*, vol.2-51 (4 July 1918), p.482.

task, in which I venture to predict that we shall at length succeed after we have at last put an end to the agitation and propaganda of the Balkan States.²³⁵

For the British Ambassador Gerald Lowther (1858-1916) the picture was much clearer. He wrote a few months later: “That the Committee have given up any idea of Ottomanizing all the non-Turkish elements by sympathetic and Constitutional ways has long been manifest. To them ‘Ottoman’ evidently means ‘Turk’ and their present policy of ‘Ottomanization’ is one of pounding the non-Turkish elements in a Turkish mortar.”²³⁶

On the eve of World War I, the Young Turks felt logistically and ideologically strong enough to discontinue their denial and understatement of the movement’s Turkish nationalist character. After the definitive turn to Turkish nationalism, the Young Turks openly embraced policies that explicitly excluded non-Turks. Two key leaders, the doctors Bahaeddin Şakir and Mehmed Nâzım, wrote to a party branch that the CUP could never be entrusted to “any enemy of the Turks, Armenian or not” (*Türk düşmanı olan ne bir Ermeni’ye ne de bir başkasına*). Armenians would only be allowed to join if they pledged total allegiance to the movement’s Turkish-nationalist agenda – a rather unlikely scenario. The doctors continued to declare that “If we take a non-Muslim Ottoman into our committee, it will only be on these conditions. Our committee is a purely Turkish committee (*halis bir Türk cemiyeti*).”²³⁷ Two years later, in a letter to Zionist leaders, Dr. Nâzım was even more unreserved in expression, leaving nothing implied: “The Committee of Progress and Union wants centralization and a Turkish monopoly of power. It wants no nationalities in Turkey. It does not want Turkey to become a new Austria-Hungary. It wants a unitary Turkish nation-state (*einen einheitlichen türkischen Nationalstaat*), with Turkish schools, a Turkish administration, and a Turkish legal system.”²³⁸ A leading Young Turk could not have been more explicit and unambiguous in describing the party’s ideal vision of society.

As a result of inter-state and intra-state pressures, within decades a heterogeneous movement for freedom, equality, constitution, and justice had transformed into a party devoted to ethnic nationalism and prepared to entertain violence. The decline of the Ottoman state as a result of Western imperialism and separatism produced two processes of disidentification among the Ottoman political elite: a shift from Ottoman patriotism to Muslim nationalism, and a shift from Muslim nationalism to Turkish nationalism. On the eve

²³⁵ Quoted in: Lewis, *The Emergence*, p.218.

²³⁶ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, pp.219-20.

²³⁷ Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir and Dr. Nâzım to Hayri Efendi, 2 June 1906, in: Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), vol.2, part 4, p.115; Filiz Cengiz, *Dr. Nazım ve Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir’in Kaleminden İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Istanbul University, 1997), pp.39-40.

²³⁸ Hanioglu, *Preparation*, p.260.

of a devastating series of wars that few saw coming beforehand, nothing could have been deadlier than the combination of hegemonic power and a radical ideology.

The discovery of society and population policies

For centuries, the Ottomans took for granted that, in the natural order of life, the cultures and languages of state, speech, literature, and religion would vary, from region to region, group to group, city to city, class to class. The Young Turks adhered to an entirely different worldview. They were advocates of the idea of population politics and firmly believed that society needed to be studied with scientific methods and crafted into a homogeneous entity. The emergence of social science gave the Young Turks an intellectual foundation on which they built their ideology of population politics. The main protagonist of this strategy was Ziya Gökalp, and one of the main objects of this policy was the ethnically mixed Ottoman eastern provinces. The moment the CUP seized power, the eastern provinces in particular were subjected to close ethnographic research and prepared for large-scale demographic interventions into civil society. This was accompanied as well as legitimized by a discourse of civilization versus barbarity.

Many Young Turk leaders in Paris were students of August Comte's disciples and deeply influenced by positivism. Their newspaper bore the slogan 'Order and Progress' (*İntizam ve Terakki*) on its masthead.²³⁹ The Young Turks were also in touch with Sorbonne professor David Léon Cahun (1841-1900),²⁴⁰ whose ideas on Turkish nationality and history had a great effect on the formation of Turkish nationalism. Cahun advanced the argument that centuries of exposure to Islamic and Arabian culture had had a detrimental impact on the Turkish race.²⁴¹ In a sense, it was only natural that, in the setting of the late nineteenth-century Ottoman crisis, the academic discipline of sociology developed under severe political pressures and in itself became politicized. What was the use of sociology in 'solving' the 'questions' beleaguering Ottoman society? This was a major question occupying the minds of Young Turk sociologists and anthropologists.²⁴² The birth and rise of Ottoman sociology attests to the pressures under and limits within which science can function in a society in

²³⁹ Z. Fahri Findıkoğlu, *Auguste Comte ve Ahmet Rıza* (Istanbul: Türkiye Harsî ve İçtimai Araştırmalar Derneği, 1962); Murtaza Korlaelçi, *Pozitivizmin Türkiye'ye Girişi ve İlk Etkileri* (Istanbul: İnsan, 1986).

²⁴⁰ Elisabeth-Christine Mülsch, *Zwischen Assimilation und jüdischem Selbstverständnis: David Léon Cahun (1841-1900)* (Bonn: Romanist Verlag, 1987).

²⁴¹ Léon Cahun, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'Asie: Turcs et Mongols, des origines à 1405* (Paris: A. Colin et cie, 1896), part II.

²⁴² Paul J. Magnarella et al., "The Development of Turkish Social Anthropology," in: *Current Anthropology*, vol.17, no.2 (1976), pp.263-74; Niyazi Berkes, "Sociology in Turkey," in: *American Journal of Sociology*, vol.42 (1936), pp.238-46; Zafer Toprak, "Osmanlı'da Toplum Biliminin Doğuşu," in: *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), vol.1, *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, pp.310-27.

crisis. One scholar who had studied under Young Turk sociology argued that “it has been more interested in questions concerning what *should be* the ideal Turkish society than in what Turkish society actually *was*.”²⁴³ Studies of society were subservient to the political, military, and economic interests of the Young Turk party. One scholar argued that if their purpose was “Turkification”, by the time the Young Turks assumed hegemony over the state apparatus, “sociology was used as an intellectual tool to serve this purpose”.²⁴⁴ In the twilight zone between between power and knowledge, it was applied sociology that most interested these sociologists.

The main Young Turk sociologist-ideologue was undoubtedly Ziyâ Gökalp. The first chair of Sociology was established for him at Istanbul University in 1915. He founded a research institute of sociocultural studies and started a short-lived *Journal of Sociology* (*İçtimaiyat Mecmuası*).²⁴⁵ Under his supervision, many works by Durkheim, his nephew Mauss, Lévy-Bruhl, and Fauconnet were translated into Ottoman Turkish and the first sociology textbook was introduced. Hence, from the outset sociology in Turkey was dominated by Gökalp’s influence. He instrumentalized sociology to grapple with the reality that Ottoman society was not a homogeneous nation state, a reality that frustrated him. He dreamt of a “monolingual and homogeneous Ottoman nation” (*yek-dil ve yek-cihet bir Osmanlı milleti*).²⁴⁶ In his famous poem “Red Apple” (*Kızılelma*) he fantasized about cultural and linguistic purity, as well as the demographic homogeneity of what he calls a “new Turkish World”. The poem contains the following passage:

He said it was important to get to know the East /
said the people are a garden and we are gardeners (*halk bahçe biz bahçivanız*) /
trees are not rejuvenated by grafting only /
first it is necessary to trim the tree.²⁴⁷

Gökalp established himself as a pioneer of Young Turk social engineering: the composition of society had to change and the political elite was in charge of doing so. After 1913, he

²⁴³ İbrahim Yasa, *Hasanoğlan: Socio-Economic Structure of a Turkish Village* (Ankara: Türkiye ve Orta Doğu Amme İdaresi Enstitüsü, 1957), pp.V-VI.

²⁴⁴ Recep Şentürk, “Intellectual Dependency: Late Ottoman Intellectuals between Fiqh and Social Science,” in: *Die Welt des Islams*, vol.47, no.3 (2007), pp.283-318.

²⁴⁵ Recep Şentürk, “İçtimâiyât Mecmuası,” in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2000), vol.21, pp.448-63.

²⁴⁶ Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Ziya Gökalp 'ın ilk yazı hayatı, 1894-1909: Doğumu 'nun 80. yıldönümü münasebetiyle* (Istanbul: Diyarbakır Tanıtma Derneği, 1956), p.95.

²⁴⁷ Ziya Gökalp, *Kızılelma* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1976 [1914], Hikmet Tanyu, ed.). This passage in the poem quite literally reflects Zygmunt Bauman’s metaphor of gardening the human landscape.

advocated the “Turkification” of the Ottoman Empire by imposing the Turkish language and culture on all the citizenry and constructing a nascent Turkish nation state.²⁴⁸

The production of a Turkish identity was a main focus of Gökalp’s job description at the Department of Sociology. In one of his articles, titled “What is a nation?” (possibly after Renan), Gökalp sketched the contours of his interpretation of criteria for inclusion and exclusion in the nation. First, he dismissed geographic, racial, imperial, and individualist definitions of Turkish nationhood and moved on to argue that

the science of Sociology demonstrates that national ties lie in upbringing, culture, that is in sentiments... we want to live in a society where we received these. Only on one condition can we disengage from it and join another society: that condition is to extract the childhood upbringing we received from out of our souls and discard it... A nation is a cultural group composed of individuals who have received the same upbringing, and are united by a common language. A man will want to live together with people whom he shares an upbringing and language with rather than people with whom he shares blood... A person will be miserable living in a society whose culture he does not share. This condition will drive him to suicide, sickness, and insanity.²⁴⁹ For example, we have many co-religionists who, although they are racially not Turkish, fully possess the Turkish spirit from the perspective of upbringing and culture... due to the upbringing they have received, they cannot live in any other society and will work for no other ideal than the Turkish one.²⁵⁰

The argument for the primacy of nurture over nature in establishing national identity, an idea deeply embedded in Gökalp’s thought, prompted corresponding policies by the Young Turk political elites. Social engineering would develop along the lines of the enforced socialization of Turkish culture.

A crucial aspect of Young Turk social science was the creation of ethnographic knowledge on the ethnic structure of Ottoman society. After the 1913 Young Turk coup d’état, CUP research on and interest in the ethnic structure of the Ottoman Empire vastly

²⁴⁸ Hamit Bozarslan, “M. Ziya Gökalp,” in: *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), vol.1, *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, pp.314-9.

²⁴⁹ In 1894 Gökalp attempted suicide but survived. According to one author, Gökalp’s mental imbalance was triggered by his identity crisis of being stuck between his Kurdish past and his Turkish future. Rohat, *Ziya Gökalp’in Büyük Çilesi Kürtler* (Istanbul: Fırat, 1992), pp.25-37. By the time the CUP had risen to power and his theories had gained a foothold, Gökalp had firmly established his identity as Turkish and Turkish only. Accusations by oppositionists that he was really Kurdish he dismissed with nationalist poetry: “Even if I was a Kurd, Arab, or Circassian / my first aim would be the Turkish nation!” Fevziye Abdullah Tansel (ed.), *Ziya Gökalp Külliyatı-I: Şiirler ve Halk Masalları (Kızılma - Yeni Hayat - Altun Işık - Eserleri Dışında Kalan Şiirleri)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1952), p.277. Later he repeated this assertion: “Even if I found out that my grandfathers came from a Kurdish or Arab region, I would still not have hesitated to conclude that I am a Turk.” Ziya Gökalp, “Millet Nedir?,” in: *Küçük Mecmua*, vol.28 (25 December 1922), pp.1-6, at p.6.

²⁵⁰ Ziya Gökalp, “Millet Nedir?,” in: *Küçük Mecmua*, vol.28 (25 December 1922), pp.1-6.

expanded.²⁵¹ The Young Turks were aware that national self-determination or ethnic majoritarianism was becoming the decisive legitimizing principle in the expanding, Europe-led nation-state system. They understood decades of territorial loss to be a result of the fact that Ottoman Muslims could never lay claim to those territories since they never constituted a compact majority in any of them. This nationalist philosophy informed the population politics to be pursued, and the ethnographic research would provide the raw data to work with. The bureaucratic apparatus that was designed for this purpose was the ‘Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants’ (*İskân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyeti*, İAMM). This organization was established in 1913 and served to advance the sedentarization of the many Turcoman, Kurdish, and Arab tribes, and to provide accommodation for homeless Muslim refugees, expelled from the lost territories.²⁵² It would later be expanded to constitute four branches, namely Settlement, Intelligence, Transport, and Tribes.²⁵³ For the collection of ethnographic knowledge, the directorate convened a ‘Scientific Council’, which was to be headed by Ziya Gökalp. The direction to be taken was laid out during World War I, when Talaat assembled the Young Turk leaders and asserted that “Anatolia is a closed box for us,” arguing that it was first necessary to “get to know the contents of it” in order to operate on it. After Talaat, party ideologue Gökalp took the floor and declaimed: “We have made a political revolution... But the biggest revolution is the social revolution. The revolutions we can spark in our social body (*içtimaî bünyemiz*), in the field of culture, will be the largest and most productive. This will only work if we get to know the morphological and physiological structure of Turkish society... In order to research these structures let us send comrades with scholarly ability to open this box.”²⁵⁴

Whereas Gökalp articulated an ideology of population politics and Talaat organized it, junior Young Turk emissaries conducted the fieldwork. A whole host of them descended upon the country to conduct research on the ethnic minorities. These ethnic experts produced dozens of volumes and virtually no group was left unstudied.²⁵⁵ The following individuals were assigned to study the following groups: Baha Sait Bey for the Kizilbash and Bektashi religious communities, Mehmet Tahir (Olgun) and Hasan Fehmi (Turgal) for the Ahi religious community, Esat Uras for the Armenians, Zekeriya Sertel (a student of Durkheim at the

²⁵¹ İsmail Görkem, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Yaptırıldığı 'Anadolu'da Gizli Mabetler' Konulu Araştırmalar: Baha Said Bey-Türkiye'de Alevî-Bektaşî, Ahî ve Nusayrî Zümreleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı HAGEM Yayınları, 2000), chapter 1, pp.1-58.

²⁵² *İkdam*, 29 December 1913 (no.6052), p.3.

²⁵³ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Aşiretlerin İskânı* (Istanbul: Eren, 1987), p.120.

²⁵⁴ Nejat Birdoğan (ed), Baha Said Bey, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Alevilik-Bektaşılık Araştırması* (Istanbul: Berfin, 1995), p.8.

²⁵⁵ For a brief overview of Young Turk ethnographic research see: Fuat Dündar, “İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Araştırmaları,” in: *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol.XVI, no.91 (2001), pp.43-50.

Sorbonne) for the tribes, religious orders, and Alevis. Gökalp himself assumed the task of researching one of the most challenging groups: the Kurds. These men were commissioned by the Young Turk party particularly to travel in the eastern provinces to map these peoples and analyze their political loyalties. The body of knowledge they produced was also a matrix of loyalty and political preference versus ethnicity.²⁵⁶

One of the most interesting researchers was a Naci İsmail Pelister (d. 1940), an ethnic Albanian yet an ardent Turkish nationalist, educated in Germany. When the CUP seized power, he began working at the Interior Ministry and published his ethnographic research under his pen name Habil Adem and many other pseudonyms as translator and ghostwriter.²⁵⁷ Pelister was responsible for researching tribes and Turcomans, but wrote on a range of subjects, including methods of population politics. His first publication as İAMM operative was officially credited to another person named Von P. Gotz, “an official from the Prussian Ministry of Colonies.” The book was titled *The Settlement of Migrants: the International Method of Assimilation*, and was composed of two parts. The first is a comparative study of methods of assimilating conquered and colonized peoples, with examples drawn from American, British, Dutch, French, German, and Russian history. The second part of the book consists of how to legislate the reception of immigrants in a given society. This part also devotes considerable space to the settlement and integration of immigrants, including examples from immigration societies such as North America, Great Britain, Latin America, and Australia. The author discusses internal and external colonization of a region. External colonization can include the establishment of a population of settler colonists, the assimilation of indigenous populations, and convincing indigenous populations to accept the settlers. British methods of external colonization are recommended. Internal colonization, on the other hand, can include the deportation of populations from one region to another, importing kin ethnic groups living abroad, and assimilating immigrant laborers. For this type of internal colonization, American methods are recommended. The author concludes the study with a summary of prerequisites for successful colonization: for a process of colonization to yield its fruits, he argues, settlers need to be able to sustain themselves economically, indigenous elites need to be induced to collaborate or face punishment, and the spiritual and cultural life of the indigenous populations needs to be extinguished.²⁵⁸ The relevance and significance of these

²⁵⁶ Birdoğan, *İttihat ve Terakki*, pp.7-8.

²⁵⁷ Mustafa Şahin & Yaşar Akyol, “Habil Adem ya da nam-ı diğer Naci İsmail (Pelister) hakkında,” in: *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol.2, no.11 (1994), pp.6-12.

²⁵⁸ Von P. Goç, *İskan-ı Muhacirîn: Beynelmilel Usûl-ü Temsil* (Istanbul: Kitabhâne-i Sûdî, 1918, transl. Habil Adem), pp.7-29, 131-2, 197-204, 237-42.

studies is manifold: they informed population policies while many of the techniques of internal colonization were carried out throughout the four decades of Young Turk rule, with varying degrees of success.

Ziya Gökalp had researched the Diyarbekir region. After several observations on Kurdish tribes and villages, he argued that “it is not only man that changes during these affairs of assimilation... but the customs, morals, in other words national culture that changes”, and concluded that Kurds would be easy to assimilate since “Turks and Kurds like each other and resemble each other.”²⁵⁹ In another article Gökalp argued that those Kurds who were in frequent contact with Arabs were “doomed to nomadism, tribal life, and reactionism” because “Arabs are tied to ignorance so tightly that... they have absolutely no talents.” Those Kurds who lived side by side with Turks however, had been “liberated from feudalism.” Therefore, according to Gökalp, the logical conclusion was that “neighborliness with Turks has had a very positive effect on the Kurds.” All in all, he concluded, “the Kurds’ interest is to stay away from the Arabs and live close to the Turks.”²⁶⁰ This ideological legitimization was complemented with an article entitled, “Urban Civilization, Village Civilization”, in which Gökalp sharply contrasted “civilized life” in the cities with the “feudalism” of the villages. Diyarbekir, he lamented, was living in the “Middle Ages”, whereas Turks, “a nation in love with freedom and equality since time immemorial... settled in the cities from their natural inclinations.” A substantial part of Gökalp’s writings was about how population policies towards the eastern provinces should take shape. In one of his articles he set the trend by arguing that when two peoples lived side by side, “the dominating nation will assimilate the captive nation.” Gökalp named this process “dénationalisation”, and argued that it had proven efficient in the French government’s campaign to suppress the use of German in Alsace Lorraine.²⁶¹ One of his students went even further and argued that Gökalp’s studies were a powerful engine propelling Young Turk population politics: “Gökalp gave an important report to the Central Committee, and later had the question of the minorities researched, in particular the Armenian Question. As a result of this research, deportations of Armenians were carried out.”²⁶²

The eastern provinces were a special focus in Young Turk ethnographic research. There are few sources on the daily practice of the research, but the existing reports on the

²⁵⁹ Ziya Gökalp, “İstimplâl,” in: *Küçük Mecmua*, vol.29 (1 January 1923), pp.1-6.

²⁶⁰ Ziya Gökalp, “Kürtler’in Menfaati,” in: *Cumhuriyet*, 20 July 1924, p.4.

²⁶¹ Ziya Gökalp, “Şehir Medeniyeti, Köy Medeniyeti,” in: *Küçük Mecmua*, vol.30 (10 January 1923), pp.4-7.

²⁶² Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Ziyâ Gökalp: İttihadı Terakki ve Meşrutiyet Tarihi: Ekli ve Fotoğraflı* (Istanbul: İnkılap ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1974), p.149.

encounter between Young Turk idealists and the peasant population reflect a confrontation between diametrically opposed ideas: ethnic nationalism versus religious conservatism. One of the CUP ethnographers went on a fact-finding mission to the eastern provinces and reported a conversation which he saw as characteristic for his travels: “I am in Erzurum. It is the feast of 10 July. I am speaking to a headman at a construction site. At the right moment, I said, “Father, are you a Turk?” The poor old man seemed annoyed at what he saw as a joke and replied in a begging manner:

- “Please don’t say such a thing. I am a Muslim.”

“But father, aren’t the Turks Muslims? Also, haven’t the Turks been the ones to protect and kept Islam alive?”

- “Sir, when we say Turks we mean the Kizilbash, please, don’t say that.”²⁶³

The son of a missionary who was born and raised in Diyarbekir, after providing an overview of the peoples of the Diyarbekir region, including various Muslims, concluded: “‘Turks’ no one of these will care to be called.”²⁶⁴ These interactions indicated that the local Ottoman Muslims did not identify with an abstract sense of Turkish national identity.

Another Young Turk ethnographer conducted his research after World War I and mapped the various identifications of the population. According to him, the population of Istanbul looked down upon much of the rest of the empire, calling themselves “city dwellers” and reserving ethnic labels such as Albanian, Arab, Kurd, or Laz for rural people. For much of the rest of the Ottoman Muslim population, their Islamic identity superseded ethnic ones. Moreover, those who did identify with an ethnic group often did so by “voluntarily identifying with a group whose qualities they considered wonderful. This way many originally Turkish youngsters took pride in Albania or with Kurdism. There was nobody who praised himself as being Turkish (*Türklükle mübahat eden tek bir fert yoktu*). The term Turk seemed to be a shameful one nobody wanted to take upon oneself. In Eastern Anatolia, Turk meant ‘Kizilbash’, and in Istanbul it meant coarse person or villager.”²⁶⁵ In a partly autobiographical historical novel, yet another Young Turk intellectual was confronted with Ottoman Muslims denouncing Turkish nationalism and Mustafa Kemal, giving rise to the following exchange:

“How can one be Turkish and not line up with Kemal Pasha?

- But we are not Turkish, sir.

²⁶³ Fuad Sabit, “Anadolu Duygularından,” in: *Türk Yurdu*, vol.2, no.28 (11 December 1912), p.72.

²⁶⁴ Talcott Williams, *Turkey: A World Problem of To-day* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1921), p.219.

²⁶⁵ Hilmi Ziyâ Ülken, *Ziyâ Gökalep* (Istanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi, 1942), pp.88-9.

What are you then?

- We are Muslims, praise to Allah (*Biz İslamızı elhamdulillah*). The ones you mention live in Haymana.”²⁶⁶

The author then went on to formulate a policy to alter these identifications: “If we are vouchsafed a victory, all we would rescue would be these desolate lands, these rugged hills. Where is the nation? It is not apparent yet, and it will be necessary to remake it over again...”²⁶⁷ Clearly, to the Young Turks’ chagrin, Turkish-speaking Ottoman Muslims did not identify with the concept of “Turk”.

All in all, the Young Turks produced an enormous (and hegemonic) corpus of knowledge on the eastern provinces. During World War I, as population politics based on this research was raging in full intensity,²⁶⁸ the research was evaluated for its empirical and practical value. Young Turk journals praised the fact that “scientific research” was conducted “by government force” and had yielded “abundant results”.²⁶⁹ Baha Said published the results of his research on ethnic groups in Anatolia in 1918, introducing the Young Turk audience to ethnic groups they had hardly heard of before.²⁷⁰ The Young Turk tradition of gathering ethnic data on minorities continued well into the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. Younger researchers, many of whom were students of Gökalp in Istanbul, now took up the task of developing the methods and theses of their mentors. The establishment of a Young Turk dictatorship in 1913 saw to it that the East became “a powerless object of power-over-others wielded by the centre.” This meant that the region could “neither exercise counter-power, to bring about a balance of power, nor exercise pressure to any viable extent... the exercise of power is, for all intents and purposes, unilateral and unidirectional.”²⁷¹

This “lack” of “Turkishness” in the eastern provinces was a major problem for the Young Turks. The clash between Armenian and Turkish claims on the eastern provinces is symbolized in a discussion between Talaat and prominent Armenian-nationalist leader Karekin Pastermadjian (1872-1923), on the eve of the First World War. The discussion was about the fate of the eastern provinces, and after mutual accusations of nationalism and expressions of suspicion, Pastermadjian inveighed against Talaat:

²⁶⁶ Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban: Milli Roman* (Istanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi, 1932), pp.110-1.

²⁶⁷ Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, p.139.

²⁶⁸ Taner Akçam, ‘*Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuştur*’: *Osmanlı Belgelerine Göre Savaş Yıllarında Ermenilere Yönelik Politikalar* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2007), pp.37-77.

²⁶⁹ “Aşiretler Hakkında İlmî Tetkikler,” in: *Türk Yurdu*, vol.14, no.193 (1 March 1918), p.87.

²⁷⁰ Baha Said, “Anadolu’da İçtimâî Zümreler ve Anadolu İçtimâiyatı,” in: *Millî Talim ve Terbiye Mecmuası*, no.5 (August 1918), pp.18-32.

²⁷¹ Majeed R. Jafar, *Under-underdevelopment: A Regional Case Study of the Kurdish Area in Turkey* (Helsinki: Social Policy Association in Finland, 1976), p.58.

You are not on the right path any longer. You are dragging the Ottoman Empire towards chaos. With your victories, you imagine yourselves Napoleon and Bismarck. You don't know where you will take this country but continue your bullheadedness. Proof? Some time ago you told Vramian you would Turkify the Kurds. With what? With which culture? You would not mention these senseless things if you had knowledge about your history. You are forgetting that you have only been on our lands for 500 to 600 years, and that before other nations have passed through these lands: Persians, Romans, Arabs, Byzantines. If they have not been able to assimilate the Kurds, how will you accomplish this? Last summer I went to our three provinces and only saw three bridges in that region: two of them were old Armenian constructions, the third one dates from Tamerlane. I have not seen any traces of your civilization. It is unacceptable that you are so inconsiderate about the important problems of the state. You are insincere in the matter of the reforms. Do you suppose we believe in the economic and political measures you took to be freed of the Armenian question, or the policies you carried out to cleanse the Armenians? Our national consciousness is so mature, we will prevent your purposes from being realized.²⁷²

This altercation is highly relevant as it demonstrates the logic and principles of nationalist population politics of the time.²⁷³ Two years later, the German teacher Martin Niepage, who was stationed in Aleppo and witnessed the genocide, added, “Where is there any Turkish trade, Turkish handicraft, Turkish manufacture, Turkish art, Turkish science? Even their law, religion and language... have been borrowed from the conquered Arabs.”²⁷⁴ For the Young Turks these observations were as humiliating as instructive, giving them a sense of what the envisioned Turkish state and society lacked to be truly admitted to the family of nation states. In order to keep a strong hold over the eastern provinces, where the legitimacy of such a Turkish nation state was perceived as dubious at best, the Young Turks were bent on “proving” that the eastern provinces were “Turkish”, in particular, that their population was Turkish (ethnic majoritarianism), their history was Turkish (national myth making), and their territory (monuments and architecture) was Turkish.

The genesis of the Young Turk interest in and internal colonization of the Ottoman eastern provinces, developed out of competition with other stakeholders, for they were not the only ones who had visions of the future of the eastern provinces. Tsarist Russia had clear

²⁷² Gaïdz F. Minassian, “Les relations entre le Comité Union et Progrès et la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale d’après les sources arméniennes,” in: *Revue d’histoire arménienne contemporaine*, vol.1 (1995), pp.45-99.

²⁷³ The discussion is also fateful in the sense that the Young Turks assaulted precisely those characteristics of the Other that Pastermadjian and Toynbee saw as objective justifications for an expressedly *national* existence in the Ottoman territories.

²⁷⁴ Martin Niepage, *The Horrors of Aleppo* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1917), pp.20-1.

imperialist ambitions in the region.²⁷⁵ The CUP's fear of a Russian "invasion"²⁷⁶ was only matched by its paranoia about Armenian and Kurdish separatism. Armenian, Kurdish, and Assyrian nationalists imagined carving out nation states from the eastern provinces. Both forces, imperialism and separatism, only strengthened the Young Turk desire to ensure and maintain a firm and preferably permanent grip on the region. British policy makers summarized the difficulty of applying the West European nation-state system to the Ottoman eastern provinces: "What makes the Armenian national character doubly unfortunate is the geographical and political situation in which the people find themselves. The Armenians of Eastern Asiatic Turkey are for the most part in a minority, or, at best, have but a bare majority; they are dwellers in towns and valleys, and are divided by great belts of sedentary Kurdish mountaineers... The example of Bulgaria, where a compact, warlike population was able to drive out a minority by foreign intervention and the incursion of foreign armies, is one that cannot be followed in Eastern Turkey-in-Asia."²⁷⁷

Despite the tensions, in the period 1908-1912 the fate of the empire was as yet undecided. Everything was still possible. Nationalists, liberals, and conservatives competed in the Ottoman political space, sometimes ferociously. The harsh political atmosphere following the eruption of the Balkan wars would permanently change this fragile equilibrium in favor of nationalists on all sides. Power and ideology were necessary but not sufficient conditions for the catastrophes to come. Severe crisis resulting from war and defeat was the fateful spark which ignited the powder keg.

Violence, victimization, and vengeance

On 17 October 1912, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria declared war on the Ottoman Empire out of discontent with its rule and the possibilities for territorial expansion. Out-powered, demoralized, unprepared, and poorly equipped, the Ottoman army fought fourteen battles and lost them all, except for one. In November, the Bulgarian advance pushed the Ottoman army back to the trenches of Çatalca, 30 kilometres west of Istanbul. There, the onslaught was stopped and the imperial capital remained uncaptured. Warfare continued as two other important Ottoman cities were captured: the old imperial capital of Edirne was besieged and taken by the Bulgarian army, and on 9 November 1912 the Ottoman garrison surrendered the cradle of the Young Turks, Salonica, to the Greek army. The state of war

²⁷⁵ Michael Reynolds, "The Ottoman-Russian Struggle for Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, 1908-1918: Identity, Ideology and the Geopolitics of World Order" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 2003), pp.37-82.

²⁷⁶ Hüseyin Cahid, "Devletler ve Şarkî Anadolu," in: *Tanin*, 27 November 1913, no.1769.

²⁷⁷ Sykes, *The Caliphs' Last Heritage*, pp.417, 418.

lasted until the Treaty of London was signed on 30 May 1913, which dealt with territorial adjustments arising out of the conclusion of the war.²⁷⁸ After the cessation of hostilities, the Empire was heavily truncated for good.

Although there were clear distinctions between combatants and non-combatants, as the skirmishes unfolded into total warfare, none of the armies respected this distinction. Atrocities were committed by all sides in the conflict,²⁷⁹ but contemporary journalists and victims accused the Bulgarian army in particular of systematic maltreatment of civilian populations.²⁸⁰ The forces commanded by the Bulgarian generals Ivan Fichev (1860-1931), Vladimir Minchev Vazov (1868-1945), and Radko Dimitriev (1859-1918) committed acts of violence including large-scale destruction and arson of villages, beatings and torture, forced conversions, and indiscriminate mass killing of Ottoman Muslims.²⁸¹ Leon Trotsky, at that time correspondent for the Russian newspaper *Kievskaya Mysl*, reported that the campaigns of ethnic cleansing and massacre were organized in particular by General Dimitriev, a man “deeply animated by those features of careerism including careless zeal and moral cynicism”. When his ambition to conquer as much territory as possible as fast as possible was frustrated by stubborn Ottoman defense, he ordered his troops to take prisoners no longer, and to execute all prisoners of war, included the wounded.²⁸² His forays into the Thracian countryside and the Bulgarian occupation in general spelled persecution and terror, accompanied as it often was by rape of women.²⁸³ The Serbian authorities, too, encouraged “local police officers, secret agents and lawyers, to terrorize the Muslims and to make a calm life for them impossible.”²⁸⁴ War crimes were another category of mass violence. According to one contemporary account, whenever Bulgarian forces captured Ottoman prisoners of war, they would frequently set the Christians free but execute certain numbers of the Muslims among them.²⁸⁵ Victimized groups who fled to their ‘ethnic brethren’ with their stories of terror kindled counter-terror against populations associated with their victimizers. Thus,

²⁷⁸ For an analysis of the Ottoman involvement in the Balkan wars from a military perspective see: Edward J. Erickson, *Defeat in Detail: The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912-1913* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

²⁷⁹ Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.136-8.

²⁸⁰ George F. Kennan, *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflection on the Present Record* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993), pp.109-35.

²⁸¹ Momchil Yonov, “Bulgarian Military Operations in the Balkan Wars,” in: Béla K. Király & Dimitrije Djordjevic (eds.), *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars* (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 1987), pp.63-84.

²⁸² Leo Trotzki, *Die Balkankriege 1912-13* (Essen: Arbeiterpresse Verlag, 1995, transl. Hannelore Georgi & Harald Schubärth), pp.296-7.

²⁸³ *Rumeli Mezâlîmi ve Bulgar Vahşetleri* (Istanbul: Rumeli Muhâcirîn-i İslâmiyye Cemiyeti, 1913), p.49.

²⁸⁴ Katrin Boeckh, *Von den Balkankriegen zum Ersten Weltkrieg: Kleinstaatenpolitik und ethnische Selbstbestimmung auf dem Balkan* (München: Oldenbourg, 1996), pp.165, 199.

²⁸⁵ Ahmed Cevad, *Balkanlarda Akan Kan* (Istanbul: Şamil, n.y.), pp.118-9.

whereas Bulgarian army units ignited the campaigns of terror and ethnic cleansing, the responses of Greek and Ottoman forces against Bulgarian villages were at least as violent.

The territorial erosion of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and in the Caucasus during the nineteenth century was a process that produced humiliation and refugee streams.²⁸⁶ The total and permanent loss of the Balkan peninsula in 1913, however, was a watershed that affected the very existence of the Empire. It is no exaggeration to state that the effect of the Balkan wars on Ottoman society was nothing short of apocalyptic. The loss of many major Ottoman cities, property, human lives, and face was unbearable to a proud Ottoman elite who were dismayed at the helplessness of the imperial army. The shock of the war would have a severe and lasting impact on Ottoman society, culture, and identity. From 1913 on, the hitherto viable umbrella Ottoman identity was no longer seen as feasible by hardliners on either side of the political spectrum. The wars had not only accelerated the long-term shift of the empire's demographic composition in favor of Muslims. Their loss also bolstered the myth of the Christian "stab in the back", the Ottoman equivalent of the German "Dolchstoßlegende", as part of a general discourse of non-Muslim treason and disloyalty. Advocates of this discourse invoked crude generalizations of the conduct of non-Muslim Ottomans during the Balkan wars, against convincing evidence to the contrary.²⁸⁷

The most immediate repercussion of the war was the refugee crisis. In the first half of 1913, Istanbul was bursting with hundreds of thousands of refugees.²⁸⁸ Philanthropic associations such as the 'Association for Muslim Refugees from the Balkans' provided relief for the refugee community, which almost exclusively consisted of Muslims. The stories and trauma these refugees brought to the capital were met with disbelief and rage by the Ottoman press. One commentator on the refugees' fate bewailed how "our motherland was trampled on by the muddy boots of the poorest enemies. Our coreligionist brothers and compatriots were slaughtered in the thousands like sheep."²⁸⁹ The British consul in Salonica witnessed the slow process of forced migration and reported about the refugees:

The result of the massacre of Muslims at the beginning of the war, of the looting of their goods in the ensuing months, of the settling of Christians in their villages, of their persecution by Christian neighbours, of their torture and beating by Greek

²⁸⁶ For an introduction see: Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1995), pp.1-22.

²⁸⁷ Eyal Ginio, "Mobilizing the Ottoman Nation during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913): Awakening from the Ottoman Dream," in: *War in History*, vol.12, no.2 (2005), pp.156-77.

²⁸⁸ Ahmet Halaçoğlu, *Balkan Harbi Sırasında Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri (1912-1913)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995).

²⁸⁹ *Balkan Harbında neden Munhazim Olduk?* (Istanbul: n.p., 1913), p.95.

troops, has been the creation of a state of terror among the Islamic population. Their one desire is to escape from Macedonia and to be again in a free land. They arrive in Turkey with the memory of their slaughtered friends and relations fresh in their minds, they remember their own sufferings and the persecutions of which they have been victims, and finding themselves without means or resources, encouraged to some extent by their own government, they see no wrong in falling on the Greek Christians of Turkey and meting out to them the same treatment that they themselves have received from the Greek Christians of Macedonia.²⁹⁰

The feminist and nationalist author Halide Edib provided an Ottoman Muslim perspective:

The spectacle of Moslem refugees, men and women and children, fleeing from the fire and sword of the enemy; the slaying of prisoners of war, their mutilation and starvation; atrocities and massacres perpetrated on the civil population – the first of their kind in twentieth century warfare – inflicted wounds far deeper than the defeat itself.²⁹¹

The effect on the Young Turks in particular was formidable as their families were overrepresented among the Balkan refugees. The Young Turk leadership predominantly originated from three areas: Salonica,²⁹² the area from Monastir (Bitola) to Ohrid, and the area around Pristina in Kosovo, which were now under Greek and Serbian rule.²⁹³ Young Turk leaders such as Mehmed Talaat, Mustafa Abdülhalik Renda (1881-1957), Mehmet Cavit (1875-1926), and many others now became refugees with their extended families.

²⁹⁰ Quoted in: Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950* (London: HarperCollins, 2004), pp.338-9.

²⁹¹ Halide Edib, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* (Delhi: Jamia Press, 1935), p.80.

²⁹² Selim İlkin & İlhan Tekeli, "İttihat ve Terakki Hareketinin Oluşumunda Selanik'in Toplumsal Yapısının Belirleyiciliği," in: Osman Okyar & Halil İnalçık (eds.), *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi (1071-1920): Social and Economic History of Turkey (1071-1920)* (Ankara: Meteksan, 1980), pp.351-82.

²⁹³ Erik-Jan Zürcher, "The Young Turks - Children of the Borderlands?," in: *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol.9 (2003), pp.275-86.



Photo 5: Ottoman Muslims expelled from the Balkans, 1912 (Langlett & Aminoff, 1912)

One of these refugees was Dr. Mehmed Nazım (1872-1926), who was born and raised in Salonica, had joined the Young Turk movement, and had become director of a hospital in the city. His family had been living in Salonica for generations and ran successful businesses in the city. When Salonica was surrendered in October 1912, he was arrested for being a Turkish nationalist and jailed without due process for eleven months in a cell in Athens. The guards maltreated Dr. Nazım there, claiming that his family had been exterminated, that the Greek flag was waving over Constantinople (obviously not Istanbul), and that it was only a matter of time before Anatolia would be a Greek country as well. Only when the CUP regime requested the release of their brother-in-arms was Nazım transferred to the seaport of İzmir. Exile from his hometown and the sight of his hapless family, including his baby daughter, deeply upset him. Dr. Nazım began writing newspaper articles, exposing and publicizing Bulgarian atrocities against Muslims and calling for vengeance against the remaining Ottoman Christians.²⁹⁴ The irreversible transformation of a patriotic doctor from Salonica into a rabid, vindictive nationalist symbolized the fate of many others.

²⁹⁴ Ahmet Eyicil, *İttihad ve Terakki Liderlerinden Doktor Nâzım Bey 1872-1926* (Ankara: Gün, 2004), pp.130-2, 153.

Revanchism was cast in the crucible of the Balkan wars. In a letter to his wife, dated 8 May 1913, Enver Pasha wrote, “If I could tell you of the savagery the enemy has inflicted... a stone’s throw from Istanbul, you would understand the things that enter the heads of poor Muslims far away. But our anger is strengthening: revenge, revenge, revenge; there is no other word.”²⁹⁵ In a discussion with one of his confidants, the Pasha was even more outspoken:

How could a person forget the plains, the meadows, watered with the blood of our forefathers; abandon those places where Turkish raiders had stalled their steeds for a full four hundred years, with our mosques, our tombs, our dervish lodges, our bridges and our castles, to leave them to our slaves, to be driven out of Rumelia to Anatolia: this was beyond a person’s endurance. I am prepared to sacrifice gladly the remaining years of my life to take revenge on the Bulgarians, the Greeks and the Montenegrins.²⁹⁶

The 1914 opening address of parliament was equally rancorous and emotional: “Do not forget! Do not forget beloved Salonica, the cradle of the flame of Liberty and Constitutional Government, do not forget green Monastir, Kosovo, İşkodra, Yanya and all of beautiful Rumelia.” The emotioned deputies exclaimed: “We shall not forget!”²⁹⁷

The emotions of Young Turk elites expelled from their ancestral lands included humiliation, helplessness, anger, loss of dignity, lack of self-confidence, anxiety, embarrassment, shame: a toxic mix that, combined together, contributed to the growth of collective hate and destruction fantasies. Besides these objective effects, the subjective perception of the tragedy in the minds of the Young Turks merits perhaps even more attention. For them, the loss of power and prestige shattered the conventional myth of an Ottoman identity and Islamic superiority. One contemporary commented that for the Young Turks “it was especially difficult to be forced to live under the rule of their own former subjects after having been the dominant element for hundreds of years”.²⁹⁸ The fear of being ruled by historical enemies was a theme even before the Balkan wars, when the Young Turk press published widely read articles with a deeply defeatist tone:

Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Crete were lost. Right now the grand [dear] Rumelia is about to be lost and in one or two years Istanbul will be gone as well. The holy Islam and the esteemed Ottomanism will be moved

²⁹⁵ M. Şükrü Hanioglu (ed.), *Kendi Mektuplarında Enver Paşa* (Istanbul: Der, 1989), p.242.

²⁹⁶ Hüsamettin Ertürk, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, Samih N. Tansu (ed.) (Istanbul: Batur, 1964), p.121.

²⁹⁷ Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, vol.3, p.465.

²⁹⁸ Bayur, *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi*, vol.2, part III, p.250.

to Kayseri. Kayseri will become our capital, Mersin our port, Armenia and Kurdistan our neighbors, and Muscovites our masters. We will become their slaves. Oh! Is it not shameful for us! How can the Ottomans who once ruled the world become servants to their own shepherds, slaves, and servants?²⁹⁹

After 1913, the Young Turk nightmare indeed came true as many of them became traumatized victims of ethnic cleansing. Their behavior and political decision-making therefore was based on fear and resentment, and was aimed at securing safety for their families and ultimately, for their nation.

There is some evidence for the claim that the revanchism was not merely an elite affair but was communicated and disseminated into society. In a partly autobiographical novel first published in 1950, noted essayist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) expressed this popularization of vengeance in literary non-fiction: “It was that desperately feverish year in which the Balkan Wars came to an end. We children were immersed in the bitterness of a defeat which we could accept no more than the adults, who had learned to bow their heads with their gaze averted. Every song spoke of strange vengeance marches.”³⁰⁰ Another contemporary Ottoman author summarized the Balkan drama as follows:

The people of the Balkans turned Rumelia into a slaughterhouse for Turks... The Turks have not forgotten this pain. By retelling the story to students at school, to children at home, to soldiers in the barracks, Turks have awoken a national spirit, a national grudge. They have infected people with a spirit that longs one day to settle accounts for the humiliation and oppression suffered by Turkdom. On maps Rumelia now appears in black. The entire army is urged to avenge its besmirched honor. Soldiers went to training every day singing the song “In 1328 Turkish honor was sullied, alas. Alas, alas, alas, revenge!” Soldiers returning to their villages would sow more seeds by singing this song.³⁰¹

These were more than just words as a severe crisis raged within Ottoman society. At that time, non-Muslim religious leaders of Eastern Thrace were petitioning the Interior Ministry to complain about the harassment they were constantly enduring from Muslims exacting revenge for their losses. These petitions reported an unprecedented atmosphere of hatred and revenge reigning in Thrace.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Quoted in: Nader Sohrabi, “Global Waves, Local Actors: What the Young Turks Knew about Other Revolutions and Why it Mattered,” in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.44, no.1 (2002), pp.45-79, p.64.

³⁰⁰ Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Sahnenin Dışındakiler* (Istanbul: Dergâh, 1973), p.54. For an analysis of this novel from the perspectives of historiography and literary theory see: Erdağ M. Göknaar, “Ottoman Past and Turkish Future: Ambivalence in A. H. Tanpınar’s *Those outside the Scene*,” in: *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol.102, no.2/3 (2003), pp.647-61.

³⁰¹ Mehmet Cemil Bilsel, *Lozan* (Istanbul: Ahmet İhsan, 1933), vol.I, p.126.

³⁰² *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 39/163, Talaat to Edirne, 5 April 1914.

Even in Diyarbekir, far away from the direct heat of the Balkan wars, the revanchism could be felt. In the city, national discussions on identity and ideas on population politics had already fueled competition and conflict between the ethnically organized political factions. Well before the war, Müftüzâde Şeref (Uluğ) had proposed declaring an economic boycott against the “treacherous Armenians” in order to strengthen Muslim economic power.³⁰³ The Armenians of Diyarbekir, in their turn, were generally anti-Russian and many adhered to the Dashnaktsutium party, which desired Armenian autonomy. Concretely, its program aimed at more freedom and more decentralization in the Ottoman administration of the eastern provinces, the introduction of Armenian as educational and official language, and an end to injustice, usurpation, and expropriation committed mostly by Kurdish tribes against Armenian peasants.³⁰⁴ Chief editor of the Armenian newspaper *Azadamart* was Roupén Zartarian, a noted Armenian revolutionary who hailed from Diyarbekir. Kurdish nationalism, though not as organized and settled as its Armenian counterpart, also existed in the province. On 19 September 1908 Müftü Suphî Efendi founded the Diyarbekir office of the ‘Kurdish Assistance and Progress Society’ (*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) in the city. Prominent members were Dr. Mehmed Şükrü (Sekban), former mayor of Diyarbekir Pirinçizâde Arif, Mirikatibizâde Ahmed Cemil (Asena), Mehmed Tahir, and Halil Hayalî.³⁰⁵ According to its statutes, it aimed to observe the constitution, pursue the notion of Ottomanism, end tribal warfare, and maintain “harmony and good relations between their compatriots the Armenians, Nestorians, and other Ottoman subjects”.³⁰⁶ The Bedirxan dynasty, a remnant of the powerful nineteenth-century Botan tribal confederation, were involved in explicitly Kurdish-nationalist politics.³⁰⁷ One opportunistic adherent of Kurdish nationalism was Derwiş Ağa of Çelik village, south of Midyat, who allied himself with the Bedirxans as a means to protest against misrule and corruption by lower Ottoman officials.³⁰⁸ However, there were also ideologically driven politicians such as Hasan Bey of Cizre, cousin to the nationalist leader Abdulrezzak Bedirxan. Hasan explained to German vice-consul Holstein that he had no doubts that Russia would assist the Kurdish national movement in liberating Kurdistan from the “Turkish yoke”, and establish a Kurdish nation state.³⁰⁹

³⁰³ Uluğ, “Ermeniler,” in: *Türk*, no.110 (21 December 1905), p.2.

³⁰⁴ PAAA, Holstein to Bethmann-Hollweg, 22 May 1913. For a history of the Dashnaks see: Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1963), pp.151-78.

³⁰⁵ Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, vol.1, pp.430-4.

³⁰⁶ *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi* (Istanbul: Kasbar, 1324), p.1, article 1.

³⁰⁷ Malmîsanij, *Cızira Botanlı Bedirhaniler ve Bedirhani ailesi derneği’nin tutanakları* (Spånga, Sweden: Apec, 1994).

³⁰⁸ PAAA, Holstein to Bethmann-Hollweg, 22 May 1913.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

The Committee of Union and Progress had not remained idle in Diyarbekir province either. The first CUP office in Diyarbekir was opened on 23 July 1908 by Ziyâ Gökâlp, who after all was a native of the region, and was also its representative in the party's Central Committee.³¹⁰ Gökâlp began publishing the newspaper *Peyman*, which adopted a relatively modest tone and emphasized coexistence of the various Ottoman subjects.³¹¹ But after the catastrophic defeats of the Balkan wars the atmosphere changed and interethnic relations polarized. The CUP dictatorship exerted its influence in this province through a network of mainly urban Kurdish members. The most influential CUP members in Diyarbekir were those related to the wealthy and powerful Pirinçizâde dynasty, who owned large estates in the province, including the rice fields west of Diyarbekir city.³¹²



One of their kinsmen was deputy Aziz Feyzi (1879-1933), the son of Pirinçizâde Arif, who had adhered to the Kurdish Assistance and Progress Society. According to a German report, Feyzi had undertaken a study trip to Germany in 1911.³¹³ On behalf of many other Diyarbekir notables, he vehemently protested in the Ottoman parliament against the proposed government plan of expropriating the powerful landowners, and in time Feyzi became a Young Turk hardliner. He had held fierce and hostile discussions with Armenian member of parliament Vartkes Serengulian (1871-1915), in which he accused Vartkes of Armenian separatist designs.³¹⁴ He became

more and more fanatic in his anti-Armenian sentiments, and reportedly had Ohannes Kazazian, a Catholic Armenian from Mardin and his political rival in the elections, assassinated in 1913.³¹⁵ Given his reputation, Aziz Feyzi's assignment to Diyarbekir caused unrest and anxiety among Armenian politicians there.³¹⁶ Other CUP sympathizers in

³¹⁰ Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Ziyâ Gökâlp'in İlk Yazı Hayatı: 1894-1909* (Istanbul: Diyarbakır'ı Tanıtma Derneği Neşriyatı, 1956), pp.11-12.

³¹¹ Up until the Balkan wars, Gökâlp used to compare Ottoman society to U.S. society as in both countries many different ethnic groups coexisted under one denomination, Ottoman respectively American. In fact, Gökâlp even rejected Turkish ethnic nationalism as it entailed nation-building based on blood bonds, which he considered unreal. Mehmed Mehdi, "Türklük ve Osmanlılık," in: *Peyman*, vol.II, quoted in: *Ibid.*, pp.99-101, 105.

³¹² According to one researcher of the period, the Pirinçizâde dynasty owned 30 villages in the vicinity of Diyarbekir city. Malmısaniç, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* (Spånga, Sweden: Apec, 1998), p.41.

³¹³ PAAA, R14084, Mutius to Bethmann Hollweg, 14 June 1914.

³¹⁴ Tark Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1997), vol.1, pp.600-1.

³¹⁵ Jacques Rhétoré, *Les chrétiens aux bêtes! Souvenirs de la guerre sainte proclamée par les Turcs contre les chrétiens en 1915* (unpublished manuscript, Bibliothèque du Saulchoir), pp.59-60.

³¹⁶ Gaïdz F. Minassian, "Les relations entre le Comité Union et Progrès et la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale d'après les sources arméniennes," in: *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine*, vol.I (1995), p.90, footnote 27.

Diyarbakir were Pirinçizâde Sıdkı (Tarancı), Yasinzâde Şevki (Ekinçi), his brother Yasinzâde Yahya (Ekinçi), Müftüzâde Şeref (Uluğ), and less prominent others.³¹⁷

The loss of the Balkans in 1913 reverberated throughout Ottoman society, including distant Diyarbakir. As if that had not been traumatic enough, vague talks of and slow but deliberate steps towards a reform plan to ‘solve’ the Armenian question, by which European ‘inspectors’ would be appointed to ensure more Armenian and Kurdish autonomy, triggered even more concern and fear among Muslims, including those in Diyarbakir. Right after the signing of the London Treaty, Diyarbakir’s governor sent a report to the government that talk of a reform plan was causing turmoil and social unrest among Diyarbakir’s ethnic groups. According to the governor, rumors of reform were “causing much excitement and alarm (*heyecan ve telaş*) among the Islamic population”. Speculative reports in newspapers about the alleged endorsement and possible implementation of a reform plan were “offending the sentiments and minds of Muslims and were lately giving rise to tumult (*galeyân*).” The governor argued that the Muslim middle class in Diyarbakir had faith in the government, but could not remain “indifferent to such a question affecting the life and future of our homeland (*istikbâl-ı memleketimiz*)”. The Muslims, he concluded his report, would reject such a reform plan and he “began expressing the possibility that terrible consequences (*fena neticeler*) could emerge from it in the future”.³¹⁸

The final reform plan envisaged the formation of two provinces from six vilayets (Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Mamuret-ul Aziz, and Sivas), and assigned two European inspectors to oversee Armenian affairs. The reform package was signed into law in February 1914. In the spring of 1914, the backlash by Muslims eventuated as expected by the governor. In another report, he mentioned clashes and riots between Muslims and Christians in the bazaar and inner city of Diyarbakir. The Muslims expressed their hatred of Armenians by painting anti-Christian graffiti on walls and insulting Christian symbols such as crucifixes with “repulsive profanity” (*şütumât-ı galîza*). The governor concluded that the situation in Diyarbakir was firmly “unfavorable for Christians”, and that Christian communities were “in complete despair.”³¹⁹ The ones responsible for the organization of a climate of anti-Armenian hatred were local CUP powerholders. In the summer of 1914, as the European crisis was deepening, the Ottoman civil inspector Mihran Boyadjian was travelling to Diyarbakir and

³¹⁷ As argued before, many of these men were related to each other due to the dense network of notable families in Diyarbakir. Thus, Aziz Feyzi was both Ziyâ Gökâlâp’s and Şeref’s cousin, and Sıdkı was related to both of them on the maternal and paternal sides. Malmisaniç, *Kürt Teavün*, p.41.

³¹⁸ BOA, DH.KMS 2-2/5-7, document 7, Diyarbakir governor to Interior Ministry, 26 March 1913.

³¹⁹ BOA, DH.SYS 23/4, document 2, Diyarbakir governor to Interior Ministry, May 1914.

encountered the Young Turk political hardliner Pirinçizâde Aziz Feyzi on the way. Aziz Feyzi quite openly threatened the Armenians in a bitter condemnation:

On the road, we often spoke about politics in the car. Feyzi Bey did not fail to slip in, in his conversations, several threats against my coreligionists. “The Armenians,” he repeated, with bitterness, “have misbehaved towards us in our days of distress during the Balkan Wars. Patriarch Zaven, the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin and Nubar have sought to appeal to foreign intervention; that will cost you dearly my friend, your future is in danger.”³²⁰

Finally Aziz Feyzi warned: “You will see now, what it means to demand reforms.”³²¹ The radicalization of political elites heralded a general deep crisis of interethnic relations in Diyarbekir, which had now reached the threshold between hatred and violence. That threshold was crossed when in August 1914, the grain market of Diyarbekir became the scene of mass plunder as many Muslim merchants joined in seizing the opportunity to loot the stores of Christians and set fire to their shops. Soon it became known that the Young Turk loyalist police chief, Memduh Bey, had “allowed Kurds and Muslims to pillage Armenian stores” (*Kürtlerle müslümanların Ermeni mağazalarını yağma etmelerine müsaade olunduğu*).³²² According to Mihran Boyadjian, Memduh Bey had started the fire himself to create opportunities for pillage.³²³ Not only was the involvement widespread, but the inaction by local authorities implied tacit approval of the pogrom.

The war and ensuing violence in the Balkans released a wave of nationalist population politics coupling ethnicity to territory. The expansion of the nation-state system onto residual Ottoman lands produced multilateral homogenization campaigns such as forced migration and population exchanges between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Most of all, the Young Turks’ perception that the catastrophe of the Balkans should never be allowed to happen to the remaining territories of the Ottoman Empire, especially the eastern provinces, would give birth to unprecedented forms of population politics and social engineering. One major outcome of these processes was a deep fear, or perhaps a complex, of loss. The fear of losing territory was a persistent phobia of both late Ottoman and Turkish political culture. Some Ottomans foresaw the looming cataclysm. In his 1913 book on the Balkan wars, Aram Andonian wrote with considerable concern that “the principle of nationality” had spelled

³²⁰ Vartkes Yeghiayan (ed.), *British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals* (Pasadena, CA: AAIC, 1991), p.479.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p.480.

³²² *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 44/234, Emniyet-i Umûmiye Müdüriyeti (Ali Münif) to Diyarbekir, 13 September 1914.

³²³ Yeghiayan (ed.), *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, p.480.

disaster in the Balkans and was utterly untenable in the eastern provinces, where most Armenians lived.³²⁴ Andonian had planned to write a second volume to his book. He was never able to do so.

Discussion

The Ottoman eastern provinces, much like the rest of the empire, were an ethnically mixed peasant society comprising a diverse array of groups. Diyarbekir province, the focus of this study, was no exception to this rule. Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived side by side for centuries under a fragile equilibrium of political, social, and economic inequality. They were organized in an imperial-monarchical structure in which non-Muslim religious communities were simultaneously privileged and inferior. There was no national economy, no national language, no single national identity, and no common set of symbols of any significance. Despite sectarian divides and group interests, throughout the centuries these peoples were interdependent and continuously collaborated and produced the cultures and economies of Diyarbekir. The advent of nationalism in the nineteenth century, stirred up by the process of westernization, would have a profound and lasting impact on this societal structure.

By the time the wave of nationalism had swept over South-East Europe and had reached Diyarbekir, it had lost most of its emancipatory principles and egalitarian ideals. The percolation of nationalism into the Ottoman Empire was, in coherence with the erosion of that empire, a blind process. But by the time nationalism was adopted by various Ottoman groups, it came to signify the glorification of the people as an ethnic or cultural group and fostered ethno-territorial visions of the space they inhabited. Great internal and external pressures, crisis, and war all account for the direction the Turkish nation-formation process would take. The polarization of relations between Muslims and Christians was an important concomitant effect of these forces. Throughout the nineteenth century, as the Empire kept crumbling at its peripheries due to imperialist penetration and minority separatism, Ottoman society went through two shifts of identification and disidentification. The first process was a shift from Ottoman patriotism to Muslim nationalism, the second one a shift from Muslim nationalism into Turkish nationalism. These contracting processes of identification and disidentification gave shape to Turkish nationalism as it developed in the period up to the First World War. This process also gave birth to the Young Turk movement, a radical group of nationalists bent on the establishment of a Turkish nation state.

³²⁴ Aram Andonian, *Balkan Savaşı* (Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 1999, transl. Zaven Biberian).

This external and internal dialectic of identification was a dynamic process that shaped Ottoman and Turkish state identity. Scholars of state formation have argued that state identity, embodied in the cultural and ethnic identity of the population, is not meaningful in isolation from the wider world and other states. States may well be unique and variable, but state identity is thoroughly socially constructed, most specifically in the continuing (and often blind) processes of political and social interaction within which states define and redefine themselves and others through their existence.³²⁵ In other words, state identities are not strictly unilateral but subject to interaction with other states. The state's identity as an ongoing product of this process, is a dialectical synthesis of internal and external definitions of identity, of which territory and population are the prime referents.³²⁶ The continuing losses of territory and ensuing shifts of population, imposed upon the Ottoman Empire, defined and redefined Ottoman identity by these two shifts: first, the exclusion of Ottoman Christians and inclusion of Muslims, and later the exclusion of Ottoman Muslims and inclusion of Turks. These processes may have brought about large-scale collective othering and disidentification from Christian groups: Muslims were considered to be 'the same' and others (Christians) were 'unlike' them, if only for the Muslims' shared experience of decades of victimization.

The idea that nations or groups are constructed has gained currency among social scientists.³²⁷ But nation-formation processes are processes of construction *and* destruction, inclusion *and* exclusion. To claim that Turkish nationalism was inclusive is apologetic, and to claim that it was exclusive is polemical and moralizing – both arguments miss the central point that processes of inclusion and exclusion coexist simultaneously in all processes of identity politics. This chapter has argued that exclusion has been a major force shaping inclusion in the formation of late Ottoman, Muslim, and Turkish nationalism. It has particularly argued that the exclusions from and victimization in the Balkans and Caucasus is what constructed the identity of the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. Turkish national identity was constructed by exclusion and violence. Rather than identity leading in a linear manner to violence, violence had produced identity: as Brubaker argued about the Balkans in the 1990s, "group crystallization and polarization were the result of violence, not the cause."³²⁸ Well before people had realized what they were included in, they had been

³²⁵ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp.1-26.

³²⁶ Rodney B. Hall, *National Collective Identity: Social Constructs and International Systems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

³²⁷ For an overview of the literature see: Richard Jenkins, "Categorization: Identity, Social Process and Epistemology," in: *Current Sociology*, vol.48, no.3 (2000), pp.7-25; Id., *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996).

³²⁸ Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," in: *Archives européennes de sociologie*, vol.43, no.2 (2002), pp.163-189, at p.171; James D. Fearon & David D. Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," in: *International*

excluded from a society. This may mean that, whereas there might hardly be full consensus among nationalist elites on what the nation is, surely there always will be consensus on what the nation is *not*. Definitions of exclusion can precede those of inclusion and may be more forceful. Whereas the image of the Self may be vague, the image of the Other may be crystal clear.³²⁹ Well before Turkish social engineers crafted the Turkish nation in the 1920s and 1930s, including molding its ethno-national boundaries, there was full consensus among Ottoman Muslim political elites on the notion that Armenians and others were never to take part in that new group. No matter how much difficulty the Young Turks had in defining what “Turkishness” was, it took them only a few years to define what Turkishness was *not*.

Exclusion was a prime mover behind the creation of the Turkish nation state. Not only did that state consist of hundreds of thousands people themselves excluded from formerly Ottoman territories beyond the Turkish Republic’s control, the political elite itself in its turn began organizing the exclusion of millions of others during and after the establishment of the rump state. The residue was a society of uprooted elites, illiterate peasants, wretched refugees, and peripheral minorities. Exclusion preceded and even defined inclusion. This process set off a dynamic that developed and maintained a fear-based belief system that included negative stereotypes, prejudice, scapegoating, and that ultimately justified violence. Fear became embodied in the Ottoman Muslims’ concepts of the Other. These dynamics became systemic in a society as the energy of fear, revenge, and a victim identity became pervasive. How this reality and trope of victimization spiralled into more violence and victimization will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Parallel to this process of identification and disidentification ran the advent of population policy, the exercise of state power aimed at crafting the ideal population within a given territory. This was a shift from monarchical politics to population politics. The Young Turks too, turned their gaze from ‘looking up’ to the Sultan, to ‘looking down’ on the population as a source of political legitimacy. From their European education they had apprehended that the modernizing discourse of social knowledge of populations facilitated state intrusions into the ethnic composition of the population, not simply for the sake of greater empirical understanding of the population, but primarily in order to reorganize it. The discovery of society was pioneered by scholars who ventured out to research the population. Young Turk ethnographers and local elites provided the Central Committee with ethnographic

Organization, vol.54, no.4 (2000), pp.845-77; Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in Former Yugoslavia* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 59-82, 239-69.

³²⁹ Julia Reuter, *Ordnungen des Anderen: Zum Problem des Eigenen in der Soziologie des Fremden* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2002).

knowledge that shaped the very formation of population politics. The ethnographers, who drew inspiration from Western European colonial literature, produced censuses, assisted government commissions charged with delimiting ethnic borders in Turkey, led expeditions to study nomadic tribes, and in the end created a huge amount of ethnographic knowledge about the peoples of the Ottoman Empire.

The complicity of scientists with dictatorial regimes has been the object of many studies focusing on the relationship between power and knowledge. Despite the existence of diverging motives and patterns of the entanglement of science and politics, studies converge on one important aspect: the intrication of science and politics was as much a top-down affair (the ordering of research with a particular set of results determined beforehand) as a bottom-up one (scholars giving in to temptations of power and utopia and behaving sycophantically to the regime).³³⁰ Whereas social scientists such as Émile Durkheim and Max Weber never stood at the forefront of political decision-making in France and Germany, the Young Turk sociologist Mehmed Ziya Gökalp was an intimate member of the inner circle of power and his ideas were highly influential in the shaping of CUP population politics. He collaborated with an unelected regime and can be considered the brains of Young Turk social engineering. By association, Turkish social science, rooted in Young Turk nationalism, was complicit in the processes of social engineering (including its crimes) launched under its influence.

The disintegration of the Ottoman state, the fragmentation and polarization along ethnic lines of Ottoman society, and subsequent acts of political violence created space in the political landscape for radicals to thrive. When the Young Turks staged a successful coup in January 1913, they proclaimed the dawn of a new era. As they listened to Ottoman society and heard a cacophony of languages, institutions, loyalties, and identifications, they concluded that the status quo was an obstacle to the single tone they sought. The status quo thus became a “question” or a “problem”. Young Turk preparations for their rule of Anatolia revealed expectations for the future based on the sociological observations of their experts. On the level of official ideology and propaganda, these expectations gravitated around the

³³⁰ John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945-1956* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nikolai Kremmentsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Mark Walker, *Nazi Science* (New York: Plenum Press, 1995); George Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural, and Social Life in the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966); Benno Müller-Hill, *Tödliche Wissenschaft* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1984); Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Otthein Rammstedt, *Deutsche Soziologie, 1933-1945: Die Normalität einer Anpassung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986); Götz Aly, “Theodor Schieder, Werner Conze oder die Vorstufen der physischen Vernichtung,” in: Winfried Schulze & Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds.), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), pp.163-82; Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus: Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der ‘Volkstumskampf’ im Osten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

concept of “Turkification” as outlined, even if only sketchily, in previous Young Turk notions about “Ottomanization”. In concrete political terms, the importance of “Turkification” meant focusing on the issue of the non-Turkish demographic structure in the eastern provinces. Any policy tackling this issue would involve much trial and error, for this idea was not explicit, its meaning not self-evident, and often the need to choose priorities and make pragmatic compromises due to the exigencies of international diplomacy forced delays and modifications in the Young Turks’ realization of a utopian society. But the ultimate direction was clear. The relatively autonomous spread of the philosophy of population politics and the relatively coincidental explosion of mass violence would prove fatal for the eastern provinces.

The catastrophic losses of the Balkan wars brought about another shock to Young Turk thinking on population policy as the ethnic cleansing of Muslims proved that violence was a politically effective method of state-building and crafting a population. When the issue of the Armenian ‘reform plan’ was brought to the arena of international politics in 1913, it induced a Pavlovian reflex in the Young Turk mind. The CUP saw Great Power interference in internal politics as yet another humiliating breach of Ottoman sovereignty, a harbinger of the doomsday scenario in which an independent Armenia would be established in the Ottoman eastern provinces. The reform plan was a comprehensive administrative project, including cultural and even linguistic provisions for the eastern provinces. These latter stipulations would partly shape and define Young Turk population policy and social engineering. The Young Turk regime attacked precisely those social characteristics that they felt were threatening Ottoman sovereignty, unity, and homogeneity the most: demography, culture, language, public space. If it were these characteristics of demographic and cultural presence that made the eastern provinces prone to Western intervention and/or the establishment of an Armenian state, then those characteristics needed to be assaulted.