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Turkish and European Identity Constructions in the 1815- 1945 Period

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ABSTRACT

This FEUTURE paper focuses on Turkey's and Europe's perceptions of each other in identity and cultural terms between two periods: 1789-1922 and 1923-1945. It identifies the identity representations developed by both sides in response to key selected political and cultural drivers of these periods by subjecting the writings of prominent Ottoman bureaucrats and intellectuals in the first period as well as newspaper articles and editorials in Europe and Turkey in both periods to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Identity representations are then discussed in relation to the pre-identified focal issues in the relationship; namely nationalism, status in international society, civilisation and state-citizen relations. The paper finds that there is no linear pattern to identity representations that are constantly contested in both the Turkish and European contexts. Certain positive and negative events trigger identity representations in novel ways, feeding into a set of relations which can be identified by conflict, convergence or cooperation.

ÖZET

FEUTURE projesi bağlamında hazırlanan bu makale, Türkiye ve Avrupa'nın 1789-1922 ve 1923-1945 dönemleri arasındaki birbirileri ile ilgili kimlik ve kültür algılarını irdelemektedir. Söz konusu olan ilk dönem için önde gelen Osmanlı bürokrat ve entellektüellerinin yazışmalarını, her iki dönem için ise Avrupa ve Türkiye gazetelerinde yer almış makaleleri Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) yöntemiyle ele alıp, her iki tarafın da geliştirdiği ve dönemlerin siyasi ve kültürel faktörlerine binaen seçilmiş kimlik tasvirlerini tespit etmektedir. Akabinde, elde edilen kimlik tasvirleri, daha önce tanımlanmış milliyetçilik, uluslararası toplumdaki konum, uygarlık ve devlet-vatandaş ilişkileri gibi odak meseleler ekseninde tartışılmaktadır. Makale içerisinde varılmış olan kanı, hem Türkiye hem de Avrupa bağlamlarında sürekli olarak tartışılan kimlik tasvirlerinin doğrusal bir kalıba yerleştirilmesinin imkansız olduğudur. Bazı olumlu ve olumsuz olayların, çatışma, işbirliği ve uyum olarak tanımlanabilecek üç ilişki boyutunu yeni ve daima farklı yollarla besleyebileceği öngörülmektedir.



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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on Turkey’s and Europe’s perceptions of each other in identity and cultural terms between two specific periods, namely 1789-1922 and 1923-1945. The first period corresponds with the final centuries of the Ottoman Empire, in which key political developments took place in both the Ottoman Empire and Europe, shaping identity representations of each other on both sides. The second period under analysis covers the initial decades after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in which rapid political and socio-cultural changes were undertaken in the country, which also witnessed a turbulent period in European history leading up to the Second World War. The analyses presented below cover the identity representations incurred by the key political and cultural drivers of these periods. The concept of “driver” is used here in place of significant historical milestones that have influenced the relationship between Turkey and Europe and which have in turn shaped the mutual perceptions and representations in these given periods.

Accordingly, for the first period of 1789-1922, the key political drivers around which substantive mutual identity representations were observed and analysed are the proclamation of the Tanzimat Edict in the Ottoman Empire in 1839; the Reform Edict of 1856 and the Paris Conference; Sultan Abdülaziz’s visit to Europe in 1866-1867 and the Paris World Fair of 1866; the Cretan insurrection of 1866-1869; the Hamidian massacres of 1894-1896; and the March 31 Revolt and Albülhamit’s deposition. For the second period of 1923-1945, the political drivers around which identity representations were observed and analysed are the Montreaux International Straits Convention of 1936 and Anschluss in 1938, whereas the cultural drivers are the introduction of the Latin Alphabet in Turkey in 1928, a Turkish woman’s (Keriman Halis) victory in the Miss Universe competition in 1932 and the twelfth congress of the International Alliance for Women held in Istanbul in 1935.

The selected texts over which identity representations were discerned included the writings of prominent Ottoman bureaucrats and intellectuals in the first period as well as newspaper articles and editorials in Europe and Turkey in both periods. These texts either explicitly or implicitly illustrated identity discussions on Turkey-EU relations and reflected the peculiarities of the periods under scrutiny. They were selected with reference to their temporal proximity and relevance to the chosen drivers. While we have had no problem finding press sources in British, French and German, particularly during the nineteenth century, when press censorship in the Ottoman Empire suppressed evaluative discussions of domestic and/or international politics we have referred to alternative sources which include newspapers published by dissidents outside the Ottoman Empire in Ottoman Turkish as well as private letters, memoirs and memoranda written by prominent bureaucrats. All texts were read and analyzed in their original languages including Ottoman sources some of which were available in critical editions with transcriptions whereas the rest were transcribed into Latin by the researchers.¹

¹ For more information on the methodology, case selection and the background literature which this research builds on, please see Aydın-Düzgit et. al. (2017), Deliverable 1- Literature Review and Guideline Paper: Identity



Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used in tracing and identifying identity representations in the coverage of the drivers in the selected texts. CDA is a method that focuses on the study of relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains. Among the different approaches in CDA, we have adopted the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which focuses particularly on analyzing the representations of identity and difference in discourse. The analytical apparatus in DHA consists of three main steps which were used in the empirical analysis of the selected texts (Wodak 2001: 73). The first step involved outlining the main content of the themes and discourses, namely the *discourse topics* in the narrative on the relationship between Turkey and Europe. The second step involved the exploration of *discursive strategies* deployed in the construction of identities in the narrative. In this research, these discursive strategies were identified in responding to the following empirical questions directed at the texts (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 44): How are the chosen subjects (the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, Europe, the EEC/EC/EU) named and referred to linguistically? What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them? By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes are certain representations of the subjects justified, legitimised and naturalised in discourse? Are the respective utterances intensified or mitigated? Discursive strategies often include argumentation strategies that are used in justifying attributions and that can take various forms. Among the most common is the employment of *topos*, defined as “parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises in the shape of content-related warrants that connect the arguments with the conclusion” (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 74). For example in the discursive construction of national identities, one often encounters the *topos* of culture and history. The third step of analysis then explored the *linguistic means* that are used to realise these discursive strategies.

The results are discussed below in relation to selected focal issues, namely the issues with respect to which Europe (or Turkey) constitutes its identity by comparing itself with and/or differentiating itself from its significant Other, i.e. Turkey (or Europe). The four focal issues identified are nationalism, civilization, status in international society, and state-citizen relations.²

2. 1789-1922 Period

2.1. Proclamation of Tanzimat: Imperial Edict of 1839

Imperial Edict of Gülhane (Tanzimat Fermanı), proclaimed in the Gülhane Park on November 3rd 1839 in Constantinople, is both a major step towards the reformulation of state-citizen relations in the Ottoman Empire and an appeal to European standards of civilization in an effort to gain better status in international society. The Gülhane Edict sought to address widespread grievances among the Ottoman subjects, by promising security of life and property, due process of law, universal justice regardless of

and Culture Drivers.

² For more information on the identification and significance of the focal issues, please see Ibid.



religion or sect, fair adjustment of military conscription and fair taxation policies. The Edict also entailed a move to win the general favour of European states in the ongoing crisis with Egyptian governor Mehmet Ali Pasha who seriously threatened Ottoman sovereignty in Egypt and Syria. Failing to stop the military advances of Mehmet Ali Pasha, Ottoman state had to resort to Russian assistance first and to the mediation of European states later in order to protect itself. The Edict also invoked the European states as witnesses to the Ottoman Sultan’s promises to its own subjects.

The Ottoman texts on the Tanzimat Edict mark the first time the word civilization (*medeniyet*) is used in the Ottoman language (1839O1, 1839O2). The Ottoman neologism for civilization, *medeniyet*, was derived from the Arabic word *medine* which, in its various forms, signified urban culture and civility as opposed to nomadism (Wigen 2015). Through such a translation a convergence between Ottoman social and political categories and the European key concept of civilization occurred. In these texts civilisation is how Europeans conduct their affairs among themselves and what makes them superior and victorious, it is not presented as an essentialised category, unique to Europeans. For one text it is a product of reverence for knowledge transferred from other cultures and of hard work (1839O1); for another it follows from reverence to human nature (1839O2). It is associated primarily with technology (understood as practical science and knowledge and their dissemination) and second, as a problem of politics and morality.

Many European sources present the promulgation of the Edict as a historical step towards civilization (1839G2, 1839F1). Although there seems to be some hesitation regarding the sincerity of the Ottoman Empire in its pledge due to its former notoriety as a despotic and oppressive government(1839E2), European newspapers do not seem to take an essentialized or cultural view of civilization either; they consider it transferable. However, the idea of European exceptionalism and the signs of the mission civilatrice are apparent in arguments that it is by the help of Europe that the East will embrace fundamental values of humanity (1939F1).

One Ottoman source characterizes the European state system as a state of perpetual peace (1839O2). The Egyptian crisis motivates the Empire to become part of this system which provides security and arbitration to its members and the summoning of the “friendly states” of Europe as witnesses in the Edict (1839O3) indicates openness to surrender the Empire’s sovereignty at least symbolically to international oversight. European sources are somewhat silent on the implications of the Edict regarding Ottoman accession to European system; however, their consideration and commendation of the Edict as a constitution in European standards can be interpreted as a willingness to judge the Empire by the standards of Europe.

State-citizen relations are the most central issue to the Edict since the core of the Edict is the reformulation of the relationship between the Ottoman state and its subjects in a just and fair fashion with attention to certain universal standards (1839O3). Both European and Ottoman sources equate provision of fundamental rights and securities to subjects with universal moral standards and the proper direction of Ottoman reform. The promise of universal application of security of life, property and taxation appealed both to Ottoman subjects who had been left politically and economically destitute



due to oppressive restorationist policies of Mahmud II and also to European powers who were concerned about the rights and conditions of the particularly Christian minorities in the Empire (1839G1).

2.2. Reform Edict of 1856 and Paris Conference

The 1856 Paris Treaty concluded the 1853-56 Crimean War between the Russian and the Ottoman Empire. In order to maintain the “balance of powers” established in Vienna Congress (1815) and to contain Russia, England and France allied with the Ottoman Empire. The Paris Treaty officially recognized the Ottoman Empire as a member of the European state system and guaranteed her territorial integrity. A month before the conference, on February 18 1856, Ottoman Empire proclaimed the Reform Edict (Islahat Fermanı) with the intention of winning the favour of European powers and leaving the coming conference with a better deal. The Edict was primarily concerned with the improvement of the conditions of the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire and it promised legal and status equality and greater autonomy and freedom to all the religious communities subject to Ottoman state.

The Crimean war led to an unprecedented amount of European presence in Istanbul and heightened interest in European culture, practices and fashion. Below, European and Ottoman representations of four successive events representing the heightened political and cultural interactions in this period are analysed: 1) the bestowal of the Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur to the Sultan by the French ambassador in December 1855, marking the first time that a Sultan received a Christian order; 2) Sultan Abdulmecid’s attendance to the annual ball held by the British ambassador on February 1, 1856, marking the first time an Ottoman Emperor to attend an event in European style; 3) the declaration of Reform Edict; 4) the signing of Paris Treaty on March 30, 1856. During and after the peace talks there was a constant struggle between England and France for influence on Ottoman policy and Ottoman bureaucrats were also split into factions according to their European alliances.

In European sources, the willingness of the Ottoman sultan to partake in European entertainments and the granting of political rights to Ottoman Christians in the Reform Edict are taken as sure sign of civilization (1856E2, 1856F1). While some European texts have a more accommodating and refined approach to Ottoman culture and identity (1856F1, 1856G2), others seem to be more cynical and orientalisating in their depiction of Ottoman adoption of European practise (1856E2). Ottoman sources, on the other hand, choose to dwell on the tension created by the Empire’s growing political and cultural interaction with Europe. This tension is reflected particularly in criticism of changing consumption patterns and gender relations. The fact that the Sultan’s receiving the order of Legion d’honneur is not mentioned in Ottoman sources can be taken as a sign of reaction to the diminishing power of the Empire among civilizations and the fear of being too much associated with Europe. While both Ottomans and Europeans use civilization in the singular, Ottoman texts also reveal a tension between “the civilization” and Ottoman traditions (1856O3).

Status of Ottoman Empire in the international society of Europe is the key topic of the period. The establishment of Russia as a common enemy and the need to secure peace in Europe facilitates the admission of Ottoman Empire into Europe on equal footing with the major powers. However, the inclusion of the political rights of non-Muslims as an article in the treaty leads to concerns on the



Ottoman side. Aside from the Pashas who push the Edict into effect, most of the Ottoman bureaucrats seem to take this as a sure sign of creeping European intervention in what should be the domestic affairs of the Empire (1856O1, 1856O2). This later turns into a cleavage within Ottoman bureaucracy whereby certain cliques would accuse others of over-Westernization. Thus admission of Ottoman Empire into international society is born with a constant tension emanating from the threat of intervention and loss of sovereignty.

Concerning state-citizen relations, the inclusion of the political rights of the non-Muslim subjects as a clause in the draft of treaty is significant. European texts perceive it as a criteria of civilization that Ottoman Empire grants universal rights to all its subjects although they are obviously aware of the sensitivity and the intricacy of the issue (1856E1). That the matter of conscription is brought up by a European text demonstrates this sensitivity since the near exclusivity of conscription to Muslim population from 1830s onwards had seriously weakened Muslims materially. Although the Empire attempted to devise ways of including non-Muslims in the army, she could not trust non-Muslims enough and the non-Muslim communities did not want military service either. While Ottoman texts are aware of the necessity of reform regarding the non-Muslims, the way the issue is forced in international arena through a treatise and later hurried into Ottoman policy through the Edict creates resentment (1856O1, 1856O2). Muslim identity of the Empire resurfaces as a key issue at this point. The negative image of the Reform Edict taints the image of the government and also spreads suspicion regarding the direction of the reform process overall, which is evident in the ironic use of the “way of civilization” by one text (1856O3).

2.3. Abdulaziz’s Visit to Europe and Paris World Fair of 1866

Sultan Abdülaziz was the only Ottoman emperor who made a peaceful journey outside the Ottoman realms. In order to enhance the relationships between the empire and European countries after the Paris Conference, he travelled to Paris to attend the Paris Exposition upon the invitation of Napoleon III, and then to England, Brussels, and Vienna between June 21 and August 7, 1867. The visit was covered extensively in European and Ottoman Press.

All the sources from the European context report very positively on the sultan’s visits and show the greatest interest for the sultan’s personality, demeanor and charisma. With regard to the focal issue of civilization, European sources highlight how the appearance of the Sultan in Europe has challenged the image of the Muslim ruler as oriental and exotic (1867G2, 1867E1). The familiarity of Abdülaziz with European ways and his modest and simple attire are seen as signs of a civilizational closeness between the Turks and the respective European country or Europe as whole (1867E1, 1867F1). Mostly, Europe is described homogeneously, but not as superior. One German text even assumes an upcoming civilizational lead of the Ottoman Empire in comparison to the Habsburg monarchy by guaranteeing its subjects freedom of religion, referring to the Reform Edict of 1856(1867G2). While the issue of Ottoman political reforms is only occasionally brought up in European accounts of the visit, European attitude towards Ottoman political progress and reform process are quite favorable and optimistic(1867G2).



On the other hand, status in international society and state society relations are decidedly central to Ottoman accounts of the visit (1867O1). The visit is expected to benefit the Empire materially (1867O1; 1867O2, 1867O3). The gap between Europe and the Empire in order and prosperity is highlighted through the visit and the Sultan himself, impressed by his observations, promises to improve his image in the eyes of his subjects through development of the realms (1867O3). The interpretations of the visit fit the familiar pattern whereby Europe sets a standard of political, social and economic development for Ottoman Empire to follow and embrace as a goal of its own reform program. The fact that such demands are implicitly made in Ottoman newspapers using the minority languages in the Empire (Armenian for instance) (1867O1), which are then translated and quoted in a newspaper published in Turkish is also revealing, since it reflects a dissatisfaction shared by both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects.

In spite of the Cretan Insurrection that was going on during the Exposition and the Sultan’s visit Ottoman Empire seems to have a favorable status in international society at the time. The invitation by Napoleon, the English Queen and hospitality of the other nations which hosted the Sultan were signs of further improvement of relations improving after the Paris Conference. Ottoman sources recognize the significance of the invitation of Napoleon alongside other European rulers and politicians (1867O2). On the European side, there is reason to suppose that the favorable image created by the visit helped the resolution of the Cretan Insurrection and the Ottoman-Greek conflict in favor of the Ottoman Empire.

2.4. Cretan Insurrection of 1866-1869

The Cretan Insurrection of 1866-69 began in August 1866 with the Cretan rebels aiming to annex the island to Greek rule by attracting the attention of the international public to the maladministration of Ottoman government and possibly provoking an intervention by the major powers. The insurrection escalated into a confrontation between Ottoman Empire and Greece and finally resolved in favor of Ottoman government in January 1869 with a prompt conference in Paris. The three-year crisis was the first major diplomatic event after the Crimean War and Paris Conference which secured the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire under the auspices of the European Concert and as such it was a test of faith for both the Ottoman Empire and European powers regarding their mutual promises to uphold their parts of the bargain. In the Ottoman Empire, the Cretan Insurrection coincided with the rise of the Young Ottomans, a group of mid rank bureaucrats who both challenged the direction of Ottoman modernization by advocating popular representation and accountability and also preaching proto-nationalist ideas.

With regards to the issue of “status in international society”, the British texts describe the relationship between the Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire as a balanced partnership of equals (1869E1, 1869E2). The German articles depict Europe as homogeneous and exclude Greece (1869G1, 1869G2). While also not included in Europe, the Ottoman Empire’s status in the international society is considered to be important since its territorial integrity has a lasting effect on the well-being of whole Europe (1869E1, 1869F1). Hence facilitating a peaceful and stable order on the continent requires containing



the insurrection in Crete. Intriguingly, the European newspapers do not invoke civilizational issues very often. The comparison with the rebellious Greeks and unruly Greek insurgents helps strengthen the perception that Turks are civilized. British newspaper articles particularly praise the scientific skills used by the Ottoman troops in order to oppress the insurrection (1869E2). The issues of nationalism and state-society relations are also absent in European coverage of the Insurrection; the threat of an escalating conflict and the desire for international peace seem to trump the segregationist and nationalist goals of Cretan insurgents and demands of Greek government. Cretan insurgents are downplayed against obedient Greeks who ally themselves with Ottoman administration.

Ottoman newspapers acknowledge the role of major European states as leader of the international arena and arbitrators of conflict in the East. Ottoman sources also note that the Great Powers want the security and stability of the Ottoman Empire (1868O4) and acknowledge the power of international law in protecting Ottoman interests (1869O8). Concerning the focal issue of “civilization”, Ottoman writers see themselves as part of the civilized world, while noting the prevalent negative image of the Turk in Europe as cruel and barbarous Muslims who torture Christians (1868O1, 1869O7). Ottoman pro-government newspapers also evades the issue of nationalism and its implications for Ottoman society and presents the Insurrection as simply a conflict between Ottoman and Greek states: the Ottoman government has done nothing wrong by the Cretans and it is only the misplaced nationalist sentiments of some Greeks that motivate revolt (1869O7).

The Cretan Insurrection was a major reference point for the Young Ottomans in their opposition to Ottoman Government. Opposition writers explicitly articulate their admiration for the just and representative governments of European countries (1868O2, 1868O3) and lament the maladministration of the Ottoman government, which in their view is what keeps the Ottoman Empire from becoming an important player in power politics (1868O4). They attribute the negative image of the Turk in Europe to the ignorance of European public which is exacerbated by the equally ignorant Ottoman government. The opposition newspapers also strongly advocate an Ottoman national identity, Ottomanism which will embrace religious and ethnic differences under the banner of loyalty to the Ottoman state (1868O1). Presenting the Cretan issue as a consequence of Ottoman maladministration, Young Ottomans argue that parliamentary representation will allow each Ottoman community to voice their interests in Istanbul and eliminate the rise of separatist demands (1868O1).

2.5. The Hamidian Massacres of 1894-1896

The Hamidian massacres, named after Sultan Abdul Hamid II, refer to the acts of violence that were inflicted on the Armenian population in the years 1894–1896. Provoked by the events, Britain, France, and Russia worked out a “Project of Reforms for the Eastern Provinces of Asia Minor” and presented them to the Porte on May 11, 1895. However, the Sultan refused to implement these reforms which were to guarantee the Armenians better protection. The events of the Hamidian massacres have been considered as a prelude to the systematic persecution of the Armenian population which later became known as the Armenian genocide of 1915.



The Issue of civilization seems central to both European and Ottoman texts. Most of the European texts use a particularly graphic language in their description of the massacres, blame the despotism of the Ottoman sultan and the government, religious fanaticism of the Muslim clergy and the savage behavior of the Kurdish rabble(1894E1, 1894G1, 1894G2, 1894F1). Along with this morally charged language, European texts also dominantly emphasize religious identity as a major distinction between the Empire and Europe. Some explicitly mark Europe as the monde civilisé which again leaves out Ottoman Empire out as the uncivil.

With the exception of one European text, which grants the Ottoman government right to discipline its subjects, European texts do not see the issue as a case of respecting international law. Some European texts blame the European powers with being involved in Armenian issue simply out of geo-political concerns without genuine regard for humanity (1894F1), which implies that the Armenian issue is seen a mainly humanitarian problem, which, in turn, reinforces the civilizational aspect. One text presents the situation as a choice between the better despot, between Russian and the Ottoman Empire (1894G2).

In Ottoman sources, both pro-government and opposition newspapers consider it the Empire's legal right to discipline its unruly subjects by military action by international standards (1896O3, 1896O6). The pro-government texts present the situation as a problem of unruly citizens (both Kurds and Armenians) (1896O6), and criticize the impulsive behaviour of Muslim population and particularly Kurds against Armenians, and massacre of civilian population by other civilians as uncivil. This is juxtaposed with the Ottoman army's possible official action against unruly Armenians. Ottoman opposition newspaper also portray the Ottoman people as civilized yet blame the oppressive sultan in addition to the rebellious Armenians in the matter (1895O2). Pro-government Ottoman texts reveal a concern with protecting the civilized image of the Ottoman Empire as the sole Muslim state and nation in a world of Christian states (1896O6: 45-46). Opposition texts argue that a case of Ottoman maladministration and seditious Armenian revolutionaries is presented in Europe as a case of purely religious violence and oppression (1896O4). One text accuses the British of betraying their own civilization by defending the cause of Christianity and not humanity (1895O2).

Ottoman opposition newspaper criticizes the Ottoman Sultan for not fulfilling the pledges made in the Tanzimat and Reform Edicts to reform state-citizen relations (1895O1). They rule out any option of independence for Armenians or other non-Muslim subjects, and instead advise all Ottoman citizens to stand united against the oppressive government (1896O6). Pro-government texts on the other hand adopt a mostly traditional approach to state-citizen relations as a ruler-subject relation, they invoke past-Ottoman practices to emphasize the government's right to discipline its unruly subjects and advise obedience to the Sultan and seeking refuge in his compassion (1896O6 35-36).

Both pro-government and opposition texts, however, emphasize the primacy of the Muslim people among ottoman subjects: opposition texts as more of a case of primus inter pares whereas pro-government texts as a case of Muslim dominant country. The frequent use of the word Turk and Turkiye particularly in opposition texts reveal the emergence of a partial ethnic consciousness among younger



generation of Ottoman elite, or rather the gradual identification of Ottoman identity with a proto-concept of Turkishness, which is not necessarily differentiated from Islam (1895O2, 1896O4, 1896O5).

European sources also criticize the Sultan for gradually abolished almost every right and privilege that was guaranteed by the Reform Edict of 1856 (1895E1). Most articles also lament the non-implementation of the decisions taken at the Berlin Congress 1878, which would improve the security and legal situation of Armenians (1894G2). According to European texts, the Ottoman government not only reduced the rights of the Christian population of the Empire but also made people believe that Armenians are at war with Islam and England is the chief enemy of Turkey (1895E1).

2.6. March 31 Revolt and Abdulhamid’s Deposition

In July 23 1908 Sultan Abdulhamid II caved in to the pressures of the Committee of Union and Progress (a group of bureaucrats and military officers campaigning for constitutional government, -henceforth CUP-) and reinstated the constitution (Kanun-ı Esasi) which he had suspended 30 years earlier. On April 13, 1909, a group of unranked soldiers from the standing army in Istanbul and some conservative religious groups, which criticized CUP, revolted and took control of the city. The parliament reconvened the same day and unanimously deposed Abdulhamid, accusing him of plotting the revolt. Mehmed V Reşad (1844 –1918) ascended the throne. On April 14, one day after the events in Istanbul, a major unrest emerged in Adana and around 15-30 thousand Armenians were massacred by Muslim civilians.

Many European sources characterize the conceding Sultan as despotic cruel (1909E1, 1909G1), who was neither the right person to prevent the Ottoman empire from falling apart nor a good partner for the Western powers (1909F2). It is noted that Abdülhamid’s pervasive fear made him lock himself in Yıldız Palace with informants and spies, and thus he was unable to create harmonic stability amongst the various peoples in the pluricultural empire and approximate the Ottoman Empire to the “occidental civilization” (1909F2). Most of the European sources seem to be optimistic with regards to the newly appointed Mehmed V, emphasizing that he wants to govern in accordance with the reintroduced constitution (1909G2) and supports the idea of liberty (1909F1). However, many articles also point out that the Young Turks want a Sultan they can control, and that this Sultan was favoured by the Young Turks because of his tractable character (1909G2). The increasingly autocratic style of the Young Turks is implied and depicted as dangerous for the maintenance of peace in the country (1909G1).

In the Ottoman context both the opposition party and the pro-CUP press try to factor in a universal standard. The opposition emphasizes civilization and considers it as a standard which the East/Muslims already have (1909O1, 1909O2, 1909O3, 1909O4). One opposition newspaper distinguishes between the immoral practices of Europe and its material/economic achievements and shuns the former while adopting the latter (1909O1, 1909O2) and associates the West prominently with Christian

³ The revolt is known as the March 31 affair (according to the Ottoman Gregorian calendar).



consciousness (1909O2). Another opposition newspapers associates the East with Islam and considers it to be in possession of freedom and constitutional government since ancient times (1909O4). All opposition texts imagine a future where the nation will develop depending on its own indigenous values and become an example to the whole world in civilization (1909O2, 1909O4). Pro-CUP press on the other hand consider the opposition as reactionaries and suppression of the revolt is presented as a win for freedom and progress (1909O5, 1909O6).

With the regards to the focal issue of state-citizen relations, British articles refer to the Hamidian massacres and argue that the sultan's fear of dissidents were responsible for the terrible atrocities which had marked his reign (1909E1,1909E2). The conceding sultan "fostered and connived at the intestine feuds of race and creed amongst his subjects" (1909E1). Although the massacres of the Armenians and the bloodshed in Macedonia attracted attention in Europe, "no race suffered more cruelly and more constantly at his hands than the Turks themselves" (1909E1). Another article critically remarks that by fostering pan-Islamic ideas, and showing himself as the successor of the prophet and thus spiritual leader of Islam, Abdulhamit had a negative impact on the non-Muslim population (1909G1) and endangered the peace in some of the empire's provinces.

The relation between the state and the citizens is a central topic in the Ottoman press as both sides accuse each other of oppression, injustice, illegitimate motivations and betraying the national interests. The fact that both sides use the vocabulary of freedom, popular legitimacy and constitutionalism reveal the degree to which universal political standards had been embraced in the Empire. The opposition accuse CUP to be a secretive organization, simply another tool of oppression and a disgrace to the constitution they are supposed to uphold (1909O1, 1909O3). Pro-CUP newspapers present Abdulhamid as a bloodthirsty and selfish tyrant who oppressed its own people; the insurgents are argued to be an extension of his oppression and supporters are claimed to not have embraced freedom and progress (1909O5, 1909O6).

Opposition and pro-CUP sources also diverge in the focal issue of nationalism. Opposition sources place great emphasis on religion and state and their union as indispensable to Ottoman identity (1909O1, 1909O3) and implicitly accuse CUP of subverting these values and not respecting Sharia. The pro-CUP sources avoid the issue of religion, although they cite the providence of God as a reason in their victory (1909O5, 1909O6). Both the opposition and the CUP sources glorify the army as the embodiment of the nation, which reveals the militaristic aspect of the emerging national identity.

3. 1923-1945 Period

3.1. Abolition of the Caliphate (3 March 1924)

Following the abolition of the Sultanate in 1 November 1922, first the religious powers of the Sultan passed over to his cousin Abdul Medjid Efendi who acted as the new Caliphate with no political authority. However, his term as Caliph proved short-lived, and the Caliphate was also abolished on 3 March 1924. The abolishment of Caliphate is one of the most striking reforms the new Republic



introduced to secularize the state structure and contain the role of Islam in Turkish society (Ayata 1996: 41-42).

The European press covered the abolition of the Caliphate intensively, and while doing so highlighted the duality and incommensurability of Western and Oriental civilizations. 1924E1 views the abolition of caliphate as Turkey’s attempt to move from the East to the West. It stresses Turkey’s action as “the deliberate renunciation of whatever spiritual and, by consequence, political precedence Turkey enjoyed in the Moslem world”, for the sake of “the reconstruction of Turkey as a compact national unit on the Western pattern”. 1924F3 emphasizes that a hybrid system comprising both Oriental and Western features is not sustainable, since they are incompatible; the former is based on religious ideas, while the latter is guided by the secular modernity of the Twentieth Century. Therefore, the secular reforms of Turkey saying a definite goodbye to the Orient are necessary. While noting their different reactions to the abolishment of the caliphate, 1924G2 underscores that the transition to the new capital city Angora from the former imperial capital city Constantinople also marks the shift from one civilizational paradigm to another.

European texts also share the concern that the abolition of the Caliphate will lead to divisions within the Islamic Civilization and a competition to claim the seat of the Caliphate vacated by the Turks (1924E1; 1924F1; 1924F2; 1924E2; 1924E3; 1924E4; 1924E5; 1924G2). According to 1924F1, the lack of a religious leader for the Muslim world will be a crucial problem for the stability of the region. According to 1924F2, the Islamic world is already divided since subjects in each country pray for their own Sultans as their religious leaders. Similarly, 1924G2 points out the possibility of several caliphs in the Muslim World as it is not certain, who will succeed the disposed caliph Abdülmecid.

There is a marked difference between the English texts, and the French and German texts, since the English considers “the abolition of the Caliphate” as a status loss for Turkey in the international milieu, while the French and the German are mostly appreciative of the reform that proves Turkey’s westernization. Some degree of nostalgia is evident in English texts, with 1924E5 highlighting the Caliphate as a symbol of Islamic civilization and 1924E3 emphasizing the splendor of the Islamic civilization during the dark ages of Europe. 1924E1 points out that the dismantlement of the Caliphate will result in a status loss for Constantinople/Istanbul “from the Rome of the East ...to a cosmopolitan city of provincial status”. 1924E5 warns that dismantling “an institution so venerable from one of the greatest religions of the world” will have dire consequences for Turkey. 1924E4 and 1924E5 remind that Indian Muslims had marshalled support for Kemalists against the British in the independence war by introducing them as the defenders of Islam.

The French texts, on the other hand, mostly consider the abolition of the Caliphate as a great achievement for Turkey’s Westernization, while only a minority focuses on the dire consequences Turkey will face in the Muslim world (1924F2). According to 1924F3, the abolition of the Caliphate puts an “end to the dream of pan-Islamic imperialism”, and “the Turkish Republic certainly accomplished the greatest moral and intellectual liberation that the Muslims ever achieved”. 1924F5 praises the reform along with other secular reforms as “a true revolution in political, religious and societal institutions of the Turkish state”. The only exception is 1924F2 arguing that the abolition of the Caliph is like the abolition



of the Pope which is unthinkable. Similarly, 1924G1 welcomes the abolition of the caliphate as a milestone that will pave the way for Turkey’s modern development based on the model of Europe. The text also claims that since the caliphate had an “universal character” it by its mere existence involved Turkey in certain foreign policy obligations.

In both Turkish texts (1924O1, 1924O2), abolition of the caliphate and the dismissal of the Ottoman dynasty from Turkey is presented as a final step in the transfer of sovereignty from the usurper dynastic family to the Turkish people. The dynastic family and the caliphate are presented as obsolete institutions and accused of both causing the decline of Islam (1924O1) and collaborating with the enemies of the Turkish nation (1924O2). Curiously, justification of abolition is not done with reference to principle of secularism or to the example of European civilization but to the Islamic tradition. Especially, 1924O1 goes to great lengths to prove the caliphate un-Islamic in its current form and considers the Turkish nation the most successful of Muslim peoples. In Turkish texts, the nation is defined in relation to its enemies; ranging from the Greeks and the British to the dynastic family which is argued to be the accomplices of the former (1924O2). In 1924O1, the nation is defined in relation to its negative past which is manifest in the Ottoman dynasty.

3.2. The Introduction of Latin Alphabet (1 November 1928)

The alphabet reform stands as a crucial watershed in the history of Turkish Republic officially endorsing the pro-Western outlook of Turkey and its rigorous detachment from the Orient. Low literacy rate, hovering around 10% when the Republic was formed, was considered as a crucial impediment to the modernization of Turkey, and subsequently a language commission composed of prominent Turkish writers including Falih Rifkî Atay was formed to adapt Turkish language to Latin scripts. The law accepting the new alphabet passed the parliament in 1 November 1928 urging for a complete shift to Latin alphabet in all walks of life by 1 December 1928.

The adoption of Latin alphabet produced intensive “civilization” discussions in both European and Turkish texts. 1928E1 identifies two distinct and mutually exclusive civilizations, European (modern and scientific) vs Oriental (backward) and argues that the Latin alphabet reform constitutes the final step for Turkey to detach from “the old Oriental culture” and assimilate into the “European civilization”. While stressing that Turkey is essentially different from Arabs and Persian, the European texts remain persistent in their perception of Turkey as an Oriental country. At the same time, some texts reveal their discontent with the alphabet reform which not only offends religious Europeans (1928E3), but also undermines the incompatibility between Turkish (Oriental) and Latin (Western) languages (1928F4).

Different from the European texts, the Turkish texts identify a single civilization referring to the West/Europe and dismiss the Orient, Arabs and Persia, as a source of backwardness. In 1928T4, Yunus Nadi depicts the West (Garb) as the “true civilization” nurtured by science. He claims that until recently the Orient was considered and celebrated as an “Oriental and Islamic civilization” as if it was worthy of such an honor: “Arabs were only able to represent civilization briefly when they temporarily adopted the Hellenic science” (1928T4).



Alphabet reform is viewed by all Turkish texts as a facilitator for Turkey’s efforts to join (Western) civilization. In 1928T3, Yunus Nadi claims that, thanks to the alphabet reform, Turkey will be able to retrieve “the true key of civilization” in less than a year, and thus it will “completely resemble Europe”. Dismissing the Arabic scripts as the main source of Turkey’s backwards for many years, 1928T2 considers the adoption of Latin alphabet as a step towards “high humanity”. 1928T1 emphasizes that civilization is not reserved for a privileged few, but can be understood and embraced by everybody (from intellectuals to shepherds) through a common alphabet. Alphabet revolution will help achieve the mental unity of Turkish nation, and anchor it to civilization, by enabling both lower and upper classes to speak the same language (1928T1) and use their brain (1928T2). 1928T1 urges Turkey to hurry in its reforms since civilization gets rid of the ones who cannot keep up with it.

On the theme of state-citizen relations, the European texts choose to highlight the forceful execution of the alphabet reform through prescribing “severe penalties” to those who oppose the reform (1928E4). 1928F4 depicts it as an arbitrary imposition undermining cultural diversity and questions how “the grand public” can be imposed a uniform script disregarding local dialectical differences. The German texts also focus on the compulsory nature of the alphabet reform and its “hasty and violent” execution under the instructions of the “enlightened dictatorship” (1928G1; 1928G2). However, 1928E4 admits that Ataturk’s “hard-handed” reform is working due to established Turkish culture that gives “the highest admiration and trust” on “the stern ruler”. 1928F2 claims that since 80% of the population still cannot read the new alphabet, they cannot follow and object to governmental decisions. On the other hand, 1928G1 claims that eventually the reform will bring an economic, political, and social change that will eventually overthrow the Ataturk’s “dictatorship”.

3.3. Keriman Halis’ Miss Universe victory (1 August 1932)

Through the initiative of the pro-government “Cumhuriyet” daily, Turkey started to send female contestants to international beauty contests abroad in 1928. The Miss Universe beauty contest in the city of Spa, Belgium on 1 August 1932 resulted in the victory of Keriman Halis, the 19 year old grand daughter of the Sheikh-ul Islam of the last Ottoman Sultan. Her victory was celebrated as a national achievement certifying the Western/European credentials of Turkey as well as the nobility of the Turkish race.

The European texts implicitly point to a single civilization composed of the West/Europe and some consider the case of Keriman Halis as a confirmation of Turkey’s admission to this civilization, on the grounds of status of women and race. 1932E1 considers Halis’ victory more than a success of a Turkish girl in a beauty competition, but “as a symbol of the new freedom which Turkish women have won, and a proof to the world that Turkey has finally shaken off the shackles which kept her so long from taking her place among civilized nations”. Similarly, 1932G2 discusses how, in less than a decade, the status of women in Turkey was elevated from a mere pariah imprisoned at home to an equal citizen with the right to become lawyers, judges, or police officers, and that with Halis’ victory, “the veil is lifted and taken away from the [Turkish] woman forever”. 1932E2 however opposes this view and claims that despite the Republican reforms to modernize the society, the Turkish public still prefers Harem to modern life.



The Turkish texts emphasize that Halis’ victory accelerated Turkey’s civilizational shift towards the West, mainly by undermining established European biases against Turkish women. 1932T1 and 1932T3 note that Europeans continue to associated Turkish women with the Ottoman Harem, and the Republican reforms and the close relations with Europe only made a limited impact in correcting these biases. Halis’ victory is presented as a crucial evidence for the Republican reforms equating Turkish women with European women in terms of rights and liberties (1932T1; 1932T3; 1932T4). The Turkish texts also concur that the photos of Halis symbolizing the modern Turkish woman provided prestige to Turkey on a global scale.

References to race are notably prevalent in both European and Turkish texts. 1932F2 implicitly includes Turkey within the category of “white race” while noting that black and yellow races cannot compete in a miss universe beauty contest. 1932T4 depicts Halis as “an epic poem of the Turkish race”, while 1932T3 claims that the victory of a Turkish woman of great virtue and skill proves “the nobility of the Turkish race”.

3.4. The Twelfth Congress of the International Alliance of Women in Istanbul (18-25 April 1935)

Turkey had officially granted women the right to elect and be elected in the general elections on 5 December 1934, prior to most European states. Shortly after, the Twelfth Congress of the International Alliance of Women was convened in Istanbul between 18-25 April 1935. Marking the first time that a women’s congress was held in Turkey, the event attracted much attention from Europe and was utilized by the Turkish government for prestige. Yet, shortly after the congress, the Turkish government decided to close down the Union of Turkish Women (Arat 1994; Libal 2008).

The international women’s congress in Istanbul triggered intensive debates in Turkish and European media on the status of women in both Turkish and European societies. 1935E1 highlights the rights and liberties acquired by Turkish women in the Republican era comparable to their Western counterparts and therefore believes that it is fitting for women of the world to meet and discuss the problems of 1935 in Istanbul. Similarly, 1935E2 stresses the British representative Lady Astor’s appreciation of Atatürk’s understanding of women’s crucial role in Turkey which led him to grant Turkish women “equality in all natural rights”. 1935E5 stresses that the Republic enabled Turkish women to be “everywhere – banks, engineering shops, post offices, aviation” and even compelled business enterprises to hire a fixed percentage of girls. While all European texts favorably compare the Republic of Turkey to Ottoman Empire on the status of Turkish women, intriguingly, 1935G1 argues that women had already an equal position in the Turkish community before Islam, and concludes that the liberation of the Turkish woman is a return to a situation that had already existed in pre-Islamic times.

Similarly, the European texts highlight Turkey’s rising prestige in international arena thanks to the rapid reforms ensuring the equality of women and men. Turkey is favorably compared to European states. 1935F2 stresses that Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, sent a letter to the congress congratulating Atatürk’s efforts for the emancipation of Turkish women. 1935F3 too implicitly recognizes Turkey’s rising international prestige when it states “no wonder why the



congress is chosen to take place in Turkey, a land where feminism prevails so rapidly”. 1935G1 claims that the Turkish woman has surpassed “not only the French and Swiss, but also the English woman” with regards to the promotion of gender equality. 1935E3 claims that the reforms on women rights enables Turkey to help the East catch up with a declining West.

The Turkish texts also note the rising international prestige of Turkey in comparison to Europe. 1935T2 emphasizes that Turkish women are admired and envied by other women thanks to the rights and liberties granted by the Republic. 1935T3 claims that Turkey is constantly rising through its own initiatives, while such a linear progress is not observed in the rest of the world. 1935T3 also believes that the women congress in Istanbul is a source of prestige for Turkey enabling Turks to better inform foreigners about Turkish progress.

3.5. Montreux International Straits Convention (20 July 1936)

Having won its independence with the Lausanne Treaty (1923), Turkey however could not regain full control over the Straits as their administration was transferred to an international committee under the League of Nations. Threatened by the rising German and Italian revisionism in the 1930s, Turkey applied to the League to reclaim its sovereignty over the Straits. Turkey’s attachment to the diplomatic resolution of the issue was welcomed by European states (Britain, France and the Soviet Union in particular) that supported the Turkish quest.

Regarding “civilization”, some European texts (1936E1, 1936E4, 1936F1, 1936F2) situate Turkey and Europe in different, but co-existing civilizations. The others (1936E2, 1936E3, 1936F3, 1936F4), on the other hand, do not explicitly differentiate between civilizations. 1936E3, for instance, uses the phrase “humanity that calls out for peace”, and praises Turkey’s adoption of peaceful method. The Turkish texts emphasize Turkey’s acquisition of a Western/European status through pro-Western reforms, and show the Montreux Convention as a solid evidence for Turkey’s European credentials. The straits are viewed as “a very significant foothold that ties Turkey to Europe and incorporates the reformist Turkish Republic into the family of European nations” (1936T2). Therefore, regaining its sovereign over the straits would mean that Turkey would become “the new magnificent state of Europe” (1936T1).

Regarding the “status in international society” focal issue, the European texts argue that the straits provides Turkey with security along with economic and political leverage against other states (1936E4). Besides, Turkey’s insistence on the peaceful resolution of the dispute helps Turkey gain the sympathy and friendship of European states and thus sets an example for the resolution of all international disputes (1936E1, 1936F3, 1936F4). Moreover, 1936F3 and 1936E1 implicitly hint the declining status of Europe as it is filled with crisis and conflict. The Turkish texts too emphasize the rising status of Turkey through the Montreux convention. 1936T1 and 1936T2 argue that the resolution of the straits problem in Turkey’s favour contributed to its elevation to a leading actor status in the Near East and the Mediterranean. 1936T2 also highlights that Turkey has proved to be the guardian of peace. 1936T3, on the other hand, explicitly considers Europe as a declining actor due to the rising revisionist powers and the atrocities in the Spanish civil war. On the contrary, 1936T4 indicates that Europe remains a leading actor through its advance culture and science.



3.6. Anschluss (12 March 1938)

“Anschluss” (Union) refers to the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in 12 March 1938. Irredentism through a nationalist and populist agenda to unite with kinsmen constituted the backbone of the aggressive foreign policy of Nazi Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler.

“Nationalism” is the most common focal issue highlighted in the Turkish texts. Acquisition of foreign territories is justified as the unification of brothers and sisters. 1938T2 argues that it is the “century of nationalism”; hence it is quite normal for two German nations to be united. The text deems the unification of Germany and Austria even much more understandable than the incorporation of Alsace-Lorraine to France although its inhabitants are overwhelmingly German. Similarly, 1938T3 considers it reasonable for Germany to not only invade Austria, but also acquire Czechoslovakia where 3.5 million Germans live. 1938T4 asserts that it was a matter of time before the two states, Germany and Austria, sharing the same race, language and culture eventually unite as one.

Nationalism is implicitly depicted as a dividing factor in Europe, as it unites Germans, it also separates them from Europe. 1938T3, for instance, argues that Europe admits the loss of Austria to Germany and it hence concentrates its energy on Czechoslovakia so that it does not share the same fate. Similarly, 1938T4 claims that Anschluss is the evidence of the overgrowth of Germans at the expense of Europe.

Overall, the Turkish representation of Europe is highly critical since it is predicated as “weak”, “divided” and “prone to conflict”. There is a common agreement in the Turkish texts that Europe is in a serious decline facing the threat of “destruction”. Anschluss is represented in the Turkish texts as a crucial indicator of division within Europe where German irredentism severely threatens the European balance of power.

4. Conclusion

The analysis above demonstrates the ways in which mutual identity representations in Turkey and Europe have been contested in history within both settings, across different time periods, and in relation to the different focal issues which arose in the context of key political and cultural drivers. Hence it attests to the fluidity in identity representations on both sides, and underlines the need to be wary of reductionist interpretations which reads the historical relationship between Turkey and Europe as one of strict Othering that denotes exclusion, mainly on cultural and religious grounds.

The first period has shown the prevalence of the four focal issues, yet at varying intensity in different times. For instance, civilization and state-society relations are observed to be key identity markers in both the coverage of the Tanzimat Edict and the Reform Edict. Nonetheless, it is after the Reform Edict that a more differentiated representation of identities over the focal issue of civilization seems to occur. Particularly in the Ottoman context, tensions begin to emerge (and intensifies at times in later periods) between the notion of European civilization and Ottoman traditions. In the case of European identity representations, a much more essentialist and exclusionary reading of European civilization vis-à-vis the Ottomans rises after the Hamidian massacres. This suggests that as political and cultural



relations intensify between the two sides, this can trigger contestations over identity representations through key focal issues, such as civilization. Again, in empirical terms, the analysis finds that status (of Ottoman Empire) in international society emerges as a focal issue after the Reform Edict and the rise of Russia as a common enemy of both sides, and introduces the long-lasting tension in Ottoman Empire (and in later decades, the Turkish Republic) between the emulation of European standards and the threat posed by European intervention to Turkish national sovereignty.

As can be expected, the rise of nationalism as a focal issue is much more pronounced in the second period of analysis, which corresponds with the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the events leading up to the Second World War in Europe. For the Turkish side in this period, there is one civilization that needs to be emulated in its totality, and that is the one of Europe. There is, however, more contestation in the European context where tensions can be observed between the perceptions of Oriental civilization and European civilization. Nonetheless, when it comes to status (of Turkey) in international society, this is clearly a focal issue where positive representations are on the rise in both contexts. The concept of race bridges identity representations towards the end of the 1930s, whereas the rise of nationalism leads for the first time to the negative perception of Europe as a weak and dissolving actor by the Ottoman side.

In conceptual terms, it is apparent that difference, as expected in any process of identity construction, is a constant theme in mutual identity representations across Turkey and Europe. Except for Turkish representations in the second period in which Turkey’s Europeanness is underlined in parallel to the Europeanising/Westernising reforms of Ataturk, both parties denote each other as different to their own Selves. Yet, the both the ‘content’ and the ‘hierarchy’ entailed in this difference can vary enormously across time and space. This is visible in the identity representations evoked in relation to each focal issue in question.

Nationalism, for instance, which emerges as a focal issue only towards the end of the first period of analysis, can be considered as a conceptual lens through which Turkey is seen in Europe as closer to the European Self in the ‘content’ of its identity (‘white race’) and as an equal of Europe in the second period due to the increasing primacy of ‘race’ in defining the concept. In the Ottoman context, however, the rise of nationalism in Europe in the second period leads to increasing negative perceptions of the European Other as weaker and as inferior to the Turkish Self, as demonstrated in the Turkish coverage of the Anschluss. In the Turkish context, although seeking status in international society through relations with Europe seems to be present in both periods, in the first period this seems to be limited to certain actors (i.e. Young Ottomans) and without a claim to Europeanness, unlike in the second period where international status is equated with the recognition of the claim to Europeanness.

The contestation is even more visible when it comes to civilization. Contrary to widespread assumptions, it is observed that civilizational differences has not been systematically employed in history to denote strict Otherings between Turkey and Europe. In early 19th century, Ottomans view civilization as a concept that unites them with Europe, while in Europe, civilization is considered culturally transferrable. Cultural interaction and political alliance between the Ottomans and European powers in mid 19th century lead to the perception in Europe that Ottoman Empire is civilizing if not already civilized.



Cultural events in this period, such as Sultan Abdülaziz’s visit to Europe as well as those in the second period, such as Keriman Halis’ victory in Miss. Universe, even seem to evoke a sense of civilizational closeness in Europe with the Ottoman Empire/Turkey.

Yet, as the identity representations over the focal issue of civilization shows, there is a contestation that takes place within the Ottoman and European contexts where one form of identity representation may not dominate at a given time, even on a specific focal issue. In the Ottoman context, a two-axis tension seems to exist between civilization embodied in European standards and Ottoman traditions, as well as the one between civilization and loss of sovereignty/threat of intervention (triggered by debates on state-citizen relations in developments such as the Cretan insurrection). Both of these axes can lead to representations of Europe as a potential destabilizer to the Ottoman/Turkish Self either on cultural and religious grounds and/or because of political/territorial concerns. Towards the end of the 19th century, atrocities toward non-Muslims trigger perceptions in Europe of Ottomans as barbaric; yet the belief that Ottomans can join civilization (under the right leadership) persists. On the other hand, Ottomans perceive their own behavior as civilized and accuse the Europeans of betraying civilization by defending solely the cause of Christians. Elite conflict continues to fuel contending perspectives on Europe. With the establishment of modern republic of Turkey in 1923, European representations begin to situate Turkey in a distinct civilization, while commending its success in adopting aspects of the Western civilization. The status of women is flagged as a key indicator of Turkey’s advancement in civilization, moving even ahead of Western states. Differences among European states’ attitudes toward the Turkish reform process become more noticeable in the early 20th century. For example, while the French and Germans consider the abolition of the Caliphate and Alphabet reform as great achievement, the British emphasize the costs and question the sustainability of such radical reforms. Turkish sources in this period recognize the Western civilization as the only civilization, and portray the cultural reforms as evidence that Turkey is on its way to quickly join the Western civilization.

In the 19th century, the focal issues of civilization and status in international society are often conflated in Ottoman and European representations. For Ottomans, conforming to standards of civilization ensures a position in the European states system and facilitates cooperation between the Ottomans and various groupings of European states against external (in case of Crimean war) and internal (in case of Cretan insurrection) threats. Hence, identity-based concerns about civilizational belonging and status in international society are tightly interwoven with strategic concerns about security. At times, when Ottoman security is not well served by cooperation with European states, internal debates about the suitability and risks of European civilizational intrusion become paramount. In the early 20th century, security concerns take a back seat and status in international society is valued for its own sake.

During times of cooperation, European states portray the Ottomans as an equal partner and capable of joining European civilization. In the 1930s and 40s, Europe begins to be perceived as losing status in international society both in Europe and in Turkey. This perception promotes positive representations of Turkey in Europe.

In the 19th century, reforms in state-citizen relations (mainly in the context of non-Muslim minorities) in the Ottoman Empire are taken by Europe as an important sign of civilizational progress. Violence



toward minorities, on the other hand, provide occasions for very negative identity representations, reproducing the Muslim/Christian divide. On the Ottoman side, they function as a double-edged sword in terms of representations of Europe. Some part of the Ottoman elite attribute Ottoman decline to poor governance, and represent European state-citizen relations as a model for Ottoman progress. Others present European interventionism on state-citizen relations as a threat to Ottoman integrity and security. The link between Europe and state-citizen relations varies among different factions of the Ottoman elite depending on the identity project they pursue (Ottomanism, nationalism, and Islamism). In the republican era, state-society relations persist in European representations of modern Turkey, in the form of criticisms of the authoritarian and forceful imposition of cultural reforms.

In relating these results to the future, it should be emphasized that there is no linear pattern to identity representations in both the Turkish and European contexts. Hence a linear pattern should also not be expected in future representations of Turkish and European identities. Instead, one could expect a set of identity representations being recycled in response to different cases and situations. Certain positive and negative events can be expected to trigger existing identity representations in novel ways, feeding into a set of future relations which can be identified by conflict, convergence or cooperation. For instance, while Sultan Abdülaziz’s visit to Europe triggered representations leading to convergence and the Reform Edict to cooperation, the Hamidian massacres were a clear case in which a key political driver has fueled identity representations conducive to conflict. The analysis of the third and the fourth periods in the following papers will give us a clearer picture of the sets of identity representations that have and that do still exist between the two sides. Furthermore, it will allow us to observe more closely whether and if so, the extent, to which there has been a convergence or divergence between different European actors concerning the ways in which they represent Turkish/European identities in response to the major political and cultural drivers in the following periods.



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