MASTER THESIS

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"Conflicting Ideologies in South Marmara During the Final Decades of the Ottoman Empire: A Historiographical Evaluation"

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Ischa Versluys

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the ideologies in the Ottoman province of South Marmara between 1890 and 1922 and the kind of effect they had on the disintegration of the Ottoman society. A historiographical approach is adopted in which four works focusing on economic, religious, and political developments in South Marmara are discussed (Gingeras, Doumanis, Erol, and Karpat). This research shows how the Ottoman regime, realizing its military and economic disadvantage in comparison with Europe, becomes determined to modernize the Empire. The proposed overarching ideological concepts to unite the inhabitants of South Marmara, respectively Ottomanism and Islamism, ultimately fail to gain ground in the region. The multi-ethnic communities that had existed for centuries saw the first rifts occur when capitalism favoured Orthodox Christians at the expense of Muslims. To counter the rise of nationalism among the Christians in the region, Islam became politicized, creating further tensions among religious lines. The attempts of the Young Turks regime to create ethnic homogenous regions in the core of the Empire saw the first destruction of the communities. Finally, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek invasion and the counter offensive of Turkish National Movement, forced the inhabitants to seek safety by embracing either one of the sides, irreversibly rejecting regionalism and Ottomanism that had sought to overcome these divides. By researching how the communities in this region dealt with change, patterns have been discerned that can account for the broader events that unfolded during the twilight of the Empire. Moreover, it shows that modernity needs to be rooted in local traditions and customs to become effective as an ideology. The challenges posed by the international system on the Ottoman Empire forced the regime to make rapid modernization efforts, giving rise to counter movements, irreversibly leading to violence.

Abstrakt

Diese Thesis untersucht die Ideologien in der osmanischen Provinz Süd Marmara zwischen 1890 und 1922 und die Effekten, die sie auf den Zerfall der osmanischen Gesellschaft hatten. Es wird ein historiographischer Ansatz gewählt, bei dem vier Werke (Gingeras, Doumanis, Erol und Karpat) besprochen werden, die sich auf die wirtschaftlichen, religiösen und politischen Entwicklungen in Süd Marmara konzentrieren. Die Untersuchung zeigt, wie das osmanische Regime, das seinen militärischen und wirtschaftlichen Nachteil gegenüber Europa erkannte, entschlossen war, das Reich zu modernisieren. Die eingeführten übergreifenden ideologischen Konzepte, die die Bewohner von Süd Marmara vereinen sollten, nämlich Osmanismus und Islamismus, konnten sich in der Region letztlich nicht etablieren. In den seit Jahrhunderten bestehenden multiethnischen Gemeinschaften kam es zu ersten Rissen, als die Introduktion von Kapitalismus in der Osmanische Wirtschaft die orthodoxen Christen auf Kosten der Muslime begünstigte. Um dem aufkommenden Nationalismus der Christen in der Region entgegenzuwirken, wurde der Islam politisiert, was zu weiteren Spannungen zwischen den Religionen führte. Die Versuche des jungtürkischen Regimes, ethnisch homogene Regionen im Kern des Reiches zu bilden, führten zur ersten Zerstörung der Gemeinschaften. Nach dem Zusammenbruch des Osmanischen Reiches, der griechischen Invasion und der Gegenoffensive der türkischen Nationalbewegung waren die Einwohner schließlich gezwungen, sich in Sicherheit zu bringen. Indem sie sich einer der beiden Seiten anschlossen und den Regionalismus und das Osmanismus, die versucht hatten, diese Spaltungen zu überwinden, unwiderruflich ablehnten. Durch die Untersuchung der Art und Weise, wie die osmanische Gesellschaft in dieser speziellen Region mit dem Wandel umging, sollen Tendenzen herausgearbeitet werden, die die allgemeinen Ereignisse während der Dämmerung des Reiches erklären können. Außerdem wird gezeigt, dass die Moderne in den lokalen Traditionen verankert sein muss. Die vom internationalen System an das Osmanische Reich gestellten Probleme erforderten rasche Modernisierungsanstrengungen des Regimes, die Gegenbewegungen hervorriefen und unumkehrbar zu Gewalt und dem Zusammenbruch der osmanischen Gesellschaft in Süd Marmara führten.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

On the 30rd of October 1918 the Ottoman Empire ceded defeat in the First World War. Ever since the allied aerial bombings of the coastal towns accompanied with a naval blockade had ceased in January 1916, the Anatolian region of South Marmara had witnessed relative tranquillity. And while in Flanders the German front retreated, revolution spread in Berlin, Budapest, and Vienna, separatism took root in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and in Sofia Tsar Ferdinand was forced to abdicate, the inhabitants of South Marmara waited in ominous anticipation. The fate of the Ottoman Empire was to be decided at the Paris Peace Conference.

Before the conclusion of any treaty could be agreed upon however, events in the Ottoman Empire had made any European dictation futile. After ceding defeat, the leaders of the ruling party, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) also known as the Young Turks, fled the capital out of fear of prosecution for the treatment of Christian minorities during their decade long rule. Within this power vacuum subjects loyal to the Sultan, Islamists, and Turkish nationalist all vied for power in the capital and the Anatolian heartland. Before any camp could establish power, allied forces occupied the capital and the Straits and Greek forces landed on the shores of South Marmara.

In the following four years the region of South Marmara would see continuous warfare and sectarian violence, ending only by a decisive Greek defeat at the hands of Turkish nationalists. This event can be considered as the finale of a decades long struggle in the province between conflicting ideologies taking root and often violently being suppressed. Against the background of this volatile historical context, the overarching research question of this Master Thesis is as follows: Which ideologies played a major role in the South Marmara between 1890 and 1922 and what kind of effect did they have on the history of the region?

This question will be operationalized by the following three sub-questions:

- What were the modernization reforms imposed on the region and how did they affect the social structures?

- What was the role of religion in this time and how was it politicized?

- How did the region of South Marmara change through political violence?

It will show that Ottomanism, regionalism, and Islamism failed as an ideological framework at the expense of ethnic nationalism because, I argue, of its inherently violent nature. The historiographic research method has been selected because it allows to compare four already existing historical interpretations of the events from a multidisciplinary angle. By lightening the burden of proof in describing these events, more attention can be paid to the broader implications of changing ideologies in these years, for the Ottoman Empire, but also more generally; what did it mean to become 'modern' in these times? As the sub-questions illustrate, this research looks at economic, religious, and political changes in South Marmara.

The Ottoman Empire in general and the region of South Marmara specifically were deeply affected by a wave of globalization in the 19th century characterized by increased interconnectivity and interdependence.[1] The role of the International System and the effects that the capitalistic economic system had on South Marmara are two major themes that will be closely examined in this research, as they are the two major external forces that stirred up unrest and change. These developments made it obvious to most to the inhabitants of the region that transformation as a result of contact with Europe was inevitable.

The communities that were affected by these developments at the beginning of the 19th century consisted of: Orthodox Greeks, Turkish Muslims, Armenians, Albanians, and Caucasian Muslims. The coastal cities were, predominantly, inhabited by Orthodox Greeks, while the agrarian

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[1] C.A. Bayly *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004), Chap.1.

centres and mountainous inlands were mainly populated by Turkish Muslims. Armenians primarily lived in cities and Muslim refugees from the Caucasus inhabited the norther parts of South Marmara.

Changing perceptions of identity, refugees' movements, forced migrations, and warfare would alter the nature of the communities so thoroughly that no comprehensive picture of the communities can be established. The ideologies that would play a key role in all these changes have been identified in this research as (ethnic) nationalism, regionalism, Ottomanism, and traditionalism (consisting of Islamism and loyalty to the Sultan). Apart from the latter category, all the proponents of these ideologies would advocate their conviction as 'modernity'. The clash of the various forms of modernism would define the faith of the Ottoman Empire.

The method selected for an analysis of this clash can be characterised as the key-hole approach: I have chosen for a close scrutinization of South Marmara with the goal of examining the deeper motivations behind the actions taken by the inhabitants of the wider Empire in this time. By researching how the Ottoman society in this particular region dealt with change, it is the aim to discern patterns that can account for the broader events that unfolded during the twilight of the Empire. The underlying motives of the population of South Marmara are therefore assumed to be not unique but are comparable to regions that can be found all around the Ottoman heartland and therefore can help to better understand what happened during the final decades of Ottoman Empire. By studying the changing society at a micro view, the macro story can be explained.

The four books have been selected because they provide an answer to the first part of the research question. From an economic, a religious, and a political angle the works discuss the changes that occurred in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and the effects this had on the inhabitants of South Marmara. By focusing on this particular region, the writers have conducted their research from a bottom-up approach. Just like this research, this method maintains that historical change, more than any other factor, is caused by

societal development, much in the tradition of the Annales School.[2] Another strength of the historiographical approach lies in that fact that is allows for the outlining of the longer development that leads to the violent conclusion in the Empire and shows how the ideologies rise and decline over decades. The disadvantage of this approach is that is necessitates that the inhabitants of South Marmara they are divided into groups. Hence this approach does not allow for deviations or individual reasoning. Be that as it may, the ideologies that are under scrutinization affected groups and communities in their totality. Although there were, beyond doubt, exceptions to the rule, their effect on the broader frame was minimal.

The following four works will be studied:

- Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923– Ryan Gingeras
- Before the Nation: Muslim-Christian Coexistence and its Destruction in Late-Ottoman Anatolia - Nicholas Doumanis
- The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia: Turkey's Belle Époque and the Transition to a Modern Nation State. - Emre Erol
- The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State - Kemal H. Karpat

The book 'Before the Nation: Muslim-Christian Coexistence and its Destruction in Late-Ottoman Anatolia' (2012) by Nicholas Doumanis thereby uses primary sources to highlight the experiences of commoners in this epoch. The Australian associate professor at the UNSW Sydney, hereby looks into the interreligious communities and how the pre-war years are remembered by the people who lived through it.[3] Recording their testimonies with a non-political aim is a relative new phenomenon and is therefore indispensable to

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[2] Fernand Braudel *Out of Italy: Two Centuries of World Domination and Demise* (New York, Europa Compass, 2019), Chap 1.
[3] Nicholas Doumanis *Before the Nation: Muslim-Christian Coexistence and its Destruction in Late-Ottoman Anatolia* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

as mode of comparison with regard to how the theories of the other three authors were experienced by the population they examined.

Of the four works selected, the oldest in the Kemal Karpat's book 'The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State' (2001). The work by the Rumanian born Turkish author, who worked both in the Unites States and Turkiye, deals with the changing nature of religion, particularly Islam in the Ottoman Empire. This work stands out in how it focuses on how the role of religion within society was changed in order to make it compatible with ideologies that originated in western Europe.[4] While the other three works focus specifically on the region of South Marmara or Western Anatolia, this book takes a more general approach and looks at how policies were created by elites in the capital and regional elites and populations responded. Hereby it touches multiple time on the South Marmara region. The sources conducted in this book are primarily secondary sources.

The third book under scrutiny, 'The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia: Turkey's Belle Époque and the Transition to a Modern Nation State' (2016) by Emme Erol examines the collapse of Ottoman Empire at the hand of a case study, namely, the port city Foça at the Aegean Sea. In the very south of the Marmara province, at the hand of the testimonies, urban changes, both primary and secondary sources, Emme Erol, shows how economy played a crucial role in determining the fate of the Empire in its final epoch. Presently working as director of Foundations Development at Sabancı University, the Turkish born Emme Erol shows how class struggle and western ideologies alter power balances in the Empire.[5]

Finally, the book 'Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923' (2009) by Ryan Gingeras focuses on the role of violence within the last decade of the Ottoman Empire. The American professor in the Department of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, argues that more than economic or religious change it

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[4] Kemal Karpat *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).
[5] Emme Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia: Turkey's Belle Époque and the Transition to a Modern Nation State* (London, I.B. Tauris 2016).

was the war and its side effects that ensured the close of the Ottoman Empire.[6] The focus of this book is specifically the region of South Marmara and used both primary and secondary sources to highlight how the region was changed though the violence that ended the communal harmony studied in the three other books.

[6] Ryan Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009).

1.1 The End of the Ottoman Empire as a Historical Question

Ottoman history as a wide-researched subject only commenced in the 1970's and was initially studied through the scope of social and economic history that by then had become a predominant research angle in European academic institutes. Research on the Anatolian rural experience in the years leading up to the First World War and the consequent Turkish War of Independence is still limited, however, for two reasons. Firstly, after the establishment of the Turkish Republic under the leadership of Kemal Atatürk, the history of this period was reinterpreted to strengthen the founding myth of the new republic. Namely, President Atatürk gave a speech in 1927 known as 'Nutuk'. In this discourse, Atatürk outlined the events that had occurred between 1919 and 1923 solely as a struggle for independence; a revolution to thrown off the oppressive yoke of the Ottoman rulers and modernise Turkey as a western oriented nation state. Focus hereby was on the suffering of the Turkish inhabitants at the hands of the Armenians, Greeks, and imperialistic forces.

This narrative, known as 'Kemalist historiography' was canonized and remained the official reading of the events in Turkiye in schools and universities. The rare contradicting voices were either censured or silenced. Western scholars embraced this reading of the events and focused more on the successful modernist reform in Turkey than on the preceding collapsing state of the Ottoman Empire. For Turks, the history preceding the foundation of the republic was a period of defeat, humiliation, and atrocities. For this reason, it made sense to overlook the expulsions and atrocities that had accompanied the death struggle of the Empire.

The Turks were the last of the peoples of the Ottoman Empire to revolt against the sultan. The Turkish relationship with this historical era and the ownership of Ottoman history has been an awkward subject and differed fundamentally from the way, for instance, the Austrians assumed their state the successor of the Habsburg Empire or the Russians claiming the legitimate successor of the Soviet-Union. Quickly after the Ottoman demise, the Empire was associated with backwardness and retraction. Within Turkiye, the

historian Dr Yaqoob Ahmed described the aftermath as a period of 'collective amnesia'. The end of the Empire was a time of chaotic change when the regions of the Empire became an integral part of the globalization wave that accompanied the western expansion of the late 19th century and fundamentally changed the identity of the Ottoman inhabitants. Ever since, it has become obvious that the region and indeed, the identities of the inhabitants of the former provinces of the Empire, cannot be properly understood without comprehending the events of the last decades of the Ottoman Empire.

Traditional works on the history of the Ottoman Empire, in documenting its demise (1909-1921) and the rise of the Turkish nation state (1921-1923), have paid much attention to uncovering the patterns that led to this metamorphosis and, particularly for the former event, underlined them as inevitable. The thesis of decline held that in the early days the Empire was ruled by devout and capable sultans who oversaw the establishment of the Empire from approximately 1300 till 1560. Thereafter, concubines and the harem courts gained more influence and weak sultans were led astray, corruption spread through the Empire, which became apparent around the second siege of Vienna in 1683. Decline set in and irredeemably continued until the ultimate collapse in 1922, despite some attempts of sultans to introduce new western legislations to modernize the Empire. That the Empire had survived for nearly six centuries was attributed to the 'Great Game' between Russia, Great Britain and other great powers, that had 'artificially' kept the Empire intact.

This narrative was placed within the framework of the Modernization Theory. The modernization theory suggested that all political entities ultimately should transform from agricultural kingdoms through a series of developments towards an industrial democracy. This development which was characteristic for the historical evolution of western European states like France and Great Britain. As a consequence, for many scholars and for a major part of the 20th century, the measurement to evaluate the last decades of the Ottoman Empire became the west. Different human histories were reduced to one single narrative of development. People who had followed a

different trajectory than the Europeans were therefore placed within a chronology that was inherently European. Every society or community was placed within this trajectory of development headed by the European societies that symbolized 'moral and intellectual superiority' and were placed within a spectre representing the European past on their way towards 'civilization'.[7] The decline was thus attributed to the fact that the Ottomans failed to westernize properly. This paradigm was repeated by Turkish and Western scholars alike, often citing a few Ottoman sources of the 17th and 18th century who lamented the loss of vitality and burgeoning military expansion that had characterized the first three centuries of Ottoman rule.

With the rise of the field of 'world history' in the 1970's a renewed interest into the Ottoman Empire and its place within the world system surfaced. The focus was not put so much on the Ottomans themselves but more on the global context that resulted in the collapse of Empires in the first half of the 20th century and had transformed the Ottoman economy from a central facilitator for Eurasian trade to a peripheral supplier of raw materials for industrial economies. In addition, the Ottoman sources that had given rise to the paradigm of decline were for the first time discredited as biased and called into question.

Interesting in this regard is the ambivalent attitude of European scholars towards the nature of the Ottoman Empire inasmuch as it was considered European. More than any other 'Oriental' Empire, the Ottomans had played a role in European affairs and were essential in the formation of a Western/European identity in opposition to an Eastern/Oriental one. In addition, in the 15th and 16th century European policy makers had little doubt regarding the superiority of the Ottoman military and economic capabilities vis à vis their own ones. The fact that a significant part of the Sultan's subjects was Christian, and that the Porte controlled a part of the continent gave the Ottoman Empire a unique place within western consciousness. More than other Asiatic Empire they were expected to 'catch-up' with the European Empires.

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[7] Joritsma Jilt *Wat kleeft aan de diepe tijd? Ecologie en kolonialisme* The Dutch Review of Books (2023).

The first two decades of the 21st century, however, have brought forward a new notion that undermined the 'theory of modernity' and the emergence of cultural relativism has demanded an alternative explanation of the events. For example, did the Ottoman Empire in fact decline since its heyday in the 16th century? Decline has been measured in comparison with Western Europe and its undeniable the Ottoman Empire was weaker in 1900 than in 1500 compared to these rivals. Most works on the Ottoman Empire nowadays, however, view decline not in the context of the international struggle for hegemony according to norms set by the western world but rather study the nature of changes within the Ottoman sphere the ability to overcome these challenges.

During the Cold War and particularly during 'the end of history,' the two decades thereafter, was a time in which western values and institutions were praised and considered universal examples. The present, however, has fundamentally changed since the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in February 2022. This event has caused the end of post-war Europe and hailed a new epoch whose nature is as of now undefined.[8] What has become abundantly clear, however, is that the European notions that economic integration will irreversibly lead to peaceful cooperation has been smashed to pieces. Furthermore, the allure of the west, its financial wealth, and robust democratic institutions, have suffered continuous blows in the last two decades. With the retreat from the United States from the Middle East and the European plans to form a 'geopolitical union' and rearm itself, there can be little doubt that we live in a new reality. Turkiye, perhaps, foresaw this better than most and has become increasingly proactive military and diplomatically in the last decade, now claiming a key-role between the west and Russia, Europe, and the Middle East. Hereby, it more confidently promotes Ottoman history as a source of pride and inspiration, rather than a past to be disregarded as has been the case in the early years of the republic.

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[8] Timothy Garton Ash "Ukraine in Our Future" *The New York Review of Books* (2023).

The fault lines between the Ottoman Empire and the modern times seem to become increasingly vague.[9]

This research is conducted in a time in which the historical link between the Ottoman Empire and the state that is considered its predecessor, namely Turkiye, has been increasingly used for legitimising Turkish current policies. For example, Turkiye hosts millions of refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Not coincidently, the Ottoman Empire boasts a history of absorbing millions of (Islamic) refugees, being forced to abandon their places of origin (Crimea/Nogay Tatars, Sephardi Jews, Muslims from the Balkan states, and Circassians). The Anatolian peninsula, despite the ethnic cleansing in the 20th century and the consequent expulsion of the Greek and Armenian communities, is still an ethnically diverse place. The question on how to deal with minorities demanding self-determination within the borders of the Ottoman/Turkish state is still a major political question within Turkiye and the wider region, most prominently with regard to the Kurdish question.

Furthermore, the question to which extend the Ottomans should be considered Europeans has occupied Ottoman scholars since the 17th century and western scholars alike since the 18th century. This debate has continued in remarkable similar lines with regard to Turkiye's place within the European Union. Although Morocco's application for membership to the European Union was denied on the grounds that they were not 'a European country', Turkiye is a candidate member. That there is considerate suspicion among western leaders regarding the true nature of Turkiye's Europeanism is one of the reasons that the membership has been pending for over 20 years. This study will argue that the Ottoman Empire was actually already an integral part of Europe during the study's timeframe.

Moreover, the pan-Ottomanism seems more alive today than at any time since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Turkiye has demanded a more active role within the Middle East and foremost within the territories which formerly belonged to the Ottoman Empire. That Turkiye, seemingly naturally, assumes the role of the regional powerhouse has to do with more

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[9] Ryan Gingeras *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire* (London, Allen Lane, 2022), Chap 1.

than merely its military capabilities. Namely, various Turkish officials feel that this position is Turkiye's right as a predecessor of the once dominant power in the region. This history and attitude, for example, have greatly tainted relations between Turkiye and Egypt and explains why Turkiye sees it as their responsibility to assume a role in the protection of the Palestinian rights. After all, it were the Ottoman sultans that for over 400 years oversaw the protection of Muslims in the Levant. This paper will therefore, ultimately, also comment on the question if the end of the Ottoman Empire was a sudden demise or rather a continuation of trends that had their roots in the decennia and even ages before the collapse and were accelerated by the violence of the Balkan wars and the First World War.

Finally, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, two things have changed dramatically. The first is the resurrection of religion as a powerful political force (Middle East, Turkiye, India, Central Asia) that has led to a revaluation of these historical roots and their resilience vis-à-vis nationalism. Secondly, it has become more and more apparent though the rise of both non-state actors (faction in Myanmar, Kurdish factions, ISIS, the Houthi movement, Tigray) and multinational organizations (the EU, African Union, WTO, UN) that the world can be neatly divided into ethnical nation states has proven to be a deception that went beyond the complexities of the societies that formed the Ottoman Empire. The aim of this research is to take a closer look at southern Marmara in the time when these assumptions of a new world order and epoch materialized and why they were/are considered to be self-evident.

Despite these numerous examples of how the Ottoman Empire still plays a vivid role in the minds of the inhabitants of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, research has been slow to acknowledge the importance of the Empire because of its decline in the last centuries of its life span. The Ottoman state, society and economy were in a process of continuous transformation. Change was the norm rather than the exception. Why then, did the Empire collapse despite the fact that it successfully had managed to overcome so many different challenges and was able to facilitate constant change? This thesis suggests the following explanation: Every coherent

political entity is created with the aim of overcoming certain challenges characteristic of its time. Thereafter, power is consolidated by a certain group anchoring their power by creating certain structures, both physical and mental. As a result, they benefit from the continuation of the status quo or marginal changes that allow these structures to survive in order to maintain their position of power. For change will irreversibly bring about new structures and different propagandists benefitting from the change of structure. Every vested authority therefore needs to balance between progressiveness and conservatism to ensure survival. This research will illustrate how the changes engulfing the Ottoman Empire forced the inhabitants of South Marmara to embrace progressive ideologies to protect their way of living and how this paradox unravelled the communal coexistence.

1.2   What happened in South Marmara between 1890 and 1922

For centuries the region of South Marmara was a province at the centre of the Ottoman Empire, inhabited, amongst others, by Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Turks. Bordering the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean it boasted multiple ports such as Çanakkale and Izmit and agricultural centres such as Bursa and Balıkesir surrounded by mountains and hills that dominate the inland. Its proximity to the capital at the heart of the Empire secured its shielded against foreign invasions and violence throughout most of the Empire's history. How it was that this region would be an epicentre of a violent struggle for, first, the continuation of the Empire, and later what kind of state would succeed the sultan's authority in these lands is the subject of this research.

Ostensibly, these years saw the divided peoples of the multinational Ottoman Empire take up arms against one another, as both the Turkish and Greek state claimed the region, and after a war, the inhabitants returned or remained in their respective homelands. That there is more to the story becomes clear upon a closer look at the motivation and events on the ground. Personal accounts betray a painful search for identity as the sultan's power and appeal weakened in the face of violence reaching near apocalyptic dimensions. Consequently, the stakes on which survival demanded, allowed for little nuance. Within South Marmara it was not only the Ottoman state that lost power and was dismantled in these years, but these years saw the destruction of cultures and communities.

This thesis will focus on the years 1890 to 1923 in South Marmara. This epoch was one of great political turmoil worldwide but above all within the Ottoman Empire. Namely, it covers the reign of the two last Sultans who were able to change the course of the Empire, the Balkan Wars, the First World War, the end of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish War of Independence, and the foundation of the Turkish Republic. This timeframe has been selected because it covers a transitional period in which rapid political, economic, and religious changes were aggravated by conflict and as a result, forced the people affected to act in order to face these upheavals.

Furthermore, this period is considered to be one of great transformation before the consolidation of new orders that continue till our time.

The value of this research lies in the fact that it questions the traditional interpretation of the collapse of the Empire focused on both the role of the major cities and the birds eye view that explains the major events, albeit, without going into detail about how these events came about in the countryside. This research aims to help filling this research-gap so that a more complete picture of the Empire in its final years will come about by means of a bottom-up approach. Hereby, the region of South Marmara has been selected as the keyhole. This region was part of the Ottoman heartland and therefore considered by the Ottoman authorities and its supporters as indispensable for both economic and cultural reasons. Further, the Turkish Muslims of this heartland viewed themselves more than any other ethnic group as the legitimate rulers of the Empire and its successor state. This conviction greatly defined how they interacted with minorities in the Empire and what kind of solution they propagated to alter the ultimate demise of the Empire.
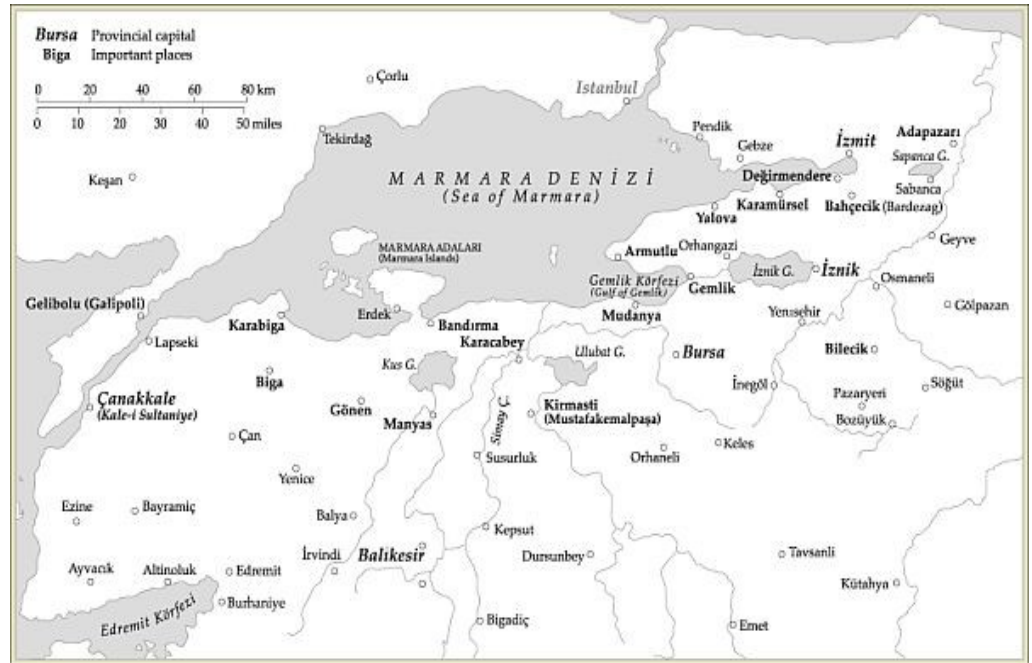

Figure 1: South Marmara Region[10]

[10] Ryan Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), Chap. 1.

By looking at a rural region in the Ottoman heartland the research question: What were the societal changes in the region of South-Eastern Marmara in the Ottoman Empire between 1890 and 1923 can be answered by answering three sub-questions. The sub questions are based upon the content of the four works who have identified three major themes that fundamentally impacted the rural society: modernization, religion, and violence. Therefore, the following sub questions will be researched:

- What were the modernization reforms imposed on the region and how did they affect the social structures?

- What was the role of religion in this time and how was it politicized?

- How did the region of South Marmara change through political violence?

Each of these sub questions will be answered by first outlining the general changes in the Empire to highlight the context in which they took place. This will be done by consulting the literature of the four authors discussed above but will also include additional sources. Thereafter, the effects on the region of South Marmara will be discussed and the four authors' interpretation of the events will be outlined, with regard to the region. Hereby a contrasting image will come forward since the authors highlight different events as crucial and disagree with one another regarding starting points, effects, and results. At the end of each chapter, a summary will be provided in which the importance of the events as concluded by the researcher will be provided, which will serve as a point of departure for interpretating the events discussed in the next chapter. With the obtained findings of the three chapters, the research questions can be answered. As stated above, the research question, by looking at a keyhole, will also shed light on the macro story of the end of the Ottoman Empire and the societal changes that were brought about by the collapse.

1.3   The Concept of Modernity

Westernization in the Ottoman Empire took up pace during the Tanzimat reforms when the elite actively tried to imitate Europe. The Tanzimat reforms were not limited to administrative changes but echoed through all layers of society, including architecture, design, and diplomatic ceremonies. It was decided by the sultan Mahmet II to abandon the old inner city and palace (Topkapi) for a new palace at the waterfront of the Bosporus in the 'European' neighbourhoods of Galata and Pera, the new heart of commercialization and capitalism.[11] Built between 1849 and 1856, the Dolmabahçe Palace was the biggest palace in the Empire and its interior was adorned with gold, bohemian and Baccarat crystal chandeliers, and precious stones such as marmara marble, alabster, and porphory.

Figure 2: Dolmabaçe Palace, Istanbul, View from the Bosphorus[12]

Its exterior features (European) Baroque and Neo-Classism styles while the overall ground plan remained true to more classical Ottoman palace structure with strict separated sections for the male-female divide. The

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[11] Çağla Caner & Pelin Yoncacı (*Re)reading the Grand Ceremonial Hall in the Dolmabahçe Palace* (Ankara, Technical University Ankara, 2008).
[12] I Yücel et. al, Dolmabahçe Sarayi TBMM Milli Saraylar Daire Baskanligi Yanin No: 28 (Department of National Palaces Publication No: 28), Isctanbul 2005.

exterior consists of a neo-classical two-wing arrangement from an avant-corps that combines baroque ornaments with renaissance horizontal lines to stress floors and double height columns.[13] The palace's purpose was to make visible the adaptation of European culture by the sultan and show that the Empire had a place within the European concert of nations. The lavish costs of the palace amounted to approximately a quarter of the yearly tax income of the Empire.

The construction of Dolmabaçe palace illustrates how the sultan and his entourage tried to convince themselves, their subjects, and the outside world of their 'Europeanness'. However, innovation means incorporating influences from others based upon local traditions and thereby creating something new, or even something 'self'. By merely imitating European culture they inherently degenerated themselves to a secondary position. The incorporation of European inspired reforms and the introduction of European ideologies changed the identity of the Ottoman inhabitants beyond recognition and maybe even beyond repair. The fact that these ideas spread so efficiently had to do with the fact that they were considered to be modern, which was essential.

Almost no term is featured so much in readings on the late Ottoman Empire as the term 'modern' or 'modernization'. In one of books discussed, The Politicization of Islam: Reconstruction Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State by Kemal H. Karpat, the term 'modern' is used 416 times, however, without clearly be defined once. This has to do with the complexity of the term, meaning different things for different people determined by the time and culture that they live. In its most abstract form modernity means having the ability to cope with the changes. Because everything changes constantly, the state or entity that can cope with these changes the best, has an advantage and is by other considered 'ahead' or 'modern'. For the Ottoman elite and bureaucracy in the 19th century (and for the Europeans commenting on the Empire), the term modern was a synonym for the term European. The western European states were considered superior

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[13] Çelik Zeynep *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), 131.

in terms of defence, technology, and statecraft. With modernizing the state was thus meant possessing a centralized bureaucracy that actively shaped the life of its citizens and was guided by the principles of (enlightened) rationality and technocratic expertise.[14] This interpretation of the word 'modern' shall be upheld in this research.

An integral part of the concept of 'modernity' was the notion 'nationalism'. The story of South Marmara in the time frame discussed provides insight into the various ways in which nationalism developed and puts present scholarly research to the test. Throughout the study of the origins of nationalism, four theories have received widespread recognition. The idea of a naturalistic interpretation held that nationalism organically developed as a natural result of historical events of people claiming nationhood and demanding statehood as a logical result. This was initially concluded from historical research on old patriotic sentiments depriving from religious or linguistic homogeneity like in regions such as England, France, North-Vietnam, Sri-Lanka, and Japan.[15]

Ernest Gellner argued that nationalism originated as a natural result from industrialization and urbanization. Vying for jobs or privileges within crowded cities faced with inequality, nationalism would naturally follow as people would unite in groups to demand rights and privileges for themselves. It was thus part of a growing sense of individualisation and isolation. This theory was part of the modernization theory, originating in Europe, industrialization and nationalism would spread east and south as other societies would experience the same steps the Europeans had already lived.[16]

Another theory was put forward by Eric Hobsbawm who stated that nationalism followed states, not the other way around. It was states that actively created nationalism through centralization by political elites. It was further strengthened through education and defined the duties of the citizens.

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[14] Fatma Müge Göçek, "Civilization," Ottoman Intellectuals, and Western Ideas: Polarization Within the Bourgeoisie" *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 117–137.
[15] Bayly *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914*, 68-69.
[16] Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983).

It was argued that this had developed to counter the popular appeal of political activism, socialism, and fear of crime.[17]

Finally, the concept of 'imagined communities' as suggested by Benedict Anderson constitutes the fourth theory. The feeling of a shared past, traditions, and future was spread though literature or 'print capitalism'. The books and papers present a feeling of belonging to the readers and explains why people in regions not yet capitalistic experienced nationalism. This theory has been particularly popular in African and Asian counties since it corresponds more with their respective history.[18]

Overall, this research will show that nationalism in the heartland of the Ottoman Empire (including South Marmara) was instigated by the state rather than ebing a political manifestation of the peasantry (that constituted 80 percent of the inhabitants of these regions). Identity remained for the biggest part of the population, until the very end of the Empire and beyond, centred to what it traditionally had been for centuries, the village of origin, loyalty to the sultan, and most of all religion.[19] As a Greek activist came to realize upon arrival in Ottoman Macedonia around the turn of the twentieth century: "*Whenever I asked them if they were – Greeks or Bulgarians, they stared at me uncomprehendingly. Asking each other what those words meant, crossing themselves, they would answer naively: 'Well, we're Christians, what do you mean Greek or Bulgarian?*"[20]

Chapter two will investigate how economic change laid the foundation for a changing power balance within South Marmara. The introduction of a capitalistic market system in the coastal communities allowed for the Christian population to gain wealth, status, and a new communal consciousness at the cost of their Muslim counterparts. This change prompted the Sublime Porte into action to create a new bureau bureaucracy to establish

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[17] E. J. Hobsbawm *Nations and Nationalism since 1970* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[18] Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and the Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 1991).

[19] Mark Mazower *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), 51.

[20] J.D. Bell *Peasants in Power: Alexander Stamboliski and the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union 1899-1923* (Princeton, UP, 1977), 4.

firmer control over the Empire and led to far reaching reforms to centralize and modernize the Empire on pace with western developments, known as the Tanzimat reforms. Finally, this chapter looks at how these classes interacted and competed in South Marmara shortly before they would meet vigorous imperial opposition.

Chapter three looks at the sultan Abdüllah II and his attempt to counter nationalism by politicising Islam. The struggle between the Sublime Porte, the western oriented bureaucracy, the demands of the Christian population for equal rights, and continuous warfare at the borders of the Empire is highlighted. Furthermore, it describes how the western oriented bureaucracy ended the rule of the sultan and, faced with continuous military defeat, started to propagate the concept of an ethic homogenous state to mobilize the Muslims of the Ottoman heartland to fight for their 'homeland'. The policies to create this homogenous state and the effects on the region of South Marmara in terms of communal breakdown are brought forward.

Chapter four looks at the effects of the Balkan Wars on the morale of the leadership and the consequences of the influx of refugees on South Marmara. In the province, sectarian violence, anarchy, ethnic cleansing and invasion occur simultaneously during the First World War and the consequent Greek conquest of Anatolia. It illustrates how the Turkish national movement violently unites all Muslims who adhere to other concepts of identity and unties them to withstand Greek imperialism and ethnic cleansing. This chapter shows how violence transforms and radicalizes the population to the degree that the most extreme measures on both sides seem the only reasonable answer. It concludes the story of the transformation of South Marmara from a multi-ethnic Ottoman province to a homogenous Turkish municipality.

In the conclusion, chapter five, the economic, religious, and (violent) political events will be summarized to draw the conclusion that it was not angst of being not modern that plagued the policy makers in the capital but angst for violence and loss of their homes that drove the inhabitants of South Marmara to embrace new concepts such as ethnicity that destroyed the communities of the region. Moreover, it will become clear that it was not an internal disfunction within the Empire but forced economic reforms and

continuous warfare that led to the Empire's demise. Its major fallacy was its inability to repulse European (economic) imperialism and find an ideological alternative for (ethnic) nationalism that accompanied western expansion. Not all authors discussed in this historiography agree with this conclusion, and the last part of the conclusion explains why their historical interpretations give different causes to what the fundamental ideological changes in the region of South Marmara were between 1890 and 1922.

Chapter 2. Economy and Modernization

This chapter highlights the inextricable connection between identity and economy in the Ottoman Empire. The changing financial situation and opportunities undermined the traditional social fabric of the society and caused communal friction. All four authors agree that the 19th century was a period of economic change in which the Ottoman economy got incorporated into the capitalistic global system which profoundly altered the economic structures that had sustained the Ottoman elite until then. Moreover, the authors agree that this new economic wealth gave birth to a middle class that would vie with the traditional Ottoman authorities for power. The four authors disagree, however, till which extend this change was the root of the demise of the Empire.[21] Be that as it may, none of the authors contends that this period marks the end of the ancien régime and the beginning of modernity in the Ottoman lands.

In this chapter, firstly, the political situation of the Empire at the turn of the 19th century will be discussed to present the background against which central and provisional policy makers made their decisions and how the western world came to yield the influence that they exercised over the Empire in this epoch. Secondly, the Tanzimat reforms will be outlined and the influence on the southern Marmara regions will be highlighted by comparing the conclusion of the four authors in this regard. Thirdly, the new rise of a new political class and the intercommunal relations as result of the changed economic and political reality will be considered. Lastly, the three topics discussed will be placed within one timeframe to illustrate how profound the changes that had occurred within the Empire were and what the implications thereof would be for the rule of the last sultan and the Young Turks in the built-up to the First World War.

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[21] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 1.

2.1 Capitalism at the Coast

The vested regime in Istanbul, throughout Ottoman history, tried to monitor pre-capitalistic port cities that were characteristic of the clear division of labour the authorities sought to enforce. These cities all had a history of being trade hubs ever since antiquity. What kind of trade and for which purpose, however, had changed over time. Within the Ottoman Empire, most of these cities served as hubs from where products from the hinterland for the demand of the capital or other urban centres were being transported. For the smaller port cities, like Foçateyn who exported alum from its mines, the price was fixed, and the domestic market consumed all its supply. This was called the provision system (iaşe system). Because the domestic market automatically took precedence this meant that international trade, for which the sultan needed to grant permission, declined significantly for most ports.[22] The growing demand of the cities and the increasing agricultural output over the course of the Empire's history ensured commercial activity and overall trade cities, particularly after the 16th century, flourished. Further, producers actively looked for ways to avoid the command economy and by driving up prices to increase their profit. Ways to do this were hiding stocks until limited supply drove up prices, through smuggle, selling goods in western markets, and piracy.[23]

The wars of the late 18th and early 19th century, such as the Seven Years War (1754-63), the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), and the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15) saw a global decrease of trade that relapsed in the aftermath and would start to deeply change the Ottoman economic system.[24] Furthermore, the western European states in the large religious warfare of the 17th century had seen an intermingling of war, finance, and innovation. In upholding first the amphioxus war fleets and afterwards permanent fleets to guard Caribbean possessions during the lucrative slave

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[22] Emme Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia: Turkey's Belle Époque and the Transition to a Modern Nation State* (London, I.B. Tauris 2016), Chap. 1.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Anar Muradov "Ottoman Trade Relations in the 19th Century" *Academic Review of Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol. 1 No. 3 (2018): 120-129.

trade, demanded a system for continuously maintaining and supplying navies. Within the fierce competition, all states directly affected started to compete and innovate. The Ottoman Empire, however, was able to assemble a huge fleet but did not develop an economic system for maintaining them at sea and navel technology started to fall behind in comparison from approximately 1700. As an Ottoman historian put it, the Ottoman Empire boosted a superb navy in the 18th century but equipped for winning 17th century navel battles.[25] This technological disadvantage would later hinder the ability of Istanbul to regulate the advancement of capitalism in the Empire on its own terms.

The Ottoman Empire viewed itself as the most powerful Empire in the wider region and acted accordingly. Trade was allowed (capitulations) with friendly nations. Because this was considered a sign of power, they did not seek reciprocal privileges. The European powers, on the other hand, particularly the Anglo-Saxons, had come to see free trade not only as an economic benefit but as an article of faith. Regimes that opposed this policy were regarded as backward and economically inefficient. For the Ottomans the ultimate economic system was one in which there was moderate commerce based on needs outlined regulations.[26] For the British and in their wake other European powers, throughout the 19th century they became increasingly depended on foreign acquisition of raw materials and food. Tariffs, especially under the rule of Lord Palmerston, were to be opposed with all means possible, including the use of arms.[27] For the Ottoman Empire this meant a constant pressure from Western power to open the Ottoman markets.

Because the presence of western merchants in this time was limited, Greek Orthodox merchants capitalized on their already exciting links with western ports, and cultural association, and were able to profit from the new influx of goods and capital. These new capitalistic agencies in the Empire were found almost exclusively in the coastal urban areas. It was essential for these actors to be able to connect with both the European trade links as well

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[25] After: C.A. Bayly *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 61.
[26] Karen Barkey *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 197–225.
[27] Bayly *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914*, 135.

with the Muslim hinterland where most of the product originated. It was primarily non-Muslims who possessed this two-way connectiveness.[28] Furthermore, there was no Ottoman class that had previously obtained a degree of autonomy and wealth. While in London, Vienna, and Paris in this time the bourgeoisie attained ever greater power, the Sublime Porte upheld a policy of discouraging the formation of a rich upper class. Class as it is presently understood in Europe, did not exist in the Ottoman society. Those in the position to influence policies in the Empire, were a selected elite integrated into the political structure. Outside this political structure, notwithstanding economic wealth, it remained impossible to overshadow officials with regard to political and economic affairs.[29] Furthermore, Sultans burdened the richest commercial families of the Empire with state contracts that impoverished them. The right to private property remained elusive until the very end of the Empire.[30]

Various agreements with western powers from the 18th century onwards compromised the iaşe system. Milestones in the opening of the Ottoman economy were two treaties signed with England in 1838 (Ottoman Tariff Convention) and 1861. These treaties abolished many restrictions between Ottoman provinces, that had previously prohibited the transportation of agricultural products without governmental approval. Additionally, tariffs were reduced and the number of people working in the agrarian sector increased. The removal of restriction between provinces also gave a boost to commercial activity like it did in the German and Austrian lands where the same regulations were lifted in the same decades.[31] The fixed prices of the old system could not compete with the European prices that were more competitive. This caused further disruption of the iaşe system. To add to that, the 19th century saw technological improvements in sea travel and firmer control over tradelines by western powers. Their economies also increasingly demanded more raw materials. As a result, the Ottoman trade and export after

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[28] Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and Islam* (London, I.B. Tauris 2011), 36–7.
[29] Serif A. Mardin "Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 2, No. 3 (1971): 197-211.
[30] Bayly *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914*, 61.
[31] Ibid.

the conclusion of the trade agreements with the west exceeded general global trends and the port towns witnessed dramatic growth. They became enclaves with limited governmental control and outward looking. As the same time, they remained intimately connected with land trade routes to other cities of the Empire and were by no means isolated.[32] The growth of cities like these could also benefit the hinterland. The growth of Izmir, for example, had positive effects for regional towns Bursa and Ankara since these towns provided silk and mohair yarn respectively, that benefited from the increased demand.[33]

Western investment concentrated on urban manufacturing and real estate in the cities. It failed to reach the hinterland and remained primarily concentrated to the coastal communities. The predicament for the Ottoman authorities was that it required western credit to afford the numerous wars waged at its frontiers and its modernization efforts to remain at pace with the European powers. In this pursuit, it had no other option then to reluctantly allow economic concessions that, paradoxically, further estranged the regions it tried to more rigorously control.[34] On the long term, the efforts to reorganize the administration of the Empire to raise more tax income and have a closer control on import and export yielded insufficient result to finance the conflicts of the 19th century. Although the Ottoman authorities refrained from borrowing huge quantities of money, this policy was defenestrated during the Crimea War (1853-56). Every or every other year a new state loan was granted. The financial crisis of 1873 combined with poor harvest and economic mismanagement, forced the authorities to suspend external payment in 1875 and declare bankruptcy in October the same year.[35] Between 1854 and 1914 the Ottomans state would loan approximately an amount of 370 million pounds.[36]

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[32] Caglar Keyder & Eyüp Özveren *Port-Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, 1800-1914* (New York, Binghamton University, 1993), 530.
[33] Erol *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 43.
[34] Erol *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 43.
[35] D. Stolz "Impossible to provide an accurate estimate': The interested calculation of the Ottoman public debt, 1875–1881" *The British Journal for the History of Science* (2022): 477-493.
[36] Gingeras *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire*, 27.

Approximately 30 percent of all European wealth was invested overseas in the second half of the 19th century. The Ottoman Empire was the largest borrower of all non-European states. Although Latin-American countries had similar trajectories with becoming dependent on European loans and finding themselves unable to repay them, the Ottoman case stands out by the magnitude of the dept. The precise sum is still a matter of debate and impossible to exactly define.[37] The financial bankruptcy of the Empire becomes clear when considering the predicament for the Sublime Porte during the World Chicago Fair in 1893. Here, all nations and Empires were invited to present themselves to the entire world. To improve its reputation among the great powers with news circulating of massacres of Armenians in the Anatolian highlands, the authorities decided to jump on this opportunity to improve relations. The construction of a pavilion was decided upon, however, the coast of upkeep quickly exceeded the budget and Ottoman representatives pleaded to Istanbul for more money: *The Fair is an event at which all civilized nations of the world are represented, and even obscure states such as the kingdom of Jahore from the Malaca peninsula, and some small central American republics whose very names are unknown, (were making) great sacrifices to show themselves. It would be unthinkable for the Sublime (Ottoman) state not to do the same…"[38]* Additional money, however, would not be forthcoming.

The 19th century saw the traditional Ottoman economic system being undermined by western trade that increased throughout the entire century. Particularly after the Crimea War, it was not only in terms of trade but particularly in terms of finance that the Ottoman state became dependent on western borrowers and western goodwill to finance their reforms and the numerous conflicts (by the year 1900 the Ottoman Empire had not known a decade without conflict in the last century[39]). The Ottoman state lost most of its sovereignty in the port cities where western compagnies and Ottoman traders operated with a remarkable degree of freedom. The Ottoman

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Selim Deringil *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimization of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 160.
[39] Gingeras *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire*, Chap 1.

authorities even suggested expanding the port of Haifa to create a "*purely Ottoman port*" in the Empire, which would be run by Muslims and which they could more effectively control.[40]

The Ottoman authorities were unable to counter this trend because of their dependency on western financial and military aid. For this reason, often the (forced) adoption of the western economic system, making the Ottoman state utterly depended on the west, accounted according to some scholars to economic colonization.[41] There are some signs that point in that direction indeed. The Debt Administration Office that was created during the Treaty of Berlin to ensure that western private borrowers would get back their investment after Ottoman bankruptcy, for instance. It operated semi-independent and was run by Europeans although it employed mostly Muslims.[42] It enforced further free trade and undermined Ottoman control over import and export. On the other hand, foreign investment, specialization, and know-how were part of this process.

In the end, the question of how bad the incorporation of the Ottoman economy into the capitalistic system was for the Ottoman state, depends on which group and place in the Ottoman Empire you regard. For Kerpat, it was an overall negative process although inevitable since the Ottoman Empire was unable to resist western pressure during the height of the age of imperialism.[43] Authors as Emre Erol and Nicholas are more positive and highlight the economic growth in the coastal areas and the prosperity that brought to certain communities.[44] The question to what degree the economic integration amounted to economic colonization is beyond the scope of this research. Essential however, is the fact that the new economic reality fundamentally altered the power balance within the Empire. As a contemporary of the 1875 Bosnian revolt remarked on the new tax-farming systems and mal-treatment

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[40] May Seikaly "Haifa at the Crossroad: An Outpost of the New World Order" *Modernity and Culture: From Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002): 102.
[41] D.C.M. Platt Finance, Trade and Politics in British Foreign Policy 1815-1914 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968).
[42] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* 177.
[43] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.
[44] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, Chap 1.

of new administrators, politics played only a secondary role: "*It is mainly an agrarian war… In its origin Agrarian rather than Political*".[45] This allowed for new classes to rise and transform their economic prosperity into political power.

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[45] A.J. Evans *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina on Foot* (London, 1877), 334-36.

2.2   Two New Classes

The introduction of capitalism into the Ottoman economy gave rise to a new middle class as it saw the manifestation of two types of merchant groups: one that benefited from trade with Europe and the wider world and the other group that continued buying goods at fixed prices for shipment to the capital. The former became more estranged from the state, while the latter more dependent.[46] The latter group would play a key role in the modernization of Islamic societies as well as accelerate the involvement of the community in politics. Private land ownership was crucial in enabling this class to rise. The transferring of land towards private individuals greatly reduced the ability of the state to leverage communities on the countryside. European economic influence further provided the beneficiaries of these policies with a political-economic foundation to promote a more 'modern' version of Islam and society.[47]

Until the mid-19th century, the Ottoman state possessed much of the land it ruled. This was being controlled by an institutionalized bureaucracy that could yield this power to increase revenue and, till a degree, control the Ottoman economy. The traditional system functioned with tax collectors in government service who took a share of the profit for the state and their own salary. However, when the need for more revenue increased, the government allowed for less bureaucratic control in order to stimulate individual involvement. Farmable land was increasingly auctioned to local notables together with the right to collect taxes. This greatly increased the power of these notables, specifically, when trade with Europe increased profit in a way with which the predetermined price system of the Ottoman economy could not compete with. These enriched notables became a new class that began to fight the old bureaucracy for more power and gave ground to the ideologies of Islamism and nationalism for Muslims in the Empire. While in general the

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[46] Barkey *Empire of Difference,* 197–225.
[47] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, 96.

Greeks and Armenians primarily profited from commerce, Muslims became an agrarian middle class.[48]

Immigration from regions occupied like Crimea and the Caucasus by Russia increased heavily in the years between 1856-78 and added another cultural and social change to the Ottoman economy. The refugees from the Caucasus, escaping the Russian onslaught, were granted land as private property and contributed to the bourgeoning agricultural sector. Non-Muslims and foreigners were officially allowed to own land from 1867 onwards, however, opposition from local bureaucracy and gentry greatly discouraged this. Although the class that possessed the land did not consist entirely of Muslims, multiple exceptions can be found, this was the overall trend in the Empire.[49]

The second characteristic of the new Muslim dominated middle-class was their attitude towards Islam. The European occupation of former Ottoman lands inhabited by Muslims in North Africa and the Balkans during the course of the 19th century destroyed the old elite that had provided religious and judicial ruling, by help of the ulema (scholars that interpreted religious law), based on an 'Islamic' societal order. The communities thereafter were thus deprived of the protection and spiritual guidance of the state that had previously outlines norms and values. Communities had thus to fall back on their own human and spiritual recourses to reposition their religion under the authority of a foreign occupation, adhering to a different faith. This resulted in the community itself becoming the source of mobilization causing the old Islamic order to compete with the new class for influence in these communities. The two points of friction were religion and possession of the land.[50]

This trend spilled over to the remaining provinces of the Empire. Being the guardian of the Islamic holy sites allowed the sultan to make reforms and modernize while still maintaining seemingly true to the Islamic nature of the state. In essence, however, the reforms transformed the Empire

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[48] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, 96.
[49] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 1.
[50] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap. 4.

from an Islamic state towards a western inspired bureaucracy. The idea of modernization of 'catching up with the civilized nations' became the primarily ideology for this new class.[51] There was, however, no consensus what modernization precisely and the Muslim middle class consisted of traditionalist, conservatists, and modernists. This middle class differed from the bureaucratic modernizers in the capital in the way they viewed the centre of power within the newly envisaged state. While the latter wanted to centralize power further, the former preferred more decentralization in order to uphold their local power base.[52]

Pragmatism was and remained the hallmark of the Ottoman ruling class regardless of what ideology they upheld privately or in opposition. While the Ottoman state continued in name, its essence through the modernization reforms and the distantiation of its Islamic nature, had profound impact on the Empire in terms of socioeconomic change and religious movements. This new class mobilized around national - meaning Islamic – ideas and legitimized its modernization efforts without contradicting the religious history and nature of the Empire. This laid the foundation for the rapid westernization that followed the collapse of the Empire.[53]

The second new class was the merchant class, dominated by Orthodox Greeks. They filled the space between the market and the state. They were not state affiliated nor proponents of western imperialism. Instead, they embodied a spirit labelled by Cen Emrence as "rooted cosmopolitans".[54] They aligned themselves in South Marmara with the reforms that were announced in the capital and dominated local politics through charities and participation in local councils. This in turn, created a civil society focused on free trade and urban autonomy. Despite the rise of communal violence in the hinterland and

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[51] Erik J. Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), Chap. 2.
[52] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, Chap. 4.
[53] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, Chap. 4.
[54] Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and Islam* (London, I.B. Tauris 2011) 42.

class conflict in the ports, this middle class established a dominant position along the coastline of South Marmara.[55]

The capitations won by the European states through gunboat diplomacy and negotiations had included certain provisions that increased the disbalance between religious classes. These capitulations stipulated that in distinctive areas of cities, European expatriate citizens were allowed to reside and trade under different legal codes and trade regimes. These benefits could also be conveyed to Armenians or Greek Orthodox Ottoman citizens. This put their Muslim competitors at a direct financial and cultural disadvantage. Moreover, the Ottoman state, desperate to maintain a certain degree of control, was more concerned with restricting independent entrepreneurship than encouraging economic initiatives.[56]

In south Maramara these effects became directly visible. Greeks and Armenians were able to use the inflow of capital and the onset of machined production to increase silk production. This became such a profitable business that cities like Gemlik, Bursa, and Adapazari changed into centres of production. Christian owners and merchants quickly became enriched, which provided the framework for the foundation of professions like teachers, lawyers, and intellectuals. For example, in the booming port of Eski Foça in 1860, despite the presence of Jews, Muslims, Europeans, and Armenians nearly all trade was conducted by the Orthodox Greeks. In the new factories that accompanied the economic transition primarily Armenians and Muslims were employed becoming an urban middle class. However, Christians in the areas around Izmit and Bursa worked on tobacco fields or for the production of timber. At the coasts, in cities like Çanakkale and Erdek it remained primarily Greeks who operated as ferry and fisherman.[57]

In south Marmara, the rise of socialism and activism could be distinguished for the first time in the latter half of the century but seemed only rarely to unite workers of different religious groups. Nationalism in the form of Greek, Armenian, or Ottoman became the prominent ideology of

[55] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 97.
[56] Bayly *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914,* 178.
[57] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 1.

affiliation.[58] This was further aided by the influx of western agents in the form of merchants and missionaries. The latter established 140 churches in South Marmara from 1860 to 1910 and provided schools and education for thousands of pupils. Particularly the Armenians in the region were eager to engage and sent their children to these institutions. Greeks were more reluctant as they were closer attached to the strong presence of the Orthodox church. Only some wealthy Muslims sent their children to missionary schools or accepted help at missionary hospitals, however, these instances were very rare and did not impact the community.[59]

Within these years in South Marmara, the towns were divided in neighbourhoods, schools, and cemeteries, and places of worship based upon religious affiliation. The market square, centre, and the port were public spaces that the communities shared. Particularly on religious holidays the communal boundaries were ignored, and celebration involved the whole village. Division of labour was not so strictly divided although Muslims overall were more represented in the state bureaucracy and possessed the lands around the villages. Non-Muslims worked more as day labourers, traders, or owned small shops and restaurants.[60]

The economic divide between the two groups expended thus from economic towards ideologic. There was profound resentment under the Muslim population about the Edict of 1856 and the favours this granted to the Christian inhabitants as it was felt as further economic favours towards them (see chapter 3). They viewed the 'equality' as giving them further freedoms that were indirectly denied to them since they didn't have a western power interfering on their behalf and granting them trade favours and privileges. One of the first actions of the Young Turks as an opposition group was pointing this grievance out.[61]

The rise of the two new classes were accompanied by remarkable economic growth and political reforms. The authors thoroughly disagree regarding the interpretation of this time and the rise of the bourgeoisie.

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[58] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.
[59] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 1.
[60] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatoli*a, 100.
[61] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* 96.

According to (Karpat, 2001) Muslim middle-class that arose was different than in the Marxist interpretation of class, as they were economically liberal oriented with a strong religious conscience. The Greek Orthodox that inhabited the port cities on the other hand, were nationalist and equally economically liberal oriented. Kerpat is reluctant in celebrating this time as a golden age since he argues that the demise of the Empire, and the violence that accompanied it, became inevitable with the new political manifestation of these classes once they assumed power.[62]

Both Doumanis and Ottomoan Crisis see it as a golden time of peace, prosperity, and intercommunal cooperation. The booming port cities showed that the inhabitants of the Empire were able to prosper as part of the capitalistic world system. Furthermore, the trade benefited not only the Orthodox Greeks, but revenue also found its way towards other communities and to the Sublime Porte. As Nicholas Doumanis shows, this period is seen by people who witnessed it and look back on at as the belle époque of intercommunity.[63]

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[62] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* 96.
[63] Nicholas Doumanis *Before the Nation: Muslim-Christian Coexistence and its Destruction in Late-Ottoman Anatolia* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

2.3   The Tanzimat Reforms

The years between 1839 and 1876 are known in Ottoman history as
the Tanzimat (the reforms), characterized by a top-down attempt to reform
the Ottoman Empire based on the example of a Western European
bureaucracy. Although modernization commenced in the decades before, this
period is further characterized by an interval in which the sultans enjoyed
relatively less power between the dominant rule of Mahmud II (1808-39) and
Abdülhamid's accession (1876).[64] The conviction within the palace was that
the military was unable to adequately protect the Empire's borders and
therefore its security depended on diplomacy. Accordingly, foreign ministers
from the civil bureaucratic office determined policy during this time in the
name of grand vezir.[65]

The Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-74 centralized the 'Eastern
Question' for foreign policy in the European capitals, while Napoleon's
invasion of Egypt (1789) had made visible that the Empire was vulnerable at
all fronts, not just the lands bordering the European Empires. Ottoman policy
makers decided to reverse the decentralization of the preceding century and
redirect authority to the Sublime Porte. Selim III (1789-1807) first attempted
to reorganize the army and sought to obtain the capital necessary for the
modernization by reforming the income system of the state.[66] The sultan
further established diplomatic representation in the major European capitals.
Selim III, however, was unable to abolishing the vested authority of the
Janissaries that benefited from the status quo, and when their position became
peril, they overthrew him, leading to his assassination in 1808. Selem III's
successor Mahmud II (1808-39) was ultimately able to break the power of the
Janissaries and continued the reforms of his predecessor. Diplomatic
representation in Europe was increased as well as the establishment of new
schools, and rationalization of civil and military institutions.[67]

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[64] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap 3.
[65] C. Findley *The Cambridge History of Turkey* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9-37.
[66] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap 3.
[67] Findley *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 9-37.

The international events in the early 1830's forced the Porte to rethink the structure and functioning of the Empire to withstand further attacks. This decade namely saw the Greek Revolt (1821-30), the 1828-29 Russo-Turkish War, and the French colonization of Algeria (1830). In all these conflicts, the Ottomans lost territories and prestige. In response to these setbacks the authority in Istanbul suggested dramatic acceleration of the reforms as the only remedy for the many ills befalling the Empire. Also, Western countries were expressing doubt as to the legitimacy of the Porte in ruling the various territories and peoples. Faced with a lack of foreign and local legitimacy various reforms were introduced. However, they did now directly wish to mirror Western states, although part of the reforms was inspired by western bureaucratic efficiency; the primary objective was to strengthen authority and reform the Empire's bureaucracy. These reforms are known as the Tanzimat period.[68]

The Tanimat reforms were carried out primarily by means of legislation. Before the constitution of 1876 some parts at the periphery of the Empire were already familiar with constitutionalism. Tunisia had a constitution in the 1860's and Romania introduced one in 1866.[69] The Tanzimat reforms consisted of three major legal acts: The Gülhane degree (1839), the Reform Degree (1856), and the constitution (1876). The reforms consisted of tax and military reforms, changes in judicial procedures, and guaranteed life, honour, and property to all the inhabitants of the Empire, regardless of religion. Tax-farming and monopolies were prohibited. Lastly, the ruling elite in the Ottoman Empire traditionally was subject to a different punitive system as usual subjects. These punishments were repudiated.

The Reform Degree officially stated the equality of all inhabitants of the Empire, thus formalizing the end of the Millet system that had ceased to exist in all but name since 1839. The degree further invited non-Muslims to establish representative bodies and opened recruitment of the military and civil service to all inhabitants. Non-Muslims also became subject to mandatory military service, that could be avoided by paying a substitution

[68] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, Chap 7.
[69] Findley *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 9-37.

fee, that quickly became the norm for this group. Court cases involving parties from different communities were to be held before mixed courts, however, except for religious matters that would be heard before a communal court.

The personnel employed in the civil bureaucracy increased from 2,000 in 1780 to 35,000-70,000 by 1876.[70] The religious class (ulema) lost influence in the fields of education and judiciary. The new elite distinguished itself by westernization and mastery of the French language, which served as the language of instructions in the most prestige educational institutions. The new ruling class was trained in newly founded governmental schools. The fist institution to prepare undergraduate (1839) and graduate students (1845) for civil service were followed by the foundation of the first lycée (1868). Of the new institutions particularly the Galatasatay Lycée and the School of Civil Administration stand out as places that emphasised not merely education but propagated a new self-conscious of a bourgeoisie class that materialized among Ottoman Muslims from the 1870's onwards. In this light, the institutions fulfilled a similar role as the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in France or Eton college in England. Education for women in the form of state school (1859) and an institute to train female teachers (1870) allowed for Ottoman Muslim women to be part of change.[71] The Tanzimat bureaucracy became a force in itself that replaced the old imperial bureaucracy.

During the Tanizmat epoch, the influence of the government within the lives of the inhabitants of the Empire increased till the degree that it can be characterized as a form of 'modern' government. Traditionally, the 'fatherland' had been the village from where one originated. The egalitarian degrees changed communal relations throughout the Empire as these isolated community structures were undermined by centralization efforts [72] Censuses and population surveys were carried out to more accurately estimated taxation income. Inhabitants of the capital were exempted from military service and taxation, meaning that the burden of the former was to be carried by Muslim males and the latter by the provinces. Military service constituted four years

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[70] Findley *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 9-37.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Mazower *The Balkans*, 47.

of active service, six years of reserve, and eight years as home guard. New legislative reforms regarding taxation and land tenure changed power dynamics on the countryside, with tax farming being replaced by direct taxation though salaried agents. An attempt that ultimately failed and complicated further reforms due to lack of finances. Lastly, technological innovations such as mailing letters (1840), traveling by means of steamship (approximately 1850), and the use of the telegram (1855) became possible on governmental initiative and fundamentally altered the lives of the Ottoman citizens. The rise of print culture allowed written opposition and the strengthening of the influence of the intelligentsia, a fundamental aspect for Greek nationalism in the decades later. Cities further acquired gas streetlights, (basic) public transportation, construction regulations, and the cityscape changed with the erection of new governmental schools, courts, administration buildings, and provincial headquarters.[73] Furthermore, the presence of the state became more obvious by the construction of printing houses to facilitate administration and taxation thereby increasing political control over Foçateyn.[74]

Although these changes were felt most directly within the capital and major urban centres, the provinces were in due course equally affected. Particularly the provincial administration law of 1871 impacted the lives of the inhabitants of South Marmara. Local administration was divided in four descending levels form vilayes, sancak, kaza, and nahiye. Governors got increased power and staff often education in Istanbul. Additionally, councils were formed on each of the three highest levels and included elected Muslims and non-Muslims equally divided together with official members. A general council met once a year to so that all the councils of different levels could exchange insights. Special commission were set up with regard to refugee settlement.[75] For example, the commission for refugees in the coastal town of Eski Foça noted that in 1891, Muslim refugees had arrived in the village.

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[73] J. Shaw and Ezel K. Shaw *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, vol. II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977), 91–95.
[74] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 45.
[75] Findley *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 9-37.

They originated from the Balkans and had fled the Russian onslaught in the Ottoman-Russian war (1877-78). They were limited in number and their integration into the town went peacefully.[76]

During the Tanzimat reforms and partly as a result thereof, urbanization in the Ottoman Empire increased significantly between 1840 and 1890. In Istanbul the population rose from 400,000 to 900,000, in Izmir 110,000 to 200,000, and in Beirut from 10,000 to 100,000. The religious composition of the Ottoman provinces could also be clearly defined for the first time, and it became clear that, on average, in the provinces in Europe Non-Muslims outnumbered Muslims by five to four and in the Asiatic provinces Muslims outnumbered non-Muslims by four to one. Russian expansion in the east and west sent flux of refugees to the heartland by hundreds of thousands annually, peaking in 1864 totalling 400,000 people.[77]

According to (Doumanis, 2012) there were two reasons for the Tanzimat reforms. The first reason was that the Ottoman elite believed that the Empire could only survive if it reformed the administration of the Empire through centralization and western inspired rationalization. Secondly, it was believed that be granting the minorities equal rights, they would become loyal citizens of the Empire. The Millet system was replaced by Ottomanism. Rather than bringing the inhabitants of the Empire together, this caused resentment by the Muslim population, that even led to some pogroms in the Arab provinces caused by 'arrogant' behaviour of Christians.[78]

For example, the equality principle of the Tanzimat reforms bringing Islam on the same footing as other religions within the Empire, allowed for the construction of religious buildings, other than mosques. In south Marmara, the enriched and empowered Orthodox Christians constructed monumental churches that came to dominate the view of the village, conveying the new power dynamics and freedoms. These changes made the reforms unpopular with the Muslim middle class and with the Muslims in the Empire in general. The Tanzimat reforms attempted to create a new identity

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[76] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 71.
[77] Justin McCarthy *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton, Darwin Press, 1995), 23–58.
[78] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, Chap 1.

in the Ottoman Empire that would unite all the sultan's subjects as a national identity, namely, Ottomanism. The key principle was that all subjects were equal, thus diminishing the influence of the religious leaders. The Tanzimat reforms strengthened the position of the non-Muslim class since the equality meant that they could assume a more prominent role in politics.[79] Opposition swelled also within the bureaucracy itself, however, the conviction that these reforms were the only way to save the Empire from fragmentation and invasion remained the conviction of policy makers.[80] Be that as it may, it is important to note that the Tanzimat reforms within their search for modernization remained true to the imperial framework instead of creating a Muslim dominated nation-state.

The Tanzimat reforms were a departure from the concept of the state as governed by an elite depriving legitimization form traditions but introduced the concept of 'nation' within the Empire. Meaning, citizens inhabiting a defined territory and sharing a political culture. This 'Ottomanism' would thus alter the concepts of state, freedom, faith, and community. The rise of individualism as every individual had to be made conscience of who they are and what they represented collapsed with the framework of the 'Turks' political structure. This structure namely was defined by the supremacy of state authority and regarded its followers as a community rather than a set of individuals. This clash of interpretation would continue to divide opinions about state structure even after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Moving back and from piety and communalism would also later be an integral part of Turkish modernism.[81]

Ryen Gingeras underlines that the Tanzimat reforms were successful in creating a centralized educational system, a new court system, and further commitment to the strengthening of the military. At the end of the rule of the Tanzimat bureaucracy in 1876, the state apparatus did resemble more closely a western bureaucracy. The constitution of 1876 was the pinnacle of the bureaucracy's influence since constitutionalism was a way to reign in the

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[79] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 100.
[80] Doumanis *Before the Nation,* Chap 1.
[81] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 7.

power of the sultan by the Tanzimat bureaucracy. This bureaucracy came to view themselves as the sole arbiter of modernization in the Empire. They would be overthrown by sultan Abdülhamid II not much later. However, he would continue the reforms regarding centralization, conscription, education, and infrastructure. What was reversed it that once more the sultan and his court were the centre of power and reforms.[82]

Karpat 2001 takes a opposite position in claiming that the Tanzimat reforms included a constitution and abolished the legal distinction of the peoples of the Empire based on religion and included reform of education. The reforms, however, were met with fierce resistance from local elites who feared that increased centralization would undermine their position of power. European powers as well, obstructed the process by countering attempts to centralize the Balkan possession and demand exemptions for Christians. For those reasons, the reforms are generally considered a failed attempt to modernize and inefficient to cure the Empire's ills that made it unable to match western powers on the battlefield. The Tanzimat reforms came to an abrupt halt when the Ottomans lost nearly all their remaining European territories in the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War.[83]

Under the millet system, that divided the religious communities, legal and religious disputes were considered internal affairs that were to be resolved within the community. The boundaries between these religious communities were often vague, however, fundamental with regard to the legal basis of the Empire. There are countless examples of local traditions adhered to by both Christians and Muslims or interreligious celebrations. Furthermore, conversion out of practical or religious motives remained omnipresent. There were also many ways in which the communities depended on one another for economic prosperity or safety. For example, in Köprü, Muslim farmers benefited from Greek migrants who specialized in trade services, while Armenians operated as retailers. Be that as it may, both authors agree that religion was one of the key pillars of identity for the Empire itself as for its inhabitants. The consequence of uprooting this system is

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[82] Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores,* Chap. 1.
[83] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 7.

suggested by Kerpat to be one of the main causes of the collapse of the social fabric of the Empire.[84]

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[84] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 7.

Chapter 3. Religion and Nationalism

Abdülhamid II was the last sultan of the Ottoman Empire that yielded significant power and the period of his reign is called the Hamidian era. His legacy is highly contested, despised by the west and Christian inhabitants of the Empire and respected by the traditionalist and most of the Muslim population, Abdülhamid sought to propose his own response to the threats that endangered the survival of his Empire. Avoiding conflict at all costs, he used Islam as a tool to unite the Muslims of the Empire, hereby seeking to overcome nationalism, and avoid the fragmentation of the Empire. Meanwhile he continued the modernization reforms of the Tanzimat, however, ended constitutionalism and political representation, becoming the absolute ruler of the Empire. The effects of his rule on South Marmara were initially limited compared to the economic changes to how the incorporation into capitalism transformed the region. However, the formation of Islam into a modern ideology would play an important role during the fragmentation of communal relations.

The reign of Abdülhamid was ended by the Young Turk revolution, reinstating constitutionalism, and western inspired government. Retaking power, the bureaucratic elite of the Tanzimat reforms tried to continue on the path of westernization and inclusion, however, threat of war, ethnic and communal tensions, and political rivalry made this infeasible. Instead, their rule soon turned into a military dictatorship that would witness large skill atrocities and increasing political tensions in the Empire to a boiling point. In South Marmara specifically, their policies towards homogeneity of religion would deeply affect the communal relations in the Young Turks' pursuit of creating a modern Empire.

3.1 Abdülhamid II

Erol highlights how his reign was seen as a "tyranny" not only by the Greek inhabitants but by many subjects of the Empire, of all religions. The author further mentions his nickname "The Red Sultan". Karpat, however, states that this nickname was a result of European literature because this sultan was particularly disliked in the European capitals.[85] During his formative years Abdülhamid witnessed how the new bureaucracy began to take control over state affairs at the coast of the old bureaucracy and the sultan's authority. Abdülhamid's predecessor attempted to restore some of the sultan's authority by aligning himself with the traditionalist faction of population. The appeal to Islamic attachment and the protection of the caliph received unexpected widespread support in the years 1865-75.[86] Till such a degree that the modernist bureaucracy saw itself forced to also appeal to this sentiment, particularly in order to mobilize the population against ever more aggressive Russian expansionism.

In 1875 a rebellion broke out against Ottoman authority in Bosnia and Serbia. Although Abdülhamid's predecessor Abdulaziz managed to put down the rebellion, Russian military interference nevertheless ensured loss of control over the provinces. The bureaucracy framed the events as an unwillingness of Abdulaziz to protect Muslims in the region, in a successful attempt to oust him. In this endeavour, they were supported by the Islamist nationalist and the army. Shortly after being dethroned Abdulaziz committed suicide. The three faction that had originally been the pillars of the sultan's authority: the bureaucracy, the army, and the religious authorities had conspired or condoned the outage of the sultan.[87] It had become obvious that the modernist bureaucracy enjoyed significant power. It was against this background that Abdülhamid accessed the throne.

Another event that would deeply influence the worldview was the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78. Abdülhamid had trusted that England would

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[85] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.
[86] F.A.K. Yasamee *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878-1888* (Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2011), Chap 1.
[87] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.

come to their aid for Russia was a shared adversary, however, bad press with regard to the Balkan revolts between the years 1875 and 1876 had resulted into a negative perception of the Ottoman in the eyes of the British public. The British maintained neutrality which virtually meant allowing the Russian to conquer significant parts of the Empire. Further, by the conclusion of the peace treaty of the war, the English forced the reluctant sultan to cede Cyprus to them. Meanwhile, the fate of the hundreds of thousands of Muslims that were killed and millions that had to flee was met with indifference in Europe. Moreover, the English made various attempts to administer the Empire, under English foreign minister Salisbury, as a colony. By gunboat diplomacy they further force the Ottomans to cede Dulcingo to Montenegro and Thessaly to Greece. As a consequence, the sultan commanded his ministers to reach out to Germany instead for military, fiscal, and financial advisors.[88]

Figure 3: Abdulhamit II in England (1890)[89]

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[88] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.
[89] George Grantham Bain Collection/Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The war further degraded the Empire to a secondary power by losing a third of its inhabitants, part of its economic heartland, and altered the demographic character of the Empire to an ever-increasing Muslim inhabitant entity due to the loss of Christian inhabited provinces and the continuous flow of refugees in these decades.[90] Lastly, the concept of an (ethnic) nation state was now encroaching the Ottoman heartland Empire with the nation states of Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria now being firmly established.

In the early years of his reign, Abdülhamid tried to bind the masses to him without becoming depended on neither the modernist bureaucracy nor the religious establishment. In exchange for loyalty constitutional rights and promises of improved material wellbeing were offered. Unable to stop the proclamation of the constitution in 1876 he did refuse to agree on English or European oversight as guarantors of the rights outlined in the constitution.[91] In order to secure an agreement between the sultan and the bureaucracy various amendments were included in the constitution demanded by Abdülhamid to obtain his support. Among others, the sultan's ability to exile anybody who he regarded as being a threat to the state's security.[92]

The proclamation of the constitution took place in December 1876. The sultan did not participate in any of the celebrations that erupted upon the announcement. The bureaucracy more actively started to promote itself as the voice of 'the people'. It was unclear who exactly was meant when members of the bureaucracy in parliament announcing to represent 'their voices' since members of parliament refrained from identifying the Ottoman population based upon either class, wealth, religion or any other category. Since the ruling elite were the only social group truly politically conscious of their position and interest, the people essentially were what they imagined them to be. By ousting the former sultan, in contrast to previous palace coups, they attempted to replace the political system in its entirety. The first years of constitutionalism therefore became a powerplay between the old and new establishments.

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[90] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 1.
[91] F.A.K. Yasamee *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878-1888* (Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2011), Chap 1.
[92] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.

The months following the proclamation of the constitutions saw Abdülhamid exiling and imprisoning the figures responsible for the coup and, in his eyes, responsible for suicide of his predecessor while opposition from the Ottoman parliament against his rule became louder. The side-lining of political oppositional figures went accompanied by two coup attempts against Abdülhamid in 1878. These failed attempts and the anxiety that they caused brought him near physical collapse. The continuous criticism on Abdülhamid's policies let him to indefinitely suspend the constitution and of parliament in 1878 when the devastating loss of land and troops at the hands of the Russians in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78 was attributed to Abdülhamid's interference in the military command. Abdülhamid's opposition to constitutionalism deprived from the fact that it was believed that he was responsible only to God, not to any legislative body. Additionally, he believed that constitutionalism could only function properly in countries where the people had achieved political maternity. The Ottoman public, in his eyes, was politically inexperienced and unworthy of political power. When he dismissed the prominent constitutionalist Mihmet pasa, with whom he had negotiated the constitution in the wake of his coordination, he remarked: "*the silence of the lower classes and the thanks of the elite showed that the people did not care for politics*". The very people Mihmet pasa had earlier swore to represent had shown nothing but silence, showing: "*how little they deserved and appreciated a constitutional regime*".[93]

Abdülhamid's reign was characterized by impersonating the Empire as a caliph. Fear of assassination led him to a secluded life, rarely leaving the capital after his coronation. He established a network of spies that reported directly to him and the most important ministries like defence and finance equally reported directly to the Porte. Ministers gained power at the coast of the grand vizier, who previously had wielded great power under former sultans.[94] He further attempted to depoliticise the bureaucracy by professionalizing the institutions. This was done by establishing a civil

[93] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap. 4.
[94] Houssine Alloul, Edhem Eldem, and Henk de Smaele *To Kill a Sultan: A Transnational History of the Attempt on Abdülhamid II (1905)* (London, Palgrace Macmillan, 2018), Chap 1.

service committee and a personal committee to oversee reforms in the bureaucracy. Because his anxiety for assassination and consequent seclusion behind palace walls, he was unable to travel thought the Empire. He displayed a profound curiosity about the Empire and its diversity; and throughout its reign he ordered tens of photographers to travel to each corner of the Empire and record how all of its inhabitants were living. This collection still provides one of the clearest ideas of life in the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 20th century.[95]

The reforms of the Tanzimat, like the establishment of new educational institutions, upgrading the army in European style (with German assistance) were greatly expanded during Hamidian rule. These reforms, however, were not paradoxical to the Islamic nature of the Empire. Abdülhamid believed that Islam had enlightened the Empire with peace and happiness and the past achievements of the religion convinced him that it was reconcilable with science and progress. He acknowledged the technological superiority of the west but believed that Islamic virtues and freedom of thought in the Empire remained intact and capable of evolving, remarking once to his daughter: "*religion and science both are faiths*".[96] Interestingly, as important as faith was to his rule there is no evidence that he ever envisaged a theocracy for the Empire, nor did he appoint religious figures to important posts. Personally, despite being member of two religious brotherhoods, he occasionally drank champagne before dinner, allowed the export and import of pork meat, and never went on the *hac* to Mecca. Turning Islam into a modern ideology, therefore, was a political plan and not a consequence of his devotion to his faith. In his view, the Muslim's attachment to Islam was on the same footing as the European's love for their nation. "*The love that they have for their motherland we nurture for our religion.*"[97]

The role of religion in the communities of South Marmara overall was of a regional kind. Islam and Christianity operated not only next to each other but were often two sides of the same coin. For example, in the village of

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[95] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

Tsliflikaki, Kleodimos Landos recalled a shared custom in times of draught: "*Rarely did we see lots of rain. If we had drought, the Turks and Christians together would perform a litany. Christians and Turks together. We'd go to a mountain, to a field or an orchard. No candles or icons. We'd just go and pray according to our religion. And it always rained.*"[98]

Moreover, local saints, sacred shrines, holy texts, and natural sanctuaries were worshipped by the entire community. Furthermore, Muslims held the belief that Islam was the succeeding religion of Christianity, thus accepting that there was a sacred value in the faith overtaken. For Christians equally seemed to accept that some of their religion had carried through to Islam. As the Christian women Evangelia Mihou. stated who frequented a mosque in Loutazaki for prayer: "*The mosque had a memorial with plaques around it and a pine tree on top. We'd go to it every St Paraskevi Day to pray there and light a candle and do incense. Women would gather and go to it now and then. The mosque was built there because they [the Turks] liked to build on church foundations to make it solid.*"[99]

Abdülhamid advised the Muslims in the country that to avoid the division of the Empire by the territorial ambitions of the Christians they should overcome their ethnic differences and unite under their common faith. For the inhabitants of South Marmara this meant letting go of regional affiliations and view their fellow Muslims as equals only. Hereby, he was first caliph and only second Ottoman sultan. Abdülhamid believed that the concept of ethnicity was used by the English to divide the Turks and Arabs to their own benefit. Equally so the term territorial fatherland was introduced to estrange Egypt from the Empire by the colonial powers. He urged all Muslims to overcome these concepts and focus on the Islamic shared beliefs. His policies towards minorities were ambivalent. Jewish communities overall flourished during this time, while Armenians, particularly after an assassination attempt by Armenians nationalists, were prosecuted and suffered heavily.[100]

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[98] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, 109-130.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Alloul, Eldem, and de Smaele *To Kill a Sultan*, Chap 1.

With emphasising the importance of Islamic unity against western imperialism, Abdülhamid threatened the stability of Russian, French, and British Empires. Since they all had significant Muslim minorities and although they were sceptical about the degree to which he could inspire them to revolt they remained wary about the possibility.[101] His reign was a period of general stability in the Ottoman Empire. Except for the Greek Was (1897), that he tried to avoid until the last moment, and which was decisively won by the Ottoman army, and that further boosted his reputation under the Muslim population. As a consequence of the stability, the population of the Empire grew from 20 million to 27 million, and in Anatolia increased with 50 percent.[102]

The Tanzimat reforms and the introduction of the term 'Ottomanism' did not overcome the ethnic and religious divides that had appeared in the Empire. Quite on the contrary, during the reforms the Christians had become further estranged and 'Ottomanism' was increasingly viewed as a Muslim identity. After the loss of the Balkans, Abdülhamid believed that the Arabs could follow in succession and that even Anatolia might be lost to the Armenians, Greeks, and Kurds. Islamism as an ideology was designed to create more cohesion between Muslims and had to prevent the loss of the eastern provinces.[103]

The Balkan revolts did not start as an anti-Ottoman movement but rather as the result of a breakdown of traditional order that transformed into a liberation movement against the 'foreign' Turks. The Ottoman rule of half a millennium in the Balkans had left its peoples to view identity in the same regard as the Sublime Porte did, in terms of religion. The celebrated national features were above all Orthodox Christianity combined with ethnic features. Paradoxically, the Ottoman 'yoke' to which they revolted was the attempt of the Ottomans to westernize and thereby interfering more directly in the affairs of everyday citizens.[104]

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[101] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, 77.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* Chap 4.
[104] Alloul, Eldem, and de Smaele *To Kill a Sultan*, Chap 1.

For the elite, everything that were to be associated with Ottoman became a symbol for stagnation, primitivism, and was till a degree looked upon with disdain. This resulted in conflicting arguments about the arts and the cultural expression of the Empire. New buildings were often designed in European styles called alafranca. There was, however, considerable backlash of traditionalist and Europeans alike who states that it was untrue to the Ottoman architectural heritage that had combined Roman, Byzantine, Persian, and Arab styles, to create the true Ottoman style, named, alatruca. These two outlooks became concepts of 'new' and 'old', and with the rise of nationalism would prove powerful frameworks for the construction of identity.

They created a cultural rift between the masses and the ruling class. Furthermore, within the new schools, universities, and household of the wealthy, political liberalism became the dominant political affiliation. As a result, the authoritarian rule of Abdülhamid became increasingly despised, and opposition swelled at the turn of the century.[105]

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[105] Şükrü Hanioğlu *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), Chap 2.

3.2 The Young Turks

The Young Turk movement traces its origins back to 1889. It was on one of the prestigious new schools that were founded during the Tanzimat reforms that an Albanian, a Kurd, a Circassian, and a Turk as pupils in the Military Medical College founded the Ottoman Unity Society. Its aims were to reinstate parliamentarianism and end the authoritative rule of Abdülhamid II. The movement grew over the years and out of fear of the secret police many of its members chose exile as a place of opposition. They went to Cairo, Athens, but mostly to Paris. It was here that in 1895 under the leadership of Ahmet Riza, the movement was renamed Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and started to actively publish pamphlets in French and Ottoman in opposition to Abdülhamid II. The branch of the movement active in France named themselves *Jeunes Turcs.*[106]

Initially its political aims were solely replacing the rule of Abdülhamid II by a parliamentarian authority. Strongly influenced by European intellectual societal ideals, the proponents of the movement envisaged a society highly homogonous according to the logic of ethnical-Darwinism and held an elitist and positivist outlook. [107] Like much of the political discussions in the late 19th century they were discussed in the same coffeehouses were communist and fascist supporters fantasied about an ideal state.

Abdülhamid II success in the war with Greece boosted his reputation and, in the years afterwards, the CUP as a political organization fell into obscurity. It was international developments that relapsed the opposition into action. The Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and the revolution in Russia that followed greatly inspired the movement. The archenemy of the Ottomans had been defeated by an Asiatic power and Japan became an example of modernization for the CUP. Further, Persia underwent a constitutional revolution which ended in a constitution being declared in 1906. These events revigorated the CUP. Lastly, the physician to the second in line to the sultan

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[106] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.
[107] Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution,* Chap 1.

Dr Bahaettin Sakir, was exiled and upon his arrival and integration into the CUP began to restructure the organization, greatly enhancing its capabilities and improving its organizational framework. [108]

In 1907 a congress in Paris aimed to unite the entire opposition on the initiative of Armenian groups. Together, they committed to the use of violence in order to achieve their goals. A second reason for the congress was that a group of officers and bureaucrats in Salonica had managed to establish a functioning network of opposition and had contacted the CUP in Paris. It was agreed upon to merge these two groups. The years 1906-08 were characterized by general discontent as inflation increased and wages stalled. This resulted into strikes and small rebellions throughout the Empire which proved especially explosive in the province of Macedonia.[109]

In this province, Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish nationalist riveled with each other for power. The rapprochement of England and Russia out of a common fear for Germany, made them willing to overcome their differences in the Balkans. This resulted in a meeting at Tallinn ostensibly to solve the Macedonian question, however, rumour had it that they were deciding to split the Ottoman Empire between them. Adding to the urgency was the news that the sultan's agents were at the brink of inmantling parts of the organization. Faced with these insecurities, the CUP prompted to action.[110]

The belief was that the reinstatement of the constitution would heal ethnical divides and thereby forestall the anticipated foreign intervention. Officers and their troops in Salonica awaited the arrival of the members of the CUP and then took position of the hills outside the city, demanding the restoration of the constitution.[111] Abdülhamid II first send officers to restore order, who were murdered and then Anatolian based troops, whom upon arrival refused to fight the insurgents. When they started marching upon the capital, Abdülhamid yielded and declared on 23 July 1908 that the constitution and parliament would be reinstated within 30 days.[112]

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[108] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, Chap. 5.
[111] Mark Mazower *Salonica, City of Ghosts; Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950.* (New York, Random House, 2004), Chap. 13.
[112] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.

The proclamation of the constitution was an event celebrated throughout the entire Empire by all communities. In South Marmara, likewise, celebration erupted with both Muslims and Christians rejoicing the end of Hamidian rule. Furthermore, particularly the Orthodox Christians seemed legitimately interested in the restoration of parliamentarian governance. As Elisavet Georgiadis who lived through the events remarked in retrospect: "*We were fine until 1908, when we were told that we were now like brothers.*"[113] The feeling of fraternity and a shared future that these changes brought seemed to have also been attributed to the Enver Bey personally as the leader of the movement as remarked by Achilles Psaropoulos: "*Enver Bey and Nazli Bey had got rid of the king Hamid. At the time it was said we had become one with the Turks, that we had become brothers. There was great fanfare ... we lit torches in the villages, a 'festa' they were called. We would shout 'Yassassin Enver Bey!*"[114]

The celebrations seemed a new era of improved living conditions and in the aftermath hundreds of strikes and local actions erupted demanding better pay and working conditions. The CUP sized unequivocally with the capitalists and banned unions and made striking extremely difficult. Elections were held for the first time in 30 years again. The tight control of the sultan over the media, however, had ensured that the reinstalment of the constitution was believed by some to be at the initiative of the sultan himself, who had decided that the people were ready for more political responsibility. Therefore, the CUP was reluctant in abolishing the sultanate, even after decisively winning the elections, enjoying the support of Muslim middle class of landowners. What was clear, however, was that the bureaucracy of the Tanzimat reforms had once more claimed power and side-lined the traditional authority. The Young Turks promised a departure from the 'backward' and 'tyrannical' Hamidian rule which would be replaced by modernization and civilized rule at the hand of a European focused regime.[115]

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[113] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, 131-169.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Eyal Ginio *The Ottoman Culture of Defeat: The Balkan Wars and their Aftermath* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), Chap. 1.

The remarkable success of the overthrow of the sultan and the jubilant months that followed would be abruptly stopped by the counterrevolution in April 1909. Concerned about the atmosphere of accelrated secularization and westernization of the society that was expected but had not materialized yet, lower members of the ulema, religious students, and religious extremists, caused an insurrection in the capital on the 12th of April 1909. The Macedonian troops stationed at the Taşkışla barracks joined the uprising and imprisoned their superiors. This can be explained by the fact that the army was split between one group that was educated at top institutes and thanked their career based on that fact. The other group consisted of people who had worked their way through the ranks over the years and felt side-lined by the CUP and saw their interest disappear with the vanishing of the old regime. The next day, more people joined their ranks, and the parliament was stormed. The CUP's leaders panicked and fled the capital, while the movement struggled to fill the power gap as high leaders from the ulema denounced themselves from the insurrection.[116]

Apart the capital the resurrection did not spread to the provinces with the exception of the province Adana. Members of the old regime tried to seize power and attacked CUP representatives. In the breakdown of order, a riot turned into a pogrom aimed at the Armenian inhabitants, leading to the death of possibly 20.000 Armenians. In the aftermath, 124 Muslims and 7 Armenians would be executed for their role in the atrocities.[117]

Leaders of the CUP regrouped in their powerbase Salonica from where and organized a military campaign to counter the insurrection. The force was called the Action Army and consisted of regular troops and volunteers. They were transported with the train to the outskirts of Istanbul and took the city without much resistance on the 24th of April. Only at Taksim square and at the nearby Taşkışla barracks there occured serious fighting which was soon overcome by the Action Army. Martial law was declared, and two courts were founded to oversee the prosecution of the rebels. Lastly,

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[116] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*) Chap. 2.
[117] Ibid.

the reign of sultan Abdülhamid II officially came to an end as he was deposed for his younger brother, Mehmet V.[118]

The coup attempt on 1909 had shown that the role of the army was crucial for the CUP to cling to power. The army would play a significant role in politics throughout the reign of the Young Turks, with serving officers allowed to be parliamentarians while performing their military duties. Inner fighting within the party, that also still also operated as a secret society, contributed to ineffective leadership. New laws were introduced limiting individual freedoms and freedoms of expression. The army was purged of commanders that thanked their career to Abdülhamid. II and martial was continued until 1912.[119]

The domestic situation was greatly affected by the international events that happened during the CUP's rule. The Austrian-Hungarian Empire had used the chaos that ensued during the coup of 1908 to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bulgaria announced the union of Eastern Rumelia with the rest of the country, and Crete joined Greece in the days afterwards. There was little the CUP was able to do as response except boycott products from these countries. In 1910 revolt broke out in Albania and Montenegro in opposition to taxation and centralizing policies. Although no independence was proclaimed it shocked the authorities that Muslims living so closely to the heartland demanded such a degree of autonomy.[120] This revolt was followed by another uprising in Yemen in 1911, which was concluded with an agreement granting some form of autonomy in exchange for loyalty to the Empire. The same year, Italy unprovokedly invaded the last remaining Ottoman province of North-Africa Tripolitania (Libya). Although the coastal cities were easily overrun by the Italian army, the CUP organized successful resistance with cooperation of tribes in the interior, based on religious affiliation.[121]

The domestic opposition to the CUP grew in strength due to these setbacks and united in November 1911 under the name Party of Freedom and

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[118] Alloul, Eldem, and de Smaele *To Kill a Sultan*, Chap 1.
[119] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Gingeras *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire,* Chap 4.

Understanding. Consisting of liberals and conservatives their uniting ideology was their resentment towards the CUP. Much to the surprise of the establishment they secured a victory in the by-election in Istanbul only three weeks after the proclamation of the new party. The CUP had used the parliament to exercise control over the bureaucracy, government, and palace. They came to realize they were losing hold over this state organ. Out of fear of the opposition the elections of 1912 were characterized by political violence and fraud that the CUP deemed necessary to secure a parliamentarian majority. As a result, the parliament lost all legitimacy and opposition swelled further. In order to break the spiralling circle of violence and chaos, and because of factions of the army threatened to interfere, a new cabinet was appointed that consisted of mostly elderly stateman that attempted to end the power of the CUP and interference of army officers in politics.[122]

The year 1912 began as members of the CUP were sent into exile or went underground while Italy looked for ways to force the Ottoman Empire to end their struggle in Libya. The guerrilla war was so successful that the Italians bombed the Dardanelles in 1912 and occupied the Dodecanese islands in order to force the Ottomans to surrender by bringing the war to the heartland.[123] In the end, the province was surrendered to the Italians because of a more lethal threat that would prove to be the beginning of the very end of the Ottoman Empire.

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[122] Erik Jan Zürcher 'Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908–1938' *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (2000): 150-179.
[123] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.

Chapter 4. The Long War

Whereas the political events in the capital had only affected South Marmara indirectly, the events that followed the coups and turmoil would profoundly change the lives of the inhabitants of the province. The first of these events was the loss of Macedonia to the Balkan states and the wave of refugees that arrived on the shores. The second event was a coup in January 1913 by the CUP, that ended parliamentarian rule and increased aggressive centralization reforms. Finally, the entry of the Empire into the First World War would set in motion a series of events that would prove a turning point in the Empire's history and change the region of South Marmara into an unrecognizable place for the inhabitants that would survive the onslaught. [124]

The Long War is a term used by Turkish historians describing the continuous warfare in the Empire that began with the First Balkan War in 1912 and only ended a decade later with the War of Independence against the Western colonial powers, Armenia, and Greece. For the inhabitants of South Marmara, their villages were on the frontline twice, however, only during the Greek invasion of Anatolia (1919) and their consequent defeat suffered at the coasts (1922). The aftershocks of the battles fought in the Balkans, in the straights, and in the Armenian highlands would equally shake the province to its core and shred what had remained of the social cohesion that had existed for centuries in the province.

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[124] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, Chap. 5.

4.1　The Balkan Wars

In 1912 Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria simultaneously attacked the remaining European provinces with devastating effect for the Ottomans. Low morale, poor logistics, naval superiority of Greece, and failing military leadership led to humiliating defeats. The entirety of Macedonia was lost (the heartland and birthplace of the majority of the members of the CUP), the Aegean islands were seized by Greece, the former capital of Edirne inhabited primarily by Muslims fell, while Bulgarian troops reached the outskirts of the capital. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees fled the violence and destruction at the hands of the Christians armies.[125] Albania formally declared independence to add to the sting of defeat. The humiliation at the hands of former subjects was complete. At the end, the Empire was shattered by its military incompetence and the size of the lost lands. The port city of Salonica, one of the economic centres of the Empire, was surrendered without a fight.

The CUP had attempted to reorganize the army, but those reforms were not finished by the time the Balkan War broke out. Particularly the drafting of non-Muslims into reserves proved problematic. Although the Armenians were overall willing to serve alongside Muslims, the Orthodox Greeks demanded their own regiment that according to a British observer did not operate as part of the Ottoman army but rather as an ally.[126] A quarter of the mobilized army consisted of Orthodox Christians that were expected to wage was against Orthodox Christian states. Although among the regular troops, desertion occurred consistently, however, Orthodox Greeks actively undermined mobilization efforts and logistic support. There were however, two things that were pointed out a success: the Muslim willingness for mobilization and the sympathy of the Muslim world for their loss.[127]

The war was considered by many contemporaries as a watershed moment in Ottoman history.[128] Photography and press made visible the

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[125] Erol *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia,* 116.
[126] Fikret Adanır *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 117.
[127] Ginio *The Ottoman Culture of Defeat*, Chap. 3.
[128] Ibid, Chap. 1.

horrors that befell the Muslims in the conquered provinces. Ottoman press drew parallels with the calamities that were only mirrored by the Crusades, while Jews drew comparisons with the suffering of their ancient predecessors at the hands of the Pharaoh. For many policy makers, it was considered a last warning before utter collapse, referring to the partition of Poland as an ominous example of how fate could play out. The defeat created a social shock within the Ottoman society. This paradigm of defeat can be compared with the societal shocks that changed Spain after 1892, Germany after 1918, and France after 1945. The mourning and fear as an emotional power stimulated violence, upheaval, and renewal. After the First Balkan War, the Ottoman society was immersed in a 'culture of defeat'.[129]

The Balkan War was a watershed moment for the CUP and the region of South Marmara. The region was now at the frontline and its strategical value close to the capital made it an indispensable part of the Empire. Additionally, the same ethnic composition as in Macedonia of Rum and Armenian communities dotted throughout the region made the authorities belief that Christian succession was a likely possibility. The war also ended the principle of Ottomanism in the Empire. Nation states and their aspirations had proven victorious over the Ottomanism project, and the CUP would draw that conclusion. The Young Turk aspiration in favour of liberal democracy, free markets, and parliamentarism that had already lost much of its allure in the last years but was now replaced by nationalism and economic protectionism. The idea that the Empire could still function as a home for both the Muslim population and its non-Muslim subject was for the first time being undermined by the political centre. [130]

It was suggested by many contemporary observers that more than the failures of the army, it was the role of the Ottoman Orthodox Greeks that had caused this defeat. Christian civilians within the Empire and armed gangs had aided the Christian armies in the region. Orthodox Greeks within the Empire were accused of financing the Greeks due to their prominent economic position and were partly held responsible for blocking reinforcements from

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[129] Ginio *The Ottoman Culture of Defeat*, Chap. 1.
[130] Erol *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia,* 116.

reaching Macedonia. Moreover, the tens of thousands of refugees that arrived in South Marmara had lost their home and possessions to the Greeks (410,000 Muslims had fled and 297,737 had made it to Ottoman Empire).[131] They felt that the Orthodox Greeks in the Ottoman Empire were not immune to blame.

In the summer of 1914, an informal boycott of Greek and Armenian products gained ground in South Marmara. Applauded by the authorities as part of a new 'national economy', national press stimulated the movement. The boycott went accompanied by violent prohibitions of Christian to enter marketplaces or engage in commerce, often encouraged by local police. In Bursa, Christian teachers and public servants were fired.[132] Shops were looted and costumers ignoring the boycott harassed, primarily by Circassian gangs. Orthodox Greeks started to leave their homes and moved to the coastal areas to escape the violence, that escalated to pogroms in some places all over the province.[133] Particularly the impoverished refugees from Macedonia and Crete formed groups of bandits and played a prominent role in the plundering and expulsion of the Orthodox Greeks since there was insufficient governmental support to provide food and shelter.[134] The degree to which the CUP leaders consciously orchestrated this violence is contested. Emme Erol refers to the events as 'Organized Chaos', however, also points out the defence of the government that building new settlements was a burden on the state budget in times of war that could not be afforded. Hence, they had no other option then to send them to already populous areas.[135] According to Doumanis, however, it leaves little doubt that the boycott was an expression of fury but very much so directed by the governmental figures.[136]

The development described above did not occur everywhere throughout the region. In retrospect, inhabitants of South Marmara describe different causes that led to the collapse of communal cohesion. There are descriptions about how before 1912 religious festivals were still celebrated

[131] Justin McCarthy *Death and Exile: Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), 339.
[132] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, Chap. 5.
[133] Erol *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 168.
[134] Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 2.
[135] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia,* 168.
[136] Doumanis *Before the Nation,* Chap. 5.

together, however, that after 1912 such things did not occur anymore: "*The Turks no longer trusted us*" in the words of Anestis Varsitopoulos, an Orthodox Greek from the coast.[137] In his perspective, the arrival of (Muslim) refugees from Crete after they were expelled by the Greeks, deteriorated the situation till a degree that violence spread. Other testimonies very clearly state that it was the outbreak of the First World War that broke communal bonds and intensified the boycott: "*Until the 1914 war we had good relations. Went to their homes, they came to ours ... but whenever the Allies bombarded the coastline, they would become angry with us.*"[138] It's clear therefore that in South Marmara between the years 1912-14 mistrust and violence spread though the communities but that no clear watershed moment can be defined.

In the first months of 1914, the CUP had created the 'Special Organization' (*Teşkilat-i Mahsusa*) that was tasks with removing Christians from strategic places in South Marmara, mostly coastal areas. Their methods ranged from warnings to organizing massacres. The CUP could enact such policies because of their absolute rule since January 1913. In the wake of the First Balkan War the Balkan states disagreeing on how to divide the conquered lands fall out in widespread warfare. Bulgaria was attacked by Greece and Serbia simultaneously and in the ensuing warfare the Ottoman army managed to reconquer Edirne and launched a guerrilla warfare in Macedonia in the areas still inhabited by Muslims. These actions were spearheaded by a group of CUP officers that had played an active role in the Action army and was active in Tripolitania before and operated under the command of Enver.[139] This group used to prestige of rewinning the Ottoman former capital to launch a successful coup in Istanbul. Throughout the First World War, these people (the three pashas Enver, Çemal, and Tamât) would be responsible for the fate of the Ottoman Empire and its inhabitants.

In June that year, the chairman of the CUP Talaat Pasha toured South Marmara under the pretext of restoring order and winning diplomatic credibility that had suffered under the news of the atrocities that had reached

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[137] Doumanis *Before the Nation,* Chap. 5.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.

the world. Ironically, his Greek counterpart Venizelos toured the newly conquered regions of Macedonia still inhabited by Muslims (62% was either killed, expelled, or had fled after the war remained), who experienced similar hardship. Overall, approximately 150,000 Orthodox Greeks fled South Marmara and headed for mainland Greece in boats crossing the Aegean.[140] Talks with the Greek government commenced in 1914 to oversee the exchange of peoples, cementing the idea that national identity was to be understood in terms of ethnicity. As a result, both states favoured demographic homogenization. Before the population exchange could materialize the First World War engulfed the Ottoman Empire.

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[140] Erol *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 184.

4.2   The First World War

The First World War arrived in South Marmara in the form of allied landings and bombardments around Çanakkale in February 1915. The landing went accompanied by aerial and naval bombardments targeting fortresses, railways, bridges, and other strategic infrastructure in all the coastal communities as far south as Smyrna, followed by an economic blockade. This was done in order to hinder Turkish war effort and economic activity. What remained of the coastal economic prosperity after the sectarian violence and the nationalization of the economy now formally came to an end. The initial response of the CUP to the allied landing at Çanakkale beside its war effort was the relocation of Orthodox Greeks to the hinterland. In contrast with the previous and ongoing Armenian deportations to eastern Anatolia and the horrific conditions that led to the death of many of them along the way, these deportations seemed born out of legitimate military concern. In most cases, the Greeks were resettled in South Marmara and did not undergo the horrors that the Armenians suffered.[141] Bursa became the centre of refuge and relief for the Orthodox Greeks. Over the course of the war, 100,000 Greeks would be resettled of which most were able to return to their original homes upon conclusion of the war. [142]

The relative more humane treatment of the Orthodox Greeks deprived from the fear of a looming conflict with Greece. When the allies landed on the shores of the Gallipoli peninsula, in 1915, the Empire balanced on the edge of a catastrophic collapse. The allied attempt to conquer the straits and the Ottoman capital, occurred simultaneously with English and Egyptian troops pushing into Palestine, Indian-English detachment fighting their way northward into Mesopotamia from occupied Bursa, and the Russians, after initial setbacks, decisively defeating the Ottomans at the Battle of Sarikamish, occupying Ottoman cities in the far east.[143] In this attempt, they were assisted by Armenian detachments and volunteer units. Fighting on three fronts

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[141] Erol *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 201.
[142] Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 2.
[143] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.

stretched Ottoman recourses to the maximum and the regime in Istanbul was keen to maintain peace with Greece to avoid having to open a fourth front.[144] The Armenians, when prosecuted by the Ottoman state, became stateless and were left to the mercy of the CUP policies.

During the war the CUP started to execute mass deportation on a grand scale. All Armenians were to be deported for three reasons. Firstly, to eliminate a group that, they believed, would never accept to live under Muslim rule. Secondly, the policy of deportation would turn the region into a 'Turkified' area were succession would be unlikely. Lastly, the houses and property left behind would be distributed to Muslim refugees.[145] The overarching concept was Turkish ethnic nationalism. Another idea behind the policy was the belief that an Armenian rebellion that was prominent in the eastern provinces. Therefore, the CUP leadership (the role of the bureaucracy in the practices is contested) commenced deportation in summer of 1915. The Armenians were to be deported to the far east of the Empire that was already deeply engulfed in sectarian violence and were the Russian army was gaining terrain.[146]

Outright refusal to depart as demonstrated by some Armenian villages in South Marmara led to violence and executions. Therefore, some communities fled into the mountains after hearing the orders to depart. The majority, however, took their most valuable possessions and by trains, carriages, or by foot started moving east. The fate of the tens of thousands of Armenians from South Marmara was varied. The fortunate were allowed to stay in Konya or surrounding settlements, while the rest were forced to march on towards Aleppo or Mosul. The worst of atrocities ensured that nearly none of them survived the journey and the consequent accommodation in the camps in the desert. The deportation of the Armenians of South Marmara continued until 1916.[147] Armenians that had served in political positions,

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[144] Ibid.

[145] Taner Akçam *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (New York, Zed Books, 2004), 143–4.

[146] Taner Akçam *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York, Metropolitan Books, 2006), 88.

[147] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 2.

fulfilled indispensable economic roles, or had recently converted to Islam were often exempted from deportation.

The war with Russia and the loss of terrain in the east had caused a new wave of Muslim refugees that had moved to South Marmara. The availability of land after the deportations of their former owners mitigated the crisis till a certain degree, nonetheless, the authorities were reluctant to allow resettlement to all. The CUP chose the chaos as the opportune moment to restructure the ethnic composition of the Muslim population as well. Only Muslim Albanians were allowed to enter the Ottoman Empire. Further, Albanians were targeted by restricting them to settle in regions like Izmit and Kale-i Sultaniye in South Marmara. These regions already had a significant Albanian population. The Albanians were located over the entirety of Anatolia and were not supposed to exceed anywhere the threshold of consisting of more than 10 percent of the population. The ultimate goal was to eradicate their Albanian language and customs and by doing so to Turkify them.[148] This also, albeit in different scales, happened to Kurds, Bosnians, Georgians, Circassians, Arabs, and Roma.

During the First World War, South Marmara saw no more conflict after the defeated allied forces abandoned Gallipoli and its surroundings in 1916. The Russian revolution caused the Caucasian front to collapse, and Ottoman forces reconquered major parts of the Anatolian highlands and the Caucasus. Despite these war efforts, when the German and Austria-Hungary Empires sued for peace and imploded in revolution and fragmentation, the Ottoman Empire was by no means able or willing to continue the war effort and unconditionally surrendered on 30 October 1918. While the CUP leaders fled (out of fear of prosecution for their treatment of the Armenians) allied forces consisting of English, French, and Italian troops occupied Istanbul, the traits, and the shores of South Marmara.[149]

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[148] Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores*, chap. 2.
[149] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.

4.3   The Occupation of South Marmara

Immediately after the armistice English troops occupied the northern coast of South Marmara. Armenians and Orthodox Greeks that had survived the war returned to their home villages and attempted to start over. The Muslim population waited anxiously what the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference (where no Turkish representative was present) would be. Although the general expectation was that the British occupied Arab provinces would be lost, generally they expected Anatolia to become a Turkish state. However, before the conclusion of the treaty, Greek forces landed in Izmir in May 1919 and sectarian violence escalated.[150]

As reward for joining the allied front at the end of the war in 1918 Greece was awarded Izmir and its surroundings. This promise was cemented by the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, dividing Anatolia between the Armenians, the French, Italians, British, and the Greeks, leaving a third of the peninsula for the Ottomans. The Greeks as they had done in the previous wars against the Ottoman, tried to expel all Muslims and their arrival went accompanied by a wave of violence. The polarization of the communities was damaged irretrievably as the local Greeks cheered and aided the march of the Greek army eastwards. In South Marmara, vicious guerrilla warfare enflamed immediately and continued further as reports of Greek atrocities circulated widely. During the last session of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies stories of ethnic cleansing and Muslim expulsion were discussed. One representative Mahmud Celal summed up atrocities and ended his discourse asking: "*All of these transgressions occurred before the eyes of the European nations. I ask you, is this the civilization Europeans are bringing us*?" One of the oldest members of the chamber Tunali Himli responded after a moment: "*We have no need of their civilization. We are civilized.*"[151]

In South Marmara, weeks before the Greek invasion began resistance started to organize itself. These efforts were of military nature but included also communicative measures such a printing newspaper and establish

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[150] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, Chap. 5.
[151] Gingeras *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire*, 164.

communication channels. Gendarmes, former officers, journalist, religious figures, and bureaucrats all began to mobilize. By June, a defensive front north of Izmir had been established.[152] The clandestine nature of this defence was a result of an on-going power vacuum after the collapse of the CUP. The sultan had wasted his credibility that by hoping to appease to the west they would guarantee the integrity of Anatolia. The capital remained occupied by British and French forces and there was no one with effective control over Anatolia. The Greeks hoped to use this power vacuum to conquer the west of peninsula as part of the an irredentist policy to create a 'Greater Greece'. The centre of the national resistance in South Marmara was the town of Balıkesir. On the 26th of June 1919, notables from the town, members of the CUP, and the army agreed on the National Congress of Balıkesir to found committees with the aim of 'saving the fatherland'. They divided roles in organizing recruitments from all counties in South Marmara, made decision about finance, and expressed the aim of establishing a regular army as a branch of the National Movement.[153]

The press of this time, in order to justify these actions and mobilize support, fell back on two themes: Islam and Turkishness. By associating the National Movement with Islam, the movement could fall back on familiar political and cultural symbols and made the struggle into a religious duty. The second reason for resistance was the term 'Turk'. This can be partly explained by legitimating their war in the eyes of the West (particularly the United States) after the declaration of the Wilsonian Principles. It was in these years, however, still unclear if Turkish referred to the state or the race. Further, who qualified as Turkish if they did not identify themselves as such? For these reasons, the term Turkish was often used in combination with Muslim.[154]

The search for volunteers for recruitment however, proved problematic. Although no exact figures numbers exist, a couple of hundred soldiers could be counted upon, primarily consisting of Albanian recruits that already played a part in the 'Special Organization'. Local elites and

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[152] Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 3.
[153] Zürcher *Turkey: A Modern History*, Chap. 2.
[154] Ibid.

communities proved surprisingly unwilling to help. Among the local population a general exhaustion with war seemed omnipresent. Furthermore, there was great opposition to the movement from loyalist forces, that favoured rule under the sultan. This led to a series of revolts in 1919 and 1920 under the command of Ahmet Anzavur, mostly consisting of Circassian and Abkhazian communities, who had fled the Caucasus and found refuse in the Ottoman lands and therefore still felt emotionally and personally connected to the sultanate. All these revolts were subsequently violently repressed by the National Movement.

On 22 June the Greek forces that had occupied Izmir and its surroundings on 15 May 1919, launched a major offensive. After fierce fighting, Balıkesir fell and 1,500 soldiers were taken prisoner. In the retreat, the British assisting the Greeks, occupied coastal cities. Busra fell on the 8th of July, and British forces occupied Izmit days later. In this pursuit, they were assisted by Circassian rebels that fought off nationalistic guerrilla warfare in Sabanca. The Greeks pushed further east, reaching the town Eskişehir, 100 kilometres from Ankara. Ostensibly the aim of these actions was to enforce the Treaty of Sèvres and while the allied troops missed manpower and will to enforce the treaty, the Greeks took it to themselves, hereby assisted by the English.[155] In South Marmara, ethnic cleansing, cultural destruction, and the enforcement of the Greek language, was to ensure the incorporation of the province into Greece.[156]

On 26 August 1922, the National Movement under the command of the general and leader of the movement, Mustafa Kemal decisively defeated the Greek forces at the battle near Afyonkarahişar. As the Greek front collapsed, the retreating forces applied the tactic of the scorched earth on their way back to reach the Aegean. In South Marmara, the violence reached a peak with Greek forces committing widespread atrocities, terrorizing the population, and burning villages and cities at will. The Kemalist forces used this as a pretext to carry out retaliative actions against the Christians

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[155] Doumanis *Before the Nation* Chap. 5.
[156] Gingeras *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 3.

population, particularly those who were suspected of collaboration or supporting the Greek invasion.

The narrative of the Ottoman Greeks betraying the Empire that they had called home for centuries, aided to the notion that the multi-ethnic nature of the region could never be revived. The idea dramatically became visualized when the National Movement had driven the Greeks back to the shores of South Marmara and took the city of Izmir on 9 September 1922, the place where the Greek invasion had started. In front of the allied boats, with hundreds of thousands of refugees and soldiers trying to escape, while the Jewish and Turkish neighbourhoods were spared, the Armenian and Orthodox Greek neighbourhoods were set ablaze, and centuries of urban co-existence went up in smoke.

On 1 November 1922, the Ottoman Sultanate was abolished by the Grand National Parliament in Ankara. A peace treaty with Greece would be signed on the 24th of July 1923, replacing the Treaty of Sèvres with the Treaty of Lausanne, creating Turkiye's contemporary borders. Control of the former capital Istanbul was handed over to Turkish forces in the weeks after. On the 29th of October, the Republic of Turkey was created by degree of the Grand Turkish National Assembly, administered by the People's Party, headed by Mustafa Kemal.[157] Victory, it appeared, was absolute.

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[157] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, Chap. 6.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

South Marmara now entered a period of stability and tranquillity as a province of the Turkish state. The borders created by the Treaty of Lausanne would, once recognized by international law, be univocally accepted as Turkish. The years 1890-1922 seem in contrast to the peaceful decades afterwards a time of extraordinary change. Borders, regimes, states, and ideologies were altered with unprecedented speed as part of the 'world crisis' that was the First World War and its aftermath. In many ways, South Marmara was indeed part of a global trend of ending multi-ethnic polities as Empires among the world fell. The effects of applying the principle of ethnic nationalism to areas traditionally inhabited by multiple peoples forecasted a dark shadow of what would happen decades later in Europe in the prelude, during, and in the aftermath of the Second World War in which genocides, people's exchanges, and ethnic cleansing were applied on an even broader scale than in the former Ottoman lands.

Yet, in South Marmara the history of regionalism, aspirations to Islamism and even Ottomanism would continue to shimmer below the surface of an ethnic homogenous province of the Turkish state. As this thesis has shown, ideologies are constantly changing and depend on more than peoples' convictions. The speed with which these ideologies were introduced or forced upon the inhabitants of South Marmara made that they failed to become prominent as they could not be rooted within communal traditions and identities. They would, however, keep lingering below the surface and, as recent events in Turkiye have revealed, continue to play a role.

In this final chapter, first a general overview of the changes that occurred in the Ottoman Empire, as described above, will be provided. Thereafter, the conclusion of the four works on which this historiographic research is based, will be examined. These conclusions shall be discussed within the light of the narrative of this research to see to which extend they can explain the rise of ethnic nationalism as the final ideology in South Marmara. Moreover, the role of the international system, as suggested by all four authors as an important factor in reinforcing their respective conclusions,

will be considered. Lastly, in the Final Remarks the broader implications of this research for understanding the end of the Ottoman Empire and the concept of modernity will be discussed at the hand of the ideological changes that occurred in South Marmara between the years 1890-1922.

5.1   The Wider Narrative

This master thesis has shown how a variety of multidisciplinary effects caused the ideological shift from regionalism and religious affiliation to the support of ethnic nationalism in South Marmara. Essential in this development was the undermining of the traditional ideological framework of the Empire that occurred as a side effect of the integration of the Ottoman economy into the western capitalistic system. As foreign investment increased and the hold of the Sublime Porte over the ports decreased, two new classes could rise that, crucially, did not rely on the sultan for their wealth and position. The Muslim middle-class embraced Islam and regionalism, while the Christian merchants overall adopted ethnic nationalism as a unifying ideology that found its way from the Greek mainland and Europe to the Aegean ports.

Meanwhile a new bureaucracy was created by the Sublime Porte as part of the Tanzimat reforms to modernize the Empire by centralizing and reforming it to Western standards. This class of highly educated and Western oriented civil servants came to realize that the sultan and his promotion of Ottomanism were inadequate to counter the spread of (Christian) nationalism nor yielded significant result in mobilizing the population to defend the Empire's borders from continuing western imperialism. They managed to reduce the sultan's influence and actively started to reform the Empire by centralizing it and increasing spending on military and administrative reforms. Because the Christian population enjoyed privileges under the patronage of Russia, France, and England, it was the Muslims that carried the bulk of these costs while seeing their position of power and prestige in the Empire being subverted.

Utilizing this sentiment of resentment among the Muslim of the Empire, the sultan Abdülhamid II managed to restore sultanic power and propagated Islam as a unifying ideology. Although reverting democratic freedoms, western inspired reforms on defence, economy, and taxation were continued, signalling a will among the ruling class to transform the Empire into a more effective power. Avoiding conflict at all costs, the Empire enjoyed

relative stability and growth for two decades. Economic stagnation and a growing discontent with the authoritative rule allowed the exiled opposition together with Macedonian army units to overthrow Abdülhamid II in 1908. The opposition reinstalled parliamentarian rule and replaced the regimes Islamism by ethnic nationalism as the leading ideology in the Empire.

Opposition to their rule, defeat in the Balkan Wars, and a sentiment of approaching collapse led the Young Turks to reverse the democratic freedoms and under absolute rule, carry out policies of ethnic cleansing and peoples exchange to ensure homogeneity in the Empire's key provinces. The outbreak of the First World War with fighting on three fronts further contributed to an encroaching feeling of disaster leading to widespread violence and atrocities. The unconditional surrender of the Ottoman Empire and the collapse of the Young Turks regime left a power vacuum in Anatolia that various powers attempted to fill.

Imperial troops landed on the shores of Anatolia, dividing the peninsula between them, and triggering a national resistance movement based on a shared Turkish/Muslim ideology. The sultan ended his credibility when he sided with the imperial powers in the hope of obtaining a dignified deal after the Ottoman defeat. Forces loyal to him or to the concept of Ottomanism were eliminated by the Greek and National Turkish forced alike. The Turkish national movement defeated first the Armenian and French armies in the East and then routed the Greeks, pushing them out of Anatolia. Within their struggle against Greece, it had become clear that all those that were members of the Greek Orthodox church would be considered ethnic Greeks and the Muslims inhabiting South Marmara, were to be Turks. These new Turks could start to build a new country, a country 'with a clean slate'.

5.2   Endgame: The Writers on the Lasting Ideology in South Marmara

This master thesis has shown how the history described above has influenced the South Marmara region. By 1922 the only remaining ideology in South Marmara was ethnic nationalism. Of all people who had inhabited the region, those who were not Turks had either been killed, fled, or turkified. Explaining how this has come about, the four authors have outlined different factors that, they argue, stand out in significance. For Emme Erol it was above all the entry into the world economy and the changing nature of the Ottoman state that caused this ideological change. It was thus external factors and decisions outside South Marmara that affected the region and led to the destruction of the communities. His descriptions of the coast of South Marmara before the Long War as a 'belle époque' of globalization and prosperity, is a celebration of the autonomy of communities within the Ottoman Empire. It thereby focuses specifically on the experience of the Orthodox Christians and the prosperity of the Aegean ports of South Marmara, rather than the wider region and the effects of these developments on the Muslims. With modernization, however, also came an end to this degree of self-rule which irreversibly ended the unique economic miracle that had benefited the coastal communities of South Marmara.[158]

For Karpat, the role of Islam as used by Abdülhamid II, transformed the Ottoman inhabitants fundamentally because religion redefined its nature to society and the individual by becoming part of the 'national culture'. In this light, the rule of Abdülhamid II was thus a complete continuation of the westernization process because he changed all the ideologies in the Ottoman Empire by altering the role of religion. The other ideologies in the Empire had no other option that also start to appeal to the national culture in order to compete and hence, Abdülhamid II modernized the Ottoman inhabitants to a remarkable degree. Religion, therefore, remains a topic given not enough credit, according to Karpat, in forming the identity of the modern Turk. The paradox between being religious on the one hand, and not opposed to science, process, or modernization, on the other, is what has caused friction in the

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[158] Erol, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia*, 230-245.

Turkish society as the effects of Hamadian rule linger. Karpat states that overcoming this predicament is still a major struggle within the Turkish society.[159]

For Ryan Gingeras it was above all violence itself that transformed the region and deepened the fault lines. Not only the violence that accompanied the rise of nationalism and Islamism but even more the clashes that originated out of class struggle and regional animosity. Most of the violence in South Marmara was not conducted at the hands of armies but the result of a 'culture of paramilitarism'. The Long War but particularly the War of Independence was also a Turkish Civil War in which various factions battled each other for survival and the future of the region. It was only after the victory of the National Movement, that these groups were either suppressed or integrated in the army and the events rebranded as a War of Independence. Ryan Gingeras further highlights that the breakdown of communal relations can only be understood as part of a trajectory of a century long attempt of the state to control the region more rigorously. Although many soldiers as part of the national movement did not fight with the idea of a Turkish Republic in mind, a commitment to a unified and unbounded state remained a constant ever since the rule of Mahmud II.[160]

Nicholas Doumanis notes that after the war, refugees from Greece travelled back to their hometowns and when recognized by inhabitants were greeted with overwhelming emotions of hospitality and warmth. Easily dismissible as trivial after the atrocities that occurred not long before, Doumanis point out that the violence of the last years in South Marmara was indeed the exception. Instead of a 'clash of cultures', the violence that tore apart the communities had been a result of political manipulation. Local histories and regionalism surfaced in moments of peacetime like described above, illustrating how coexistence had been the norm rather than the exception. This conclusion, like Karpat's, points to an external (political) system that abused and deceived the inhabitants of South Marmara and

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[159] Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam,* 408-432.
[160] Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 166-170.

underlined the good nature of the people who once together inhabited the region.[161]

However, describing the change that followed the introduction of capitalism into the Ottoman economy as a 'golden age' or 'belle époque' does not acknowledge the profound change and destruction this caused. Furthermore, the inequality among religious lines made it the time indeed a golden age for the Christians of the Empire only. The frictions caused by the new economic reality, would be the beginning of a trajectory that would see them lose either their life or their homeland forever. The belle époque was thus a swan song for the 600-year Christian presence in the Ottoman Empire and the end of nearly two millennia of Christian presence in South Marmara. Although it was the economic change that spurred the capital into action and it did contribute to the introduction of nationalism within Ottoman ports, it did not cause the dramatic change that overruled all other ideologies.

Nor was regional affiliation or a sense of community with all traditions and shared interest sufficient to close regional ranks in the face of external threats. Showing that it was not underlying ethnical aversion it, nevertheless, has become obvious that for this communal harmony to flourish, it required the Ottoman framework that protected multiethnicity. In the face of nationalistic appeals and particularly when the Ottoman centre crumbled and the Greek and Turkish national forces gained ground, the regional identity proved unable to counter these forces.

It was the violence with which nationality was enforced that made it the dominant ideology in South Marmara. During the decades leading up the Long War but also during the unfolding events all ideologies were still rampant in the region. Not even opposition to the Greek invasion of 'their' homeland united the Muslims to this cause. Although religion did play a uniting role to some degree and was an important aspect of the Turkish ethnicity, it was insufficient by itself to unite the opposition to the Greek invaders. The attempt to replace nationalism with religion ultimately failed because it was unable to produce a political structure that could adequately

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[161] Doumanis *Before the Nation*, 170-173.

protect its followers. It was the military might of the National Movement that could crush all other competing ideologies and 'unite' all Turks under this banner.

The events in South Marmara can therefore only be understood in the wider framework of the international system. The ideologies that have been identified in South Marmara: Ottomanism, regionalism, Islamism, and nationalism, beside regionalism, all originated outside the province, just as the force that would make nationalism dominant. South Marmara therefore does not provide an answer to the origins of these ideologies but shows their regional implications and the requirements for their success.

5.3   Final Remarks

As this research has shown, it was not a fundamental flaw within the Empire that sealed its fate. In a more benign international system that had respected the Empire's borders, the Empire could have continued to function for a considerably longer period of time. In the same light, not one revolt within the Empire was successful without the direct assistance, almost always militarily, of a western power. It was, above all, western imperialism that led to the demise of the Empire, more so than the spread of nationalism, economic incompetence, or a lack of political legitimization of the ruling class.

Be that as it may, the inability of the Empire to militarily compete with its biggest foes Russia and England within an international system that favoured economic exploitation and imperialism did lead to its collapse. The developments within western and central Europe in the 17th and 18th century that led to the technological and militarily position of superiority were not confined to the European peninsula alone but did not occur within the Ottoman lands. In that sense, when western diplomats in the 19th century remarked that the Ottoman Empire only still existed because the balance of power within the concert of Europe necessitated it, they were correct. For the inhabitants of South Marmara, it became increasingly clear that the Europeans determined the fate of the Empire and thus theirs.

We have seen how class and identity can be created as a result of political will. The bureaucracy that gave rise to the Young Turk movement was a conscious creation of the sultan's cabinet. On the other side, the rise of the Greek/Christian middle class was an unintended consequence of capitalism affecting the Ottoman economy and of European racial preferences. The political friction this would cause between the Christians and Muslims and how willingly the Armenians and Greeks would embrace western concepts of nationalism were unforeseen events. To add to the complexity, the Ottoman response to nationalism by propagating the concept of Ottomanism as overreaching identity for all the inhabitants of the Empire failed miserably in South Marmara. During the final years of the Long War, it was only the descendants of refugees from the Caucasus and a small number

of intellectuals[162] that still believed in Ottomanism and the rule of the sultan. The former because of a personal sense of gratitude and loyalty to the sultan, the latter because they realized that embracing nationalism would continue the policies of ethnic homogeneity embodied by the Greek authorities and the Young Turks.

Ideology and the class that embodies it requires next to political will also a political authority able and willing to fight for it. The four authors have pointed that it was not a deep-rooted hatred that led the inhabitants of South Marmara to embrace extreme policies that led to the widespread bloodshed in the province. Yet, despite the fact that nationalism and the modern sense of ethnicity originated in Europe, it was the inhabitants of South Marmara and the wider region that adopted it and gave it special characteristics that made it their own. For the Orthodox Greeks, that was a combination of religion, language, claiming direct legacy with the ancient Greek city state, and an irredentist policy. For the Turks this was a combination between a heritage as descendants of the wandering Turkish tribes, an attachment to the heartlands of the Ottoman Empire, the feeling of being the rightful heirs to the Empire's history, and a shared religion. The story was more complex than an English observer remarked, witnessing the final days of the Ottoman Empire, when stating: "*The introduction of the Western formula (of the principle of nationalism) among these people has resulted in massacre… such massacres are only the extreme form of a national struggle between mutually indispensable neighbours, instigated by this final western idea.*"[163]

Within the violence occurring in the region as part of the Long War, the absence of sultanic rule, and the anarchy that followed, polarization over the remaining recourses and longing for defence led the inhabitants of South Marmara to split in groups. As illustrated, the groups formed among ethnic, regional, and religious lines and more often consisted of gangs and warlords were the right of the strongest mattered. Faced with these circumstances it made sense to align with whatever power was able to shield the inhabitants from violence. For Orthodox Greeks it therefore was sensible to embrace the

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[162] In particular the readings and teachings of Ali Kemal
[163] A. J. Toynbee *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* (London, 1922), 17-18.

coming of Greek forces, while the Muslims after suffering under the occupation, willingly aligned with the National Movement, no matter how ideologically involved they were with its underlying philosophy.

This research has shown that none of the events described can be properly understood in isolation. There is a continuity described of various authorities in Istanbul that actively tried to exercise closer control over the region. This control was lost first to local actors, then to Athens, and finally to Ankara. The Empire was left smaller and devastated but soon after more centralized and coherent in terms of homogeneity.

The ultimate victory of ethnic nationalism as an ideology in terms of human rights and individual freedom can only be considered a retrograde step in history. To illustrate, when in the beginning of March 1821, the Ottoman sultan Mahmud II learned that the Greeks had organized an uprising from the Danuban Principalities and when he was further informed of the slaughter of Muslim subjects, he furiously toyed with the idea, backed by of his favourite at court Halet Efindi, to put all Greeks in the Ottoman Empire to death. Immediately the Supreme Muslim Authority sheykh-ul-islam objected on religious grounds. It would be against the *sharia* to put the innocent together with the guilty. Also, the Grand Vizier objected the proposal outright, leading to his dismissal from the position. The sultan, however, heeded their advice.[164] One century later the differentiation between the innocent and the guilty seemed blurred to the degree that no differentiation was or could be made anymore. Within the prism of ethnic nationalism everybody was either guilty or innocent.

South Marmara had witnessed the rise of a system that in terms of intrusion and control of its inhabitants went beyond anything the Ottoman Empire had previously attempted. Modernity meant a direct state control over its citizens which in terms of culture, history, language, and political affiliation would be homogenous. When Turkiye achieved this goal, it was integrated within the international order in a way that the Ottoman Empire

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[164] Mark Mazower *The Greek Revolution; 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe* (Dublin, Allen Lane, 2021), chap. 1.

had attempted and failed to achieve, namely, on the same footing. Finally, it has modernized sufficiently.

What can be said about modernization in the Ottoman Empire more generally, is that it requires to be 'rooted'. The modernization efforts in the Ottoman Empire were enforced within the span of some years only and the movements to counter these drastic changes followed each other in rapid succession. As a result, the ideologies had no time to be integrated within the life of the inhabitants of South Marmara in a natural way. The challenges posed by the international system necessitated a rapid change that no society based on traditions and customs could absorb so quickly.

For the inhabitants of South Marmara, modernity, when it came in the various forms like reforms, foreign literature, or armies, was a foreign concept at first. It tore apart communities with new concepts to which they could not quickly enough adopt. Since peacetime in the wake of 1922, however, and particularly after the 1950's when the state control after Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's reforms was loosened, a new kind of Turkish nationalism as a separate ideology has appeared. One in which the Ottoman past, religion, and regional affiliations, have a place next to overarching concept of 'Turkishness'. It is the hope that when Tunali Himli in 1922 in the Ottoman parliament stated: "*We have no need of their civilization. We are civilized*"[165] he was referring to this inclusive ideology.

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[165] Gingeras *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire*, 164.

Glossary

Maps

Figure 4: Ottoman losses over the 19th and 20th century[166]

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[166] Map by gifex *The decline of the Ottoman Empire 1798-1923*.
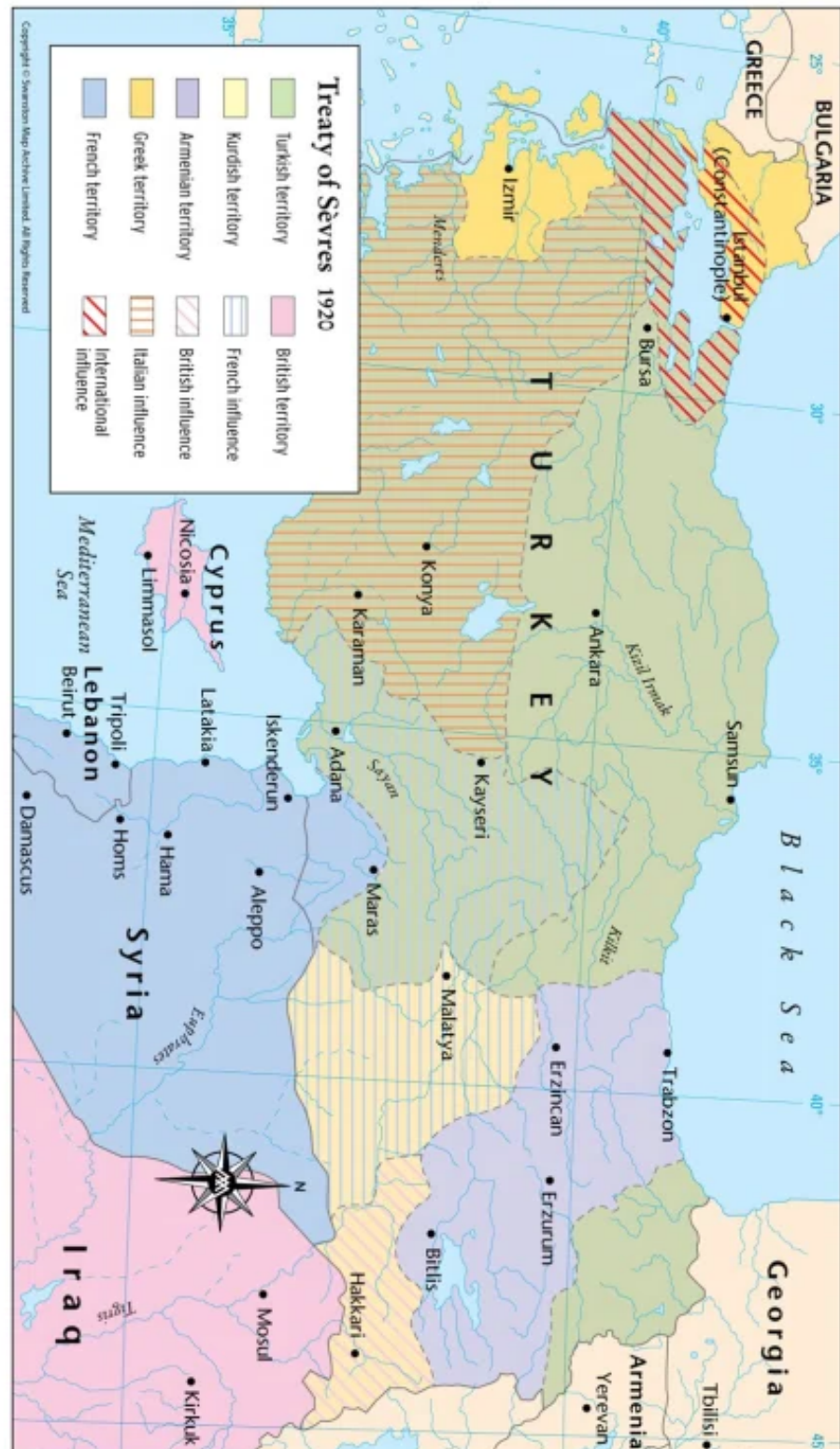
Figure 5 Treaty of Sèvres[167]

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[167] Map by Nathnongoldwag Worldpress.

List of Ottoman Terms:

Ahidname, Sozlesme (treaty, agreements)

Ayan (local land elite)

Beylerbey (governor of a province)

Devşirme (forcibly recruited soldiers and bureaucrats from Balkan Christian subjects)

Eyalet (province)

kalemiye (person in charge of the treasury and budget)

Kapi/Kullari (slaves of the sultan)

mahalles/haras (quarter, neighbourhood)

Millet System (Division of peoples based on religion)

Penics (slaves)

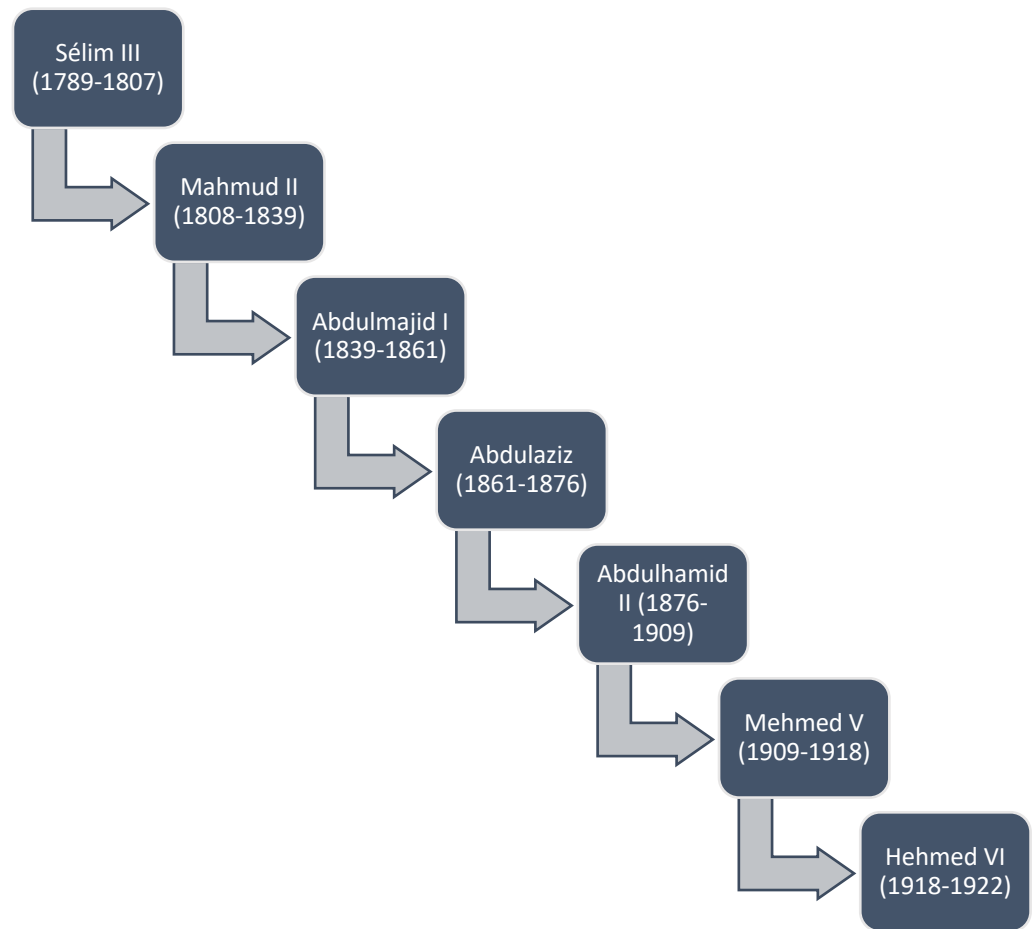*Reis Efendi* (head of the central administration)

Sanjak (province department)

Taife (alternative name for Millet)

Tanzimat (reorganization)

Ulema (students of the sharia)

A chronology of the relevant Ottoman Sultans

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Pledge

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Ischa R. Versluys

Vita

Ischa Richter Versluys was born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands at the turn of the millennium. Displaying an interest in foreign cultures and countries from a young age onwards, his exchange to Milan, Italy, during high school made a lasting impression. However, particularly his voyage after graduation, taking him to Israel, China, and Mexico caused a deep interest into conflict resolution and the role of changing perceptions of identity as an aspect thereof. His bachelor European Studies in Maastricht taught him the basics of the European integration process and the functioning of the European institutions. During his Erasmus to Istanbul, Turkiye, a deep fascination with Ottoman Studies surfaced, particularly with regard to the final decades of the Empire as a key example of how identities change through politics and how these developments still affect us today. To finalize his bachelor program, Mr. Versluys worked for six months in Belgium for a thinktank working on the subject of EU-Turkiye relations. Afterwards Mr. Versluys commenced his master program in Advanced International Studies at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien. Based on his academic achievements, he was awarded a position in the exchange program to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Mr. Versluys successfully completed his master program in June 2023.