TRACING THE OTTOMAN LEGACY OF DEFICIENT HORIZONTAL
RELATIONS IN TURKISH CIVIL SOCIETY

BY

AEUY-JAI GAJASENI TONGBOR

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For my family.

Abstract

This paper attempts to supplement a literature concerned with Turkey's Ottoman legacy, especially as it pertains to the functioning of civil society in Turkey. It does so because the efficacy of civil society in Turkey is a major topic of discussion in light of its European Union accession bid, and Turkey's Ottoman legacy is yet to be comprehensively teased out. While the strong state tradition which is part of the Ottoman legacy is well documented, relations within society separate from the state's influence are yet to be subjected to an historical analysis. While the influence of the state on Turkish society is pervasive, and must be a component of any analysis of civil society in Turkey, analysis focusing on Turkey's strong state legacy has obscured other interesting facets of the country's Ottoman legacy. This paper posits that deficiencies in Turkish civil society are not just the result of the strong state tradition, but also reflect social attitudes that can be traced to a number of policies implemented in the late-Ottoman Empire.

Introduction

This paper attempts to supplement a literature concerned with Turkey's Ottoman legacy, especially as it pertains to the functioning of civil society in Turkey. It does so because the efficacy of civil society in Turkey is a major topic of discussion in light of its European Union (EU) accession bid, and Turkey's Ottoman legacy is yet to be comprehensively teased out. While the strong state tradition which is part of the Ottoman legacy is well documented, relations within society separate from the state's influence are yet to be subjected to an historical analysis. While the influence of the state on Turkish society is pervasive, and must be a component of any analysis of civil society in Turkey, analysis focusing on Turkey's strong state legacy has obscured other interesting facets of the country's Ottoman legacy. This paper posits that deficiencies in Turkish civil society are not just the result of the strong state tradition, but also reflect social attitudes that can be traced to a number of policies implemented in the late-Ottoman Empire. The paper thus seeks to answer the following question: Can deficient horizontal relations in Turkish civil society, evident in a lack of trust, tolerance, and respect for minority issues, be linked to the state's Ottoman legacy?

The paper proceeds as follows: The first chapter discusses contemporary Turkish civil society. It discusses the need for Turkey's civil society to 'qualitatively' improve for the progress to be made in Turkey's EU candidacy, and identifies the paper's focus on the issue of minority and cultural rights. It argues that the procedural difficulties Turkey evidences are compounded by qualitative deficiencies which overarch a number of examples of Turkey's inability to secure minority and cultural rights. The qualitative short-comings of Turkish society, which are usually attributed to the Ottoman legacy of a strong state tradition which inhibits civil society, are also linked to horizontal relations which are not necessarily the result of the strong state tradition. A distinction between vertical and horizontal relations is made to more fully appreciate the obstacles to democratic consolidation as indicated by the fostering of an effective civil society.

The second chapter discusses the structural benefits of civil society, and what is required to achieve them. It is pointed out that effective horizontal networks are concomitant with secondary structures, that is, autonomous public spheres

independent of state influence. Furthermore, their structural aspect is identified as being the result of an economic legacy. In time, these spheres exercised influence over the state and institutionalized a broader public space where economic freedoms were extended to include civil rights. This indicates the cultural nature of civil society, notably the fact that its emergence represented the shattering of traditional and personal ties of allegiance. It is also noted that this notion of civil society did not emerge in the Ottoman Empire. Instead of a shattering of personal ties of allegiance, patrimonial relations persisted. Without this 'shattering,' the Ottoman Empire remained mired in a societal system based on particularistic allegiances which have only recently begun to be challenged.

The third chapter comprises a literature review of Turkey's Ottoman legacy. It is noted that this is generally restricted to an analysis of Turkey's strong state tradition, to the detriment of an investigation of relations which persist in some respects independent of this tradition.

The fourth chapter provides an analysis of reform policies enacted during the late Ottoman Empire. The chapter begins with the *Tanzimat* reforms enacted in the middle of the nineteenth century. Specifically, it highlights how certain of these reforms resulted in the further codification of the Ottoman *millet* system. The *millet* system is thus discussed, and what its further systematization meant. Noting that this occurred during a time of increasing tensions between religious communities, it is posited that these reforms may have institutionalized a break-down of trust in Ottoman society that was occurring as inter-communal relations deteriorated. Following this, further significant reforms and policies up until the establishment of the Turkish Republic are analysed. It is posited that these reforms exacerbated the distrust of others, especially of non-Muslims by Muslims, and later non-Turks, by Turks. In the conclusion it is argued that these developments during the late-Ottoman period may provide an insight into the persistence of deficient horizontal relations which does not rely solely on Turkey's strong state legacy.

Chapter One: Political Liberalization and Civil Society in Turkey

Turkey applied for associate membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959 and signed the ‘Ankara Agreement,’ which recognized Turkey as an associate member, in 1963. This began the process of establishing a customs union between the two actors and, ultimately, of granting Turkish membership in the EEC, later the European Union (EU). In 1987, Turkey applied for full EEC membership, with a customs union finally being established in 1995. Following this, in 1997, Turkey was declared eligible to become an EU member, in 1999 was declared a candidate country for EU membership, and in 2001 the Luxembourg Council adopted the ‘Accession Partnership’ for Turkey. In 2004, the Luxembourg Council defined the conditions for opening accession negotiations, and in 2005 a negotiating framework was adopted and negotiations formally opened. These negotiations were facilitated by a ‘screening process’ which determined to what degree Turkey met the membership criteria, and thus what criteria the country was still required to fulfil.¹

A significant component of the criteria against which Turkey is evaluated is the Copenhagen Criteria, according to which;

“Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.”²

The political obligations of the Copenhagen Criteria sum up a desired project of political liberalization of Turkish society, in that they “serve to improve human rights and democracy, establish the rule of law and develop several initiatives, which in the end create a suitable domestic and international environment for minority rights.”³ So far Turkey is deemed by the EU to have been unsuccessful. The 2012

¹ European Commission, "Enlargement; Countries; Detailed Country Information: Turkey," http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey/index_en.htm.

² Copenhagen European Council, "Presidency Conclusions," (1993).

³ Sule Toktas and Bulent Aras, "The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey," *Political Science Quarterly* 124, no. 4 (2009). p706.

Progress Report on Turkey's accession bid points out that while progress has been made in some areas, significant issues remain. Central to EU concerns is the claim that "[t]here has been very limited progress as regards fundamental rights,"⁴ which is significant because "[t]he EU defines the protection of minority rights as a moral condition for membership."⁵ In particular, the report points to:

- the lack of an independent Ombudsman institution
- continued police impunity
- insufficient access to justice
- increase in violations of freedom of expression
- insufficient progress made on the freedom of assembly and association
- insufficient progress made on the freedom of thought conscience and religion
- a need for legislation concerning women's rights and gender equality to be implemented more effectively
- a need for overall improvement in children's rights
- insufficient progress made on the issue of the socially vulnerable and/or persons with disabilities
- no progress made on anti-discrimination policies
- limited progress made concerning respect for and protection of minorities and cultural rights⁶

In conclusion, the report states that "[t]he situation regarding the respect for fundamental rights continues to be the source of serious preoccupation, notably stemming from the wide application of the legal framework on terrorism and organised crime, which leads to recurring infringement on the right to liberty and security, of the right to a fair trial and the freedom of expression, assembly and association."⁷ Furthermore, Turkey is yet to sign the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Instead, it "responds with claims that it is a unitary republic and does not have a minority question" and that "the Treaty of Lausanne provide[s] protection and equal treatment of non-Muslim minorities, which also allegedly satisfies the Copenhagen criteria."⁸

The procedural difficulty that Turkey is experiencing with political liberalization according to European norms is concomitant with more substantive short-comings in Turkish society. In the literature concerning contemporary Turkish

⁴ Commission Staff, "Turkey 2012 Progress Report," (European Commission, 2012). p72.

⁵ Toktas and Aras, "The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey." pp705-706.

⁶ Staff, "Turkey 2012 Progress Report." pp70-75.

⁷ Ibid. pp74-75.

⁸ Toktas and Aras, "The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey." p708.

societal relations, it is often noted that Turkish civil society lacks in certain crucial respects. For example, Schimmelfennig, Engert, and Knobel argue that Turkish society is fundamentally weak,⁹ and Kalaycıoğlu argues that “civil society in Turkey is highly fragmented, lacks patterns of cooperation and has no active membership basis due to the low public tendency to become part of associational life.”¹⁰ Poulton states that “freedom of expression in Turkey, the basic precondition for democracy, remains severely curtailed.”¹¹ These are perhaps surprising statements, considering the literature also often refers to the significant growth in Turkish civil society since a closer relationship with the EU was established in the 1990s. These seemingly contradictory positions can, however, be resolved by an analysis of the qualitative nature of civil society. Thus Şimşek argues that civil society is more than the mere existence of so-called ‘civil society organizations’ (CSO) and instead requires the existence of ‘civility’ which “implies tolerance, the willingness of individuals to accept disparate political views and social attitudes; to accept the profoundly important idea that there is no right answer.”¹² Similarly, Heper and Yildirim state that the primary characteristics of civil society are pluralism, altruism, toleration, and civility.¹³ Applying criterion derived from this perspective to Turkey, Şimşek goes on to argue that Turkish civil society “still has significant shortcomings” and “is still very far from contributing to democratization.”¹⁴ Özler and Sarkissian reinforce this argument and claim that civil society is underdeveloped and unable to contribute positively to the democratization process because civil society organizations “have developed along a polarized Islamist-secularized divide.”¹⁵

Different issue areas can be used as lenses through which the shortcomings of Turkish civil society can be analyzed. Through a cultural prism, one can analyze the

⁹ In P. Kubicek, "The European Union and Grassroots Democratization in Turkey," *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 3 (2005). p373. See also Frank Schimmelfennig, Stefan Engert, and Heiko Knobel, "Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of Eu Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 41, no. 3 (2003).

¹⁰ In A. Ergun, "Civil Society in Turkey and Local Dimensions of Europeanization," *European Integration* 32, no. 5 (2010). p510. See also Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Civil Society in Turkey: Continuity or Change?," (2002).

¹¹ Hugh Poulton, "The Turkish State and Democracy," *The International Spectator* 34, no. 1 (1999). p62.

¹² S. Şimşek, "The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey: From Quantity to Quality," *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 3 (2004). p53.

¹³ Metin Heper and Senem Yildirim, "Revisiting Civil Society in Turkey," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 11, no. 1 (2011). pp4-6.

¹⁴ Şimşek, "The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey: From Quantity to Quality." p68.

¹⁵ Ş İlğü Özler and Ani Sarkissian, "Stalemate and Stagnation in Turkish Democratization: The Role of Civil Society and Political Parties," *Journal of Civil Society* 7, no. 4 (2011). p378.

political situation of Kurds living in Turkey. From a religious perspective, one can analyze the situation of non-Sunni Muslims, notably the Alevi, as well as the position of non-Muslim minorities, namely Jews, Armenians, and Greeks. While these examples have their own particular concerns, the same deficiencies in Turkish civil society can be attributed to their persistence. Hence Ergil states that

“[t]he Kurdish problem is but one symptom of a more general weakness of Turkish democracy. Although the plight of the Kurds [tends] to receive the greatest international attention, other groups outside the official mainstream of Turkish society – Islamic activists, ethnic and cultural minority groups, and intellectuals on both the left and the right – have all, at one time or another, been silenced by the Turkish state.”¹⁶

The Kurdish question in Turkey is especially significant because it is a prominent reason that Turkey’s integration into the EU is impeded. Yavuz calls them “a litmus test for democracy and human rights in Turkey.”¹⁷ The inability of the Turkish state to accommodate its Kurdish citizens’ demands for cultural recognition, for example by inhibiting the teaching of Kurdish in schools and the broadcasting of Kurdish television and radio programs, is used as an example by the EU as evidence of human rights abuses.¹⁸ While legal prohibitions were removed in the 1990s, restrictions remain in place, and efforts to practice these rights often face official censure and pressure.¹⁹ Historically, the existence of the Kurds in Turkey has been denied by the state, a policy which persists, if not as intently: “There are a number of right-wing academics and intellectuals who continue to try to prove that the Kurdish people and their identity are no different from the Turkish people and culture.”²⁰ Such denial is also evidenced by the fact that the Kurds continue to be denied minority status in the Turkish political system because Turkish Kurds are

¹⁶ Doğu Ergil, "The Kurdish Question in Turkey," *Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 3 (2000). p123.

¹⁷ M Hakan Yavuz, "A Preamble to the Kurdish Question: The Politics of Kurdish Identity," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18, no. 1 (1998). p16.

¹⁸ Ergil, "The Kurdish Question in Turkey." pp122-123.

¹⁹ Poulton, "The Turkish State and Democracy." pp52-53.

²⁰ “The view behind this policy was that the Kurds were of Turkish Origin but during the course of unexpected historical events such as migrations, wars and draughts they had to live under the influence of foreign powers, and thus had become self-alienated. What the Turkish government had to do was to teach them what they had forgotten about themselves.” Sefa Şimşek, "New Social Movements in Turkey since 1980," *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 2 (2004). p131.

predominantly Sunni Muslim. Because of this, Kurds are effectively marginalized or subjected to assimilation.²¹

Poulton states that “[a]ssimilation is deliberately used to overcome ethnic differences” through a process of benign neglect, which refers to the state’s policy of allowing Kurds to exist, but restricts their access to mainstream society unless they “[abandon] their own culture and [adopt] the state approved Turkish model.”²² Such a process is designed to “lead to assimilation over usually two to three generations, as without help the minority culture is clearly at a serious disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the dominant culture.”²³ Such a strategy is significant because it relies upon the collusion of civil society.

A significant manner in which Kurdish cultural identity is restricted is through the prohibition of certain letters which exist in the Kurdish alphabet, but not in the Turkish. Further, restrictions on the expression of Kurdish identity in the public realm extend to the prohibition of political parties which advocate for Kurdish issues. Along with parties which openly advocate for political Islam or radical left-wing views, Kurdish political parties “face censure for being unconstitutional.”²⁴ Ultimately, Taktas and Aras argue that reforms undertaken by Turkey to satisfy the Copenhagen criteria are purposefully aimed at the bare minimum and that “[t]here is still a gap between *de facto* and *de jure* minority issues.”²⁵ Rights for Kurds and other minorities which are supposedly ensured by reforms are complicated by a lack of implementation or the placement of barriers to their enjoyment.

Even following amendments to the Turkish Constitution in 1995 “some basic principles which clearly infringe the right to non-violent freedom of expression remain, as well as others which have been used as the basis for repressing free expression.”²⁶ Concerning civil society attitudes towards the Kurdish situation, “the rigid attitude of the military and the violent attacks of the PKK [Kurdistan Workers’ Party][have in the past] scared many people in Turkey. Thus, efforts to begin an

²¹ For a discussion on the economic marginalization of Kurds, see Paul J White, “Economic Marginalization of Turkey’s Kurds: The Failed Promise of Modernization and Reform,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18, no. 1 (1998).

²² Poulton, “The Turkish State and Democracy.” p48.

²³ Ibid. p49.

²⁴ Ibid. p54.

²⁵ Toktas and Aras, “The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey.” p713.

²⁶ Poulton, “The Turkish State and Democracy.” p56.

open discussion of the Kurdish problem failed each time.”²⁷ Only since 1999 and Turkey’s EU candidacy have more people began to sympathize with the Kurdish movement in Turkey,²⁸ however as explained later, this does not necessarily reflect a qualitative change in civil society.

The sphere of religious freedom in Turkey is also significant as “[r]eligious freedom in Turkey will be one of the most important issues covered during Turkey’s membership negotiations with the EU.”²⁹ Concerning religious identities, the qualitative short-comings of Turkish civil society can be seen with the treatment of non-majority Muslims such as the Alevi, and non-Muslim communities. This is especially evident considering that limited political liberalization, which has occurred since the 1990s, has allowed civil society organizations to operate only for the official state religion of Sunni Islam. All other religious activity is banned from the public sphere. This one-sided increase in civil society activity has not improved the quality of civil society in Turkey. Religious civil society activity focuses almost solely on the Sunni majority, thus further marginalizing minority religious groups. The Alevi are particularly affected by this state of affairs. Sunni dominance in the public sphere, as well as its intimate affiliation with the state, coupled with a generally assimilative Sunni approach to Alevis negatively affects their ability to contribute to democratization.³⁰ In particular, the socialization of Alevi youth through “mandatory instruction of Sunni Islam in state schools” and the socialization of the Alevi in general through practices such as the state-funded construction of mosques in Alevi villages,³¹ when not successful creates strong reactions which do not facilitate open dialogue.

As well as non-majority Muslims, Turkey’s minority regime established by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 officially recognizes Armenians, Greeks and Jews, and legislates for the “right to use their own language, the right of political and civic equality, the right to establish religious, educational, and social welfare institutions,

²⁷ Şimşek, "New Social Movements in Turkey since 1980." p133.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Toktas and Aras, "The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey." p714.

³⁰ re Erman and Emrah Göker, "Alevi Politics in Contemporary Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 4 (2000).

³¹ Grigoriadis, "Islam and Democratization in Turkey: Secularism and Trust in a Divided Society." p1197.

and the right to freedom of religion, travel, and migration.”³² This includes broadcasting and publishing rights. However, Toktas and Aras point out that this regime “has been violated continuously by domestic political maneuvers [sic] and measures operating within the pretext of country-specific conditions.”³³ Aksan reinforces this claim when she states that “present-day Turks will have difficulty allowing that an Orthodox Greek living in Turkey is somehow a Turkish citizen. Armenians and Jews are similarly viewed with suspicion.”³⁴

The above are all examples of a need and desire for further and more substantive political liberalization in Turkish society. While Kanra argued in 2005 that “there appears to be considerable scope to broaden the horizon of Turkey’s long-running aspiration towards democratization and towards the reconciliation of Islam and democracy,”³⁵ Grigoriadis points out that since 2007, “[a]midst rising social tension, mutual distrust has aggravated relations between secularists and conservatives.”³⁶ Since that date, successive political crises concerning the secularist nature of the regime have resulted in Turkish societal divisions manifesting as large protests. Grigoriadis argues that the core element of these divisions is a “lack of respect for individual autonomy ... [which pervades] the whole of Turkish society.”³⁷ In 2012, Mousseau states that although reform progress has been made in the economic sphere and with reference to fundamental rights concerning physical integrity and protection from torture and political imprisonment, fundamental rights concerning “political, civil and social rights such as freedom of expression and workers’ rights seem to be sustained at low levels similar to the pre-candidacy period.”³⁸ Kubicek states that although Turkey’s EU candidacy, along with the opening represented by the 1999 Marmara earthquake, opened up a space

³² Toktas and Aras, “The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey.” p700.

³³ Ibid. p702

³⁴ V.H. Aksan, “Ottoman to Turk: Continuity and Change,” *International Journal* 61, no. 1 (2005). p31.

³⁵ Bora Kanra, “Democracy, Islam and Dialogue: The Case of Turkey,” *Government and Opposition* 40, no. 4 (2005). p515.

³⁶ Grigoriadis, “Islam and Democratization in Turkey: Secularism and Trust in a Divided Society.” p1196.

³⁷ Ibid. p1207.

³⁸ Demet Yalcin Mousseau, “Is Turkey Democratizing with Eu Reforms?: An Assessment of Human Rights, Corruption and Socio-Economic Conditions,” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 12, no. 1 (2012). p76.

for liberalization and democratization, this has mostly been filled by rhetoric, and powerful forces continue to frustrate reform.³⁹

The inability of Turkish civil society to flourish given these openings and concomitantly to instead be filled by conservative forces indicates the qualitative shortcomings of civil society in Turkey. Namely, a lack of trust of other groups in Turkish society, coupled with privileged state relationships for certain actors, impedes civil society.

“In Turkey, such lingering impediments as populism, clientelism, and opportunism seem to have prevented the members of civil society from entertaining an idea of a common good ... This state of affairs must also have had an adverse impact on the development of trust among the members of civil society and, consequently, on the building of horizontal linkages among the members of civil society. Similarly, the continuing weakness of civil society has prevented it from acting as an efficacious countervailing power vis-à-vis the state.”⁴⁰

This passage indicates that horizontal linkages are integral to a qualitatively enriched civil society. A significant example of the lack of horizontal linkages in Turkish society is seen with the activity of Sunni-Islam civil society groups. Even when the issues that majority-Sunni religious groups are advocating for are issues that affect all religious groups, such as the right to wear a headscarf and practice religion without repression, majority-Sunni religious groups do not frame their advocacy beyond their particular religious framework. Although at least one Sunni group “[has] expressed a desire to expand their repertoire to reflect that of a universal human rights organization ... The leader of the group confirmed that the organization had remained narrow in focus because of the demands of its members.”⁴¹ After conducting an analysis of three Islamic non-governmental organizations, Kadioğlu identifies that they all have at least one thing in common: a moralism which ultimately inhibits sympathy with other marginalized groups who face similar problems. This is especially the case with Islamic groups which

³⁹ P. Kubicek, "The Earthquake, the European Union and Political Reform in Turkey," *Mediterranean Politics* 7, no. 1 (2002). See also Paul Kubicek, "The Earthquake, Europe, and Prospects for Political Change in Turkey," *Middle East* 5, no. 2 (2001).

⁴⁰ Heper and Yıldırım, "Revisiting Civil Society in Turkey." p12.

⁴¹ A. Sarkissian and Ş.İ. Özler, "Democratization and the Politicization of Religious Civil Society in Turkey," (2012). p11.

advocate for women's rights who cannot support broader women's rights movements which would include advocating, for example, for the rights of prostitutes and homosexuals.⁴² What these examples show, according to Kadioğlu, is a general in-group mentality which also indicates that a general suspicion of the rights of others is pervasive in Turkish society.

Qualitative short-comings reflect an in-group mentality which is concomitant with fragmentation in society, and can be seen in examples of problematic horizontal relationships. In short, qualitative short-comings reflect a lack of horizontal relations which can bridge social cleavages, and a lack of tolerant, open attitudes towards other groups in society. Toros's study of civil society in Turkey is indicative of the pervasive nature of in-group mentalities in Turkish civil society. Stating at the outset that "[t]hrough membership to civil society organizations, citizens may develop their qualities of trust, confidence, and cooperation," which are then "expected to reappear and settle in the political culture of the society,"⁴³ Toros finds that an environment, i.e. a vibrant civil society, "should produce a number of practices such as social compromise, tolerance, political democracy, and the like" which are all missing in the Turkish context.⁴⁴ Problematic horizontal relations are compounded by problematic vertical relations, that is, the lack of horizontal relations in Turkish society is compounded by a tradition of the Turkish state fostering vertical relationships with privileged actors. This two-dimensional problem is evident in the number of explanations put forward to explain a lack of buy-in to EU reforms by the Turkish public. A lack of buy-in to EU reforms is considered indicative of horizontal relations that are intolerant and closed to the plight of minority groups in society.

The lack of buy-in to democratic reforms by the Turkish public is evidenced by Kubicek who finds that while there is support for democratic principles and human rights in the abstract, when applied to specific human rights issues and democratization requirements such support falls away dramatically. The point he makes

⁴² Ayşe Kadioğlu, "Civil Society, Islam and Democracy in Turkey: A Study of Three Islamic Non-Governmental Organizations," *The Muslim World* 95, no. 1 (2005).

⁴³ Emre Toros, "Understanding the Role of Civil Society as an Agent for Democratic Consolidation: The Turkish Case," *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 3 (2007). p399.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p405.

“is that there is some evidence to suggest that the Turkish public supported the reforms *as a response to EU conditionality when they were adopted*. In other words, there is little to suggest that some of the most basic reforms demanded by Europe – and this would include provisions for the Kurdish language, as minority rights are integral to the Copenhagen Criteria – were driven by grassroots forces. Without pressure from the outside, it is highly doubtful that such reforms would have been adopted.”⁴⁵

Identifying the lack of buy-in from the public is difficult, and a number of explanations are put forward. What these different explanations reflect, however, is either a vertical or horizontal dimension. That is, they either reflect privileged vertical relations, or deficient horizontal relations. The vertical dimension of this problem refers to the relations privileged societal actors have with state elites who are conservative in nature and represent the closest link to the Ottoman state tradition. In the literature, the inability of Turkish civil society to establish effective horizontal relations is usually put down to this vertical dimension, i.e. it is a strong state tradition that inhibits civil society. The next section first describes these elites and outlines their resistance to democratic reform before highlighting the vertical relationships they have established which bolster their power in an increasingly democratic polity and privilege certain groups.

State Elites and Resistance to Democratization

Since the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the strong-state tradition, which is a continuation of an Ottoman ethos, has been embodied by Kemalism.⁴⁶ Kemalist ideology grew out of the Turkish War of Independence and was further developed by Kemal Ataturk during the Single Party Period leading up to the Second World War. Kemalism is both “one of the strongest currents to have influenced Turkish political culture” and “somewhat of a problematic and fuzzy concept to deal with.”⁴⁷ This stems from the pragmatic approach it directs to its

⁴⁵ P. Kubicek, "The European Union and Grassroots Democratization in Turkey," *ibid.* 6(2005). pp372-373. Italics in original.

⁴⁶ METIN HEPER, "The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy: Turkey and Germany Compared," *Comparative Political Studies* 25, no. 2 (1992).

⁴⁷ Sinan Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, Secularism and Nationalism*, vol. 10, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics (London: Routledge, 2009). p6.

somewhat vague goal; “to bring the nation-state of Turkey to the level of the advanced states of the world explains the essence of Kemalist reforms.”⁴⁸

Kemalism and Turkish state elites are predominantly represented in the military, which proactively resists some of the most significant reform processes, notably those concerning minority rights. The Turkish military is the most significant site of resistance to reform according to EU criteria because of its privileged role, established during the Turkish War of Independence, as guardians of the republic. Furthermore, along with “[t]he army’s heroic status as guardian, the perception of external military threats from the region, and favorable portrayals in the media and in schools have facilitated the army’s strong presence in society.”⁴⁹ The Turkish army’s resistance to a number of Copenhagen Criteria is, on the face of it, surprising, considering;

“The army has played a prominent role in Turkey’s political modernization leading the country along a Western path, by endorsing the dynamic transformation of the Turkish state and society, in line with Atatürk’s ideological commitment to the West. It also intervened politically to counter the forces blocking this transformation and to preserve democracy, secularism, and national unity in the face Islamist, separatist, and sectarian challenges.”⁵⁰

Specifically, this role of guardian entails defending the six principles of Kemalism: nationalism, secularism, republicanism, populism, statism, and reformism, and when viewed from this perspective it is easy to see how the army’s priorities do not match up with the Copenhagen criteria.⁵¹ For one thing, as Öniş points out, the version of modernity aspired to by the Turkish military, partly informed by Turkist nationalism, is no longer in line with the post-modern ideals of the EU, a hallmark of which “is recognition of multiple identities with a strong emphasis on the promotion of minority rights.”⁵² The underlying rationale of resistance to reforms which would allow for the freedom of cultural and ethnic expression concerns the risks that such measures would supposedly present to the state. This especially relates to the

⁴⁸ Suna Kili, "Kemalism in Contemporary Turkey," *International Political Science Review / Revue internationale de science politique* 1, no. 3 (1980). p384.

⁴⁹ N. Narli, "Civil-Military Relations in Turkey," *Turkish Studies* 1, no. 1 (2000). p108.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ For an overview of these six principles and how they continue to influence Turkish politics see Kili, "Kemalism in Contemporary Turkey."

⁵² Z. Öniş, "Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-Eu Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era," *Turkish Studies* 4, no. 1 (2003). pp11-12.

Kurdish population in Turkey. The military fear “that broadening the space for identity politics would encourage not only rising fundamentalism but also Kurdish separatism,”⁵³ overarching which is the argument that such reforms would threaten Turkey’s territorial integrity. The military thus proactively counter democratic reform through informal mechanisms “which have effectively preserved the balance of power on the side of the military.”⁵⁴ “[A]ny demand for expanding cultural rights to a level that may provoke the fear of separation is met with suspicion and is rejected, if not blocked.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, the security mindset of the military concerning the right of minorities to self-determination is complemented by a more purely nationalistic attitude put forward by right-wing political elites. For example, for the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), the ‘Kurdish question’ is framed as an issue concerning terrorism.⁵⁶

This sort of nationalistic attitude is also evident within the Turkish judiciary, which Patton describes as the “civilian doppelganger to the military” and states that it is a “key instrument of anti-EU forces.”⁵⁷ Take, for example, Turkey’s Constitutional Court which, in 2008, only narrowly allowed the ruling AKP party to remain active after a landslide election victory, for allegedly endangering the secular foundation of the state due to its support, and the subsequent passing of a constitutional amendment the aim of which was to allow the use of the headscarf in the university campuses. In annulling the amendment, “[t]he Chief Justice of the Court in his statement announcing the verdict, underlined that this was a ‘serious warning’ to the government party not to violate the Republic’s principles of secularism.”⁵⁸ The judiciary’s anti-reformist agenda represents illiberal and anti-democratic views which “stem from its statist priorities that put the interests of the state above the rights of individuals”⁵⁹ and suspicion “that EU reforms will empower Islamists and Kurdish separatists.”⁶⁰

⁵³ Marcie J. Patton, "Akp Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the Eu Process?," *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007). p353.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p354.

⁵⁵ Toktas and Aras, "The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey." p713.

⁵⁶ Tanil Bora, "Nationalist Discourses in Turkey," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2 (2003). p448.

⁵⁷ Patton, "Akp Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the Eu Process?." p349.

⁵⁸ Sahin Alpay, "Making Sense of Turkish Politics," *The International Spectator* 43, no. 3 (2008). p6.

⁵⁹ Patton, "Akp Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the Eu Process?." p349.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p350.

Along with concerns about the expression of cultural rights by groups deemed to present threats to national security and unity, a corresponding concern within Kemalist political elites focuses on threats to Turkey's secular identity. For example, Baç highlights the fact that the concerns of the Kemalist elite are focused not only on the threat that the expression of cultural rights represents, particularly with reference to the idea of Kurdish separatism, but also on the threat of divisive cleavages represented by Islamic fundamentalism.⁶¹ The decision of the Constitutional Court mentioned above "[reinforced] claims by intellectuals about the rise of a 'juristocracy', a regime where the sovereignty does not belong to the people or the parliament but to the judiciary."⁶² This idea can be attributed to all state elites mentioned here and hence contributes to Poulton's argument that because the Turkish military "is inimical to all forms of expression other than the official Kemalist line ... the Turkish polity is inimical to civil society *per se*,"⁶³ a condition that undermines the quality of Turkey's horizontal relations.

Kemalist state elites have established a number of vertical relationships which contribute to the short-comings of Turkish civil society. Many of these occur through the military. Indeed, the Turkish military, whose autonomy is considered to be a major impediment to democratic consolidation, "attempt to bolster their autonomy from civilian governments with the argument that they have always had a special relationship with the people."⁶⁴ One of the most pervasive of these is the relationships the military has institutionalized with Turkish students through the state education system.⁶⁵ Güney and Karatekelioğlu, for example, show how the military is directly involved in high school curricula which particularize human rights. In addition they highlight a mandatory course in the high school curriculum, taught since 1926, by military officers and with a textbook written by military personnel, which aims at political socialization of young citizens. They state that

⁶¹ M.M. Baç, "Turkey's Political Reforms and the Impact of the European Union," *South European Society and Politics* 10, no. 1 (2005).

⁶² Grigoriadis, "Islam and Democratization in Turkey: Secularism and Trust in a Divided Society." p1206.

⁶³ Poulton, "The Turkish State and Democracy." p55. See also M Lutfullah Karaman and Bülent Aras, "The Crisis of Civil Society in Turkey," *Journal of Economic and Social research* 2, no. 2 (2000).

⁶⁴ Aylin Güney and Petek Karatekelioğlu, "Turkey's Eu Candidacy and Civil-Military Relations: Challenges and Prospects," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, no. 3 (2005). p441.

⁶⁵ See K. Çayır and İ. Gürkaynak, "The State of Citizenship Education in Turkey: Past and Present," *Journal of social science education* 6, no. 2 (2008).

this course, “[i]nstead of developing citizens with a wide perspective and a critical stance, this curriculum encourages students to be suspicious of all foreigners, particularly people from neighbouring countries; to fear all differences... and to treat their non-Muslim friends as categorically different (in fact as non-Turkish).”⁶⁶ It is especially effective considering the ramifications engaging with people at this age have for future civic identity.⁶⁷ Furthermore, this is part of a broader public relations strategy which promotes “its ‘national security concept’ to raise citizens’ consciousness about internal and external threats that it identifies.”⁶⁸

The relationship that the military establishes with students is continued, at least for young men, with mandatory military service. This facilitates concordance between the army and society through intimate and informal links between military brass and the citizen army; “the officer corps is not a separate and exclusionary institution. Rather, it comprises a group of elite soldiers who sustain a citizens’ army largely by maintaining the respect and trust of the citizen soldiers.”⁶⁹ This does not, however, indicate a close relationship between military officers and citizens. Military culture in Turkey is concerned also with public appearance, and is organised in such a way that elite soldiers “are at once distant from society, yet are perceived to be an organic part of it.”⁷⁰ Ultimately, Turkey’s management of vertical civil-military relations results in a concordance between the military and citizenry and “an endorsing political culture.”⁷¹

As well as the vertical relations mentioned above, since the rise of multi-party democracy, political patronage has become a facet of contemporary Turkish politics, as state elites seek to maintain political support.⁷² This refers to the ongoing practice of forming links “with leading economic interest group associations and some key persons such as local notables and others who could mobilize votes for

⁶⁶ Ibid. See also Ayşegül Altınay, “Human Rights or Militarist Ideals? Teaching National Security in High Schools,” in *Human Rights Issues in Textbooks: The Turkish Case*, ed. Deniz Tarba Ceylan and Gürol Irzik (Istanbul: The History Foundation of Turkey, 2004). p86.

⁶⁷ James Youniss, Jeffrey A McLellan, and Miranda Yates, “What We Know About Engendering Civic Identity,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 40, no. 5 (1997).

⁶⁸ Narli, “Civil-Military Relations in Turkey.” p118.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p117.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p119.

⁷¹ Ibid. p120.

⁷² See Metin Heper and E. Fuat Keyman, “Double-Faced State: Political Patronage and the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998).

them.”⁷³ The Alevi provide a good example of this. Due to its close relationship with Kemalist elites, the most powerful Alevi group undermines Alevi desire for self-determination. Erman and Göker point out that their defence of Kemalist ideology, such as secularism, ultimately serves to facilitate the continued erosion of Alevi influence in local politics and are thus “skeptical [sic] about the possible contributions of Alevi politics to Turkish democracy, as shaped under current political conditions.”⁷⁴

Concomitant with political patronage, another example of detrimental vertical relations is the continuing dependency of the Turkish economy on the state. Şimşek points out that the state is still the biggest economic patron in Turkish society. Not only is the degree of dependency of private industry and business on the state ‘remarkable,’ “[d]ependency on bureaucracy and government as institutions which control the framework of economic activity may take extreme forms since this relation is hardly formalized or institutionalised [sic]. Consequently, state-business relations may easily turn into clientelism and patronage relations.”⁷⁵ A significant ramification of this sort of dependency is the necessity for businesses and other groups to get on well with the state, and thus not challenge it. Especially problematic for the functioning of civil society, this applies to the education sector as well as the media, who reliance on the state therefore means they “cannot pressure the state to liberalize and democratize.”⁷⁶ Mousseau extends this insight and argues that the nature of Turkey’s economy, especially the existence of “clientelist networks competing aggressively over state rents ... may explain the unstable and illiberal nature of Turkey’s democracy.”⁷⁷

Finally, a very significant vertical relationship established by state elites which privilege certain groups concerns the role of religion in Turkish society, namely the priority given to Sunni Islam. This may sound surprising, given Turkey’s avowedly secular state, but describing Turkey as a secular state is inaccurate. This is because it does not “[involve] a neutral stance toward different religious beliefs, as well as the phenomenon of religion in general. A genuinely

⁷³ Ibid. p261.

⁷⁴ re Erman and Emrah Göker, "Alevi Politics in Contemporary Turkey," *ibid.*36(2000). p115.

⁷⁵ Şimşek, "The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey: From Quantity to Quality." p59.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p60.

⁷⁷ Demet Yalcin Mousseau, "Democracy, Human Rights and Market Development in Turkey: Are They Related?," *Government and Opposition* 41, no. 2 (2006). p299.

secular state has no preferential links with any religion and neither promotes nor obstructs religious beliefs among its citizens. The republican Turkish state fulfils neither of these conditions.” The Turkish state is instead both ‘assertively’ secular due to its “aggressive measures to put religious institutions under its firm control and promote a ‘religion-free’, ‘rational’ society” and has repeatedly compromised this assertively secular character “toward championing a certain form of state religion,” that is, Sunni Islam. Thus, as Türkmen points out, “Turkish secularism is commonly understood to be based not on the exclusion of religion from the system since its inception but, rather, on the control and reinterpretation of Islam by the state.”⁷⁸

Türkmen highlights the use of state education in fostering a national morality which subscribes to Kemalist ideology. Importantly, he notes that the education curriculum concerning religious studies increasingly prioritises Sunni Islam in proportion to a decrease in content concerning other religions. He states that “[s]uch changes reveal the consequences of political and social changes occurring in the Turkish public sphere, in parallel with the transformation of Islamic actors themselves,” namely, the integration of Islamic actors into the social system.⁷⁹ The transformation of Islamic actors refers to the electoral success of the moderately Islamic Justice and Development Party and concomitant politicization of religious civil society since the 1990s. Although the ‘civil society opportunity structure’ is open to all religious groups, the Sunni Islam’s privileged relationship with the state due to the assumption of religious homogeneity in Turkey means that only Sunni-Islam groups can effectively enter their concerns into the public sphere,⁸⁰ thus further depriving minority religious groups.

Other problematic vertical relations which explain the lack of buy-in by the Turkish public can also be seen. Ergun, for example, points out that it could be the result of a concern that the substantial involvement of European actors in efforts to energize Turkish civil society has detrimental effects concerning its qualitative nature; “dependency on international funding and project-based work has alienated domestic civil society actors from their grassroots bases, and weakened their

⁷⁸ Buket Türkmen, "A Transformed Kemalist Islam or a New Islamic Civic Morality? A Study of "Religious Culture and Morality" Textbooks in the Turkish High School Curricula," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no. 3 (2009). p381.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p396.

⁸⁰ Sarkissian and Özler, "Democratization and the Politicization of Religious Civil Society in Turkey."

relations with core supporters and members.”⁸¹ Additionally, Tocci argues that “the accession process has not entailed sufficiently dense and widespread contacts between Turkish officials and non-official actors with the EU institutional framework.”⁸²

The problematic nature of Turkey’s horizontal relations is not as clear or as fully articulated in the literature on civil society, but a number of examples can still be drawn upon, and much of the literature speaks at least broadly of this deficiency.⁸³ Şimşek tells us that “[d]eep fragmentation in [Turkish] civil society is accompanied by a lack of tolerance and respect for others.”⁸⁴ Therefore, when particular advocacy groups gain power in society, they tend to stifle, circumscribe or ignore other social issues. Şimşek draws on an example which illustrates this problem.

“The following experiment conducted by two female journalists shows this general problem of intolerance in a theatrical style. “They went to a movie theatre in Fatih, a district of Istanbul known for its religious conservatism, dressed in mini-skirts, and alternatively, to an exclusive night club, wearing black veils. In both instances they were forced to leave the premises.””⁸⁵

Another instance of intolerance in Turkish civil society is the example of Prime Minister Erdogan’s wife who “was attacked in the media for her preference for wearing a headscarf to an official event and was discouraged from attending on more than one occasion.”⁸⁶

Furthermore, the problematic nature of Turkey’s horizontal relations can be seen in the fact that divisions within political elites concerning the legitimacy of EU ‘interference’ generate an inconsistent application of European norms.⁸⁷ This argument is supported by Heper who points to a ‘bifurcation’ of state and political

⁸¹ Ergun, "Civil Society in Turkey and Local Dimensions of Europeanization." p520.

⁸² N. Tocci, "Europeanization in Turkey: Trigger or Anchor for Reform?," *South European Society and Politics* 10, no. 1 (2005). p82.

⁸³ For example see Şimşek, "The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey: From Quantity to Quality." P. Kubicek, "The European Union and Grassroots Democratization in Turkey," *ibid.*6(2005).

⁸⁴ S. Şimşek, "The Transformation of Civil Society in Turkey: From Quantity to Quality," *ibid.*5(2004). p63.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Aksan, "Ottoman to Turk: Continuity and Change." p35.

⁸⁷ C. Rumford, "Failing the Eu Test? Turkey's National Programme, Eu Candidature and the Complexities of Democratic Reform," *Mediterranean Politics* 7, no. 1 (2002).

elites. When they emerged after the Second World War, “[t]he political elite subscribed to popular democracy and placed narrow political interests over the general public interest. For the state elite, the Republic came first and democracy second.”⁸⁸ Although this situation has changed since 1980, with the military generally accepting the legitimacy of particularistic interests, “the state elite still does not trust the political elite” some of whom it still believes “place party or even personal interests above the long-term interests of the nation.”⁸⁹ Hence, “if in the military’s opinion the vital interests of the country are at stake, it could intervene, according to provisions in the 1982 constitution and the bylaws of the military that entrust the officer corps with the duty of defending the country against internal as well as external enemies.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Metin Heper, "The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics," *Journal of International Affairs-Columbia University* 54, no. 1 (2000). p73.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p77.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 2: Structural Qualities of Civil Society

The above examples of the shortcomings of Turkish civil society are indicative of a public sphere lacking the qualitative requirements that would facilitate bottom-up democratization. There is a concern that progress so far made in the reform process stipulated by the EU has been responding mainly to the material incentives of conditionality rather than to the moral underpinnings of reforms.⁹¹ Furthermore, “Turkey [continues to pursue] its conventional approach to the protection of minorities in its relations with the EU and does not plan to change the qualitative nature of these rights.”⁹² This is problematic because, following Putnam, the existence of civil society organizations are beneficial to democracy only when they fulfil;

“their capacity to socialize participants into the ‘norms of generalized reciprocity’ and ‘trust’ that are essential components of the ‘social capital’ needed for effective cooperation. Civil associations [are supposed to] provide the ‘networks of civil engagement’ within which reciprocity is learned and enforced, trust is generated, and communication and patterns of collective action are facilitated.”⁹³

Currently, Turkish civil society is more accurately represented by Putnam’s description of “dense but segregated horizontal networks [which] sustain cooperation within each group”⁹⁴ but, as Foley and Edwards point out, “may or may not contribute to effective democratic governance.” Indeed, “at times they become the basis for social strife.”⁹⁵ Effective civil associations, that is, horizontal networks which “cut across social cleavages [and] nourish wider cooperation”⁹⁶ can be referred to as ‘secondary structures’ that generate social capital.

In the literature on civil society, ‘secondary structures’ represent a structural component that operates independently of central government and is based on property rights. More broadly, they can be conceived as “corporate bodies with autonomous jurisdiction ... which formed the institutional base of civil society in the

⁹¹ Kubicek, "The European Union and Grassroots Democratization in Turkey."

⁹² Toktas and Aras, "The Eu and Minority Rights in Turkey." p711.

⁹³ Michael W Foley and Bob Edwards, "The Paradox of Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 3 (1996). p41. See also Robert D Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton university press, 1994). pp167-175.

⁹⁴ *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. p175.

⁹⁵ Foley and Edwards, "The Paradox of Civil Society." p41.

⁹⁶ Putnam in *ibid*.

West.”⁹⁷ The fact that they are based on property rights indicates that the concept of civil society is closely linked to the development of liberal economic relations, relations which were then codified by citizenship rights. This section briefly provides an account of the evolution of civil society along with citizenship, as it was the codification of citizenship that indicated the concrete emergence and expansion of a public sphere existing between the state and family structures. This account of the evolution of civil society/citizenship is important because it highlights the distinctively cultural underpinnings of their emergence. The economic nature of civil society was necessarily facilitated by the emergence of a particular class, the bourgeoisie, acting as a social carrier. Following this, the argument that the Ottoman Empire lacked civil society is outlined. This leads us in to an analysis of society during the late-Ottoman period, during which time the Ottoman state and its society were subjected to numerous reforms inspired by increased interaction with European modernity.

Bernhard tells us that “[c]ivil society as an historical phenomenon first began to take shape in late medieval-early modern Europe. It refers to social groups who were emancipated from restrictions placed upon them by feudal and absolutist systems.”⁹⁸ Actually existing civil societies have varied greatly, “but it almost always dealt with social and political life beyond the domestic sphere of home and family.”⁹⁹ Bernhard reduces the diversity of examples of civil society down to a structural and institutional definition and describes civil society as “a public space structurally located between official public and private life and populated by a range of different autonomous organizations. Thus, civil society has concrete structural boundaries and is populated by a diverse set of agents.”¹⁰⁰ Likewise, Janoski states that “[c]ivil society represents a sphere of dynamic and responsive public discourse between the state, the public sphere consisting of voluntary organizations, and the

⁹⁷ S. Mardin, "Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11, no. 3 (1969). p264.

⁹⁸ M. Bernhard, "Civil Society and Democratic Transition in East Central Europe," *Political Science Quarterly* (1993). p308.

⁹⁹ Jürgen Kocka, "Civil Society from a Historical Perspective," *European Review* 12, no. 01 (2004). p66.

¹⁰⁰ Bernhard, "Civil Society and Democratic Transition in East Central Europe." p309.

market sphere concerning private firms and unions” and can be applied to all countries “if they have private organizations between the state and the family.”¹⁰¹

The structural nature of civil society is a result of its economic legacy. The rise of commercial and merchant classes within European feudal systems led to a shared understanding of interests. Furthermore, the geographical nature of commercial organizations, namely the fact that they congregated in towns and cities, made it possible for some autonomy of rule, especially concerning economic matters, to be granted within the feudal system. Over time, this nascent bourgeoisie began to understand the value of a sphere autonomous from the arbitrary power of absolutist rule which had established itself after feudalism. Thus economic autonomy evolved into a broader conception of autonomy for social actors. “This new public space came to be situated between the official public life of the monarchy, the state, and the nobility, and that of private and/or communal life.”¹⁰² Having been allowed the freedom to organize their own affairs as long as they didn’t conflict with the state, they eventually grew to such a level of sophistication and organization that “they were able to compel the state through political struggles to recognize and respect their existence. With time they were able to use this autonomy from the state to institutionalize influence over the official political sphere and radically alter it.”¹⁰³ Critically, this capacity to radically alter the state was made possible by the creation of legal boundaries which protected nascent civil society from the exercise of state power. Therefore, Bernhard claims that the most important requirement for a civil society to be truly emancipatory is the sanction of the state; “the public space must be guaranteed as a realm of freedom from the state and by the state itself... Barring this, a liberated public space would be but an anarchy of competing interests.”¹⁰⁴ This means that the state must recognise the value of allowing civil society to exist, that is, that it is in its own best interests. This is because “[s]trengthening civil society also serves to strengthen the state itself.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Thomas Janoski, *Citizenship and Civil Society: A Framework of Rights & Obligations in Liberal, Traditional, and Social Democratic Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). p12.

¹⁰² Bernhard, "Civil Society and Democratic Transition in East Central Europe." p308.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p309.

¹⁰⁵ Kocka, "Civil Society from a Historical Perspective." p72.

The economic dimension of civil society as it emerged as an historical phenomenon led it away from earlier Enlightenment conceptions which idealized it as “a utopian plan for a future civilization in which the people would live together in peace as politically mature, responsible citizens.”¹⁰⁶ The influence of economic considerations distinguished a sphere separate from the state defined by the existence of a bourgeois middle-class rather than “a ‘civil society’ made up of citizens.”^{107 108} Following the claim that effective citizenship rights represent the codification of civil society, Kalberg’s argument “that *cultural* forces [have played] a central part in the rise of modern citizenship”¹⁰⁹ is in other words an argument highlighting the necessity of ‘civil’ relations for the establishment of modern citizenship rights. Kalberg argues that “[t]he development of pre-modern citizenship by no means occurred in some ‘automatic’ sense with the rise of cities, increasing trade, industrialization, and expansion of the public sphere.”¹¹⁰ Fundamentally, what is required for the emergence of pre-modern citizenship is a cultural transformation; “a shattering of *personal* ties of allegiance typically cultivated in [traditional] groupings” without which “no formulation of impersonal and binding notions of civil rights can occur.”¹¹¹

Referring to the structural nature of civil society, Mardin tells us that the Ottoman Empire lacked ‘civil society’: “It lacked that basic structural component ... a part of society that could operate independently of central government and was based on property rights.”¹¹² Historically, “[c]ivil society emerged as a critical idea and oppositional force in the age of absolutism,”¹¹³ however, referring to a history of civil society which saw it develop in conjunction with autonomous cities¹¹⁴, Mardin states that Ottoman state policies restricted the development of the structural

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p66.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p67.

¹⁰⁸ Kocka argues that this shift in the definition of civil society reflects the fact that civil society can be expressed in three different ways – normative, descriptive and analytical; “first, as a type of social action; second, as an area or sphere connected to, but separate from, economy, state, and the private sphere; and third, as the core of a draft or a project that still has some utopian features.” Ibid. p68.

¹⁰⁹ Stephen Kalberg, “Cultural Foundations of Modern Citizenship,” in *Citizenship and Social Theory*, ed. Bryan S. Turner, *Politics and Culture* (London: SAGE Publications, 1993). p91. Italics in original.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p93.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Italics in original.

¹¹² Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire.” p264.

¹¹³ Kocka, “Civil Society from a Historical Perspective.” p71.

¹¹⁴ See Weber in B.S. Turner, “Outline of a Theory of Citizenship,” *Sociology* 24, no. 2 (1990). p203. Also, Durkheim in Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire.” p264.

conditions, 'secondary structures', which would facilitate the development of civil society; they "did not permit the development of true urban autonomy."¹¹⁵ This lack of 'civil society' constitutes a significant contrast between Ottoman society and its European counterparts. Instead of societal evolution towards differentiation of governmental functions, the dispersal of authority remained diffuse. Not only was this diffuseness evident in the lack of structural conditions which chimed with the first and second estates in Europe, but was also evident in the legal system. Due to the patrimonial nature of the system, all problems of law and adjudication were reduced to administrative matters and impersonal legal norms did not develop.¹¹⁶ Thus, not only were corporate bodies with autonomous jurisdictions inhibited as the result of a power struggle with the bureaucracy¹¹⁷, that is, explained with reference to a power struggle between different groups, they were also inhibited because of more cultural reasons, namely the continuance of patrimonial authority.

The patrimonial Ottoman system inhibited civil society from forming, and therefore, no shattering of personal ties of allegiance was forthcoming. This is because

"in order for civil society to develop fully and be maintained in the long run it needs political institutions that satisfy the criteria of a constitutional state and the rule of law, that permit democratic participation, the making of decisions on fundamental principles, setting legal conditions, and intervening to protect, foster and reconcile its citizens. The inherently diverse civil society finds the unity it needs only in a democratic state under the rule of law."¹¹⁸

The patrimonial nature of the system produced two structural qualities in the Ottoman Empire, a diffuse authority structure complemented by a dichotomous cultural structure. Importantly, the diffuse nature of authority (for example, the cross-over roles that notables tended to inhabit¹¹⁹) resulted in a lack of differentiation among state functions which in turn led to a culture of dependence on the state for support. Universal dependence on the state inhibited 'revolutionary'

¹¹⁵ "Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire." p265.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p268.

¹¹⁷ Compare Mardin's explanation of bureaucracy as distribution of power with Karpat's discussion of conflict between middle class and bureaucratisation. Especially "the absence of clear boundaries as *ayan* acquired more power." Ibid. p269.

¹¹⁸ Kocka, "Civil Society from a Historical Perspective." p71.

¹¹⁹ "[A] local notable could appear one day as defending the interests of his town against the state and the next day as an employee enforcing the policies of the state." Mardin, "Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire." p269.

struggles against the state, which thus “did not have the organizational autonomy that would permit the consolidation of victories.”¹²⁰ This meant that a middle-class, that is, a group distinct from both nobility, or in the Ottoman case, the bureaucracy, and the common masses, was unable to form. Furthermore, without the shattering of personal ties of allegiance that the rise of a bourgeoisie would have facilitated, the Ottoman legacy of the Turkish polity is one in which particularistic allegiances were very important.

The fact that civil society did not exist in the Ottoman Empire is the starting point of an analysis that attempts to trace the cultural underpinnings of the qualitative deficiency of contemporary Turkish civil society. The lack of civil society in the Ottoman Empire combined with the fact that the late Ottoman period is characterized by increased interaction with European modernity indicates that the Ottoman state responded to this period of transformation in its own particular way. The final chapter is an analysis of the transformation of the Ottoman state into the Turkish Republic during this time. In investigating the policies and practices of this era which were concerned with mediating state/society relations it attempts to highlight the cultural legacy of the modern Turkish state. This supports the argument put forward which posits that statist responses in this period institutionalized societal relations which persists to this day, relations which inhibit the functioning of an effective civil society. The paper thus contributes to an emerging body of literature tracing the lineages of the modern Turkish state to the reform era of the Ottoman Empire, and also puts forward a complementary argument to the one which blames the short-comings of Turkish civil society solely on its strong state tradition. Before moving on to my own analysis of Turkey’s Ottoman legacy, the next chapter reviews the literature on this topic.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Chapter Three: Literature review: Turkey's Ottoman Legacy

Analysis of Turkey's Ottoman legacy is a relatively new but increasingly covered topic. Previously it has been obscured by a "self-imposed amnesia."¹²¹ Currently, one can point to a number of treatments of this topic. For example, Walker contends that Turkey's "status and ambition as a regional and global player"¹²² can only be understood if we also understand the Turkish public's "historical memory of past-leadership."¹²³ Alternatively, Akturk argues that the discrepancy between the official view of Turkish citizenship and the actual religious connotations that Turkish citizenship entails can be put down to the persistence of the *millet* system. He states that "there is a striking continuity between the Islamic *millet* (religious community) in the Ottoman Empire and the understanding of the modern Turkish *millet* (revealingly, *millet* is the most widely used Turkish word for *nation*) after the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923."¹²⁴ Furthermore, he shows "how the Ottoman legacy of defining communal and personal identity on the basis of religious affiliation structures the politics of ethnic recognition in Turkey today."¹²⁵

Akturk's analysis highlights the two-step process through which Turkey is influenced by its Ottoman legacy. First, you have the continuation or influence of the Ottoman polity on the early republican period, which is followed by the influence of the early republican period on contemporary Turkey. While the second part of this process is well covered, the significant impact the Ottoman polity had on the early Turkish republic is less comprehensive. A major factor for this was the effectiveness of republican rhetoric which posited a clean break with its imperial past; "an attempt on the part of the republican elite to construct oblivion in the society about the multicultural Ottoman past in order to constitute a Turkish national

¹²¹ Aksan, "Ottoman to Turk: Continuity and Change." p19.

¹²² Joshua W Walker, "Turkey's Imperial Legacy: Understanding Contemporary Turkey through Its Ottoman Past," *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 8, no. 2-3 (2009). p496.

¹²³ Ibid. p494.

¹²⁴ Sener Akturk, "Persistence of the Islamic Millet as an Ottoman Legacy: Mono-Religious and Anti-Ethnic Definition of Turkish Nationhood," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 6 (2009). p893.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p894.

identity.”¹²⁶ Because of this, insights which link the Ottoman past to the Turkish present are even less evident.

Çağaptay and Isyar provide examples of research into the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic, also with reference to citizenship. Çağaptay’s argument supports Aktürk’s above, by concluding that “not ethnicity but the legacy of the millet system and ethno-religious identities shaped Turkey’s citizenship policies in the interwar period.”¹²⁷ Isyar, on the other hand, argues that the rhetoric of racialized citizenship which made possible the emergence and dominance of Turkism is the result of a dominant discourse of modernity which first established itself in the late-Ottoman Empire.¹²⁸ In contrast, Zürcher provided an early example of research into the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic by highlighting the similarities between the Young Turks of the late-Ottoman period and the Kemalists who established the Republic.

Zürcher charts the continuity between Young Turks and Kemalists on three levels: social background, organizational characteristics, and ideology.¹²⁹ Socially, both groups shared educational and professional backgrounds, and were both products of the new Western-type schools operating in the late-Ottoman Empire. Organizationally, both groups “had their roots in extra-parliamentarian, unofficial organizations” which resulted in their parliamentary wings playing a secondary role to central committees. Ideologically, a number of themes are identified. First, both groups were committed to saving and strengthening the state. According to Zürcher, it was only geopolitical contingencies that saw the Young Turks committed to empire, and the Kemalists to the nation-state. Indeed, a commitment to nationalism became prevalent within the Young Turks as these geopolitical realities began to be established. Second, both groups were committed to secularism, and at the same time, both used Islam opportunistically. Third, both groups were committed to positivism: “the belief that objective truth could be correctly interpreted by the use

¹²⁶ A. Kadioglu, "Denationalization of Citizenship? The Turkish Experience 1," *Citizenship studies* 11, no. 3 (2007). p283.

¹²⁷ Soner Çağaptay, "Citizenship Policies in Interwar Turkey*," *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 4 (2003). p601.

¹²⁸ B. Isyar, "The Origins of Turkish Republican Citizenship: The Birth of Race," *ibid.* 11, no. 3 (2005).

¹²⁹ Erik J Zürcher, "The Ottoman Legacy of the Turkish Republic: An Attempt at a New Periodization," *Die Welt des Islams* 32, no. 2 (1992). pp241-247.

of scientific methods.”¹³⁰ This was reflected in their understanding of the parliamentary process; rather than being a vehicle for popular representation, it was instead considered a place where rational discussion (among elites) could generate ideal policy. Finally, both groups, ground in the old statist tradition as well as a military/bureaucratic environment, believed that “only the state could serve as a motor of modernization and progress.”¹³¹ For both groups, the idea of a small liberal state that only secured the conditions in which individuals could freely go about their business was not entertained.

That the liberal ideal of a small state held no appeal reflects the idea that the Ottoman state was responsible for the welfare of its subjects. This paternalism is one of the themes that Heper identifies not only as linking the Ottoman Empire with the early republican state, but also as continuing to influence contemporary Turkish politics. Heper states that the belief that the Ottoman state was directly responsible for the welfare of its subjects is a central Ottoman norm, established over hundreds of years, which, in conjunction with a number of other norms, continue to affect contemporary Turkish politics. The others he identifies are; eternal vigilance of the world around them; harmony within society (maintenance of law and order); a dichotomy between rulers and ruled; and politics characterized by personal rule. Accordingly, “[t]he Ottoman desire for a strong state that would regulate the polity and society from above [has] left a particular imprint on democracy in Turkey.”¹³²

According to Heper, these themes ultimately resulted in a superiority complex as “elites came to see the general population as unsophisticated.”¹³³ A belief that was further imbedded as Ottoman elites, notably the Young Ottomans, began to have increased interactions with European modernity: “they equated their newly acquired knowledge with political legitimacy.”¹³⁴ This initially was focused on ideas surrounding rational government and bureaucratic structures, but was extended by the Young Turks who incorporated ideas from the new social sciences, especially sociology.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p246.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Heper, "The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics." p71.

¹³³ Ibid. p67.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Although the justifications may have gone through permutations, concomitant with the idea that “the salvation of the state resided in the welfare of the state,”¹³⁵ the unity of the state remained the overall objective. This had critical ramifications. Entrenched in this mindset, the importance or value of periphery structures remained obscured, and “politico-cultural problems took precedence over socio-economic issues.”¹³⁶ This resulted in the inability of the state to respond to structural pressures stemming from new ‘global’ economic conditions, namely the emergence of capitalist relations. “For instance, the Ottoman elite had no interest in mercantilism and did not even use tariffs to collect revenue. In the view of the ruling elite, peace and prosperity depended on keeping the members of each class in their respective places. Old norms prevented the elite from understanding the logic of a capitalist economy.”¹³⁷

The unity of the state and its personal responsibility to provide for the welfare of its subjects led to a privileged concern with law and order, which was reinforced at the start of the republican era as the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire remained fresh in the Kemalists memory. “In the early years of the Republic, the founders were afraid that the country could be torn apart along primordial lines at any moment.”¹³⁸ This legacy continues to be seen in the rhetoric around the idea of being ‘one and together’ and in consensus over social issues being forced by unanimity. “[The] overemphasis on harmony constituted a serious barrier to the emergence of adversarial politics in Republican Turkey,”¹³⁹ a barrier which continues to be evident through examples of intolerance for political opposition.¹⁴⁰

The intolerance of political opposition reflects and is compounded by a dichotomy between rulers and ruled, which is perpetuated in the bifurcation of the elite, a consequence of the regime being opened up by Kemalists, in 1930 and 1945, to ‘educated’ Turks. The state elite continued to espouse Kemalist ideology, while a new ‘political’ elite subscribed to popular democracy, placing, in contrast to Kemalism, narrow political interests over the general public interest. The diametrically opposed positions fostered zero-sum attitudes and continued to

¹³⁵ Heper, "The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics." p68.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p68.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid. p69.

¹⁴⁰ Karaman and Aras, "The Crisis of Civil Society in Turkey." pp52-53.

constrict any societal dynamism.¹⁴¹ Only since 1980 have there been political leaders who have not looked down upon the rest of the country. However, state elites continue to “[look] down upon the views offered on the state of the economy by leading interest groups.”¹⁴² This can be seen in an article which is most relevant to this paper, concerning civil society, or rather, the lack of it in both the Ottoman Empire and modern-day Turkey. The themes identified by Heper above have been interpreted as a strong-state tradition which characterizes Turkey’s legacy, the correlate of which is a weak civil society, and following Çaha, the lack of a liberal-minimal state, which failed to be entertained in the Ottoman tradition, has been problematic from a civil society perspective; “the minimal state, the concept that is the backbone of liberal political thought, is the most necessary if civil society is to spring into life.”¹⁴³ Karaman and Aras build upon this and argue that the patrimonial structure inherited from the Ottoman Empire continues to manifest itself in military interventions and constitutional measures infused with an official ideology based on “the protection of the state and the survival of the regime.”¹⁴⁴

Karaman and Aras argue that “[t]he main obstacles that continue to impede progress towards a more authentic and truly functional civil society can be classified under five different categories, all of which are a result of state hegemony over civil society.”¹⁴⁵ This analysis thus supports and extends Heper’s insight that the Ottoman legacy has left a particular imprint on Turkish democracy. Karaman and Aras fill in some of the gaps concerning precisely what this imprint is. The five categories they speak of broadly describe this legacy. They are: an unstable democratic process; bureaucratic centralization; intolerance of political opposition; state dominance over (or lack of respect for) civil rights and freedom; and, the ideological structure of state control.¹⁴⁶ The main thesis of Karaman and Aras’s argument is that the strong-state tradition in Turkey, reinforced by the perpetuation of an official ideology, impedes the development of fully harmonious state-society relations due to its curtailing of freedom of thought and expression. According to

¹⁴¹ Heper, "The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics." pp72-73

¹⁴² Ibid. p81.

¹⁴³ Çaha Ömer, "The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey," *Journal of Economic and Social Research* 3, no. 2 (2001). p38.

¹⁴⁴ Karaman and Aras, "The Crisis of Civil Society in Turkey." p51.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p52.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

them, “the main obstacle to the further development of Turkish civil society has been the state’s unwillingness to respond to the demands of the people.”¹⁴⁷

Karaman and Aras’s argument is valid and insightful, but its state-centric analysis, I argue, relies too heavily on an ideological argument in explaining societal relations, and leaves room for more analysis from a societal perspective. Their argument is concerned with “[t]he state’s reluctance to create channels of communication with its own civilian population” and “[t]he state’s refusal to embark on an honest and constructive dialogue with the organizations of civil society in Turkey,” and I believe this obscures the institutionalization of certain horizontal relations within Turkish society which also contribute to Turkey’s problematic democratization efforts. I thus posit that vertical relations which sum up the strong state tradition are complemented by horizontal relations which also reflect an historical legacy.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p58.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Late-Ottoman Reforms

This chapter provides an analysis of the late-Ottoman Empire, otherwise referred to as the reform period, when Western ideas and European powers began to critically affect the functioning of the Ottoman state. Beginning in the first section with some historical context, the second section then discusses the structural changes that occurred in Ottoman society as a result, and describes the statist responses these structural pressures generated. The third section then relates these developments to the problem highlighted in this paper, namely the lack of effective horizontal relations in Turkish society. The analysis begins with an explanation of the *Tanzimat* reforms, focusing on how they further institutionalized the Ottoman *millet* system during a time of increasing tensions among different religious communities, especially between Muslims and non-Muslims. Other significant reforms and policies, it is posited, compounded these attitudes which were in many respects not evident, at least not to such an extent, earlier in the Ottoman Empire. The chapter thus refers to the Young Ottomans programme to institutionalize a single Turkish language, Sultan Abdülhamid's pan-Islamism, and the Young Turks/Kemalist's Turkism. Taken together, the idea is put forward these policies have had a cumulative effect on the attitudes of majority-Sunni Muslim Turkish citizens toward minority groups in Turkey. This chapter thus posits the idea that the policies enacted during the period in which the Ottoman Empire transitioned into the Turkish state institutionalized attitudes which persist to this day, and continue to inhibit Turkey's political liberalization, especially pertaining to the instigation, or lack thereof, of attitudes which would foster the civility required for reforms to contribute to political liberalization. This chapter thus attempts to identify a historical legacy which contributes to the difficulty Turkey has in fostering normative horizontal relations in society.

4.1 Historical Overview of Transitional Period

This section comprises a historical sketch of the transition from Ottoman Empire to Turkish nation-state, or republic. The first reforms of the Ottoman state, influenced by European ideas, can be traced back to the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-74, along with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. Findley points out that these events were perceived by Ottoman elites as the menace of European

imperialism and “stimulated demands in both Istanbul and the provinces ... for an end to the political decentralisation of the proceeding two centuries and a reassertion of Sultanic authority.”¹⁴⁸ The catalyst that was the menace of European imperialism was constituted by “[a]dvanced technology, an economic system relying increasingly upon industry, [and] new techniques of government and of study culminating in military power.”¹⁴⁹ The first of the resulting reforms was thus military in nature. This required more revenue and therefore more efficient government, and ushered in the first period of Ottoman reform. Begun by Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) and continued by Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839), it was a period in which European ideas first influenced Ottoman policy and a transition was begun from ‘tradition’ towards ‘rational-legal’ authority.¹⁵⁰ Karpas states that the resulting centralization “was instrumental in undermining the basis of the old arrangement and in paving the way for a new one.”¹⁵¹ Such disruption of traditional arrangements was compounded by “the destruction of the imperial army, the Janissaries, in 1826.”¹⁵² This resulted not only in the introduction of the French regimental system to the military, but was also the catalyst for the curbing of religious power and regional rivalries.

This first reform period fostered a general alignment of Ottoman and European interests and resulted in the Ottoman-British commercial treaty of 1838. This treaty gave to Great Britain “undisputed competitive superiority with regard to domestic manufactures”¹⁵³ and facilitated the dependent integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy. The introduction of what was essentially free trade on British terms caused the Ottoman state to almost collapse.¹⁵⁴ It also marks the end of the first reform period. In 1839, due to the admission of Western technological superiority, reformist tendencies were expanded with greater institutionalization of the reform processes already set in place, and marked the beginning of the second and more significant period of reform, the *Tanzimat*. Coupled with the Ottoman-

¹⁴⁸ Carter Vaughn Findley, "The Tanzimat," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey Volume 4 Turkey and the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). p11.

¹⁴⁹ K.H. Karpas, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3, no. 3 (1972). p245.

¹⁵⁰ Weber; see also ...

¹⁵¹ Karpas, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." p253.

¹⁵² Aksan, "Ottoman to Turk: Continuity and Change." p20.

¹⁵³ Karpas, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." p247.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

British commercial treaty, this period resulted in a condition of increased interaction with an emerging global modernity.

The *Tanzimat* was thus a continuation of a governmental response to a period of crisis in which the Ottoman state began to contract. For example, “[i]n the Balkans, after Serbia won autonomy (1815) and Greece won independence (1830), separatist nationalism continued to spread.”¹⁵⁵ Concomitant with reform, territorial loss became the theme of the 19th century. Furthermore, due to economic collapse, the Ottoman state became financially dependent on European powers. Responding to this period of crisis, “reformist initiatives proliferated ... to a degree that defies summary,” although “they cohere around certain themes.”¹⁵⁶ Significantly, the rationale for reforms was based on the belief that European ideas and technologies must be adopted if the Ottoman Empire was to compete in a period of social upheaval and war. The entire reform process was thus a proactive response to European interference, and resulted in the adoption of the Ottoman constitution of 1876-77.

The constitutional foray of 1876-77 barely lasted two years, as the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 created crisis conditions which allowed newly installed Sultan Abdülhamid to nominally end the first reformist period. Fortna, however, points out that “[r]ecent scholarship has credited Abdülhamid with continuing reforms that had only been partially realised in the Tanzimat era,”¹⁵⁷ and Karpas says his reign “represents the synthesis of previous structural developments.”¹⁵⁸ More accurately, the Hamidian era “represented an important shift away from a more hopeful and trusting attitude towards Western interaction with the Ottoman state.”¹⁵⁹ Instead, it coupled modernization with Islam, and rejected the idea that its constitution should be guaranteed by European powers.

Like the *Tanzimat* reforms and the Young Ottomans before him, Abdülhamid’s strategy for countering secessionist tendencies and European interference did not succeed. Ultimately, his plans were cut short by foreign

¹⁵⁵ Findley, “The Tanzimat.” p15.

¹⁵⁶ For an overview of the major themes of reform, see *ibid.* pp17-32.

¹⁵⁷ Benjamin C. Fortna, “The Reign of Abdülhamid II,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey Volume 4 Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). p39.

¹⁵⁸ Karpas, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908.” p270.

¹⁵⁹ Fortna, “The Reign of Abdülhamid II.” p39.

interference. Fearing that the Sultan would allow Russia and Britain to carve up the Balkan's in their favor, the main opposition movement, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) managed to force the Sultan to re-introduce the constitution, and ultimately cede all of his power. The CUP initially attempted also to try and save the empire, but, due to massive geopolitical upheaval in the second decade of the twentieth century, generated a more nationalist perspective.

The Hamidian period ended with the 1908 revolution. Once again Western ideas began to dominate thinking about how to save the empire. It was, however, conservative in nature; it was a continuation of what has been called the 'defensive reform' movement begun by the Ottoman state with the *Tanzimat*. Its essential task was not "destruction and creative reconstruction, but rather ... conservation and survival of the Ottoman Empire."¹⁶⁰ Accordingly, any liberal tendencies the CUP had before its 'revolution' were discarded in favor of authoritarian strategies designed to ensure the survival of the empire. This included the restriction of fundamental liberties.

Following a period of contraction, after the Balkan Wars, and with the armistice of Mudros following World War I, the Ottoman polity found itself significantly more Turkish and more Muslim. "Mudros also marked the beginning of a struggle for survival under the new geo-political circumstances engendered by defeat in the First World War. Galvanized by renewed occupation and the threat of mortal losses, the struggle lasted five years and further transformed state and society. When the Lausanne Peace Treaty of July 1923 restored the main lines of the Mudros ceasefire as new political boundaries, it consigned the Ottoman state to history and spawned the new state of Turkey, which was to be declared a republic in October 1923."¹⁶¹ During this struggle for independence from the *entente* powers and to reclaim land lost during the war, imperial structures continued to operate and facilitated the independence movement's success. However, the signing of the Lausanne Treaty by Mustafa Kemal's administration located in Ankara provided not only a new geo-political, but also international legal framework, which Kemal utilised as the basis for a new Turkish Republic.

¹⁶⁰ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, "The Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1918," *ibid.* p80.

¹⁶¹ Hasan Kayali, "The Struggle for Independence," *ibid.* p113.

4.2 Structural Changes in Ottoman Society and Statist Responses.

This section builds upon the previous and identifies the structural changes in Ottoman society that accompanied the documented period of transformation. It also outlines the state's (or state elite's) responses to these changes. In particular it attempts to outline specific policies which can be identified as the legacy of contemporary problems in Turkish civil society, namely attitudes which continue to inhibit the flourishing of horizontal relations in Turkish society.

With increasing interaction between the Ottoman Empire and European powers, structural transformations first began to occur along cultural-religious lines. These changes have both internal and external factors, but overall were a by-product of increased interaction with the West. Conflict along these lines was nationalist, sectarian, and between religious and secular groups and was exacerbated by Western powers as they contributed to the politicization of religious differences between groups which had previously coexisted relatively peacefully.¹⁶² In the face of these changes, reforms were primarily a response to internal stimuli, culminating in the 1876-77 constitution, which was a proactive response to internal change generated by external interactions. These internal structural changes were the result of a transformation of patterns of regional exchange, whereby groups within the Ottoman Empire established more effective relationships with European powers than the Ottoman state,¹⁶³ to the extent that ethnic minorities in the Ottoman Empire actively courted European powers.¹⁶⁴ Such relationships, while also facilitating Western objectives, also reflected genuine economic insecurity on the part of non-Muslim groups. The economic nature of the relationships between non-Muslim groups and European powers led to the emergence of new societal groups which placed novel demands on the Ottoman state. These groups thus represented the emergence of a potential bourgeois class which, hitherto, had not existed in the Ottoman state. Due

¹⁶² Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, ed. William Beik and T. C. W. Blanning, 2 ed., New Approaches to European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). pp174-179.

¹⁶³ Karpas, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." p247.

¹⁶⁴ For example, the lack of secondary structures which would ensure economic security from the arbitrary power of the Ottoman state encouraged appeals to outside powers. Therefore, "[t]he lack of power countervailing that of the bureaucracy helps to explain the process by which ethnic minorities in the Ottoman Empire turned to Western Powers for protection" and the argument that such claims merely served as a pretext for intervention by economic imperialists obscures "the genuine insecurity that economic dealings with the Empire entailed." Mardin, "Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire." p266.

to the structural nature of the Ottoman authority system, the state was unable to change. Instead, it implemented a modernization project on its own terms, which resulted in the codification of the already existing *millet* system. The codification of the *millet* system contributed to tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims, as it allowed their economic dealings to continue unhindered, while at the same time reducing the status of Muslims in society. The inability to respond with structural innovation represented a diversion of interests between the Muslim elite and non-Muslim groups, which led to more conflict as the state remained mired in a traditional conception of authority and continued to consider itself as synonymous with society. Significant structural change would not occur until the upheaval represented by the First World War, which finally destroyed the fabric of Ottoman society.

The establishment of effective relations with European powers by non-Muslim Ottoman minorities led to political pressure being placed on the Ottoman state to guarantee their livelihoods. The *Tanzimat* reforms were thus primarily designed to ward off European interference in the Ottoman state's internal affairs. *Tanzimat* reforms attempted to directly address the internal conditions which fostered a desire for European powers to interfere by engaging with the concept of citizenship. The two primary documents associated with the *Tanzimat* (1839, 1856) "both declared equality of citizenship before the law, for Muslim and non-Muslim."¹⁶⁵ This policy was thus an attempt to placate non-Muslim communities and groups, as well as their patrons.

However, this strategy was problematic. "With the *Tanzimat* reforms, the old system of differentiation and distinction and of Muslim legal superiority formally disappeared,"¹⁶⁶ which "offended conservative Muslims who resented being deprived of the superior status that the *şeriat* assigned them."¹⁶⁷ Additionally, the recognition of religion evident in the 1856 document "in effect codified the confessional (*millet*) system of religious communities that has always been assumed to be fundamental to the Ottoman system,"¹⁶⁸ and thus exacerbated the structural changes which were already underway. The codification of the confessional system

¹⁶⁵ Aksan, "Ottoman to Turk: Continuity and Change." p21.

¹⁶⁶ Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*. p178.

¹⁶⁷ Findley, "The *Tanzimat*." p28.

¹⁶⁸ Aksan, "Ottoman to Turk: Continuity and Change."

exacerbated changes in patterns of regional exchange. In conjunction with the “financial colonization of the British and French,” it allowed considerable wealth to “[move] into the hands of the non-Muslim communities.”¹⁶⁹ This process set about impoverishing the Muslim elite¹⁷⁰ at the expense of a non-Muslim commercial class, and meant that tensions between the two groups overrode the idea that all were equal citizens.

The Euro-centric attitude of the *Tanzimat* reforms was critiqued by the Young Ottomans, who emerged from *Tanzimat* educational policy which was largely driven by the goal of elite formation.¹⁷¹ Their critiques were both substantive and procedural. On the one hand, they criticized the absolute use of state power in implementing reforms. On the other hand, they were unhappy with the granting of equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. Their aim was “to correct the errors of the Tanzimat reforms, and put an end to the cultural dichotomy which supposedly had resulted from a misunderstanding of the philosophical, ethical and social foundations of the empire, and from the use of state power to impose an alien cultural system on society.”¹⁷²

“According to the Young Ottomans, the Tanzimat could not go beyond a cultural imitation and has shaken the Muslim community fundamentally ... *the solution [instead lay] in the establishment of a representative, constitutional, and parliamentary administration and hence in the creation of a full loyalty in all subjects of the empire, Muslim or non-Muslim.*”¹⁷³

To avoid mere cultural imitation of Europe, the Young Ottomans counter-intuitively argued for the adoption of European institutions, instead of the adoption of European culture, and therefore played “a vital role in introducing some general notions of pre-modern political culture and in paving the way for the constitutional experiment of 1876-77.”¹⁷⁴ “They hoped that if the empire was furnished with more liberal institutions and if there was equality of citizenship before the laws for all subjects,

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ For evidence of this drawn from the Ottoman foreign service see C.V. Findley, “Economic Bases of Revolution and Repression in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 1 (1986).

¹⁷¹ Findley, “The Tanzimat,” pp21-23.

¹⁷² Karpas, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908,” p262.

¹⁷³ Yelda Demirağ, “Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism,” *Milletlerarası münasebetler Türk yılığı* 36(2005). p146. Italics mine.

¹⁷⁴ Karpas, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908,” p266.

then it would be possible to save the country from collapse quickly and preserve its unity and integrity in the long run.”¹⁷⁵

While the *Tanzimat* represents one of the first forays into Ottoman citizenship, the Young Ottomans were the first to ponder the notion of identity from a political perspective, that is, from a perspective concerning “the political culture of the emerging ‘modern’ Ottoman state.”¹⁷⁶ They “began to seek a new identity to counter the nationalist feelings awakening in the Ottoman society which was previously organized under the ‘millet’ system and believed they could only be successful against the nationalist current by a version of nationalism which would give everyone an overall identity.”¹⁷⁷ Their basic goal “was the creation of a new identity for Ottoman subjects and loyalty to its government. The new concept of *Vatan* (fatherland) aimed at creating a new form of identity to supersede religious, ethnic, and local divisions.”¹⁷⁸ Demirag refers to this identity as pan-Ottomanism;

“a current of thought which aims at creating, over all the nationalities of the Ottoman Empire, a we-feeling of being Ottoman and an ‘Ottoman nation’ in parallel with this feeling. The main idea [of pan-Ottomanism] was a principle of *ittihad-anasir-i* (the unity of the components) taking each millet as an equal part of a greater Ottoman nation.”¹⁷⁹

The Young Ottomans’ concern with the establishment of an Ottoman identity led them to a concern with the role of language in society, as it was symbolic of the Ottoman cultural dichotomy between rulers and ruled, whereby two types of Turkish were spoken, one by the bureaucracy and one by the ordinary people. This problem was addressed by a group associated by the Young Ottomans, called the Young Pens, who believed that simplification was needed in order to permit communication with all the nation’s people.”¹⁸⁰ The generation of a national language was argued to be essential for the Ottoman state to be able to aspire to the technological and

¹⁷⁵ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p146.

¹⁷⁶ Karpāt, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." p264.

¹⁷⁷ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p145.

¹⁷⁸ Karpāt, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." p264.

¹⁷⁹ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p145.

¹⁸⁰ A. Aydingün and İ. Aydingün, "The Role of Language in the Formation of Turkish National Identity and Turkishness," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10, no. 3 (2004). pp417-418.

scientific levels evident in Europe, which “depends upon the dissemination and spread of knowledge.”¹⁸¹ In addition, the creation of a shared language was identified as a key strategy in overcoming the dichotomy of Ottoman society by bringing the elites and masses together in a sphere of communication. Language was thus “an essential condition for mass communication and national education.”¹⁸² Their upgrading of the language that ordinary people spoke “was later used as a boundary setter in nation-state building to mobilize the masses around the Turkish national ideal”, but at the time, “their purpose ... was to maintain the unity of the Ottoman state... The idea was that the new language would help to disseminate ideas to the common people.”¹⁸³ Education reform, begun with the Young Ottomans, would remain a theme of reforms up until the establishment of the Turkish Republic, but coupled with its positivist goals would be the objective of assimilating ethnic and linguistic minorities into a common national identity.

The Russian-Ottoman War of 1877-78 marked the end of the *Tanzimat* and the activity of the Young Ottomans, and a new attempt at unity was put forward by Sultan Abdülhamid. Following the war, one of Abdülhamid’s objectives was “finding a means of achieving a sound and practical basis of social solidarity among the majority of his subjects”¹⁸⁴ and he “saw the attractiveness of pursuing a policy of Islamic unity in the face of European encroachment... referred to as pan-Islamism.”¹⁸⁵ Pan-Islamism reflected the idea that “the main cause of the decline [of the empire] was the denial of the basic teachings of Islam. It aimed to keep all Muslim people united politically, through giving them a sense of Islamic socio-political identity.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Seyfettin in *ibid.* p418.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* 418.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Fortna, "The Reign of Abdülhamid II." p47.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p48.

¹⁸⁶ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p147. It also served as a strategy to counter the pan-ideologies that were present in the West, and to remind European powers of the moral weight the Caliphate enjoyed in the region. Pan-Islamism was thus a two-sided strategy: “On the one hand, it was a positive strategy aimed at the majority of [Abdülhamid’s] imperial subjects as it sought to take advantage of the new demographic situation and to strengthen the cohesiveness of the empire’s Islamic base. On the other hand, it was also a negative or threatening policy intended to remind the European powers, France and Great Britain in particular, that the Ottoman sultan-caliph held considerable sway over many millions of their overseas imperial subjects.” Fortna, "The Reign of Abdülhamid II." p48.

Because of the loss of territories that were a theme of this period, and the fact that these losses made the Empire a place increasingly populated by a majority of Muslims, it is during the Hamidian period that “the idea of replacing Ottomanism with Muslimness began to gather strength,”¹⁸⁷ and Ottoman nationalism was gradually superseded by Turkish nationalism. “The idea of a multinational state based on common citizenship lost its practical importance since the Ottoman state became predominantly inhabited by Muslims, and aside from Iran, it was the only remaining major independent Muslim state in the world. The future seemed to lay [sic] in capitalising on the Muslim features of the empire in order to rally all the faithful, first, in order to assure the empire’s survival, and secondly, to start the movement of Muslim liberation from European rule.”¹⁸⁸

The reign of Abdülhamid was followed by a constitutional ‘revolution’ and ushered in the second constitutional period. The seeds of the 1908 revolution were sowed with Abdulhamid’s program of education, which focused on combining secularist, scientific components with Ottoman and Islamic traditions. It thus exhibited rigidity and moral suspicion of liberality that ultimately served to foster frustration among students, a frustration which continued as young Muslims became part of a conservative bureaucracy: “Frustrated by the constraints of a conservative bureaucracy, and thinking more about the running sore of nationalist disaffections and insurrections and of European interference which these occasioned than about their Sultan’s skill in managing the crisis, they sought a permanent remedy in the constitutional arrangements that, they believed, had allowed the West to progress and prosper.”¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, “[t]hey believed that constitutional rule by elected representatives would solve all problems at one stroke.”¹⁹⁰ However, like Abdulhamid before them, the CUP developed a distaste for strong legislatures.

The distaste of strong legislatures was especially due to a “concern about the ability of a strong parliament to undermine the regime and aggravate ethno-religious conflict.”¹⁹¹ The CUP thus continued down the constitutional path only so as to

¹⁸⁷ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p147.

¹⁸⁸ Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." pp272-273.

¹⁸⁹ Andrew Mango, "Atatürk," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey Volume 4 Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). p151.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p152.

¹⁹¹ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, "The Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1918," *ibid.* p80.

bolster their authoritarian rule “with the appearance of the sanction of the people.”¹⁹² As Hanioglu points out, “[e]litism in the political thought of the [CUP] ... coexisted with an acute awareness of the symbolic value of the power of the people”¹⁹³, and it was within this context that “[t]he first attempt to search for a Turkish identity for the citizens of the Empire in light of modern nationalist ideals appeared.”¹⁹⁴ The ideology of Turkism became the dominant discourse of citizenship in the Ottoman Empire during, and as a result of, the Balkan Wars.¹⁹⁵ Demirag supports this position stating that “[u]ntil the Balkan Wars, the policy of ‘Ittihad-i Anasir’ (the unity of constituents) remained the dominant policy in terms of [the CUPs] main framework.”¹⁹⁶ “The continuous attempts of Great Powers to intervene in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire under the guise of protecting the minorities caused the young intellectuals to adopt Turkish nationalism vigorously. However, while ‘Turkish’ proclivities emerged within CUP rule between 1908 and 1918, they took a back-seat to strategies designed to save the Ottoman Empire.

Initially Turkish proclivities were subsumed within ideas like Ottomanism and pan-Islamism, only becoming more noticeable during the First World War with the possibility of the collapse of the empire. Nationalism became a leading concern of intellectuals from all ethnic and religious backgrounds in the years leading up to the First World War, made visible by the proliferation of press publications following the revolution.¹⁹⁷ Turkist nationalist tendencies, which didn’t fit with its plans to save the multinational empire, entered the CUP through its press activities early on, but it was not until it became a pragmatic option to deal with the collapsing empire that it was fully articulated. “The young Turks introduced a new understanding that the nation was the source of all authority, and so they made the first attempt to transform the Empire into a model of a homogeneous state based on the premise of one state, one nation.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Ibid. p82.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ A. İçduygu, Y. Çolak, and N. Soyarik, "What Is the Matter with Citizenship? A Turkish Debate," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 4 (1999). p193.

¹⁹⁵ Isyar, "The Origins of Turkish Republican Citizenship: The Birth of Race."

¹⁹⁶ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p153.

¹⁹⁷ Hanioglu, "The Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1918." pp99-101.

¹⁹⁸ İçduygu, Çolak, and Soyarik, "What Is the Matter with Citizenship? A Turkish Debate." p193.

The Turkist agenda was secularist with religion taking on a pragmatic function. For Atatürk, Turkish nationalism was a means to self-determination.¹⁹⁹ Ironically it was this pragmatism which allowed for a resurgence of Islam in the form of a modernist movement, and an initial concordance between the CUP and Islamic leaders in the central regions of the empire. “But the underlying contradiction between the CUP leaders, who had a use for religion only inasmuch as it legitimised their rule, and the modernists, for whom life under a revived Islam was the paramount goal, meant that relations were quickly strained.”²⁰⁰ However, in spite of secularist tendencies, Westernization was opposed by the CUP and “[a] backlash against all things Western set in after the Balkan Wars.”²⁰¹

The general anti-Western, anti-Christian attitude that permeated the CUP leadership was at odds with the project of modernization. Kemal Atatürk, however, noted the link between Westernization and modernization. After successfully leading the Turkish military in the Turkish War of Independence against Western-backed forces, he sought to disarm Western hostility so as to allow the modernization process to progress more smoothly. By adopting a universal discourse concerning human civilization, “Kemal directed the energy of the Turkish nationalism that he fostered away from external enemies and towards the domestic tasks of fighting backwardness and ignorance, and building up the prosperity of a ruined land.”²⁰² Kemal’s perception of much of Turkey as ‘backwards’ reflected his belief that European culture was the only path to modernity. Accordingly, the reformist program attempted by the Kemalist elite focused on ‘civilizing’ individuals who previously were allowed to maintain their particular identities. This was done according to cultural objectives and attempted to create a shared national identity. Such a strategy had two components; destruction and creation. On one hand, it required “the total elimination of Ottoman and Islamic heritage, which was considered responsible for the backwardness of the state and society.”²⁰³ Hanioglu argues that this aspect reflected the difficulty the existence of non-Muslim groups posed to purist Turk ambitions. “[T]he Turkists avoided confronting this reality, and instead chose to assault the very notion of an ‘Ottoman’ identity as promoted by the

¹⁹⁹ Aksan, "Ottoman to Turk: Continuity and Change." p24.

²⁰⁰ Hanioglu, "The Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1918." p103.

²⁰¹ Ibid. p105.

²⁰² Andrew Mango, "Atatürk," ibid. p163.

²⁰³ İçduygu, Çolak, and Soyarik, "What Is the Matter with Citizenship? A Turkish Debate." p194.

Tanzimat, which stood accused of robbing the Turks of their sense of self.”²⁰⁴ This was because the *Tanzimat* accorded equal status to non-Muslims and Muslims which “prompted an uproar among the Muslims within the empire who felt that the ground beneath them was becoming increasingly more slippery and that they were losing their old privileged status.”²⁰⁵ But it also reflected a belief that Islam itself was the cause of Ottoman backwardness.

Once established, the Kemalists set about imparting a new Turkish identity, beginning with legislative provisions which continued the separation of religion from the political structure of the state begun with the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922. Furthermore, “Kemal opposed ... the ideologies of Pan-Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. He [said] that Turks had deeds to do in Turkey, and adoption of any other policy would be nothing but adventure. The new nationalism in the Republic of Turkey aimed at saving and developing the Anatolian Turks.”²⁰⁶ Such rhetoric was at odds with the concept of citizenship outlined in Article 88 of the Turkish constitution, which stated that “the name Turk ... shall be understood to include all citizens of the Turkish Republic, without distinction of, or reference to, race or religion.”²⁰⁷ This definition was further complicated by the continuation of Islam as the official religion of the state.

State practice deviated considerably from Article 88, especially as “[c]oncerns about the territorial and political unity of the country in the face of Kurdish rebellion and an Islamic uprising against secularism led the state to downplay [its] civic understanding of national identity and instead to emphasise homogeneity and ‘Turkishness.’”²⁰⁸ This response was the continuation of a response to the effects of World War I and the Turkish War of Independence, whereby “outside Istanbul, the country was devastated, its population reduced and the fabric of its multi-ethnic and multi confessional society destroyed.”²⁰⁹ An ideology of Turkish nationalism was thus deployed to fill the void. Where before

²⁰⁴ Hanioglu, "The Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1918." p101.

²⁰⁵ Kadioglu, "Denationalization of Citizenship? The Turkish Experience 1." p287.

²⁰⁶ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p157.

²⁰⁷ Kayali, "The Struggle for Independence." p146.

²⁰⁸ Kemal Kirişçi, "Migration and Turkey: The Dynamics of State, Society and Politics," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Volume 4 Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). p179.

²⁰⁹ Mango, "Atatürk." p159.

Kemalist's, as Young Turks, had thought of themselves as Ottomans and Turks, now, with the loss of so many nations due to the war "they settled for the single Turkish identity. An ideology of Turkish nationalism, based on language, shared experience, genuine common interests and presumed common culture ... it tried to foster a Turkish national spirit, and pursued the goal of 'national economy', a euphemism for discrimination not just against foreigners, but against non-Muslims also."²¹⁰

Strategies to achieve the secularization required for modernization attempted to destroy the link to the Ottoman past that Islam represented. "Perhaps the most important ... was inflicted with the adoption of the Latin script as part of reform attempts in 1928..."²¹¹ On the other hand, a new identity had to be constructed as replacement. This secular identity, as per Article 88, was not to be defined by ethnicity or religion, but was to be 'constructed' and thus open to non-Turkish groups. "The Republican civilizing elite, therefore, tried its best to penetrate into the lifestyle, manners, behaviour and daily customs of the people, and to change the self-conception of Turks."²¹² Having inherited a strong centralized state apparatus, "the Republican state projected a particular form of a vision of socio-cultural life, a good life which each Turkish citizen should adopt ... [which] would represent a common good and national interest."²¹³

The emphasis on shared national identity, however, had significant ramifications for the way policy was put into practice, and state practice significantly deviated from the definition of Turkishness stated in Article 88. Ultimately, while attempting to destroy ethnic identification with groups which existed within the Ottoman Empire, Kemalist state practice identified Turkishness with "membership in one of the Muslim Sunni ethnic groups closely associated with past Ottoman rule."²¹⁴ Kadioğlu refers to this process of 'othering' identities in pursuit of a homogenous identity the 'nationalisation of citizenship'. As well as an emphasis on being Muslim, the Turkish national identity ultimately emphasized language, and assimilatory campaigns were carried out which attempted to impose

²¹⁰ Ibid. pp161-162.

²¹¹ Kadioğlu, "Denationalization of Citizenship? The Turkish Experience 1." p289.

²¹² İçduygu, Çolak, and Soyarik, "What Is the Matter with Citizenship? A Turkish Debate." p195.

²¹³ Ibid. p194.

²¹⁴ Kirişçi, "Migration and Turkey: The Dynamics of State, Society and Politics." p179.

the use of Turkish. For example, the ‘citizen speak Turkish’ campaign, a public campaign in which minorities were encouraged to speak Turkish, often with the collusion of elite groups within the minority.²¹⁵ As well as national campaigns carried out in the public sphere, assimilation was attempted through “Turkification measures in the realm of education and economics via newly adopted legal codes making Turkish classes mandatory in minority schools and making the use of the Turkish language mandatory in economic institutions.”²¹⁶ The focus on a national language was to the detriment of multicultural society, as the state used it as an ideological weapon in its modernization project. “[T]he new Turkish Republic standardized language and education in order to create and strengthen the Turkish national identity and modernize the country. The foundation of the republic was characterized by a process of homogenization initiated by the state elite.”²¹⁷

4.3 Transitional Reforms as a Legacy of Contemporary Civil Society

The initial response to structural pressure was attempted during the *Tanzimat*. The increasing agency of non-Muslim minorities and the fruitful relationships they established with European powers led the Ottoman state to implement reforms through citizenship policies. Unable to accommodate structural change, however, the *Tanzimat* reforms discussed served to further systematize the *millet* system of governance, a structural reality which remained in place until the First World War destroyed the fabric of Ottoman society.

The *millet* system was a mechanism which allowed the Ottoman state to indirectly rule different religious communities within the empire. It was a loose set of central-local arrangements which allowed particular communities religious and regulatory autonomy while regulating transactions between them and the Muslim majority. It was thus “the simultaneous division and integration of communities into the state,” facilitated by the cooptation of local elites, “intermediaries with a real stake in the maintenance of the status quo.”²¹⁸ When the *millet* system was further codified by the *Tanzimat* it was during a time of increased national tensions, and the

²¹⁵ Soner Cagaptay, "Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (2004).

²¹⁶ Kadioglu, "Denationalization of Citizenship? The Turkish Experience 1." p289.

²¹⁷ Aydingün and Aydingün, "The Role of Language in the Formation of Turkish National Identity and Turkishness." p422.

²¹⁸ Karen Barkey, "Islam and Toleration: Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 19, no. 1 (2005). pp15-16.

integration of these societal divisions became problematic. Shaw points out that because of their association with European powers, “many Muslims [began] to associate the minorities with foreign attack and even treason.” The influence that minorities exerted over the Ottoman state through their patrons left “the Muslims feeling, with considerable justice, that the Tanzimat was, indeed, intended to place the minorities into a position of dominance in the empire and that it was singling out the non-Muslims for special treatment,”²¹⁹

The second major response to structural pressures was attempted by the Young Ottomans, bureaucratic elites who emerged from Tanzimat education policies focused on elite formation. The Young Ottomans attempted, not necessarily through official channels, to implement language reform in the hope of achieving a more comprehensive unity than that which the *millet* system could provide. Language reform meant the establishment of a common language which would facilitate rationalist/positivist goals. The Young Ottomans were thus the first group of Ottoman elites to show an interest in language policies, which would continue to appeal to elites throughout Turkey’s history.

It was with the Young Ottomans that a focus on defining a common language emerged, and with the resulting decision to ‘upgrade’ ordinary Turkish that we can witness the transition from a concern with Ottomanism to a concern with Turkishness. The decision not to use Ottoman Turkish, and instead to use Turkish resulted in “the interchangeable use of the terms ‘Turkism’ and ‘Ottomanism’... [which] provides an understanding of ... how the Ottoman nationalists moved toward the idea of creating a Turkish nation state and later advancing Kemalism.”²²⁰ It is with the Young Ottomans that we first see the idea of language as an indicator of national identity, and it is thus here that the othering of non-Turks can be traced. The beginning of the establishment among Muslims of a shared language at this time would thus have exacerbated an in-group mentality vis-à-vis minority groups.

The third significant attempt to counter changing structural conditions, especially as they began to be manifested as a result of military conflict, was Sultan

²¹⁹ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic the Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). p128.

²²⁰ Aydingün and Aydingün, "The Role of Language in the Formation of Turkish National Identity and Turkishness." p420.

Abdülhamid's reactivation of Islamic identity which "aimed to keep all Muslim people united politically, through giving them a sense of Islamic socio-political identity."²²¹ Although later reforms were of a secular nature, as has been pointed out, Turkish secularism is about the control and reinterpretation of religion in society, and contemporary Turkish politics privileges Sunni Islam as a fundamental indicator of Turkish identity. Thus it can be argued that the privileging of Sunni Islam in contemporary Turkish politics which is partly responsible for inhibiting effective democratic horizontal relations can be traced to the Islamic policies of Abdülhamid.

Finally, the Turkism of the Young Turks and later Kemalists was discussed. Determining that the Ottoman state suffered from the backwardness of many of its citizens, which was a result of its Islamic past, they set about eliminating these aspects from collective memory. Utilizing conceptions of modernity, the Kemalists thus set about homogenizing the population according to modernist principles, and concomitantly othering those who could not or would not subscribe to these new values. The regime was thus secularist, but ideological pragmatism saw them establish a privileged relationship with Sunni Islam, with which a huge majority of citizens identified. The complex relationship the state established with Sunni Islam is seen in its assault of the *Tanzimat* identity which was accused of robbing Muslims of their rightful place in society. By assaulting this identity they were implicitly endorsing Sunni Islam as the religion of Ottomans and Turks, thus informally continued the Islamization of Ottoman/Turkish society begun by Abdülhamid. This also built on the consequences of the *Tanzimat* reforms which codified the *millet* system by further generating differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. The de-legitimization of the state's Ottoman heritage also contributed to the forging of inaccurate histories concerning the nature of the Ottoman *millet* system, obscuring the genuine cooperation and cohabitation it often entailed.

As well as the elimination of the state's Ottoman heritage, its replacement with a new identity also fostered a lack of respect for non-Muslim/non-Turks by (Muslim) Turks. A process of othering was concomitant with the nationalization of citizenship. Isyar refers to this process as the "the normalisation of the existence of

²²¹ Demirağ, "Pan-Ideologies in the Ottoman Empire against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism." p147.

the Turkish race as a sovereign nation.”²²² He states that one of the most important acts of this normalization was the dismissal of a law that forbade “the formation of political clubs and associations that had an ethnic base other than ‘Ottoman’.

However, this dismissal did not apply to all ethnicities and races in the empire but was solely for the Turks.”²²³ This led to the formation of myriad groups and facilitated the construction of the racial culture of the Turks. It was the institutionalization of Turkism and its claim to be the true mode of citizenship that invalidated Ottomanism. The invalidation of which, it has been argued, is a central part of the legacy of contemporary Turkish societal relations which lack an effective horizontal dimension.

²²² Isyar, "The Origins of Turkish Republican Citizenship: The Birth of Race." p346.

²²³ Ibid. pp346-347.

Conclusion

The framing of Turkey's Ottoman legacy in terms of its strong state tradition reflects the idea that the basic cleavage in Ottoman and Turkish societies has been between the center and periphery.²²⁴ While this is correct, it does not capture the whole picture. Indeed, it may be required to look beyond strong-state analyses to inject new blood into Turkey's democratization process. From the strong-state perspective, civil society is deficient. Turkish society is inimical to civil society because of a Kemalist ideology which inhibits its potential to flourish. This inhibition then results in a lack of effective pressure being placed on the state for significant liberalization. Without this pressure, Kemalist ideology remains in place and unchanged, thus continuing the suppression of civil society. Therefore, to escape the circular effect the strong state tradition has on Turkey's democratization process, an analysis that evades the strong state tradition by focusing on other aspects of the Ottoman legacy may be helpful.

Overall, deficient horizontal relations are not only the result of Turkey's strong state tradition. Since the reforms of the late-Ottoman period, we can see a number of policies and consequences that have contributed to a lack of trust and solidarity, notably between Turkish Muslims and minority groups, be they ethnic or religious. The most significant of these policies were the *Tanzimat* reforms which further institutionalized divisions between non-Muslim minorities and Muslims at a time when their integration into Ottoman society was becoming problematic due to rising nationalist sentiments coupled with the relative impoverishment of Muslims. Further policies implemented between the *Tanzimat* and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, while not as conclusive, exacerbated the divisions between non-Muslim and Muslim, and contributed to a process of othering which this paper posits continues to have contemporary ramifications.

²²⁴ Metin Heper, "Turkey: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 1, no. 3 (2001).

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