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Some Psychopolitical and Social Psychohistorical Processes in the Formation of Classical Period Ottoman Identity

Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Kimliğinin Oluşumunda Psikopolitik ve Sosyal Psikotarihsel Süreçler

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Abstract

Traditional disputes on pre-modern Ottoman identity mostly revolve around the topic of "Is there a single Ottoman identity or various Ottoman identities?" Some researchers point out that the name "Ottoman" refers to the ruling class. On the other hand, some researchers mention a supra-religious and supra-ethnic unionist consciousness and the existence of an Ottoman identity as an umbrella of sovereignty. The basic argument of this paper is that the Ottoman Empire's institutional structure and organization, which governed the group members' contacts and connections in political, economic, cultural, and social life, provides a good setting for the formation of the dual identity paradigm. In the two big spaces of social life in the Ottoman society, commercial and agricultural life, social life organized by the waqf system from places of worship to educational institutions, and daily life and practices became collectivized to a large extent by preserving religious and ethnic sub-identities via common spaces such as bazaars and squares. Thus, these patterns established through social structures/relationship networks made it possible for the multi-characterized Ottoman subjects to socialize and to build a collective Ottoman upper identity. Objective representations such as the Ottoman Greek, the Ottoman Armenian, and the Ottoman Jew can be read as the most concrete indicators of dual identity formations in the Ottoman large group.

Keywords

Collective identity, Social identity, Large group, Political psychology, Social psychohistory, Ottoman Empire

Öz

Modern dönem öncesi Osmanlı kimliği üzerine yapılan geleneksel tartışmaların başında, "ortak bir Osmanlı kimliği olup olmadığı ya da birden çok Osmanlı kimlikleri mi bulunduğu" gelir. Bazı önde gelen araştırmacılar, Osmanlılık tabirinin yönetici kesimi karşıladığını kaydetmektedir. Bazı araştırmacılar ise dinler ve etnik gruplarüstü birliktenci bir bilinçten, bir egemenlik şemsiyesi olarak Osmanlılık kimliğinin varlığından söz etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel tezi, Osmanlı büyük grubunda siyasi, ekonomik, kültürel ve sosyal yaşamda grup üyelerinin temas ve ilişkilerini düzenleyen imparatorluk kurumsal yapı ve örgütlenmesinin, ikili kimlik modelinin gelişimine imkân sağlamış olduğudur. Zira Osmanlı toplumunda sosyal yaşamın iki büyük mekânında tarım, zanaat ve ticaret hayatı; ibadet yerlerinden eğitim kurumlarına kadar vakıf

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sistemiyle düzenlenen sosyal hayat; pazar, meydan gibi ortak mekânları ile ortak gündelik yaşam kültür ve pratiği büyük oranda dini ve etnik alt kimlikler korunarak kolektifleşmiştir. Böylece sosyal yapılar/ilişkiler ağıyla kurulan bu örüntüler, çoğul karakterli Osmanlı tebaasının sosyal uyumunu ve kolektif bir Osmanlı üst kimliğinin inşasını mümkün kılmıştır. Nitekim Osmanlı Rum'u, Osmanlı Ermenisi, Osmanlı Yahudisi gibi objektif temsiller, Osmanlı büyük grubundaki ikili kimlik oluşumlarının en somut göstergeleri olarak okunabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler
Kolektif kimlik, Sosyal/toplumsal kimlik, Büyük grup, Politik psikoloji, Sosyal psikotarih, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu

An Ontological Examination of Classical Ottoman Identity: Social and Imperial Identity

The fundamental requirements for defining identity are the similarities and contrasts between members of a large group, the allegiance/subordination connection, and, most crucially, a sense of belonging. The sense of belonging, with the most concise expression, is to define himself/herself as a part of a whole, and has been one of the basic needs of human beings as social beings from primitive times to the present. This ensures meeting individuals' needs such as security, support, help, validation of their values, feeling important and necessary, and comfort. (Bilgin, 2008: 123-124). With a sense of belonging, individuals integrate with their social groups in common values and purposes, and concrete expressions of this integration determine social identities. Accordingly, social identity is the individual's representations of self (self-perception), his/her knowledge of the social group/groups he/she belongs to, the part of the self that results from the value and meaningfulness he/she attributes to membership in these groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1979: 33-47), and the part of the self that consists of a group membership (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). In other words, the main determinant of social identities is the group they belong to. The sense of belonging to a more comprehensive group, such as religious, national, or ethnic group, corresponds to collective identity, which is one of the types of social identity. (Taylor, 1997: 179). According to these definitions, humanity has existed in the formation of a large number of natural or constructed ingroups and outgroups – us and them – that have been interdependent and interacted with each other in line with their needs and goals throughout history (Aranson et al., 2012: 496). Thus, it is without a shadow of a doubt that humanity acquired various ascribed and constructed group identities during this process. In that case, since social/collective identity can only be mentioned in the context of belonging to the group, and in order to examine whether Ottoman identity existed in the classical period, first, it is necessary to discuss whether *an Ottoman large group* exists or not.

According to Muzaffer Sherif, a group is "a social unit that consists of people who have a certain status and role relations with each other and that has its own set of values and norms, which at least in important matters concerning the group, regulate the behavior of its members." (Şerif and Şerif, 1996: 144). Henri Tajfel ve John Turner (2004: 283) define a group "as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves." According to Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı (2006: 258), "multiple people interacting with each other, common norms, common goals, the feeling and consciousness of being a group" are necessary conditions for human communities to be considered a group. We will begin to determine whether these necessary conditions existed in Ottoman society by clarifying the largest structure, namely the components of the imperial organization, in which the community we call *the Ottomans* was organized.

The general characteristics of the Empire phenomenon as a political form can be summarized as follows: (Howe, 2002; Ünlü, 2010: 283-243)

a. A dominant sovereign centre and a periphery that is dependent/subjected to it within the boundaries determined by different legal statuses,

b. Large-scale land acquired through conquests,

c. Unambiguous boundaries which are subject to change at any time

d. Semi-sanctified ideological discourse that legitimizes imperial domination,

e. Great military and economic power,

f. A discourse of sacredness and eternality attributed to the leader/system,

g. A discourse of universality centered on peace, justice, security or well-being,

h. Heterogeneous structure based on religious, linguistic, ethnic, cultural etc. diversity,

i. Sustaining the domination over different elements with military, economic, social and cultural pressure and/or incentives,

j. Different administrative models (direct and indirect),

k. Military service and tax liability of the subjects.

The Payitaht (center) of the Ottoman Empire, along with other political entities like provinces and vassal states, were all part of the political framework of this empire type. With the understanding of *Gaza*, the conquests were legitimized on the ground of righteousness. The ideological discourse, which is based on the eternal sublime state, (*Devlet-i aliye-i ebed müddet*) (Genç, 2003: 37) and the ancient law (*kanun-ı kadim*), and shaped by the understanding of the order of the world (*nizam-ı âlem*), enhances the value system that the Ottomans attribute to holiness and eternity. On the other hand, it provided legitimacy to the Imperial system, which was built with the claim of bringing peace and justice (circle of justice) to the whole world. The population of the Ottoman Empire, which had great military and economic power during the classical period, reached 60 million by the 16th century. Although it was dominantly a Muslim nation[1], it contained a religious, ethnic and cultural diversity including communities such as Christian, Jewish, Arab, Greek, Armenian, Vlach, Slavic and Hungarian. Undoubtedly, in the initial phase, there was an element of pressure/coercion in establishing military, economic, social and cultural hegemony over these different elements. However, it is a known fact that the existence of inclusive mechanisms, such as the community/millet system and the *istimâlet* policy, which can become quite flexible from time to time, are the main tenets of the system.[2]

The Ottoman Empire built its insight of administration respectively directly and indirectly. While the direct rule was more prevalent in *miri states* (imperial domains), there were administrative units subject to indirect rule under the name of *salyaneli* (annually taxed) states (such as Egypt, Basra, Baghdad, Abyssinia, Algeria, Tripoli), khanate (such as the Crimean Khanate), sharifate (such as Mecca), voivodship (such as Wallachia, Moldavia, Erdel, Dubrovnik) and *hâkimlik* (some places in Eastern Anatolia) (İnalcık, 2003: 109-111; İpşirli, 2007: 502-505). There are three main types of taxes from Ottoman subjects: jizya (from non-Muslims/dhimmis), *avarız* and *mukataa* (most importantly, the tithe (*öşür*) from Muslims and tribute (*haraç*) from the Christians, etc.) (Özvar, 2007: 521-525). Non-Muslim administrators are exempt from tax as well as those who reside in

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1   Mille, millet: Religion. In the hadiths, the word *millet* is mentioned as "innate characteristics, nature (*fitrah*)" besides its meaning (religion) in the Qur'an. (Şentürk, 2005: 64-66).

2   For example, Feridun Emecen explains the spread of the Ottoman Empire and its ability to maintain its power for many years not only with the power of the sword but with the *istimalet* policy (Emecen, 2018: 19).

Istanbul and serve the Palace (physician, diplomat, etc.) with their entire lineage (Shaw, 2008: 118). In addition to the existence of an extremely strong and organized social division of labour, it is also a fact that there was a very strong bureaucratic structure. Despite their religious, ethnic and sectarian differences, and variations in their rights and obligations, everyone residing in the Ottoman country (more precisely, in the Ottoman realms) is an Ottoman subject. So, can we mention the Ottoman Empire as a group with many subgroups in which there are certain status and role relations in almost every aspect of life in the Ottoman geography? Can it be claimed that the behavior of Ottoman subjects was regulated by a set of values and norms and that group members had the feeling and consciousness of being a group?

The first thing to note is that the Ottoman Empire, as an empire, had a number of administrative qualities that made it distinct from other empires. The existence of indirect and direct forms of administration such as separate political entities in the empire, is one of the factors that create intragroup differences. At first glance, elements such as religion, sect, ethnicity, culture and language, which constitute diversity rather than commonality, seem far from uniting the subjects of the empire as a group. However, whether it was established by military, economic, social, or cultural pressure or incentives, the dominant political authority in the Ottomans, as in other empires, functioned as a large and comprehensive tent under which the subjects gathered. In other words, the interaction networks that made the Ottoman large group of imperial subjects similar and differentiated it from outside groups were produced based on an allegiance relationship. The integration process had initially developed on the basis of an obedience to the sovereign power. However, despite the differences between the communities, there was a social influence and harmony based on subordination to the center, by meeting the needs of security, welfare, support, recognition and approval of common values under the imperial tent.

The main argument of this study is that the social cohesion that developed among the plural Ottoman subjects in the classical period of the Ottoman Empire through patterns established via social structures/relationships networks largely shaped by the central power enabled the construction of a collective Ottoman upper identity. However, it cannot be claimed that this identity is represented at the same level of belonging and identification across all of the state's borders, which were spread across three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Empires are political structures with functions that extend beyond administering the subjects under their control in the geographies over which they rule. These administrative structures reorganized the lives of the group members not only politically and economically, but also through the empire's specific socio-cultural institutions and the relationships formed around these institutions. While the empire pattern enabled the formation of collective behavior and emotion in the society/group, in-group similarities and differences also occurred spontaneously to a certain extent. One of the common features of empires, the characteristic of *having great military might and economic power* and the function of providing peace, justice, security, and welfare on behalf of group members/subjects, is a driving force in getting out of an *allegiance-centered* similarity/coexistence construct and leading members to have a group belonging. In this respect, the classical period Ottoman society shows the characteristics of a group in which the interaction of millions

of members with various religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, statuses and roles, and relations within/with the center is regulated by legal, customary and traditional values and norms. It should be noted at this point that the integrity, consistency, and continuity formed by mutual interaction and communication, as well as internal processes, is the equivalent of social identity in social theory (Marshall, 2000: 9). To some extent, the members of the Ottoman large group developed the "feeling and awareness of being a group" – albeit at different levels of identification in all in-groups – through the group's structural components/institutions, joint activities, division of labor, common norms and goals.

Collective Ottoman Upper Identity and the Dual Identity Model

According to social identity theory, *identity formation* takes place in three phases. Individuals/groups first categorize people as "me/us" and "she/he/them" (social categorization/social classification), then they identify themselves within the group they classify as "us" (social identification) and compare *us* with *them* (social comparison). In the categorization stage, similarities and differences are crystallized, and in the next identification stage, the common feelings, thoughts and behaviors of the group are internalized. At the stage where *us* and *them* are compared, satisfaction about being included in the group and self-esteem is increased (Hogg et al., 1995, 260-261). Undoubtedly, the formation of social identities, on the one hand, assimilates and integrates individuals under the umbrella of common values/interests; on the other hand, it causes discrimination, exclusion and sometimes hostility towards those who are alien to them. For this reason, social categorization/classification is a mechanism that forms the basis of both in-group favouritism (bias) and out-group prejudices (Tajfel and Turner, 1979: 33-48).

One of the models developed against the conflict and prejudice processes produced by social classification is the common upper identity model, which aims to establish joint participation between categories. (Gartner et al., 1993: 15-22). In this model, previously acquired given identities (religion, ethnicity, etc.) as subgroup identities are re-categorized into a more inclusive common upper group identity (Eniç, 2019: 104). In this framework, varieties are to be gathered under the roof of a new "upper identity", new criteria should be determined, and a new categorization should be made in order to meet on more common ground. Scientific researches in the pursuit of eliminating mutual prejudices and neutralizing the *us/them* dichotomy through the integration and creation of a new and common upper identity as *us* do not produce very positive results on the theoretical plane. Yet, there are very successful examples in historical practice and we think that the Ottoman classification developed within the imperial system can be mentioned among these practices. In fact, many historical materials testify that the phenomenon of *being an Ottoman* in the classical period is a social identity that meets the requirements of the common upper group identity model used in social psychology (Gaertner et al., 1993: 4-12).

The re-categorization activity, which is a decisive stage in the formation of the common upper identity, becomes quite evident after the conquest of Istanbul, which initiated the Ottoman imperialization process. It is possible to say that Fatih Sultan Mehmet's

regulations on religious communities after the conquest were a very important step in this sense. Via these legal regulations, which we prefer to conceptualize as *the community system* instead of *the millet system* to distinguish it from the modern regulations in the second half of the 19th century, the Muslim dominant group identity and many sub-identities such as Greek, Armenian, and Jewish groups were re-categorized under the Ottoman inclusive tent. At first glance, it is really thought-provoking how possible it is for different religious groups to gather under the same upper identity roof in traditional societies where separation/differentiation and therefore the perception of *the other* is essentially *religion-centered*. However, we believe that identification with upper group identities in traditional societies that were not politicized yet, despite all differences, developed spontaneously as a necessary consequence of socio-economic conditions. As a matter of fact, through the reclassification process, these conditions enabled the Ottoman subgroups to differentiate with some groups (for example, other Christians) despite sharing religious and/or ethnic common ascribed identities, and to identify with some groups (such as the Muslims) with which they did not share the same ascribed identities.

The basic phenomenon that started the reclassification/categorization process in the Ottoman group is the *allegiance* relationship. The commonality/familiarization between different in-groups activated in this way enabled the reduction of religious/ethnic prejudices or at least enabled their control by the central authority - for the Ottoman example - as stated in the *common upper group identity* theory. Another phase that has been very influential in the identification processes of different groups under the Ottoman roof is the construction of a common *other* conception. For both dominant Muslims and non-Muslim groups, the main *other* is European Christians that were not under Ottoman rule. In fact, when the threat of the European Christians as the *other* was apparent, a unified Ottoman large group representation with a common feeling and attitude towards the *other* developed. This was achieved despite the existence of in-group conflicts (within the Muslims, the Jews, and the Armenians etc.) and inter-group (Muslim-Greek, Greek-Jewish, Armenian-Greek, etc.) conflicts.

While the Ottoman organization of communities allowed the subgroup identities to be preserved and expressed by allowing a certain level of freedom, it also brought some important gains. Religious and sectarian differentiation, which is the strongest discriminating element of sub-identities, did not limit the participation of these sub-groups in the Ottoman political, economic and social institutions. In this way, interaction based on social cooperation between different groups managed to find a way to flourish and develop. It also contributed to the process of Ottoman subgroups reclassifying themselves into both their subgroup identities and a common upper group, under the umbrella of collective group identity. Through reclassification and the construction of a new collective identity, intra-group biases decreased (Gaertner et al., 1990: 693-700), and positive relations were established between different groups (Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Armenian, Greek, etc.).

Even though the Ottoman Empire is a Turkish empire, it is not exclusively an empire of the Turks. Like all empires, it has a multinational, multi-religious and multilingual structure. In this respect, the dual identity model (Dovidio et al., 2007: 300-330), which is a version of the collective group identity, offers a new and much more explanatory

context for understanding the classical period Ottoman society. Objective representations such as the Ottoman Greek, the Ottoman Armenian, and the Ottoman Jew can be perceived as the most concrete indicators of dual identity formations in the Ottoman group. In the dual identity model, sub-identities are preserved and identification with the common upper identity is ensured. Simultaneous emphasis on both identities reinforces dual identity representation. Many studies show that a strong upper identity is beneficial for both majority and minority group members where subidentities are also strong. In this way, by emphasizing common and different identities at the same time, the level of intergroup bias and prejudice is effectively reduced (Dovidio et al., 2007, 303). In the construction of dual identity, there is an interaction of groups synergistically with the unity of subidentities and upper identity (Hewstone and Brown, 1986: 12-30; Eniç, 2019: 113). In order to maintain this interaction successfully, the social contact environment and the social structure institutions must be organized in accordance with the preservation of sub-identities. Indeed, identity is an expression of integrity, consistency and continuity that is formed not only by internal processes but also by external/environmental/social interactions (Marshall, 2000: 9).

Therefore, the social structure as a dynamic whole, consisting of people and social institutions in a permanent, perpetual and organized relationship network, functions as a kind of laboratory environment in the formation and configuration of identities (Bottomore, 2000: 119). The structures where the group members experience a collective interaction can prosper the dual identity model as a type of collective upper identity to the extent that it allows the preservation of subgroup identities. This model does not only recognize the differences of the subgroup identities but also ensures the production of an upper category that encompasses all of the identities. Studies show that ethnic minority members who want to preserve the difference and originality of their identities have much more positive feelings towards the majority group if the dual identity model is encouraged in comparison with normal conditions (Glasford and Dovidio, 2011: 1021-1024). This naturally ensures that systems adopting the dual identity model are more peaceful and collaborative when compared to assimilation or separation strategies.

Collective Interaction Spaces/Structures and Motivational Functions Shaping the Classical Ottoman Upper Identity

The institutional structure and organization of the Ottoman Empire, which regulates the contacts and relations of the group members in political, economic, cultural and social life, presents a character suitable for the development of the dual identity model. In the two big spaces (urban and rural) of social life in the Ottoman society, commercial and agricultural life, social life organized by the waqf system from places of worship to educational institutions, and daily life and practices became collectivized to a large extent by preserving religious and ethnic sub-identities via common spaces such as bazaars and squares. Halil İnalcık mentions that in the Ottoman Empire there was "not suppression and supersedence, but a reconciliation and integration" and argues that "Basically, the Ottoman peoples represent an umbrella of sovereignty over religions and regional cultures, and it is possible to talk about an Ottoman identity under the frameworks created by it." (İnalcık, 2004: 15-17). According to Feridun Emecen (2018: 368), the administrators of the Ottoman Principality adopted the aim of creating a collective social structure together,

not with an understanding of suppression based on racial and religious superiority. This inclusive organization model, which was shaped under the Ottoman rule, strengthened the formation of positive attitudes towards unification/integration within the group while preserving sub-identities, and contributed to the simultaneous identification of the group members with both sub-group and upper group identities. This article primarily focuses on the social and daily life of this organizational network that shaped the Ottoman identity, and the other, stereotypes and shared positive images as the elements of the Ottoman upper identity.

Social and everyday life

The Ottoman central government did not form a unity with the religion, language and culture of the dominant group by dissolving the differences within itself. Instead, it was based on the harmony/balance of different religions, sects and ethnicities on the condition of obedience to the Ottoman dynasty. Although non-Muslims had some administrative autonomy according to the community system, contrary to the traditional narrative, many studies have shown that the Ottoman central authority's effectiveness in the community administration, except for religious rituals, is deeper than it was previously thought. More importantly, these communities were not able to establish central authorities that spanned the entire empire's borders until the second half of the 18th century (Greene, 2015: 42-45; Emecen, 2018: 374). Apart from simple legal problems, it is seen that both community leaders and non-Muslim people prefer kadi courts instead of community solidarity and subgroup favouritism (Emecen, 1997: 53). Non-Muslims also widely used the Ottoman courts to resolve disputes among themselves and public order incidents originating from the Christians (Üçel-Aybet, 2018: 183). For example, studies have documented that the Greeks referred to these courts as their own and registered their heritage in both the community and the Ottoman courts. The fact that the Ottomans abolished all the restrictions imposed on the Jews by Byzantium and the Jews enjoyed more exemptions in practice while having the same law as the Christians, was effective in applying to kadi courts instead of their own community courts. In summary, these practices in the field of law, on the one hand, positively affected the process of integration and unification of non-Muslims under the Ottoman roof, apart from their communities; on the other hand, this highlighted the existence of a common world in the field of law. Applying to kadi courts when there is an incompatibility and a conflict between the interests/demands of non-Muslim individuals and the general interests of the community points out that the Ottoman central authority also functioned as a kind of social balance in the field of law. In this way, it can be said that non-communal loyalties were formed and a sense of belonging to the Ottoman upper identity based on allegiance was produced.

According to the traditional narrative, one of the dominant understandings is that non-Muslims and Muslims lived in isolated neighborhoods in the Ottoman lands. However, the neighborhoods where both communities lived together were not few (Kütükoğlu, 24). The court records also show that the Muslims and non-Muslims in Ottoman society tended to live at a certain distance from each other; however, there is also a substantial amount of the opposite situation. For example, the Jews, who were tenants in the social complex rooms when they first migrated to Manisa in the 16th century, later bought houses in Muslim neighborhoods, and even though it was legally forbidden, they lived

in the houses they rented or bought around the Muradiye Mosque (Emecen, 1997: 62-63). It is also evident that the Muslims and non-Muslims lived together, especially in neighborhoods with high commercial activities (Emecen, 2018: 356). In the 15th century, Muslim neighborhoods were generally within the walls, but a century later, they also settled outside the city walls, and the physical borders with non-Muslims largely disappeared (Greene, 2015: 92). Especially after the 15th century, the walls separating the neighborhoods where the congregations lived began to disappear due to fires and epidemics (Shaw, 2008: 91). Therefore, a more accurate statement of the situation is that although the Muslims and non-Muslims had a tendency to live in separate neighborhoods, this cannot be generalized.

These groups from different religions shared common spaces, common feelings and concerns in the neighborhoods where they lived together under the roof of the Ottoman Empire. For example, Muslim and non-Muslim people prayed together to get rid of plagues. The presence of prayer rugs in non-Muslim inheritance documents indicates that the cohesion between non-Muslims and Muslims was so high that it facilitated each other's worship (Araz, 2008: 176-177). On the other hand, while participating in non-Muslim celebrations was considered a sign of blasphemy, it is also evident that Muslims participated in various celebrations of non-Muslims (Araz, 2008: 164-166). According to what Fresne Canaye wrote in his travel book, Le Voyage du Levant dated 1573, Muslims in Istanbul gave flowers to their Christian neighbors on religious holidays; the Christians would also offer Easter bread to the Muslims on their religious holidays. In fact, Shaykh al-Islam Ebusuud Efendi issued a fatwa stating that there is no harm in accepting Easter bread by the Muslims in accordance with the right of neighborship (Üçel-Aybet, 2018: 166; Greene, 2015: 170). Non-Muslim subjects were also participating in victory festivities together with the Muslims. During Ramadan nights, the Jews played puppetry with their Muslim neighbors in coffee houses (Üçel-Aybet, 2018: 396). Many bonds were established between the Muslims and the Christians through established practices such as marriage, blood fraternity, baptism, and friendship (Greene, 2015: 95). While it is prohibited for the Muslims and non-Muslims to bathe in the same bath and go to the same barbershop according to the written law, there are many contrary examples to these laws (Araz, 2008: 124).

Another practice that differentiates the sub-groups in the Ottoman written laws was about clothing. Clothing, which is an element of material culture, was one of the means of identification that made symbolic boundaries between individuals and groups clear. Therefore, clothing was one of the indicators of group membership and belonging (Ülgen, 2012: 474). The practice of differentiated clothing, which was also available in Europe and Byzantium, was a result of the search for social transparency, and the establishment of a social system and stability by determining the status of social elements (Faroqhi, 1998: 124). These distinctive outfits do not always carry a hostile intent. In fact, they also mean the approval of groups (Lewis, 2018: 73). Making the difference visible was also reflected in the religious texts, and the communities themselves demanded this separation. For example, Jewish clergy did not tolerate their congregations to dress similarly to those of other religions (Turan, 2005: 254). On the other hand, unlike Medieval Western Europe, it is seen that the rules prohibiting groups from appropriating each other's symbols were

mostly not followed in the Ottoman Empire (Emecen, 2018: 65). For example, while the Muslims had the right to wear green, white, red and yellow clothes, it is known that the Jews wore white turbans and red shoes. Not only the Muslim women but also the Christians and the Jews wore white or colored dresses (And, 2004: 422). The existence of many edicts enacted on the dress code at certain intervals is in fact an indication that these rules were not followed at all. Despite the edicts of the central authority and the efforts of the community leaders to prevent it, the fact that non-Muslims mostly prefer Muslim clothing instead of clothing that symbolizes their community is a strong indication of the existence of a sense of identification and belonging with the Ottoman upper identity. Similarly, despite the rule that non-Muslim buildings should not be built higher than Muslim buildings, it is seen that this was not the case in practice just as the restrictions on building non-Muslim structures next to mosques and riding of horses by non-Muslims (Shaw, 2008: 126; Faroqhi, 1998: 124).

In daily life, Muslim and non-Muslim groups built a common world by sharing similar clothing, home furnishing styles, customs, spoken language and artistic aesthetics under the tent of the Ottoman Empire. For example, the clothes of non-Muslim women are the same as the Muslims in many places. Anatolian and Caucasian Armenians and unmarried Greek girls cover their faces just like Muslim women (Faroqhi, 1998: 125). Petrus Gyllius, who was sent to Istanbul by the Kingdom of France between 1544 and 1547, recorded that in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Greeks had nothing left of the old Byzantine traditions and customs, and they had been imitating the Turks in daily life, cuisine, clothing and home decoration. Gyllius also mentions that Greek women in Istanbul wore caftans over long dresses just like the Muslims in their homes (Üçel-Aybet, 2018: 142). The French orientalist Antoine Galland, who was in Istanbul in 1672-1673, also says that non-Muslim young girls cover their faces when going out, and non-Muslim women, like Muslim women, do not usually go out and prefer to look out of the window (Üçel-Aybet, 2018: 195). Kuripecic, one of Ferdinand I's embassy delegation, states that in the Balkans, Greek villagers dress in the same manner as the Muslims, the only difference being the Greeks have long hair (Üçel-Aybet, 2018: 205). Dutch traveller Cornelius de Bruyn records in 1678 that Greek and Jewish women in Izmir, like Muslim women, tied colored handkerchiefs to their headdresses and wore a long white dress that extended to their feet in the street (Üçel-Aybet 251). Apart from clothing, it is seen that many customs were shared by the Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, in rural areas, Armenian men would gather and sit in a room made in a barn, just like the Turks. The village area was divided into two for men and women. There were some common traditions such as drinking coffee when asking for a girl in marriage, betrothal, engagement, wedding ceremonies lasting for an average of three days, henna nights, red veils, parents' refraining themselves from showing their love towards their children in the presence of others and especially in the presence of other adults (Matossian and Villa, 2006: 109, 165).

The Ottomans and Europe: Reciprocal Construction of *the Other*

The other is alien to *us*; it is different and it has a negative connotation and perception in terms of content. *The other* is in opposition to what is defined as *us* (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Bilgin, 2007: 179). In a long historical process, The Ottomans and Europe became

the other reciprocatively and this situation played an important role in the formation and strengthening of the collective identity of both big groups. The main reason for this is the existence of the Islam-Christianity dichotomy as the backbone of these identities and the main indicator of their differentiation, and the existence of great competition for limited resources. According to Muzaffer Şerif's (1966: 15) *realistic conflict theory*, intergroup behavior now and in the future depends on the cooperative or competitive nature of group goals. Confrontation and hostility occur in the case of a real or imaginary threat to the security of the group, or conflict of interests with outside groups. This feeling reinforces group identity by increasing solidarity within the group (Brewer, 1979: 315-320). It can be said that the lines "The world consists of three parts; Europe, Asia and Africa, and the Christians live in Europe while the enemies of Europe live in other places." (Yurdusev, 1997: 36) are one of the best descriptions of the situation for Europe. A good indication of *the otherness* of Europe for the Ottomans is that things coming from *Europe/Kafiristan (The land of infidels)* are considered *makruh* (detestable) (İnalcık, 2004: 1049). Until the 16th century, the European view of the Ottomans was also similar.

The Ottomans are also infidels from their perspective. Later on, they would be labelled as *barbarians* in the 18th century. Negative evaluations of the other such as *ignorant and inept* stereotypes (Berkes, 1975: 23), and if we express it in psychoanalytic terminology, *externalized negative images* would be attached to the Ottoman image for Europe in the 18th century. How negative was the image of Europe, which was *the other* for the Ottoman Muslim group, for the Ottoman non-Muslims? The Jewish stereotype, widely shared by European Christians, included *immorality, sorcery, and sinister evil*. In Europe, harsh treatments such as attacks, mass murder, and exile against the Jews without separating the elderly, disabled and children, had been going on for centuries. On the other hand, the Jews were forced to convert, and those who did not convert were marked with distinctive symbols and headgears. In addition, the most heavily taxed were the Jewish group. The Jews who were Byzantine subjects were also subjected to the same harsh treatment (Lewis, 2018: 212-213). In the 16th century, the Portuguese Jew, Samuel Usque, author of *The Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel*, with his following statement "(...) most signal is great Turkey, a broad and spacious sea which God opened with the rod of His mercy. Here the gates of liberty are always open for the observance of Judaism." (Lewis, 2018: 213), exemplifies the common feelings of the Jewish and the Muslim groups against *the common other*. Naturally, the Ottoman central government and Muslim subjects did not have the characteristics of the other for the Jews, who, as Ottoman subjects, attained a level of tolerance, protection and high welfare (Shaw, 2008: 5-15). On the other hand, the Christians were a threat group for them and the Ottoman tent acted as the main shield that alleviated this threat in favour of the Jews. The dissolution of the Ottoman system could lead to the resumption of the Christian attacks against the Jews. Indeed, with its interventions, the Ottoman central government largely prevented its Christian subjects from harming the Jews, unlike in Europe. The Jews were always protected against the attacks by the Christian gangs, oppression of the Armenian nobility, and exclusion from the economic sphere. (Shaw, 2008: 131-133).

The situation was similar for the Ottoman Greeks and the profile defined as *the other* was Catholic Europe. The impact of the fourth Crusade was decisive in the alienation of

the Catholic world and the shaping of the Greek Orthodox identity. Catholic persecution led to the separation of Greek Orthodox from the Catholic Christian identity and increased the level of identification with the Greek Orthodoxy (Greene, 2015: 55). In the early 1500s, the definition of Europe combined with the concept of Frank (Frankoi) was introduced to the Ottoman Empire through the Greeks and resulted in a shared common image of hatred for *the other* (Berkes, 1965: 14). Luigi Bassano, who lived in Istanbul between 1532 and 1540, states that the Greeks did not like the Latins and even preferred their daughters to marry the Turks rather than the Latins (And, 2004: 422). While the Orthodox Church, which was subjected to Catholic persecution for a long time, especially in Crete, Cyprus and the Cyclades, had important privileges in the Ottoman administration, the Greeks reached a better position both within the Ottoman bureaucracy and as subjects (Faroqhi, 1998: 77).

For the Anatolian Armenians, the Ottomans are a *savior* against the Orthodox Byzantium, just as it was for the Jews. Simeon, an Armenian-Pole, gives the following information about the situation of the Armenians in the Byzantine period: "When Istanbul was in the hands of the Greeks, no Armenians were allowed into the city let alone the Armenians settling there. (…) When the Turks took Istanbul, many Armenians settled here (…) In fact, the Turks treated them very well." (Emecen, 2018: 381). In terms of understanding the attitude of Ottoman Armenians towards European Christians, the attempt to poison Suleiman the Magnificent in Budin in 1541 is noteworthy. Some pro-Habsburg Hungarians offered to cooperate with the Sultan's cook, Armenian Manuk Karaseferyan, to kill the Sultan, but Karaseferyan preferred to reveal the assassination attempt instead of collaborating with the Christians (Pamukciyan, 2003: 264).

Shared positive image and self-esteem hypothesis

One of the constructive elements of large group identities is the shared repository of positive images/representations. Shared positive images refer to certain elements and experiences that are passed on to new generations under the conscious or unconscious guidance of parents and others. These images reinforce the large group component in individuals' identities through generalizations, and thus individual identity and large group identity are inextricably intertwined (Volkan, 2007: 55-60). With the storage of shared positive images in the collective memory of the groups, an invisible *us* is built without being aware of it, and a permanent and continuous sense of "we" is produced in the group (Volkan, 2003: 50-65).

Being strong is one of the strongest positive images of the Ottoman upper identity shared within the group. Since shared positive images are produced by the interaction of in-group and inter-group processes, it is important whether the image of Ottoman strength is reciprocated, especially in the out-group. For example, the Turkish/Muslim/Ottoman image for Europe has become idiomatic with the phrase "*Fort comme un Turc/Strong as a Turk*". This image, which is clearly revealed in the notes of European travellers and diplomats, shows that despite many stereotypes, the positive image of *Gran Turco/Great Turk* is reflected in the outgroup. It is the same reason why all the attention of Europe was on the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century and that many publications were released for or against the Ottoman Empire. As a matter of fact, more than 1500 books were

published in mostly German but also in Latin, French, English, Italian, Spanish and other European languages between 1522 and 1572 in order to get a better understanding of the Ottoman Empire. While most of these publications include the call for a Crusade against the Ottomans, some of them give information about the origin, history and traditions of the Ottomans (Göyünç, 1999: 314-319). In particular, the life and conquests of Suleiman the Magnificent inspired many literary works, ballets and operas in Europe after the 16th century (Renda, 2004: 1121).

The 16th century Spanish traveller Pero Tafur also makes the representation of the Ottoman image in Europe visible with the words, "In my opinion, if the Turks decide to march to the west with their soldiers, no one can turn them away from it." (Kılınç, 2020: 1842). In the same century, the German traveler pastor Salomon Schweigger reflected the same Ottoman image in his words, "First of all, the God is almighty (causa principalis), while the Turks are just an instrument (cause instrumentalis) the God uses this instrument to punish the Christians. (…) I fear that Christendom will never be able to deal with this enemy." (Kılınç, 2020: 1866). Busbecq, the ambassador of Archduke Ferdinand I of Austria, apart from the image of the *Strong Turk*, also gives information about the historical continuity and violence of the conflict between the two big groups. "You will see how harsh, how strong, how smart, how arrogant, and in the end what a successful soldier, how cultured and good orator the Turk is, the common enemy of the whole Christian world." (Kumrular, 2016: 36). The statement of French traveller Jean du Mont, who came to Istanbul in 1609, "(…) I seriously respected the genius of this nation." (Üçel-Aybet, 2018: 118) highlights the reflection of the positive Ottoman image shared in the outer group. In a Protestant pamphlet published in the second half of the 16th century, it is remarked that, "For the Christian world, submission and tribute to the mighty [Ottoman] sultan is the best way, we can count on him to rule us with justice and generosity." (İnalcık, 2004: 1065). Luther also says that in 1530, because of the poor living conditions in Eastern Europe, Christian peasants welcomed the Turks as saviors (İnalcık, 2004: 1074).

People are motivated to have and maintain a positive social identity, and therefore there is an ontological (existential) relationship between social identity and positive image/self-esteem. As a matter of fact, social-collective identities are reinforced by the value and emotional significance attributed to being a member of a group (Tajfel, 1982: 2). Group emotion is the common emotion that a group of people can experience in the context of a particular social identity, namely group empathy (Smith et al., 2007: 435-440). Emotional attachment through identification with the group causes the individual to feel positive feelings about group membership, and thus, self-esteem increases, and the group identity becomes stronger (Tajfel, 1970: 98-99). Shared positive images have an important function in binding the group together by increasing the formation of group feeling (Mackie et al., 2000: 609-615).

In addition, the group's definitive boundaries and creation of a sense of emotional security, meeting the needs through group membership, and shared emotional connections (positive experience and interaction, shared values) are the other factors that create group feeling (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). Considering the subject of group behavior, the Self-Esteem Hypothesis (Abrams and Hogg, 1988: 320-325) can be applied as the

most functional theory in explaining the formation of group emotion. According to the hypothesis, when group members can positively distinguish their group from *the other* through comparisons, their self-esteem increases. Consequently, identification and attachment with group identity increases as the group bolsters the self-esteem of its members. In the light of these theories, we are of the opinion that the shared positive image of "strength" about the Ottoman Empire was extremely effective in the emotional attachment to the Ottoman upper identity not only in the Muslim group but also in the non-Muslim groups. In the classical period, the Ottoman central government protected all its subjects against the European *other*, the ruling class, and its non-Muslim subjects against inter-communal conflicts with this quality of "strength".

Conclusion

Preferring the term "plural societies," social anthropologist Fredrik Barth describes cultures that are capable of bridging racial divides. Different groups in a plural society present the appearance of economic interdependence and ecological specialization as a means of a unified community. There are no assimilation problems for dominant and non-dominant factions in a pluralistic society. The ability of the dominant group to recognize the basic values of the subgroups and to meet the needs of the groups ensures harmony and integration. Thus, in the plural society, the dual upper identity model can develop and the identification of the group members can be ensured. Based on these theories, it can be concluded that the dominant and subgroups in the classical Ottoman group, which has the characteristics suitable for the definition of a plural society, are integrated under the tent of a dual upper identity.

On the other hand, the Ottoman upper identity, formed with the political, economic and social structure relations unique to the Ottoman Empire, and shaped in accordance with the dual identity model, had a function in reducing the intergroup conflicts. Thus, harmonious relations could be established between subgroups such as the Muslims, the Christians, the Jews, the Armenians and the Greeks. The main motivations that provide this are the security, welfare, recognition and approval of values, and the meeting of needs that the Ottoman upper identity offers to the group members. These motivations led to the reclassification of group members in the classical period, which differentiated non-Muslim subjects from the European Christians for the Muslim group, and the Ottoman Muslims from the European Christians for the non-Muslim subjects.

As one of the classical era's conventional communities, the Ottoman Empire faced prejudices, discrimination, and grievances resulting from religious differences. However, both the Islamic doctrines and the benefits of Muslim-non-Muslim coexistence, as well as human relations and the techniques employed to develop these relations, allowed the classical Ottoman Empire to construct a collective socio-cultural framework as a system of values and meanings.

The Ottoman higher identity became the character of the system established in the orbit produced by the central authority that functioned as the Sun, much like the Solar System, in which different planets revolve in a common orbit due to the gravitational impact of the Sun.

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