Morgane Labbé,

La nationalité, une histoire de chiffres: Politique et statistiques en Europe centrale (1848-1919),

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Morgane Labbé's book examines the production and utilization of ethnographic statistics and maps employed to colonize and govern the Polish territories partitioned by the end of the 18th century by the Prussians (Germany), the Habsburgs, and the Russians. While looking at the sources, Labbé also takes into consideration the data, opinions, and evaluations of the Polish (minority) intellectuals as an example of *contre-statistics*. Another important topic in the book is nationality and contemporary ways to measure it. It examines the international dimension with specific attention to the International Congress of Statistics (1857-1874) where the methods to measure nationality were discussed. Additionally, the book makes use of the data presented at the Peace Conferences (1919), which used these tools to solve the question of nationality.

The author successfully analyzes the mutual effect of the technics (statistics, maps) and politics, in general, and the question of nationalism, in particular. While she associates the "German national state construction" with "cartography and statistics" (p. 19), she emphasizes the impact of politics over technics during the "1848 Revolution, 1880 anti-Semite crisis in Germany, the 1905 Russian Revolution or the First World War" (p. 363). For this reason, the book's periodization is shaped not only by politics, but also by technics. Labbé covers a period from the 1848 Spring of Nations to the 1919 Peace Conference. She juxtaposes

this with the technics: starting with the 1844 "Sprachkarte von Deutschland" (of Karl Bernhardi), through 1916 "L'atlas Völker-Verteilung in West-Russland" to the 1919 E. de Martonne's map (one of the maps circulated during the Peace Conferences 1919).

This period was an "era of enthusiasm for statistical data-collection", during which the definition, measurement, and geography of nation(s) were discussed. To define a nation, several factors that were put forward in nationwide and international discussions were language, religion, culture, custom, mores, way of life, birth, descent, confession and so on. The language became the factor, on which there was a general agreement. The main reason was that besides the assumption regarding the direct relation between language and thought, language is the sole measurable character of a nation. In other words, the choice of the tongue was not only chosen because of its determinant role in "nationalist thought", but also because of its measurable character. However, as the book shows, this "tacit acceptance" also created other questions, at least among statisticians: If language is an indicator of nationality, which language has to be taken into consideration: spoken, official language, or mother tongue. If the spoken language is taken into account, which milieu should be chosen: the language spoken in public, at home with one's family or the one at school? And which spoken language should be measured as the best-spoken language or the most used language? The other reason that alleviated these discussions was the governments' desire to get their preferred desired data from the census. Eventually, the taxonomies of language multiplied: mother tongue, spoken language, language spoken in the household/ family (*Familiensprache*), written language, public language, school language, the national language, slang (*Umgangssprache*), official language, language of birth country (*Geburtslandes*), foreign language, and cultural language.

The importance of this work for the field of Ottoman-Turkish Studies is that it generates the following question: Why did the Ottoman Empire not produce linguistic data and maps similar to its fellow European states? This question becomes even more important when one keeps in mind that the Ottoman Empire was a participant in the 1872 International Congress of Statistics, which decided "the spoken language [to be] a mandatory subject in censuses (p. 39)". It is thus highly surprising that none of the Ottoman censuses included a question on language and none of the Ottoman statisticians produced linguistic data. The main reason seems to have been the (non)equilibrium of political and military power. In the Polish example investigated in the book, the three powers (German,

Habsburg and Russian), were in a kind of a stalemate. However, in the case of Ottoman disputed territories, Russia was dominant. In other words, the Russian military power determined the "nation" and "frontiers" until when European Powers entered the "Great Game" through the 1853-1856 Crimean War. Starting during the 1876 Bulgarian territorial disputes the (ethnic) statistics and map *a la européenne*, became diplomatic tools. During this stalemate the Ottomans were supported mainly by the Great Britain and France against Russia as well as the Bulgarian minority. In other words, the post-1848 Polish case could be compared with the post-1878 Bulgarian case, for which all parties produced their data and maps, yet they were a lot more amateurish than the Polish case.

The second reason was the non-priority of language. The official language of the Ottoman Empire was Ottoman, an imperial language that was based on Turkish strongly characterized by Arabic and Persian. Moreover, the language was not a priority among Ottoman minorities. No minority group wanted their language to be recorded in census data. The relationship between mother tongue and the nation was not as strong among the minorities as it was for their European fellows. Most probably, the language was viewed to be a divisive factor among minorities. For instance, Armenians speaking the Western Armenian language were divided as Catholic, Protestant, and Gregorian. Similarly, the Greek orthodox community was further divided into Catholic and Protestant. On the other hand, many non-Turkish Muslims spoke other languages but did not have their own alphabets. Thus, the language for some communities had not yet gained a "selfhood" to "determine" its national fate. Third, the dominance of religion seems to have played a significant role. Despite the "Sharia" Empire was in transformation from the 1839 Tanzimat onwards, the 1876 First Constitution still emphasized that the "[Ottoman] Caliphate is the protector of Islam and Sultan of his subjects". Hence, the Ottoman identity politics (*millet* system) was religious/sectarian, and the definition of the nation was much more religious than their European counterparts. Fourth, the reason was the lack of technics and knowledge. Despite having a long history of the practice of "census" such as *tahrir*, the place of statistics was not very strong in the Ottoman Empire. The use of maps was almost absent in the Ottoman bureaucracy. Neither statistics nor maps were not popular among intellectuals. The number of statisticians and cartographers was relatively few. Language would only gain a similar importance as in mid-19th century Europe, during the foundation of the Turkish Republic, where the official language was emphasized at the expense of religion. The moment when the religious minority

lost its threat to the state, language gained weight. The number and proportion of non-Muslims sharply decreased, and the remainder was concentrated in Istanbul. Language became a census question at the first Republican census undertaken in 1927. The language question in Turkish censuses had changed in time like in the 19th century European censuses that the book demonstrates. The questionaries formulated and divided the question as "mother tongue" and "spoken language". These questions aimed to measure the degree of "Turkophonization" or to put it another word: of Turkification. A question about the "second language" started to be asked in the 1935 census. The formulation of the question was a copy-cat similar to the 1905 Prussian census. The issue here was if German was not the mother tongue was it still be used as the spoken language (p. 71).

As a result, the book is a must-read for nationalism studies. As the author rightfully claims by reflecting the importance of maps and statistics in nation-building and the question of nationality, "the book provides a new reading of the history of state and nationalism". Maps and statistics, which were generally squeezed into footnotes, become central sources of this book. Indeed, by portraying the nationalists' effort to digitize and visualize their nation, Labbé's book is a critical intervention in the study of nationalism dominated by Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" approach.

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