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Nationalism and Religion in the Formation of Modern State in Turkey and Egypt until World War I

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Abstract: This study discusses the formation of national identity and the nation state in the modern Middle East in comparison with Turkey, one of the earlier models of national state formation in the region. The basic aim of the study is to examine the position of religion and religious identity as the source of legitimacy in the modern state. In order to have a better understanding of the relationship between nationalism and religion in the Middle East, the study attempts to look at the development of Egyptian nationalism and the role of religion in the making of modern state in Egypt. The study also attempts to make a comparative historical work by analyzing the history of the early Republican Turkey and the consolidation of the modern Turkish state by legitimacy other than religion hitherto the basic source of authority.

Introduction

There are several points that should be made clear in such an analysis. First, comparative analysis between similar cases would teach us historical developments better and provide a systematic assessment to understand differences as well as similarities in the cases compared. Egypt and Turkey have more commonalities rather than differences in their respective historical path in early modernization for establishing nationality and modern state. Second, this study does not consider the development of national identity and nationalism as unique only to the establishment of republic in Turkey. In other words, this study is written in awareness of the fact that the development of nationalism started in Turkey well before the modern republic, during the years of turmoil in the Young Turks' struggle to save the Empire from collapse. The consolidation and development of nationalism and nation-state continued well into the 1930s in Turkey. Therefore, the study

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considers a political and ideological continuity more than rupture between the late Ottoman thinking of Ottomanism, Islamism and nationalism and early republican establishment of national identity. However, the study aims at questioning the early development of the nation state in modern Turkey and Egypt until the First World War, thus will refer only to the early developments in the Young Turks' and Young Egyptians' era. Third, while there are some commonalities and frequent characteristics in the establishment of modern state in Middle Eastern countries, the study does not take the Middle Eastern state as if it would constitute a homogeneous unit *per se*. But the study will utilize the specific features of basically the Egyptian political developments in the 1920s for the sake of historical comparison to make clear the status of religion in the former Ottoman domains. And fourth, the study attempts at understanding the historical relationship between the state and religion in the modern political establishment in Turkey and Egypt, but it is not the objective of this study to analyze these developments in the modernity paradigm. In other words, there is no commonly agreed process of state-making and nation-building which could be employed to understand cultural and social processes in these countries, as there is no basic state formation paradigm that would be conducive to our understanding the political developments in specific regions as a whole. Therefore, each specific case requires further analysis from within and without to grasp better the specificities in national developments in their own social and political settings.

The foundations of the modern state in the Middle East became one of the challenging subjects in the scholarly debate in political history. The modern state formed by a bureaucratic order over a specific population in a certain territory with the monopoly of the use of force is hard to find in the Middle East. This is because the development of the state and nation in the Middle East has historically determining factors different than Western European statehood. The most significant difference appears to be that the Middle Eastern state formation is more of the making of external powers rather than the conflict among internal forces within society. Therefore, in the modern Middle Eastern setting, the origin of legitimacy of power is not social forces, but rather forces outside the social and political relations between state and society. Thus the power in the modern Middle Eastern state is at best partial, added more sources of conflict to patriarchal authority, the historical foundation of power. The authority is largely segmented and ineffective, but in contrast to its partiality, and perhaps just because of its incompleteness, the state is highly centralized, bureaucratic and authoritarian to impose its control not only on resources but also on the people. But the central authority is limited with the large urban areas; the

rural and nomadic societies are generally free from central authority. The Middle Eastern modern state is also territorial with the clearly established boundaries drawn by the British and French during the Mandate period, though the society it rules is not with many nationalities, ethnicities, religions and languages. The comprehensive authority of the state covers all country and effective within the boundaries; however, the survival of state power depends largely on its alliance with one or the other of these entities as local power pockets. The state has also a balancing activity among local powers by manipulating them against each other in order to maintain stability and security in remote areas.

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The Development of Modern State and Nation in the Middle East

The modern state is a political system which is able to penetrate into society that exerts a high degree of control over social, economic and cultural affairs and as a bureaucratic institutional structure which is able to response to citizens' demands. The state in Turkey and Egypt is taken for granted to have been established in the reformation period in the Ottoman Empire and to have organized state-society relations in a way different from previous order through reforms and revolutions from above. Once established and consolidated the power in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the state started to control and exert heavy pressure over citizens' participation into political processes, organization of civil society, interest groups, political parties and other institutional practices in the modern nation state. These processes followed different paths and methods in Turkey and Egypt, and this study wants to focus only on the attitude of the state toward religion and religious institutions in both countries.

Turkish Modernity, Nationalism and Religion

It was the Tanzimat period (1839-76) in the Ottoman Empire that established the essence of institutional life of the modern state with the recognition and protection by the state of security of life, honor and private property its citizens. The Tanzimat reforms at the political and economic spheres required the centralization of power to increase state's revenues, and create new institutions to re-organize social and political life according to the requirements of the new age of modern states. The centralization attempts during the Tanzimat aimed at weakening of the influences of internal and external forces over the political and economic affairs of the Empire.¹ In the age of the Tanzimat, the Ottoman politics and economy were subject to the territorial demands not only of European powers as Russia and Austria, but also of its own vassal, Egypt of Mehmet Ali Pasha. The expansion of European manufacturing and trade also required the transformation of Ottoman economy and administration to a new mode.² For the Tanzimat bureaucrats, the establishment of a powerful and functional government was the only way to challenge the domestic and foreign demands from the Empire, which would have otherwise reduced the power of the state. Many administrative, economic, financial and educational reforms aimed to create a new state with a strong military power depending on new sources of revenue and centralized finances. As the power of the state increased, the new bureaucracy became more effective not only against the privileges of new economic groups, mostly non-Muslims in close relations with capitalist circles in Europe, but also against the authority of the palace and its religious legitimacy.

The conservatives, however, were to be made happy with the strengthening of the state with references to religion. The Tanzimat made it clear that the reforms were not against the *ulema* and their privileges but for the protection of the strong state tradition. Reforms were explained by the bureaucracy to strengthen the state which in turn would protect the Ottomans' rights and to provide justice. But traditional groups, the conservative *ulema*, religious endowments, the military and notables whose interests were destructed by reforms, government officials and their allies the provincial tax-farmers did not wait too long to react the Tanzimat order, and attempt to revert their losses by the reforms.³ The Tanzimat was expected to unify the subjects of the Empire around Ottomanism, prevent nationalist uprisings, integrate provincial groups into the central politics and institutions through local councils,

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and create a modern state with the rule of law; however, it failed to create a consensus among its people for unification. While each religious community had their own nationalist projects during the age of nationalism, the reforms increasingly benefited the commercial, entrepreneurial, urban and educated groups, formed mostly by non-Muslims at the expense of Muslim agrarian groups as the process of integration into capitalism gained pace. The Tanzimat also increased the degree of European intervention on behalf of the non-Muslims into the affairs of the Empire.

The response to the rights and privileges of non-Muslim groups and European penetration into the Empire came from the Ottoman Muslim intellectuals, such as Namik Kemal, Ibrahim Sinasi and Ziya Pasha, who formulated their ideological challenge for the liberation of the Ottoman Empire around Islamic political terms and restructuring of Ottoman central institutions. The new Ottoman intelligentsia of middle class origin, educated in state schools and worked in the service of government, considered the establishment of a constitutional system and representative institutions as the solution to the question of saving the Empire. It was Namik Kemal who added a new terminology to Turkish patriotism with the concepts like fatherland (*vatan*), freedom (*hurriyet*) and constitutional rule (*mesrutiyet*). The ideas of the Young Ottomans were also highly colored by Islamic reformism of Jamal Al-Din Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, who challenged economic and political domination and cultural expansion of the West. While the Pan-Islamic ideas of Afghani were occupying the day, the Young Ottomans were defending the representative institutions in an Islamic manner, the representation of Muslims in the traditional religious assemblies, *shura*. The Young Ottoman intellectuals, dissented the rights and privileges provided by the Tanzimat to the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire,

called for reforms depended more on the adoption of Islamic teachings to the modern age. Impressed by the German and Italian unifications, and the successes of Pan-Slavic movements in the Balkans, the Young Ottomans formulated the first theoretical arguments for the *ittihad-i Islam*, the unity of Muslim populations.⁴ The wars which furthered territorial domination of the West in the Muslim societies' lands also increased the radicalism of the Young Ottoman thought. The Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 (The 1293 War), the French occupation of Tunisia in 1881 and the British landing in Egypt in 1882 created a serious threat that unified the Muslims around Sultan-Caliph. Sultan Abdulhamid II, despite all of his unlimited ambition for power and absolute rule, became a focus of loyalty of the Muslims inside or outside of his domain. Indeed the Young Ottoman intellectuals' critique of the absolute power of the Sultan and his greater identification with Islam were among the factors that took the Young Ottomans' thought to a more liberal standing. The Young Ottomans conflict with the bureaucracy that became more powerful with the Tanzimat centralization also furthered the liberal ingredients of the Young Ottoman liberation ideology.⁵

The Young Ottoman intelligentsia's ideas provided a fertile ground for the establishment of a revolutionary society during the absolute rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II, who shelved the constitution for more than 30 years using the Russo-Ottoman War as an excuse for his personal reign. Frightened by a sudden collapse of the Empire by the activities of non-Muslim communities in the Balkans and the sponsoring Great Powers, Abdulhamid II adapted a Pan-Islamic policy to be able to hold the Muslims of the Empire together. Islamism became the inspiring force behind the power of the Sultan- Caliph as well as strengthening element for the Islamic nature of the state.

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A group of Young Turks in the Military Medical College established the Society of the Ottoman Union (*Ittihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti*) in 1899 against the absolutism of the Sultan and to-re-institute the 1876 Constitution as the only cure for the Empire's weaknesses. Since the ideological inclination of the Young Turks was Ottomanism, that is the unity of all Ottoman subjects within the territorial integrity of the Empire, the group tried to attract members from *millet*s of the Empire. The correspondence of the founders, Ishak Sukuti, Mehmet Resit, Abdullah Cevdet, Ibrahim Temo and Huseyinzade Ali with Ahmed Riza, then in Paris, publishing his positivist ideas in his paper, *Mesveret*, transformed the Society to the Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) in the early 1890s.⁶ The CUP did not have economic and political reform program until the Young Turks established the Committee's own government following the loss of the Balkan Wars and started to implement nationalist economic and ideological programs. Though there were conflicting ideological currents prevailing in various groups within the CUP, their westernization and the constitutional government were the common objectives that unified the CUP members around. The expansion of education under the rule of Abdulhamid prepared the basis for the emergence of bureaucratic and professional classes. They were, in other words, the by-products of the Hamidian reforms in education, courts and government. The Young Turks were state employees and part of the bureaucracy, educated in the newly established state schools, served as teachers and scholars in educational institutions, trained as lawyers to function in the new legal order in accordance with the modern law. There were also among them newspaper owners and publishers, writers dispersing their ideas of constitutionalism and freedom in books and journals. Many served in the military, trained in modern war colleges and academies.⁷ The new intelligentsia had specific distinct interests in power, which were in conflict with those of the traditional classes and the traditional segments of the military. The Young Turks were also based on a much broader social base in the Ottoman society.⁸

When the objective of providing unity and gradual realization of minority rights within the constitutional order failed, the Committee, well organized in every college and military corps around the Empire by 1908, acted in a revolutionary way to urge the Sultan to reinstitute the constitution.⁹ The military pressure from the officers in the Balkans came in July 23, 1908, and Abdulhamid bowed the CUP's demand for the revival of the Constitution, but the Committee was unsuccessful in dethroning the Sultan until the Islamic counter-revolution of 1909.

The counter-revolution, called the 31 Mart Event, had several repercussions: it ended the Abdulhamid regime, and helped the CUP to establish a parliamentary system. Though the origin of the counter-revolution remained blurred, the conservative army officers, the *ulema* and the students of religious institutions, and religious groups have all participated in the reactionary upheaval. The CUP found a rare opportunity to extinguish the reactionary influences over the political system. The counter-revolution was inspired by Islamic circles using religion as a pretext for their actions; Islam lost its previous significance in the ideological structure of the CUP. The CUP started to formulate a more nationalist framework minus Islam from then on. The suppression of the counter-revolution by the army commanded by Mahmut Sevket Pasha (later Minister of War and Prime Minister of the CUP) also proved that the CUP would need the military might for its own survival. The most important of these consequences are perhaps the establishment of the modern parliamentary state by

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limiting the Sultan's rights, strengthening the legislative authority, and recognizing the rights and liberties of the general public. The CUP had now achieved a more modern state, but the international juncture was not going to give enough space for it to function properly.

The main currents in the CUP ideology developed in the most chaotic years of the Empire from 1878 to 1913, a period when the Empire lost almost one third of its territories and population in the Balkans, North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. Well aware of the fact that European ambitions in the Empire depended solely on their nationalist aims, and the Balkan wars were just due to the formation of Balkan national states, the Young Turks felt that they needed to

develop their own nationalism as well. Or, in other words, as Feroz Ahmad rightly points out, they had to start emphasizing one of the ideological ingredients of Ottoman intellectuals from among Ottomanism, Islamism or nationalism.¹⁰ Ottomanism, the unity of Ottoman communities, was already replaced by Islamism after the loss of Bosnians, Bulgarians, Albanians and Greeks. Developed by Ottoman intellectuals like Namik Kemal, and more importantly by Jamal Al-Din Afghani, and adopted by the Sultan himself to appease the remaining Muslim populations of the Empire, Pan-Islamism appeared as an anti-imperialist current against the foreign control of Ottoman finances and alien domination on the culture of the Muslim world. However Pan-Islamism was as traditional as retrospective, since it was looking for the solution to the ills of the Empire in returning to the utopian world of the glorious age of Islam. It was modernist as well in its demand for modern education and for the modification of Islamic rules and codes in accordance with requirements of the modern age, but these views were bound to remain only on the ideological ground. The Ottoman Islamists such as M. Semseddin (Gunaltay), Egyptian Sait Halim Pasha, Musa Kazim Efendi, Ismail Hakki (Izmirli), Sehbenderzade Ahmet Hilmi, Ismail Fenni Ertugrul and Mehmet Ali Ayni were gathered around the journal *Sirat-i mustakim* during the Abdulhamid rule and the journal *Sebilulresad* in the Constitutional period.¹¹ The fatal blow to the survival of Islamism within the ideological structure of the CUP came from two directions: first, the 1909 counter-revolution, led by Dervis Vahdeti and supplied by his reactionary Islamist ideology, became a threat to the very existence of the constitutional rule; and second, the Albanians were separated from the Empire in 1912 to establish their own national state (and later the Arabs revolted against the Ottoman armies in Hijaz during the war for their state on Arab Peninsula). Westernization was the common bond for the all circles within the CUP, influenced strongly either by Ahmed Riza's positivism or Prince Sabahaddin's ideas of liberalism and decentralization. Abdullah Cevdet, one of the founders of the original Society in 1889, maintained his European manners, dressed as a European, and defended Europeanization of society and education in his journal *Ictihad*. The third important ideological current in the CUP was Pan-Turkism, or rather its political variation, Turkish nationalism. Turkish nationalism had its sources in the literature and academic work done in the Turkology institutes in Europe. The transformation of literary work to nationalist ideology was realized by the contribution of Turkish scholars such as Yusuf Akcura, Agaoglu Ahmet and Huseyinzade Ali, who migrated from Russia to Turkey with their nationalist feelings. Pan-Turkist writers, scholars and orientalists also founded their Turkish Society in the libertarian atmosphere of the 1908 Revolution, and published their ideas in journals like Turkish Homeland (*Turk Yurdu*). The CUP's Turkish nationalism gained pace with the establishment in 1912 of the Turkish Heart (*Turk Ocagi*) in the same Military Medical College where the seeds for the CUP were laid.

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With the founders like Yusuf Akcura, Mehmet Emin, Ahmet Ferit, Agaoglu Ahmet and Fuat Salih, Turkish nationalism gained its organizational structure with the Turkish Heart.¹² Also economic nationalism pursued by the CUP during WWI foresaw the emergence of the statist economic policies in the Turkish Revolution. In their search for the liberation from European economic control in the Empire and for favoring the Turkish-Muslim element in the Ottoman trade, the Young Turks adopted a nationalist economic policy. The War provided the opportunity to unilaterally abolish the capitulations, which caused the loss of European control in Ottoman economy.

When the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1918, there was only one nation, the Turks, fighting for its independence and organizing its political-institutional structure to be able to establish its state in the near future. With the advantage of finding a ready-made bureaucracy and a military that was dissolved after the WWI in Anatolia, the Turkish nationalist officers started their liberation war against the occupying powers, and an institutional structure for war aims. It was the long-lasting war itself that helped the nationalists to create solidarity and national identity around common aims of liberating Turkey from imperialist occupation and establishing a new system of governance in Anatolia. The modern Turkish national state established in 1923 following the National Independence War had its antecedents in the national identity and the ideology of nationalism created in the late Ottoman era. It is indeed Young Turk nationalism and the development of various other currents of thought in the early twentieth century that provided ideological bases and nationalist foundations to the new state in Turkey. In this sense, the establishment of the modern state in Turkey in 1923 constituted the culmination point of a long process of modernization in the Ottoman Empire, started with the Sultan Selim's reform attempts in the late eighteenth century, and developed with social and political changes succeeded by complex work of internal and external actors. Therefore, it would not be wrong to contend that the Turkish model of establishing the modern state and identification of the population with it differ not only from the Western European experience but from the Middle Eastern state and nation formation processes as well.

Early Egyptian Nationalism and the Status of Religion

Egypt during the reign of Mehmet Ali Pasha and his most able son Ibrahim experienced a great leap forward in agricultural renovation, industrial development and, educational and administrative reforms. Mehmet Ali Pasha's personal ambitions and Egypt's advantageous geographical location in Eastern Mediterranean turned the country to an early example of the development of the modern state in the Middle East. The need for having a large and deterrent army in Egypt required the change in the method and taxation in agriculture, investment in infrastructure, and establishment of new manufacturing techniques in iron processing, textiles and sugar production. However, the ambitious policies of Egyptian rulers were forced to end in 1841 due to the threat they posed against not only their own suzerain, the Ottoman Empire, but also against the European interests in the Middle East, technical knowledge, capital, labor and organization capability of the state also withered away in the 1860s. Khediv Ismail attempted to create a new impetus to Egyptian modernization by making it as the center of the world trade with the opening of the Suez Canal and by changing Egypt's political organization in

Western ways. During Ismail's reign, new, educated and westernized urban elite started to join in administrative processes, participate into legal system, and serve in the educational institutions in Egypt. Nevertheless, Egyptian modernization was solely based on the extravagant spending on non-productive sectors and Ismail was deposed on British and French demand in 1879 despite his efforts to save finances and administrative system from bankruptcy.

Though the formation of the modern state in Egypt can be taken as far back as the Mehmet Ali Pasha's reform in the early nineteenth century, the development of an Egyptian identity and nationalist movements start with the British occupation of Alexandria and Cairo in 1882. Mehmet Ali Pasha's modernization period in Egypt was defined at best as a false start.¹³ For George Antonius, Mehmet Ali Pasha, having a project of carving out an Arab Empire for himself, did not have any nationalist consciousness and his initiative was already bound to fail from the start. However, the bases for the new nationalist forces were already laid down during the first half of the nineteenth century by the development of Egyptian civilian bureaucracy and military groups, educational and legal reforms. In the last quarter of the century the Egyptian political groups started to be differentiated as a result of the early modernization and as response to the British domination on Egyptian economy and finances. There were various political groups, especially in the military, which defined their position vis-a-vis the Khedive's palace and the British military occupation. Four basic constituencies appeared at the political sphere, each having their own aims and policies toward foreign control in Egypt. Two groups of people were supporting the Palace, a group of wealthy landowners and their representatives in the Assembly led by Sharif Pasha, and a weak reactionary party. The other two groups were in a position to develop nationalist challenge against British occupation, but with different ideologies and means. One of them was organized in the military around lower-level nationalist officers organized by Colonel Ahmed Arabi. The other group saw the liberation of Egypt in religious ideological terms as developed by Muhammad Abduh.¹⁴ The most radical of these groups was the army officers that acted against the European intervention into Egyptian political affairs following a joint British-French note protesting the establishment of a constitutional government in Egypt. The opposition grew within the army groups against the Dual Control, established by the British and French financial advisor (later with ministerial powers) to administer Egyptian finances. Already the *Casse de la Dette Publique*, founded to control Egyptian economy by the Europeans in similar manner with the Ottoman Public Debt Administration had increased nationalist feelings and hatred within the army. The Casse was reducing the government expenses to almost nil to pay back Egyptian public debts, retiring army officers and personnel and reducing military budget. The army, revolted against the Dual Control, quickly gained strength not only in the Cabinet, but also on the streets in Cairo and Alexandria.

The overthrow of nationalist army officers in Egypt by British bombardment of Alexandria and in the Battle of Tel Al-Kebir, and the re-formation of British rule in Cairo by Lord Dufferin in 1882 became turning point in the development of Egyptian national identity. Though the Disraeli government declared that the occupation would not last longer than necessary, the British aims were too comprehensive, focusing on the protection of British communications, and of British and foreign interests, and provisioning of security and stability around the Suez Canal.¹⁵ Thus Egyptian nationalism developed basically against British aims in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, aware of the fact that an

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alliance between Egyptian nationalists and Islamists would turn the tide against the British and foreign interests, the British chose the strengthening of the state under Khedive Tewfik despite the conflict and ambiguous position of the British.¹⁶

Lord Dufferin, former British ambassador in Istanbul, was appointed in 1882 to Cairo by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to secure the stability of Egypt. Lord Dufferin found the country in administrative and financial chaos, and started to work with the Sharif Pasha's government to train Egyptian forces for Suez's security, to form a police force for Egypt's cities, and prepare for financial reforms. Dufferin founded an Egyptian army of 6.000 under the command of Sir Evelyn Wood as the *Serdar*. His financial reforms required the reduction in state employment and especially cutting the numbers of high-salaried foreign personnel in the service of the state. Already drawn the reaction of the French by ending the Dual Control of Egyptian finances with British and French advisors, the British policies of stultifying the French influence in Egypt were strongly criticized by Quai d'Orsay. But more important than external reactions was the reaction coming from within the country. Lord Dufferin had established in 1883 the provincial Council for the Reform of Native Tribunals, reformed the *Ahliyya* (lower) courts promulgated in 1881 and instituted the Court of Appeal. The mixed courts, founded by forty Belgian and Dutch judges under British prosecutor-general, were for the trial of foreigners and Christians. It was not long for the popular objections to emerge for the workings of the mixed legal system. Also the Egyptian and French Schools of Law became the cradle for Egyptian nationalist youth.¹⁷

When Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer in 1892) was appointed as the Consul-General to Egypt in 1883, a new Organic Law established the eighty-member General Assembly formed by the Tawfik's cabinet members, his legislative council's members and 44 elected provincial officials. The new legislation aimed to end the indefinite status of the British advisors in government; however, it did nothing more than increasing the complexity of the relations within Egyptian politics. While the real power remained within the British advisors and military, a power triangle was founded among the British Consul-General, the Khedive and his cabinet, and the Sultan's authority in Istanbul. Indeed the questions stemmed from this power triangle were not solved until the end of the Egyptian kingdom in 1952. The British controlled all important state affairs, trade, agriculture, irrigation, health, foreign affairs, and the military, however, Lord Cromer ignored

educational reforms since the British needed more agricultural labor and more taxes to pay Egyptian foreign debt charges. The British military and political advisors also established strict control over religious institutions, especially heterodox orders, but orthodox religious institutions like Al-Azhar and its *ulema* and religious ideology as the legitimizing force remained exempt from British intervention.

Khedive Abbas Hilmi's reign (1892-1914) and his Francophile policies prepared the ground for the nationalist groups and organizations to flourish. Abbas Hilmi's challenge against Lord Cromer in the appointment of prime minister not only provided him the French support, but also granted the popular backing of the nationalist circles, especially the Egyptian army. Abbas Hilmi's Egyptian patriotism found an immediate response among the Islamists such as Jamal Al-Din Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, and the secular nationalists such as Ali Yusuf and Mustafa Kamil, as well as among the Coptic Christians such as Butros Gali.

The Islamic reformist Jamal Al-Din Afghani, in Cairo between 1871 and 1879, saw the cure for Western imperialism and Christian domination on the culture of

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Muslims in the Middle East in the return to Islam's fundamentals. For him, Islam was not passive obedience, but an active way of life using mind and knowledge for social regeneration and strength. Being against Islamic scholasticism, he asserted that the need arose for reform in Islam and educational modernization. Afghani maintained that Islamic way of life should have been adapted to the requirements of modernity, and the political unity of the *ummah* was necessary for freedom from foreign domination. However, Afghani also talked about patriotism and nationalism in addition to his Islamist ideas. His travel between nationalism and Islamism, a contradictory ideological swing for present, did not mean any inconsistency for him due to his defense of Muslims' lands against Western intrusion. In his first recorded lecture in 1870 at the opening ceremony of Istanbul University, Afghani talked about the revival of Islamic *milla*, borrowing the meaning of the term as nation, but using it to cover the whole Muslim community in the world.¹⁸ Afghani was adamant in his Islamism during his stay in Egypt, but his Pan-Islamic ideas sometimes remained behind the elevation of nationality, ethnicity and language to the fore. "There is no doubt that the unity of language is more durable for survival and permanence in this world than unity of religion since it does not change in a short time in contrast to the latter" says Afghani when he stressed on the significance of the unity of language as a common tie in human societies.¹⁹ He was aware that his audience in Egypt was a multi-religious one; therefore he was highly pragmatically focusing more on the elements of nationality to mobilize the Egyptians against foreign domination.

Afghani's Egyptian disciple, Muhammad Abduh promoted Pan-Islamic ideas and adapted them to Egypt's underdevelopment and to an idea of Islamic patriotism for Egypt. Abduh's support to Arabi's proto-nationalist uprising led to his exile with Arabi Pasha, however he managed to go to Paris to join Afghani there. Though he had a peasant origin, Abduh studied law, and following his positions as school teacher and judge in Egyptian courts, he was made the Grand Mufti of Egypt in 1899 by the representative of British domination, Lord Cromer, to whom Abduh opposed theoretically. Having positioned himself between the British occupation and Khedive's deficient nationalism, Abduh remained as the highest clerical authority of classical Islam in Egypt until his death in 1905. Abduh was searching for a gradual reform in Islam to return to its earliest purest form. He was also anti-imperialist in his demand for liberation of Egypt from the British. These two points were the features that determined the status of Abduh as an intermediary between the Egyptian territorial patriots and the defenders of purest form of classical Islam. While advocating for a more egalitarian society in Egypt, he also argued about the unity of Muslims in the primitive, uncorrupted form of Islam. In his Islamic society, Arabic would be the unifying force as formed by an amalgam of *Fusha* (classical Arabic) and *Amiyane* (colloquial Arabic). Foreign schools, especially missionary educational institutions, for Abduh, were teaching Muslim pupils the foreign devils and alien beliefs. Abduh, however, had surprisingly good personal relations with Lord Cromer, but many times he got into conflict Abbas Hilmi and his governments.²⁰

Having inconsistent ideas and positions between Islamism, Arabic patriotism and modernism, Abduh found a safe haven in Ottomanism, which, he believed, would protect the political greatness of Islam. During the heyday of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the 1880s, Abduh remained loyal to the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph, who was protecting the dominion of religion, guaranteeing its possessions and ruling the Muslim lands as the single authority over Islamic affairs.²¹ For him, it was the

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Ottoman state and its Caliph to liberate Islam from the infidels' domination and to return the Muslims to the glorious age of Islam. However, Abduh later developed an idea of Islam of the Arabs, or Arabism, which was explicitly contrary to his earlier ideas of Ottomanism. In his teachings, the Kuran became as the basis for the success of the Muslims, and the Holy Book must have been taken in its strictest aspects in accordance with the rules of the Arabic language. Negating Ottomanism, patriotism and nationalism, Abduh recognized Islam as the only remedy for the illnesses of the Muslims. He put forward that Islam must have been practiced only by the language of shepherds and camel-drivers, to whom and in whose language the Kuran was descended. Islamic revival was only possible, for Abduh, by the work of those who knew Arabic language, the practices of the Arabs, their history, culture and customs in the days of the revelation of the Kuran.²² In his later years as the head of the Islamic establishment in Cairo, Abduh also gave up Arabism, and even Islamic political activism, but kept advocating the need for the revival of Arabic studies for Islamic reform.

Having threatened by the opposition from Islamic modernism as well as from the classical Islamic establishment, Abbas Hilmi found more secular allies in the nationalist groups. Ali Yusuf, though the publisher of an Islamic-oriented newspaper *Al-Muayyad* (The Supporter), was an anti-British Egyptian patriot. Yusuf established the Constitutional Reform Party in 1907 with the Khedive's sponsorship and financial support. Since Yusuf's party was organized with imposition from the palace, it was bound to remain ineffective and to have no popular backing. Indeed with the death of Ali Yusuf in 1911, the party also disappeared from the Egyptian political theatre. However, radical nationalists, called the *Hizb al-Vatani* group, gathered around the newspaper *Al-Liwa* (the Standard) in 1900. The leader of the group was Mustafa Kamil, an ardent nationalist lawyer. He studied in the Egyptian School of Law in 1891 and graduated from the French School of Law in France in 1894. Funded by Khediv Abbas Hilmi during his education, he saw the Khedive as the center of nationalist struggle against occupation and the British as the destructive force for Egyptian administration, people, culture and economy.²³ For him, the British also reduced the significance of Islam and Islamic teachings for its interests not to be disturbed in India by the Indian Muslim community. Thus he blended Islam and nationalism together as did many other nationalists in Egypt²⁴. Mustafa Kamil wrote for the need of returning the glorious past of Egypt and saw the political salvation in the Islamic liberation of Egypt from British rule; and social recovery could only be achieved by a determinate fight against ignorance and education. While he was demanding an autonomous rule under the Ottoman Caliph, he also believed that the Sudan was to be brought under Egyptian rule.

In the Sudanese question emerged with the Mahdi revolt in 1883, almost all Egyptian political parties and groups acted defensively in the nationalist manner. When Muhammed Ahmed, a Sufi sheikh and self-proclaimed Mahdi, called the Sudanese tribes to unify under the banner of Islam and established his Sunni fundamentalist theocratic state, Egypt and British acted jointly to suppress the rebellion and re-gain the Egyptian benefits from the Sudan. In 1899, the joint Anglo-Egyptian expeditionary force defeated the Mahdi's Islamic rule and established there the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, the dual rule which would continue to pose the question of sovereignty in Egypt until 1951.

As the alliance between the Palace and nationalists was gaining strength due to the British position in Egypt political life, Cromer retired and was replaced by Sir Eldon Gorst in 1907. The new Consul-General Gorst was

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a steadfast liberal and wanted to break up the close relations between the Khedive and nationalist groups. The moderate *Al-Umma* (The Party of the Nation) led by Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid quickly became the supporter of Gorst. Ahmed Lutfi Bey was also backed up by the Coptic community that recognized Gorst's attempts at liberalization of politics, Egyptianization of government posts and strengthening local councils. Upon Mustafa Fahmi Pasha's resignation from prime ministry in 1908, Butros Gali Pasha, the leader of Coptic reformist group became prime minister despite the nationalists' dislike. The debate over Suez Canal concession cost the life of Butros Gali in 1910.

Disappointed by the failure of the moderate *Al-Umma*, Gorst Pasha returned to London, and Lord Kitchener, *Serdar* of Anglo-Egyptian troops in the Sudan, became the new British consul in Cairo. Not only his ambitious personality, but also international developments ended liberalizing experiments in Egypt. Kitchener wanted to put Egypt in order by the proclamation of a new organic law, which required elections for the new Legislative Assembly. The elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for the nationalist groups headed by Saad Zaghlul, Mustafa Fahmi Pasha's son-in-law. Upon the election of Saad Zaghlul as the vice president of the Assembly, the British tried to balance his power with the appointment of Husayin Rushdi as prime minister, who hold the office until the end of the First World War. Kitchener returned to England to claim the War Ministry in the summer of 1914. Worried for the nationalist tendencies of Abbas Hilmi, the British replaced him with Husayin Kamil, and announced the establishment of British protectorate in Egypt and the Sudan. Egyptian nationalism lost its pace for the duration of the war, however it found an relentless nationalist leader in the personality of Zaghlul in the national struggle of Egypt during the British mandate period.

Conclusion

The brief comparison between the development of Turkish and Egyptian nationalism and the formation of the basic institutions of the modern state in the beginning of the twentieth century displayed that some propositions of western scholarship in state building in the Middle East can not be convincingly proven. Middle Eastern national states have long been considered and examined as created in a method determined basically by the European intervention. It is either believed that the modern state had already been established by the Western powers themselves at the end of the nineteenth century as it was the case in Egypt and Iraq. Or it is the contention of some scholars that the state was established or reformed under the influence, control and domination of the forces of imperialism as it had happened in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth and Syria and elsewhere in the twentieth centuries. It is thought that in either case the native population and the ideologies they developed played a minimal role in the formation of state and its nationalist ideology. This idea leads to think that the Middle Eastern societies remain alien, at least aloof to state structures created by foreigners, and do not feel belonging to their states, but maintain their loyalty to institutions other than the state. This study attempts to show that the formation of modern state in the Middle East was the result of the contending interests between the internal forces as well as their struggle with the interventions from without. It is a more complex web of relations than the straightforward thinking of it as the establishment of the institutional and constitutional structures by the occupying powers similar to their own. The weaknesses of the Middle Eastern states in their capability of penetrating into society and answer social demands and in the loyalty of the population to specific ethnic, tribal

and religious interests appears to be the consequence of foreign intervention as well as conflicting interests within the country. While this brief work on the early development of Turkish and Egyptian nationalism and state attempted to put forward the similarities in the attitude of the nationalists toward state-making and the role of religion, it is out of the scope of this study to analyze the differences in particular paths that were pursued by both states in their continuing struggle to nationhood and statehood after the WW I.

This study did also tell us about the status of religion in the early formation of national identity in Turkey and Egypt. The study's first basic conclusion is the relation between Ottomanism and Arabism as the ideology of unification among Ottoman communities. Arabism grew out of the ideology of Ottomanism through two distinct but not completely unrelated routes. One was the conservative Islamists and Islamist modernists' ideas that Islam could only be glorified in its authentic Arab culture and Arab history as they searched the original foundations of Islamic liberation in Arab/Islamic roots. The second source of Arabism was the work of Syrian, especially Christian nationalists in their demand from the Ottoman capital more jobs, more local power, local finances and local military for the Arab youth in the Arab lands. Though this is out of the scope of this study, the Christian Arab nationalists stressed more on the Arab cultural origins than religious fundamentals in their search for Arab nationalism in Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere. As with the Turkish nationalists who drew the national boundaries within the Ottoman domain after the Turks remained as the only social base for nationalism, the local Egyptian patriotism also defined the "Arab" identity within larger Egyptian Arab and Islamic culture with some Ottomanist overtones. As the WWI was coming closer, Arabism in the Arab Middle East, and nationalism in the Ottoman Empire proper replaced Ottomanism as the reaction of the nationalist groups and Islamist communities in their challenge against Western domination.

Despite the expansion of Arabism by secular nationalist intelligentsia in the Arab territories, the second conclusion of the study is that nationalism in the Middle East is decorated by an Islamic rhetoric, a fact which would be natural given the nationalist and Islamist opposition to British hegemony in Egypt. And this should be considered natural in the other Muslim communities in the Middle East in which the political authority has been legitimized for centuries either by a popular perception for the divine right to rule or by religious belief for the right to govern. The use of religious terminology by the intelligentsia is not only because of mobilizing the people for nationalist aims, but also because of challenging the ruler's authority whose legality depends mainly on religion. Afghani, Namik Kemal and the Young Ottomans, Muhammad Abduh, Mustafa Kamil and Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Kawakibi went back and forth between Islamism and nationalism. Political activities of the Islamists and their stress on modernity and the adoption of Western technology not only distinguished Islamist modernists from conservative *ulema*, but also rendered them closer to secular nationalists. Due to their patriotic ideas, the political Islamists can therefore be evaluated as an intermediary step between Islamism and nationalism, or rather they can be named as proto-nationalists as Keddie put rightly forward. However, Middle Eastern nationalism is still highly problematic in terms of the role of religion in the making of "national" communities, since the complex relations (or in other words, separation) of the secular national authority and religion are still waiting to be solved especially in the Arab Middle East.

Notes:

¹ For the external pressures over Ottoman economy and foreign politics, see Matthew S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966) and M. E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East, 1792-1923*, (London and New York: Longman, 1987, pp. 59-96; and for the new Ottoman social forces emerged with new interests, Kemal H. Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (July 1972), pp. 243-281.

² Donald Quataert, "Main Problems of the Economy during the Tanzimat Period", *150. Yilinda Tanzimat*, ed. by Hakki D. Yildiz, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Yayinlari, 1992), pp. 212-213.

³ Halil Inalcik, "Application of Tanzimat and Its Social Effects", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, Vol. 5 (1973), pp. 115-127; and *idem*. "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri", *Bellekten (Türk Tarih Kurumu)*, V. 28, N. 112 (Ekim 1964), pp. 640-649.

⁴ Nikkie Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (March 1969), p. 20.

⁵ Karpat, *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁶ Sina Aksin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki*, (Istanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1980), pp. 16-19.

⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914*, (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 16-17.

⁸ Feroz Ahmad, "The Young Turk Revolution" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No. 3, The Middle East (July 1968), p. 20

⁹ Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress...*, p. 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹¹ Aksin, *Ibid.*, p. 248.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 251.

¹³ George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1946), p. 21.

¹⁴ Sydney N. Fisher and William Ochsenwald, *The Middle East: A History*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1990), p. 286. Fisher and Ochsenwald also take the development of early Egyptian nationalism back to the Mehmet Ali Pasha's early educational reform period. In 1826 Mehmet Ali sent Riffa Rafi Al-Tahtawi, an Al-Azhar graduate and a teacher in Egypt, to Paris as student guardian. Studying French education, Tahtawi wrote extensively on Egyptian patriotism and the love of country, modernization of the *ulema* and reform in Islamic institutions, and the need for secular education. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

¹⁵ For one of the best analysis of British policy in the Middle East, see: Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1921*, (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978), chapter I, especially, pp. 24-27.

¹⁶ Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *Modern Egypt: The Formation of a Nation-State*, (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 41-42.

¹⁷ For a detailed information and a meticulous analysis of the Egyptian legal system in the age of nationalism, see: Byron Cannon, *Politics of Law and the Courts in Nineteenth Century Egypt*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), *passim*.

¹⁸ Keddie, "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism", *Ibid.*, p. 22

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23, c.f. Mehdi Rendessi, "Pages peu connues de Djamal al-din Afghani", *Orient*, VI (1958), pp. 123-128.

²⁰ P. J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt*, (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 177-188.

²¹ C. Ernest Dawn, "From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origins of an Ideology", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (July 1961), p. 389.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 390.

²³ Fisher and Ochsenwald, *Ibid.*, p. 342.

²⁴ Vatikiotis, *Ibid.*, p.195.