Psychopolitical Determinations on the Administrative and Economic Motivations of Classical Period Ottoman Identity

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Abstract: The main aim of this study is to analyze the construction process of the Ottoman large group identity within the framework of political, economic, social, cultural structures and the social networks during the classical period. This approach is not new to the discipline of history. However, in this study, we discuss the formation of Ottoman large group identity through an interdisciplinary perspective using theories and concepts of social psychology and sociology. The argument is that the institutional structure and organization of the Ottoman Empire, which regulated the interactions and relations of different social group members, led to the development of a dual identity model. This inclusive organization model, which was shaped by Ottoman rule, strengthened the formation of positive attitudes toward unification/integration between the groups, while preserving sub-identities, and contributing to the simultaneous identification of group members with both superordinate and sub-group identities. Objective representations such as Ottoman Greek, Ottoman Armenian, and Ottoman Jew can be perceived as the most concrete examples of dual identity formations within Ottoman society.

Keywords: Collective Identity, Dual Identity, Large Group Identity, Political Psychology, The Ottoman Empire

Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Kimliğinin Yönetsel ve Ekonomik Motivasyonlarına Dair Psikopolitik Saptamalar

Özet: Bu çalışmanın temel tezi, klasik dönemde Osmanlı coğrafyasındaki siyasi, ekonomik, sosyal, kültürel yapılar ve gündelik ilişki ağları içinde bir Osmanlı üst kimliğinin şekillenmiş olduğudur. Bu saptama, tarih disiplini için yeni değildir. Ancak bu çalışmada Osmanlı üst kimliği ilk kez sosyal psikoloji ve sosyoloji biliminin kuram ve kavramları ışığında disiplinlerarası bir perspektifle ele alınmaktadır. Buna göre; grup üyelerinin temas ve ilişkilerini düzenleyen klasik dönem Osmanlı'nın kurumsal yapı ve örgütlenmesinin, ikili kimlik modelinin gelişimine uygun bir görünüm arz ettiği görülmektedir. Osmanlı egemenliği altında biçimlenmiş olan bu kapsayıcı örgütlenme modeli, alt kimliklerden vazgeçmeyi gerektirmeyen niteliğiyle grup içinde birleşmeye/bütünleşmeye yönelik olumlu tutumların oluşumunu güçlendirmiş, grup üyelerinin hem alt hem de üst grup kimliğiyle eş zamanlı özdeşleşme yaşamasına katkı sağlamıştır. Osmanlı Rum'u, Osmanlı Ermenisi, Osmanlı Yahudisi gibi objektif temsiller, Osmanlı grubundaki ikili kimlik oluşumlarının en somut göstergeleri arasında okunabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İkili Kimlik, Kolektif Kimlik, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Politik Psikoloji, Üst Kimlik

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1. Introduction

Empires are political structures with functions that go beyond administrating the subjects on the geographies they rule. These administrative structures reorganize the lives of group members, not only politically and economically, but also through the socio-cultural institutions specific to the empire and the relations shaped around these institutions (Hardt, Negri, 2003). While this embodied empire pattern enables the formation of collective behaviour and emotions in the society/group, in-group similarities and differences also occur, spontaneously to a certain extent. One of the common features of empires, the characteristic of "having great military 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 activating a group belonging. In this respect, the classical period of 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 and with the center are regulated by legal, customary, and traditional values and norms. Emphasizing that the equivalent of the social identity phenomenon in social theory is an integrity, consistency, and continuity formed by mutual interaction and communication as well as internal processes (Marshall, 2000), it is possible to talk of members of the Ottoman large group (Volkan, 2007, p.4) due to the structural components/institutions of the group, their joint activities, the division of labour, and common norms and goals, developing the "feeling and awareness of being a group" – albeit at different levels of identification in all in-groups – to a certain extent. On the other hand, it should be underlined that social identity is a product of the 19th century – even if not as a phenomenon but as a term/concept – and its content is produced as a manifestation of the modern paradigm.

Undoubtedly, there was a sense of belonging and identities before modern times. Moreover, these identities were not only given identities (religious, ethnic, etc.), but also identity structures close to the identity concept of modernism, in which the dominant ideology and sovereign superstructure, such as the Roman identity, were the main determinants. With the emergence of industrial society and modernism, it is possible to see the development of new social and political categories in the context of identity politics in societies that have become politicized with a new content. First of all, identity is a dynamic phenomenon and its content and components have changed during the historical process. It should not be forgotten that even the content and perceptions of the most ancient and powerful given identity elements (religion, ethnicity, etc.) differ to a certain extent in modern societies compared to traditional societies. Therefore, elements such as similarities and differences, a sense of belonging, and the common images

and symbols that we evaluate in the determination of pre-modern identities should be interpreted in line with the spirit/values/cognitive schemes of not only modernist practice but also the contemporary period under consideration. It is obvious that it will not be possible to grasp the social reality of centuries ago with the internalizations of today's post-modernist standards. In other words, an assumption about the classical Ottoman identity, which points to a historical and past social reality, can be constructed with a combination that Wallerstein calls the "historical system" (Wallerstein, 2013, pp.145-148), which is permanent but not eternal and can only be read within its temporal-spatial patterns. As Cemal Kafadar more concretely points out, for example, 13th and 14th century Armenians, Greeks, and Bulgarians should not be evaluated through today's national consciousness and a modern mentality, as "*the nations that came under the Ottoman rule and whose historical adventures were interrupted*", rather, they should be evaluated from the perspective of the paradigm and belonging relations of the classical period (Kafadar, 1999, p.65).

2. Ottoman Large Group Identity and the Dual Identity Model

The concept of social identity can be defined as the part of an individual's self-perception that results from the knowledge of membership in a social group or group networks, and the value and emotional meaning attributed to this membership (Tajfel, 1982, p.2). The sense of belonging to a more comprehensive group (large group) such as religious, national, ethnic group – the individual's identification within this group – corresponds to collective identity, which is a type of social identity. 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 clarified, and in the next identification stage, the common feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of the group are internalized. At the stage where "us" and "they" are compared, satisfaction about being included in the group and self-esteem is increased (Hogg, et al., 1995, pp.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 toward those who are not from them (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, Turner, 1979, pp.33-48). In the "common in-group group identity" model (Gaertner, et al., 1993, pp.1-26), on the other hand, via recategorization, previously acquired

given identities (religion, ethnicity, etc.), subgroup identities, are recategorized into a more inclusive common group identity. In this framework, varieties are gathered under the umbrella of a new "large group identity", new criteria should be determined and a new categorization should be made in order to meet on more common ground. Although scientific researches in the pursuit of eliminating mutual prejudices and neutralizing the "us/them" dichotomy through the integration and creation of a new and large group identity as "us" do not produce very positive results on the theoretical plane (Eniç, 2019, pp.102- 126), there are very successful examples in historical practice and we think that the Ottoman classification developed within the imperial system can be included among these practices.

The recategorization activity, which is a decisive stage in the formation of a common identity, became quite evident after the conquest of Istanbul, which began 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. With this legal regulation, the Muslim dominant group identity and many sub-identities such as Greek, Armenian, and Jew were recategorized under the Ottoman inclusive tent. We prefer to conceptualize this system as "the community system" rather than the *millet* system (Ortaylı, 2005, pp.66-70) to distinguish it from the modern regulations in the second half of the 19th century. However, this study focuses on the stages of recategorization, identification, and comparison of non-Muslim subgroup identities in the Ottoman identity rather than dwell on the formation process of Ottoman identity in different Muslim in-groups.

The basic phenomenon that started the reclassification/categorization process in the Ottoman group was the introduction to 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 theory of "common group identity". 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" was 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 toward the "other" had developed. This was achieved despite the existence of in-group conflicts (within Muslims, Jews, and Armenians etc.) and inter-group conflicts (Muslim-Greek, Greek-Jewish, Armenian-Greek, etc.).

The Ottoman identity was formed within the political, economic, social, and cultural structures and networks of daily relations in the Ottoman geography. For example, the Ottoman organization for

communities, while allowing subgroup identities to be protected and expressed by allowing a certain degree of autonomy, also brought some essential benefits. The difference between religion and sect, as the strongest discriminating element of sub-identities, did not limit the participation of these subgroups in political, economic, and social Ottoman institutions. In this way, interaction based on social cooperation between different groups flourished and developed, and contributed to the process of Ottoman subgroups reclassifying themselves under the umbrella of a collective group identity, while preserving their subgroup identities. Through reclassification and new collective identity construction, in-group bias (nepotism) decreased (Gaertner, et al., 1990, pp.692-704; Gaertner, et al., 2000, pp.98-114) and positive relations among different groups (Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Armenian, Greek, etc.) could be established.

While the Ottoman Empire was a Turkish empire, it was not exclusively an empire of Turks. Characteristic to all empires, the Ottomans has also a multi-national, multi-religious, and multilingual structure. In this respect, the "dual identity" model (Dovidio, et al., 2007, pp.296-330), which is a version of the collective group identity, offers a new and much more explanatory context for understanding the classical period of Ottoman society. Objective representations such as the Ottoman Greek, Ottoman Armenian, and 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 in-group identity is ensured. Emphasis on both identities simultaneously reinforces dual identity representation. Many studies show that a strong identity is beneficial for both majority and minority group members when sub-identities 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, p.303). In the construction of dual identity, there is interaction of groups within the unity of sub-identity and large group identity (Dovidio, et al., 2007, pp.296-330). 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 the integrity, consistency, and continuity that is formed not only by internal processes but also by external/environmental/social interactions (Marshall, 2000, p.9). While this expression becomes crystallized through the mutual interaction between action and social structure, which is the "process of experiencing everyday behaviour" as defined by Anthony Giddens, two elements – action and social structure – reproduce each other during the same process (Binici, 2013). 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, pp.119-120). Therefore, whatever the composition of collective identity is, the underlying factor is collective interaction, and this interaction

usually takes place through participation in social groups. The structures where group members experience a collective interaction can encourage the dual identity model as a type of collective identity to the extent that it allows the preservation of subgroup identities. This model not only recognizes the differences between subgroup identities but also ensures the production of an upper category that encompasses all identities. Studies show that ethnic minority members who want to preserve the difference and originality of their identities have much more positive feelings toward the majority group if the dual identity model is encouraged in comparison with normal conditions (Glasford, Dovidio, 2011, pp.1021-1024). This naturally ensures that systems that adopt this model are more peaceful and collaborative when compared to assimilation or separation strategies.

3. Administrative and Economic Structure-based Motivations in Shaping the Classical Ottoman Large Group Identity

The institutional structure and organization of the Ottoman Empire, which regulated the contacts and relations of group members in political, economic, cultural, and social life, presented a suitable environment for the development of the dual identity model. Because in the two big spaces of social life in the Ottoman Empire – urban and rural – culture and practice became collectivized to a large extent by preserving religious and ethnic sub-identities through practices in artisanship, agricultural, and commercial life; social life organized by the foundation (*waqf*) system from places of worship to educational institutions; and common spaces such as bazaars, squares, and common daily life. This inclusive organization model strengthened the formation of positive attitudes toward unification/integration within the group, with its quality that did not require giving up sub-identities (except for those other than the people of the book and the people of the sunnah) (Ortaylı, 1999, p.84), and contributed to the simultaneous identification of group members.

Undoubtedly, the understanding of political unity (relation of allegiance) based on power and sove-reignty (obedience) was the main determinant in the organization and development of social structures in the Ottoman Empire (Aron, 2000); allegiance to the Caliph-Sultan was the common denominator and inclusive tent that provided the production of all other elements of Ottoman identity. Although the social relations in Anatolia and the Balkans, which constituted the main body of the empire during the 15th and 16th centuries, included local differences, the commonalities/similarities in the relations of these elements with the Ottoman central authority were much more than the differences (Faroqhi, 1998, p.61).

Stanford Shaw states that Turks, Jews, Armenians, and Greeks living side by side under the roof of the Ottoman Empire became more similar than their cognates and co-religionists in other geographies with a common lifestyle (Shaw, 2008, p.69). Greek Turcologist Dimitri Kitsikis, parallel to Shaw and Faroqhi, emphasize the relationship of assimilation (affinity) processes with space in the formation of many common customs, beliefs, and traditions (Kitsikis, 1996, p.19). Due to living in the same geography with other religious identities and despite all their differences, the groups under the Ottoman roof shared many commonalities. Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters, on the other hand, emphasize the space and highlight the similar concerns and excitements that occur in the common urban space where different religious groups live (Eldem, et al., 2000, pp.1-18). If we evaluate these determinations in the axis of psychopolitical and social psychohistory, we can say that these commonalities and similarities made a significant contribution to the group's categorization process of "us" and "them" and paved the way for the formation of a collective Ottoman identity. The social structures in which these partnerships and similarities were produced, and the common attitudes shaped through intergroup relation networks, social schemas (social cognition), and psychosocial motivations present us with the basic components of the social structure of the empire, which was constructed over the dual identity framework.

3.1 The Function of the Administrative Structure in the Formation of Feelings of Power, Security, Justice, Balance, and Fulfillment of Needs

The existence of the feeling that needs such as security, power, and justice are met among the members of a group increases the level of harmony, belonging, and identification, despite all differences, and accelerates the production of a common sense of community and common/collective identity. As we have previously mentioned, identities are produced by interaction and this interaction naturally occurs in a physical space. Therefore, it can be said that the space/territory of an empire signifies the physical boundaries where the different elements living in it interact and engage in common practice at various levels and begin to differ with the outgroups while being similar to the in-group. Certainly, these limits are not just physical. Because various social values and norms take shape in this space, despite all their differences, the emotions, thoughts, and attitudes of group members are reproduced to a certain extent – at least heavily influenced – and, thus, in-group uniformness begins to emerge, with or without being aware of it (Şerif, Şerif, 1996). These borders, which lead to uniformity, also separate imperial elements from outsiders/others. In other words, the territory has great importance in the formation of social structures, social schemes, and attitudes. In empires, the main force that both draws the boundaries between groups

and determines the content and direction of the interaction within the space/territory is the political structure/sovereign element.

3.1.1 Empire as a center of plural political participation

Like space, time is one of the basic elements that shape the interaction relations that produce identities, and the partnerships produced in the space with defined boundaries gain meaning in harmony with the patterns of the era (time). Then, when we evaluate it in terms of time, it should be taken into consideration that life was slow and the social differences of group members were few in all traditional societies, not only in the Ottoman Empire. In traditional times, there was a homogeneous structure shaped by the collective consciousness (common beliefs and feelings of group/society members) determined by the common sacred; this reality suggests that the main element of traditional group identity that unites group members and differentiates it from the out-group is "sacredness".

Naturally, the basic element of Ottoman identity was also sacred/religion; just as Christianity was the backbone of European identity, Islam was the backbone of Ottoman/Turkish identity. The reference point that Ottoman subjects determined when defining both the central authority and themselves was based on religion, not ethnicity or language (Faroqhi, 1998, p.61). However, unlike Europe, the Ottoman Empire was not a theocratic state based on the Church/Pope-King dichotomy. Because, while the belongings of the members of the big group were severed between the local authority and the Papacy/Imperial authority in the Middle Ages in Europe, the integration of religion (Caliphate/Islam) and the state (Sultanate/the Ottoman Dynasty) was ensured according to the Islamic state administration legacy that the Ottomans took over. This integration did not allow a conflict between religious (ecclesiastic) and worldly (secular) power in the case of Muslims, who constituted the majority, and increased the influence of the central authority, which gathered these two great powers in one body. On the other hand, for non-Muslims, there was no conflict between religious and worldly power because the first condition of being a member of an Ottoman non-Muslim community is to be an Ottoman subject and therefore to obey the central authority (Özil, 2016, p.156). For this reason, compared to their co-religionists in Europe, the sense of security of the non-Muslims as Ottoman subjects was not disturbed due to either the Church-feudal dichotomy or sectarian conflicts.

Other components of the political structure also have motivational functions in the production of the Ottoman large group identity and in the adoption of this identity by group members at certain levels. The pillar of the Ottoman political structure, based on the conception of the order of the world, based on the

ancient law (Kanun-ı Kadim), was the Sultan (the Ottoman Dynasty) as the leader. The Sultan had the right to be elected by birth, and the office where the power of administration (sovereignty) and religious authority (caliphate) was combined was a sacred, unchangeable authority responsible for maintaining the ancient order (Berkes, 2002, pp.26-29). Obedience to the ruler (Ulu'l-emr), the caliph-sultan and his military-civil servants, was considered a sacred duty, both religiously and worldly. In the Ottoman Empire, there were two social classes separated between the governors and the governed; the governors were called *askerî* (beraya), and those who were ruled were called *reaya*. The ruling class was a tax-exempt group divided into three subgroups: *seyfiye* (the Sultan's household and timariots/timarli sipahis), *ilmiye* (ulema) and peniye (bureaucrats). Reaya, which was made up of all Muslim and non-Muslim taxpayers, consisted of farmers, peasants, artisans, traders, nomads, and members of the service sector (Genç, 2007, pp.532-538). Hence, regardless of religion, sect or ethnic difference (Emecen, 2018, p.354), the overwhelming majority of the population found its social representation within the reaya group. Therefore, it is not difficult to determine that the differentiation between groups in the Ottoman political structure was not essentially religious.

The religious difference in participation in the Ottoman ruling elite was not as inconsequential as in the ruled/reaya group. It can also be said to a certain extent that not being included in the dominant Muslim majority did not constitute an obstacle to participation in administrative power. However, the ilmiye/ulema group, which was based upon sharia rules, had the most strict and sharp limits that prevented members of a different religion from joining the ruling class. Non-Muslims took part in military groups as auxiliary units (voynuks/Christian sergeant, martolos/Christian raiders, etc.) or in the Divan-ı Hümayun as translators and consultants (Genç, 2007, p.536). It is also known that there were many Christian *mültezim* (tax farmers), especially in the Balkan lands. The presence of third-generation Christian sipahis just before the conquest of Istanbul is proof of the continuity of the transition from the Christian military class to the Ottoman military class. For example, in 1489, 261 of the 281 timariots in Lemnos were Christians, and Ottoman Christians participated in expeditions against other Christians without changing their religion and received their share of the booty just as did Muslims. In the 15th century, Serbian and Bulgarian soldiers constituted a significant part of the Ottoman army. In 1520, when Süleyman I organized the Siege of Vienna with 120,000 soldiers, the number of Christian elements in the Ottoman army was 90,000. The Christian ruling elites of these regions also preferred to join the Ottomans rather than the Hungarians, where they were forced to convert to Catholicism (Greene, 2015, pp.15-16, 28). In addition, the Spanish garrison troops in North Africa joined the Janissaries because they were not treated well and could not receive material compensation for their services (Faroqhi, 1998, p.72). Between 1550 and 1605, 50% of

37 mukataa tax farmers in Istanbul were Muslims, 38.42% were Jews, and 11.57% were Christians (Tekin, 2008, p.134). In the 16th century, while the rate of tax-exempt Muslims in Rumelia was 19%, the rate of tax-exempt Christians was 11% (Faroqhi, 2018, p.128). In the 15th and 16th centuries, Jews constituted the vast majority of tax farmers, tax collectors, inspectors and civil servants (especially those working in customs) (Lewis, 2018, p.207). In the same period, Armenians were also customs officers, as were Jews, stewards and advisors of the Ottoman public officials, and castle guards (Emecen, 2018, p.308). For example, Simeon from Poland, who started his journey to Jerusalem in 1608, talks about an Armenian customs officer named Koca Bedik at the beginning of 1600, and records that this influential figure had janissaries and cavalry at his disposal (Üçel-Aybet, 2018, p.204).

After the conquest of Istanbul, a large part of the old Byzantine elite continued their lives as Christians in the capital; for example, members of the Byzantine imperial dynasty such as Palaeologos became wealthier as tax farmers. While Veli Mahmud Pasha Angelovic, one of the two sons of a distinguished Byzantine family, was promoted to the Ottoman grand vizierate as a Muslim between 1455-68, his brother Mihael Angelovic preferred to be the Christian ruler of Belgrade Smederene Castle. Mikhael Kantakuzenos (Şeytanoğlu) was the leading figure of Ottoman finance until the 1570s. As can be seen, prominent Byzantine families, such as the Kantakouzenos and Palaeologos, maintained their strong and high positions in Ottoman society as "archons/notables". Some of them converted to Islam and some remained Christians (Greene, 2015, pp.32-37). Church records dated 1581 report that "Greeks were investing into tax-farming (iltizam) business to become tax-collector (mültezim) to collect the Sultan's taxes and collecting various annual taxes, some of them got rich while others were not doing well". This is another historical record showing that non-Muslims joined the Ottoman ruling class to a substantial extent (Greene, 2015, p.75). The same is true for Jews. Jews, who were persecuted for centuries in Europe and lived in exile, had status for the first time and even shelter, a common ruler, and a common civilization and lifestyle thanks to the Ottoman central authority, and were able to build a unity among Ottoman Jews despite the differences in their own communit Stanford ies (Shaw, 2008, pp.88-89). Even though some groups of the ruling class did have dominant group (Muslim) favouritism, the Ottoman Sultan never refrained from gathering the beneficial non-Muslim population around him. Therefore, it is difficult to disagree with Greene Molly, who evaluated the inclusion of non-Muslims in the ruling class as the ability of the Ottoman sultans to benefit from an established and long-running system (Byzantine tradition) (Greene, 2015, pp.42-75).

3.1.2 Empire as the center of justice

The Sultan, who, during the Ottoman Empire, was the owner of the land and everything on it, was obliged to ensure the safety and welfare of the people according to the principle of justice (*daire-i adliye*/Circle of Justice), which constitutes the basis of the religion and state (Kodaman, 2007, p.4). For this reason, the edicts regarding the social order were based on the protection of all Muslim and non-Muslim subjects and balance in the social structure (Emecen, 2018, p.369). There was a mutual dependency between power and justice in the Ottoman Empire, and the arbitrary use of power was considered illegitimate. Feridun Emecen, stating that the basic principle during the Empire the provision of peace and prosperity for its subjects, explains how this principle was put into practice as follows: "(…) it is known that the dynasty itself perceived this task as a religious duty. This situation manifests itself especially in the administrative and judicial practices, which are represented by Âl-i Osman, that is, the Ottoman dynasty, and which are revealed to the public through an increasingly developed bureaucracy." (Emecen, 2018, p.9).

The justice of the central gover41nment was not only for Muslims; its responsibility also included all non-Muslim subjects. In an edict of Mehmet III dated 1602, the protection of non-Muslims was considered the common duty of Muslims. It began: "Since, in accordance with what Almighty God the Lord of the Universe commanded in His Manifest Book concerning the communities of Jews and Christians who are people of the dhimma, their protection and preservation and the safeguarding of their lives and possessions are a perpetual and collective duty of the generality of Muslims and a necessary obligation incumbent on all the sovereigns of Islam and honourable rulers (…) every one of these communities that pay tax to me, in the days of my imperial state and the period of my felicity-encompassed Caliphate, should live in tranquillity and peace of mind and go about their business, that no one should prevent them from this, nor anyone cause injury to their persons or their possessions, in violation of the command of God and in contravention of the Holy Law of the Prophet." (Lewis, 1984, pp.43-44). For example, as signified by the words of Sarı Mehmet Pasha, one of the famous treasurers of the 17th century, "Sovereignty is achieved with the people and the treasury collected from them. It is always the protection of the people that ensures prosperity and prevent misery." Classical Ottoman bureaucrats adopted the understanding of protecting the whole of the people without any religious discrimination.

While one of the duties of the Janissaries stationed as garrison troops in the castles since the reign of Fatih was to protect these places from the enemy, another duty was to prevent the ill-treatment of Muslim people against non-Muslims. In 1466, the Greek scholar George Trapezuntios addressed Mehmed

the Conqueror, "No one doubts that you are the Emperor of the Romans. The person who legally holds the center of the empire is the emperor, and the center of the Roman Empire is Istanbul." His words (Üçel-Aybet, 2018, p.112) naturally prompted the Ottoman sultans to take such measures as the emperors of non-Muslims. For example, Benedict Kuripecic, who was in the embassy delegation of Ferdinand I of the Habsburg dynasty to Suleiman the Magnificent, reported that the villages that were plundered or extorted by Serbian, Albanian, and Hungarian bandits in the Kosovo valley, which he visited in the 1530s, were reconstructed and prospered only after they are was annexed by the Ottoman administration/rule. On the other hand, all the imperial subjects of all religions and ethnicities, the rich and the poor, had the right to convey their complaints to the Divan. It was also possible to present complaints and/or requests to the Sultan himself in person, especially during Friday greetings (Üçel-Aybet, 2018, pp.182, 236-237).

Justice was emphasized in the treatises of some Ottoman statesmen and thinkers of the 17th century. For example, Lütfi Pasha, one of the grand viziers of the 16th century, in his *Asafname*, recommends that the reaya should be treated fairly and not be burdened more than they could bear (Kütükoğlu, 1991, p.59). In fact, taxes were determined according to the income of the people. The 17th century thinker and statesman Koçi Bey also emphasized that injustice would disrupt order, saying "The world (the state) persists with unbelief (*kufr*) but not with oppression (*zulm*)" (Öz, 2013, pp.67-87). A large number of edicts were issued to protect the rights of non-Muslims, not only against some Muslims but also against different non-Muslim communities as well as community leaders or notables (Mumcu, 1985, pp.14-15). The Pole Simeon, who was also Armenian, conveys his observations about the "marginalization/alienation" between the non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman lands and the attitudes of the Muslims as follows: "(…) Especially the Greeks in the Islands always take a dim view of the Armenians and when they see them, they spit on the ground and treat them like dogs. The Greeks have always been hostile towards the Armenians. They even saved themselves from the pressure of the Greeks by applying to the patriarchs and the Muslims." (Emecen, 2018, p.381).

The Ottoman understanding of justice is found not only in domestic but also in European sources. For example, İnalcık quotes from Paul Rycaut's book *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, published in London in 1668, that among the basic features of the Ottoman regime was the implementation of justice with complete rigour (İnalcık, 2004, p.1079). A French missionary who came to Anatolia at the end of the 17th century also conveys his views on the justice of the Ottoman Empire as follows: "The Turks are not barbaric and inhumane. They do justice not only among themselves but also for their enemies without discrimination." (Üçel-Aybet, 2018, p.116). By virtue of this understanding of justice, the Ottoman central government played a decisive role in the process of the subgroups' adaptation to the common identity. For

this reason, we are of the opinion that the central authority provided a kind of social homeostasis around the understanding of justice, both in conflicts between different religious groups and within groups. Some example are the protection of the Balkan Catholics against the attacks of the Orthodox, or the protection of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews against their inter-group conflicts.

3.1.3   Empire as the centre of authority

The Ottoman central authority, as one of the greatest states of its time in terms of time and space, corresponded to extraordinary power and superiority in the representation of Ottoman as an identity. Erich Fromm (Fromm, 2001, p.12) relates the level to which people prone to obedience are obedient to people's need for security. As the belief that this need will be met increases, the level of attraction for that object and the compatibility between the elements increase, so the belonging and identification process accelerates (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2006, p.93). In other words, the relationship between obedience and belonging increases individuals' level of integration with the structure. The success and positive image of the group increases group members' self-confidence and reinforces group commitment (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2006, p.279). Accordingly, it is not at least theoretically misleading to assume that being a subject of one of the most powerful and prosperous states in the world largely met other religious groups', as well as Muslims', need for security and self-esteem.

American psychologists David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis draw attention to the fact that supporting group members and protecting all kinds of rights without ignoring their needs and beliefs are prerequisites for the formation of a sense of community and social integration. According to the sense of community theory, human organizations are tighter in communities where needs can be met and integration accelerates as the need is fulfilled (McMilan, Chavis, 1986, pp.6-23). Examples of just some of the numerous ways in which the needs of subgroups in the classical period Ottoman world were to a large extent fulfilled from the middle of the 15th century to the middle of the 16th century are the quadruple increase in population from the central regions of Greece to the Peloponnese, the drastic increase in the number of churches and monasteries in the Balkans at the beginning of the 16th century, practices such as leaving two-thirds of taxes (tribute) collected by communities' religious authorities, preventing unauthorized access to their properties and preventing local officials from collecting unauthorized taxes (Greene, 2015, p.22, 81). Even the minister Stephan Gerlach, who came to Istanbul with the Austrian embassy in 1573-76, made many negative evaluations about the Ottoman Empire and described the Turks as "barbarians", yet recorded the following lines in his diary: "In addition to not claiming any right on the

property of the churches, the Turks made it obligatory to pay a certain amount of money every year. They did not take any of the properties of the Greeks. If they see a Christian in distress or in danger, they rush to his aid. If someone gives them a small gift, they will even give their lives in return" (Gerlach, 2007, pp.135-136).

However, in order not to fall into the trap of an over-simplified perspective, let us immediately emphasize that the practices in the classical period, a long period of three centuries, certainly differed in terms of time and space. During the reigns of Bayezid II and Murat III, some restrictions were imposed on non-Muslims, but they were never prevented from making a living in accordance with their own religion and traditions (Lewis, 2018, pp.93-95, 99). The main reason for these restrictions and limitations is that mostly non-Muslims acquired a high level of wealth and power, which they began to exhibit. Emecen's research on the Jews of Manisa, for example, constitutes a micro-level example of this phenomenon (Emecen, 1997, pp.61-62). Therefore, despite the existence of some contrary practices, it can be argued that there was a mentality based on fulfilling the needs of non-Muslim groups in the Ottoman Empire, not an unlimited and unconditional tolerance.

Relations within the Ottoman political structure were not built on religious partnership in practice. By preserving their sub-identities, non-Muslims could maintain their pre-Ottoman positions, taking part in the political structure to a certain extent, and thus had the opportunity to develop a sense of similarity kinsmanship/partnership with the Ottoman group. This favourable situation points to the contribution of the administrative structure in the process of expanding the sub-identities of non-Muslims with the Ottoman identity in accordance with the dual identity model. On the one hand, the Ottoman understanding of the circle of justice led to a social cohesion motivated by fulfilling needs (as defined by Ibn Khaldun as rational *asabiyyah*); on the other hand, it played an important role in Ottoman non-Muslims' clarification of the "other" through social comparison, which is the third stage of identity formation. However, as we will underline from time to time, the differentiation in political structure relations does not originate from a religious basis but from economic concerns. A non-Muslim belonging to the ruling class has much more in common with a Muslim ruler in terms of political structure relations than a commoner of the same religion.

3.2 Economic Structure: Prosperity, Relative Equality and Protection of Sub-identities

3.2.1 Rural space (Setting)

Economic structures have the quality of integrating subjects' interaction on the axis of common benefit, according to the hierarchy of needs, despite all their ethnic, religious and racial differences. For this reason, it can be argued that the economic relations between groups shaped one of the main processes that created the Ottoman group identity. The division of labour, institutionalized through interdependence and intergroup interaction relations, positively affected the preservation of sub-identities while also enhancing the development of in-group harmony and the sense of belonging to the group.

The most important goal of the Ottoman state was "ibadullahın terfih-i ahvalleri" (the improvement of the conditions of the servants of Allah), that is, social welfare (Tabakoğlu, 1986, p.379), and its economy was agrarian. Each peasant family was granted farmland that it could cultivate (a land that a pair of oxen could plough) to support their families and three-quarters of the total population made their living by cultivating state-owned family farms. The right to use these lands, called *miri*, was in a sense handed to peasant families in the form of a lease, in return for which they were liable for tax, while the land could be handed down from father to son (Pamuk, 2009, pp.32-40). For example, in 1528, 87 percent of imperial lands were miri lands (İnalcık, 2016, p.114) and the family farms that made up a large part of this were called registered-land or *raiyyet* farms. Raiyyet farms were the smallest unit in which the rural area was organized and the main source of taxation for the state. The organization of these lands provided the central authority with the opportunity to regulate and control all peasants and the agrarian economy Pamuk (Pamuk, 2009, p.43) states that with the miri system, not only the agricultural area, which constituted the great majority of the empire's income, but also the economy, finance, military, and social areas were organized, which emphasizes the determinant aspect of the economic factors that was a cornerstone in the classical Ottoman social structure.

A tax system is an important tool in understanding the economic structural relations' impact on the basic conditions of allegiance. However, more importantly, some concrete data on the economy-central authority-reaya relations to a certain extent reveals the function of the economic structure in the formation of the common identity. To put it more clearly, the fact that the reaya, as well as the merchants and shopkeepers in the Ottoman Empire, had the same tax liability (except for the *jizya*) despite belonging to different religious groups, should be seen as an important factor allowing Muslims and non-Muslims to evaluate themselves as a common "us" group. In other words, the tax system crystallises the most concrete

representations of partnership/commonality against out-groups under the umbrella of the common identity
and in-group differentiation (as non-tax payers and payers) in the context of economic structure.

Historians of Ottoman economics have often emphasized the decisive nature of the understanding of
justice in the classical period Ottoman tax system. In this system, the taxes of the reaya, which constituted
the majority, were the backbone of the empire's financial system (Akdağ, 2010, pp.447-448). As in the
Byzantine (*pronoia*) and Islamic (ikta) traditions, sipahis, who lived in the countryside and collected a
large part of these taxes, were obliged to feed soldiers (armed soldiers/slaves the they bought or captured
as prisoners of war) to join the army during war in proportion to the income they earned (Özcan, 2007,
pp.509-512). Although the *salyaneli* (annually taxed) provinces, such as the Danubian principalities of
Wallachia and Moldavia, and Egypt, Baghdad, Abyssinia, and Basra, did not apply the timar system
(Pamuk, 2014, p.60; İnalcık, 2016, p.109), this system was not only a land regime but also the backbone
of the empire's political, economic, and social organization, which shaped the state organization (İpşirli,
2007, pp.502-505). In this system, the rulers had the same rights regardless of their religion and ethnicity.
For example, according to the records, at the end of the 15th century, 22,000 timariot sipahis in Rumeli
enjoyed the same privileges as 17,000 timariot sipahis in Anatolia (İnalcık, 2016, p.112).[1]

Similarly, the people had the same obligations regardless of their religion or ethnicity. There were
multiple reaya taxes. The heaviest tax was *öşür* (tithe/crop tax), whereby between one-fifth and one-tenth
of their produce was collected, depending on productivity. The equivalent of *öşür* (crop tax/tithe) taken
from non-Muslims was called *haraç* (tribute). Apart from these, unlike Muslims, non-Muslims also had to
pay a jizya tax because they were exempt from military service. However, the non-Muslim poor, elderly,
and clergy were exempt from this tax (Köse, et al., 2015, p.77). The relationship of the Ottoman central
authority with its subjects was determined based on service to the state rather than to religious, ethnic, etc.
belonging (Greene, 2015, p.24). It is clear that this situation undoubtedly created a suitable ground for the
formation of socialization, integration, and belonging in line with common practice, division of labour,
and common interests and purposes in the members of the group to which the majority was included,
despite their differences.

When we look at the situation of peasants in Europe, which was the "other" for the Ottoman Empire
at the same time, it shows how the Ottoman state structured relations between the central authority and
the reaya based on mutual benefit through practices such as tax restrictions and controlling the sipahis.
Small farmer serfs, who are much more numerous than free peasants in Europe, were completely at the

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[1]Niyazi Berkes states that 62% (64,000) of the Ottoman military force, which was 103,500 at the end of the 15th century, consisted of timar cavalrymen. See. (Berkes, 1972, p.64).

disposal of the landlord, unlike Ottoman peasants, and had the status of slaves, who could be bought and sold with the land. Serfs were also divided into groups among themselves. For example, "demesne serfs" had to work 2-3 days unpaid on the lord's land as well as their own land, where they worked for very little wages. "Border serfs" were poor peasants with a maximum of 2-3 acres of land, and they worked this land for very low pay. The "cotter serfs", the lowest class of serf, had no land. On the other hand, the lord had the right to take his lands from serfs at will. Cases among serfs or between serfs and lords were handled by the mansion court composed of lords, which was different in the Ottoman Empire, where the *kadis* (judges) were responsible for such cases (Aydoğdu, 2016, pp.3-7).

While the economic structure in Europe was designed against serfs' interests, not only Muslims but also non-Muslims were freed from serfdom on the lands that came under Ottoman rule, and they attained the status of "*ehli zimmet reayası*", free peasants of the Empire. As the Byzantine historian Pachymeres notes, most Greek villagers cooperated with the Ottoman Empire to get rid of the heavy taxes and oppression imposed by the Byzantine Empire (Emecen, 2018, p.367). Minister Gerlach also witnessed these practices: "Christians and Jews living under the rule of the Ottoman Empire preferred to live in the Muslim Ottoman State rather than living as citizens of a Christian state in Europe. Because the Christians and Jews living in the places under the supervision of kadis and subaşıs were very content with their lives as they were not subjected to arbitrary disturbance by the Turks there. After paying their tribute each year, they felt free. However, in Christian countries, the taxation never ends. Christians in Constantinople have their own houses, vineyards and gardens, just like we do, which could be passed down to their children or close relatives." (Gerlach, 2007, p. 684).

Governed people, the reaya, consisted of the majority of the Ottoman population. These people were mostly peasants and farmers, regardless of whether they were Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, or Jews. In other words, regardless of their religion, sect, or ethnic origin, the people were largely integrated around common interests, engaged in agricultural activities, and constantly interacted in the common markets where they sold their products. Within this structure, Muslim or non-Muslim reaya did not differ between each other but with "non-reaya/others". For example, while Greeks did not have a monolithic unity and had many linguistic and cultural differences, studies show that both rural and urban Greek reaya were no different from Muslim reaya (Özil, 2016, p. 36). As the supreme authority, the central authority, with its laws and practices – in proportion to its periodically changing power – functioned as a tent covering all groups by regulating both the economic structure and the relations between the groups who are the main actors of this structure. On the other hand, while the central government mostly sided with the reaya in cases of conflict with the military/administrative class, from the second half of the 16th century, the

situation gradually shifted in favour of the military/administrative class (Akdağ, 2010, pp. 448-449).

3.2.2   Urban space (Setting)

Commercial and industrial activities dominated the Ottoman urban economy and cities were mostly placed on main roads (Kütükoğlu, 2018, p.20). A large part of the Ottoman urban population was organized in craft and trade guilds (organizations of tradesmen) with an understanding of social solidarity based on religious and moral (*fütüvvet*) principles. Hence, artisanship and fütüvvet (guilds) became two inseparable factors (Kütükoğlu, 2018, p.54). Thanks to this, we can learn about the principles of this organization through the *futuvvetnames*, which are a kind of professional regulation concerning the moral, social, and work discipline of the guilds. Faroqhi is among those who state that values such as "honesty, loyalty to the word, covering the faults and failures of one's comrades, discrediting arrogance and greed for worldly goods" in the text of the 15th century futuvvetname writer Yahya bin Halil were maintained for a long time among the Ottomans. We are of the opinion that these values contributed to a certain extent in the process of identification with the Ottoman identity of the merchants and artisan groups, which constituted the majority of the city's population despite the religious differentiation. As a matter of fact, as a novelty born in the Eastern Balkans and Ottoman Anatolia, many guilds had both Muslim and non-Muslim members (Faroqhi, 2018, p.76). Greeks, who dominated most of the Balkans and European trade and provided the needs of the capital, also had their own guilds and in the 16th century, particularly in the flourishing Balkan cities, churches and monasteries were renovated with the contribution of Christian saddlebags and tailors' guilds (Greene, 2015, p.20, 116). Jews, who were generally the owners of large trade caravans, also had many guilds as pharmacists, tailors, shoemakers, and wood and metal tradesmen (Üçel-Aybet, 2018, p.207) and it was known that good relations were established between Jewish guilds and Muslim guilds (Shaw, 2008, pp.84-144). As Muslims and non-Muslims had separate guilds, tradesmen of different religions could work together in the same guild. Although people were not prevented from being in the same guild due to religious differences, it is known that there were contrary situations. For example, some Muslim members of the Wireworkers Guild (*Telciler Loncası*) complained that Muslims could not be apprenticed to unbelievers because the guild's valiant chief was a Greek named Aleksi. However, some Divan-ı Hümayun documents show that these and similar cases arose from personal conflicts rather than a conflict of religious identity, and for this reason, efforts were made to prevent the oppression of non-Muslims in the courts (Araz, 2008, pp.184-187).

One of the important issues for the guilds was to provide the necessary raw materials at affordable prices and to distribute them evenly among the guilds. There was conflict between the poor guilds and the guilds that had more than one stall and were able to produce intensively. The rich guilds restricted poor guilds' ability to produce by buying up raw materials (Pamuk, 2014, p.60). On the other hand, there was conflict between merchants and artisans due to the export of raw materials. Although the state tried to maintain a balance between artisans and merchants by prohibiting the export of certain substances, merchants were exempt from many rules that applied to artisans since they had an important function in the economic order (Pamuk, 2014, p.67). It should be noted that the majority of the Ottoman merchant group was non-Muslim.

The situation of the artisans and merchants group that made up the Ottoman urban population was similar to the farmer reaya. İnalcık, observing that Muslim and non-Muslim artisans and merchants belonged to the same class, emphasizes that they all had the same rights regardless of religion or ethnicity (İnalcık, 2016, p.157). For example, the fact that wealthy Jewish, Greek, and Armenian merchants could dress like Muslims, ride horses, and carry weapons, despite the dress codes that differentiated Muslims and non-Muslims in social life, shows that segregation in urban space was more economic than religious. The central authority took many measures to prevent intergroup conflict and to ensure social cohesion in the urban space. One of them was to adjust the production of goods according to the needs of city-dwellers and prevent artisans from making losses due to overproduction, and to prevent consumers from being forced to pay higher prices due to underproduction (İnalcık, 2016, p.41). The high level of economic welfare in the Ottoman cities during the classical period was also a positive factor in the formation of a feeling about meeting the needs of Muslim and non-Muslim people. The records of a Venetian merchant dated 1589 report that wages were higher in Istanbul than in Europe. The merchant mentions that a Venetian merchant's annual income equals four months' income in Istanbul (Greene, 2015, pp.111-114).

One of the most obvious organizations showing the close relationship between economic activity and religious and social life institutions in the Ottoman Empire was foundations (*vaqfs*). Through the foundation system, the religious and social needs of the people were met with structures such as masjids, mosques, schools, madrasahs, soup kitchens, lodges, libraries, guesthouses, hospitals, fountains, baths, roads, bridges, caravansaries, and cemeteries. In the early period after conquest of a city, the Ottomans reconstructed the social order by establishing new foundations of statesmen and wealthy people. In order to sustain these services, various commercial buildings such as inns, covered bazaars, shops, and workshops were donated to the foundations (Yediyıldız, 2012, pp.479-486). Thus, foundations functioned to enhance the interaction and unity of various social groups. For example, foundations were established in order

for guilds to cooperate among themselves or to pay avarız taxes (which began as a war tax collected in extraordinary conditions) in villages and neighbourhoods. These foundations could be used by all groups, whether peasant or city-dweller, ruling elite or governed people, Muslim or non-Muslim. Thus, by providing a kind of social justice, the process of evolution of differences toward commonality/integration accelerated.

Many foundations were also established for non-Muslims. The Ottomans recognized the rights of the churches and monasteries that were established before the conquest, and the foundations continued to be operated as before and to organize charities for non-Muslims (Ercan, 2001, pp.173-250). Jewish foundations (*ekdeshe*) financed many institutions such as synagogues, hospitals, and orphanages (Shaw, 2008, p.118). Uncertainties regarding the legal rights of non-Muslim foundations until the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent were solved and grounded on a legal basis with the fatwas of Ebusuud Efendi (Yıldız, 2019, pp.141-198). Although non-Muslims had the right to establish foundations in the Ottoman Empire, they were able to benefit from Muslim foundations in various ways. Non-Muslims were also able to use structures such as roads, fountains, and inns just like Muslims, rent real estate belonging to foundations, work in a foundation on a salary, and borrow money from cash foundations. According to Greene's work on church records, since a village without a place of worship was out of the question, churches were built by the Ottoman authorities in the 15th and 16th centuries in accordance with the waqf system in neighbourhoods where there were previously no Christians (Greene, 2015, p.21).

4. Conclusion

Classical period Ottoman society demonstrates the characteristics of a group in which the interaction of millions of members with different religious, linguistic, and ethnic characteristics, various statuses and roles, relations with each other and with the center was regulated by legal, customary, and traditional values and norms. Social anthropologist Fredrik Barth defines societies that can unite ethnic differences as "plural societies". In a plural society, different groups present the appearance of a unified society through mutually interdependent economic relations and ecological specializations. In a plural society, both dominant and non-dominant subgroups do not have assimilation concerns; intergroup relations are reciprocal. 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 identity model can develop and the identification of group members can come to fruition. As a structure with functions that transcend managing its subjects, as in the "plural society" model, the Ottoman Empire reorganized the lives of its

members/subjects through its own political, economic, and socio-cultural institutions and the relations shaped around them. While collective behaviour and emotional formation was ensured in the society/group through these structural patterns, similarities and differences within the group also occurred spontaneously to a certain extent. In the Ottoman Empire, the quality of "having great military and economic power", being one of the common features of empires, played a driving role in activating the "allegiance" centered similarity/unity construction toward group belonging by assuming a function of providing peace, justice, security, and welfare on behalf of group members. Thus, the construction of the classical Ottoman identity could be actualized with the motivations that emerged, especially from the relations of the administrative and economic structure.

These motivations were formed on the condition that the multinational, multi-religious, multilingual Ottoman Empire structure, as an administrative apparatus and organization, could provide its members with basic benefits such as security, welfare, self-confidence, and recognition and connect them to the center and each other in the protection of common interests. In this way, objective representations such as Ottoman Greek, Ottoman Armenian, and Ottoman Jew can be perceived as the most concrete indicators of dual identity formations in the Ottoman group. Because, in the two big spaces of social life – urban and rural – agriculture, artisanship, commercial life, and everyday culture and practices were collectivized to a large extent by preserving religious and ethnic sub-identities. This inclusive organization model, shaped under Ottoman rule, strengthened the formation of positive attitudes toward unification/integration within the group with its quality that did not require giving up their sub-identities, and contributed to the simultaneous identification of group members with other group identities. Intergroup religious/ethnic prejudices were reduced or at least controlled by the central authority, with the reclassification of both the Muslim dominant group identity and many sub-identities such as Greek, Armenian, and Jew under the Ottoman inclusive tent. Thus, in the construction of the envisionment of the common "other", as an element of identity formation, it is possible to conclude the existence of a unified Ottoman large group representation for both dominant group Muslims and non-Muslim groups with a common feeling and attitude toward the "other", European Christians, who were not under Ottoman domination.

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