

Challenges of examining the Ottoman/Turkish immigration policies

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Abstract

The article demonstrates the challenges of the project, which argues that the pro-immigration policy of the Ottoman/Turkish governments (1774–1989) was shaped by political concerns (concretely population and identity politics), in addition to humanitarian concerns. The pro-immigration policy, and more specifically the open-door policy, facilitated, encouraged, compounded, and even in some cases produced immigration. In other words it functioned as a “pull factor”. As a working paper, this article will analyse epistemological, methodological and theoretical challenges that emanate from the scope of the topic. To examine two centuries of migration covering a territory extending to three continents and including millions of migrants, as well as those they were directly or indirectly tied to, is indeed quite a challenge.

Introduction

Turkey is one of the largest shelter countries in the world, hosting four million Syrian refugees (as asylum seekers/*sığınmacı* in Turkey) in the last decade. It has never been easy to host millions, creating social, political and economic problems. The anti-refugee attitude, which was seen mainly amongst the anti-government circles contributed to the governing party's (AKP) losses in the 2019 local elections. To counter growing anti-refugee feelings and to justify their open-door¹ policy since 2011, the AKP has argued that the reason for hosting millions of refugees is mainly the cruelty of the Assad regime and solely out of humanitarian concern. With this discourse, the AKP would like to place the burden of responsibility for their open-door policy (hereafter, the ODP) on the “push factors”. However, the AKP government changed its pro-migration policy by de facto totally closing the borders in 2016, later de jure, to the Syrians. Turkey constructed a wall on the Turkish-Syrian border. Through the military operation in 2019 (*Barış Pınarı*), the government aimed to create a “security zone” in Northern Syria for the refugees in Turkey. During the 2019 Idlib crisis, the government

Keywords: *Ottoman Empire, Turkey, migration, refugee, open-door-policy*

risked war with the Syrian government to stop the flight of Syrians from Idlib. Furthermore, the government allowed the refugees to accumulate at the Greek border in order to force the EU to continue the economic support promised by the Convention of 2015 and to react to the humanitarian crisis in Idlib. This change clearly demonstrates the complexity of migration² policy that has never been solely determined by humanitarian but also by population and identity concerns. Moreover, the shift in the government's stance likewise shows the contribution of the open-door policy to migration more than the push factors, with the Syrians subject to persecution in their home country. This complexity could be also seen in the long span of Ottoman/Turkish immigration history, extending over two centuries.

Hypothesis

The aim of this working paper is to demonstrate the difficulties of the project, which will examine the Ottoman/Turkish governments' immigration policies. The challenges emanate mainly from the scope of the topic. To examine two centuries of migration (1774–1989) covering a territory extending to three continents and including millions of migrants, as well as those they were directly or indirectly tied to, is indeed quite a big challenge. The paper assumes that movement (migration/mobility) and mastery of space as a relationship is a pattern in Ottoman/Turkish identity that is being reconstructed today.

The hypothesis of the project is that the pro-immigration stance of the Ottoman/Turkish governments was shaped by political concerns (population and identity politics), in addition to humanitarian concerns. The pro-immigration policy and more specifically the ODP facilitated, encouraged, compounded, and even in some cases produced immigration; in other words, it functioned as a “pull factor”. The governments (i.e. Ottoman Empire/Turkey), via the ODP, were the main producer of migrants. Since the ODP was shaped mainly by identity and population concerns, it played a role in

¹ The “Open-Door Policy” was initially used to refer a system of trade in China open to all countries equally, in the early 20th century. The term has been used in the last decades, especially in migration studies, to refer to the free circulation of people/individuals. In other words, the open-door policy allows people to (e/im) migrate freely.

² Unless otherwise stated, the term migration/migrant will address the “forced” and massive inflow (immigration) towards the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, excluding domestic and outflow migrations. For details, see the discussion on the term of *muhacir* below.



Fig. 1: An iconic paint of the 1864 Caucasian migrants. A section from "The mountaineers leave the aul" of Pyotr Nikolayevich Gruzinsky (1837–1892).

the homogenisation of the country. Most of the literature on Turkish migration (hereafter, literature) mainly argues that the "push factors" dominated, that Ottoman/Turkish immigration policy was shaped mainly by humanitarian concerns, and that the Islamicisation and Turkification policies were their consequences.

Obviously, the main reasons for massive immigration over the last two centuries towards the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, as the literature emphasises, were push factors: Western/European imperial expansionism/colonialism (mainly Russian, Austria-Hungarian, French)³ and the nationalist, anti-Islam/Turkish policies of newly created states (mainly in the Balkans). As is also emphasised in the literature, the concrete factors include forced migration and forced resettlement, expulsion, fear of deportation and massacre, forced labour, taxation, military service, enforcement of new "official" languages in schools, restrictions on Muslim worship, and everyday racism (especially for the republican period). The Ottoman/Turkish governments opened its doors to these populations, who escaped their country of origin to save their lives, wealth, and beliefs.

Nevertheless, the push factors are not enough to explain the immigration of millions of Muslims and Turks over a period of two centuries. First, push factors did not always result in the migration of all Muslims/Turks. Push factors produced migration in some cases, but not all cases. A push factor by itself does not necessarily generate migration. Second, the door was not always open for all people, even though they suffered similar persecution, i.e. similar push factors. Whatever the reason for migration, the closing door slowed down and even stopped migration. In other words, the host country's policy (mainly the ODP) also determined migration, i.e. the number of people able to migrate. Third, through the aid and exemptions they provided, the Ottoman/Turkish governments aimed to attract Muslims and Turks to migrate and settle in their territory. Fourth,

even in some cases, the Ottoman/Turkish governments were the main drivers of immigration, by calling for emigration.

Indeed, the door has been always open, but only for some groups in accordance with the population and identity policy of Ottoman/Turkish governments. And the ODP, as a pull factor, had big impact on the migration of Muslims and Turks. The Ottoman Empire had an ODP for Muslims who directly had a migrant status until 1908, while non-Muslims could only be accepted as refugees and yet never in

mass. The pro-migration policy for Muslims and Turks was abandoned especially between 1913 and 1923. The successor state, Turkey had the ODP only for those of Turkish "descent" and "culture". The migrant status was not granted to non-Muslims, and very few individual refugee claims were accepted. Although Turkey opened the door to Syrians, they are still not considered to be "migrants", nor "refugees," but rather only "asylum seekers".

In these pro-migration policies, population and identity concerns were essential alongside humanitarian concerns. The status as a migrant, a refugee, or asylum seeker was determined by the collective identity of the applicant, and not solely by the conditions they were subjected in their countries of origin.

In effect until 1912, the ODP for Muslim migrants was adopted in a period when the Ottoman Empire desired population growth for economic, military, and political needs. In 1856, the empire sent out a call for migrants, making clear that those who migrated would have aid (land, property, sustenance, even salary) and time-bound exemptions (military and tax). The Meclis-i Tanzimat justified this call by emphasising that it would increase the number of subjects in the empire.⁴ The promises clearly encouraged migration to the *Dar al-Islam*. The commission founded by Abdulhamid II, namely Muhacirin-i İslamiye Komisyonu, was charged with encouraging Muslims to migrate to the empire in order to increase both the number and proportion of Muslims in all regions of the empire. It was thanks to the arriving Muslim migrants that the proportion of Muslims in Istanbul increased from 44 to 61 per cent in a period of only three decades between 1884 and 1914.⁵ The governments between 1913 and 1923, on the other hand, closed the borders and had an anti-migration policy. For this reason, despite two destructive wars (World War I and the War of Independ-

³ Although the Austro-Hungarian regime in Bosnia did not intend to drive Muslims out, the change in power caused migration/emigration.

⁴ Gülsoy 1996: 57.

⁵ Karpat 1985: 170, 190.

ence) and despite the suffering of Turks and Muslims in Anatolia, massive migration did not take place. With the exchange of population in 1923, the newly created Turkish Republic further closed its open door by limiting admission only to those who identified with the "Turkish descent and culture" (*Türk soyu ve kültürü*). Needless to say, Islamic belonging was essential. The Turkish Republic first wanted to make up for the population that had perished in the wars, in Atatürk's words "eksik nüfus" (missing population) and, second, to increase the proportion of Turks. The door was opened to Muslims and Turks that had been oppressed and persecuted by nation-states in the Balkans. While the migrants wanted to protect their Islamic and Turkish identity by settling in Anatolia, they simultaneously transformed the empire and the republic.

The Ottoman/Turkish migration codes made it clear who was not allowed to immigrate. Both the Ottoman/Turkish regulations officially denied access to "Gypsies", anarchists, spies, and those with epidemic diseases. Although not explicitly in the regulations, non-Muslims were essentially barred from immigrating. For example, half of those who came to take refuge via a Russian ferry in 1905 were rejected because they were non-Muslim.⁶ The republican period further limited migration. After the establishment of the republic, some of the "old" Ottoman subjects who were outside the borders and wanted to "return", such as the Ottoman Greeks and Armenians, were not accepted.⁷ The republican settlement laws granted migration rights only to those of "Turkish culture and descent".⁸ Thus, among the various rejected groups were Balkan "Gypsies" (including Muslims, but especially Christian ones), Romanians, and Russian Jews. Likewise, in the 1940s, Jews with Turkish citizenship and living in France who desired to return to Turkey were refused.⁹ The door was also closed to some Turks during the republican period: Christian Turks (*Gagauz*) from Romania, Muslim Turks from Western Thrace and Alexandrette (*Hatay*), "Shia" Turks, Cyprus Turks, and Iraqi Turkmens. These groups either lived in disputed countries (where the population size determined the fate) or in neighbouring regions.¹⁰ Paradoxically, although Iraqi Turkmens were more oppressed than Bulgarian Turks (especially in the period

1936–1958), they were not allowed to migrate to Turkey.¹¹ These preliminary historical observations lead to the following set of questions relevant to the project's hypothesis: How did population and identity concerns influence the pro-migration policy, and when and why did they change? Why does a push factor lead some to migrate, but not everyone affected? What makes something a push factor? How did Islam and/or Turkism play a role in migration? What was the official definition of identity (Muslim, Turk) and its impact on migration? What was the impact of the transformation of the state system from empire to republic on migration policy? Do the imperial and republican migration policies reflect the character of each system? Or was the Ottoman migration policy exceptional and different from other empires' migration policies? What were the differences between Turkey's immigration policies and those of other nation states? How did the territorial mentality and knowledge (from canonical to secular territorial concepts) shape the state's migration policy? Why and how did the number of migrants matter? When did migration take place the most: in times of war or peace? Was there any anti-emigration movement among Muslims and Turks in their home countries? And who were they, intellectuals or nobles? Why did religious leaders encourage Muslim migration? What is the significance of migration as a myth, as cultural knowledge and intergenerational memory in the identity narratives of the Anatolian populations?

As these questions demonstrate, the examination of the identity and population dimensions of the Ottoman/Turkish pro-migration policies contains great challenges; epistemological, methodological, and theoretical.

Epistemological and methodological challenges

The epistemological difficulties derive from terminology and, especially, sources. In this section, the paper will demonstrate the difficulties that derive from changes in migration terms, the literature, and archives. The majority of the migration literature published in Turkish and in Turkey argues that the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic always kept their doors open for all incoming migrants. Both the Empire and Republic are portrayed as having handled the question of incoming migrants with a humanitarian approach without due attention to the shifting social, political, historical, and economic conditions, in general, and the official concerns about population and identity, in particular. The hypothesis will be refined by examining these epistemological problems, by explaining the following questions: Why and how does the term *muhacir* create problems? Who counted as *muhacir* in the Ottoman/Turkish contexts? Why does it differ from its universal and its literal meaning? What is the difference between *muhacir* and *mülteci* (migrant and refugee)? What are the problems in the literature? What is the importance of the Ottoman/Turkish archives in migration studies? In the current literature, what factors are emphasised for migration, i.e. push or pull factors?

¹¹ Kalaycı 2014: 199.

⁶ *Tuna* [newspaper], 92, 20 Kanuni evvel 1321, 4, cited by Yılmaz, 1996: 593.

⁷ BCA.30-18-1-1.4.52.19 (12.03.1922) and BCA.30-10-117.815.19 (15.05.1945); see also Çağaptay 2006: 71, 87.

⁸ Law code of the 885 dated 31 May 1926, and of the 2510 dated 21 June 1934. For the analysis of this law see, Erol Ülker, "Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934", *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 7, 2008, Demographic Engineering – Part I. <http://ejts.revues.org/index2123.html>, accessed 15 December 2019.

⁹ C. Guttstadt, *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust*, Assoziation A, 2008.

¹⁰ Hersant 2008; see also M. Pinar, "Tek Parti Döneminde Gagauzlar (Gökoğuzlar)", *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce ergisi* 4 (12), 2017: 96–119; K. Kirişçi, "Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices", *Middle Eastern Studies* 36 (3), 2000: 1–22.

Then, the paper moves on to the methodological difficulties originating from the spatial, temporal, and quantitative size as well as the complexity of the topic. Complexity also derives from movement. The society, politics, economy, and more importantly frontiers were all in constant fluctuation, during which time migration acted as a centripetal force. The period covered in this study was thus chaotic, painful, and troubling. The paper demonstrates that each period of migration, shaped by multiple actors and factors, needs to be examined in the *longue durée*, by freezing time. How can one examine and generalise migration policies that also changed in terms of time and space as well as

ory (or theories) could best explain such a sensitive and macro-scale topic? More specifically, what theoretical paradigm(s) can best work to understand the Ottoman-Turkish ODP?

Epistemological challenges; scholarship and archives

Epistemological difficulties are due to the limits of terminology, archives, and literature. More specifically, they are tightly tied to the "power" that determines taxonomies and knowledge. The most important term that comes to the fore is *muhacir* (literally, migrant) which is different from the present-day understanding of the term.



Fig. 2: 1878 Migrants. *The Illustrated London News*, September 1, 1877, 213.

according to the size of population and the size of the migrants? How best to study a timespan that was by no means homogenous/linear, but rather intense, troubling and chaotic? What was the character of the periods during which the migrations took place?

Following the methodological difficulties facing this study, the paper will focus on the questions of magnitude and nonuniformity of territory. The Ottoman and, to a lesser degree, republican lands included a population with multiple and, at times, conflicting racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities that forced the governments to be pragmatic and flexible in their policies. How best to study the multi-spatial empire based on a study of various regions? How can we generalise these spaces? The last methodological difficulty is due to the size of the data pertaining to both migrants and the population at large. Underlining the need for reliable data in both the Ottoman/Turkish cases, I focus on the following two questions: How can we distinguish the cases and policy of exceptions versus principles, and individuals versus masses? Why is it important to measure the historical sequence of migrations?

The final part of this study sheds light on theoretical difficulties. It applies the historical research method that uses findings to derive concepts. The main question to answer when the project is accomplished is: Which the-

Some of the Ottoman migration cases were very different from migration to Europe today, and had a different meaning than the international legal regulations. Some movements deemed migration by the Ottoman state and today's literature were in fact population transfers implemented by the army and governments during, for example, the withdrawal of the Ottoman army during the 1877–1878 Russo-Ottoman War, the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars, and so on. Rather than "immigration", they were "internal migration".

Some immigrations (from the Balkans, especially from the southern Balkans, in its precise Ottoman name Rumeli, including the Macedonian region) were "post-colonial migration", as newer literature distinguishes it from general immigration.¹² While most of the migrants were former Ottoman subjects, only very few migrated from a third country. The Christians that emigrated from Hungary and Poland were called refugees, not migrants.¹³

Besides this uniqueness of these Ottoman migration cases, the difficulty concerning the use of terms related to migration (*muhacir*, *göçmen*, *mülteci*, *sığınmacı*) derives from their being uncertain, subjective, and changing. Indeed, these terms but especially *muhacir* were not clearly defined, mainly because they were all politically, ethically, and religiously charged terms. *Muhacir*, for instance, can be literally translated as "migrant", yet it bears a strong "religious" component as it specif-

¹² Interestingly, an important part of the studies on Balkan migrations claim that the *muhacirs* were the descendants of those who had previously been resettled in the Balkans, i.e. *evlad-ı fatihan*. For instance, Paşaoğlu argues that "the immigration following the 1876 war; is the scene of return back of the Ottoman settler in Balkans in 14th and 15th centuries" (2013: 349). See also, Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Evlad-ı Fatihan*, TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, V.11, İstanbul, 1995: 524–525, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/evlad-i-fatihan>, accessed 11 January 2020.

¹³ Saydam 1997: 82.

ically refers to a "Muslim migrant".¹⁴ The term *mülteci*, on the other hand, was mainly used for non-Muslims (i.e. "undesired migrant"), and Muslims who had migrated irregularly.

The imperial and republican governments used these terms related to migration from the late 18th through the late 20th centuries.¹⁵ Muslims escaping from wars and/or conflict zones that would be considered as refugees under international law were deliberately defined as *muhacir* by Ottoman bureaucrats. For instance, the Muslims fleeing the Russian army during the 1877–1878 war were called *muhacir*, but those fleeing during World War I were called *mülteci*. In other words, rather than the circumstances of the migration determining the terminology used, the state made this decision. Put bluntly, it was the government that assumed the taxonomic authority over whether to label someone a migrant. Similar to other cases in different parts of the world, the Ottoman/Turkish governments, too, chose their own terms that were largely shaped by their population and identity politics. Nevertheless, one should also keep in mind that these uses were also blurry and arbitrary. The term *muhacir* was sometimes arbitrarily used as an umbrella term. It was often used for internal migration and even for those displaced by government orders.¹⁶

The meanings of these terms were also constantly changing in differing contexts. The difference between *mülteci* and *muhacir* became much more clearly defined by the beginning of the 20th century. While "refugee" started to be used for the Muslims who had arrived during the war from territories that had not yet officially been abandoned, "migrant" was used for those who came from the territories ceded by treaties. This distinction became more nuanced in the 1913 "Regulations on Migrants" (*Muhacir Talimatnamesi*), when Muslims fled to Anatolia during the Balkan Wars. According to these regulations, those who had received migration permits from their home country would be called migrants, but others would be called refugees. By the 1930s, the Arabic term *muhacir* was "Turkified" and also "secularised" with the introduction of the term *göçmen*, which was further divided into two categories: *iskanlı* (to be settled by government) and *serbest* (free). After the signing of the Refugee Convention in 1951, the term asylum-seeker (*sığınmacı*) was used more often and it took on the meaning of refugee, i.e. undesired migrant. Therefore, while the term *mülteci* began to refer to refugees from Europe, such as Bosnian refugees, the migrant status continued to be given to those of "Turkish descent and culture".

¹⁴ A. Toumarkine, 2015: 822–824.

¹⁵ Unfortunately, most of the studies of migration (especially the Ottoman immigration studies) do not clearly distinguish between a refugee and an immigrant, i.e. Cuthell and Blumi. D.C. Cuthell, "The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An agent in the transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860–1866 (Turkey)", 2005, Columbia University, unpublished PhD thesis; I. Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878–1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

¹⁶ BOA.DH.ŞFR. 486.134 and 495.73.

The second group of epistemological problems pertains to the sources. Although both the archives and the existing literature provide the primary and secondary sources in this study, they are also the very problem in an investigation of the identity and population dimensions in the Ottoman/Turkish migration policy. The overwhelming majority of the studies on Ottoman/Turkish migration from the 1770s through the 1980s are in Turkish and were published in Turkey. Keeping in mind the prevalence and significance of the phenomenon of migration, these studies remain insufficient. Indeed, following the Syrian refugee crisis the migration studies particularly increased. Often characterised by a discourse of security and *raison d'état*, these studies implicitly or explicitly aim to consolidate Turkish national unity. That is why more often than not they fall into the trap of adopting the prevalent statist and security-centered discourse.¹⁷ MA and PhD theses submitted to Turkish universities are perhaps the best examples of migration studies being crisis-based and immediately politically oriented. The number of MA and PhD theses defended in Turkish universities increased enormously following the influx of Syrian refugees in Turkey. For instance, there were 10 theses with *muhacir* in the title through 2012, but 16 between 2013–2019. There were 813 with "göç" in the title through the end of 2012, but 1173 between 2013–2019. At this point it must be noted that the term *göç* is used for all kinds of migration (internal, worker migration etc.), while *muhacir* is used for historical migration. Yet the impact of *sığınmacı* on studies of migration can be clearly seen in the number of theses addressing the asylum issue. The theses including the word "asylum/sığınma(cı)" in their titles rose from 64 for the period 1996–2014 to 211 between 2015 and 2019.¹⁸

Politics determine studies of migration, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. For instance, the number of theses examining Iraqi Kurdish refugees in 1991 and Kurdish internal displacement in Turkey in the 1990s are limited; respectively, around 20 and 10. These numbers demonstrate that the subject rather than object matters in Turkish migration studies. The other example are the emigration topics. The emigrations of non-Muslims from the Ottoman Empire and Turkey has worked at a symbolic level. For example, there have been more theses on the Armenian deportation written in France than Turkey: 30 entitled *genocide armenien*¹⁹ in France since 1997, with only 5 entitled "Armenian

¹⁷ for example see Ü. Özdağ, *Stratejik Göç Mühendisliği-İç Savaşta Sürüklenmek İstenen Türkiye*, Kripto, 2020; see also, Saydam 1997, Halaçoğlu 1994, McCarthy 1995. On the other hand, theses considering the security dimension emerged around 2000, concretely on the forced internal displacement of Kurds because of the PKK. It has increased enormously since the arrival of Syrian refugees. Between 1999 and 2019, 70 theses examined the relationship between security and migration. More than half, i.e. 45 theses, were defended between 2017 and 2019. See database <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi>, accessed 20 May 2020.

¹⁸ For the theses since 1970 see database <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/giris.jsp>.

¹⁹ <https://www.theses.fr/>, accessed 12 May 2020.

deportation" in Turkey.²⁰ Indeed, the favourite subject in the literature is not emigration, but immigration. While the thesis and dissertation databases from Turkey and Europe give a view to the unpublished scholarship, a glance at the published research provides a similar perspective. Turkish migration studies started with the works of Circassian and Crimean-originating researchers in the 1940s and the 1950s. It became a major focus of interest by the 1990s, mainly due to the "opening" of the Ottoman archives to researchers as a result of President Turgut Özal's "globalising" policies. Perhaps more importantly, the end of the Cold War period contributed to a shift in attention from ideology to identity. It is also important to note that the pioneering studies in this field were undertaken by academics with a migrant background. The personal seems to have become academic as their research interests appear to have been guided by their immigrant background, as in the cases of Karpāt²¹ and Kırımlı.²² A large number of these studies concentrates mainly on the migrations from the Balkans, and, to a lesser extent, Caucasus and Crimea.²³

With their exclusive focus on push factors, these studies tend to ignore the impact of the promotion of migration by the state through a range of incentives such as aid and exemptions. Rather than accounting for the active role of the Ottoman and Turkish governments from the very beginning of the waves of migration, therefore, these studies tend to portray the state as a passive third party. One of the pioneering scholars in this field, Saydam, for instance, argues that the ODP existed since "the 13th century" and for "humanitarian and religious concerns".²⁴ Even when they take into account the identity dimension, these studies again reflect an ill-balanced approach as they stress the anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish attitudes of the governments of the countries of origin, failing to take into account the pro-Muslim and pro-Turkish policies of the host country.²⁵ More specifi-

cally and importantly, these researchers fail to take into account the pull factors such as aid and exemptions offered in their not-so-open-door policies.²⁶ Although these were very generous in the late Ottoman Empire, they decreased in the republican period. This aid included free land and housing in addition to exemption from military service and taxation.²⁷ This project therefore argues that the ODP itself was a pull factor. Indeed some studies approach the Russian open-door policy and the exemptions it promises as pull factors,²⁸ although almost none of these studies consider the Ottoman/Turkish ODP as such.



Fig. 3: Iconic photo of 1912 Balkans' migrants. Frederick Moore, National Geographic Society.

Although these studies aspire to emphasise push factors, their treatment remains unconvincing and dissatisfying. More specifically, they do not address the following question: although they argue that the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires pursued a systematic policy of expelling Muslims, why did a significant share of Muslims not emigrate? If the expulsion of Muslims was centrally decided by these governments, what official decrees and documents testify to such a decision? Likewise, they do not focus on the questions of how persecutions took place and who the persecutors were. It is possible to speculate however, that the persecutors were most probably local actors who acted according to their local needs rather than central policies. Thus, research on the local persecutors (Cossacks, Christians, irregular units, etc.) is needed. If the local Christian population were responsible for the persecution and expulsion of Muslims, then it is necessary to establish the social strata and regions involved. The policies of the states that caused the emigration of Muslims were neither uniform nor totally pro-emigration. As Pinson points out, there was not a "single" Russian opinion on the topic, but rather two

²⁰ <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/>, accessed 20 May 2020.

²¹ K.H. Karpāt, "The hijra from Russia and the Balkans: The Process of Self-definition in the Late Ottoman State", *Muslim Travellers. Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*, ed. by D.F. Eickelman and J. Piscatori, London 1990: 131–152.

²² Kırımlı, 2008.

²³ For instance, there are 148 MA and PhD dissertations on migration from the Balkans, 58 for the Caucasus, and 49 on Crimea.

²⁴ Saydam 1997: 78, 97.

²⁵ For instance, see Karpāt 2010.

²⁶ As was noted earlier, the door was never actually very open because there have always been limits on admission based on such factors as religion, politics, and race.

²⁷ Saydam 1997: 153–184.

²⁸ Beydilli 1988: 373; McCarthy 1995: 122.

opposing sides: pro-emigration and anti-emigration.²⁹ There are documents that show that the two empires even tried to stop the emigration of the remaining Muslims. In most cases, the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires were anti-migration compared to the Ottoman Empire.³⁰ More Muslims remained in them than immigrated to the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, there were more Muslims in the Russian Empire than there were Ottoman Muslims in the last quarter of the 19th century.³¹

On the other hand, despite some studies arguing that religious persecution was the push factor, they do not answer the question whether the anti-Muslim policy was pursued for identity purposes or political/ideological purposes (that is secular and socialist, i.e. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia)? Indeed, the main reason for the migration of Bulgarian Turks in 1989 was not mainly an anti-Muslim campaign, but rather an anti-Turkish campaign. If religious restrictions were the push factors, why did the others not emigrate? Despite all oppression and persecution, the Muslims who did not emigrate lived their beliefs, even developed their religions. For example, the success of Nüvvab madrasas in Bulgaria has even become famous in the Muslim world.

Another common problem in the Turkish scholarship on migration is that there is almost no correlation established between those who arrive and those leave. Immigration, from the late Ottoman Empire to the 1980s Turkey, has been viewed as an independent process. However, they were closely correlated, due to the character of the wars, that is, demographic warfare. The wars with Russian Empire were not only territorial struggles but also demographic ones. Both empires aimed to have more religiously uniform populations. For this reason, both empires had similar population policies: forced migration, forced settlement, and so on. The exchange of population has often been implemented both officially, and, more often unofficially. There was almost a tacit agreement of an exchange of population (mostly on the basis of religious affiliation, i.e. Muslims vs Christians) between the Ottoman and Russian Empires.

The wars with the newly created Balkan states also had the character of demographic warfare. Besides the mutually forced migrations during the Balkan Wars (1912 and 1913), there was also the obligatory exchange of populations between Balkan states. Such as the Ottoman-Greek Kingdom (1914), Ottoman-Bulgaria (1914), and Turkey-Greek Kingdom (1923). These agreements contributed to the exchange of Muslims

and Christians between Anatolia, Thrace, and these countries.

The prevalent literature also fails to address "return migrations".³² A small fraction of those who migrated to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey returned to their home countries, such as Russia and Bulgaria. The return migration was high particularly among Bosnian Muslims (1878–1918)³³ and Bulgarian Turks (1989)³⁴. The main reason was that the immigrants realised that what they were promised was not met. Although the governments attempted to limit this return migration, there was still quite a number of such returnees.

Another serious problem in the common Turkish scholarship is that it bases arguments for push factors on Ottoman/Turkish archives and documents. The problem here is that, if emphasising push factors, then the first primary sources to delve into are the archives of the countries that pushed the Muslims out. For example, one of the experts on migration in Turkey does not use one single Russian document to substantiate his claim regarding the "Policy of the Destruction of Turks by Russians". Alongside the Ottoman/Turkish sources, he uses French and British newspapers and books.³⁵ Justin McCarthy, too, claims in his well-known study that the "forced expulsion of peoples was an effective instrument of Russian policy" in the Caucasus.³⁶ Yet rather than using Russian documents, his sources are entirely based on those of Russia's enemy, i.e. British archives. Turkish historian Ahmet Halaçoğlu claims that Russia, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Armenia "persecuted" and "destroyed the Turks". Similarly, he, too, fails to use one single document from these countries.³⁷ One last example is Zeynep Zafer's article "Balkan Wars and Pomaks", in which she examines the "genocide and migration" policies of the Bulgarian state. Despite her knowledge of the Bulgarian language, she does not use any Bulgarian government sources.³⁸

²⁹ For details see Pinson 1970 and Pinson 1972.

³⁰ For details see M. Fuhrmann, "Vagrants, Prostitutes, and Bosnians: Making and Unmaking European Supremacy in Ottoman Southeast Europe", in *Conflicting Loyalties: Social (Dis-)integration and National Turn in the Late and Post-Ottoman Balkan Societies (1839–1914)*, ed. by N. Claye, H. Grandits and R. Pichler London, I.B. Tauris 2011: 15–45; Meyer, 2007: 15–32.

³¹ The first Russian census undertaken in 1897 enumerates 13,9 million Muslims, while the 1894 Ottoman census enumerates 12,8 million Muslims. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Empire_Census_and_Karpat, 1985: 152–153, accessed 12 May 2020.

³² With some exceptions; Meyer 2007; Fuhrmann 2011: 15–45; see also T. Gündüz, "Bosna'ya Dönen Boşnak Göçmenlerin Türkiye Ve Türkler Hakkındaki Görüşleri", *Balkanlar ve Göç*, dd. Ali Fuat Öreñç-İsmail Mangal Tepe, Bursa 2013: 165–173.

³³ B. Şen, "Shuttle Back and Forth Between Two Empires: The Petitions of Bosnian Muslim Migrants in the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Archives at the End of the Nineteenth Century", *Saraybosna, Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 64, 2015: 325–343.

³⁴ For the Bulgarian Turks' immigration see D. Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish emigration and return", *International Migration Review* 26 (2), 1992, 342–352; G. Kılıçlı, "Bulgaristan Türkü Göçmen Kadınlarının Öz-Kimlik İnşası", *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 36 (1), 2019: 150–162.

³⁵ İpek 1994: 14–15.

³⁶ McCarthy 1995: 18.

³⁷ A. Halaçoğlu, *Balkan Harbi Sırasında Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri (1912–1913)*, TTK, Ankara 1994.

³⁸ See for example Z. Zafer, *Balkan Savaşları ve Pomaklar*, 100. Yılında Balkan Savaşları (1912–1913): İhtilaflı Duruşlar, Sempozyum Bildirileri-I, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2014: 351–367.



Fig. 4: Muslim-Turks from the Greek Kingdom in 1923.

A note on the Ottoman/Turkish archives is in order. The main problem is the access to some archival holdings; concretely, the Internal Ministry's Immigration Commission Documents (Dahiliye Nezareti Muhacirin Komisyonu Evrakı, DH.MHC) and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The holdings of DH.MHC were recently opened to researchers. The migration policy could thus far only be depicted using documents obtained from the files of other ministries, primarily the Interior Ministry. Although the funds of the Immigration Commission for the republican period have been opened (the Toprak İskan Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi/General Directorate of Land and Settlement), they have not yet been examined critically in terms of the open-door policy. Moreover, the archives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs are not fully opened.

The Ottoman migration policy could become much more clear with the examination of the newly-opened holdings of the Ottoman Immigration Commission and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Until these archives are not fully examined, we will not be able to answer the following questions: how did the (Ottoman and) Turkish consulates assess the pressures against Muslims and Turks? How did the Ottoman/Turkish governments process migration demands, and how did they organise migration? Was there a different policy of migration and resettlement put into effect for migrants coming from different countries? How could a researcher determine the ethnicity and region of the migrants? This is the most important problem, especially in the cases of simultaneous migrations from different regions, for example, in the migration from Nogay, Circassia, and Crimea in the 1850s and 1860s when migrants of Crimean or Circassian origin were not well-distinguished in the archival documents.

Another archival problem is the difficulty of accessing documents cited by older studies. Fonds and file numbers have been changed over time. It is difficult and indeed at times impossible to get a hold of the original documents cited in academic works.³⁹

Methodological questions

Examining the role of population and identity in the pro-migration policy poses serious methodological challenges stemming from the subject's spatial, temporal, and quantitative magnitude. Indeed, it is difficult to examine an entire timespan of two centuries of migration taking place on three continents. Moreover, these three dimensions are not static, but rather continuously shifting.

Magnitude of time-span and its speedity

Immigration had started to become a problem by the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca and it acquired a massive and tragic dimension during the Crimean War in 1853–1856, and continued until the migration of Bulgarian Turks in 1989.

Examining two centuries of migration carries great challenges. The period is long, in terms of transformation, and troubling; two "long centuries", to borrow a phrase from Eric Hobsbawm. There were major transformations (global, imperial/national, and regional) during the period; the penetration of capitalism in the "old world", the ideology of nationalism and its aim to establish nation-states, the global conflict of the Great Powers, the irredentism of pan ideologies (pan-Hellenism, pan-Slavism, pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism etc.). All these played a role in migrations. As Blumi examined in his work *Ottoman Refugees*, global economic factors had a significant impact on migrations. However, the factors that impacted deeply on the population and identity politics were imperial expansionisms (Russia, Austria-Hungary, France etc), nationalist claims, and nation-state irredentism (mainly in the Balkans). All played a major role in Ottoman/Turkish migration policy, but how big a role did they play in actual migrations?

The changes at the "national" (Ottoman) level took place parallel to global changes. This period, the "long century" of the Ottoman Empire, was a paradoxical process. On the one hand, the empire was losing land

³⁹ An important document that contains the Ottoman-Russian agreement on the Circassian migrations, which was cited by Karpat, can

not be found in the Ottoman archives; such as "FM (İD) [Hariciye, İdare] 177, 6513 139, 8 and 21 December 1862", see Karpat, 1985: 67.

and population due to ongoing wars; on the other, it reformed its administrative structure to strengthen its hegemonic capacity in relation to population and identity. Through the Tanzimat reforms, the Ottoman Empire was undergoing a wholesale westernisation project. While increasing its administrative and governing capacity, the *reaya* (literally "flock") became *tebaa* (subject), and finally *vatandaş* (citizen) with the foundation of Turkey.

The real challenge of this transition/transformation is its amorphousness. Although 1922 and 1923 were officially the end of the empire and the foundation of the republic, the transition was not as sharp; the transition period extended over a longer time on both ends. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) government acted with "national" motives during its hold on power in the 1908–1918 period. Following the founding of the republic, on the other hand, the Kemalist Ankara government benefited from Ottoman "heritage" and "experience". Moreover, there were two governments (Ankara and Istanbul, between 1920–1923) that implemented their own policies, one imperial and one national. Should one accept this period as imperial or national, or should it count as both?

During the transition from empire to republic, the population, identity and migration policy underwent a change. Indeed, in terms of migration policy, 1923 is not the year to make the empire-republic distinction. While one could observe the "nationalist" settlement policy during the CUP era, the Kemalist era witnessed imperial migration policies. It can be further argued that the migration policy implemented in the late Ottoman period is similar to the migration policies adopted by a nation-state. Likewise, some laws and practices of the early republican era are the same as those of the Ottoman period. In other words, while the end of the empire shows the signs of a new stage, the early Republican period also carries traces of the old. Moreover, both the Ankara and Istanbul governments implemented their own population and migration policies between 1920 and 1923.

Besides this national level transformation, local transformations also created difficulties, mainly because most were not synchronised with macro transformations; indeed, they may even have pursued opposing aims. Macro transformations had a role in increasing regional differences. The rate of change was higher in western regions and lower in eastern regions. While the Balkans, Thrace, and Western Anatolia were rapidly "developing", the predominantly Kurdish, Armenian, and Arab-inhabited eastern regions remained stationary. While western Muslims were more "modernised", eastern Muslims became more conservative and they approached national and global developments differently. Another reason for this was the investments made in transportation and communication technologies in western regions (railways, telegraph etc.) With the development of communication technologies, mobility and urbanisation also increased. This human mobility with economic incentives increased strengthened pro-migration sentiment in the western regions. The ques-

tion arises: were there different cultures of migration depending on region and class? As yet, no study addresses the influence of these factors on migration to Anatolia. Wars were the biggest factor in shaping the period, economically, socially and politically. They were multiple and varied: global (First World War), imperial (Russian-Ottoman War 1877–1878), regional (Crimean war 1853–1856, Balkan Wars of 1912–1913), national (Greco-Turkish War 1897, Turkish War of Independence 1919–1923) and local (Cretan Rebellion 1896). Most of them ended with territorial losses that caused massive migrations. Although several studies examine these wars and their consequences in terms of refugee crises, any study focuses specifically on the relationship between wars and military conflicts and migration/refugee in Ottoman/Turkish history.⁴⁰

Magnitude of space

Examining the ODP of an empire stretching to three continents presents huge difficulties also from the point of view of geography. This immense landmass included various neighbours, "areas", and populations. The neighbours of the Ottoman Empire and, to a lesser degree, those of Turkey were different in terms of their own population characteristics, identities, and historical relationships. The eastern frontier was (and still is) mountainous and home to a nomadic Shia population, while the southern frontier was (and still is) desertlike with Bedouin Sunnis. The western frontier was maritime with a Catholic, urban population, and the northern frontier was maritime and nomadic, with a Russian Orthodox population. Needless to say, different neighbours followed different population and identity policies.

Algerian Muslims fleeing French colonisation were welcomed more hesitantly than the Russian Muslims. The Ottoman officials welcomed only a few thousand migrants, far fewer than the millions of Russian Muslims and Turks. It seems that the Tripoli *muhacirs* were less favourable than the Caucasian migrants. This geographic selection would be seen in the attitude of Turkey, which signed the Refugee Convention of 1951 while maintaining geographical limits. Until the AKP governments, Turkey recognised the right to refugee status only for Europeans, the right to migration only for those of "Turkish descent and culture", while the rest were limited to "asylum rights".

There were three "migration zones" from which most migrants came: Crimea, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. These regions were the predominantly Muslim-inhabited contact regions with the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. The loss of these regions led to massive migration. The remaining migrations were from the Balkan countries, which mostly gained their independence during the Balkan Wars.⁴¹ Although the

40 For details see F. Dündar, "Deporting Demos, Militarizing Nations: Forced Migration and Conflicts in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (1908–1947)", in *Migration to/and From Turkey: Changing Patterns and Shifting Policies*, ed. by A.B. Karaçay and A. Üstübcü, Istanbul, Isis, 2014: 15–47.

41 Besides the studies of Karpát and McCarthy, see also: S.J. Shaw,



Fig. 5: 1989 Muslim-Turkish Migrants from Bulgaria. *Yeni Şafak*, November 4, 2019.

migrations from these three regions experienced periods of high intensity, they were spread over a long period. Migrations from Crimea began when the Ottoman Empire ceded Crimea with the 1774 Küçük Kaynarca Treaty. The biggest migration took place during the Crimean War and until 1863. According to Kırımlı, migration lasted until 1944, especially during the years of 1810, 1812, 1816, 1819, 1827, 1856, 1860–62, and 1864–65.⁴² The longest-lasting source of migration was the Caucasus, a region Islamised but never fully controlled by the Ottomans. After the suppression of the Sheikh Shamil Rebellion against Russian expansion, the great migration took place in 1864. The second wave took place during the 1877–78 war and continued at a lower intensity until the collapse of the empire.⁴³ There were also other migrations that were different from preceding ones and had their own ethnic and regional characteristics: Nogay (1859–62),⁴⁴ Batumi (Muslim Georgian, 1878, 1914),⁴⁵ "Oriental refugees" (1916).⁴⁶ The third region of migration was the Bal-

kans, where multiple actors and factors played a role in the migrations that lasted until the 1990s. The wars were the main reason, beginning with the Serbian Revolt and reaching a massive and tragic level with the 1877–78 Russo-Ottoman War and the Balkan Wars. Unlike Crimea and the Caucasus, the Christians were the majority in the Balkans, where the nationalist groups had overlapping territorial claims that drove "homogenisation" policies. The period of "mutual homogenisation" ended with the population exchange of 1923. The exchange cleansed Anatolia of its autochthon people comprising Ottoman Greeks and made the Muslim-Turkish population in Greece less "dangerous" in a demographic sense.⁴⁷ Nearly half of the remaining Turks and Muslims migrated during the republican period.⁴⁸ There were multiple waves of migration: the Cretan Muslims (1898, 1923),⁴⁹ the Ottoman-Greek exchange (1914),⁵⁰ the Ottoman-Bulgarian exchange (1914),⁵¹ the Greek occupation *kaçgıns* (1919–20), the Turkish-Greek exchange (1923), the Bulgarian Turks (1950, 1989) and Yugoslavia (1950s).⁵²

"Ottoman Population Movements During the Last Years of the Empire (1885–1914). Some Preliminary Remarks" *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 1980; A. Akgündüz, 1998: 97–120; N. İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, Serander Yayınları, Trabzon, 2006; Kale, 2014: 252–271; Kazgan, 1970; Kasaba, 2009.

⁴² For the Crimean immigration see H. Kırımlı, "Kırım'dan Türkiye'ye Kırım Tatar Göçleri", *Uluslararası Göç Sempozyumu Bildiriler*, Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, İstanbul 2006, 147–152; S. Erkan, *Kırım ve Kafkasya Göçleri*, 1878–1908, Trabzon, KATÜ Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Ülkeleri Araştırma Merkezi, 1996.

⁴³ Bice, 1991; see also Habıçoğlu Bedri, *Kafkasyadan Anadolu'ya Göçler*, Nart Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1993; Saydam Abdullah, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856–1876)*, TTK Ankara 1997; and A. Toumarkine, *Les migrations des populations musulmanes balkaniques en Anatolie 1876–1913*, İstanbul, ISIS, 1995.

⁴⁴ 64,892 Nogay migrated between 1859–1862, see D.D. Paşaoğlu, "Nogay Göçleri ve Türkiye'deki İskânları", PhD thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2009.

⁴⁵ Özel, 2010: 477–496; see also M. Demirel, "Artvin ve Batum göçmenleri (1877–1878)", *Osmanlı-Rus Savaşı'ndan Sonra, Türkiye'de Yaşamaları Dergisi*, 40, 2009: 317–340.

⁴⁶ One of the rare studies on this issue, see E. Kaya, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve Milli Mücadele'de Türk Mültecileri Vilâyet-i Şarkıyye ve Aydın Vilâyeti Mültecileri (1915–1923)*, Ebabil Yayıncılık, Ankara 2007.

⁴⁷ For the immigration from the Balkans see Y. Altuğ, *Balkanlardan anayurda yapılan göçler*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991; Kocacık, 1980: 137–190; H.Y. Aganoglu, *Göç: Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'te Balkanlar'ın Makus Talihi*, Kum saati yay, 2001; N. İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri (1877–90)*, Ankara, TTK, 1994; B. Simsir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri*, C.I-II-III, TTK, Ankara 1989; Halaçoğlu, 1994.

⁴⁸ Geray, 1962; for more details see A. İçduygu and İbrahim Sirkeci, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde Göç Hareketleri", in *75 Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere, Tarih Vakfı*, I, ed. by Oya Baydar, İstanbul, 1999: 249–259; S. Çağaptay, "Kemalist dönemde göç ve iskan politikaları: Türk kimliği üzerine bir çalışma", *Toplum ve Bilim* 93, 2002: 218–241; S. Gök, *Tek Parti Döneminde Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da İskan Politikaları (1923–1950)*, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, 2005.

⁴⁹ S.A. Kassab, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde, Osmanlı Vilayetleri'ne İskân Edilen Giritli Göçmenler", *Osmanlı Ans.* 4: 697–702.

⁵⁰ Ladas, 1932.

⁵¹ S. Önder, "Meclis-i Vükela Mazbatalarında Türk Bulgar Mübadelesi", *Anadolu üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3 (1), 1991: 207–225.

⁵² H. Öksüz and Ü. Köksal, "Emigration from Yugoslavia to Turkey (1923–1960)", *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, 9, 2004: 145–177.

The Muslim emigration from Habsburg-mandated Bosnia and Herzegovina (1879, 1909)⁵³ was mainly motivated by a desire to live in *Dar al-Islam*.

The Balkans (south of the Danube) remained main migration source region during the republican period, of whom the actors and factors were varied. The actors included the great powers, the newly created (autonomous) states, and nationalist groups. The Muslim migrants were also varied: Turks, Bosnians, Pomaks, Albanians, and so on.

In addition to the "migration zones" listed above, the following migrations occurred from the territories that were lost to the other European powers (France, Great Britain, and Italy) such as Tripoli, Algeria (1848–1900),⁵⁴ and Tunisia (1881, 1908–14).⁵⁵ There were very few migrants from "third" countries: Hungarian refugees (1848, around 5000),⁵⁶ Polish refugees (1774 and 1848),⁵⁷ Romanian and Russian Jews (1880s–1910s),⁵⁸ White Russian refugees (1919–1924),⁵⁹ and German and Jewish academics (1930s). The Christian migrants were in general opponents of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires.

The real challenge created by the huge territory is to study the post-Ottoman territories, whether in their totality or individually. As I noted earlier, it is an area that spreads over three continents and corresponds to nearly 30 states in the present day. They are divided into numerous "area studies" such as Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. Studying migration

on this geographical scale also means to be in an active dialogue with nearly 30 national historiographies. The national historiographies of the states that were established on the former Ottoman territories examine the issue of historical migrations in the "separate" boxes of emigration vs immigration. While immigration is situated within the issue of "disputed territories", the emigration issue is investigated in the context of "liberation" and independence. In other words, while emigration is seen as a rescue from "Turkish-Islamic captivity/turkokratia", immigration is viewed as a result of persecution. Similar to the Turkish academic works cited earlier, these national historiographies, too, approach the issue of migration from a perspective that reinforces their national unity.⁶⁰

Recently, various contributions in area studies in the US approaching migration from a regional perspective have been on the rise. These include the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Asia, the Levant, North Africa, Russia, the Gulf, the Caucasus, the Black Sea, Middle East, and the Arab World.⁶¹ Area studies envision their respective region as a social, cultural, economic, and even ideological totality. They also analyse migration in a "closed pool logic". Their priority is to understand the region rather than migration. They may have two important contributions. They can play a role in understanding migration between the states established after the Ottoman Empire, and establishing a balance between national historical writings and the Ottoman past.⁶²

B. Şen, *Nationalism and Migration: The Post-1950 Balkan Immigrants from Yugoslavia*, unpublished MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007.

⁵³ Bosnian Muslim immigration to the Ottoman Empire was mainly in 1879, as well as 1882, 1889–1902 and 1908–1909.

⁵⁴ The number of Algerian immigrants was about 10,000. For details see Ş. Tufan Buzpınar, "Suriye'ye Yerleşen Cezayirli Muhacirlerin Tabiiyeti Meselesi (1847–1900)", *İslâm Araştırmaları*, 1, 1997: 91–106; see also S. Samur, "Osmanlı devleti'nde cezayir göçmenleri ve Abdülkadir El-Geylani", *Erciyes Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi dergisi*, 8, 1992: 141–158.

⁵⁵ Bardin, 1980: 162–178. According to Stiti, 223,000 Tunisian fled to the Ottoman Tripoli (Libya) after the French conquest in 1881. Most of them were repatriated by the French protectorate. See also Mustapha Stiti, "Tunus'un Fransızlar tarafından işgali karşısında Osmanlı siyaseti (1878–1888)", unpublished PhD thesis, İstanbul University, 2008, 161.

⁵⁶ M.T. Gökbilgin, "Rakozcı Ferenc II ve Osmanlı Devleti Himayesinde Macar Mültecileri", *Türk-Macar Kültür Münasebetleri Işığında il, Rakozcı Ferenc ve Macar Mültecileri Sempozyumu*, İstanbul, 1976, 1–17; N. Göyünç, "1849 'da Macar Mültecileri ve Bunların Kütahya ve Halep'te Yerleştirilmeleri ile İlgili Talimatlar", *Türk-Macar Kültür*, op.cit, 173–179; A. Refik, *Türkiye'de Mülteciler Meselesi*, İstanbul, 1926; B. Nazır, *Macar ve Polonyalı Mülteciler. Osmanlı'ya Sığınanlar*, İstanbul, Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2006.

⁵⁷ Nazır 2006.

⁵⁸ N.I. Şeber, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Rusya ve Romanya'dan Gelen Yahudi Muhacirler", *Tarih Dergisi*, 53, 2012: 39–61; M.K. Öke, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Siyonizm ve Filistin Sorunu*, İstanbul, 1982.

⁵⁹ T. Timuçin, *White Russians in Istanbul: The Plight of the Russian Emigres during the Years 1919–1924*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, Bilkent Üniversitesi, 1999.

⁶⁰ D. Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact upon Greece*, Paris, 1962; Nubar, Boghos, *The Pre-War Population of Cilicia*, Paris, 1920; N. Michoff, *La Population de la Turquie et de la Bulgarie au XVIII' et XIX' s.: recherches biblio-statistiques*, 4 vols., Sofia, 1915–1935.

⁶¹ For instance, one needs to apply to other cases the Circassian studies that examine the impact of Circassian migration in Balkans and the Middle East, such as: V. Hamed-Troyansky, "Circassian Refugees and the Making of Amman, 1878–1914", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49 (4), 2017: 605–623; M. Dobrev, "Circassian Colonization in the Danube Vilayet and Social Integration (Preliminary Notes)", *OTAM* 33, 2013: 1–30; S. Shami, "Historical Processes of Identity Formation: Displacement, Settlement, and Self-Representations of the Circassians in Jordan", *Iran and the Caucasus* 13 (1), 2009: 141–159.

⁶² See, among others: M. Cote, "Les migrations internationales dans le bassin méditerranéen [note critique]", *Méditerranée*, 59, 1986: 103–105; C. Schmoll, H.Thiollet and C. Wihtol de Wenden, *Migrations en Méditerranée*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2015; I. Ninić, *Migrations in Balkan History*, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1989; M. Morokvašić, "Migrations et diasporas: les Balkans mobiles", *Balkanologie* VII (1), 2003: 11–17; K.C. Zachariah, B.A. Prakash and S. Irudaya Rajan, "Gulf migration study: employment, wages and working conditions of Kerala emigrants in the United Arab Emirates", *CDS Working Paper* 326, Trivandrum, CDS 2002; A. Arsan, J. Karam and A. Khater, "Editorial Foreword: On Forgotten Shores: Migration in Middle East Studies, and the Middle East in Migration Studies", *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East & North African Migration Studies* 1 (1), 2015: 1–7; D. Chatty, *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East*, Cambridge, 2010; D.F. Heisel, *Theories of International Migration in International Migration in the Arab World*, vol. II, United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia, 1982.

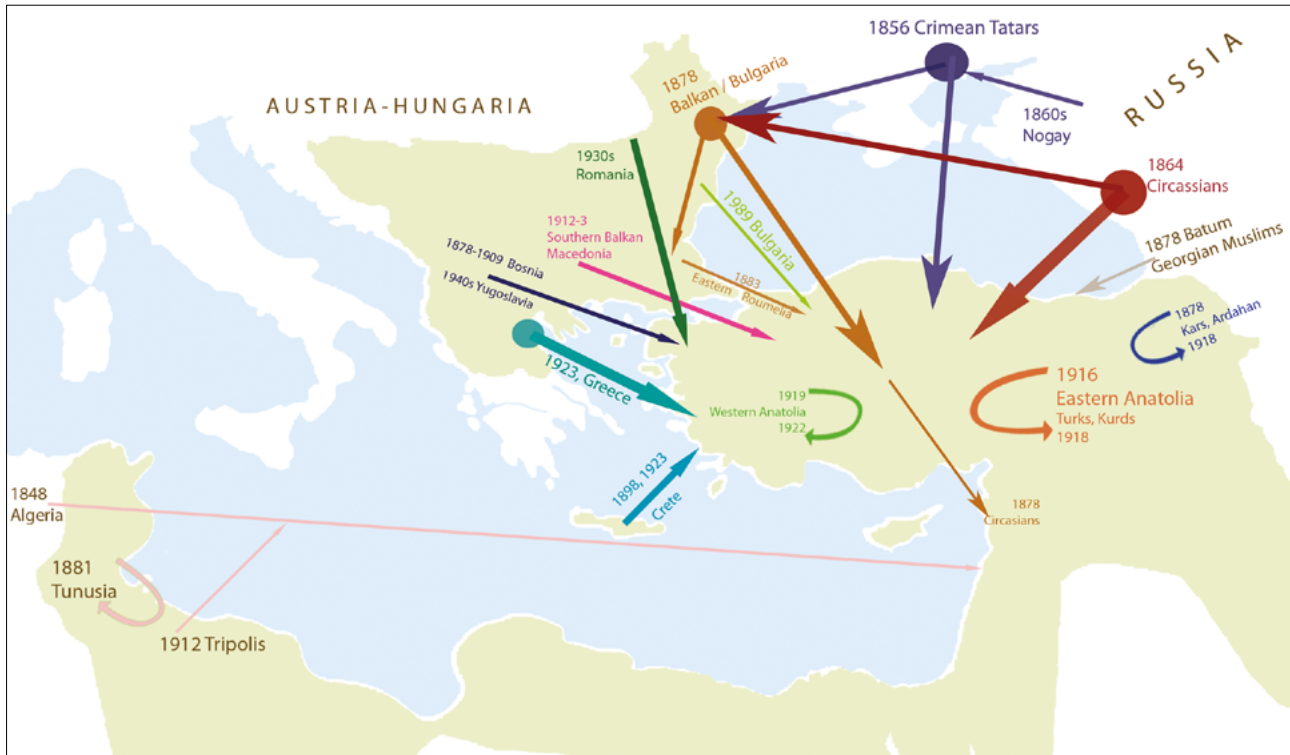


Fig. 6: The immigration towards the Ottoman Empire and Turkey between 1856 and 1888 (© Fuat Dündar, 2021).

In sum, the spatial magnitude and its heterogeneity obligate researchers to consider two other related fields, i.e. national and regional (area) studies. Thus, it would involve scaling between four levels: global history > imperial history > regional (area studies) > national historiography. This project could overcome this scaling problem if it applies the understanding underlying the main question that the "connected history" theory asks, "how can we write a history of Ibero-America if we consider the Spanish and Portuguese worlds as strictly distinct?"⁶³.

Another challenge is the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the population from the Ottoman Empire to Turkey. These identities are multi-layered and difficult to categorise in distinct categories. Indeed, very few of them can be merged into one single ethnic and/or religious identity, such as Yezidis and Jews. Most of them have overlapping identities: Muslim or Catholic Albanians, Gregorian or Protestant Armenians, Alevi or Sunni Turks etc. Most of these identities also have multiple offshoots: for instance, "Shia" has several strands, such as Shia, Caferi, Alevi, Ismaili, Nusayri, and Bektaşî. With their social and regional differences, these identities became more varied mainly due to tribal divisions. Sometimes tribal identity was considered the most important component of one's identity by not only the members of the group but also the Ottoman and Turkish states. These characteristics would create further obstacles to analysing the government policies. For instance, if the 1915 Deportation Law was for the Gregorian Armenians, which the Turkish historiography claims, or for all Armenians, it would be indeed difficult to determine whether a policy targeted the entire group or a "sub-group".

The other challenge is to find out whether the identity difference (besides religion) influenced the open-door policy of governments. We know that the Ottoman African Muslims migrated least, from the regions occupied by British, French, and Italians. But was this due to the racial difference or the difference in different Western colonial policies (i.e. Russian vs British)? On the other hand, the impact of linguistic identity on the ODP decision is clear. We know that the language of Muslim migrants had gained in importance by 1908. The non-Turkophone were dispersed in Anatolia in order to facilitate their learning Turkish,⁶⁴ and the Turkish language had become an important criteria by the time of the founding of the republic. But was language also an important factor before 1908? The other question to answer is the impact of knowledge of Turkish on the decision of return-migration. We know that if the return-migration was strong among Bosnian migrants, it was because of their Turkish language difficulties.⁶⁵ The last dimension of identity is tribalism. Tribalism was a of in migration policies; for instance, the tribalism among Nogays and Circassians was seen a threat to the state and Islam, since their *asabiya* was seen an obstacle between state and tebaa direct relations, especially the Circassian *asabiyah* (*xabze*). It is for this reason the Young Turks unified tribal affairs and migration affairs in one directorate. Since the impact of tribalism is clear, the question to answer is how to separate and distinguish the anti-tribalism policy from the-migration policy, and were they mixed in some cases?

⁶⁴ Dündar 2001.

⁶⁵ Şen 2015: 333.

Magnitude of migrations and data

The third methodological difficulty derives from the magnitude of migrations and the problem of measuring them. Indeed, examining the role of the population and identity policy in massive and enduring migrations means to come face to face with three difficulties: exceptionalism, measurement, and reliability of data.

Generalisation of migration policies and practices extenuates exceptional and individual dimensions. Exceptions in the general migration policy are multiple, which creates difficulties for this project. Sometimes, the attitude toward individual migration could be differentiated from mass migration. For example, the migration of "Muslim Turks" from Western Thrace and the Gagauz (Christian Turks) from Romania were not accepted and even prevented during the republican period. However, on the individual level this policy was sometimes not applied. Some were able not only to enter, but also to gain citizenship.⁶⁶ On the other hand, since most migration took place as a result of state policies, the project excludes the role of migrants in decision-making. This approach extenuates exceptional and individual dimensions. Although migrations were caused by macro politics and wars, the reasons could be different for individual migrants. The migrants had their own reasons such as family reunification, better education, and economic/commercial concerns. How can one evaluate the different impact of migration policies on individual applications, and what produced exceptions to the general policy?

The importance of data in migration studies has been well known since the founder of migration studies E.G. Ravenstein based his theory on the 1881 British census. The migration data is also important for this project, which covers mass and enduring migrations. Population and identity politics, which were two reasons for pro-migration policies, are directly related to the quantity of migration in the Ottoman/Turkish context. Muslim migrants contributed to this issue during the transformation from empire to republic, during which the political borders were redrawn according to "national" numbers. Concretely speaking, the Muslim migrants increased the number and proportion of Muslims in the multi-religious Ottoman Empire and of Turks in the multi-ethnic Turkey. However, it is a challenge to determine the exact number of migrants. The data presented by the literature on the departure and arrival of migrants seem unreliable. For instance, the renowned expert Kemal Karpat argues that the number of Crimean migrants was between 0,6 and 2 million.⁶⁷ The literature also exaggerates the number of migrants. For example, according to Tekeli,⁶⁸ the number of migrants for the period

1783–1922 was 3,94 million. McCarthy,⁶⁹ on the other hand, argues that it is 4,000,381 for 1827–1922, while Quataert⁷⁰ estimates 5 to 7 million (1783–1913), Quataert and İnalcık⁷¹ is 5 million (1850–1922), and Karpat 5 million (1854–1908).⁷²

Fig.7: Estimations and Official data regarding the Ottoman/Turkish immigrations⁷³

Estimations		Official datas	
1783–1922, Tekeli	3,940,000	1876–1916	1,193,944, all migrants
1827–1922, McCarthy	4,000,000	1864–1881	487.760, Caucasian
1783–1913, Quataert	5-7,000,000	1878–1918	1,304,870, all migrants
1854–1908, Karpat	5,000,000	1912–1914	242,807, Balkan migrants
1923–1976, Doğanay	1,451,252	1877–1897	1,020,861
1923–1997, İçduygu and Kirişçi	1,676,819	2011–2020	3.618.918, Syrian "refugees"

These differences are not only due to technical difficulties but also to the ideological approaches of these researchers. In their reasoning, the higher the number of migrants, the more cruel the non-Muslim and non-Turkish states and the more victimised Muslims and Turks would be. In contrast to the findings suggested by these works, the data prepared by the Ottoman bureaucrats of the period are significantly lower. For example, according to the Interior Ministry data of 1918, the number of Caucasian migrants was 400,000

⁶⁹ McCarthy 1995: 339.

⁷⁰ D. Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922*, 2nd ed., Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2005: 117.

⁷¹ D. Quataert and H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 1994: 793–94.

⁷² Karpat 1985, 11. He estimates the numbers of Circassians at 700,000 – 1 million in the 1860s and at least half a million in 1881–1914, see pages 68, 70. Interestingly, in another study he estimates 7 million for the period from 1856 to 1914, K.H. Karpat, "Historical Continuity and Identity Change or How to be Modern Muslim, Ottoman, and Turk", in *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Leiden, Boston and Köln, Brill, 2000, 22.

⁷³ This table is the compilation of sources cited in the footnotes 67–74 as well as the following sources: Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniyye'nin 1313 senesine Mahsus İstatik-i Umûmisi (*İstatistik-i Umûmi İdaresi Nezaret-i Umûr-ı Ticaret ve Nafia*), İstanbul 1316, 40–41. İçduygu; A., and Kirişçi, K., *Land of diverse migrations*. İstanbul, Bilgi University Press, 2009; Doğanay, H. *Diştan Anadolu'ya göçün nüfus artışı üzerindeki etkilerine genel bir bakış*, *Edebiyat Fakültesi Araştırma Dergisi*, 2, 12, 1980, Atatürk Üniversitesi Yayınları, Sevinç Matbaası, 351–378, <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-korumamiz-altındaki-suriyeliler>.

⁶⁶ Hersant 2008, Çağaptay 2006.

⁶⁷ Karpat 1985: 68–69.

⁶⁸ 1,8 million Crimean Tatar immigrants in 1783–1922, 1,5 million Caucasian immigrants in 1859-1879, 1,5 million Balkan immigrants in 1877–1878, and 640,000 Balkan immigrants after the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913. İ. Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğundan Günümüze Nüfusun Zorunlu Yer Değiştirmesi ve İskan Sorunu", *Toplum ve Bilim* 50, 1990: 56–57.

post-1864, and 87,760 for the period 1878–1881. According to the Immigration Directorate (AMMU), the number of recorded migrants was 1,193,944 between 1876–1916.⁷⁴ Immigration Director Hamdi Bey gave the number of migrants between 1878–1918 as 1,304,870 in his parliamentary speech in 1918. The number of those who came after the Balkan Wars was also lower in the documents of the period. For example, according to the *İkdam* newspaper, the number of Balkan migrants between November 1912 and March 1914 was 242,807.⁷⁵

Besides the numbers, the historical sequence, in other words the time of migration, is also important for the project. An histogram of migrations can serve to find the causes of migrations. It would determine whether the migration happened in wartime or peacetime, which would help to better understand the relationship between war-diplomacy-migration as well as the causes, processes, and consequences of migration. Since the literature argues that the Ottoman-Turkish pro-migration policy was based on humanitarian concerns, the historical sequence will help to distinguish war-time refugees and peace-time migrants.

Last but not least, another important difficulty of research is the generalisation of the multi-layered character of migrations. To portray these multiple layers of a migration wave, the Crimean migrations could be given as a striking example. Following the 1774 treaty, the royals and nobles left the Crimean Khanate. The second wave followed the annexation of Crimea to Russia. The third wave, yet the first massive wave, of migration began during the Crimean War, when the Russian deportation policy targeted the Muslims who lived in coastal and other strategic regions. The deportation was executed to prevent the disembarkment of the Ottoman Empire and its allies. This operation triggered Muslim emigration to the Ottoman lands. The fourth wave was organised by the Ottomans and their allies. During their military advance, but especially toward the end of war, they transferred a share of the Crimean Muslims. This migrant transfer was intertwined with a soldier transfer.⁷⁶ The fifth wave consisted of those who feared that Russia would assume them to be collaborators. The more the fear of massacre spread, the more migration increased. This fear was reinforced by the attacks by Russian and local forces on collaborators. Indeed, it assumed the scale of a massacre consisting of looting and vengeful violence on the part of local and paramilitary forces (in the beginning, Russian Cossacks).

The implementation of military hegemony in the region increased emigration via the expulsion of rebellious elements and the dismissal of collaborators with the Ottomans. The next step was colonisation with "loyal" elements (similar to the Ottoman's *şenlendirme* policy) of the areas destroyed during war, and settlement of mi-

grants coming from outside of Russia. The sixth wave of migration took place after all conflict had ended, during the establishment of the Russian administration in the region. The change of sovereignty reversed the governor-governed relationship. Muslims who could not digest this change emigrated. Those whose lands had been confiscated by Russia also emigrated. Russia redistributed land with a new land regime as it seized Crimean land holdings, primarily strategic and fertile lands. Other causes were the military, taxation, and Russian language and anti-Islam regulations.

The seventh wave of migration took place during peacetime, which extended over long span, and human losses were low. The reasons remain lighter than the previous ones. Fear for one's life is replaced by desire for a better life and identity concerns (i.e. to live one's Islamic beliefs). This was the reason for the migration during the republican period. As the literature emphasises, the reasons for the migration from Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria to Turkey included conversion and assimilationist policies, forced changes of their names, oppression and persecution. However, this kind of generalisation ignores that not all conquering states at all times intended to assimilate or drive out conquered Muslim populations.⁷⁷

In sum, there was no single reason for migration over time. Most of the Ottoman/Turkish migrations were connected to each other and they also had their own particularities. The challenge here is how to escape from the simplification and banalisation of diverse and varied migrations?

"Dis-conclusion": theoretical questions

The first challenge to theorising derives from the rather complicated and sensitive research subject. The second derives from migration theory itself. Most of the theories are Euro-Western centered. They are modeled not on empires but on nation-states. They deal with the issue mainly in terms of social and economic integration. They examine individual cases of migration rather than mass scales. Moreover, migrants are considered rational individuals. On the other hand, refugee studies, which is not enough to explain peacetime migrations in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, is relatively more limited, and refugee-centered, minimising states' agency.

Migration research is contemporary oriented and interested in forecasting. Migrations are rarely recognised as factors that constitute history. The integration of perspectives from area studies and mobility research has so far not led to enough inclusion of the importance of historical structures and cultural knowledge.

Whatever the reason for their production, theories are able to offer appropriate paradigms. Since a theory can not explain migration in all its dimensions, studies of migration have to adopt an inter-disciplinary approach. The most appropriate and inclusive theory

⁷⁴ See Table 1 of Murat Bardakçı, *Talat Paşa'nın Evrak-ı Metrûkesi*, Everest, 2015.

⁷⁵ *İkdam*, V° 6173, 29 April 1914, BOA, 2398/5, 2.5.1918, MAZC, 3, 4, 2, 41: 217. MMZC, 3, 1, 1, 26, 6.7.1914: 606–14.

⁷⁶ Saydam 1997.

⁷⁷ See for example, N. Immig, *Zwischen Partizipation und Emigration Muslime in Griechenland 1878–1897*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2015.

seems to be the "migration system" theory because the Ottoman/Turkish migrations took place for mainly political reasons (i.e. states) and the effect of pre-existing links between countries where migration took place was decisive. Most migrations (at least until the 1990s) that occurred with macro-political, ethnic and security concerns, were state-sponsored migrations. Few migration from Russia to the Ottoman Empire and from the Balkans to Turkey were not independent of these parameters because most of these movements stemmed from institutional relations between states, rather than the migrants' own decisions.⁷⁸

In addition to the migration system theory, the most appropriate and explanatory paradigm are push and pull factors. This project will make it clear that it is important to supplement this paradigm with a knowledge analysis approach.

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⁷⁸ Fawcett 1989; Kritz, Lim and Zlotnik 1992.

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ISSN 2191-3897
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