Socio-political changes, confessionalization, and inter-confessional relations in Ottoman Damascus from 1760 to 1860

Massot, A.K.J.M.

PART 1: THE TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES

CHAPTER 1 : REFORMING THE STATE AND SOCIETY: BUILDING CONFESSIONAL CULTURES

The first part of the 19th century was characterized by various projects of transformation of Ottoman society and various ways to imagine community. At the level of the state, the government embarked on a series of administrative, economic, and societal reforms which altered state-society relations and societal hierarchies. Efficiency, centralization, rationality, accountability, authenticity, and distinction were the primary keywords of these transformations which sought to mold the inhabitants of the empire into controllable subjects.[1] Similarly, religious communities in the empire were reconstructed along similar objectives as a result of internal impetus, foreign influences, and government policies. It was accompanied by the confessionalization of Ottoman society, through which religious distinctions were emphasized and religious identities were politicized. Among Muslims, the Sufi *ṭarīqā* Naqšbandīya played a central role in gathering support for the reforms and in politicizing religious identities.

These various ambitions to reform society and religious communities were intertwined with the long term development of the construction of confessional cultures among Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Since the 17th century, religious practices, dogma, and identifications were subjected to heightened social control and homogenization. In the 19th century, this process was intensified and religious communities were increasingly demarcated and shaped according to political objectives, altering the significance of confessional belonging. This new form of local politics, affected by the *Tanzimat* reform, marked the confessionalization of

[1] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage books, 1977), 136.

Ottoman society.[2] This transformation is often presented as a prelude to nationalism.[3] However, this study will highlight the various trajectories of political and confessional belonging which forces us to challenge this narrative which links modernization and nationalism.[4] It will challenge the predominance given to institutions as actors of social change, and point to the underlying dynamics of the construction of confessional cultures before the official institutionalization of the *millet* system.

This chapter will point to these intertwined transformations. It will first explore the development of confessional cultures in the Ottoman Empire through the intensification of religious doctrine and practice and the reinforcement of religious identifications. Second, this chapter will focus on the dynamics of religious reform among Muslims, by focusing on the influence of the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya which played an important role in legitimizing the *Tanzimat* reforms and politicizing religious identities.

1. Development of Confessional Cultures

1.1 Intensification of Religious Identities and Doctrine

The Ottoman Empire, composed of a variety of religious groups, had been characterized by a certain level of confessional ambiguity. Religious communities were highly heterogeneous, spread across the empire and beyond. Religious education was disparate and lacked homogeneity, resulting in a diversity of beliefs and practices. The borders between religious groups were blurry and fluctuated across time and space. Christians, Jews and Muslims were embedded in shared regional cultures with common customs, languages and at times shared religious practices and rituals.[5]

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[2] Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism,* 6; Rogan, "Sectarianism", 493-511.
[3] According to Durkheim's analysis of modernization through the waning out of mechanic sociabilities, replaced by organic sociabilities as a result of the creation of modern institutions, Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2013).
[4] Aymes, *A Provincial History*, 26.
[5] Tijana, "State and Religion," 66.

From the 17th century onwards, this confessional ambiguity was identified as problematic. Confessional consciousness was constructed incrementally.[6] Tijana Kristic has addressed the Sunnitization of Ottoman Muslims in this period as a reaction to the rise of the Safavid Shia Empire, which triggered a process of oppositional identity-building on the Ottoman side.[7] It was also a tool of legitimization of the sultan in the face of political defeats in the 16th and 17th century.[8] This process of Sunnitization included an increasing definition of correct beliefs and behavior expected from Muslims and the imposition of these standards on the population.[9] It was done through religious education and the distribution of catechisms, or *Ilmihal,* as well as moralistic literature to the population. *Fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence, was increasingly popularized through these means, bringing legal discourses into the daily worship of Ottoman Muslims.[10] These dynamics shaped the Sunni identity of the Ottoman Empire.

Similarly, Bernard Heyberger points to various dynamics which contributed to the building of confessional cultures among Oriental Catholics in the 17th century, including contacts with Europe, missionary influence, political and military propaganda, literacy, and orientalist discourses. It led to a need to reinforce religious borders, emphasize distinction and separation from 'heretics' and from the Muslim environment.[11] Latin missionary influence also included new forms of spirituality and the internalization of faith through devotional practices.[12] Among Jews, since the 17th century, there was a revival of Sephardi identifications and customs, and Lurianic Kabballah mysticism based on a Ladino cultural

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[6] Bernard Heyberger, "Catholicisme et construction des frontières confessionnelles dans l'Orient ottoman," in *Frontières religieuses à l'époque moderne,* dir. Francisco Bethencourt and Denis Crouzet (Paris: Presses Universitaires de la Sorbonne, 2013), 123.
[7] Kristic, "State and Religion," 72, 73.
[8] Krstić, *Narratives of Religious Change,* 108; Terzioglu "Sufis".
[9] Kristic, "State and Religion," 66, 72.
[10] Ibid, 73.
[11] Heyberger, "Catholicisme," 123.
[12] Bernard Heyberger, "Confréries, dévotions et société chez les catholiques orientaux," in *Confréries et dévotions dans la catholicité moderne (mi-XVe-début XIXe siècle)*, dir. Bernard Dompnier and Paola Vismara (Rome: Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome, 2008), 238.

development brought about by the arrival of Francos, or European Jews, in the empire. It encouraged a sense of a shared religious culture among Ottoman Jews.[13]

The grounds of religious legitimacy were shifting in this period, from tradition and custom to textual evidence, as represented by Protestant teachings but also Wahābī and later Salafi ideologies.[14] The development of printing press and the establishment of missionary schools had a role to play in this transformation.[15] The Ottoman conquest of Arab lands led to the gradual constitution of public archives and the mass production of legal documents. Reem Meshal studied this archival development in Egypt and argued that it encouraged literacy and led to the development of proto-citizenship.[16] In this context, literacy was also developed as a necessity to resist new impositions of the modernizing Ottoman government such as new taxes, which were done through the written word.[17] Dana Sajdi observed the development in the 18th century of what she coins the 'nouveau literacy', that is the production of chronicles by individuals not associated with the *ulema,* who had dominated the field beforehand. These new chroniclers represent the social mobility of the 18th century[18] and the development of a

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[13] Jacob Barnai, "From Sabbateanism to Modernization: Ottoman Jewry on the Eve of the Ottoman Reforms and the Haskala," in *Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture in the Modern Era*, ed. Harvey Goldberg (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 75. For an account of the Sabbatean movement see Jacob Barnai, "The Sabbatean movement in Smyrna: the social background," in *Jewish Sects, Religious Movements, and Political Partie*s, ed. Menachem Mor. (Omaha, NE: Creighton University Press, 1992), 113-122.

[14] On the rise of the Salafiyya see Weismann, *Taste of Modernity.*

[15] For an in-depth exploration of the rise of literacy since 18th century, see Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus, Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Bernard Heybeger, "Livres et pratique de la lecture chez les chrétiens (Syrie, Liban) XVIIe - XVIIIe siècles," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 87-88 (1999): 209-223; Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (Oxford University Press, 1995).Hanna Dyāb, *D'Alep à Paris : Les pérégrinations d'un jeune Syrien au temps de Louis XIV,* trad. Paule Fahmé Thierry, Bernard Heyberger, Jerôme Lentin (Arles: Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2015); Bernard Heyberger, "Individualism and Political Modernity: Devout Catholic Women in Aleppo and Lebanon. Between the Seventeenth and the Nineteenth Centuries," in *Beyond the Exotic. Women's histories in Islamic Societies,* dir. Amira Sonbol (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 72-74.

[16] Reem Meshal, *Sharia and the Making of the Modern Egyptian Islamic Law and Custom in the Courts of Ottoman Cairo* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2014); see also Nelly Hanna ,"The administration of courts in Ottoman Cairo," in *The State and Its Servants: Administration in Egypt from Ottoman Times to the Present,* ed. Nelly Hanna (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995).

[17] Timothy Fitzgerald, "Reaching the Flocks, Literacy and the Mass Reception of Ottoman Law in the Sixteenth Century Arab World," in *Law and Legality in the* Ottoman Empire *and Republic of Turkey*, ed. Kent F. Schull , M. Safa Saraçoğlu and Robert F. Zens (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 20.

[18] Sajdi, *Barber,* 8.

new 'cultural literacy'.[19] Among Christians, the Catholic reformation encouraged the development of reports and archives among local Christian communities, who also entertained an expanding correspondence with the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide.[20]

The process of the development of confessional cultures included a will to emphasize distinction and separation from other religious communities, especially in the public sphere. Contacts with Europe in the 18th century, in the face of political defeats of the Ottoman Empire and of the development of European imperialist projects over the Ottoman Empire, encouraged Christians to increasingly look to Europe, which underlined their Christian identity in an Islamic state.[21] Similarly, Jews of the Ottoman Empire came increasingly into contact with European Jewry and shared networks of information, individuals and resources which created a sense of common belonging.[22]

In the 19th century this development of confessional cultures was intensified by the institutionalization of the *millet* system and by the reforms of the Ottoman State. Religious identities, which had been reinforced since the 17th century, were increasingly politicized, partaking in the confessionalization of Ottoman society. The first part of the 19th century was characterized by reforms of the Ottoman State which tended towards centralization and rationalization of power relations and saw the influence of reforming approaches to religious practices and identity among Muslims and non-Muslims.

A shared program of reform among religious groups sought to abolish what was deemed to be 'superstitions' and unsanctioned practices.[23] Catholic missionaries, while rejecting the Protestant literal approach to religious texts, sought to clearly distinguish

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[19] Sajdi, Barber, 7.
[20] Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient,* 477- 478.
[21] Heyberger, "Catholicisme," 129.
[22] Yair Wallach, "Rethinking the *yishuv*: late-Ottoman Palestine's Jewish communities revisited", Journal of Modern Jewish Studies 16n no. 2 (2017): 286, 287.
[23] See Ussama Makdisi *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

orthodoxy from heresies, religion from superstition.[24] Religious fraternities participated in the strengthening of borders.[25] Christian and Jewish fraternities helped to build solidarities and sense of commonness among members of religious communities.[26] Muslim sufi orders also played a role building solidarities among Muslims and reinforcing religious borders.[27] These institutions contributed to the rise of confessional cultures by bridging the gap between lay and clerical elements. Among Jews, the *Haskalah*, or Jewish enlightenment, sought to engage on a different level with religious texts and to get rid of mysticism which was widespread in the Ottoman Empire.[28] The idea to return to a true faith that had been crippled with innovations and deviations was common among different religious groups.

Across the religious spectrum in the Ottoman Empire, ulema, missionaries, clergy members and rabbis attempted to pinpoint innovation and thus determine tradition. However, while the objective was similar, they differed greatly regarding the means used to get rid of these innovations. While Christian missionaries, rabbis and the majority of Muslim scholars emphasized teaching, preaching, and even publications as a way to return to the straight path, others such as some of the followers of the Wahābī doctrine, emphasized coercion or even violence.

The concept of faith itself was transformed in this period. Faith was being transformed from an external marker of identification to a question of inner beliefs.[29] The commitment of Muslims and Christians to the tenants of their faith was being questioned like no time before. Ottoman subjects had not only to to dress like Muslims, Jews and Christians but also to

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[24] See Chantal Verdeil, *La mission jésuite.*
[25] Heyberger," Catholicisme," 138, 140; Heyberger, "Confréries," 238; see also Verdeil, *La mission jésuite*; Girard "Le christianisme oriental," 496.
[26] Roni Weinstein, "Kabbalistic Innovation in Jewish Confraternities in the Early Modern Mediterranean," in *Faith's Boundaries: Laity and Clergy in Early Modern Confraternities,* eds. Nicholas Terpstra, Adriano Prosperi and Stefania Pastore (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 241.
[27] Zacorne, *Pour ou contre le monde*, 21. See the role of the Naqšbandīya below.
[28] On the Haskalah in the Ottoman Empire see Tamir Karkason, "The Ottoman-Jewish Haskalah (Enlightenment), 1839-1908: A Transformation in the Jewish Communities of Western Anatolia, the Southern Balkans and Jerusalem," PhD diss., (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2018).
[29] Heather Sharkey, *A History of Muslims, Christians and Jews,* 227.

believe and practice according to the accepted dogma.[30] Religious authorities begun to increasingly monitor the religious life of their flock.[31] Similarly to Christian missionaries activities, Sunni ulema were sent to Muslim groups such as Alevis and Shias in order to encourage a "rectifications of doctrine", which intensified during the rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909).[32]

1.2 Reforms, Interstitial Freedom and Confessionalization

The *confessionalization* of Ottoman society was the affected by the reforms of the religious communities' institutions which started in the 18th century. Power in the Ottoman administration was distributed across heterogeneous scales which included a variety of intermediaries and networks. Ottoman Christians and Jews had overlapping social ties and belonged to a variety of social groups. Socioeconomic status, and especially rank, was a strong basis of identification and commonness.[33] As non-Muslims, they were governed both by the Ottoman State apparatus and by their own communal institutions. Confessions themselves were composed of various institutions which shared authority and had various levels of influence over the flock. Within communities various norms coexisted and at times displayed contradictions. In this multiplicity of institutions and social norms, Christians and Jews enjoyed a certain level of agency. This type of agency has been described by Giovanni Levi as interstitial freedom, a liberty to choose authorized by the interstices between governing institutions.[34]

This is especially true of the non-Muslim laity, which had enjoyed a high level of interstitial freedom beforehand. The notables had a major role to play as intermediaries with the different levels of the Ottoman government. In *Bilād al-Šām*, non-Muslims notables

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[30] Ibid, 227.
[31] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains,* 69-74.
[32] Sharkey, *A History of Muslims*, *Christians and Jews*, 223.
[33] Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 36.
[34] Giovanni Levi, " Les usages de la biographie," *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 44, no. 6, (1989): 1325-1336.

reached prominent positions as advisors, scribes or money-lenders to the governors.[35] They were part of their household and managed to build their fortune through this patron-client relationship.[36] The elites had developed a wide network across the Mediterranean and in the empire thanks to dynamics of migration.[37] This international aspect encouraged them to develop close relationships with foreign consuls. This centrality of the elite, usually composed of merchants and scribes, as an intermediary of the community with the Ottoman government and foreign powers gave them a certain level of power over the communal affairs, relegating the religious leadership to a secondary role or at least to a relationship of interdependence with these lay elites.[38] The dispersal of communities over the empire and abroad, had created a heterogeneous system of overlapping jurisdictions and multiple authorities. The religious leadership of non-Muslim communities was characterized by the heterogeneity of norms, rules and the local forms of power relations which lacked an overarching hierarchy. The multiplicity of institutions allowed for the diffused nature of power across the religious leadership.

This interstitial freedom however was challenged by the institutionalization of non-Muslim communities which started in the 18th century as a result of missionary influence but also internal dynamics. This process, similarly to the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reforms, encouraged centralization of resources and the homogenization of norms which ended up reducing individual leeway and freedom. The religious leadership sought to play a more direct role into the communal affairs. In the case of Catholic communities of *Bilād al-Šām*, these transformations were encouraged by the Catholic reform and Roman injunctions. This transformation of non-Muslim communities led to resistance among the population who had

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35 Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 6, 35.
36 al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 79.
37 See these networks in Ian Coller, *Arab France, Islam and the Making of Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt: 1725-1975* (Stuttgart : Fraz Steiner Verlag, 1985).
38 Yaron Harel, *Syrian Jewry in Transition, 1840-1880,* trans. Dena Ordan (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 61.

conducted many activities beyond the purview of the state and religious authorities. These resistances in turn caused internal conflicts within communities. At the same time, the homogenization of norms and forms of belonging also contributed to reinforcing confessional identifications. This move towards stronger and more political religious identities encountered the obstacle of other forms of belonging were also politicized: local identity, *ʿaṣabīyya* and family networks.[39] The development of confessional cultures on the level of the religious community was thus challenged by the politicization of ethnic or local identifications.

While the construction of confessional cultures of non-Muslim communities started before the 19th century, the *Tanzimat* reforms exacerbated these earlier developments and gave the religious authority institutional tools to enforce their centralizing and homogenizing reforms. In the previous centuries, only the Greek Orthodox and Armenian patriarchs benefited from the official recognition of the Ottoman State.[40] The Jewish community was recognized but did not have a similar representative in Istanbul. Starting in the 1830's however, Catholic communities gradually obtained the recognition of the state, and their patriarchs became intermediaries with the Ottoman government, thus changing the balance of power between and within Christian communities.[41] A Jewish *hahambaşı* was named in Istanbul and given a relative authority over all the Jewish communities in the empire, which was a departure from the traditional autonomy these various communities had enjoyed beforehand.[42] The institutionalization of non-Muslim communities and new role given to patriarchs and *hahambaşılar* in this period gave rise to strong internal oppositions, especially from those who had benefited from some level of autonomy, or interstitial freedom beforehand.

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[39] Heyberger,"Confréries," 240.
[40] Masters, "The Establishment," 459.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Avigdor Levy, "*Millet* Politics, the Appointment of a Chief Rabbi in 1835," in *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Avigdor Levy (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1994), 434.

Simultaneously with the institutionalization of non-Muslim communities, the Ottoman reforms delegitimized the natural corps, or *ṭaʾifa*, such as clan, tribe, socioeconomic status, professional corporations, and gave the individual a space of autonomy and self-development.[43] By abolishing various privileges of the ruling class, the Ottoman government sought to equalize the status of Ottoman subjects and put them at equi-distance from the state. This assault on privilege percolated on all the levels of Ottoman society. Christians and Jews started to challenge the privilege of Muslims within the Ottoman state structure, Catholic patriarchs challenged the privilege of the Orthodox patriarchs, Christian and Jews challenged the privilege of the high clergy or of certain families and inhabitants of certain cities over the community institutions. In the same manner, the privilege of *āšrāf* families was being challenged by newcomers who demanded to be recognized as equals.[44] Inherited privilege based on family line or status group or hierarchy was increasingly questioned and delegitimized. In this process, socioeconomic statuses lost their identification power and were gradually replaced by membership in a religious group, reinforcing the strength of the process of confessionalization.[45]

1.3 Looking Inwards and Abroad : New Solidarities and Internationalization

This confessionalization of Ottoman society was exacerbated by the events which took place in the late 18th century and early 19th century. The increasing intervention of foreign powers in the Ottoman Empire was accompanied by sectarian narratives of Christianity against Islam, which tainted the interpretation of other local events. Foreign intervention contributed to building dichotomous discourses of Christians against Muslims in *Bilād al-Šām*. This dynamic is observable in the accounts of political battles by contemporary chroniclers. The account by the chronicler Rūfāʿīl Karāma and Miḫaʾil al Dimašqī of the battle over Beirut

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[43] Roderic H Davidson, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (Princetown: Princetown University Press, 1963), 7.
[44] Yūsuf Ğamīl Naʻīsa, *Muğtama' Madīnat Dimašq 1772–1840,* vol. 2 (Damascus: Dar Tlas, 1994), 450.
[45] Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism,* 36.

which opposed the Ottoman governor Ahmad Paşa al-Cezzar and Yūsuf Šihāb, the ruler of Mount Lebanon exemplifies this discourse.

Cezzar Ahmed Paşa was appointed governor of Sidon in 1776. He started a process of centralization, which he wished to extend to Mount Lebanon. Yūsuf Šihāb, the ruler of Mount Lebanon, had grown worried about the influence of the ruler of Palestine, Ẓāhir āl-ʿUmar, and had called upon Cezzar Ahmed Paşa to Beirut in 1772 to check on Ẓāhir āl-ʿUmar 's ambitions.[46] Yet, when Cezzar Ahmed Paşa arrived he did not wield to the conditions of his agreement with Yūsuf Šihāb and started to expropriate the properties of the Šihāb family and their vassals and turned them into state property.[47] The property of the Šihāb family was turned into state property (*miri*). He also effectively separated Beirut from Mount Lebanon.[48] Cezzar Ahmed Paşa was the first governor to directly intervene into the affairs of Mount Lebanon.[49] He took control of the agriculture and commerce by placing himself as an intermediary, and imposed both taxes on *miri* lands and custom duties.[50] In this sense, he was an instrument of provincial centralization.[51] However, his actions were subsequently read through a sectarian narrative emphasizing a zero-sum game between Christians and Muslims.

When he ruled Beirut, churches were turned into horse stables and many Christians were attacked.[52] Miḫā'īl al-Dimašqī mentioned that when Cezzar Ahmed Paşa took control of Beirut, 'Islam was happy of his behavior'.[53] Cezzar Ahmed Paşa relied on Druze chiefs to conduct his centralization process, thus turning them into targets of popular resentment.[54] Yūsuf Šihāb finally turned to Ẓāhir āl-ʿUmar, who also gained the allegiance of the Shia clans.

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[46] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 68.
[47] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence, A History of the Internationalization of a Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 69, 71.
[48] Ibid, 71.
[49] Ibid, 65.
[50] Ibid, 71.
[51] Ibid, 65.
[52] Karamā, *Ḥawadiṯ Lubnān,* 42.
[53] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 69.
[54] Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence,* 71.

He asked for Russian help to take control of Beirut from Cezzar Ahmed Paşa and successfully pushed him away.[55]

Russia was involved in a war with the Ottoman Empire which lasted from 1768 to 1774. In 1770. The Ottomans had suffered a crashing defeat and the destruction of their fleet at the battle of Chesma which had shocked the population. Following this battle, the Russians won control of the Agean.[56] This event marked the beginning of successive victories on the part of Russia against the Ottoman Empire, which encouraged the sultans to reform their military apparatus. As such, the call upon Russia was not well received by the Ottoman government. The fact that under the reign of Yūsuf Šihāb, many members of his family, including himself, had converted from Sunni Islam to Maronite Christianity, shaped the sectarian understanding of this conflict as a struggle between Christians and Muslims supported respectively by Christian European powers and the Ottoman government. When Cezzar Ahmed Paşa was eventually defeated by the Russian fleet allied with Ẓāhir āl-ʿUmar and Yūsuf Šihāb, Beirut was freed and Rūfāʿīl Karāma mentioned that Christians rose freely flags with crosses over the city, without any opposition.[57] Here the crosses hint both at the religious dogma of Christianity and at political power of the Beirut Christian inhabitants allied with the Šihāb emirs.

These narrations show the beginning of the politicization of religious identities in the figure of Cezzar Ahmed Paşa. When he was victorious, it was seen to benefit Muslims, while he actually frustrated the interests of Muslim notables, and when he was defeated it was seen as a victory of Christians. In the contemporary chronicles, the Šihāb emirs are portrayed as the protectors and champion of Christians, while Cezzar Ahmed Paşa assumed the role of

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[55] Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730-1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 42.
[56] Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 69.
[57] Karamā, *Ḥawadiṯ*, 42-44.

champion of the Ottoman State and Islam.[58] This dichotomous view of the power dynamics is obviously an oversimplification, and these chroniclers do contradict their own narrative by pointing to the complexity of power relations of Mount Lebanon and shifting alliances. Yet, the arrival of the Russian navy to Beirut undeniably played a role in this dichotomous reading of the Šihābī dynasty as champions of Christianity.

The events of the late 18th century, and especially the Russian-Ottoman war, marked public consciences and shaped sectarian narratives of *Bilād al-Šām*.[59] In addition, the conquest of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 marked the memories of the inhabitants of *Bilād al-Šām*. Being the first European conquest in the Ottoman Arab lands, it was a considerable subject of discussion and shaped the local perception of French and later British and Russian political aims in the empire. The conquest of Egypt is usually presented as the turning point marking the advent of modernity in the modern Middle East. This view has been challenged by the recent scholarship.[60] The turning point is rather to be found in the domain of public imagination. Indeed, the invasion of Egypt had long lasting effects for the nature of inter-confessional relations and the way the political role of religious communities were imagined. It materialized the imperial aims of European countries, especially France,[61] and marked the start of on the ground military interventions in the Ottoman Empire. It led to a backlash against Christians, accused of doubtful political loyalty, in various cities of the region.[62] It was followed by the Greek revolt in 1821 and the French conquest of Algeria in 1830. As such, it gave rise to a variety of fears and suspicions regarding the political objectives of foreigners in the empire, be they consuls or merchants. In addition, this perception of foreign threat became intertwined with a vision of Ottoman Christians as a fifth

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58 Ibid
59 Ibid.
60 Juan Cole, *Invading the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2007), 246-247; Peter Gran, "Egypt and Italy, 1760-1850 Towards a Comparative History," in *Society and Economy in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 1600- 1900, Essays in Honor of Andre Raymond*, eds. Nelly Hanna and Raouf Abbas (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 11. Sharkey, *A History*, 14.
61 Sharkey, *A History*, 15.
62 Grehan, "Imperial Crisis," 505.

column, facilitating these imperial goals. It was thus an important basis of sectarian discourses.[63]

2. Reforming Society : Movements of Religious Reform

2.1 The Tanzimat and Religious Reforms

The *ṭarīqā* Naqšbandīya played an important role in the confessionalization of Ottoman society during the *Tanzimat* reforms. The *Tanzimat* reforms are at times approached as a linear process of centralization which started in 1839 and ended at the end of the 19th century. However, as argued by recent work on the Ottoman Empire, the *Tanzimat* reforms were actually composed of a variety of periods in which aims and means shifted according to the response of the society, international relations, and power struggles among decision-makers in Istanbul.[64] They had antecedents in the 18th century, yet for the purpose of this inquiry we will focus on two main periods. The first period started in the 1830's at the end of the reign of Sultan Mahmud II and ended in the mid-1850's with the rise of Fuad and Ali Paşa. The second period started in the aftermath of the Crimean war in 1856 and lasted until the rise of Sultan Abdülhamid in 1876. The first period, which will be explored in this chapter, was characterized by modernizing reforms of the army and administration, as well as by a centralization of economic, political an financial resources. The policy makers justified reforms by a need to strengthen the empire against foreign powers in a context of repeated military losses, to get rid of corruption and to ensure the rights of Ottoman subjects to win their loyalty. Through this period, the reforms were presented as a return to the Islamic ideals of justice and fairness in order to strengthen Ottoman society, using the traditional Islamic image of the circle of justice.[65] According to Bourdieu, the summoning of religious

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[63] Ibid, 15.

[64] Etienne E. Charrière and Monica M. Ringer, " Introduction," in *Ottoman Culture and the Project of Modernity: Reform and Translation in the Tanzimat Novel* , eds. Monica M. Ringer & Etienne E. Charrière (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 3, 6, 8.

[65] Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript," *Die Welt des Islams* 34 (1994): 202. The circle of justice is an Islamic political concept which makes a link of causality between a just government, the prosperity of subjects, the financial resources of the state and military power. This concept is based upon the idea

obedience as a response to defeat and weakness is a common trope.[66] The Ottoman government relied on this trope and put forward the argument that the lack of religious obedience was responsible for divisions among the *umma,*[67] and thus weakness in front of the enemy. The Ottoman State embraced this causal relationship to foster the unity and loyalty of its subjects.[68]

The 1839 decree of Gülhane, which was central to the Ottoman reforms, reflected this ideal of the circle of justice. Drafted by bureaucrats, it aimed to limit the arbitrary power of the sultan and to guarantee individual rights to Ottoman subjects. The decree introduced the idea of universal military conscription as well as the imposition of a wealth-based tax, to relieve the less well-off.[69] The decree did not mention directly non-Muslims but did not exclude them, either. Rather, it was addressed to all Ottoman subjects.[70] This decree was seen as a pledge from the sultan to put an end to the oppression of the population by governors, to respect the subjects' individual freedoms and rights, thus introducing for the first time a contractual state-society relationship similar to the notion of citizenship. The decree of 1839 then underlined religious freedom, which was seen by some as allowing conversion out of Islam, thus marking a break with former restrictions and shifting the meaning of faith.[71]

The emphasis on individual rights was a tool to build loyalty among the empire's subjects in a period of secession and rebellion. It turned subjects into proto-citizens, with rights but also duties. It followed similar developments in Russia, Prussia, and France in the

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that good governance is what allows the survival of the state. On the history of this notion see: Linda T. Darling, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice From Mesopotamia to Globalization (*Oxon: Taylor & Francis, 2013); Moshe Gammer, "The Ottoman reforms and Cheikh Shamil," in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration*, dir. Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (London, New York: I.B Tauris, 2005), 61.

[66] Violaine Roussel, "Le droit et ses formes. Éléments de discussion de la sociologie du droit de Pierre Bourdieu," *Droit et société, no. 56-57, (*2004/1): 50.

[67] Religious community of Muslims.

[68] Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots," 202.

[69] See a translation of the Gülhane edict in Jacob C. Hurewitz ed., *The Middle East and North Africa in World politics (*New Haven: Yale University Press 1975-79) vol. 1, 269 and in Masters, *Christians and Jews,* 135.

[70] Hurewitz*, The Middle East,* vol 1, 316-318.

[71] Selim Deringil, "There is no Compulsion in Religion: On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839-1856," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000): 556.

18th and 19th century where individual rights were awarded in exchange for conscription and taxation.[72] Granting individual rights also helped pave the way to the fiscal reforms and centralization which defined the *Tanzimat* period.

The decree of 1839 aimed at facilitating the centralization of the empire and creating a modern state. However, it did so by relying on concepts well-embedded in Ottoman society and Islamic law. Thus, contrary to the following decree of 1856 which arose strong opposition from among the population, the decree of 1839 was not seen as a break with the past but rather as a reorganization aiming to reach the just basis of Ottoman governance.

These changes represented the ideas of a certain group of bureaucrats, moved by reforms taking place in European states but also by Islamic ideals of the just ruler.[73] Bureaucrats who were instrumental in crafting the decree, such as Mustafa Reşid Paşa, were moved by Islamic ideals and ideas of reform promoted by the *ṭarīqa*[74] Naqšbandīya-Mujadidīya, to which many of the government officials belonged.

The Naqšbandīya had been revived in the Mughal empire since the 16th century. In India, the Naqšbandī shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi (1564-1624) created his own branch of the *ṭarīqa* called the Naqšbandīya-Mujadidīya. He emphasized the need to follow both the *šarīʿa* (the law) and the sufi way (*ṭarīqa*). He was adamant to avoid what he saw as innovations introduced into Sufism such as certain practices of the intercession of saints, idolatry, trances, and dances. He also fought syncretic attempts with Hinduism by the Mughal Emperor Akbar. He saw the ulema as advisers of kings and emperors and parted with a tradition of shunning from political power. He thus opened the way for political activism.[75]

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[72] James C. Scott, *Decoding Subaltern Politics: Ideology, Disguise, and Resistance in Agrarian Politics* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012) 111.
[73] Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late* Ottoman Empire, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 34, 38.
[74] Religious fraternity.
[75] John Obert Voll, *Islam, Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, Colo. Harlow, Essex, England: Westview Press, Longman, 1982), 58-60.

The Naqšbandīya-Mujaddidīya spread westward with the arrival of Ahmed Sirhindi's deputies to Istanbul and Damascus. In Damascus, the deputy from Central Asia, Muḥammad Murād al-Buḫārī, was quite successful in establishing the *ṭarīqa* in the city and his family obtained the monopoly on the *Ḥanafī* mufti position, thus benefiting from great political and spiritual power. Murād al-Buḫārī benefited from the patronage of Sultan Mustafa II (1695-1703) who granted him properties in the city.[76] In Istanbul, many important ulema were also part of Sufi orders and among them the most successful were the Ḫalwātiyya[77] and the Naqšbandīya.

During the *Tanzimat*, the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya became influential in Istanbul as well as in cities of *Bilād al-Šām.*[78] The relationship between the Ottoman State and this *ṭarīqa* evolved through the first part of the 19th century. *Ṭuruq,* with their flexible structure and large geographical spam had often been instrumentalized by the Ottoman government as a tool of loyalty-building and territorial expansion. For example, the *ṭarīqa* Baktāšīya was a precious tool of conversion of the Christians in the Balkans until the 17th century, because it presented a syncretic approach to Islam which included various Christian concepts and rituals, as well as Shia practices.[79] It was closely linked to the Janissary institution. In Central Asia, the Baktāšīya's syncretic approach facilitated Ottoman conquests and helped win the loyalty of certain groups such as the Shias in Anatolia.[80] In the 19th century however, expansion was no longer on the agenda, and the Ottoman government rather needed to foster unity among its subjects.

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[76] Voll, *Islam,* 39.

[77] A *ṭarīqā* founded in Khorasan which emphasized ascetic lifestyle and individualism. It played an important role in the Urabi revolt in Egypt in 1879-1882; See Donald Reid, "The 'Urabi Revolution and the British Conquest, 1879–1882" in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. M. W. Daly, The Cambridge History of Egypt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[78] ʻAbd al-Majīd al-Ḫānī*, al-Ḥadāʾiq al-wardīyā fī ḥaqāʾiq aǧlāʾ al-Naqšbandīyā,* ed. ʻA. Maḥmūd (Irbil: Maṭbʻa wazāra al-Tarbiyya, 2002), 337.

[79] Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*, 22.

[80] Butrus Abu Manneb, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876),* Analecta Isisiana (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2001), 60.

The Janissaires, associated with the Baktāšīya, were abolished in 1826 because of their inability to avoid the secession of Greece. However, they continued to exist in various cities of the provinces such as Damascus. They were accused of being ill-prepared and too immersed into civil life to defend the empire. The loyalty of Baktāšī adepts in this conflict was questioned because of their role in the Balkans. As a consequence, numerous ulema and bureaucrats of the Baktāšī order lost their positions, were exiled or even killed.[81] Some of them were sent away to rectify their beliefs with the help of Naqšbandī shaykhs.[82] The belongings of the Baktāšīya were given to the public treasury.[83] The government turned to a *ṭarīqa* which fostered unity of practices and beliefs such as the Naqšbandīya. It replaced the Baktāšīya and took over the their lodges.[84] The Naqšbandīya was this able to grow considerably from this point onward.[85] The *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya was the ideal candidate to replace the Baktāšīya. These two Sufi orders differed in their mystical approach, while members of the Baktāšīya chose withdrawal from the world, the Naqšbandīya rather encouraged its adepts to act for the world, spurring activism.[86] The Naqšbandīya's program of reform of Islamic societies, its insistence on obedience to the ruler and its ideals of return to the *šarīʿa* fitted the Ottoman State's centralization aims and the legitimization discourse of the sultan in the 19th century as *amīr al-muʾminīm*.

Pertev Paşa, a Naqšbandī, crafted a decree to abolish the Baktāšīya in which he described members of this *ṭarīqa* as heretics, *alevis,* and *revafiz.* He referred to the Baktāšī lodges as places of promotion of Shiism.[87] They are accused of corrupting Janissaires and showing them the way to rebellion, as a consequence of what he perceived at their rebellious

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[81] Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam,* 10-11.
[82] Ibid, 68, 69.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid, 10-11.
[85] Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, state, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111.
[86] Thierry Zacorne,"Pour ou contre le monde, une approche des sociabilités mystiques musulmanes dans l'Empire ottoman", in *Vivre dans l'Empire ottoman,* eds. François Georgeon et Pierre Dumont (Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997), 21, 25.
[87] Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam,* 68, 69.

attitude towards the *šarīʿa*.[88] The link between religious deviance and political rebellion is clear in this decree. The discourse of legitimization of the reforms relied on this interaction between adherence to religious norms and political loyalty.

The Ottoman government instrumentalized the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya to legitimize the *Tanzimat* reforms. However, to nuance this image of a top-down instrumentalization, it should be highlighted that numerous decision-makers and bureaucrats who crafted the reforms, such as Pertev Paşa, Mustafa Reşid, and Sadık Rıfat Paşa, were themselves members of the *ṭarīqa*. They had risen to power under Sultans Selim III and Mahmud II.[89] These bureaucrats and members of the Naqšbandīya had an important role to play in crafting the reforms and merging the needs of the state with a discourse of societal reform based on Islamic ideals.

Members of the Naqšbandīya are indeed found among the four main institutions of the Ottoman State, the *ilmiye,*[90] the *mülkiye*,[91] the *seyfiye*[92] and the *kalemiye*.[93] The Ottoman ruling elite in the early 19th century was divided between two main political factions based on these different institutions. On the one hand, the bureaucrats as members of the *kalemiye* were linked to the new institutions, the Translation Bureau[94] and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and wished to expand the role of these new institutions. On the other hand, members of the Palace faction were in the entourage of the sultan and in the military establishment. They were represented by the Grand Vizier. They supported the power of the sultan against the bureaucrats who increasingly obtained decision-making prerogatives in this period.[95]

Albeit these power struggles between the two institutions of the bureaucracy and the Palace, Naqšbandī bureaucrats, military leaders and ulema shared the common perceived need

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[88] Ibid, 50.
[89] Florian Riedler, "Opposition to the *Tanzimat* state : conspiracy and legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire, 1859-1878" (PhD diss., SOAS, 2003), 37.
[90] Religious establishment.
[91] Palace or imperial institution.
[92] Military institution.
[93] Administrative institution.
[94] Tercüme odası.
[95] Carter Vaughn Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the* Ottoman Empire *: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 153.

for reform in this first period of the *Tanzimat*. Both the military leaders and the bureaucrats saw in the elite ulema a source of weakness of the sultan.[96] For example, Mahmud Nedim, a member of the Palace, saw the ulema who monopolized the important positions in the Ottoman state structure as an obstacle on the path of unity and strength of the empire. In his view, the corruption of the elite ulema was the cause of all the issues facing the empire.[97] Ulema which had secondary positions within the religious institutions also shared this criticism towards elite ulema. For example Muḥammad Āmin ibn ʿĀbidīn, the leading Ḥanafī scholar of Damascus criticized the economic activities of this group.[98] There was a strong concern with the corruption of the elite which was seen as weakening the empire from the inside.

While the identification with the *ṭarīqa* created some commonness among the members, they did differ significantly on a variety of issues, including the desirable extent of the reforms. Divergences emerged regarding a specific aspect of this program of reform: the need for consultation. Both groups agreed that the sultan needed to base his decisions on consultations, yet they differed regarding who was to be involved in these discussions. On the one hand, bureaucrats considered that the sultan had to respect the fundamental rights of protection of life, honor, and property as well as the right to a fair trial, in order to ensure security, commerce, and production.[99] In addition, according to them, the sultan had to respect laws crafted by bureaucrats.[100] Their political ideals resembled an authoritarian regime based upon the rule of law, similarly to the Habsburg empire.[101] They wished to put an end to the ill-treatment of bureaucrats and civil servants by the sultan, whose properties

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[96] Findley, *Bureaucratic*, 153; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Sultan and the Bureaucracy: The Anti-*Tanzimat* Concepts of Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasa" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 3 (August 1990): 262.
[97] Abu-Manneh, "The Sultan and the Bureaucracy," 261.
[98] Itzchak Weismann,"Law and Sufism on the Eve of Reform: The Views of Ibn 'Abidin," in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration,* dir. Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (New York: I.B Tauris, 2005), 72.
[99] Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy,* 34.
[100] Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought : A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 182.
[101] Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy,* 31.

were often confiscated without reason and were victims of exaction especially under Mahmud II. In order to ensure the fundamental rights of Ottoman subjects through the rule of law, the bureaucrats sought to limit the discretionary power of the sultan and create a legal basis to ensure the security of government employees.[102]

At the same time, the bureaucrats also wished to increase their position within the government hierarchy, by demanding to benefit from the same privileges enjoyed by the ulema and members of the military.[103] The ulema and military classes were the pillars of the Ottoman government and as such benefited from a variety of advantages. The bureaucrats, wished to become the third pillar of the Ottoman state structure.

The ulema, on the other hand, considered that they should be the ones consulted by the sultan because they based their expertise on Islamic sciences and were the only ones who could craft laws according to Islamic ideals and *fiqh*.[104] This idea of the centrality of the ulema as advisers of the sultan is not new and has been emphasized by al-Ghazālī, who was read extensively in the 18th and 19th century.[105] Both the bureaucrats and the ulema saw themselves as the institution that could put a limit to the sultan's will. However in the 1840's, these two objectives coincided for the bureaucrats in charge wished to base their legislation on Islamic law and relied on the ulema as interpreters of the *šarīʿa*. This cohesion will however be challenged in the mid-19th century.

Finally, members of the military and the palace did not wish to wield political power to the new bureaucratic institutions and thus rather emphasized the decision-making power of

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[102] Mardin, *Genesis*, 185 ; Tufan S. Buzpinar, "The Question of the Caliphate under the last Ottoman Sultans," in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration*, dir. Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 24.
[103] Mardin, *Genesi*s, 185.
[104] Weismann*, "*Law and Sufism,*" 7*3.
[105] Gilbert Delanoue, *Moralistes et politiques musulmans dans l'Egypte du XIXe siècle* (Cairo: Inst. Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1982), 46.

the sultan. The military had been on board for the reforms of the army and the abolition of the Janissaries, but many of them were not eager to expand the reforms to other institutions.[106]

Members of the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya were found among both factions. On the one side, there were the bureaucrats who inspired the decree of 1839 and gravitated around Mustafa Reşid Paşa, the Ottoman ambassador to Paris and London in the 1830's and the minister of foreign affairs in 1839.[107] He was named Grand Vizier from 1846 until 1852. Together with other bureaucrats such as Sadık Rıfat, also minister of foreign affairs,[108] he was an disciple of the aforementioned Naqšbandī Pertev Paşa, who had drafted the decree against the Janissaries,[109] and had been involved in the redaction of the Gülhane decree.[110] Pertev Paşa traced his Naqšbandīya lineage to the Indian Shah Gulham Ali Dehlavi. Indeed, he was a disciple of Ali Bahcet, himself a disciple of Mehmed Emin Bursali, a deputy of Muhammad Jan, the famous deputy of Shah Gulham Ali Dehlavi.[111] The mother of the young Sultan Abdülmecid was also a follower of Muhammad Jan.[112] Most of the Naqšbandī bureaucrats had been introduced to the *ṭarīqa* by some disciples of Shah Gulham Ali Dehlavi, such a Muhammad Jan. They were thus members of the Naqšbandīya-Mujaddīdiya.

On the other hand, there were also Naqšbandī followers within the Palace faction. Hüsrev Paşa for example, the war minister from 1827 to 1837, was involved in spreading the *ṭarīqa*, built a Naqšbandī lodge in Emirgan, and financed a *zāwīya* in 1834.[113] He was opposed to the reforms that were not in the military field.[114] Hüsrev Paşa strongly opposed

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106 Mardin, *Genesis*, 212.
107 Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots," 186.
108 Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam,* 106, 109.
109 M. Alper Yalçinkaya, *Learned Patriots: Debating Science, state, and Society in the Nineteenth Century* Ottoman Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), note 11, 246.
110 He was ultimately killed by Mahmud II. Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots," 187.
111 Mardin, *Genesis,* 187.
112 Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam,* 102.
113 Ibid, 44.
114 Mardin, *Genesis*, 212.

Mustafa Reşid Paşa because he held him responsible for favoring foreign intervention in the empire.[115] Hüsrev Paşa was dismissed in 1840, when the bureaucrats took over.

The early 1840's represent the apogee of power of the bureaucrats, they were able to gain some ground thanks to the success of Mustafa Reşid Paşa in convincing France and Great Britain to side with the Ottoman government and push back Muḥammad 'Alī, the governor of Egypt who had attempted to take control of *Bilād al-Šām*.[116] They passed the 1839 Gülhane decree and secured a central position for the newly created bureaucratic institutions.[117] In the provinces, councils were created to help the governor in the decision-making process.[118] The criminal code promulgated in 1840 limited the use of force on the part of military leaders, governors but also the sultan himself.[119]

The Ottoman government's main worry in this period was the Wahābī control of the holy places Mecca and Medina, which threatened the conduct of the pilgrimage. The governor of Damascus, Abdullah Paşa, could not conduct the *hajj* in 1802 with serious negative economic and political repercussion.[120] The Wahābī takeover of the holy sites was the direct consequence of the alliance of the thoughts of the 18th century 'ālīm Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahāb and the political leader Muḥammad ibn Saʿūd. The latter's son conquered Mecca and Medina in 1805. The Wahābī doctrine's main idea, which was influenced by the 13th century scholar Ibn Taymīyyā, was that those who call themselves Muslims but engage in practices that he described as *širk* (among others: belief in intercession of the deceased, associating something with God) cannot be considered Muslims, and thus do not benefit from

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115 Findley, *Bureaucratic reform,* 153.
116 Caroline Finkel, *Osman's dream, The Story of the* Ottoman Empire *1300-1923* (London: John Murray, 2006), 444.
117 Ibid, 449.
118 Elisabeth Thomson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 3 (1993): 457.
119 Kent F. Schull, "Criminal Codes, Crime, and the Transformation of Punishment in the Late Ottoman Empire," in *Law and Legality in the* Ottoman Empire *and Republic of Turkey*, ed. Kent F. Schull , M. Safa Saraçoğlu and Robert F. Zens (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 159.
120 al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ ḥawādiṯ,* 107; David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform : Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria,* Studies in Middle Eastern History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 22.

inviolability of life and property as Muslims. Based on this understanding, they denied the status of Muslim to a vast amount of inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, especially to the inhabitants of *Bilād al-Šām* and Anatolia, known for the various practices that the Wahābī labeled as *širk.* By this practice of *takfīr*, excluding Muslims from the *umma*,[121] the Wahābī thinkers could make legal the fact of attacking the Ottoman sultan by declaring his lack of legitimacy because of his encouragement of *širk* practices, stripping him of his title of caliph and thus rendering his control of Mecca and Medina illegitimate.[122] Another main criticism directed towards the Ottoman government, was the power it delegated to Christian and Jewish subjects in issues of governance. This influence of non-Muslims was used by the Wahābī thinkers to question the Islamic nature of the Ottoman State.[123]

If the Wahābī did not generate a widespread consent for their ideology in Damascus, rather the contrary, they influenced the way Ottoman policy-makers responded to arising threats to the legitimacy of the state. Their criticism regarding the place of non-Muslims in society resonated strongly in the public discourse of the 19th century regarding the place of non-Muslims in Ottoman society. It participated both to the intensification of a Muslim confessional culture, by marking the borders of the community and by practices of exclusion, and to the politicization of religious identities.

2.2. Shaykh Ḫalid in Damascus

The Wahābī-Saʿūdī alliance was not satisfied with the sole control of the holy places of Mecca and Medina, and they reached the south of *Bilād al-Šām* in the years 1803-1812, during the governorship of Yusuf Genç Paşa in Damascus. The governor Yusuf Genç Paşa had promised the Ottoman government that he could be victorious against the Wahābī threat, which led to his appointment.[124] The Wahābī ulema sent invitations to Damascene ulema to

[121] Muslim community.
[122] Commins, *Islamic Reform,* 23.
[123] David Dean Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 23.
[124] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 110.

join their ideology and political project, but received a cold response. The ulema of Damascus agreed that there were some issues with the ways some Muslims conducted religious practice but they argued that this did not strip the individual of his Muslim identity.[125] They agreed with the need for some elements of reforms but reminded the Wahābī ulema that to kill an innocent Muslim is the worst of sins. The beliefs of the Wahābī were for Damascene ulema a deviation from the right path.[126] In this assessment, they concurred with the ideas of a prominent member of the Naqšbandīya, the Kurdish shaykh Ḫalid al-Baġdādī, who was the main actor of the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya in the 19th century.

In order to better understand the role of the Naqšbandīya in the 19th century, it is useful to address Shaykh Ḫalid al-Baġdādī's personal history. He was born in the Kurdish region of the Ottoman Empire, more precisely in Shahrizur close to Sulaymānīya, which was the seat of the Baban princes. Ḫalid al-Baġdādī studied religious sciences and later taught in Sulaymānīya. This region was part of the Ottoman Empire but benefited from a certain level of autonomy in exchange for its role in defending the empire against the Qajars in the 19th century. Already in the 17th century, the Naqšbandīya had been mobilized politically in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq, where it accompanied the Ottoman war efforts against the Safavid Empire. The Naqšbandīya was thus used as a tool of loyalty building in frontier areas. Through this role however, the Sunni identity of the Naqšbandīya was reinforced and polarized against a Shia other. The war effort also led to the centralization of the organization of the *ṭarīqa* under a few shaykhs who enjoyed political and spiritual power, such as Shaykh Mahmud Umaravi.[127] This politically charged environment influenced Ḫalid al-Baġdādī who became a main figure of the Naqšbandīya an important actor of the *Tanzimat* period.

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125 Commins, *Islamic Reform*, 24.
126 Ibid.
127 Diane Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism : Naqshbandīs in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700,* "Suny Series in Medieval Middle East History" (Albany: state University of New York Press, 2005), 141.

Ḫalid al-Baġdādī went to Mecca for *hajj* in 1805 and witnessed the Wahābī take-over, which he saw in an unfavorable light, describing their numerous 'innovations' (*bidaʿa)*.[128] Shaykh Ḫalid, himself an advocate of reform among Muslim communities, strongly opposed Wahābī ideas. In Mecca, he met an *ʿalīm* who advised him not to look for knowledge in the Arabic peninsula but rather to seek knowledge in India.[129] Yet, after his experience in Mecca, he went to Damascus in 1807 and wove a strong relationship with the Kurdish governor Yusuf Genç.

The Wahābī takeover of Mecca and Medina put the governor of Damascus in a difficult situation as his main responsibility was the conduct of the *hajj* caravan. The governor, Yusuf Genç Paşa, thus adopted policies towards Muslims and non-Muslims that betrayed this concern with the Wahābī accusations, and were aimed at showing the adherence of the Damascenes to the Islamic precepts and the restrictions of the *ḏimma.* The Christian chronicler Ibrāhim 'Awra argued that Yusuf Genç's attitude towards non-Muslims and the society in general was influenced by the ideas of his shaykh, which is none other than Shaykh Ḫalid.[130] Indeed, as Yusuf Genç was threatened by the Wahābī takeover, Shaykh Ḫalid helped him to prove that the Wahābī theologians were wrong in their assessment of *Bilād al-Šām* as a place where the *šarīʿa* was not applied. Under his influence, Yusuf Genç demanded public signs of piety. He also tried to make non-Muslims less visible in the public space and restricted their clothing and appearances. According to the chronicler Miḫā'īl al-Dimašqī, he forbade Christians from drinking wine and arak, and ordered that they burn the alcohol they had at home. He then set out to check whether this order had been obeyed by searching houses and ordering the owner to be killed if any alcohol was found.[131] He made regulations so that Muslims and non-Muslims could be distinguished visually. For example,

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[128] al-Ḫānī*, al-Ḥadāʾiq,* 313, 314.
[129] Abd al-Razzāq al- Bayṭār, *Ḥilyat al-bašar fī tārīḫ al-qarn al-ṯāliṯ ʿašar*, ed. Muḥammad Bahğa al-Bayṭār (Damascus : al-Maǧmaʿ al-ʿilmi al-ʿarabi bi Dimašq, 1963), 733.
[130] al-'Awra, *Tārīḫ wilāya,* 94.
[131] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 110.

he forbade Christians from wearing any other color than black.[132] Non-Muslim women could no longer wear embroideries or jewelry in public, not only to distinguish between them and Muslims but also to mark a hierarchy of honor.[133]

Yūsuf Genç also limited non-Muslims' access to public bathes and demanded that the doors of the churches be raised higher so that one did not have to lower his head when entering.[134] He then forbade Christians from raising their voices higher than Muslims. According to Mikhā'īl al-Dimashqī, these restrictions encouraged some Muslims to provoke Christians and mistreat them.[135] For example, a Christian man entered the neighborhood of Bāb Tūmā market to sell wood and was screaming to attract customers. One Muslim man took advantage of this situation and accused him of raising his voice over the Muslims. He was taken to the *naqīb al-āšrāf*, the leader of the *āšrāf.*[136] However, the man pleaded his case and was released although he spoke badly to the *naqīb*.[137] This incongruous accusation points to the influence of rulers' attitude and discourses towards certain groups which are instrumentalized in everyday inter-confessional relationships to get rid of competitors, opponents, or even simply to bother strangers.

Yusuf Genç especially resented the fact that restrictions on the appearance of *ḏimmī* subjects were not respected by Christians of Mount Lebanon, and by inhabitants of the town of Zaḥle in particular. The chronicler Ibrāhīm ʿAwra mentions that Yusuf Genç was adamant that Christians from Ḥaṣbayā and Marjʿayūn who used to come to Damascus had to change their appearance.[138] Another chronicler, Miḫa'īl al-Dimašqī also mentioned an event which

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[132] Ibid, 112.
[133] Ibid, 111.
[134] A popular design in churches and chapels in order to invoke the humility of the worshiper in front of God and in front of representative images. This architecture however was contrary to Islamic teachings which forbids bowing towards representative figures.
[135] Ibid, 112.
[136] Descendants of the prophet, which gave them an honorable possible in society.
[137] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 134.
[138] al-'Awra, *Tārīḫ wilāya,* 94

illustrated the governor's attitude.[139] Yusuf Genç had encountered peasants from Zaḥle and Mount Lebanon who were wearing green turbans, a color reserved for Muslims. He asked them what their *maḏhab*[140] was. They answered that they were Christians. He ask them how they dared to take the risk of facing the consequences of breaking the contract of *ḏimma.* They answered that this was how they dressed in the mountain. He thus reprimanded them and gave them the choice to become Muslim as they dressed like Muslims, or be executed. The two Christians from Mount Lebanon converted and returned to Christianity when they went back home. The Christian from Zaḥle however refused. After trying to convince him in vain, he was executed.[141] Yusuf Genç's attitude in this affair also points to the *Tanzimat* objective of homogenizing norms and increasingly imposing urban codes to the countryside, contributing to the process of confessionalization.

Yusuf Genç also adopted strict attitudes towards Muslims who were prohibited to shave their beard or listen to music. He forbade the consumption of sweets, alcohol and tried to curtail the popularity of coffee shops by forcing them to close after sunset.[142] These policies aimed at showing the adherence of Damascenes to Islamic precepts to ward off Wahābī accusations, while paradoxically legitimizing their claims. He also made dietary changes, demanding that Damascenes stop cooking with flour and fat, and that the cooks of serail[143] use only oil, in order to adopt an ascetic lifestyle. He also reduced the meat consumption of the serail and limited himself to thyme and oil some days of the week. Shaykh Ḫalid approved these dietary measures aimed at curbing consumption and adopting an ascetic lifestyle.[144]

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[139] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 117.
[140] Islamic fiqh school : Mālikī, Ḥanafī, Šāfiʿī'i, Ḥanbalī
[141] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 117.
[142] Grehan, *Everyday Life,* 118, 135, 145.
[143] Governor's palace.
[144] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,*115.

According to Miḫā'īl al-Dimašqī, Shaykh Ḫalid also told Yusuf Genç that he should not buy his food with the money made illegally. The latter asked what money is legal, to which Shaykh Ḫalid answered: only the money of the *jizya*.[145] Thus Yūsuf Genç immediately increased the amount of the *ğizya* and collected it from Christians. These policies dissatisfied non-Muslims but also the ulema, and the notables who asked Yusuf Genç to stay away from Shaykh Ḫalid and to overturn these restrictions not grounded in tradition and customs.[146] This example points to the fact that policies adopted towards non-Muslims are part of public demonstration of piety and adherence to Islamic law, and can be used to further governors' popularity or forge alliances. They are embedded in larger narratives regarding morality, political strength and loyalty to the Ottoman State.

The Greek Catholic Abbūd Baḥrī, Yusuf Genc's adviser/money-lender, was also affected by these measures towards Christians. Yūsuf Genç Paşa asked him to become a Muslim to prove his loyalty.[147] The intertwining of religious identity and loyalty points to the politicization of religious identities in this period. According to al-ʿAwra, Shaykh Ḫalid was behind this initiative.[148] Miḫā'īl al-Dimašqī, on the other hand, mentioned that it was Baḥrī's Jewish competitor, Hayyim Fārḥi, who convinced Yūsuf Genç Paşa to demand this conversion.[149] Baḥrī grew worried of this demand and escaped with his brothers to Zaḥle, from where he wrote to the Emir Bašīr Šihāb demanding his protection. His escape deprived the emir of an useful adviser with influence on the Ottoman governor. Upon hearing of Baḥrī's escape, Yūsuf Genç felt regret and published a certificate of safety for him and his family, asking for their return. Emir Bašīr Šihāb agreed to his return. When he came to Damascus, Baḥrī was honored by the Pasha who asked him for forgiveness, presenting his

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145 Tax paid by non-Muslims in Islamic empires.
146 al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,*118.
147 al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,*115; al-'Awra, *Tārīḫ wilāya,* 94.
148 al-'Awra,*Tārīḫ wilāya,* 94.
149 Mikhā'īl Mishāqah, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder : The History of Lebanon in the 18th and 19th Centuries,* trans. W. M. Thackston (Albany: state University of New York Press, 1988), 63.

demand for conversion as a joke. Yūsuf Genç clothed him in luxurious garments and gave him an even more important position.[150]

Miḫā'īl al-Dimašqī argued that from the time of the publication of restrictions onwards, some Muslim troublemakers started to bother Christians and understood that it was legal for them to kill priests, plunder monasteries, and harass foreigners in the city, such as missionaries. Thus, Christians paid *āġawāt* to protect them and the *qāḍī* threatened the troublemakers with punishment if they continued. Miḫā'īl al-Dimašqī seems to mean that the troublemakers were a specific group taking cohesive actions, however he does not mention their identity or affiliation. The governor also made a public announcement saying that foreigners did not commit any fault and should be left in peace. Seeing that the governor was against them, the intriguers complained about the Christians to the sultan.[151] At that point they found a way to circumvent the threat of punishment by the governor by arguing that there was a destroyed mosque behind the monastery of the missionaries (*dayr al-āfrenǧ*), and that they needed to rebuild it. They obtained the authorization to do so and demanded that Christians who lived around the monastery vacate their properties. One of the houses belonged to a Maronite *waqf* so the owner came to complain to the deputy of the *qāḍī*, who put an end to this affair and published an order saying that Christians and Jews have to be treated equality regarding buying, selling and property ownership.[152] These examples show that non-Muslims knew how to use the various decision-makers which made up the provincial administration and could benefit from the protection of the *qāḍī* and government officials in the securing of their rights.

Al-Dimašqi mentions that both Christians and Muslim were desperate because of Yusuf Genç's actions, which departed from the local customs. The ulema thus successfully convinced Yusuf Genç to stop imposing these restrictions and making life difficult for

[150] al-'Awra,*Tārīḫ wilāya,* 95.
[151] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 113.
[152] Ibid, 114.

Damascenes. In this case, they functioned as spokesperson for the Muslim but also non-Muslim population. They probably endorsed this role after being asked to intervene by the non-Muslim elite with whom they shared a social status. They argued that this was against the '*maḏhab'* of Islam. They also pushed him to take his distances from Shaykh Ḫalid and encourage him to leave the city.[153] At that time, Shaykh Ḫalid was not a recognized shaykh and had no patron in Istanbul to support him in front of his opponents. According to the chronicler, the behavior of the governor, and the situation of non-Muslims improved dramatically after his departure.[154]

Shaykh Ḫalid, having lost the support of the governor and following the advice he had received in Mecca, left the city, and set up for India in 1809 where he became the disciple of the Naqšbandī-Mujaddidī shaykh Shah Ghulam Ali Dehlavi.[155] This shaykh had an important political role in the Mughal Empire. The British conquest which had started in 1803 had threatened the role of Naqšbandī shaykhs in the country, and thus pushed Shah Ghulam Ali Dehlavi to champion the opposition to the colonial regime. He saw the British conquest as a threat to the integrity of the *umma* and to the political power of Muslims.[156]

Shah Ghulam Ali was also hostile to Shias for he was involved in a political conflict with British-supported Shia shaykhs of the region of Awadh, who, under the reign of the Nawab leader, engaged in polemical debates with Sunnis shaykhs in the 18th and 19th centuries. Both Shah Ghulam 'Ali and another of Shaykh Ḫalid 's masters in India, Jan-i Janan, had negative attitudes towards Shias and saw them as threat to the unity of Muslims because of their role in British policy.[157] Jan-i Janan was eventually killed by a Shia, which

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153 al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 118.
154 Ibid, 118.
155 Otherwide called Abdullah al-Dilawi, d. 1824.
156 Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: orthodoxy and activism in a worldwide Sufi tradition,* (London: Routledge, 2007), 66.
157 Sajida Sultana Alvi, "Sunni Ulama's Discourses on Sh'ism in Northern India during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: An Overview," in *Courants et dynamiques chiites à l'époque moderne (XVIIIe-XXe siècles),* ed. Denis Hermann and Sabrina Mervin (Beirut: Orient Institute/Würzburg: Ergon, 2010) 133, 139- 140; Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya*, 66.

only increased the hostility of the local members of the *ṭarīqa* towards this community.[158] Ghulam Ali also reacted strongly against the syncretism promoted by the Mughal Empire Akbar, and instead pushed for a reform of the ulema and an eradication of innovations.[159]

Shaykh Ḫalid became Shah Ghulam 'Ali's favorite disciple, and he gave him the mission to spread the Naqšbandīya order back home in the Ottoman Empire. He thus returned to Sulaymānīya and began to recruit disciples. He created his own branch: the Naqšbandīya-Ḫalidīyya, named after him. However, he was forced to leave Sulaymānīya because the Baban ruler Mahmud Paşa felt threatened by Ḫalid's popularity among Kurds of the region. Apparently, the shaykhs of *ṭarīqa* Qādirīyya, threatened by his success, also participated in this ousting. He thus moved on to Baghdad, where he was able to get followers from among the Ottoman officers.[160]

Shaykh Ḫalid's teachings incorporated his teacher's attitude towards foreign imperialism and Shias. Similarly to India, the context in the Ottoman Empire was characterized by an increased foreign intervention and loss of sovereignty. This comparison between these two contexts encouraged him to fight the intervention of European powers in the Muslim world in general. He identified the roots of this weakness of the Muslim world in the divisions of the *umma* which led to the abandonment of religious principles.[161]

'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bayṭār, a Damascene, wrote in the biography of Shaykh Ḫalid that he had been threatened by Shias in India because of his involvement in polemical debates. According to the author, he managed to avoid numerous murder attempts.[162] This adversity to Shias marked his teachings and was useful for the Ottoman government in its territorial struggles with the Qajar-ruled Iranian state.

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158 Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam,* 65
159 Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya*, 66.
160 Riedler, "Opposition to the *Tanzimat* state," 35.
161 Weismann, *Taste of Modernity,* 49.
162 al- Bayṭār. *Ḥilyat,* 580.

Shaykh Ḫalid returned to Damascus in 1822 with twenty of his deputies, and they were well received by the ulema, unlike ten years earlier.[163] He remained there until his death in 1827. What owed him this warm welcome when he was chased out of the city earlier? While he was unknown when he came to Damascus the first time, Shaykh Ḫalid now benefited from a wide popularity in the city and with governors thanks to his position at the head of the *ṭarīqā.* Then, as mentioned earlier, the Naqšbandīya was increasingly seen in a positive light by the Ottoman government which engaged itself on a reformist direction and saw the potential of the *ṭarīqa* in gaining the loyalty of the Ottoman subjects during these transformations. Shaykh Ḫalid also sent deputies to Istanbul to reinforce his patronage networks with the capital. Many members of the ulema but also bureaucrats and members of the Palace became his deputies and joined the Ḫalidīyya.

Important ulema in Istanbul became disciples of Shaykh Ḫalid. Mustafa 'Asim Effendi,[164] who was named *Šayḫ al-Islām* over the 1818-1819, 1823-1825, 1833-1846 periods, was a member of the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya-Ḫālidiyya. After the death of Mahmud II, his influence grew within the *mağlis*. When he held the position of *Šayḫ al-Islām*, there was a symbiosis between the bureaucrats and the ulema, who played an important political role.[165] It is during this period of symbiosis that the Gülhane decree was written.

In addition, even Sultan Abdülmecid himself was influenced by Shaykh Ḫalid. His mentor Mehmet Emin Hafiz Effendi, was introduced to the *ṭarīqa* by a deputy of Shaykh Ḫalid.[166] Once he became Sultan, Abdülmecid named his mentor mufti of the imperial guard.[167] The influence of the *ṭarīqa* upon the sultan is visible in the decrees that he crafted. For example, he reminded the population of the obligation to commit to the five daily

[163] Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya,* 88.
[164] Starting his career as a judge, he was named Shaykh al-Islam over three periods in the first part of the 19th century, Abu-Manneh, *The Islamic Roots,* 186.
[165] Ibid, 186, 202.
[166] Ibid, 182-183.
[167] Ibid, 182-183.

prayers.[168] He also made symbolic gestures vis-à-vis the Naqšbandīya-Ḫalidīyya, such as decorating the tomb of Shaykh Ḫalid in Damascus.[169]

The Naqšbandīya-Ḫalidīyya was quite influential in the capital city up until the outbreak of the Crimean war in 1853. Its emphasis on the Sunni identity of the empire, Shaykh Ḫālid's will to emphasized the distinction of Muslims and non-Muslims in the public space as well as the need to reform Muslim's practices contributed to the confessionalization of society in this period. Important decision-makers believed in the idea of reform proposed by the *ṭarīqa* and saw in the application of its precepts a way to unite the empire and find a new strength by operating a return to the Islamic ideal of the just ruler.

In conclusion, the 19th century saw the intensification of religious identities and doctrines amongst all religious communities. It was build upon the long term dynamic of the construction of confessional cultures which started in the 17th century. The Sunni identity of the Ottoman State was emphasized by the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya, which sought to reform the minds and practices of their coreligionists to strengthen the empire and the *umma.* Among Christians and Jews, similar movements of religious reform accompanied the institutionalization of communities, which were accentuated by the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reforms. As a consequence of the internal and state reforms, the cross-cutting cleavages which had existed beforehand and had allowed the individual a certain level of interstitial freedom were challenged. Religion became the main marker of identification among Ottoman subjects. This confessionalization of Ottoman society was accentuated by the nature of international relations and the various foreign threats to the Ottoman State.

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[168] Ibid, 103.
[169] Ibid.