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978-0-521-88740-3 - Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective

Karen Barkey

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Empire of Difference

Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective is a comparative study of imperial organization and longevity that assesses Ottoman successes and failures against those of other empires with similar characteristics. Karen Barkey examines the Ottoman Empire's social organization and mechanisms of rule at key moments of its history: emergence, imperial institutionalization, remodeling, and transition to nation-state. She reveals how the empire managed these moments to adapt and avert crises and examines what changes made it transform dramatically. The flexible techniques by which the Ottomans maintained their legitimacy, the cooperation of their diverse elites both at the center and in the provinces, as well as their control over economic and human resources were responsible for the longevity of this particular "negotiated empire." Barkey's analysis illuminates topics such as imperial governance, institutional continuity and change, imperial diversity and multiculturalism, multifarious forms of internal dissent, and the varying networks of state-society negotiations.

Karen Barkey is professor of sociology and history at Columbia University. She is the author of *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, winner of the Social Science History Award in 1995, and coeditor with Mark von Hagen of *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union, and the Russian, Habsburg, and Ottoman Empires*.

She has been awarded fellowships from the United States Institute of Peace, Social Science Research Council-MacArthur, and the National Humanities Center.

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KAREN BARKEY

Columbia University



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FOR TONY MARX

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Preface

From the hill of Çamlıca on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, one has a majestic view of the multireligious, multiethnic character of the imperial city, the hub of many civilizations founded from 658 to 657 B.C., captured by Justinian and named the “New Rome” in 324 A.D., further named Constantinople in 330 A.D., and conquered by the Ottomans in 1453, to be designated Istanbul (from the Greek, *eis tin polin*: toward the city). In 1458, Istanbul became the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

From this hill of Çamlıca, I often watched my city and listened to two different lessons of history. One was related by my grandfather, an Ottoman subject and a soldier for the empire in World War I, and the other recounted by my father, a modern citizen of the Turkish Republic, born during World War I and coming of age at a time of national reconstruction.

The history that my grandfather told was one of imperial diversity, toleration, and a cultural bazaar. He worked very close to Yeni Cami and Mısır Carşısı (the Egyptian Market) and Rüstem Paşa Cami, finished in 1561 by the architect Mimar Sinan. His retelling of Ottoman life and culture mirrored the sites that he moved through – religious spaces of quietude and serenity; a multi-hued and vibrant display of eastern smells and tastes; perfumes, incense, drugs, and spices; and along squares filled with boisterous itinerant peddlers, street vendors, and mothers pulling their sons, with threatening images of boogey men lurking around the corner. He took his grandchildren to eat at the Ottoman restaurant Borsa, where he let us order specialties unlike our home cuisine, and filled our minds with the poetry of Bâkî, Fuzulî, Nedîm, and many other Divan poets of the empire. His was an Oriental version of the Orient.

The history that my father told was one of the need to move with history, to acknowledge the necessity for modernity, industry, and national consciousness. His was a tale of modernity locked into an Atatürkist version of history, serene in its notion of progress based on diligence and strength. Ottoman greatness for him was embedded in Byzantine continuity; in the early achievements of the Turks; and in what he saw to be the impeccable way in which the Roman,

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Byzantine, and Ottoman worlds produced marvels of architecture, which he tirelessly narrated to every foreign tourist who visited during his long career as an engineer and businessman. His Orient was on the move, but somewhere entirely different than my grandfather's Orient: the hustle and bustle he saw and appreciated was that of industry and commerce, of trade and economic development, caught up in the relations between the West and a modern Turkey. His was an Occidental version of the Orient.

When I later became interested in the past of this extraordinary city and empire, I realized that neither one of the histories I so carefully listened to were complete, and, in their different understandings of the past and their vision of the future, they did not easily speak to each other. Instead, I have lived with the two pictures together. The manner in which I tried to rearticulate these histories remained unproductive until I understood that the way to bridge these two pasts was through a much more consciously analytic history of the empire. I have tried to understand empire by giving both visions their place, while forging my own representation and interpretation of what I saw as meaningful in my ancestors' past. For me, trained in sociology, such an enterprise would focus on the actual workings of empire, to uncover the manner in which empires became such powerful political formations, ruled differentiated groups, and maintained cohesion in times of upheaval. In such a moment of upheaval – a period of widespread banditry – I had earlier discovered an important key to empire: that empire was a “negotiated enterprise,” and regardless of its strength an empire has to work with the peripheries in order to maintain a mix of compliance, tribute, and military cooperation, as well as to ensure political coherence and durability.

This theme is further developed in this book, in which my main interest is to understand the longevity of this particular political formation called empire. I carry out an analysis of the Ottoman Empire's social organization and mechanisms of rule at four carefully selected moments of its history: emergence, imperial institutionalization, imperial remodeling, and transition to nation-state. Unlike most comparative studies, my study also examines Ottoman imperial longevity from the Ottoman point of view and assesses Ottoman accomplishments and failures against those of other empires of similar characteristics. My goal is to understand the organization of empire through different moments and therefore contribute to comparative imperial studies. But I also want to better integrate Ottoman history into comparative imperial studies. In writing this book, I was interested in highlighting the mechanisms and machinery of empire, rather than the narratives of battles, wars, and treaties. I am also not setting out to chart a history of the multifarious relations between layers of text produced during the empire and their historical context. Rather, I am trying to understand how institutional and organizational structures enable or hinder the actions of the agents and networks of agents whom I consider crucial to my analysis. Developing an explanation for the longevity of empire, for me, means reconstructing a relatively faithful representation of a social process and identifying

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the typical actions, interests, and meanings of agents, and networks of agents, relating to each other through webs of association.

To this end, rather than going for new sources and archival material, I have made use of the abundant and carefully researched historical work and published data and have marshaled a theoretical framework and used a wide array of methodological tools to make this history analytically coherent and intelligible. In this process, I have also been highly selective; some institutions are highlighted, some regions underlined, and some processes stressed to the detriment of others.

This book took a long time to come to fruition. During this time, many individuals and institutions have been helpful. I first got a Social Science Research Center–McArthur fellowship to initiate this research, and spent a year at the National Center for Humanities reading and preparing what would become a segment of this book. After a long break from it, I returned to the project, and, despite a major reorganization of my thoughts, I was still able to use the research that these institutions made possible for me to carry out.

I am indebted to many scholars and friends in this endeavor. Two scholars have shaped my work in more ways than I can ever retell or thank them for. Daniel Chirot, with whom I have worked closely for more than 20 years now, directed me toward historical sociology, and toward comparative political analysis that insists on asking questions about large-scale outcomes that are substantively and normatively important and have an impact on the world in which we live. His intellectual mark is at the core of this book because his interest in what makes societies flourish or turn toward the abyss, his interest in ethnic conflict and genocide, and his interest in the far corners of the world has been with me since the day I met him. As is his style, his friendship and advice come with both encouragement and trenchant critique: these have helped me improve my questions and my analysis.

Harrison White has been the other similarly powerful figure since I arrived at Columbia University more than a decade ago. Harrison's analytic insight has transformed my work because he possesses such a fine capacity for sociological theorizing and combines it with deep and distinctive historical knowledge, in many ways different and at odds with the manner in which historians tell the story of societies. From his early reading of my previous book, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, to the reformulation of my work on time and scheduling in the Ottoman Empire, he has pushed me toward more innovative and original directions. I have been influenced by his acute sense for finding what traditional narratives have missed and what analysts have overlooked. Dan and Harrison have read and commented on multiple drafts of my manuscript with interest, care, and much more than a sense of scholarly duty. I remain indebted and hope that I have taken advantage of their excellent insights and counsel.

Although I have not seen him in many years and miss his strong intellectual presence, Halil İnalcık, my mentor in Ottoman studies, remains with me all the time.

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In my department, thanks also go to Peter Bearman and Charles Tilly, who carefully read and commented on the manuscript at a critical stage of revision. Two wonderful colleagues, George Gavrilis and Yonca Köksal, have been close friends, as well as patient and knowledgeable readers with expertise in the Ottoman and theoretical fields. Mark von Hagen and Ira Katznelson, with whom I have cotaught and coauthored work, have kept me on my toes, helping sharpen my arguments. Jean-Francois Bayart and Romain Bertrand, loyal colleagues and friends, have given me many occasions to present my work at Sciences-Po in Paris, providing me with analogies and counterexamples from Africa to Indonesia. Nader Sohrabi and Etem Erol, both superb scholars of the empire, have provided many forums at Columbia for me to present work and have engaged me on several occasions. I owe the specifics of my network analysis and the models to the marvelous work of my coauthor on another project, Frederic Godart, whose expertise and effectiveness remain unmatched. Rudi Batzell spent at least a summer reading and commenting on my work. His equally sharp attention to detail and ideas make him a special Columbia College student with a bright future ahead. Finally, Figen Taşkın researched most of the material on the networks of the early sultans; Işıl Çelimli helped with the figures and tables in the book; and Cenk Palaz, whose Ottoman historical and linguistic expertise I could not do without, worked day and night on the details of Ottoman and Turkish transliteration problems. At Columbia, I also have to thank a continuous wave of serious, thoughtful, and committed graduate and undergraduate students, whose relationships have been vital to me, among them Adoma Adjei-Brenyah, Zoe Duskin, Sara Duvisac, Aurora Fredrikson, Lena Friedrich, Bedross der Matossian, Neema Noori, Neha Nimmagudda, Onur Özgöde, Harel Shapira, Natacha Stevanovic, Arafat Valiani, Kineret Yarden, Murat Yüksel, and Xiaodan Zhang. They have inspired me and have sustained my enthusiasm throughout my career. In Sociology, I also thank Dora Arenas, who has helped to facilitate my administrative burden as much as possible.

In Amherst I have benefited from the friendship and intellectual camaraderie of Sam Bowles and Libby Wood. Sam delved into the depth of Ottoman tax farming, providing me with comparative examples and clarifying the economics of such systems. Libby read segments of my manuscript and generously introduced me to the editors of Cambridge University Press, forging the decisive tie in this publication. Amrita Basu and Uday Mehta read, commented, and supported the sometimes relentless process of writing and doubting. Paola Zamperini kept me positive throughout. I cannot thank Daria Darienzo of Amherst College Library enough. Even before we arrived at Amherst, she wrote to me to give me a sense of the materials the library had in my field, and her continued support of my research was invaluable. Jayne Lovett has provided me with indispensable computer expertise and backup support for the past four years. Debby Goan, Denise Twum, and Jacqueline Makena helped with library research, editing, and manuscript work. Marion Delhay also helped during the summer of 2006 with manuscript editing of French sources. Finally,

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for the past four years, Sabra Mont and Karl Long have selflessly helped take care of Joshua and Anna-Claire, making it possible for me to commute to Columbia University and write this book.

In the field of Ottoman studies, Reşat Kasaba, Çağlar Keyder, Şevket Pamuk, Fikret Adanır, Hasan Kayalı, Aron Rodrigue, Linda Darling, Virginia Aksan, and Halil Berktaş stand out. Their continued interest in my work and their openness and inclusiveness have made it possible for me to continue my effort in darker moments. I particularly thank Reşat, who has followed this project from its inception, invited me to numerous conferences to present various parts, and whose suggestions have helped me think through history more carefully. In many ways, I owe to this group my continued participation in the field of Ottoman studies.

I thank Julie Perkins who edited the manuscript through the summer of 2007. I thank Eric Crahan, my editor at Cambridge University Press. Mary Paden on the production side has been very patient with me, and many thanks go to Ken Hassman, whose wonderful expertise at indexing I could not do without. Many friends had a hand in the making of the cover: George Gavriliş, Michael Chesworth, as well as my brother, Henri Barkey. It is an honor to have the work of Turkey's great modern photographer, Izzet Keribar, on the cover.

Finally, family and friends have been very influential as well. My mother and my brother have encouraged me, giving me love and support whenever and wherever needed. I am most grateful to my brother's sustained interrogation of my knowledge of dates of Ottoman wars and treaties throughout my childhood! My father passed away when I was still working on this manuscript, and, despite the time spent in the care and sadness of his long illness, what I miss most was his continued vitality, his headstrong and conscious effort to always be there to improve, and his luminous trust in me. My children miss him as well, but they have also missed their mother, whose attention to the Ottomans has sometimes overwhelmed them, angered them, and led them to enticing alternatives. Joshua, for a long time, asked me to write a *Lord of the Rings* version of the Ottoman Empire with him, as he thought a collaborative project would draw my attention. Anna-Claire's favorite phrase has been "is it done already?" as little kids on long road trips ask their parents "are we there yet?" So, my darlings, we are there.

My life companion, Tony Marx, to whom this book is dedicated, has lived with this book since we both got tenure at Columbia in 1997/98. He is the only man I know who is truly a feminist, an equal-opportunity husband, who has devoted his life as much to my career as to his own. I admire most his superb generosity of heart, his tremendous warmth, his devotion to his family, and his ability to remain good humored while juggling serious social and political problems of consequence.

Karen Barkey
Bargecchia

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Transliterations

There are various ways of doing the transliteration of foreign words. In this book, I have used Turkish words as much as possible to remain consistent in usage. However, words such as “pasha,” “vizier,” or “devshirme,” which have become quite well known in English, are used in their English spelling. Similarly, although I kept to the Turkish place-names of many regions and towns, I have maintained the English place-names for well-known cities such as Rome, Istanbul, Salonica, Aleppo, and Cairo. I use “Constantinople” to denote the Byzantine city and “Istanbul” the city after 1453.

The following is a key to the pronunciation of Turkish letters:

C: “j” as in Josh

Ç: “ch” as in chess

G: very soft, not really pronounced

I: without a dot, pronounced like the “o” in atom

Ö: pronounced like the French sound “eu”

Ş: pronounced like “sh” in shawl

Ü: pronounced like the French sound “u”

The use of a circumflex indicates a lengthened vowel.