

The Young Turk Revolution and Ottoman Ethno-Religious Communities

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Bedross Der Matossian,
Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire,
Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014, xiv+249 pp.,
ISBN 978-080-4791-47-2.

Feroz Ahmad,
The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities: Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Jews, and Arabs, 1908-1914,
Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 2014, xii+191 pp.,
ISBN 978-160-7813-39-2.

Michelle U. Campos,
Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine,
Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011, xiv+343 pp.,
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More than a century on, the Young Turk Period of Ottoman history recently has become a fascinating field of study due to the fact that it was in this period

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that major political and social configurations were crystallized, leading to the emergence of the Modern Middle East. The period is significant as it included political reform and intellectual fermentation, and devastating wars that brought the end of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it was the first time that the multi-ethnic Ottoman society experienced constitutionalism and in accordance with this changed the nature of Ottoman statecraft and of the relationship between the state and ethno-religious groups in the empire.

In recent years, three books have been written shedding light on the involvement of the Ottoman ethnic communities in the new regime after the Young Turk Revolution. Each body of work focuses on different ethnic groups and issues using different concepts and approaches to understand the short but intense Young Turk era. Michelle U. Campos and Bedross Der Matossian cover the period between the 1908 Revolution and the outbreak of the World War I and focus on three major ethno-religious groups. However, Feroz Ahmad expands the scope and time and evaluates five ethnic groups with a focus on the period between 1908-1918.

Using the relational approach, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in early Twentieth Century Palestine* examines how Muslims, Christians, and Jews became imperial citizens by embracing the civic project of “shared homeland” and also how the Ottoman nation, not an “imagined” or discursive imperial community, was “a shared field of social and political interaction and contestation.” (p. 3)

Criticizing the existing scholarship, Michelle U. Campos argues that “it is clear that in the interest of preserving their own political role in the Middle East, the Western mandatory powers had an interest in ignoring and even reversing the developments that had taken place in the last decade of Ottoman rule.” (p. 250) Campos also thinks that Ottoman imperial reform involving concepts such as political rights, liberty, enfranchisement, as well as civic belonging is not in line with “the dominant European picture of the Islamic world steeped in ‘Oriental despotism’ and therefore in need of Western enlightenment.” (p. 250) Furthermore, reconsidering the inter-communal relations in the context of Palestine, Campos challenges the presumption about the existence of Arab-Jewish conflict in the early twentieth century. She argues that the core of the 1908 Revolution was “civic Ottomanism,” “grassroots imperial citizenship project that promoted a unified sociopolitical identity of an Ottoman people struggling over the new rights and obligations of revolutionary political membership.” (p. 3)

By the turn of the twentieth century, empires had begun to be regarded as obsolete and unable to respond to modern needs. Rendering imperial change invisible and loyalty to empire unintelligible, such a perception sharply distinguishes nations from empires. Yet, according to Campos, empires indeed “often acted like ‘nations,’ and vice versa,” (p. 5) and in the same way the “‘Ottoman-nation’ took on forms and discourses that in many ways echoed ‘traditional’ (nation-state) nationalism.” (p. 5-6)

Regarding the structure of Ottoman society, Campos, unlike Matossian and Ahmad, makes a generalization by arguing that religion was not the central factor dividing Ottoman society. Rather, throughout Ottoman history class and status had always played significant roles in stratifying the multiethnic Ottoman society. The physical proximity of different religious communities in almost all regions of the empire led familiarity, solidarity, and at times caused conflict among ethno-religious groups. Palestine was a microcosm of the empire in which inter-communal relations of Muslims, Christians, and Jews could perfectly be observed. Campos demonstrates how these communities in Palestine had common interests leading cooperation for their so-called “shared homeland” as well as communal interests causing clash and divergence.

Ottoman Brothers is a work of seven chapters. Chapter One traces the ideological development of the 1908 Revolution and provides details demonstrating the euphoria in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. The author focuses on the revolutionary slogans of “liberty, equality, fraternity, justice” which became the key concepts for the Ottomans in their discursive struggles to reconcile the present imperial parameters and their new political horizons. In this regard, she also shows how religious vocabulary was greatly employed in legitimizing the revolution.

In Chapter Two Campos discusses the development of Ottomanism as a state ideology, promoting universal loyalty to the empire and equality for non-Muslims under the law. According to her, representing Ottoman reforms in general, and Ottomanism in particular, as only a state project “ignores the ways in which Ottoman subjects themselves adopted, finessed, challenged the state project” (Campos, 2011: 65) in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The new educated classes widely adopted and propagated the reformist terminology, and finally the revolution led to expressions of a new discourse of the Ottoman nation. In this process, “Ottoman became a term of self identity” (Campos, 2011: 77), articulated in the form of “we” and “us.” Modern “national schools” and conscription played key roles in institutionalizing Ottomanism.

Seeing it as an ambiguous and failed project, Bedross Der Matossian is not as optimistic as Campos with regard to Ottomanism. Rather, he problematizes the project by analyzing the complex factors behind its failure. Feroz Ahmad also sees it as a failed attempt for creating Ottoman citizenship in order to defuse the challenge of nationalism. This project could not be realized, according to Ahmad, due to the fact that the Ottoman public lacked a common language that could strengthen the common sense of citizenship. Moreover, he claims that Ottoman communities did not wholeheartedly embrace the secular concept of Ottoman citizenship.

Unlike Matossian and Ahmad, Campos emphasizes the strengthening of civil society in this period, as she seems to take most of the developments as a kind of proto-democratic experience. Branches of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and Freemason lodges radically increased throughout the empire, including Palestine. Not long after the revolution, two events brought about a new site for “a grassroots expression of Ottoman patriotism and mass political mobilization.” (Campos, 2011: 100) In response to Bulgaria’s declaration of its independence and annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, the Ottomans boycotted Austrian goods, ships, and commerce.

Moreover, the 1908 parliamentary elections were a great occasion for provincial Ottomans to become involved in imperial administration. As highlighted by both Matossian and Campos, the press played a key role in campaigning and more importantly in enlightening the public about voting. The elections, according to Campos and Ahmad, underscored the inherent communal rivalry as the ethno-religious groups in the empire mobilized and strategized to strengthen their positions in the rapidly changing environment of post-revolutionary empire. With regard to elections Matossian also draws attention to “complex ethnic politics and lobbying efforts among and between the different ethnic groups.” (Matossian, 2014: 98)

Unlike the other two works, *Ottoman Brothers* allocates a whole chapter, entitled “The Mouthpiece of the Public,” to the significance of the press as civic space, one serving during this period “to help imagine the community in universally inclusive imperial terms” (Campos, 2011: 134), and later on “in exclusionary sectarian and ethnic terms.” (p. 134) More often than not, the press served as a battlefield for the inter-communal and intra-communal matters, particularly with regard to the new rights and responsibilities of citizenship and privileges such as military conscription. Campos, unlike Ahmad and Matossian, draws attention

also to the shared urban space as a significant site for revolutionary discourse and practices of imperial citizenship. This went hand in hand with the development of the educated middle class, civil society, and municipality.

In addition to the aforementioned points that differentiate it from the other two works, *Ottoman Brothers* disproportionately concentrates on the conflict between the Sephardi Jews and Ashkenazi Jews with regard to the Ottomanist project. In the prewar years, Sephardi Jews in Palestine found themselves at the crossroads of two ideological commitments: Ottoman universalism and Jewish particularism. The press became a battlefield between Zionist Jews (Ashkenazi) and anti-Zionist Jews (Sephardi). The former's outlook was dogmatic towards Jewish nationalism and Zionism, denouncing ideological Ottomanism. The latter preferred acting as "Ottoman citizens of the Mosaic faith" insisting on the compatibility between their Ottomanism and Zionism. Campos argues that "the increasing appeal of Zionism that emerged after 1908 among the empire's Sephardim was closely related to the perceived failures of Ottomanism and incomplete universalism." (p. 198)

Most Arabs too, according to Campos, remained loyal to the Ottoman state until the extraordinary years of the First World War, "promoting themselves as integral constituent elements of, and even vital partners to, the imperial project." (p. 233) Michelle Campos, like Feroz Ahmad, disagrees with the accusation that CUP Turkified the elements of the empire. Though the Ottoman officials initially responded positively to the demands of the Paris Arab Congress (1913), within a month they backpedaled. As the CUP chose to centralize the empire, Ottomanism fell short of expectations; and with the outbreak of the World War I relations between the Arab community and the Ottoman state gradually deteriorated.

Shattered Dreams of Revolution examines the ways through which Armenians, Arabs, and Jews negotiated their space and identity within the rapidly changing political realm of the period between 1908-1914. Taking a macro-historical approach, Matossian's work includes various regions of the Ottoman Empire. According to Matossian, the existing scholarship on the impact of the Young Turk Revolution is divided into two groups. One group sees the revolution as the factor that led to the deterioration of interethnic relations that ended up in ethnic nationalism, whereas the other "romanticizes the period as the beginning of a positive project that was interrupted by World War I and the collapse of the empire." (Matossian, 2014: 2) Though Matossian does not refer to it specifically, *Ottoman Brothers* can easily be placed within the second group of scholarship

which, according to Matossian, failed to problematize the revolution and its complexity. Taking a critical view of the actors of the period, Matossian argues that constitutionalism could not be realized “due to the ambiguities and contradictions of the Revolution’s goals and the reluctance of both the leaders of the Revolution and the majority of the empire’s ethnic groups to come to a compromise regarding the new political framework of the empire.” (p. 3) Put more precisely, dreams of the 1908 Revolution were shattered because the Young Turks were not committed to constitutionalism, and the non-dominant groups wanted to maintain their privileges and ethno-religious identities together with the ambiguous Ottomanism project. In brief, the revolution was paradoxical.

Shattered Dreams of Revolution consists of six chapters, which are organized chronologically, each discussing a specific theme and demonstrating how Arabs, Armenians, and Jews were involved in the developments of the period. The introductory chapter narrates the experiences of Arabs, Armenians, and Jews during the nineteenth century, showing how they transformed in parallel with the developments of the period.

Chapter One not only describes the euphoria of the revolution in the capital and various provinces, but also manifests how the culture of the new Ottoman nation was developing with the use of new symbols, concepts (liberty, justice, fraternity, and equality), slogans, discourses, and competing public sphere. In order to demonstrate this transformation Matossian refers to three exemplary individuals of the Revolution, Patriarch Madteos II Izmirlian, General Fuad Paşa, and Prince Sabahaddin. Matossian asserts that the participation of multiethnic and multi-confessional Ottoman society in post-revolutionary celebrations legitimized the revolution while also making the politics of the revolution paradoxical. This paradox would become more apparent once the celebrations were over and ethnic groups began to discuss the fate of their communities in this new political framework.

Chapter Two examines the efforts of the Armenians, Arabs, and Jews to establish political platforms during the fragile post-revolutionary period. In this section of the book, the diverse political discourses revealed in the newspapers of ethnic groups have been analyzed to demonstrate the ambiguity, complexity, and fluidity of the period. Liberty became the key concept in the vocabulary of the Revolution while also a major source of ambiguity.

Unlike Campos, Matossian argues that the ideal of creating an Ottoman identity which would unite the diversity of ethnic groups under one banner is

paradoxical. This is the case because from the very early phase of the Revolution, the struggle between universalism and particularism was evident in the press. He also draws attention to the disparity between the center and periphery in adopting constitutionalism, as many officers of the *ancien régime* along the periphery were reluctant to declare freedom.

The 1908 Revolution was a “historical period” both for the shift of imperial power and for the redistribution of power within the communities. Though Ahmad and Campos briefly refer to redistribution of power within ethnic communities, Matossian allocates a whole chapter, entitled “The ‘Historical Period’ and Its Impact on Ethnic Groups,” to the so-called micro-revolutions, redefining intra-ethnic relationships. Liberal and secular leaders replaced traditional elites, including patriarchs and rabbis, who were integral components of the *ancien régime*. In this process, the center of power was transferred from the Armenian Patriarchate to the Armenian National Assembly. Members of the Dashnak (the Armenian Revolutionary Federation) and the Hunchak (the Socialist Armenian Party) returned from exile to Istanbul and became legitimate political entities after the Revolution. Though it did not happen as smoothly as in the Armenian case, the Jewish *millet* also experienced a liberalization of leadership. In the Arab provinces, the *ulema* class, a power group of the *ancien régime*, had gradually lost their authority and ceded their position to the notables (elites). Chapter 3 includes details about different responses to this elite transformation after the Revolution in Damascus, Latakiyya, Nablus, and Mount Lebanon.

Like *Ottoman Brothers, Shattered Dreams of Revolution* includes details of negotiations among the CUP, Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Jews, and Arabs on the eve of the 1908 elections, which brought new issues including proportional representation, fairness, democracy, administrative decentralization, and ethno-religious privileges. The Armenians were more concerned than the Jews and Arabs about proportional representation, believing that they were not fairly represented in the Ottoman parliament.

In the post-revolutionary period, the Ottoman parliament became the new public sphere for the Ottomans. Constitutional assembly was, according to Matossian, “a means for the CUP to implement its massive project of centralization to preserve the territorial integrity of the empire.” (p. 124) However, some of the non-dominant groups, he argues, paradoxically “sincerely believed that Parliament ultimately would allow them to find a remedy for the maladies that inflicted the empire in general and their communities in particular.” (p. 124). Chapter Five

of *Shattered Dreams of Revolution* focuses on the parliamentary debates over issues such as Zionism, the Hejaz and the Bagdad Railways, the Lynch Affair, the Mutran Affair, and reforms in the Eastern Anatolian provinces. This part also discusses the CUP's restrictive policies, particularly the restriction of public assembly to curb political activism of opposing groups. These restrictions became more evident in the aftermath of the Counterrevolution (31st March Incident), ending up in the non-dominant groups' disillusionment with the CUP regime.

Regarding the causes of the 31st March Incident, Matossian refers to Sohrabi who says that counterrevolution "brought to light the antagonism –class (economic), cultural, and generational – between the military officers and bureaucrats and their less educated peers and underlings, and also their superiors." (p. 151) Seeing it as a threat for Constitutionalism, the Armenians and Jews supported the Unionists in suppressing the counterrevolution by taking active part in the Action Army. The dethronement of Sultan Abdülhamid II "was hailed by all ethnic groups" as it signified a "Second Revolution." The ethnic communities supported the CUP in the face of the opposition to save the constitution, which they considered as the safeguard for civil liberties and also "their national rights and privileges." (p. 172) However, in the eyes of the CUP the constitution was a means to preserve the integrity of the empire. For Matossian, it was these contradictory aims combined with preexisting factionalism that destroyed pan-Ottoman dreams of the Revolution.

Providing a relatively less analytical approach, Feroz Ahmad deals with the "question of nationalities" in *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities: Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Jews, and Arabs, 1908-1914*. Differing from that of Campos and Matossian, Feroz Ahmad's narrative is more political, focusing on controversial issues of the period such as the Armenian question and the Arab Revolt. This is perhaps because the book scrutinizes the whole Second Constitutional period, including the World War I years, during which the relationship between the CUP and ethnic groups dramatically deteriorated for various reasons. Unlike the works of Matossian and Campos, Ahmad's book does not propose an argument about the nature and impact of the revolution on the relationship between the CUP and ethnic communities.

Another distinctive characteristic of Ahmad's work, which distinguishes it from the other two books, is that it regards the period between 1908-1918 as a decolonization process in which various ethnic groups in the empire struggled to gain their independence. Feroz Ahmad places the last decade of the empire

within a larger narrative that makes an analogy between the Ottoman Empire and modern colonialist empires. According to this perspective, the Ottoman Empire was imperialist in the pre-modern sense, exploiting conquered lands for tribute rather than raw materials, markets, and places for capital investment, as later empires did. Furthermore, the ethno-religious groups in the Ottoman Empire were organized as *millets* “enjoying a great deal of cultural and social autonomy under their religious leaders.” (p. 2) Nevertheless, like most of empires, the Ottoman Empire also went through a decolonization process in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, the struggles of various ethno-religious groups need to be seen as part of decolonization process. Though he fails to substantiate this argument, Ahmad underlines it in different contexts throughout the book.

Another eye-catching point Ahmad makes in his book is the weakness of the Porte, or rather the CUP, in this period vis-à-vis foreign intervention and internal pressures. As a proof for its weakness, he refers to the counterrevolution and the military coup of 1912, during which the CUP came very close to being eliminated from power. Ahmad seems to be justifying the CUP’s policies by underlying its weakness in solving the problems such as the massacres against and deportations of the Armenians in the Eastern provinces. Despite this defensive position regarding the CUP, Ahmad also underscores a significant point saying that the CUP was not a monolithic group with a recognized leadership; rather Unionists were “politically divided and only agreed on the subject of combating Abdülhamid’s autocracy and on restoring the constitution.” (p. 115)

Like Matossian and Campos, Ahmad represent Abdülhamid II as an autocratic ruler and Young Turks as an educated group committed to saving the empire from disintegration in the face of pressure from the great powers and nationalist movements. Ahmad asserts that the 1908 revolution took place due to discontent among Muslims and Christians that stemmed from Hamid’s autocracy. All the communities cooperated with the CUP in reinstating the constitutional system to improve their conditions. But in the aftermath of the revolution they could not agree upon a joint program due to their conflicting agendas. The leaders of various nationalities, according to Ahmad, “had come to believe that they could obtain concession, and even independence from the Porte only if the Great Powers intervened on their behalf.” (p. 8)

The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities is a work of eight chapters. Each chapter is devoted to a specific ethno-religious group and a period. Since the Armenians and Greeks are the leading actors of the time and of the book, they are

given larger role, focusing on the World War I years. Chapter Two examines the Armenian community between the immediate aftermath of the 1908 revolution and the outbreak of the World War I. The Armenian community, like the others, was not monolithic, having different ideological branches and socio-economic layers.

The issue of fair representation and universal conscription became the major bones of contention between the CUP and non-Muslim communities, particularly Armenians and Greeks. Ahmad also refers to the outbreak of 31st March Incident and the Adana Incident as turning points that further exacerbated relations between the CUP and ethnic groups, especially the Armenians. The land question also affected the relations between the Porte and Armenians. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, Kurdish tribes seized the lands of Armenian peasants who then fled to Caucasus. After the 1908 revolution, they returned and demanded financial compensation for their lands. The Porte, because it was extremely weak in the Anatolian provinces, could neither establish order in the Eastern Anatolia nor restore the lands, despite all its efforts.

The situation in Anatolia worsened with the Balkan Wars, as many Armenians joined the army, leaving the villages defenseless against the Kurdish tribal raids. In the aftermath of the war in the Balkans, “Armenian leaders demanded foreign control of any reform to be carried out” (p. 34) as they lost their faith in the Porte and the CUP. The projected scheme of reform could not be carried out, according to Ahmad, because the Kurdish chieftains opposed it and they led a rebellion in the Bitlis region. Unable to disarm the Kurds, the state distributed arms to the Armenians of Bitlis so that they could defend themselves against the Kurdish rebels.

Chapter Three focuses on the Greek community during 1908-1914. With the outbreak of the Balkan War, more and more Muslims poured into both Istanbul and Anatolia from the lost European territories, aggravating the situation for non-Muslim groups, chiefly Ottoman Greeks. The friction over the Aegean islands that the Porte lost during the war deteriorated Muslim-Greek relations. As Ahmad puts it, “the tension between Athens and Istanbul held the Greek population hostage during the negotiations.” (p. 49) In the meantime, Muslims in the lost territories in the Balkan Wars were also ill-treated. Seeing the weakness of the Porte the Greek patriarch, like his Armenian counterpart, appealed to Russia for the protection of his flock.

The following chapter is dedicated to the Albanians. The 1908 revolution prompted the Albanian movement, mainly because Albanians were not comfortable with the idea of centralization. The wars in Tripoli and the Balkans and the opposition of liberals pulled down the CUP and Albanian insurgents became more extreme as they believed that European intervention was around the corner. In response, the CUP approved Albanian nationalists' demands; but despite the concessions, Albanians undertook another rebellion to gain more from the Porte. Finally, in the London Conference (1913), an independent Albania was established.

Chapter Five, entitled "The Greeks and Armenians, 1914-1918", elucidates Armenian community's activities during the Great War. Ahmad constantly underscores the Porte's efforts to be on good terms with the Armenian community despite all the challenges it faced. As part of these efforts, the perpetrators of the violence against the Armenians were severely punished, and some of them were even hanged. With the outbreak of the World War I, the Armenian revolutionaries in Eastern Anatolia decided not to fight against Russia, expecting an Entente-Russian victory. During the Sarıkamış campaign "the Ottoman army came face to face with Armenian volunteers fighting alongside the Russians." (p. 75) Moreover, despite the Sarıkamış defeat and reports in the Russian press claiming that the Armenians were offering all sorts of help to the Russian army, "the Ottoman response to the Armenian population in general remained friendly." (p. 77)

Afraid of a counter-revolution organized by Armenian revolutionaries and of "the Entente landing at the Dardanalles on April 25 with the aim of breaking through the Straits and occupying the capital" (p. 91), the Porte passed the "Temporary Relocation Law" (*Geçici Tehcir Kanunu*), deporting the Armenians of Anatolia. Ahmad strongly emphasizes the extraordinary conditions that led the desperate CUP government to take such a temporary measure. Furthermore, he emphasizes the existence of fractions among the CUP leaders with regard to the Relocation Law. He also implies the possibility of German involvement in this process.

According to Ahmad, there was a "special relationship" between Ottoman Jews and the Porte, having centuries of peaceful coexistence. The Jews in the empire were the least affected *millet* by the nationalist movement, "having no desire to seek autonomy let alone an independent state." (p. 101) The Balkan Wars strengthened the ties between the CUP and the Jews, as the latter enlisted and did not desert during the war. In this period, the Zionist project was the major

factor creating tension between the Porte and Ottoman Jewry and also between the Ottoman Sephardim and the Ashkenazim.

The Zionist project also affected the relations between the Unionists and the Arabs, causing heated debates in the parliament. Ahmad surveys the issues related to the Arab community in the empire. He concentrates on the development of Arab nationalism and reform demands, and Sharif Hussein's Revolt during the World War I. Regarding the rise of Arab nationalism in the Second Constitutional period, he argues that "examination of the politics of Arab deputies shows not a radical growth of Arab nationalism, let alone separatism, but the growth of localism." (p. 115) Furthermore, he challenges the premise: that Arab nationalism emerged as "a response to Turkish nationalism and the 'Turkification' policies of the Committee of Union and Progress." (p. 115) This premise is false, according to Ahmad, as it considers that "the Committee of Union and Progress was a powerful, monolithic body with a program that it was determined to implement and this program was guided by a determination to Turkify all the non-Turkish elements of the empire." (p. 115) He deems these assumptions as myths.

He also comments on the revolt led by Sharif Hussein. He calls it the Hashemite revolt rather than Arab revolt, asserting, "there was no Arab revolt, only the revolt of some tribes in the Hijaz under the Hashemite leadership." (p. 132) For Ahmad, the British exploited Sharif Hussein, who was dreaming of being the caliph of an independent Arab kingdom in the region, and armed the Hashemites to rebel against the Ottoman Empire. Based on this assumption, the revolt can easily be interpreted as a betrayal, accelerating the disintegration of the empire. Nevertheless, Ahmad interestingly states that "today the revolt ought to be seen as an event in the process of the decolonization of the Ottoman Empire, which was heading for defeat." (p. 134)

Overall, Campos has a positive view of the process in the immediate aftermath of the 1908 Revolution as a relatively successful civic experiment based on the notions of Ottomanism and shared homeland. Given the "traditional" tribal and sectarian base of the Middle Eastern administrations since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Campos thinks that the civic Ottomanist project, though short-lived and incomplete, is very relevant to the present historical moment. Unlike Campos, Matossian and Ahmad neither deem the aftermath of the Revolution as a project nor consider it as an exceptional constitutional experience for Near Eastern communities. Concentrating more on the 1908 Revolution and its paradoxical aspect, Matossian believes that neither the CUP nor the ethnic communities were

ready to give up their priorities for the sake of constitutionalism. Unlike the other two works, Ahmad's book does not specifically focus on the Revolution itself.

Though chronology is also taken into consideration for its organization, *Ottoman Brothers* is thematically divided. Each chapter includes the experience of all three groups, Christians, Muslims, and Jews, with regard to the particular theme. *Shattered Dreams of Revolution* is chronologically organized, discussing a significant development in each part. *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities*, on the other hand, allocates one chapter to each community telling the experience of this community between 1908-18.

While Matossian and Ahmad refer to the communities with their ethnic identities, Campos identifies them with their religions. Furthermore, unlike Ahmad who easily refers to Ottoman communities as "nationalities." Matossian uses the concept of ethnic group, reminding the audience of the fact that nation and nationalism were ideas only of political activists and the intelligentsia in the later part of nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. This is because the majority of people in the Ottoman Empire, according to Matossian, did not see themselves belonging to a nation; rather "their identities meshed in an array of overlapping identities, highlighted by religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity, on the one hand, and regional and local loyalties, on the other." (Matossian, 2014: 4) Campos, on the other hand, uses the concept of "community" without explaining why she prefers it.

Despite their claims of dealing with more than one community, all the three authors concentrate on a specific one. Campos dedicates the bulk of her book to the case of Jews, saying little about Christians and Muslims. Matossian provides more space to the Armenian community compared to Arabs and Jews. Ahmad's book gives the impression it was written to shed light on the controversial issues of the Young Turk Period, particularly the Armenian question. What is more, he offers contradictory arguments about the period. He seems to justify events like massacres and relocations by accentuating the weakness and helplessness of the CUP government and disclosing the cooperation of Armenians, Greeks, and Albanians with foreign powers against the Porte. Nevertheless, he suggests that all these developments are supposed to be construed today as struggles of nationalities to gain their independence in the decolonizing Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman Brothers pays great attention to local affairs and rivalries in the Sanjak of Jerusalem, not today's Palestine, to some extent overlooking the developments

of the neighborhood and, most importantly, those at the center. Matossian and Ahmad, on the other hand, mainly focus on the center, saying little about the periphery. Another point that can be raised about the three books is their overreliance on the print journalism as their source material. In addition to a variety of secondary literature, they refer to diaries, memoirs, and telegrams.

All in all, these three works have valuable contribution to the literature of Second Constitutional Period as they shed light on the very first constitutional experience of the Middle Eastern communities. Furthermore, as the books under scrutiny here reveal, it is clear that as late as the early twentieth century the Ottoman communities were still loyal to the Ottoman Empire, not expecting her demise and were ready to share her fate.