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Building Professional and Political Communities: The Value of Honor in The Self-Representations of the Police during the Second Constitutional Period.

My paper will focus on the use of honor and related concepts in sources written by members of the police active during the Young Turk period, when the police institution was deeply reformed. I argue that the concept of honor emerged as a central value around which the promotion of individual, professional and political identities was articulated. Referring to personal qualities and political values, the notion of “*namus*” (honor) was used by the authors of short self-narratives or more detailed autobiographies to legitimize both their role in the police institution and the activity of the police institution in the society. This twofold dimension was based on rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion, constantly opposing the honorable policemen of the new regime to various categories supposedly lacking honor, such as the policemen of the previous regime and the strong-arm men of the present. My paper aims to highlight that multi-dimensional use of the notion of honor and its social and political signification in the definition of a professional identity for the police forces.

Before analyzing the rhetoric of honor used in these police narratives, I will briefly contextualize these texts and their authors within the broader framework of the emergence of the police forces as one of the major institution in charge of implementing the Tanzimat principles of protecting individuals, honor and property. I believe that this contextualization is useful to understand the transformations in the conception of policing and the uses of honor, which went together with the shift to a constitutional regime in 1908 and the gradual control of the state by the Unionists.

The second part of my paper will concentrate on the role of honor in the affirmation of a positive police identity. The value of honor was very instrumental in the emergence of a

discourse on police ethics during the second constitutional period. Parallel to the efforts put into the professional formation of the police members, the stress on the moral qualities which were required to be part of the police served two purposes: it aimed to mark the rupture with the turpitudes of the previous regime, while enhancing the legitimacy of the new institution, whose activities were to be shaped by the principles of the new regime: freedom, equality, justice and service to the people. Honor was promoted as the central value which would allow the policemen to perform their duty properly and to become essential intermediaries between the state and the people.

In the second part of my paper, I will show that this emphasis on the value of honor was also a way to stigmatize and exclude some categories, an aspect which, though less explicit than self-promotion in the narratives under study, was at least as central in the construction of a professional and political community. Focusing on the characters depicted as shameful, I will point out the convergence of the different sources in defining moral, political and ethno-religious criteria supposedly incompatible with honorable behavior. I will argue that, beyond being a literary way to emphasize the virtue of the authors confronted to dangerous enemies, this negative approach to honor should be one of the elements to take into account in the evaluation of the political orientations of the police institution and its relationship with the people during the second constitutional period.

I-Protecting life, honor and property: police forces as new comers into the Circle of Justice

The redefinition of the relationship between the Ottoman State and its subjects was at the core of the Tanzimat reforms. Through the 1839 and 1856 edicts, as well as multiple legal and administrative reforms, the political and social bases of the Ottoman regime were

transformed. The details of this process, which articulated traditional Islamic and Ottoman concepts and European references, are beyond the scope of this paper. Here, I will content myself with focusing on the role attributed to the newly created police forces in this transformed political framework.

Several studies have pointed out the transformations introduced by the Tanzimat reforms into the mechanisms of legitimization of the Ottoman state and the traditional “Circle of Justice” linking the sultan to his subjects (Reinkowski, 2004; Miller, 2005; Tuğ, 2013). In most of those studies, the stress is laid on the legal reforms as signs and vectors of the new political conception at work. The extensive reform of the justice system, which manifested itself through the adoption of new codes and a thorough reform of the judicial procedure, offers indeed very valuable elements to understand the new idiom of power and law which emerged out of the Tanzimat process. Much less studied than justice and law, the role of the police within this process was all but insignificant. In charge of law enforcement, protection of the state interests and the subjects’ lives and properties, the police were given a central position in the new mechanisms of control and surveillance of the populations. Following the suppression of the janissaries in 1826, the institutionalization of the police forces, officially created by the 1845 *Polis Nizamnamesi*, was a slow process which spread until the early 20th century (Alyot, 1947).

The few and succinct police regulations published until the second constitutional period offer a scanty source to get a thorough understanding the missions attributed to this institution by the power. Nevertheless, they make it clear that the main tasks given to police forces pertained to the implementation/preservation/restoration of the political/social/moral order. This double triptych is more than an easy short-cut. In their various articles, the 1845, 1879, 1896 and 1907 polis regulations juxtaposed and articulated several concepts closely related to public order, discipline and security, such as *nizam*, *asayiş*, *emniyet*, *inzibat*, which

appeared in the first articles of the regulations to define the aim of police activity. The rest of the articles provided information on the concrete meaning of those concepts as far as policing was concerned. In the 1845 regulation, the priorities of the police activities were defined as the control and surveillance of the populations and the prevention or suppression of social unrest and deviant behaviors (begging, gambling...) (the regulation is reproduced in Ergin, 1995: 875-878). The regulations published under the reign of Abdülhamid II gave a major importance to the defense of state interests through the surveillance and suppression of political opponents, but many aspects of social and moral control were also listed among the attributions of the police forces. In all of these regulations, fight against crime was a secondary topic, only mentioned in the last article of the 1845 regulation and still in the background in the following texts. Much stressed by Ferdan Ergut as a distinctive feature of the Ottoman-Turkish police, this predominance of social control over crime resolution was actually shared by most of the police systems organized or reformed in the 19th century (Ergut, 2004).

In this context, cases related to morality became one of the major fields of intervention for the police forces. In the absence of codes, self-narratives or pedagogical publications, which would highlight the principles underlying police activity until 1908, only the police reports provide us with a better understanding of the conception of order and disorder which shaped these interventions. In those laconic sources, various minor disorders are assimilated to the negation of moral values and codes. Negative expressions related to morality, such as the omnipresent *uygunsuz* or *uygunsuzluk* (improper), are used to stigmatize both behaviours, events and individuals: drunkenness, prostitution, indecent clothes, state officials neglecting their duties... Many of the behaviors labeled as *uygunsuz* in the police reports did not constitute clear breaches of the law but they were denounced as infringements of the social and moral order. The determination of what was proper or improper was to a large extent left

to the appreciation of the local police officer. That empirical definition made it much more flexible and open to negotiation than the letter of the law, but it also opened the way to police arbitrary and abuses¹. Next to the concept of *uygunsuzluk*, negative forms of words such as *ahlâk* (morals), *adâb* (good manner) et *münasebet* (opportunity) are also omnipresent in the late 19th century police reports. They clearly demonstrate that under the reign of Abdülhamid II, the police did not only focus on the surveillance and repression of the political opponents, but also (and mostly) on the prevention and repression of the violations of an ideal, though undefined, social and moral order.

The Young Turk revolution did not introduce a major change in this general framework of the police activities. Abdülhamid II's most infamous spies were dismissed, the police institution was deeply reformed in August 1909, when the Police Ministry was dissolved and replaced by the General Directorate of Security (*Emniyet-i Umûmiye-i Müdüriyeti*), and the political targets of the police were no more the Young Turks or opponents to the sultan, but the reactionaries and challengers to the CUP authority. However, social and moral control remained at the core of the police missions, as it is attested by the law on beggars and suspect individuals adopted in 1909, which gave to the police a large power of initiative concerning the apprehension and repression of those individuals (Ergut, 2002). The very fact that that law considered together the beggars and the recidivists and criminalized them on the ground of their persons rather than their acts illustrates the blurring of the frontiers between illegality and immorality mentioned above. Because they were considered to be loose, depravated and improductive characters (economic rationality being a part of the social order to be promoted), beggars and repeat offenders could be the objects of expeditive judgement, expulsion, prison and even physical punishment (Ergut, 2002; Özbek, 2009).

¹ It also constituted a shared idiom with the urban elites-notables of those cities, who petitioned to the police to ask for their help in the restoration of public and moral order in their neighborhoods, through the expulsion of women suspected of prostitution or the closing of tavernas accused of being places of excessive noise and depravations linked to the use of alcohol.

If there was a clear continuity in the definition of the social order “defended” by the police between the Tanzimat, Hamidian and Young Turk Period, that institution was given much more efficient means to perform its missions during the last period: the rise in police number and the efforts laid in the professionalization of the institution through the creation of police schools, the stipulation of conditions for the recruitment and advancement, as well as the rise in wages were significant of the importance given by the new regime to the police as vectors of a tighter knowledge and control of the society.

That process of professionalization had its discursive counterpart in the emergence of several kinds of publications through which the police produced a discourse on themselves and attempted to highlight and justify various aspects of their activities. A police journal started to be released in 1911 and several textbooks were published after 1909 to be used in the newly established police schools. These sources provide us with an insight into the perceptions and definitions of policing from the part of some members of the institution, something lacking for the previous periods. With their contents, their rhetorics and their visual materials, they are helpful to get a better understanding of the modalities and aims of policing at that time, but they were also the vectors of a new strategy of communication, which aimed to legitimize the police as an intermediary between the state and the society. Relying more specifically on the short self-narratives included in three police textbooks published between 1910 and 1913, and on two autobiographies written by police officers for this period, I argue that despite their differences in length and contents, these different sources articulated a similar rhetoric of honor and morality, which constituted the basis for their affirmation that the police were the most legitimate and efficient intermediaries between the state and the society in the new regime. At a time when foreign and local detective stories were flourishing in the Ottoman Empire, police officers taking up their pen seemed to care very little to appear as new Sherlock Holmes, preferring to present themselves as honorable men, guided by

political and moral ideals and defending the common interests of the state and the people. The second part of my paper will study more in details the use of honor in these narratives.

II-Building professional and political communities

The words “namus” (honor), “namuslu”, “namusgar” (honorable) and they synonyms constitute one of the major semantic fields in the police literature of the second constitutional period. The insistence of the authors on those concepts tells us much about their motivations for writing such self-narratives and the ideological views underlying them. I will try here to point out the multi-dimensional use of this concept.

First, in most of those texts, the notion of honor is part of the revolutionary rhetoric which aimed to stress the rupture between the shameful old regime of Abdülhamid II and the glorious constitutional present. Sensible in many aspects of public life, this dual opposition between the past and the present is nowhere more present than in the police narratives, for obvious reasons. Used by Abdülhamid II to protect state interests, suppress political opponents and enhance social control, the police were one of the most criticized institution after the 1908 revolution. While the first purges occurred at the end of the summer, both the newspapers and the parliamentary debates stressed the need of a vast reform of the institution, which would be the only way to give it back its lost credibility. One year later, in August 1909, the Police Ministry was replaced by a Directorate of Public Security, under the authority of the Ministry of Interior. The publications under study emanate from members of this reformed institution and most of them can be considered as official publications, since they were part of textbooks used in the new created police schools.

According to those narratives, the old regime police was corrupted, brutal and unfair, that is deprived of any honor, “namussuz”:

“İşte bu eski zâbıta. Ahâli nazarında hakir bir mevcûd iken kendisine kelence ahâliye karşıya emân bir kalb taşıyan bir canavar, bir zâlm, bir hâin, bir hilekâr, bir hırsız idi, fırsatı ‘ganimet bilen bu insanıyetsizler, efrâd-i ahâliyi esir gibi kullanıyor” (Hüseyin Hakkı, 1911:14)

“(Polis) benim için en zelîl ve en hakîr ve vâsıta-i zulm ve denâ’et bir sınıf mahlûkâtтан ibâret idi[...] Ah nâmûssuz mahlûklar !” (İbrahim Feridun, 2010 [1910]:182)

The duty of the new police was therefore to clean the stain left on the institution, hence a need that the police members be of a perfect exemplarity. In our sources, the “honorable” policemen are almost terms by terms opposed to the previous ones: understanding the sacred nature of their work, refusing any kind of bribe, showing all due respects to the people, they should embody the value of honor, as stressed by Nazif Efend at the end of his short self-narrative, inviting his fellow policemen to be “always honorable” :

“Kânûn-ı memleketi temsîl edecek, her felâkete göğüs gelecek, huzûr-ı ümmeti ve refâh-ı milleti takrîr ettirecek ancak (polis)dir, dâ’imâ arkadaşlar nâmûslu olunuz ![...]” (İbrahim Feridun, 2010 [1910]: 185)

Beyond this opposition between the depravations of the past and the morality brought back by the new regime, the concept of honor also pointed to the personal qualities required from the individuals eager to enter the police institution. Although none of the authors denied the importance of professional formation, all of them stressed that education could by no means be sufficient to create a good police officer. Courage, honesty, fairness were described as the innate virtues prerequisite to enter the police and be successful in the accomplishment of policing task. According to Hüseyin Hakkı, one should prefer that “rather than being learned, the police be of “excellent morality”” (*hüsn-ı ahlâk sâhibi*) to perform their duty properly:

“Zâbıta fâzilet-i ilmiyesiyle memleketine hizmet eder. Fakat hiç bir vakit iddi’â olunamaz ki bütün ma’nâsıyla bir zâbıta me’mûru olabilmek için fâzilet-i ilmiye kifâyet eder. Ancak fâzilet-i ilmiye ile berâber bundan ziyâde hâslet-i rûhiye ve

meziyet-i vicdâniye lâzım ve lâbüddür. Ahlâksızlık, ridâ'et-i rûhiye, mezellet-i nefsiye cahillere münhâsır değildir. Zâbitanın memlekette hâdim ve nâfi' olması için ma'lûmâtlı olmakdan ziyâde, hüsn-ı ahlâk sâhibi bulunması arzu olunur.” (Hüseyn Hakkı, 1911: 22)

The stress on personal qualities, respectability and moral exemplarity of the state officials had been a key aspect of the reform and development of bureaucracy and state apparatuses since the Tanzimat period. Several scholars have argued convincingly that the legal reforms and adoption of new penal codes were first and foremost directed at the repression of abuses and misbehaviors of state officials, such as corruption disproportionate use of violence, acknowledging the crucial role of the actors of the various state administration in the legitimization of the regime and the eradication of illicit practices in the whole society (Kırlı, 2006; Miller, 2005). This importance given to morality also showed itself through the codified and informal conditions of recruitment specific to each institution. The widespread use of recommendations and *kefil* (sponsors) for the new recruits provided them with a certificate of morality, while tightening power relationships among the bureaucratic elites. In the last quarter of the 19th century, when most of the state institutions were provided with regulations elaborating on the criteria for entering such careers, “excellent morality” was one of the standard requirements. For instance, the 1907 police regulation which listed the conditions to be recruited as a policeman not only mentioned the age or physical conditions, but also that possession of “excellent morality” (*hüsn-i ahlâk*) (Alyot, 1947: 197). Similar mentions continued to be present in the regulations issued during the Second Constitutional period, which inherited the rhetoric of morality of the previous regime and transformed the moralization of the state institutions into a political priority.

While praising that process of moralization, police self-narratives did not overlook the obstacles met through the process. According to the authors, the difficulties in finding those respectable and honorable characters were the major problem faced by the police

institution. “Improper” (“uygunsuz”) behaviours such as the non respect of working hours or the frequentation of coffeehouses during working time were denounced as manifestations of loose characters, which stained the image of the institution. This point shows us the limits of the rhetoric opposing the old and the new police. One part of the much longed for honorable and respectable new police members had previously taken place among the police members of the previous regime, denounced as corrupted and immoral by the same sources. The state archives show clearly that the purges realized in 1908-1909 were all but systematic and comprehensive: most of the individuals purged at that time were spies or high-rank officers, and even a part of them were reintegrated a few months later. The main reasons for that low turn-over was that the police schools had hardly started to work and the image of the police was still very negative, making it difficult to find competent and honest new recruits. Through the rise in the police wages decided at the end of 1909, the authorities attempted to make policing be more attractive to valuable candidates but that was only a partial answer to the recruitment problem. The transfer of officers and soldiers from the army to the police proved to be a more efficient solution, not only providing the police with well-trained, disciplined and supposedly high-spirited recruits, but also strengthening the link between the two institutions and contributing to the spread of military values among the civil society, one of the major aspects of the Young Turk policy after 1909 (Ergut, 2004: 215-228).

If that policy made possible a quick quantitative rise in the police numbers after 1909, it did not suppress the concern of the institution with the low degree of morality and sense of duty of many policemen. In this respect, the criticisms voiced by the police writers previously quoted were echoed by an official stigmatization of the “black sheep” of the institution through the police journals published at the time, *Polis* and *Polis Mecmuası*. Each issue of these newspapers published a list of policemen

who had displayed improper behaviors while performing their duty. Their identity, the nature of their fault and their sanction were mentioned (Ergut, 2004: 241). The most recurrent faults all pertained to the realm of morality: prostitution or frequentation of loose women, excessive consumption of alcohol, policemen lazily sitting in coffeehouses instead of accomplishing their watches.

That public stigmatization of the unworthy policemen could have given a very negative image of the institution, had not it been counterbalanced by the symmetric exaltation of the virtue of the bravest members of the institution. Significantly, the police heroes were introduced to the readers in a very different way: instead of the lists reducing the individuals to their faults and penalties, the most honorable policemen were presented with their pictures and an explanatory caption. Among them, the most honored were the *şehit*, the policemen who had died on duty, most often while fighting brigands or robbers. Pictured within a black framework with a laudatory mention, they were eulogized for their spirit of sacrifice and uncalculated courage, as the best incarnations of the exceptional sacredness and difficulties of the police job.

The *şehit* were extreme cases where the social and political role which was given by the new regime to the police resulted in self-sacrifice for the nation. However, the self-narratives of the police officers stressed that this high conception of the duty should not be the prerogative of a few individuals, but the state of mind of all the police officers:

“Kanun-u adaleti temsil eden polis millet ifay-i hizmet uğrunda icab ederse ölmekten, diri diri mezara girmekten bile çekinmemelidir ve bu ise vezaifin en mukaddesidir.” (İbrahim Feridun, 1910: 188).

Honor was the value underlying this spirit of sacrifice and, in a broader perspective, the everyday activities of the common policemen, as summarized by the last sentences of police officer Nazıf’s short self-narrative:

“Evet, muhterem meslektaşlarım! Size yalvarır ve istirhâm ederek derim ki: dâ’imâ nâmûslu olunuz çünkü: (polis) : nâmûs-ı zâbitayı, nâmûs-ı hükûmeti, nâmûs-ı milleti temsîl eder.” (İbrahim Feridun, 2010 [1910]:184-185).²

The triptych mentioned here (honor of the police forces, honor of the government, honor of the nation) points out the role of privileged intermediaries the policemen were expected to play between the state and the society, an aspect which has been much studied by social scientists working on the police in various chronologies and geographies. Night and day in contact with the population, involved in the protection of individual life and property, the police embody “presences of state” in the everydaylife (Deluermoz, 2009). Beyond their policing tasks, through their exemplary behaviors, together with the gendarmes, they were considered as vectors capable to carry the modernizing/civilizing state project to the social and geographic margins of the Empire. Significantly, the police writers less lingered on their performances in solving crime or arresting thieves than on the exemplary value of their daily behaviors and activities among the society. The greater was the social or geographic distance of their “targets” from the center, the more this moralizing and civilizing mission grounded on their exemplary behaviors was stressed. While they pictured themselves looking for tax evaders in the remote provinces of the Empire, or policing the underground milieu of Istanbul, the writers did not only denounce illegal acts, but a whole range of disordered and illicit behaviors which were to be curbed by their admonitions and exemplary conducts³. Laziness, drunkenness, frequentation of prostitutes or loose women in urban context, ignorance of Turkish language and disrespect for the public goods and private property among Kurdish and Arab tribes were some of the moral and social evils pointed

² Yes, my dear fellows! I beg you, I exhort you: always be honorable because the police represents the honor of the police forces, the honor of the government, the honor of the nation.”

³ The geographical sphere of intervention of the police was limited to the urban areas, whereas the gendarmes were in charge of the rest of the territory. However the military background of many police officers had provided them with an experience in rural areas and distant provinces.

out by the policemen who, unsurprisingly, on the contrary portrayed themselves as well-mannered, polite and full of pedagogy to bring back those components of society to the right way and foster their integration in the Ottoman nation.

In the context of the second constitutional period, that moral mission acquired a very political character. Beyond compliance to the law or duties of any citizens, the police and the gendarmes were expected to reflect and spread the political values (freedom, equality, justice) promoted by the constitutional regime, or at least they gave themselves that role in their writings, arguing that they had some power to make the transformations of the political system sensible in the everyday life of the common people, and consequently to play a part in the process of legitimization of the new regime. The author of the book *Polis ve Jandarmalara Mahsûs Rehber* illustrated this dimension with an anecdote in which he was personally involved. At his arrival at Horan, he was faced with fearful and hostile people, who had lost any faith in the central power due to the misdeeds and abuses of the Hamidian police forces:

“Hükümet nâmına icrâi fa‘il ve hareket eden bu zâbıta me’mûrlarının şu uygunsuzlukları vicdân-ı beşri, hizret-i nefs-i insâniyeye cürhedâr eyleyen şu sarkıntılar yüzünden ahâli ‘indeinde hükümet ve devletin aslâ bir ehemiyet ve ‘itibârı kalmamıştı ”.

However, after the narrator behaved mercifully to them and made a speech where he explained the values of the new regime and the role of the gendarmes, the people became at once loyal and proclaimed their faith in the new government:

“Hükümete perverde eyledikleri emniyetizliğin bir i‘timâd ve itminâtı olmuştu. Gerek mücrimler ve gerek bu kadınlar hepsi birden ‘yaşasın ‘âdil hükümet’ diye bağıldılar.” (Hüseyin Hakkı, 1911:19)

No need to say, nothing testifies the truth of this kind of anecdotes but they constitute meaningful elements to understand the message that their authors tried to convey to their

works. In the quoted texts, honor appears as one of the key notions which would allow the police to achieve their mission to create a link between the power and its subjects and thus legitimize the new regime. Although the semantic field of honor has a long history in the legal and political language in the Ottoman Empire (see Başak Tuğ's paper), I would argue that a new dimension was added to its political meaning with the second constitutional period. Explicitly or implicitly, our police authors referred to the new challenges brought by the representative regime in terms of political legitimization. As obvious in the last quotation, in which the people celebrated the "fair government", the legitimization of the sultan or of the imperial political system was not anymore the only point at stake. The honorable policemen were not only representing the state, but also the government, itself a reflect of the committee which dominated the political arena.

Ibrahim Feridun, Hüseyin Hakkı, Hasan Niyazi, the authors of the works previously quoted, did not hide their political affiliations. Former members of the Action Army, they were loyal supporters of the Committee Union and Progress which dominated the political life after the 1909 failed attempt of counter-revolution. They saw themselves not only as the emanation of the state, but also as the defenders of the Unionists, who, they argued, constituted the only legitimate and efficient force to defend the regime against its enemy. In this respect, their taking up their pen to share their experiences as police officers, encourage the new recruits and promote the political and moral role of the police in the new regime can be read as a political act, a part of the official propaganda developed by the CUP during the early years of the Young Turk era. While promoting a down-to-earth view of police activity, rooted in exemplary behaviors and daily interactions with the people, their writings illustrated the need to go beyond these everyday experiences and develop a political conscience both among the members of the institution and the rest of the population.

The politicization of the police institution and the gradual take over of the Committee Union and Progress is beyond the scope of this article. Let it be sufficient to say here that the use of the notion of honor for political ends was not the monopoly of the Unionist side. Its blurred and extensive definition made it a tool for every party, with various stresses on its moral, religious and social dimensions. Rather than what it referred to, the political impact of honor lied in its being acknowledged as a shared-value, which could be used in the search for a common political idiom between the state and the different components of society. However, the increasing domination of the Unionists over the political sphere and the different institutions of the state gave a specific political tone to those publications by police officers. The legitimization of the power through its honorable and devoted police went together with the discredit of its declared or alleged opponents, accused of perverting the political, social and moral order.

III- Out of the honorable community

In the police writings under study, honor did not only work as an inclusive, connecting value. The lexical field of the positive values associated with honor was counterbalanced with a use, at least as frequent, of negations of honor: *şerefsiz*, *namussuz*, *edebsiz*, were some of the adjectives much used by the writers dealing with individuals or categories contesting the public or political order. According to the authors, an important aspect of police activity, -and at the same time a motivation for them taking up the pen- was to fight against “honorless” individuals and groups, denounced as enemy of the regime and the country. The moral and political characterizations of those enemies were articulated to define the major targets of police surveillance and repression, a characteristic which could already be observed during the reign of Abdülhamid II. The major differences with that previous period concerned the political identity of those targets, as well as an increasing weight on ethnic/national characterizations in the determinations of the honorable and shameful categories.

A closer study on the individuals and categories labelled as “honorless” makes more obvious the political and social dimensions of this stigmatization. Unsurprisingly, the fiercest criticisms were addressed to the individuals suspected of plotting against the new regime, especially the ones moved by conservative (or reactionary) ideals. Several chapters of Rıza Öge’s book, police officer during the second constitutional period and the first decade of the republic, focus on his activities of spying on and repressing the activities of supporters of the old regime and members of the religious opposition. Whereas not much was told about the subversive political activities of those suspects, the narrator devoted long passages to the physical and moral characteristics of those individuals, described as cunning, malicious and disloyal. Especially denounced was the influence they managed to exert over the common people through their ostentatious modesty and religiosity. In the eyes of the police officers, that apparent respectability was part of their political project of undermining the social support of the regime and made them be all the more dangerous and subversive. Although the author did not bring forth any concrete elements which would prove that modesty and religiosity to be fainted, he labeled as shameful the utilization of these moral values to political ends, while ignoring the fact that similar uses and abuses of morality were also at the core of the police discourse and practices of the time.

More direct attacks on the ground of immorality targeted categories which all belonged to the lower classes and marginal groups of the cities: individuals engaged in the prostitution business, *kabadayı*, or members of the bands (*çete*) active in the peripheries of the cities⁴. Interestingly enough, women are almost totally absent among those stigmatized categories. Whereas the police reports of the period attest the recurrence of the interventions targeting women defined as “uygunsuz” (prostitutes, ill-reputed or improperly dressed *-açık saçık-*

⁴ This urban dimension is closely linked to the attributions of the police, responsible for maintaining the order in the city while the gendarmes had the control on rural areas.

women), self-narratives of the police chose not to deal with this issue. One possible explanation of that silence is that the confrontation with women would not have contributed to the construction of a positive masculinity, an important aspect of the self-promotion at work in those writings: women were described as weak creatures, married or single, whose security and respectability was to be protected by the police, whereas the courage and boldness of the police members affirmed themselves in their man-to-man struggles against male adversaries. Significantly, the authors of those narratives emphasized the physical strength of their opponents, often linked to their social and/or professional background, such as the Greek *kayıkçı* to whom Rıza Öge devoted the third chapter of his book, or the ordinary prisoners who benefitted from the amnesty conceded by the new regime in the summer 1908 and who were according to Ibrahim Feridun at the origin of a tremendous rise of insecurity in Istanbul during the following months. Beyond their physical characteristics, those categories were depicted as lacking any morality and honor in their use of violence: they resorted to physical intimidation and assassinations to deter or eliminate their victims, for the sake of material gain and personal prestige. Rather than violence *per se*, its uncoded use was much blamed by our authors: attack of unarmed individuals, disproportion between the number of aggressors and their targets, subversion of duellos through the use of hidden weapons were among the practices that were attributed to these urban lower-classes, with the assumption that beyond their implications in specific criminal matters they constituted a permanent threat for the social and moral order, as groups or individuals.

This social over-determination of the definition of the dangerous classes is by no means a specificity of the Young Turk period, nor of the Ottoman context. The increasing criminalization of the lower-class and the accusations of moral depravation which targeted them were one of the major aspects of the process of urbanization and industrialization which took place from the late 18th century in many European and non European countries. More striking in these police narratives is the

combination of social and ethnic or national criteria in the stigmatization of dangerous categories in urban context. The case of the *kayıkçı* mentioned tells much about this perspective. While he denounced the vile character and manners of two Greek brothers involved in an affair of robbery and blackmail, Rıza Öge used against them a Turkish *kayıkçı* from Rize, pictured throughout the chapter as a most honorable man, eager to defend his nation and hardly accepting any material rewards for his contribution to the arrest of the Greek brothers, as illustrated by the following words:

“Ben bu işi bu memleketim için seve seve yaparım. Kuzum kölen olayım bana paradan puldan söz etme. Madem ki Devletin şerefi ve haysiyeti için uğraşıyoruz, ben bu domuzu yakalamak için devletten para mı alacağım, olmaz böyle şey” (Öge: 1957, 42)⁵

In Rıza Öge’s book, the references to the honor of the state and the nation went together with recurrent accusations against the foreign influences on Ottoman economy and law enforcement on the one hand, and the misdeeds of Greek citizens living in the Ottoman capital on the other hand. Rıza Öge is an extreme case in the polarization of honor along national categories. He is also the only one of our authors whose personal-narrative was not written during the second constitutional period but much later, in 1957. His taking part in the National Struggle, during which he was seriously wounded by Greek nationalists, is presented in his preface as the turning-point of his career and his life, and makes it difficult to evaluate to what extent his nationalist rhetoric and stigmatization of Greek citizens when dealing with the pre-war period reflected his feelings and experiences of the time or their reconstruction in the framework of the nationalist ideology of the Turkish Republic. One should nevertheless mention that he carefully distinguished the treacherous Greek citizens (Yunanlı) from the helpful Greek Ottoman subjects (Rum), whom he occasionally used as collaborators and whose taverns he frequented regularly. In this respect, his perspective fits quite well the early stage of the Young Turk period, when the stress on the nation was linked to the defense of the

⁵ I am very willing to do this job for my country. I beg you, do not even talk of money or rewards. We work for the honor and dignity of the State, how could I ask money from the state for the arrestation of this swine?

integrity of the empire rather than to the condemnation of its multi-confessional and multi-ethnic character.

In our other sources, the expressions “honor of the nation” (*namus-ı millet*) or the references to *vatan* referred to the equality in rights and duties of all the Ottoman subjects, and the genuine brotherhood which was to unify them:

“Edirne vatanımız olduğu gibi, İstanbul, İzmir, Kürdistân, Arabistan, Rumeli , Anadolu, Trablus ve bu askam dâhilindeki memâlik toprak ve de vatanımızdır. [...] Demek oluyor ki islâm, hristiyan, musevi ‘umûm-i osmânlılar yekdiğeriyle vatan kardeşirler. [...] Osmânlı millet pencesini teşkil eden ‘anâsır-i muhtelif [türk, ‘arab, kürd, laz, arnavud, tatar, boşnak, çerkes, rum, ermeni, musevi, bulgar, sirb ve saire] beyninde ayrılık olmayıp hepsi bir vatanın evlâdı, bir yurdun sakinleridir. Bunlar arasında ne derece hüsn-i ufaf ve ihtihâd husûle gelirse vatan ve millet o nisbette ka’ideler görür” (Hasan Niyazi, 1913: 10-11)

Such standard expressions of Ottomanism appeared as the official ideology promoted by these sources when defining the nation, even for the texts published in the context of the Balkan wars. The role imparted to the police forces was to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman nation through securing the lives and properties of all subjects, without any distinction of origins (the principle of neutrality, or impartiality at the core of police ethics) and through suppressing the elements threatening this integrity through their national or separatist ambitions.

It is difficult to determine to what extent this rhetoric of equality and rights influenced the everyday practices of the police members. In this respect, the autobiography published by Rafael Chikurel, a Jewish commissaire in Izmir in 1911, offers a much less positive image of the evolution of the police forces after 1908 (Nahum: 2002). On the one hand, he emphasized the discriminations which he himself suffered, as a Jew, in the police institution, from the part of his hierarchy, his colleagues, and the local Young Turk committee. On the other hand, defending himself against the accusation of torturing and blackmailing Armenian

revolutionaries during the Hamidian regime, he presented himself as a loyal servant to the Ottoman state and argued for the necessity to exert a specific control -including civil policing and close surveillance- on the Armenian subjects of that port-city, suspected to plot against the empire and the regime.

The increasing assimilation of the defense of the honor of the nation to the fight against its declared or alleged enemy is beyond the scope of this paper. The authors of the above mentioned works either retired a short time after publication (Rafael Chikurel) or were transferred (or returned) to the army during WWI (İbrahim Feridun, Hüseyin Hak, Hasan Niyazi, Rıza Öge). The military mobilization deprived the police forces from most of their recruits and introduced a break in the process of professionalization, which would only resume after the proclamation of the Republic. In this respect, military sources would probably be much more telling than police ones on the continuities and rupture in the official rhetoric of honor and its relationship with the concept of nation during the First World War and the National Struggle.

Conclusion

This brief analysis of a few sources written by police members active during the early 1910's has enabled us to identify two main functions in the use of the concept of honor. First, honor was a key notion in the construction of a professional identity for the post-1909 police institution. It enabled the police officers to stress the rupture with the corrupted and arbitrary police of the old regime, and to promote a police ethic based on the respect for the law and the service to the nation and the people. From that point of view, our sources all aimed to deliver a message to the present and future police recruits, providing them with representations of model characters and behaviors attributed to the authors themselves or other police members. Through those texts and the police journals published during the period, the police institution

engaged for the first time in corporate communication. At the core of this communication was the stress on the morality of the institution, pictured as a privileged career for honorable men and as a fair, impartial and efficient tool for the protection of the people.

However, our police sources did not only use honor as a tool for the reform and the cohesion of the institution. The centrality of honor in their narratives is at the same time closely related to the role they attributed to the police forces in the redefinition of state/society relationship in the constitutional regime. According to them, police embodied better than any other institution the value of honor, capable to strengthen the ties between the central power and the people, through the protection of the latter and the legitimization of the former. The political dimension of this mission attributed to the police forces is explicitly or implicitly present in all of our sources: the shift to a representative regime after 1908 introduced a new dimension to the policy of legitimization of power well studied for the Hamidian regime. State, government, nation were used indistinctly in our sources when they defined the police as the primary guarantor for the honor of those entities. The politicization of the police forces revealed by this kind of rhetoric was even clearer in the disqualification of the enemy of the regime, as deprived of morality and respectability. In this respect, the police sources offer an interesting standpoint to analyze the transformations of the political and public spheres during the early Young Turk period and the shift from an initial rhetoric of integration and connection through common values, to practices of exclusion and elimination.

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