AN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE OF *"MULTICULTURALISM"* AT THE BORDER CITY OF ANTAKYA

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Abstract

Antakya, a city on the Turkish border with Syria, has in contrast to many cities in Turkey, been successful historically in protecting its plurality and in this form it exhibits a good example of multiculturalism. However this is an authentic example peculiar to Antakya. The paper tries to put forth that the core of Antakya's multiculturalism today is comprised of the intermingling of component of the Ottoman old "*millet*" system with elements of modernization process implemented during the Republican period. Thus the paper asserts that it is not possible to understand how this authentic culture within the border field of a Unitarian Nation State has continued without looking at the different historical periods that reveal the reciprocal relationship between local, national and global. In this context the impacts of Ottomanist governance and of Kemalism; of the debates about the entrance into the E.U. as well as the recent crisis in Syria on inter-ethnic relations and the identification processes in Antakya are being scrutinized.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Multiculturalism, Border, Millet System, Kemalism, Secularism, Inter-Ethnic Relations.

ANTAKYA SINIR KENTİNDE OTANTİK BİR "ÇOKKÜLTÜRLÜLÜK" DENEYİMİ

Öz

Türkiye'nin Suriye sınırında bulunan Antakya kenti, Türkiye'nin pek çok kentinden farklı olarak, çoğulculuğunu tarihsel olarak korumuştur ve bu şekliyle çokkültürlülüğün iyi bir örneğini sergilemektedir. Ancak bu, Antakya'ya özgü otantik bir örnektir. Makale, bugün Antakya'da var olan çokkültürlülüğün özünün Osmanlı eski millet sistemi ile Cumhuriyet döneminde uygulanan modernleşme sürecinin unsurlarının bir karışımından oluştuğunu ileri sürmektedir. Dolayısıyla makale yerel, ulusal ve küresel arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiyi ortaya çıkaracak farklı tarihsel dönemlere bakmadan, bu otantik kültürün bir üniter ulus devletin sınır alanında nasıl süregeldiğini anlamanın mümkün olmadığını vurgular. Bu bağlamda, makalede Osmanlı ve Kemalist yönetimlerin; Avrupa Birliği'ne giriş sürecindeki

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tartışmaların; ve Suriye'deki son krizin Antakya'da gruplar arası ilişkileri ve kimlikleşme süreçlerini nasıl etkilediği irdelenir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Etnisite, Çok Kültürlülük, Sınır, Millet Sistemi, Kemalizm, Laiklik, Etnik Gruplar Arası İlişkiler.*

The Historical Authenticity of Antakya

In 4th century before Christ, Libanius, the Greek Sophist Philosopher[1] said "*it seems to me that one of the most pleasing things in cities, and one of the most useful, is meetings and mixings with other people (...) If a man had the idea of traveling all over earth with a concern not to see how the cities looked but to learn their individual ways, Antioch would fulfill his purpose and save him journeying. If he sits in our market-place, he will sample every city; there will be so many people from each place with whom he can talk*".

In 2005, Ismet Okyay, a Professor of Architecture from Antakya[2] expressed his feelings about this hometown as "*the cities, where you spend your childhood and youth deeply affect your life and your identity, especially if this is a 2500 year old city ... Antakya, still appears as a fairy tale city, it is still my Babil. It is a place which has a variety of people and a place where peace is common. When Antakya was a busy metropolitan city, the present well known cities, New York, London and Paris were not even established in the world geography. Even Istanbul was a small settlement*".

It is quite astonishing today to hear so often such similar cultural portrayals of Antakya[3] after 2000 years. Despite losing a lot from its historical importance and cosmopolitanism[4], Antakya – known in ancient times as Antioch – has remained as one of the most ancient Turkish cities with a traditional multicultural character since the Roman Empire[5]. Its inhabitants of 213,570 are made up of more than twelve ethnic and/or religious groups, which

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1   In Christine Kondoleon, *The Lost Ancient City,* Princeton University Press, 2000, p.11.
2   İsmet Okyay, Antakya city and Architecture, the fifth meeting of National Congresses of International Union of Architects, *Turkish Congregations, Territories and Architecture,* Antakya, 26 February 2005.
3   The historical city of Antakya, at the time of its annexation to Turkey, together with the surrounding counties was named the city of Hatay. This study focuses on the present Antakya located at the center district of Hatay. The demographic profiles of the other districts and regions of Hatay are different from Antakya. However in situations encompassing both Antakya and its surrounding counties Hatay will be used within the text.
4   Situated on the Silk Road (a historical trade route between the Mediterranean and China), Antakya was very important for the European traders. During the period of the Byzantium Empire, Antioch was the capital of Ancient Syria, a vital marketplace at the crossroads between East and West. In the 10th century it was one of the most important markets, where Eastern and Western traders met and traded. See: Ataman Demir, *Çağlar İçinde Antakya,* Akbank Yayını, 1996.
5   Eyüp Özveren, "Zaman İçinde Avrupa, Akdeniz Dünyası ve Antakya Üzerine Düşünceler", in Eyüp Özveren, Oktay Özel, Süha Ünsal and Kudret Emiroğlu (eds.), *Akdeniz Dünyası*, İletişim Yayınları, 2006, p.25.

include Arabs, Turks, and Kurds, Circassians, Armenians, Afghans, Roma Gypsies bounded to various religious affiliations under the umbrella of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

In the context of Turkey's virtual entrance into the EU, Antakya was presented as proof of the pluralistic openness of the Turkish state for ethnic-religious minorities. Actually, it is definitely true that when visiting the city, one immediately feels its multicultural charm. In its antique there is a cluster of Synagogues, Mosques, tombs of Saints, Orthodox, Catholic and New Protestant Churches. The historical elements and structures that have blended but remained effectual in the variety of ways that have allowed continuity of the authenticity of the city.

What this paper argues is that Antakya's multiculturalism today incorporates some components of the Ottoman old millet system – a social system in which each religious community was allowed to be governed by its own religious legislation and its religious leader(s) – and elements of advanced modernity and that the diachronic dimension in the composition of Antakya's multiculturalism is fundamental for its understanding.

Under a multicultural society we understand a society where the political organization of the multi-ethnic components permits clear expressions in public life as seen by each ethnic group separately. We call some specific aspects of such a multiculturalism diachronically derived, when some principles of organization of social life, due to their "*longue durée*" existence in the past[6], are resistant to erosion by new, more modern principles of organization that they still remain active and have very visible consequences. Although, the field is being explained as "*multicultural*", this study avoids relying theoretically on theories of multiculturalism due to the fact that there is no coherent multicultural policies conducted by the governments of Turkey that are comparable with any other case of multiculturalism in Europe, Canada or Australia.

Accordingly, some fundamental aspects in the relations of individuals belonging to different communities in Antakya, as well inside as across their communities, even today, should still be explained in terms of a "*millet*" (confessional communities of Muslims, Christians or Jews) derived interpretation of what theoretically may be called the traditional "*core elements of ethnicity*"[7]. In ethnic groups, Nash made a distinction between the core elements and the surface pointers of ethnicity. Core elements are: an ideology of biological-genealogical continuity of a group, commensality (including the rule of endogamy), and the devotion to a common religious cult (linked with a common past). Less important, but also very useful for ethnic we-consciousness are the "*surface pointers*", i.e. the

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6   Jacques Le Goff, *La civilization de l'Occident medieval*. Paris: Arthau, 1984, p.346.
7   Manning Nash, "The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World", in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (ed.), *Ethnicity*, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp.24-28.

whole range of other cultural symbols that permit groups to put their difference in evidence vis-à-vis others, such as language, hair dress, clothing etc.

In line with Nash, we emphasize that the awareness of a biological-genealogical continuity and of a common religion, i.e. the core elements of ethnicity, has been solidly anchored during the Ottoman millet system and that, due to its "*longue durée*" perspective, it has not been fundamentally menaced by later policies of the French administration and the Republic of Turkey. What has been the object of erosion are mostly the "*surface pointers*", namely language. It doesn't mean that the current practices in the various communities should be seen as non-flexible, non fluent or essentialized. The multiple and overlapping "*categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves*"[8] due to modernity, education and the impact of global events on large parts have also shaped its population. In that sense, culture in Antakya is constantly in flux, multiple and complex[9]. In this line, the paper will develop the idea that the structuring of kinship, neighbourhoods, professionalism and political practices may fundamentally relate to different periods and proclivities in Antakya's history, and what has led to a genuine cultural mix. As the city is a border place, it would also be very instructive to observe the interrelationship of the geopolital border with flexed or rigidified cultural boundaries.

This anthropological study is based on a qualitative research using open-ended questions, engaging in in-depth interviews and participant observation between 2005 and 2013 as data collection methods. More than 150 people were interviewed among basically four communities, which are the Turkish speaking Sunni majority and the three major Arabic speaking minority groups - Orthodox Christians, Alawite Muslims and Sunni Muslims as well as individuals of other social, cultural groups. Taking into account socio-economic, cultural and political diversity, the interviewees were classified according to the criteria of gender, age and education. This study provides a macro-anthropological perspective in order to understand   influence of power relations, global economics, and the relation between the citizen and the state on everyday life of the border inhabitants of Antakya.

With the quotations from interviews that take place within the text, the religion, gender, age and what academic level the person had studied to are also indicated. Since the census conducted in 1965, no work has been carried out to measure ethnic differences. So, it is not possible to give any definite data about the demographic profile of the communities. Actually, as an ethical stance, it would be meaningful not to mention about the approximations of the communities, especially when such categorizations are used to make an analysis

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8   Frederic Barth, Pathan Identity and its Maintenance, in Frederic Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundarie,* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969, p.10.
9   *Ibid.;See also* Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural complexity: Studies in the social organization of meaning,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

of strategic power relations associated with the Syrian issue on the basis of their ethnicity.

Social Organization: From the Millet System to the Kemalist Republic

Antakya became a city of the Ottoman Empire in 1516 and bound to the Aleppo province (in modern day Syria). At the end of World War I (1918) and for the following twenty years it was under French rule. After Turkey made a request to the League of Nations, it was declared as part of Turkey (founded in 1923) by diplomatic means in 1939[10]. While many cities lost their "*millet*" based plural characteristics due to various circumstances such as migrations, population exchanges between Greece and Turkey with the Lausanne Treaty of 1923[11], and the Property Tax of 1942, Antakya, has protected its multicultural environment. Nonetheless, in Antakya too Jews and Christians, who were also exposed to pay Property tax, either lost their wealth or migrated abroad, which in turn resulted in a sharp dwindling of the community to almost 50%. Islamic basis of the Ottoman state and its heterogeneous structure were seen by the Turkish government as the main cause of the backwardness in Ottoman society[12]. For this reason, a new, modern, secular nation state was created, based on the idea of one nation sharing a common Turkish culture and Turkish language[13].

Established minorities from late Ottoman times have experienced different regimes that have regulated their private and – more decisively – their public life. In the Ottoman millet system, each religious community had the right to be governed by its own religious legislation, religious leader; and specialised in different sectors within the economic market. In the millet system the main millets were the Muslim millet, the Greek Orthodox, Jewish and Armenian ones. Muslims of any ethnic background enjoyed precisely the same rights and privileges. The local practices of Antakya were similar to the rest of the Ottoman countries. Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Armenians and Jews enjoyed their own group rights and freedom of religion. The Arab Alawite community, as well as the Anatolian Alevis[14], Shi'as, and Yezidis (that were seen as deviant

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10   Ahmet Faik Türkmen, *Mufassal Hatay Tarihi*, V.1, Cumhuriyet Matbaası, İstanbul,1930; Serhan Ada, *Türk-Fransız İlişkilerinde Hatay Sorunu*, İstanbul Bilgi Universitesi Yay., Istanbul, 2005.

11   See Nergis Canefe, "Turkish Nationalism and Ethno-symbolic Analysis: The Rules of Exception", *Nations and Nationalism 8 (2)*, 2002, pp.133-155.

12   Fuat Keyman and Senem Aydın, *Modernleşme ve Milliyetçilik*, Gündogan Yay., Ankara, 1993, p.4.

13   Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, Routledge New York, 1993; Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, London, 1993.

14   Actually both Alevis and Alawites belong to the Caferi, Sufi denomination of Islam, which has a syncretic, heterodox nature. While the name Alevi refers to Turk and Kurd groups, the name Alawite refers to Arab groups. The Alawite groups include those who also live in other countries of the Middle East. Even though they share the same philosophy of religion

forms of Islam) were generally considered to be part of the Muslim millet[15]. However, they were neither within the Muslim millet nor were they allowed to be out of it[16]. At the end of the Ottoman period, the sociocultural practices of the millet system have remained intact until 1939 under French rule.

Antakya passed into a Kemalist system almost 16 years later than the other cities in Turkey. Contrary to the Ottoman times, the new republic of Turkey, based on secular Kemalist principles, provided a public space for heterodox Muslim minorities, who were excluded by the Sunni dominated "*Muslim millet*"[17]. As a consequence, the four communities combined their religion with a very benevolent attitude to the Kemalist regime: the Alawites because of secularism and the Christians because of minority rights given in the Treaty of Lausanne. Indeed especially for formally or informally defined minority communities, secularism and democracy have been significant principles which envisage equality and peace among citizens. On the other hand, whilst the term "*millet*" was referring to confessional communities rather than their ethnic origins in the Ottoman Empire, along with the ideology of modern Turkey the term had been transformed to refer to the "*nation*" in Turkey. However, it also retains its use as a religious classification. Religion is an important factor determining the continuity of specialisations in commerce and of endogamy among the ethnic communities who live in Antakya.

The Turkish speaking Sunni Muslim majority of Antakya has further increased due to the emigration of many Christians to Western countries and the immigration of Turkish speaking Sunnis from other cities or villages. As well as becoming integrated into the Turkish state, they also became integrated

and Islam with Alevis (Kurdish and Turkish), their religious rituals contain a few differing characteristics. The Alawite do not recite their worship with music. It was during the colonial period that the name Alawite entered literature through the French authors who wrote the first literary texts on them. For these reasons the two groups are named differently within the text. For similarities and differences among these groups, see Marianne Aringberg-Laanatza, 'Alevis in Turkey-Alevis in Syria: Similarities and Differences,' in: Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga, and Catharina Raudvere (eds) *Alevi Identity.* Stockholm: Swedish Research Institute, 1988.

15 Kemal Karpat, "The Ottoman Ethnic and Confessional Legacy in the Middle East", in Milton J. Esman and Itamar Rabinovich (ed.), *Ethnicity, Pluralism and State in the Middle East,* Cornell University Press, London, 1988, pp. 35-54; Elie Kedourie, "Ethnicity, Majority and Minority in the Middle East", in Milton J. Esman and Itamar Rabinovich (ed.), *Ethnicity, Pluralism and State in the Middle East,* Cornell University Press, London,1988, pp.25-35.

16 İlber Ortaylı, "Alevilik, Nusayrilik ve Bâb-ı Âlî", in Irene Melikoff, Ilber Ortaylı and Hakan Yavuz (ed.), *Tarihi ve Kültürel Boyutları ile Türkiye'de Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler,* İnkılap Kitabevi, Istanbul, 1998, pp. 193-199; Mustafa Öz, "Nusayriyye", in Irene Melikoff, Ilber Ortaylı and Hakan Yavuz (ed.), *Tarihi ve Kültürel Boyutları ile Türkiye'de Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler,* İnkılap Kitabevi, Istanbul, 1998 , pp.181-192; Türkmen, *op.cit.*

17 Fuat Bozkurt, *Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinde Alevilik,* Doğan Kitapçılık, İstanbul, 2000; Ayhan Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte Toplumsal Kurumlar ve İktidar,* Mülkiyeliler Birliği, Ankara, 1996; Marianne Aringberg-Laanatza, "Alevis in Turkey-Alevis in Syria: Similarites & Differences", in Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga, E. & Catharina Raudvere (ed.), *Alevi Identity,* Swedish Research Institute, Stockholm, 1998, pp.151-165.

into the national majority. Nevertheless, the typical Antakya cohabitation model where various communities are dependent on one another continued to function rather well. Kemalism and the experience of living together for centuries were a guarantee for a neutral, public, political culture. Some rioting did occur[18] but the majority of inhabitants preferred the status quo.

Under the Kemalist regime the Arab Alawites in Antakya became an economically and culturally significant community particularly in the 1970s. For many of them working in Arabic Gulf countries was an economic trump. They are historically an integral part of the Middle East, including the coastal areas extending from Syria to Turkey. They belong to the Caferi branch of Islam and have heterodox beliefs; they do not obey Sharia law. The principle of secularism plays a significant role in their lives[19]. Together with Turkish and Kurdish Alevis, they constitute the second largest religious community, after the Sunnis in Turkey[20]. However, while Alawites within the millet system were considered the underclass[21] under the Kemalist regime a major struggle was exerted to change this class. The secularisation of Turkey made their gradual emancipation possible[22]. Furthermore, due to a large section of Christians dealing solely with commerce and crafts, and often emigrating to Syria, the Alawites were able to fill gaps in much-needed skill areas[23]. This gave the Christians and Alawites the power to protect their ethno-religious profiles.

Not only based on the philosophy of Alawism, but also on very close social interaction, there are many cultural similarities among the Arab Alawites and the Arab Orthodox Christians in Antakya. Arab Christians are officially bound to the Istanbul Greek Orthodox Patriarchy. Nevertheless, spiritually their church, which had been under the Patriarchy of Antioch, became allied with the Patriarchy of Damascus in Syria after their communities dwindled in numbers in the period of the Seljuks (1268)[24]. Until today this link with Damascus has remained valuable[25]. Within the millet system Christians had their own

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18   Ada, *op.cit.*
19   See Tord Olsson, "The Gnosis of Mountanieers and Townspeople. The Religion of Syrian Alawites, or the Nusairis", in Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga, E. & Catharina Raudvere (ed.), *Alevi Identity,* Swedish Research Institute, Stockholm, 1998, pp.167-177; and Martin Stokes, "Ritual, Identity and the State: An Alevi (Shi'a) Cem Ceremony", in Kirsten Schulze, Martin Stokes and Colm Campbell (ed.), *Nationalism, Minorities and Diasporas: Identities and Rights in the Middle East*, Tauris Academic Studies, London, 1996.
20   Bedriye Poyraz, "The Turkish State and Alevis: Changing Parameters of an Uneasy Relationship", *Middle Eastern Studies*, V. 41, No.4, July 2005, pp.503-516.
21   Mehmet E. Galip-Et Tavil, *Nusayriler*, I. Özdemir (trans.), İstanbul: Çivi Yazıları, 2000; Öz, *op.cit.*; Türkmen, *op.cit.*
22   Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kurds, Turks and the Alevi revival in Turkey", *Middle East Reports*, No. 200 (Summer 1996), pp.7-10.
23   Barbara Aswad, *Land, Marriage and Lineage Organization among Sedentarized Pastoralists in the Hatay, Southern Turkey: A Diachronic Analysis,* Ann Arbor, MI, 1968; Aringberg-Laanatza, *op.cit.*
24   Elçin Macar and Yorgo Benlisoy, *Fener Patrikhanesi,* Ayraç Yayınevi, Ankara, 1996.
25   Peter Andrews, *Ethnic Groups in Republic of Turkey,* L. Reichert, Wiesbaden, 1989.

economic niches. Kemalism offered a model that made it possible for the ones who could remain after the influence of the First World War and the Property Tax, to continue their former practices in the public realm that had become a Turkish language space.

Things were also positive for the Arabic speaking Sunnis, first as they find Turkey more modern than the Arab world, second as they were also part of the majority population in terms of Religion. Arabic being their mother tongue was a plus in terms of work opportunities in Gulf countries, and finding positions of employment within the State as imam or muezzin. The stringent Kemalist politico-institutional rules brought them neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. Nevertheless, like the other two Arab communities, they were exposed to political control due to their proximity to the border, even there were times when "*the people had to seek permission to go to their farms as after sunset the road would close because it was at the border*" (Arab Sunni, 43, male (M), univ.).

Looking back at the 1940s, we see how a number of consequences of the late Ottoman millet system were able to continue in the beginning of Kemalism. The "*core elements*" of ethnicity[26] were not made a topic of discussion: the continuation of their own minority group, endogamous practices, and cults (though out of the political public realm) could continue as before, while the economic niches that had been so important for Christians and Alawites at the local market, could continue as a politically and religiously neutral option. What changed drastically were some ethnic "*surface pointers*"[27], mostly concerning language.

Since the 1950s, more so the 1970s, Antakya like other Turkish cities has also experienced a rise in national religio-political interpretation of national identity. The emergence of the universalist, equalitarian citizenship demands within the context of Turkey's entrance to EU in the 2000s; and since 2012, the recent developments in relation to the last crisis in Syria and its spillover risks for Turkey, has influenced the existence, inter-ethnic relations and identification processes among Antakya inhabitants.

Religious Communities and Marriages: The Rule of Endogamy

The best guarantee for the conservation of an ideology of biological-genealogical continuity in a city such as Antakya is the respect for the rule of endogamy. Even though marriages among people of different religions or affiliations are no longer a taboo, similarity of religion remains the most important criterion in marriage practices.

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26   Nash, *op.cit.*
27   *Ibid.*

There are Sunni who marry with the Alawite but they are not conservative. Such incidents are very rare with us. If they are insistent on marrying someone who is not going to cover up in the future they are placed under an economic siege. (Arab Sunni, M, 43, h.s.)

Our other son also wanted to marry a Sunni but we did not consent, he is still upset with us. (Arab Alawite, M, 67, p.s.)

We live in the same neighborhood as the Alawite. We do not give away or take brides from one another but there have been instances of people falling in love, instances of taking brides and instances of not being able to do so as it was not their destiny. (Turk Sunni, Female (F), 33, p.s.)

The society compared to the past is much more tolerant towards this subject but again it is still not in the same meaning as we would like it to be. I am of the view that silently and deeply those things that are unwritten are still protecting their validity. (Arab Alawite, F, 45, h.s.)

A high cultural capital which comes from a high level of education, and high material capital, are very important elements which help individuals to have inter-ethnic and/or inter-religious marriages without confronting problems. "*The problems are related to which class the people come from. If they had achieved economic independence they could make this decision easily. Culture comes with wealth*" said a respondent (Arab Christian, M, 50, university). Despite all the changes in Antakya, the institution of marriage still "*serves to preserve traditional values*"[28]. There are freedoms in such issues but only a small group seems to enjoy them.

Religious Cults at the Labour Market

In commerce we also see that the millet system is still effectual. Inside the city, the communities were categorised into specific professional categories. Thus a very advanced division of labour positively influences Antakya's cohesion. These historical categories are based on social organisation, which is called *Ahism*. *Ahism* (*Ahilik*) was a traditional way of organising professions where crafts, ethics, solidarity and hospitality affected business operations and economic dealings. *Ahism* dates back to the Seljuks in the early 13th century. Providing training and social education to its members, who belong to various professions, *Ahism* helped people gain prestigious positions in the community, and shaped the Ottoman and Turkish business ethics and economic activities through their principles. After the 16th century, these categorisations were transformed into guilds. Today, the "*Guild and Artisans Organisation*" and

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28   William A. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers: Fort Worth, 1999, p.244.

different Guild Unities are restraining instead inside this organization[29]. In a personal communication, a sociologist from Antakya, Mehmet Salmanoğlu, explains the division of the professions in the market from the past to the present (Antakya, 21 August 2004).

"*Retailers used to do various jobs in the market place. Mostly Christians and some Jews are the jewellers. The textile industry was in the hands of the Christians but later the Turkish Sunnis learnt this area and took over. Metal works and Bakeries are run by the Alawites. The leather market is in hands of the Christians. Shoe making, furniture making and carpentry were in the hands of the Turkish Sunnis. Butchery is in the hands of the Alawites, in the past it used to be in the hands of the Jews. Manufacturing is in the hands of the Jews. In the past, before they went away the Armenians were in the majority in the long market (uzun çarşı). I think at that time they used to be involved in commerce and food based jobs …*

This historical division of labour is a structure remaining from the 'Lonca system' (the Guild of Tradesmen). At that time every occupation had a saint ... The textile's saint was Saint İdris, the metal workers' was Şeyh Delati, and the carpenters' was Habibineccar. For example, they used to open up with 'Bismillahirahmaninrrahim' (in the name of God) and the blessing of our Saint Habib-i Neccar".

It is important to remember that the economic orientation towards the Arabic markets, present in the early years of the integration into the Turkish State, has remained important for the economic prosperity of Antakya. In this sense, the Gulf War in 1990 and then The Iraqi War in 2003 and today the crisis in Syria further contributed to the deterioration of the city's economy.

Language

Social scientists and others have conceptualized a relationship between culture, society and language[30]. If anything has gradually lost its value since the entrance of Antakya into Turkey (1939), it is the use of the Arabic language. As a consequence of such cultural politics, the official language of Turkish has also begun to be a substitute for the Arabic mother tongue spoken between parents and children in the home. Although it does not entirely replace Arabic speaking in the home, parents speak Turkish with their children as a strategy for better integration within school. The language in schools was Turkish, no exceptions were allowed. Arabic does not attract young generations any more, even though knowledge of Arabic is very useful for doing business with Arabic countries.

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29   Kayhan Atik, "Ahilik Teşkilatı Ve Türkler Üzerindeki Etkiler", *Ahilik Araştırmaları Dergisi (Ahad)*, S.1, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ahilik Araştırmaları Merkezi, Ankara, Haziran 2005; Gürhan Uysal, « Türk İş Ve Meslek Ahlâkînin Tarihî Ve Kültürel Boyutu Olarak Ahilik Geleneği », *Ahilik Araştırmaları Dergisi (Ahad)*, 1. Sayı, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ahilik Araştırmaları Merkezi, Ankara, Haziran 2005.

30   Ralph Grillo, *Pluralism and the politics of difference: State, culture, and ethnicity in comparative perspective,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1998, p.326.

In a personal communication, Leyla (Arab Alawite, F, 38, univ.) interprets this situation as "*voluntary assimilation*" as an adaptation strategy through education. Hatay has been very successful in having high numbers of students going onto study at universities.

The Christian community also has its own position towards the usage of Arabic. Despite the older generations speaking it very fluently, they do not insist on teaching it to their children for various reasons such as avoiding alienation of the youth and external migration to Western countries. "*There is an incredible migration to Europe. The Christians have taken the Antakya culture to the four corners of the earth*" (Christian, M, 60, primary s.).

Arab Sunnis are the community who use Arabic the most fluently and actively. The fact that they mostly migrated from the villages to the city and some of them have closer connections with the majority Turkish community through political preferences and Sunnism creates different attitudes towards protecting their mother tongue. Nevertheless, among the youth there is the same tendency as with the Alawites and the Christians - the assimilation to Turkish has started: "*Every family that is Arabic essentially speaks Arabic at home. My siblings did not want to learn Arabic. My mother speaks Arabic to them, but they respond in Turkish*" (Arab Sunni, F, 30, univ.).

In general, despite language still being important in keeping relations among different Arabic speaking communities at the public level, their way of life, which is particularly shaped by religion, is very important in terms of putting differences and similarities, and to shape relations, at the private level. Among Arab Sunnis, religious identity seems to dominate the Arabic identity and unify them with the Turkish community by adopting the Turk-Islam synthesis. For Arab Sunnis, learning Arabic does not seem to be a problem as, like the Turkish Sunnis, they can learn the Arabic alphabet in the Koran classes given in the mosques by their Imams. "*We have a partnership with Turks politically and religiously but not in terms of nationalism, in the sense of the Nationalist Action Party*" (Arab Sunni, M, 44, univ.).

For all Arabic speaking communities, at the national level, assimilating to Turkish seems to be a helpful and effective strategy for adopting the Turkish culture and gaining higher positions in society through education and the valuable social capital linked to contact with the majority Turks. They generally do not present their ethnic identitification in contrast to an overarching Turkish one. However at the local level, speaking Arabic has been an important element first, providing connections in business and second, contributing to the network between Arabic communities. Especially among Arab Sunnis, loss of the Arabic language could weaken their relations with other Arabic communities and prioritizing their Sunni religious identity above all, may create a clear division between Sunnis and others. The Arab Sunni community can be a buffer group

which, until now, has provided various connections between the Turkish Sunnis and the non-Sunni groups.

Religion

In Republic of Turkey, the national identity was articulated as Turkish. Being Turkish meant acceptance of the Turkish identity, speaking Turkish and being Muslim[31]. Nevertheless, the State was fundamentally secular, and didn't accept Islamic visible signs in the official, public realm, so that Islam remained a faith in the individual realm[32]. Only Greek Orthodox and Armenian Christians and Jews were formally defined as "*legal*" minorities[33]. Furthermore, the State would accept sub-identities as long as Turkish citizenship remained intact. The non-Muslims, heterodox Muslims, Arabs and Kurds enjoyed equal rights as Turks as far as the formal definition of citizenship goes[34].

Since the 1950s and especially the 1970s, a gap has grown between the two forms of citizenship, the formal and the substantive one[35]. Since the 1950s and the military coup of 1980, a gradual process of Islamisation began in Turkey[36]. 1980 was an important turning point in the political history of Turkey. "*The radical left, in which many Alevis had found a political home, was destroyed after the military coup of 1980*"[37]. During this process, Sunni Islam was imposed by strengthening the Directorate of Religious Affairs, building numerous new mosques and appointing Sunni prayer leaders (Imams) not only in Sunni towns and villages but also in Alevi communities, and by giving obligatory religious education in schools[38]. All these measures could be interpreted as the government's endorsement of efforts to bring the Alevis into the Sunni fold[39]. Fundamentally the regime has remained Kemalist, but at some points the weight of the Sunni majority at the national level has become more apparent, and has also affected Antakya.

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31 Baskin Oran, *Kuresellesme ve Azinliklar*, Imaj, Ankara, 2001, p. 140; Rıdvan Akar, 20. Yüzyılın Malazgirtleri. *Birikim: Etnik Kimlik ve Azınlıklar*, 1995: p.74.

32 Keyman and Aydın, *op.cit.,* p.4.

33 Oran, *op.cit.*

34 Kemal Kirişçi, "The Case of the Kurds in Turkey", in Gladney Dru (ed.), *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, Stanford University Press, 2000, Stanford, pp.227-245.

35 Nergis Canefe , *op.cit.*; Oran, *Türkiye'de Azinliklar,* Iletisim Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2004; Kirişçi, *op.cit.*; Kenan Işın and Patricia Wood, *Citizenship and Identity,* Sage, London, 1999; Ferhunde Özbay, *Women, Family and Social Change in Turkey*, Unesco, Bangkok, 1990.

36 Ahmad, *op.cit.*; Zürcher, *op.cit.*; Yalçınkaya, *op.cit.* ; Canefe, *op.cit.*

37 Van Buinessen, *op.cit.*, p.5.

38 Van Buinessen, *op.cit.*; Zürcher, *op.cit.*; Riza Zelyut, *Aleviler Ne Yapmalı,* Yön Yayınları, İstanbul, 1993; Cemal Şener, *Alevilik Olayı: Toplumsal Bir Başkaldırının Kısa Tarihçesi.* Yön Yay., İstanbul, 1998.

39 Martin Van Bruinessen, "The Debate on the Ethnic Identity of the the Kurdish Alevis" in Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi (ed.), *Syncretistic religious communities in the near east: Collected papers,* Brill, New York, 1997, pp.23-31.

Ignorance of minorities is not confined to religious issues. Many Alawites and Christians feel that they are excluded from state institutions and have stated that they wish to benefit from equal rights of political participation. What a respondent said: "*As a Christian I do not find myself inferior to anybody in Antakya, but in the rest of Turkey it is a different story*" (Christian, M, 30, univ.). More than once, it concerns details (e.g. the problems that local civil servants made for Christian names that Christians wanted to give to their children), but all the details together have created a social climate that has become an obstacle for a spontaneous life style for religious minorities.

The Imagination of Humankind as a Cohesive, Regional Identity

People in a globalizing world may have different loyalties and various communities as markers of reference. In their judgment they may move from a focus on the local to a focus on the national, and furthermore a "*system of nations*" or the transnational, to the universal of humankind[40]. The inhabitants of Antakya may be influenced by family or their neighborhood (determined by various ethnic "*core elements*", variegating from one ethno-religious community to the other), but also by a regional loyalty vis-à-vis Antakya as a city, by Turkey as a State, by Islam or Christianity as a transnational system, and by a universal idea of humankind. Many people of Antakya belonging to the various ethnic/religious groups seem to adopt a universal idea of humankind and often mention the "*cosmopolitan*" nature of Antakya that has existed for centuries, having been at the crossroads of various civilizations and a vital marketplace at the crossroads between East and West[41].

"*Antakya is a city of tolerance. No one interferes with anyone. I tie this up with the kind of experience that has been gained from the past, to understanding that there are others and that they are not different. This also has historical roots. It originates from the fact that many different cultures have lived here from back in the past. For example in central Anatolia originating from the fact of seclusion there is no culture of tolerance to others over there*" (Arab Sunni, M, 40, univ.).

"*Historically this is a cosmopolitan place. The people here have learnt to accept each other*" (Turkish Sunni, M, 44, h.s.).

"*If there exists a compromising culture, it is centered in Antakya; there is no other place where so many religions get along with each other*". (Arab Christian, M, 33, h.s.)

"*I am happy with living in a multicultural place. I am living in an apartment similar to the United Nations where the social circle is developed*" (Arab Alawite, F, 50, univ.).

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40 Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Sage, London, 1992, pp.25, 29.
41 Özveren, op.cit. pp.13-26.

"*There are many advantages of living in a place made up of different communities. I have the same pleasure from listening to the Muslims call to prayer (ezan) and (Christian) church bells. I do not perceive them as religious. In Antakya there is a mystic air*" (Turk Sunni, F, 35, h.s.).

"*Conceptions of the future may play a far larger role than ideas of the past in group politics today*"[42]. From the 1990s onwards, joining Europe – an idea with roots in late Ottoman and early Kemalist times – had played an important role in creating hope for protecting multiculturalism and modernisation in Antakya, even if the process today has come to a standstill. Individuals and groups know that their wish for "*further democratisation of Turkish politics*" could be accelerated through the policy influences of the European Union[43]. They advocated membership in the union with the EU because they thought "*the EU being a pressure element was speeding up the implementation of democratic law*" (Christian, M, 55, secondary s.); for the "*civilised laws of the EU like liberty, freedom and equality*" (Turk Sunni, M, 42, univ.); "*for the democratisation movement to work*" (Alawite, F, 40, univ.).

Yet, Appadurai also states that, "*imagination, especially when collective, can become the fuel for action*"[44] . However, this kind of imagination is not really collective in Antakya because of a totally different reason. First for the ones whose expectations in terms of secularisation, democracy and representation were not fulfilled such as the respondents who said "*everybody lives hiding their religion*" (Turk Sunni, M, 40, univ.) or "*they were trying to portray the Alawite as the weak face of the society*" (Arab Alawite, M, 44, univ.); second for the ones who are distant or criticizes these trends for favouring ethnocentricism, conservatism and on their pre-conceptions of other communities, conservatism and communitarianism as the respondents categorize other communities on the basis of whether "*they are not real (!) Muslims*" or "*drink alcohol which God forbids*". Actually, in-migrations are found by the city inhabitants to be an important fact behind the development of the Antakya culture.

"In Antakya there is a determined group of people whose social environments are very modern and cultured. However the flow of migration to the city tries to change the social life of the city. It has changed it already ... There is more conservatism among the migrants; they have not improved themselves in social and cultural terms" (Arab Christian, M, 65, h.s.).

"*When we talk about the life in Antakya in terms of its culture we should ask: which Antakya; old or new? There was an incredible socio-cultural life in Antakya between the 1940s, when it was annexed to Turkey and 1978, when anarchism in Turkey reached its peak. Even Istanbul could not compete with Antakya … Like the whole of Turkey, Antakya is also becoming a village city after all the migrations from rural to*

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42   Appadurai, *op.cit.*, p.145.
43   Öniş, *op.cit.*, p.12.
44   Appadurai, *op.cit.*, p.146.

urban … *How many people have never been in the museum, many do not even know where it is (…) We gradually lose the culture of the city*" (Turk Sunni, F, 58, p.s.).

Brettell emphasises "*multiple and overlapping sets of ascriptive loyalties that make for multiple identities*"[45] which are not "*stable and continuous*" in complex urban situations in the US, The same is true in Antakya today. There is a difference, however, namely that some locations have remained strongly determined by the "*core elements*" of ethnicity. There are also already many different ideas about modernity. They belong to institutions as well as the horizons of individual citizens. Even though the demands for religious representation were not fulfilled in terms of secularism, the Kemalist political tradition has been the glue between "*old*" and "*new*".

Politics

The political life as a very important surface pointer in Antakya is symbolically very strongly expressed within the culture, similar to Turkey as a whole, was very complex. The biggest political tension in the city occurred before the 1980s, when Turkey experienced terrible examples of mass terrorism, people were dragged into bloody quarrels which were also accelerated by hostilities between the extreme left- and right-wing supporters, and fed also by provocations from different sects. Antakya was also affected from this division of population into left and right wings. The left-wing was supported mostly by Arab Alawites, while the right-wing was supported by Turkish Sunnis. Arab Sunnis were divided into the two groups, but mostly supported the right-wing, Turkish nationalist movement. The Christians who were less numerous, avoided politics altogether as a way of coping with the situation.

Based on the common opinion that "*the troubles in the city were because of external sources*" and "*in the history of Antakya there had never been sharp polarisations*", all the communities try to keep their relations with other communities based on not only mutual respect but also common interest. In fact this saying that "*neither Antakya's nationalism is similar to other nationalisms nor is its leftism*" is widespread. Despite conflicts in the 1930s and the 1970s, Antakya remained a peaceful city due to the continuous search for peace between the communities. Until the 1990s (around the time of the first Gulf War) Antakya and Hatay as a whole experienced sufficient economic prosperity and social welfare. In fact when the relationship with Syria after the 2000s developed in a positive sense both in the economic and in the social and cultural context, a sense of relief was felt in the city and this in 2012 until the eruption of the Syrian issue, had born the belief that there were going to be much better developments.

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45   Brettell, *op.cit.,* p.11.

The Borders and Boundary Making

Antakya's socio-cultural and economic transformation cannot be understood without emphasizing its being a border space in relation with the physical border between Turkey and Syria. The role that the State plays in the popular politics of place making and in the creation of naturalized links between places and peoples[46] cannot be underestimated. In that sense, border protections in terms of State security and sovereignty have a very important role in the articulation of Turkish State ideology and national identity. "*Citizenship, state nationalism, and various other social ties draw border people away from the border, inward, to the centers of power and culture within the state*"[47], also in Antakya. "*The border becomes not the imaginary line of separation but something camouflaged in a language and performance of culture*"[48].

The communities in Antakya, made their best performance especially by voluntarily assimilating into Turkish culture and language and accepting the Turkish identity basically in the context of Turkish citizenship, and even for some in the ethnic sense thinking that "*as we suffered uneasiness, we do not want the new generation to suffer in the same way. So we did not teach our new generation their mother tongue*" (Arab Alawite, M, 55, h.s.). Not insisting on the Arab identity also positively influences the inter-ethnic relations in the city, who were bothered by Syrian claims on the city until the 90s. Being a border city often results in being mentioned in relation to Syria's claim on it. The Arabic language remained as a symbol of differences rather than the "*core element*"[49] of ethnicity.

During the times while there were negotiations regarding Turkey joining the EU, when Turkey-Syrian Relations improved in 2000, not only the borders between the two countries but also the rigid boundary drawn between the national identity and sub-identities in terms of representative citizenship have flexed. In the past, while the inhabitant, who went cross the border to visit their close relatives were being accused of spying (Arab Alawite, M, 47, univ.); through the business agreement achieved with Syria, the citizens of both countries were allowed to enter through each others borders without a visa in 2009. Development of commercial and touristic business between the two countries have created a positive atmosphere in the city due to the fact on one hand this was regarded as part of the democratic opening of Turkey, where all communities were going to find a change for more representation in terms of secularism; on the other hand due to the fact that the city's economy is bounded to international business in

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46 Achilles Gupta and James Ferguson, Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference, *Cultural Anthropology,* Feb. Vol. 7, No. 1 Blackwell Publishing, 1992, p.11.

47 Tomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan, *Border identities*, Cambridge University press, 1998, p.13.

48 Nevzat Soguk, in Prem K. Rajaram PK and Carl Grundy-Warr (eds) *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics and Territory's Edge.* Minneapolis, MN/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007, p.x.

49 Nash, *op.cit.*

particular with Middle East. As the economy deteriorated due to the Gulf War in 1990 and the war in Iraq, the positive relations with Syria brought a hope in terms of development in the economy where all ethnic groups contribute and share. These transnational business relations were a door to earn a living for large transportation firms; the drivers working on tracks; the city traders with the livening up of tourism; and for both men and many women who made a living out of the suitcase trade.

"*In 2012, with the uprising in Syria, and deteriorating relations between Turkey and Syria, trade stopped. "The transportation firms in Hatay are experiencing a huge crisis (…) most of the lorries are in the garages, the work is barely subsisting (…) nearly 12 thousand Turkish drivers who sustain a living only from driving have become unemployed*"[50] and exposed to poverty with their families.

These incidents have created a big change not only in terms of the economy but also in a social sense. This is because with these incidents (1) around the border provinces and districts tension is on a rapid escalation, an environment of fighting and violence is on the rise every passing day; (2) the exodus of refugees across the border raised tension in the city; (3) with radical groups joining the opposition in Syria, the secular people, in particular those who are not Sunni (Alawited and Christians) have become tense. The prevalent situation has created anxiety and fear in a serious sense.

As a result of this, sayings aimed at spoiling the social cohesion and tranquility have spread. In the city first of all, points of views that generalize the Alawite minority group as Baathists as a result of their concerns and reactions against the prospect of war; and all refugees as warriors is damaging the peace in the city and bringing both groups into confrontations. Whereas, the social condition could only be understood through the deprivation and victimization of both of the groups.

"*The parties of the sectarian and the ethnic war that have been created are finding themselves supporters in Hatay ... To support one of the parties in the war is automatically making the other ethnic and religious groups in Hatay as the 'other'. Thus sadly the tranquility of the Hatay public, who have paid a high price to learn the habit of living with each other, is being driven away*" (Dr. Selim Matkap, Chairman of the Hatay Medical Association) .

With the massive explosion in Reyhanlı in May 11, 2013, in relation to the polarizations that appeared between the Alawites and the Sunni Refugees; a new one has been added between all the people of Hatay regardless of religion and the Refugees. Alawite and Sunni groups (Arab, Turk and Circassian) illustrated their annoyance towards the killing of civilians and terrorism. They

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50 *Hatay Gazette*, http://www.hataygazetesi.com/suriyedeki-ates-nakliyecileri-yakti (7.5.2012).

directed their anger towards the Sunni refugees. Anti-refugee attitude has become widespread. Actually both the worsening economic situation and the cultural differences were already influential in this distancing. The locals began to think in terms of "*if the Syrian problem does not get resolved in the short term, all of these refugees will remain here and share our bread, in fact we will be deprived of our bread*" (Arab Sunni, M, 45, univ.). Ideas such as "*the Syrian refugees are not familiar with the tolerant culture of Hatay*", thinking that "*if they remain here then no trace of the Hatay culture will remain*"; and "*it is not clear as to who is coming or going*" triggered public order concerns amongst the people.

Surely, the biggest reasons for fear by the city people are the radicals, and the fear that the sectarian war will spread to the city. "*For sure, with a 900 km border with Syria, Turkey cannot isolate itself from the Syrian conflict ... As both countries have until recently sparred over Hatay, and because the ethnic and sectarian make-up of this province is a microcosm of Syria, it provides a clear example of the conflict's spillover effects. Ankara's capacity to be an impartial stabilising soft power in the region has been vastly reduced*"[51]. Some define their expectations for the future as "*Antakya is going to get through this*"; "*in the 70's (when there was tension between the right-left political groups which was also fuelled by ethnic differences) the people of Hatay succeeded in being discreet and they are also going to succeed now*"; some say "*that nothing is going to be as it used to be*".

Conclusion

As a city with a history dating back to 300 BC Antakya has been a cradle to numerous civilizations, which can be registered as the capital city of civilizations. It has transferred its universal culture from the antique times to date in an uninterrupted way. The people of Antakya have not seen cultural, ethnic, religious differences as a danger but to the contrary they have seen it as a form of prosperity and have adapted this to the city's identity. Regional Antakya identity has become the most fundamental identity element that has ensured this regions cultural peaceful cohabitation, and have shaped the people's other identities. Core elements of the particular group cultures have not been regarded by them in essentialist terms.

Current life in Antakya today is affected by both the local and the global, by formal patterns of the past and postmodern ideas about the future. It is a diachronic multiculturalism, where traditional "*core elements*" are intermingled with imaginations of the global. For development of the cohabitation and integration to the Turkish National culture and identity, minority groups have voluntarily forsaken their ethnic Arabic identities and language. Not only as communities but also as individuals, shifting among various identity

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51   "Blurring the Borders: Strian Spillover Risks for Turkey", *International Crisis Group* Europe
      Report N°225, (Accessed: 25.05.2013).

preferences, they try to cope with economic and political developments, and with the plurality and dynamism of the city, as well as to integrate to the nation as a citizen and to have a productive position in the global world. This helps them create networks, where multiple survival techniques can be developed. Secularism, as the only condition of living together has ensured the continuity of the regional culture and religious belonging.

Today, universalism and particularism, as the two paradoxical trends of the global, are "*mutually dependent and interrelated processes emerged to shift the norm of homogenization of nation-states considerably*"[52]. While the State aspirations towards universal democratization processes make the Antakya people, and in particular minority communities and cultural groups feel more confident about their future and recognition, the international politics towards the neighboring countries and the crisis in Syria have a negative effect on their lives.

In light of the fact that the foundations of the modern government borders were drawn as a result of an idea of unity, any potential threat posed by international intervention or by regional political actors to this unity, create ambivalences among city people. When the geostrategic borders are opened for the warring parties as well as the humanitarian purposes – with the impact of such development – if essentialist, particularist, and sectarian tendencies are brought inside, neither a peaceful co-existence of diversity and consequently nor an Antakya culture will remain. Such a development would essentialize the core elements cultures, which were unproblematic within a cosmopolitan multi cultural lifestyle. Where essentialism exists then the ties that hold the people together begins to loosen up. Whilst it is a city capable of being a world symbol of tolerance where peace and brotherhood were dominant in the streets, today unrest and fear prevails. As the subject of Syria having entered the international political arena, the future of Antakya is going to be determined by local, national and global politics.

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52   Hannerz , *op.cit.*

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