

Explaining Multireligious Nationalism:

The Cases of Albania and Egypt

by

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Explaining Multireligious Nationalism: The Cases of Albania and Egypt

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*To my eagerly awaited daughter Ayşe Hümeýra
and to her precious Mother*



ABSTRACT

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Even though the close relationship between the Reformation in Europe and the rise of nationalism is underlined by many scholars, contemporary dynamics between religion and nationalism are rarely remembered. The religiously exclusionary procedures for the nation-state formation have been one of the main apparatuses to succeed in national homogeneity, which is always desired by nation-states. The early nation-states such as England, France, and Spain all rose upon religious homogeneity. Therefore, while it is easy to find religiously homogenous nationalism examples, multireligious nationalisms are strictly rare and require more attention. Such cases provide us with an invaluable opportunity to compare, test, and ultimately understand the complicated relationship between nationalism and religion. In this thesis, I argue that Albanian and Egyptian nationalisms successfully addressed the challenge of accommodating different religious affiliations within their populations, thus becoming rare examples of multireligious nationalism. After formulating the concept of multireligious nationalism, which entails three necessary and jointly sufficient conditions, namely, the presence of diverse religious groups within the nation, the rejection of exclusionary practices based on religion, and the recognition and inclusion of diverse religious groups; the causal background of Albanian and Egyptian multireligious nationalisms is analyzed. I argue that the efforts of Christian minorities within both societies, along with Protestant missions, contributed to the revival of Albanian and Arabic as literary languages. This revival provided a platform for minority elites to express their nationalist ideas, which were reciprocated by Muslim elites. Subsequently, external threats from other Balkan states in the case of Albania, and the British invasion of Egypt, led to the unification of elites from diverse religious groups in both contexts. Consequently, the concept of nationalism expanded to encompass diverse religions within both societies.

ÖZETÇE

Çok Dinli Milliyetçiliği Açıklamak: Arnavutluk ve Mısır Vakaları

Mehmet Yasin Bozkuş

Uluslararası İlişkiler, Yüksek Lisans

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Reform hareketleri ile milliyetçiliğin yükselişi arasındaki yakın ilişki birçok akademisyen tarafından vurgulanıyor olsa da, din ve milliyetçilik arasındaki ilişki nadiren çalışılmaktadır. Ulus-devletlerin ortaya çıkışında dini temelli sınırlar, bu yapıların her zaman arzuladığı ulusal homojenliği yakalamanın temel belirleyicilerinden biri olmuştur. İngiltere, Fransa ve İspanya gibi ilk ulus-devletlerin tamamı dini homojenliğin sağlanmasının ardından ulus olarak ortaya çıkabilmiştir. Bu nedenle, dini açıdan homojen milliyetçilik örnekleri bulmak kolay olsa da, çok dinli milliyetçilikler oldukça nadirdir ve akademik çalışmalarda daha fazla yer bulmalıdır. Bu tür örnekler, milliyetçilik ve din arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi karşılaştırmak, test etmek ve nihayetinde anlamlandırmak için önemli fırsatlar sunmaktadır. Bu tezde, Arnavut ve Mısır milliyetçiliklerinin, bünyelerinde mevcut olan farklı dini aidiyetleri ulus-devlet içinde barındırabilme zorluğunun üstesinden geldikleri iddia edilmektedir. Bu çalışmada, ulus içinde farklı dini grupların varlığı, dine dayalı dışlayıcı uygulamaların reddi ve bu farklı dinden insanların tanınarak ulus devlet sistemi içerisine dahil edilmesi üzere üç farklı ve bir araya geldiklerinde yeterli koşulu içeren çok dinli milliyetçilik kavramını formüle ettikten sonra; Arnavut ve Mısır çok dinli milliyetçiliklerinin nedensel arka planı analiz edilmektedir. Her iki milliyetçilik örneğinde de Hristiyan azınlıkların çabası ve Protestan misyonierlerin desteğiyle Arnavutça ve Arapçanın modern yazılı diller olarak ortaya çıktığı savunulmaktadır. Dildeki bu canlanma ile azınlık elitler milliyetçi fikirlerini ifade edebilecekleri bir imkan bulmuş ve Müslüman elitler de bu milliyetçi uyanışa destek vermeye başlamıştır. İlaveten, Arnavutluk örneğinde diğer Balkan devletlerinden gelen dış tehditler, Mısır örneğinde ise İngiliz işgalinin, farklı dini gruplardan elitlerin bir araya gelmesinde önemli nedenler olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Netice itibarıyla, milliyetçilik kavramı her iki toplum için farklı dinden paydaşları içine dahil edecek şekilde genişlemiş ve her iki milliyetçilik de çok dinli milliyetçiliklerin nadir örnekleri arasında yerini almıştır.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CHA	Comparative Historical Analysis
CUP	The Ottoman Community of Union and Progress
RCC	The Egyptian Revolutionary Command Council
FJP	The Freedom and Justice Party
NDP	National Democratics Party

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL GROUNDING

1.1 The Puzzle

It is often put forward in the literature on early nationalism that the general trend in nation-formation processes had been towards religious homogenization where states execute methods of exclusion towards minority groups. Contrary to theoretical expectations, the Albanian and Egyptian nationalist movements succeed in generating multireligious mobilization and henceforth a sticking to a multireligious nation-formation path. Rather than the dominant patterns of eradication, both cases display an outcome of overcoming the challenge of having different religious affiliations represented in their population with the emergence of a more encompassing national identity. I argue that Albanian and Egyptian nationalisms can be considered as relatively deviant cases from the religiously homogenizing nation-state trends within the nationalism literature.

How did Albanian and Egyptian nationalist movements succeeded to overcome the challenge of having different religious affiliations represented in their population and become deviant cases as multireligious nations? Why can they be considered rare cases in their respective regions, namely the Middle East and the Balkans? What characteristics and causes lead these cases to deviate from the general trends in nationalism studies? How can we define multireligious nationalism? These questions make my cases all the more puzzling and worthy of discussion. In this thesis, I will examine the outcome of multireligious nationalism (dependent variable) from a comparative historical perspective and explain the causal factors behind these two deviant cases.

1.2 The Argument and Theoretical Significance

In the context of the nation-building, the legal boundaries of citizenships have substantial effect on defining a nation. In other words, legalized internal boundaries decide who is included and who is excluded from the nation (Marx 2002). Even though these boundaries can be established through diverse ways, ethno-linguistic characteristics and religion have become two significant boundary makers in the history of nationalism to include, mobilize or exclude people (Fincham and Dunne 2020). Moreover, these two-

deciding feature of a nation usually overlap. Therefore, in most nation-states religious homogeneity is as prevalent as ethno-linguistic homogeneity (Fincham and Dunne 2020). Primordialist theorists of nationalism even count common religion as important as common language, origin, culture and territory (Shqerra 2014). Even though the religious homogeneity played an essential role in many nation-state formations, there are relatively deviant cases that established nation-states regardless of religious differences, such as Egyptian and Albanian nationalism. Since these are aberrational cases from religiously homogenous nation-state formations, the explanation of the identified outcome will offer a new perspective for the nationalism studies. Moreover, it brings the neglected topic of nationalism studies, religion, into the discussion from a new point of view.

Since, the religious exclusionary methods in nation-formation, which will be discussed in the following parts in detail, can be considered as common for the heritages of today's modern nation-states, being a multireligious nation-state does not find a particular place within the nationalism literature. The literature on nationalism does not provide an exact definition for multireligious nation-formation process either. Thus, following Goertz's method on concept formation (2006), I propose a novel definition of multireligious nation-states in this thesis. Goertz (2006) illustrates the significance of names, definitions and concepts by citing J.S Mill's discourse on scientific inference and logic. He emphasizes that research design and methodology courses have overlooked the importance of these terms. In contrast to neglected value of concepts, the newly introduced concept of a multireligious nation-state can engender new discussions in the fields of nationalism and nation-state formation studies. Furthermore, this thesis provides valuable insights to the literature on both nationalism and nation-formation by addressing the inquiry of why Egypt and Albania, both become multireligious nation-states.

I argue that multireligious nationalism should be recognized as a distinct category of nationalism, characterized by three essential elements that are each necessary and collectively sufficient for the formation of a multireligious nation: the presence of diverse religious groups within the nation, rejection of exclusionary methods against minority religions before and during nation-building, and recognition and incorporation of diverse religious groups within the nation. From a causal and explanatory perspective, my argument is that a series of necessary conditions led to the emergence of a similar outcome, namely multireligious nationalism (dependent variable), in Egypt and Albania. Specifically, I propose that the concept of nationalism was disseminated to a wider group

of elites within both societies through the translation activities of Protestant missions, which led to the revival of Albanian and Arabic as literary languages. This, in turn, prompted Christian intellectuals in Muslim-majority societies to take early initiatives for national cultural rights. Finally, external threats from oppressive powers compelled national elites from diverse religions to come together, resulting in the formation of multireligious nation-states. Furthermore, the policies of the central government of the Ottoman Empire during the early 20th century, which were based on Turkish nationalism, had a catalytic effect on Albanian multireligious nationalism. While this catalyst also influenced Arab nationalism within the Arabian Peninsula, it had no significant impact on Egyptian multireligious nationalism due to Egypt's autonomous structure separate from the Ottoman Empire.

1.3 Case Selection, Methodology and Research Design

Paul Pierson's chapter in the book *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* begins with a quotation from Edward Carmines and James Stimson. They likened political science to political journalism, noting its myopia regarding processes on a larger temporal scale (2020, 197). It is imperative to bear in mind that the major issues and instances in social sciences typically unfold over an extended period (Pierson 2003). In order to provide a better understanding for the time period of political incidents, Pierson uses natural science analogies and characterizes the "global warming" phenomenon as a gradual process where both the cause and effect occur over a prolonged duration relative to their triggers and consequences (Pierson 2003).

Instead of establishing a straightforward cause-and-effect link between x and y, there might be some intervening factors, such as a,b,c, that are triggered by x and lead to the emergence of y (Pierson 2003, 187). Likewise, the multireligious nations of Albania and Egypt also experienced similar developments due to certain pivotal events in their history. Their distinct patterns in terms of being a multireligious nation unfolded gradually over time and could only be understood by examining their historical trajectory.

As multireligious nationalism can be perceived as an exception to the standard trend in nationalism studies, the number of cases analyzed in this thesis is inherently limited. Therefore, this study will employ a method that does not pursue universal knowledge but rather aims to formulate questions and identify puzzles concerning specific sets of cases

that display enough resemblance to be compared in a meaningful way (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 8). This approach, known as Comparative Historical Analysis (CHA) will be utilized in this study.

CHA can be characterized as “a concern with causal analysis, an emphasis on processes over time, and the use of systematic and contextualized comparison” (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 10). Mahoney and Rueschemeyer identify three fundamental components of CHA, namely the emphasis on providing explanations and causal arguments, analyzing historical sequences, and comparing similar and contrasting cases (2003, 11–13). These three key elements of CHA are also compatible with my cases. Likewise, in this thesis, I seek to identify the long-term explanatory factors that account for how the exceptional phenomenon of multireligious nationalism emerged in two comparable nations. Furthermore, CHA affords researchers the opportunity to oscillate between theory and history, to “formulate new concepts and discover novel explanations”. This aligns with one of the main objectives of my study, which is to avoid spreading the analysis too thin across too many cases, as Mahoney and Rueschemeyer emphasize (2003, 13).

In the same book, Mahoney discusses the methods for making causal assessments in CHA. According to him, two of the most critical requirements for CHA and nominal (categorical) comparison are that they require cases to be “mutually exclusive (each case can be classified in only one category)” and “collectively exhaustive (one of the categories applies to each case)” (Mahoney 2003, 339). Since the main focus of this study is on the dependent variable, namely multireligious nationalism, it raises a question similar to “What explains Y?” and aims to identify the true explanatory variables that account for the deviation from the general trend in nationalism studies by becoming multireligious nations (Anckar 2008).

Although Albanian and Egyptian nationalism are labeled as deviant cases due to their exceptional outcome of becoming multireligious nations, these two cases cannot be considered as either the most different or similar systems in terms of other independent variables. While both nations share certain similarities such as having diverse populations in terms of religion and a legacy of the Ottoman Millet-system, they differ in terms of their regions, main ethnic groups, neighboring countries, former colonizers, supranational identities, level of economic development, and stability of political regime. Therefore, rather than categorizing them as either similar or completely different systems, it is better

to study these two nations as deviant cases and identify the explanatory variables behind their extraordinary outcome.

Deviant cases are those that cannot be predicted by existing theories (George and Bennett 2005, 240). Such cases do not meet the expectations of established theories or have outcomes different from those of similar cases (Bennett and Elman 2007, 177). In this sense, Egyptian and Albanian multireligious nationalism fit this definition perfectly. It is important to note that "deviant cases can be analyzed at different stages of the research cycle and can potentially provide powerful sources of new hypotheses and variables" (Bennett and Elman 2007, 177). Therefore, studying the deviant characteristic of Albanian and Egyptian nationalism can provide a new understanding of multireligious nationalism, which can be considered a newly established concept.

The importance of deviant cases can be measured by the additional value they provide and their ability to predict new and novel facts. In other words, studying deviant cases can help to solve puzzles that cannot be explained by existing theories and can support qualitative studies by providing more options to move back and forth between theory and evidence (Bennett and Elman 2007, 178).

Even though Albanian and Egyptian nationalisms are considered as deviant cases, it would not be correct to claim that there are only two nationalisms that fall under the category of multireligious nationalism. Since examining the emergence and consequences of multireligious nationalism in both cases requires the analysis of long historical processes, the cases in this study are limited to Albania and Egypt. Along with these examples, Arab nationalisms including Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, North Macedonian nationalism, Georgian nationalism, and even some nationalisms in the Indian subcontinent and Africa, although not exactly similar, can also be included in the category of multi-religious nationalism as they provide examples of people of different religions living together. However, even if it is possible to increase the number of examples, given that cases of multi-religious nationalism are the least likely cases, it is important to note that Albanian and Egyptian nationalisms are two examples in this quantitatively limited group.

While the relationship between religion and nationalism will be discussed in subsequent sections, it is important to note that the cases being studied have a multireligious structure, whether examined as historical single case studies or within current theories and types of nationalism. Additionally, to illustrate this anomaly, a small

comparison will be made between Albanian and Egyptian nationalism and their neighboring nations in the region. Therefore, reference will be made to Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, Israeli, and Saudi nationalisms in the next chapters to enhance the causal leverage of the framework. This approach does not only help to strengthen the validity of the causal claims made in the analysis, but also allows for the identification of potential confounding variables that may have influenced the outcome in these cases.

For example, it could be argued that both nations were once constituent parts of the Ottoman Empire, and therefore the process of forming a multireligious nation after seceding from the empire could have led to a certain trend, with the legacy of the Millet system as a potential explanatory factor. However, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many new nation-states emerged by seceding from the Ottoman Empire, but only a few managed to successfully navigate the challenge of representing different religious affiliations within their populations. Examining similar cases could help eliminate other potential explanatory factors.

Some can argue that studying in small-N cases can make predictions not sufficient however I have to ask a question which is similar to Mahoney's question, is a full prediction possible under other methodologies including quantitative methods and regression analysis? (Mahoney 2003, 340). Furthermore, social scientists lack the advantage of laboratories to produce specific cases and examples for comparative analysis to elucidate valuable causal mechanisms. This can result in causal complexity, which is defined as "a situation in which a given outcome may follow from several different combinations of causal conditions," as identified by Ragin (2009, 124). However, the issue of causal complexity is a concern not only for small-N studies, but also for quantitative methods. However, given that multireligious nationalism and multireligious nations are rare and deviant cases in nationalism studies, conducting in-depth historical analyses of their nation-formations while attempting to control for other potential explanatory variables as much as possible could help overcome the issue of causal complexity.

1.4 The Neglected Topic of the Nationalism Studies: Religion

The notion of religion has become peripheral to most political scientists, even in subfields like comparative politics and international relations (Bellin 2008). For the

former group, this neglect is rooted in the early theoretical pioneers of the field, such as Weber, Durkheim, and Marx, who viewed religion as a "premodern relic" that engendered a sort of path dependence in today's comparative politics (Bellin 2008, 317). For the latter subfield, Bellin emphasizes the close connection between the emergence of the modern international order and the Treaty of Westphalia. She contends that this new international order was built after the "cessation of religious wars and non-interference in religious preferences," thereby resulting in another path-dependent subfield direction in which religion has little significance (2008, 318). Although liberal scholars in the subfield attempted to remind the importance of religion, among other ideas, it has not gained sufficient importance within the field. Despite the increased discussion of religion and its impact on the subfields of political science in recent decades, there is still a long way to go (Bellin 2008).

Nationalism, as an ideology and field of study in political science, sociology, and history, also suffer from this neglect. Nationalism is deemed one of the principal ideologies or phenomena that has shaped major historical and political events such as wars, treaties, the dissolution of multinational empires, and the establishment of new nation-states in the modern era. Even though there is no consensus on when it started, most scholars accept that it originated in Western Europe. While many accept its close relationship with the Reformation in Europe (and hence, Christendom) and the printing press, the link between religion and nationalism is ignored. Even well-known scholars of nationalism studies, such as Gellner, Anderson, and Hobsbawm, do not focus on this intertwined connection between religion and nationalism (Rieffer 2003). Since many social scientists consider nationalism a modern and secular phenomenon (Gorski and Türkmen-Dervişoğlu 2013), the relationship between religion and nationalism has remained relatively unexplored. However, what if religion plays a vital role in both present and past incidents in nationalism studies, such as the rise of nation-states, nation formation, and contemporary ethnic conflicts? Therefore, emphasizing this uncharted connection will be significant for new insights within the field of nationalism studies.

The disregarded connection between religion and nationalism and how this complex relationship has been studied and classified is analyzed by two scholars. The first one is Brubaker, who argues that insufficient attention has been paid to the relationship between nationalism and religion, and thus a more analytical approach is necessary to understand this connection. Brubaker proposed four distinct ways to analyze this intricate

relationship by drawing from relevant literature (2012). Similarly, by emphasizing questions to further investigate the religion-nationalism relationship, Aktürk (2022) critically reviewed six types of relationships from the nationalism literature and established four types of national-religious configurations.

A brief examination of the four categories proposed by Brubaker and the six types of relationships outlined by Aktürk is crucial to comprehensively comprehend how the intricate interplay between religion and nationalism has been explored in academic literature and what impacts religion has had on the genesis of nation-states. Although the total number of categories proposed by Brubaker and Aktürk differ, it is important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, similar categories will be examined together.

In the first configuration, Brubaker contends that nationalism can be regarded as a new form of religion, suggesting that religion and nationalism can be considered analogous phenomena based on the research of Hayes and Anthony Smith. Brubaker elucidates that nationalism possesses several characteristics that may rival or surpass those of traditional religions, such as the existence of Gods (love of fatherland and national heroes), mythology, notions of salvation and immortality, as well as observances of feasts and holy days. However, Brubaker maintains that this initial classification fails to account for the distinctive and intriguing features of religion (Brubaker 2012). Similarly, in his first paradigm, Aktürk also probes "whether nationalism is a modern or secular religion" by drawing from the works of Hayes, Kedourie, Bellah, Anderson, and Gellner (2022, 207). In his critique, Aktürk argues that "the lack of systematic research on the nationalist rituals of everyday life" which supposedly replace religious practices is a zero-sum game (2022, 208).

As a second set of studies, Brubaker and Aktürk investigate whether certain religious traditions have influenced the formation of specific nationalisms. While Aktürk terms this category as "Chosen People" as the mythomoteur of nationalism (2022, 208), Brubaker similarly argues that religion can shed light on the true origin and nature of nationalism, particularly by examining how certain religious traditions have influenced the shaping of specific nationalisms (2012). Examples include the impact of Puritanism on English nationalism, Orthodoxy on Balkan nationalisms, Shinto on Japanese nationalism, and Israeli nationalism. The concept of "chosen-ness" and Smith's notion of the "myth of ethnic election" in religious thought have had a significant impact on the emergence of

certain nationalisms. Furthermore, the Reformation and "Confessionalisation" are widely recognized as important religious turning points that played a role in the rise of nationalism by creating new socio-political relationships within society, standardizing vernacular languages, and thereby increasing literacy, and bringing politics and culture closer (Brubaker 2012).

One crucial aspect of Brubaker's second classification is that in the relationship between religion and nationalism, the former can be used as a tool to establish boundaries for the purpose of homogenization, as nationalism is founded on the concepts of similarity and difference (2012). Conversely, Aktürk examines this idea of homogenization and religious exclusion as a means of nation-building as a third category and considers it equally important to the others (2022). Given that the concept of religious exclusion and homogenization holds great significance in expressing the rare features of my cases, Albania and Egypt, the method of using religious exclusion for nation-building will be extensively analyzed in the following pages.

As previously stated, since these classifications are not mutually exclusive, both scholars examine similar cases under different headings. The fourth and fifth types of relations identified by Aktürk are the impact of religious organizations on policy-making and the relationship between religious rituals/habits and the likelihood of being more nationalist (2022, 210–11). In the final classification, Aktürk emphasizes the notion of civilizations as supranational identities by critically evaluating Samuel Huntington's argument (2022).

On the other hand, in his third classification, Brubaker examines studies that treat religion as a part of nationalism (2012, 2). While differentiating between weak and strong variants, the main idea of this section is the overlapping boundaries of nations and religions, as seen in examples such as Sikh, Jewish, and Northern Ireland (Brubaker 2012, 9). However, one of the most significant aspects within this category is the focus on the Southern Slavs, specifically the Serbs and Croats. Brubaker (2012) emphasizes how religion can differentiate an ethnic group that speaks the same language, which makes my cases, Albania, and Egypt, even more valuable for analysis.

Furthermore, the differentiation between mono-religious nations and nations with political leaders from different religious minority backgrounds, such as Albania and Syria in Aktürk's study, has been a triggering factor for this thesis (2022, 210). It is evident that the former is more prevalent and often results in the exclusion of religious minorities.

However, multireligious nations are still important to discuss and study due to their rarity and also differences in interethnic relations across cases. Before delving into the formation of multireligious nations, it is essential to recall how early nation-states in Western Europe, where nationalism originated and spread to most parts of the world, began their journeys during the early modern era.

1.5 Religious Exclusion and Religious Diversification as Nation Building

While critically reviewing Adrian Hastings' book *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism*, Engster begins by explaining the orthodox view in nationalism studies that nationalism is a modern phenomenon (Engster 1999). Although renowned scholars in the field, such as Gellner, Anderson, and Hobsbawm, argue that nationalism emerged in the 18th century, Hastings posits that nationalism is an early-modern phenomenon that can be traced back to the 15th century (Engster 1999). According to Hastings, the transformation of various ethnicities into self-conscious political entities was due to two main factors: external political pressure and state formation, as well as the unification of vernacular languages and the rise of modern European languages. Hastings also argues that this literary awakening began in the Middle Ages, building upon Anderson's modernization of vernacular languages theory (Engster 1999, 1197).

Similarly, Gorski also challenges modernist/orthodox nationalism theories. He argues that the strict differentiation between modern and early modern roots for the birth of nationalism cannot be determined, and that some obvious examples can be found even in the early modern period, if not earlier (Gorski 2000, 1429). In addition to their counterargument on the early-modern roots of nationalism, it is also asserted that nationalism is not exclusively a secular phenomenon. To support their argument, Gorski and Türkmen-Dervişoğlu provide four main points: first, nationalism has "a religious lineage"; second, national identities often overlap with religious identities; third, nationalist rhetoric borrows heavily from religion; and fourth, religious nationalism could be considered a distinct form of nationalism (Gorski and Türkmen-Dervişoğlu 2013, 203).

These theses are significant in challenging the established paradigms and orthodox modern/secular understanding of nationalism. Nationalist ideology aims for "cultural homogeneity within political units," and religious homogeneity can be seen as a kind of rule of thumb for it (Brubaker 2012, 8). Therefore, comprehending how and when early nation-states in Western Europe managed to establish almost entirely homogeneous populations in terms of religion also contributes to the debate on the early roots of nationalism.

While critically investigating the different relationships between religion and nationalism, Aktürk (2022) argues that the use of religiously exclusionary methods for nation-building is one of the six relationships between religion and nationalism, since Western European nationalism, which can be considered the model for other nation-states, is based on religious homogeneity. Being one of the most renowned works on the medieval exclusion of religious minorities in Europe, Anthony Marx asserts that England, France, and Spain built their nation-states by excluding religious minorities such as Protestants in France, Catholics in England, Muslims, and Jews in Spain. Nationalism, according to Marx, is inherently selective, defining categories and boundaries to include or exclude people from the desired society (Marx 2002, 103). Marx highlights the exclusive nature of nationalism by considering not only "race, gender, and class" but also "religion" (Marx 2002, 107). Moreover, Aktürk (2022) extends Marx's claim by arguing that these three European nation-states were also the ones that colonized most of the world. As a result, exclusionary nation-building processes occurred on different continents such as Africa, America, and Asia.

Similarly, Terpstra (2015, 251) argues that Marx's trio, along with "Calvinist Netherlands, Lutheran Sweden, and Catholic Portugal," are examples of the sectarian nature of European nation-states. In a critical and comparative review of three relevant books, including Terpstra's, Aktürk (2020) contends that the exclusion of Jews and Muslims, the two major non-Christian religious groups in Europe and the Americas, was not unique to the early nation-building periods of these countries. While this thesis does not concern itself with contemporary religious-based exclusion or discrimination, analyzing this critical review in terms of early nation-building in Europe and the Americas can help understanding the exclusionary methods employed by certain nation-states to establish religiously homogenous nation-states.

Aktürk (2020) cites specific historical events, such as the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648) and the Glorious Revolution (1688), to illustrate how religious discrimination persisted even after the Reformation in Europe and how it contributed to the development of sectarian roots in European nation-states. Additionally, he employs Nicholas Terpstra's argument to demonstrate how the process of confessionalization led to the rise of nationalization. According to Terpstra, "the late medieval Catholic idea of Corpus Christianum served as a precursor to the early modern concept of a sacred nation, which could be Catholic or Protestant, but in any case, Christian only" (Aktürk 2020, 696).

Terpstra (2015) explains in his book, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: An Alternative History of the Reformation*, that the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic counter-reaction resulted in significant religious persecution of minorities throughout Europe, which extended to the Americas. Terpstra views the Reformation as a social purification initiative in Europe, and cites the example of the Iberian expulsion, which involved the forced expulsion of 200,000 Muslims and 80,000 Jews at the turn of the 16th century, as evidence of this phenomenon (Terpstra 2015, 2). Terpstra cites French king Henry IV's goal of achieving "one faith" alongside "one law" and "one king" to argue that the desire for religious homogenization was unprecedented, both regionally and in terms of sectarianism, as it targeted even different Christian sects such as the Protestants (2015, 1). He provides examples of various religious expulsions, including Dutch Anabaptists, English Catholics, Bohemian Hussites, Moriscos, Italian Calvinists, Spanish Muslims and Jews, and Flemish Protestants, to demonstrate how the ethnicization of religious identity was utilized to establish mono-religious societies (Terpstra 2015, 2).

To gain insight into how exclusion operated within the colonized world, which was mainly colonized by Europe's first nation-states, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín's book *Culling the Masses* would be a valuable source, as Aktürk notes in his review (2020). Although the book does not focus primarily on religious exclusion, Aktürk argues that the fact that North and South America are the world's most religiously homogenous continents is largely due to immigration policies discussed in the book (2020, 704). The primary evidence for religious exclusion during the early nation-building of American nations is that the category of "white" mainly includes Christian-heritage groups, mostly either Protestant or Catholic. While the racist policies of the USA during the early years of the nation formation are not the main focus of this study, they will be significant in the

next part, which examines the concept of multireligious nations in opposition to the idea that most of today's European nations, and specifically the USA, can be considered multireligious nations.

In essence, it can be stated that the history of early nation-states in Europe and their former colonies began with the religious homogenization of populations and continued with the standardization of vernacular languages and other features of nationalism. To provide a more contemporary perspective from a different region, the differentiation between Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia can serve as a significant example of how religious differences can play a role in nation-building. Despite sharing the same ethnolinguistic roots from Southern Slavs, the emergence of new nations was due to religious variations between Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims (Duijzings 2002). Although direct religious exclusion in Southern Slavs for state formation was not evident until the end of the 20th century, it is clear that "the cornerstone is religious difference" for these nation-states. While it is relatively easy to find examples of religiously homogenous nation-states, particularly those formed during a specific time period, religiously heterogeneous nation-state formations are rare and require more attention to comprehend the stimuli behind them.

Anthony Marx's article, *The Nation-State and Its Exclusions*, alludes to "the rare examples of the inclusive nationalism" without providing concrete examples of such nations. Rather, he contends that these instances can be observed in countries where the risk of internal conflict is minimal or nonexistent (Marx 2002, 108). The fact that very few studies have been conducted on these rare instances of comprehensive nationalism in the past 20 years and that the few examples available have not been comparatively examined, highlights a lack of clarity in the literature. This situation also underscores the notion that the concept of multireligious nationalism either does not exist or is inadequately developed. In the following section, I will explore how the concept of multireligious nationalism can be conceptualized to address this gap in the literature.

1.6 A New concept: Multireligious Nationalism

Gary Goertz introduces in his book *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide* various methods of concept formation employed by scholars in quantitative and qualitative research (2006). While qualitative scholars tend to focus on social science concepts that

are often deemed non-mathematical and substantive, quantitative scholars prioritize scaling and indicators. To address this issue, Goertz provides a handbook primarily aimed at qualitative social science concepts and further expounds a crucial idea from J.S Mill, "concepts are a central part of our theories" (Goertz 2006, 1). For the concept formation part of my thesis, I will extensively rely on the tools provided by Goertz.

Among the central points that Goertz underlines is the notion that a phenomenon which lacks a clear definition cannot be observed or measured in its interaction with outside world. Thus, it is of prime significance to reach a clear definition before any measurement can occur. Moreover, Goertz goes beyond this argument to put forward a "realist" claim whereby he argues that concepts are not mere definitions; they are pivotal components that shape the essential aspects of an entity. In other words, concepts are closely associated with the "ontology" of phenomenon and aimed to capture that nature and therefore they can be regarded as the rationale for why attribute X is significant, forming an integral part of the ontological theory of the object (Goertz 2006, 27).

Goertz's ideas about concept formation creates challenges for the concept of multireligious nationalism as well. For one thing, the constitutive components of the concept and different layers that they include must be evidently presented. What is not clearly identified in the literature, in that sense, is the fact that nationalism is not only viewed as a modern phenomenon but also a secular formation. Consequently, cases of multireligious nationalism are frequently overlooked or studied as separate case studies. In order to compare and contrast these uncommon occurrences and obtain consistent findings across cases, it is necessary to define and conceptualize multireligious nationalism as a distinct outcome.

As a starting point, when we consult various English dictionaries for the definition of multireligious, we mostly encounter definitions along the line of "involving or including several different religions". However, due to the ontological non-conformity of nationalism with religion, the meaning of multireligious nationalism is not included in dictionaries. Moreover, the term "multireligious nationalism" has limited representation in academic journals and databases, if it even exists. Therefore, it is essential to establish the concept of multireligious nationalism.

My aim in this thesis is to go beyond the association with of multireligious nationalism with the mere existence of multiple religious communities in a given country. The term "multireligious" is often, and mistakenly, conflated with religious tolerance or

constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. Yet, to reach a definition that captures the ontological components of the phenomenon *a la* Goertz, we need to go beyond certain functional outcomes. As Goertz (2006, 27) contends, the definition of "copper" cannot be limited to its reddish color. To construct a comprehensive concept of "copper," examining its atomic structure is more appropriate. Similarly, to develop a clear understanding of "multireligious nationalism," such an endeavor, rather requires delving deeper into the defining characteristics beyond the mere coexistence of multiple religions within a nation.

If we equate multireligious nationalism solely with religious tolerance and the existence of multiple religions, then many nations, including the USA, Australia, and the UK, that are dominated by a single ethno-religious elite group in their formative period would be classified as multireligious nations in today's world. However, if we take the easy way out by defining multireligious nationalism based on the aforementioned characteristics, would we not be committing the same error as we did with the copper example? In other words, to create a thorough and insightful understanding of multireligious nationalism, we must look beyond surface-level features and examine the underlying principles, and mechanisms that govern the coexistence of multiple religions within a nation.

Religious tolerance and the existence of constitutional rights for different religions cannot be considered synonymous with multireligious nationalism. This is because, in the former, the dominant group may simply tolerate the other groups, whereas in multireligious nation-states, where the concept of multireligious nationalism emerges, the national identity is constructed in a way that brings together different religious groups. In other words, in multireligious nation-states, the coexistence of multiple religions is not simply tolerated, but actively recognized as a crucial component of the national identity. For instance, as previously mentioned, the United States is a modern nation-state that upholds religious freedom and is renowned for its tolerance towards nearly all religions. However, if American national ideologues and politicians were categorized according to their religious affiliation, the results would be vastly different from those of multireligious nations like Albania and Egypt. Apart from Christianity in general, Biden is only the second president after Kennedy to belong to a non-Protestant denomination. Therefore, it can be inferred that in the US, the primary boundary-maker is not even religion, but rather religious sect. Conversely, as will be demonstrated by the examples of Albania and Egypt,

it is evident that a multireligious structure exists not only among the rulers but also at numerous levels of the state and society.

As Goertz (2006, 35) explains, a concept builder should provide necessary and sufficient conditions for the concept and make it measurable through various methods of operationalization. Moreover, in CHA's nominal strategy the causation is decided by using necessary and sufficient conditions (Mahoney 2003, 338). This same approach should be applied to multireligious nationalism as well, to define and measure it more effectively.

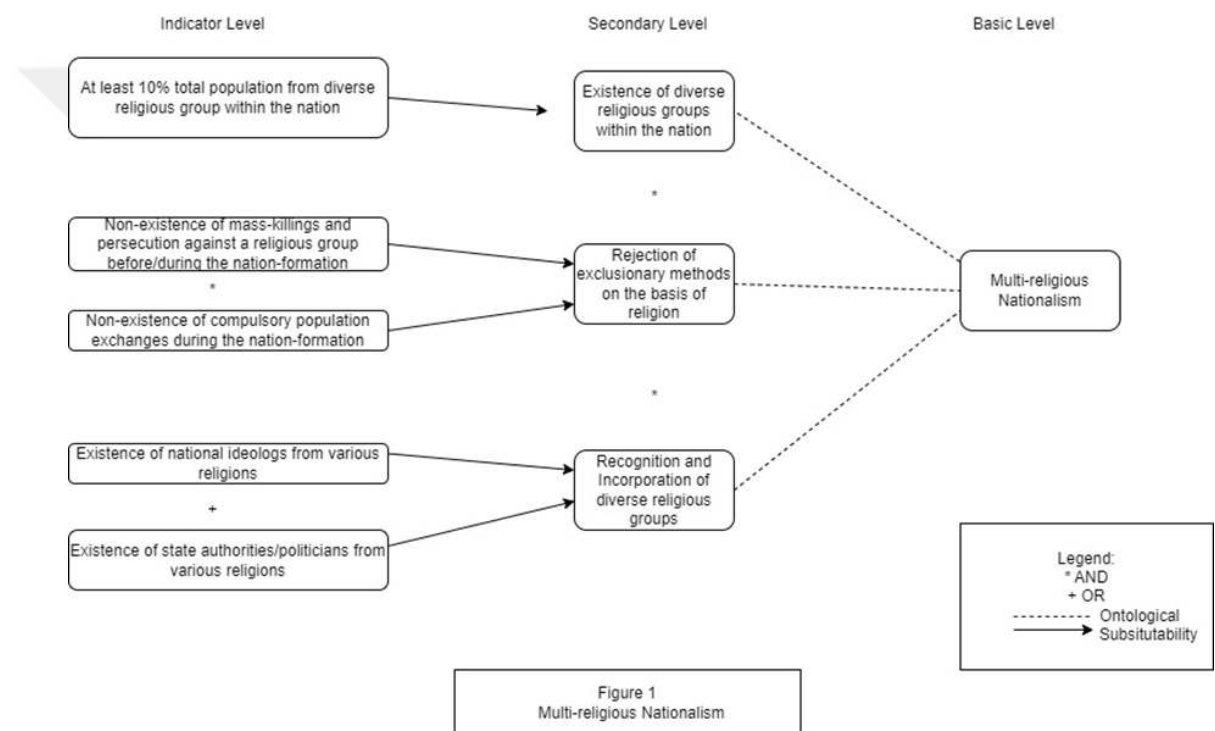


Figure 1.1: The Concept of Multireligious Nationalism

I argue that multireligious nationalism can be defined as a distinct form of nationalism that is characterized by three essential elements, each of which is necessary and, taken together, sufficient for multireligious nations:

- 1) The existence of diverse religious groups within the nation.
- 2) The rejection of exclusionary methods based on religion during the early stages of nation-building.

3) The recognition of diverse religious groups either legally or through policy implications and incorporation of members of the communities should exist at the early stage.

While these features do not exhaust the constitutive elements of nation-building in general, they function in a way to differentiate a special subset of nationalism, which is multireligious nationalism, through the addition of the above mentioned three attributes. Figure 1.1 presents a summary of the necessary conditions (secondary level) that must be met to achieve multireligious nationalism (basic level). The parameters under the indicator level can be utilized to measure the necessary conditions either nominally or ordinally.

To begin with, in order to classify a nationalism as multireligious, the existence of a significant population from diverse religions is required, which can be referred to as the element of existence. In today's world, with the increasing level of international migration, it is possible to find people and even citizens from diverse religions in any modern nation-state. However, for a nation-state to be considered multireligious, a substantial proportion of its population should belong to different religions, typically at least 10% of the total population.

While the presence of a diverse religious population in a society is a necessary condition for a nation to be considered multireligious, it is not sufficient in and of itself. For example, India can be considered as a prime example to demonstrate the insufficiency of this condition. In India, there are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and others who live together in a pluralistic society that ensures the existence of various religions. However, the secession of Pakistan and the compulsory population exchange between India and Pakistan for Sikhs and Muslims demonstrate that India does not meet the second necessary condition, which is the rejection of exclusionary methods against various religious groups.

Like India, one condition that many nations fail to meet despite the existence of diverse religious groups is the absence of rejection against these groups through exclusionary policies. Exclusion refers to the deliberate or implicit exclusion of a particular religious group from the benefits and privileges of the nation or even the right to live in extreme cases. As discussed previously, exclusion has played a central role in nation-state formation. Therefore, the mere presence of diverse religious groups or

citizens in contemporary European nations does not make them multireligious, due to the historical use of exclusionary methods during the early stages of nation-building.

However, the exclusionary dynamics of nation-state formation do not always take place along religious lines. On the contrary, in some cases, rejection of exclusion along religious lines takes a central place. The Albanian nation-formation could be one of the best examples of the latter group, which, while openly excluding the Slavic ethnic identity, rejects the exclusion of Albanian-speaking communities from different religions within the identified territorial unit. As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the presence of discriminatory practices on the grounds of religion can be indicated nominally. To determine whether religious-based exclusion exists or not, an extensive historical analysis at the national level is required. Although some countries have practiced religious exclusion, as discussed earlier, Albania and Egypt have explicitly rejected it.

Lastly, a multireligious nationalism necessitates the acknowledgement of diverse religious factions, not only through legal measures but also via policy implementations. It is insufficient for these religious groups to simply coexist and reject exclusion; their constituents must also be recognized and integrated into the wider national community at an early juncture. Recognition can be established either explicitly through legal frameworks or via policy implications that acknowledge the presence of diverse religious groups. Recognition involves acknowledging the existence of multiple religious groups and their distinctive identities within a nation, as is evident in the case of Lebanon. Since its independence, Lebanon has operated within a framework that recognizes the Sunni, Shiite, and Christian communities. However, recognition does not necessarily have to be as explicit as in the Lebanese case. The absence of barriers for people from various religions and sects to hold public office and the practical implementation of this situation can also serve as an indicator of recognition. It is crucial to acknowledge that each group has its unique beliefs, practices, and traditions that are valuable and vital to its members. However, recognition alone is insufficient either.

From my previous example, despite the Indian constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion and ensuring that no one is discriminated against on the basis of their religion, the attitude towards the Muslim population is not the same as towards other Indians. This highlights the importance of another related condition, which is incorporation. Incorporation can be defined as the integration of diverse religious groups into the broader national community while preserving their unique identities. In other words, being a

member of different religious groups does not eliminate the category of being a member of the nation.

Moving to the operationalization layer (Goertz 2006), various ways in which each constitutive component can interact with the external environment will be identified. At this level, I will outline the different methods in which the existence or absence of each element can be observed in the real world. To assess the degree of recognition and incorporation and address the issue of operationalizing the concept of multireligious nationalism, the early nationalist intellectuals, politicians and elite composition of Albanian and Egyptian nationalism will be examined in terms of their religious backgrounds, political actions, and their impact on the national awakening. In the following chapters, the deviant structures of Albania and Egypt as multireligious nations will be examined from a historical and comparative perspective. The underlying causal mechanisms that account for these unusual outcomes will be explored.

Chapter 2:

ALBANIAN MULTIRELIGIOUS NATIONALISM: AN EXCEPTION WITHIN THE BALKANS

In 2016, Sadiq Khan, son of a Sunni-Muslim Pakistani immigrant family, was elected as London's first Muslim mayor.¹ This was a momentous stride towards religious diversity in a nation that even saw the expulsion of Catholic Christians during its formation. Fast forward to March 2023, Humza Yousaf has now become the first Muslim prime minister of Scotland, a Western democracy with a clear Christian majority.² It is noteworthy that having a Muslim as the head of government in Western democracies is still an exceptional occurrence. The fact that only two out of the 46 presidents, John F. Kennedy, and Joe Biden, elected thus far in the United States, a nation renowned for its religious tolerance and diversity, have been Catholic highlights the significance of religious differences in the pursuit of such positions. In a world where not only differences among religions, but also variations among religious sects such as Protestants versus Catholics or Sunnis versus Shiites, determine major executive and state offices, as well as social structures, Albania can be seen as an outlier with its multireligious character and a significant number of individuals from various religions holding office, despite its Muslim-majority population.

In October 2014, the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, delivered a public address at the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum at Harvard University, expounding on the meaning of religion to Albanians and Albania. Opposing the notion that Albania is a Muslim country, he contended that Albania is a European nation with its Sunni/Bektashi Muslims, Catholic/Orthodox, and Protestant Christian denominations. He provided a concrete example from his own family, stating that "I am Catholic, my wife is Muslim, our elder son is Orthodox, and our baby is Catholic."³ In 2021, five years after recounting the

¹Peter Kellner, "Sadiq Khan," *Britannica*, last modified May 9, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sadiq-Khan>.

² Yasmeen Serhan, "Hamza Yousaf Is the First Muslim Leader of Scotland – or Any Western Democracy," *Time*, last modified March 29, 2023, <https://time.com/6266199/humza-yousaf-scotland-leadership-vote/>.

³ "Albania is a Muslim country! This is not true. Albania is a European country where Sunnis, Bektashis, Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants live all together in peace. Mix marriages, no problem. One concrete impression from my own family: I am Catholic, my wife is Muslim, our big son is Orthodox, and our baby is Catholic." Edi Rama, *Speech in J.F Kennedy Forum*, last modified October 17, 2014, <https://youtu.be/hLVP1ytOT7Y>.

same anecdote about his family, Edi Rama took his notion to the next level, suggesting that their youngest son has the option to become Hebrew should he desire to do so.⁴ How did a Catholic Albanian, who is married to a Muslim woman and has Orthodox children, manage to serve as the long-standing Prime Minister in a predominantly Muslim Albania? How did Albania manage to reach its status as a multireligious nation, despite the Balkans' historical prevalence of ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences?

A region that serves as a bridge between Asian and European civilizations and is situated next to the Mediterranean Sea, the Balkans has historically been a territory that many empires have fought over and a destination for migration from various lands. As expected, the population is interwoven with different identities, and changes in these identities can be seen within a small distance. Located in the heart of the Balkans, Albania distinguishes itself from its neighborhood through its distinctive multireligious structure. Unlike its Balkan and European counterparts, such as predominantly Orthodox Christian Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania; Catholic Christian Italy and Croatia; or predominantly Sunni Muslim Bosnia, Albania places language at the core of its national identity, rather than religion. How did Albania succeed in managing its religious differences and emerge as a multireligious nation? What were the stimuli behind its deviant nationalism? This chapter investigates Albania's multireligious nationalism from a historical perspective and explores the causes that led to this anomaly within the Balkans.

I argue that a series of necessary conditions, which were sufficient when combined, led to the emergence of multireligious nationalism in Albania. The existence of these necessary conditions alone does not imply the outcome of multireligious nationalism; rather, only when combined do they provide sufficiency for such an outcome (Mahoney 2003, 341). I propose that the endeavors of Catholic Christian Albanians and Protestant Missions prompted to the resurgence of Albanian language as a literary language which provide a platform for minority elites to express their nationalist ideas. During this period, Christian intellectuals within Albanian Muslim-majority society initiated the movement for national cultural rights. Concurrently, external threats from oppressive powers and other Balkan states compelled Albanians to take protective measures, which unified

⁴ B92, "I am a Catholic, my wife is a Muslim, and my two children are Orthodox", last modified August 26, 2021, https://www.b92.net/eng/news/region.php?yyyy=2021&mm=08&dd=26&nav_id=111547.

Albanian elites across religious divides under the banner of nationalism. As a result, the notion of nationalism expanded to encompass a broader group of elites from diverse religions within Albanian societies. Moreover, the nationalist policies of the Ottoman central government and their implications before and during the uprisings in the region led to the estrangement of elites from different religions and accelerated the emergence of Albania as a multireligious nation-state in 1912. This causal chain is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

In this chapter, after providing relevant information about the historical and cultural background of Albania, the sections will follow the structure presented in Figure 2.1. Firstly, a portrait of Albania before the awakening will be presented. Then, the revival of the Albanian language and early nationalist publications will be discussed. This will be followed by a section on the League of Prizren, which explains how the early unification of Albanian national elites from diverse religious backgrounds had an impact on the spread of nationalist ideas among Albanian elites. The next section will detail the centralist policies based on Turkish nationalism of the central Ottoman Government and their effects on Albanian multireligious nationalism. Finally, to demonstrate how independent Albania maintained its multireligious structure in three different periods, namely until the Italian invasion, during the communist era, and post-communist Albania, policies on ethnicity and religion will be discussed in detail, and a breakdown of the chief politicians by religion from different eras will be provided.

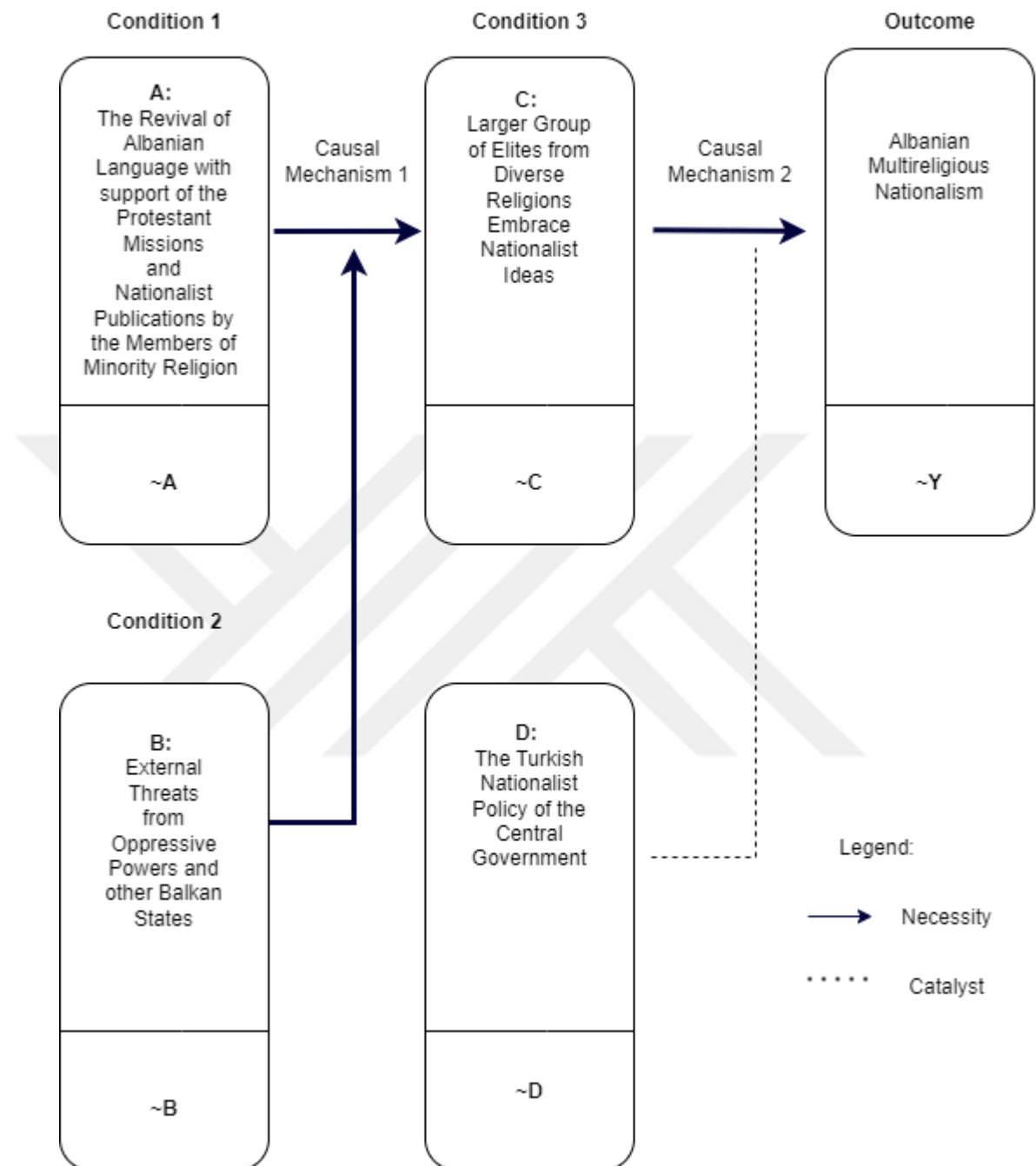


Figure 2.1: The Causal Chain Which Explains the Albanian Multireligious Nationalism

2.1 The Historical and Cultural Background of Albania

Defining oneself for the peoples of the Balkans could prove to be more challenging compared to other nations, because of the historical pattern of migrations and conquests

that resulted in a more intermixed population. However, one of the defining features of Albanians has been their ethnic homogeneity. Despite frequent invasions and conquests in the region, Albanians have managed to resist assimilation by Slavs, Greeks, Italians, and Turks, whenever circumstances allowed for it (Hall 1994, 25). This ethnic homogeneity is reflected in contemporary censuses as well. The 1989 and 2011 censuses indicate that 98 percent of the country's population is comprised of ethnic Albanians (Hall 1994, 25). However, this ethno-linguistic homogeneity does not necessarily translate into a homogenous nation-state, especially when it comes to other determinants of identity, such as religion. In contrast to the homogenous ethnic Albanian identity, the country consists of a significant population adhering to various religions and religious sects. The breakdown of the population with respect to religion is as follows: 60% Sunni Muslims, 15% Bektashi Muslims, 15% Orthodox Christians, and 7% Catholic Christians (Ipsos Strategic Marketing 2011).

To better understand the existence of this multireligious nation-state, it is necessary to comprehend the historical context of competition between different religions within the region. Albania, or the region we now refer as Albania, has been a strategic crossroads since the Roman Empire, due to its significance for trade routes. As a result of this strategic importance, Albanian lands have become a meeting point for various religions (Hall 1994, xix). This situation has become one of the most significant reasons for the historical multireligious structure of Albanians.

The term "Albania" is believed to have originated from one of the Illyrian tribes, a pre-Hellenic Indo-European civilization that inhabited North Central Albania around 1000 BC. Illyrians are significant to present-day Albanians not only as their antecedents but also because most Albanians believe that they are direct descendants of this civilization (Hall 1994, 3). However, like many tribes and civilizations, Illyrians also came under the influence of the Roman Empire. As a result, Illyrians who lived under Roman rule became Romanized and served in the Roman army and civil service during the early years of the first century. These individuals began to be known as Albanoi and were mentioned in the second-century AD writings of the Roman Empire, such as Ptolemy. The term Albanoi soon came to be used for other Illyrian tribes as well (Hall 1994, 26). The believed lineage of Albanians is closely linked to the fate of the Roman Empire and its partition. Illyrians came to be known as Arbërs, and after the division of the Roman Empire in 395 AD, Arbëria became part of the Byzantine Empire.

Nonetheless, the concept of a shared ancestry for Illyrians persisted through the Arbër culture, which comprised Romanized Illyrian people in the early Middle Ages (Hall 1994, 26).

Despite some Bulgarian and Serbian conquests in the ninth and tenth centuries, Byzantine hegemony and Orthodox Christianity persisted in the region. Additionally, due to the proximity to the Catholic center of Christianity, the influence of Catholicism was also present in the area. During the same period, the region came to be known by the name Albans, which encompassed not only the territory but also the people of Illyrian and Arbër descent (Hall 1994, 3). Furthermore, the notion of belonging to an ancient tribe that inhabited the lands of present-day Albania is also utilized as a counterargument against Slavic claims. In other words, Albanian territorial claims to Albania are not based on migration, unlike the Slavs; instead, they are founded on the premise of being the rightful owners of the land (Hall 1994, 3).

Undoubtedly, the profound connection between the Albanian territory and its people has endured for many years and continues to exist to this day. While the Byzantine era contributed to the dissemination of the Orthodox sect, the schism within the Christian Church between the Orthodox and Catholic branches was further exacerbated when Charles I of Anjou, the King of Naples, entered Albania from Northern Italy and established the Kingdom of Arbëria in 1272, which led to the acceleration of the spread of Catholicism (Hall 1994, 5). During the same period, the term Albania, began to be used in Latin dictionaries to refer to the region.

The intricate dynamic between Catholic and Orthodox Christians became even more complex with the arrival of the Turks, who added Muslims to the mix and further intensified these division. The Ottoman expansion into the Balkans during the fifteenth century also marked the region's initial systematic encounter with Islam. Consequently, the Ottoman era in Albania is closely linked to the country's current demographics due to its profound impact on the linguistic, religious, and cultural differences that exist within the region (Buda 1985).

2.2 *Albania until the Awakening*

“The brave man is named and honored

The one who sacrificed himself for the fatherland

*Forever he will be remembered
On earth and under as a saint!”⁵*

National anthems carry symbolic importance as they serve as a prominent source of national inspiration. As can be seen, the Albanian national anthem exemplifies the concept of martyrdom and selflessness for the sake of the glorious homeland. These selfless sentiments from the national anthem lead to a thought-provoking question: who initiated this struggle and who was the first to make the ultimate sacrifice?

Despite being a battleground for various religious conflicts in the past, modern Albanian national identity is primarily defined by race and language rather than religion. Many Albanians identify themselves as *Shqiptar*, which means eagle in Albanian, and refer to their country as *Shqipëria*, meaning "the land of the eagles" (Gawrych 2006, 21). It is no surprise, therefore, that the flag of modern-day Albania prominently features a double-headed eagle on a red background, which is derived from the emblem of the medieval Albanian hero and ruler Skanderbeg (1405-1468), also known as *Gjergj Kastrioti*. Nevertheless, the inquiry that needs to be questioned is how a legendary historical figure from centuries ago come to be revered as the national hero of a contemporary nation-state? Skanderbeg's enduring importance as a national symbol stem from his famous struggle against the Ottoman Empire and his unwavering desire for an independent Albanian state or province. Furthermore, his transition from Catholicism to Islam and subsequent renunciation of Islam and return to Catholicism demonstrates how both religions were accessible to Albanians even during the medieval period. In his era, Albania achieved a sort of sovereignty for the first time in its history, using its own name following the Roman Empire's dominance in the region (Prifti 1978, 5). This myth-making persisted with the establishment of the Albanian state, leading to Skanderbeg's veneration as a national hero and a source of inspiration. His city of death, *Akçahisar* (Kruje), acquired symbolic significance as a heroic symbol of Albanian independence.

⁵ The last verse of the Albanian National Anthem.



Figure 2.2: The Medieval Albanian Hero Skanderbeg and his family emblem, later adopted for the Albanian National Flag (Hall 1994, ii)

However, it is likely that only a small number of Albanians were familiar with Skanderbeg's story until the Albanian national revival movement started in the 19th century. In 1899, Naim Frasheri, a prominent Bektashi Muslim Albanian intellectual, authored an epic poem that portrayed Skanderbeg's heroic deeds and life, contributing to the remembrance of his legacy. The significance of Skanderbeg's myth lies in its ability to unite diverse religious groups and serve as an inspiration for Albanians to unite regardless of their religious differences in the pursuit of independence. For example, despite fighting against the Ottomans after renouncing Islam and viewing that war as a holy battle against Muslims, Skanderbeg is revered not only by Christian Albanians but also by Muslim Albanians in present-day Albania as a national hero for his efforts towards achieving Albanian independence (Hall 1994, 36). The fact that he is held in high regard in modern Albania regardless of religious affiliation illustrates the significance of a medieval leader's role in shaping a contemporary nation-state. Thus, comprehending the tale of Skanderbeg and his struggle against the Ottoman Empire is crucial and can serve as a means of understanding Albania's current religious makeup as well.

The life of this medieval hero and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the region, leading to the Islamization of the area, are intricately linked. With the decline of the Serbian state towards the end of the 14th century, there was an escalation in the conflict

between local Albanian rulers, which presented an opportunity for the Ottoman Turks to intervene and expand their influence in the region. Even though some Albanian feudal lords started to acknowledge the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty, the resistance against the Ottomans persisted (Skendi 2015). It is also important to remember that Albania was not the only area of concern for the Empire in the Balkans.

It could be argued that the 15th century was the period of the Albanian struggle, albeit not a full-blown resistance. In 1431, the Turks captured *Yanya* (Ioannina) and established two different *Sandjaks*,⁶ as *Arnavid* and *Debre*, which was an indication of the capture of a significant proportion of Albanian territory. As one of the renowned strategies of the Ottoman Empire, the employment of conciliatory policies was also extended to the Albanians. In other words, most of the local elites and landowners secured their rights by fulfilling three main obligations: "payment of tribute, provision of auxiliary troops when necessary, and mandatory dispatch of the feudal lords' sons to the Sultan's court in Istanbul as hostages" (Hall 1994, 33). Specifically, the last requirement aimed to prevent further conflicts. Despite being born into a noble Catholic Christian family, Skanderbeg was once taken one of these hostages, and was later converted to Islam and educated in Ottoman institutions. Eventually, he became a member of the Ottoman Army.

The Ottoman Empire's defeat in the Battle of Nish in 1443, in which Skanderbeg served as one of the commanders in the Ottoman Army, presented a new opportunity for this Albanian commander of Catholic Christian origin. Following the battle, Skanderbeg resigned from the Turkish army and renounced Islam, and with 300 Albanians under his command, he went to *Akçahisar* and "proclaimed the independence of the *Principality of Kastrioti*, raising his family's red flag with its black double-headed eagle" (Hall 1994, 6) and initiated a kind of holy war against the Muslim Turks (Skendi 2015). He led his principality for almost 25 years without suffering any defeats by collaborating with foreign forces such as Venice and Naples (Hall 1994, 36). Following Skanderbeg's death in 1468, the resistance lost its most significant leader. Consequently, *Akçahisar* fell to the Turks under Mehmed II in 1478, and the entire region was eventually conquered by the Ottomans at the end of the 15th century (Hall 1994, 6).

During that period, almost all of Albania was Christian. While Roman Catholicism was predominant in the north of Albanian lands, Orthodox Christianity was dominant in

⁶ One of the administrative districts into which a vilayet (a major administrative division) is divided.

the south. This diversification was not coincidental; it correlated with the geography of Albanian lands, and its effects could be seen even in the 20th century. This cultural separation between Albanians stems from the two distinct sub-groups, the Ghegs and Tosks. The remote and mountainous northeast part of the region was inhabited by the Ghegs, while the flatlands in the south were home to the Tosks. In other words, the Shkumbin River became a natural border between these two distinct groups (Hall 1994, 28). While traditional clan and extended family relations were more apparent among the Northern Ghegs, the Southern Tosks were more receptive to the outside world and, consequently, established greater ties with other societies.

From a religious diversity standpoint, while the Northern Ghegs were primarily Catholic Christians, the Southern Tosks were predominantly Orthodox Christian until the region's encounter with Islam. The 16th and 17th centuries became a period of migration or assimilation for Albanians. Most Catholic Christians migrated to Italy, and most of those who remained started to become Muslim (Hall 1994, 6). The Islamization of the region accelerated during the 16th century, and this process has remained one of the primary reasons why Albania is one of the few Muslim majority nation-states in Europe even today (Clayer 2015, 1). The distinction between the Ghegs and Tosks was mostly due to geography and continued with the expansion of Islam. While Sunni Islam gained more followers among the Ghegs, the Bektashi branch of Islam had a greater number of adherents among the Tosks (Clayer 2013, 19–20).

It can be inferred from the existing Sunni Muslim predominance among Albanians that the number of Ghegs has always been higher than that of Tosks. Thus, it can be contended that Tosks can be classified as a subnational minority, despite their population being not significantly lower than that of the Ghegs. While the next sections will cover the marked distinctions between the Ghegs and Tosks, which became less visible during and after the communist era in Albania, it can be argued that the dissimilarities between these two subnational groups extend beyond their religious affiliations. These differences are reflected in various aspects through centuries, such as language dialects, clothing, and cultural attributes.

Furthermore, despite the historical rivalry between Ghegs and Tosks, any external menace could unify them. For instance, while blood feuds were prevalent between them, the killing of an Albanian by a Serb, irrespective of their origin, prompted a serious response from both parties (Clayer 2013, 19). This example demonstrates that any

external threat has the potential to overshadow internal differences for Albanians, even in the early modern era. Although the Ottomans also used the term "Albanian" to define people who lived in the region, most were also categorized under the umbrella of Muslims since religion was the primary source of identity according to the *Ottoman Millet System*. Religious divisions were considered of paramount political importance in Ottoman society, so individuals were identified as Rum, Muslim, or Orthodox before being identified as Albanian (Duijzings 2002). It is not surprising that there were not many uprisings against Ottoman rule in the region until the 19th century. This is due to the fact that most of the region had converted to Islam and Albanians had significant roles in the Ottoman civil service, including the highest authority after the Sultan, the Grand Vizier. It is worth noting that individuals of Albanian descent comprised the largest group to hold this position, with at least 32 Grand Viziers of Albanian origin, surpassing any other ethnic group.⁷

2.3 The Revival of the Albanian Language and the Emergence of the Nationalist Publications

By the 19th century, nationalist uprisings occurred across many regions of the world, with the Balkans being particularly impacted due to their proximity to the epicenter of nationalism - Western Europe. The year 1821 marked the beginning of the Greek War of Independence, while demands for independence were also on the rise in many parts of the Balkans, including the Serb region of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were simultaneously losing power due to wars with European states, especially Tsarist Russia. Despite the increasing threat to Albanians as a result of living at the center of these developments, it can be argued that in the early 1870s, Albanians were still far from embracing the modern ideology of ethnic nationalism and a strong sense of national consciousness (Gawrych 2006, 22–23). At that time, a standardized written form of the Albanian language did not exist, and there were distinct vernaculars, particularly between the Tosk and Gheg dialects. Nonetheless, some Christian minority groups produced works on the Albanian language. Furthermore, the influence of Protestant missions

⁷ More details about Albanian Grand Viziers can be found at Mustafa Bilge's article on Arnavutluk. Mustafa Bilge, "Arnavutluk", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, accessed May 4, 2023, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/arnavutluk>.

expedited efforts towards the Albanian language and intensified the development of national consciousness.

2.3.1 Religious Diversification During the National Awakening

The dissimilarities within Albanian lands were not solely based on language or cultural factors; also there was a varied religious landscape during the era of early national awakening in the 19th century. The Muslim community comprised of approximately 1 million adherents, including Bektashi Muslims, while there were 300,000 adherents of Orthodox Christianity and 180,000 adherents of Catholic Christianity (Gawrych 2006, 21). This indicates that at least two-thirds (a clear majority) of Albanians were Muslims and the population was not segregated based on religion. In other words, even though there existed a distinction between the predominantly Sunni Muslim/Catholic Christian Northern Gheg region and predominantly Bektashi Muslim/Orthodox Christian Southern Tosk region, there was no strict demarcation between these groups, and it was very common to find Albanians from diverse religions in most cities.

Additionally, these groups were affiliated with distinct religious hierarchies. Muslim Albanians were under the patronage of the Ottoman Sultan, which he administered through his *seyhülislam*, the principal Muslim religious figure in the empire. Orthodox Christian Albanians were subject to the Rum Ecumenical Patriarch, who also resided in Istanbul, whereas Catholic Christian Albanians fell under the protection of Austria-Hungary (Gawrych 2006, 21–22). It is crucial to highlight that, although the Christian society was officially divided into two branches, the Muslim society was more divided. While Bektashi Muslims were the most prominent among these branches, there were other groups/sufi orders such as *Halvetiyye* and *Saddiyye*. In other words, despite the existence of hierarchical and centralized institutional networks for Muslims via mosques and madrasas, different solidarity networks coalesced around sheikhs as well (Clayer 2013, 25).

Bektashism, which became the official Sufi order of the Janissaries that was disbanded in 1826, has garnered many adherents among Albanians, particularly among the Tosks. After the dissolution of the Janissaries and Bektashism, it is evident that many sheikhs and remnants fled from Istanbul and settled in Albanian territories (Gawrych 2006, 22). Although the extent of their influence on the Albanian national awakening will

be better understood in subsequent parts, it can be stated that Bektashi Muslim leaders played a significant role in mediating between different religious groups (Hall 1994, 43). Consequently, it can be posited that there were not only two, but four distinct religions present within Albanian territories: Sunni Muslims, Bektashi Muslims, Catholic Christians, and Orthodox Christians.

2.3.2 National Awakening

As previously mentioned, while some Albanians of the Catholic Christian faith either remained or converted to Islam, others fled from their homelands during the Ottoman expansion. In the 19th century, a bourgeoisie emerged in Albanian urban areas and in the diaspora, predominantly consisting of Catholic Christians. The influence of Italy and Austria was apparent in this Catholic Christian commercial bourgeoisie. As the majority of the Albanian diaspora is of the Catholic Christian faith, they were able to more effectively assert their unique culture (Gawrych 2006, 21–22). Therefore, it is no coincidence that the early national awakening was instigated by the Catholic Christian elites. Following the Catholic Christian bourgeoisie, a similar middle class emerged among Orthodox Christians as a result of institutionalization in Greece and the formation of a commercial bourgeoisie both within and beyond the Ottoman Empire. With regards to Sunni Muslims and Bektashi Muslims, the impact of the elites who traveled to the West for educational purposes with the *Tanzimat* reforms was quite apparent (Clayer 2015, 27). Consequently, a middle class and educated elite emerged within the four different religions/sects of Albanians during that period. The Albanian diaspora from different religions, which was naturally linked to various centers in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, started to have a crucial influence on the dissemination of Western ideas. Therefore, the significance of the Albanian diaspora, who lived in Italy, Greece, Romania, and different centers of the Ottoman Empire, cannot be ignored for the early national awakening of Albanians (Clayer 2013, 2).

Although the initial demands of these Albanians were not related to independence or autonomy, it can be contended that the early foundations of the Albanian national revival emerged from the Catholic Christian Albanian (Arbereshs) elites who resided in Italy and Sicily in the end of the 18th century. At first, the requests were comprehensible, such as

including greater autonomy for churches and schools, and the freedom to hold meetings and seminars (Clayer 2015, 1).

In the early years of the subsequent century, the wave of national revival started to disseminate to the Orthodox Christian Albanians in the Balkan region. This stimulus was accelerated not only by Albanians in Italy but also by the surging nationalist trend among Orthodox Christians in the region, such as Greeks and Serbs. Later, it extended to the Muslim elite within the Ottoman Empire (Clayer 2015). Nevertheless, since the majority of Albanians were Muslims, the connection between the Ottoman Empire and its Muslim Albanians was also robust, which made it challenging for the awakening wave to flourish in Albania compared to other Balkan states. In other words, the Muslims, who comprised the bulk of Albanians, were influenced by nationalism later than other components (Clayer 2015, 2). Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that since Muslim Albanians comprised the majority within the Albanian population, cooperation between the Christian minority Albanians and their Muslim counterparts was necessary to advocate for their rights. The initial endeavors, initiated by Christian Albanians, gained traction after the advent of Protestant missions, which played a pivotal role in this distinctive nationalist movement (Clayer 2013).

2.3.3 The Revival of Albanian Language and the Effect of the Protestant Missions

As Gellner (2008) and Anderson (1991) have argued, the proliferation of writing and printing presses played a significant role in the emergence of nations, along with modernization and rationalization. Therefore, national ideologists had to prioritize the establishment of a common language and promote printing activities. Considering that Albania is a nation with a Muslim majority, it was essential that Albanian nationalism encompasses Muslims in the process of nation-formation. Unlike other Balkan nationalisms, such as Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia, which relied on a shared religion and church to unite their people, Albanian nationalism required a common factor. Consequently, a common language played a crucial role in binding together people of different religious affiliations within the Albanian nation. The early attempts to establish a standard language and alphabet were initiated by the Catholic and Orthodox churches, and the translation efforts of Protestant missions further accelerated this process. As Miroslav Hroch (2015, 113) has noted, Albanian nationalism, like many Central

European nationalisms, began with the efforts of a small group of intellectuals interested in Albanian language and folklore. These initial endeavors, although limited in scope, were later reinforced by the elite's efforts to involve the wider population.

Indeed, even though there was no apparent nationalist intention, the translation of religious texts by Catholic Christian Albanians living in Italy had a significant impact on the emergence of Albanian nationalism to enable Albanians to comprehend these religious manuscripts (Clayer 2013, 119). These religious texts, which also included some identity statements, gained momentum when the Protestants translated the holy books into the local language and disseminated them to wider areas through printing presses (Clayer 2013, 121).

Western thinkers, linguists, and historians discovered the Albanian nation almost simultaneously with the Protestant missionaries' work on the Albanian language. The comparison of the Greek language with the existing dialects of the Albanian language at the beginning of the 19th century, along with the quest for ethnic origins other than the Greek nation for Albanians, historically accelerated the Italian Albanians' efforts to propagate theses on these matters. These efforts went so far that, in addition to Skanderbeg, significant historical figures such as Alexander the Great and Pyrrhus were claimed to be of Albanian descent. At the stage of forming this pantheon, works questioning Albanian history began to feature the names of heroes such as Muhammad Ali Pasha and Ali Pasha Tepelena, who were Muslim Albanians (Clayer 2013, 133–35). Although studies on Albanian folklore and history began with the Italian Albanians (*Arbereshs*), it can be argued that these studies were primarily accelerated by the Protestants (Clayer 2013, 137).

The impact of the Protestant Reformation and the standardization of vernacular languages are two key factors that have influenced the rise of nationalism in many cases. The desire to spread the Christian faith worldwide led to waves of expansion of Evangelical Protestantism (Doci 2017). Similarly, their influence can be seen in Albanian nationalism. For instance, the first translation of the Bible into Albanian by Christian Orthodox Vangjel Meksi in 1821 marked the end of a period of doubt and uncertainty regarding the Albanian language. Additionally, the translation of the Bible and other Christian texts into Albanian had an undeniable effect on the development of Albanology, largely thanks to the work of the Protestants (Doci 2017, 123). Following the work initiated by Meksi, Orthodox Christian Albanian Grigor Gjirokastriti reviewed the text

and subsequently published it in Albanian with Greek script, alongside a modern Greek translation on the following pages, in 1827. The involvement of the Protestant British Bible Society in proposing the task to Gjirokastriti serves as additional evidence of the innovative and pioneer nature of Protestantism in this area (Clayer 2013, 137). By 1857, he had produced distinct translations for both the Gheg and Tosk dialects, with the encouragement and assistance of the British Bible Society. While Greek letters were utilized for the Tosk dialect, the Gheg dialect was transcribed using Latin letters (Clayer 2013, 161). This situation further demonstrated that the division amongst Albanians was not limited to geographical distinctions, and more significantly, it revealed the absence of a shared and standardized alphabet even in the 19th century.

The endeavors of the Bible society and Gjirokastriti along with the dissemination of religious literature featuring diverse Albanian alphabets, spurred Albanian intellectuals and the middle class to prioritize the acquisition of literacy skills in their native language, beyond religious education. This initiative was not limited to Christians alone, but also extended to Muslim Albanians (Gawrych 2006, 20).

During this same era, as the Ottoman Empire began to align itself more closely with the West following the *Tanzimat* reforms, a new generation of Ottoman subjects who had traveled to the West for either education or visit were beginning to return with novel ideas. Muslim Albanians were not exempt from these transformative processes. Consequently, a Muslim-Albanian intellectual class that recognized the emergence of a national identity was gradually taking shape (Clayer 2013, 167–68). As the number of Albanian texts continued to expand, the necessity for a standardized alphabet became more pronounced and prompted discussions on the topic to advance more rapidly.

Despite the lack of a universally recognized alphabet among Albanians, efforts to create one began in Istanbul in 1879. “The Committee for the Defense of the Albanian Rights,” comprising Albanian elites from various religious and sectarian backgrounds, determined that the “Latin Alphabet” would be the most suitable option for the Albanian language. This chosen alphabet made its debut in the 1879 publication “Alphabet of the Albanian Language,” which contained also various historical stories of Albania (Olgun 2019, 318). In the initial ten pages of the book, the newly introduced alphabet was presented, followed by stories written by Sami Frasheri (Bektashi Muslim), Jani Vreto (Orthodox Christian), and Vaso Pasha (Catholic Christian).

The significance of the Committee for the Defense of the Albanian Rights in the advancement of Albanian language is also highlighted in two literary works, namely *Albanian Literature: A Short History* and *A History of Albanian Literature*, written by Robert Elsie (2005) and Koco Bihuku (1980). These books delve into the committee's central figures. In order to show the multireligious structure of the committee, I categorize these figures based on their religious affiliations. In the absence of adequate information regarding the religious affiliations of the key figures in the book, I classify them based on their names (as to whether they are Christian or Muslim) and their place of birth to determine whether they are Gheg or Tosk, and thus deduce their Catholic/Orthodox Christian identity and Sunni/Bektashi Muslim identity. Table 2.1 illustrates the leading Albanian elites from various religious backgrounds within the committee.

Table 2.1: The Leading Figures within the Committee for the Defense of the Albanian Rights

Sunni Muslim	Bektashi Muslim	Orthodox Christian	Catholic Christian
Hasan Tahsini	Sami Frasheri	Jani Vreto	Vaso Pasha
Ziya Prishtina	Abdul Frasheri	Koto Hoxhi	
Ömer Prizreni	Veysel Dino	Mihal Harito	

Through the power of this alphabet, the "Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings" was established in Istanbul, with members including Bektashi Muslims Sami, Naim and Abdul Frasheri, Catholic Christians Vaso Pasha and Nikolle Bonati Iskodra, Orthodox Christians Koto Hoxhi, Anastas Kostandin Frasheri and Jani Vreto and roughly twenty-five other Albanian elites, ten of whom were Muslims, four were Catholic Christians, and fourteen were Orthodox Christians, to enable the publication of Albanian language materials in the same year (Skendi 2015, 119–20). Despite ongoing debates in the following decades about which alphabet Albanians should use, the Latin alphabet was officially adopted for written Albanian in 1908 at the Albanian National Congress in Monastir (Hall 1994, 6).

At this point, it is important to mention that Sami Frasheri's works and ideas are crucial in understanding the thoughts of Bektashi Muslim Albanian elites regarding loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. Working on Albanian language and history did not contradict loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, which was considered the homeland and viewed as a debt to Albanian lands, where Frasheri was born and raised. This Ottoman

intellectual, who had a thorough command of Turkish and authored the first Turkish dictionary and encyclopedia in the modern sense, prioritized the Ottoman identity in his works and explored Albanian identity through his dictionary in a way that was accessible to the masses (Gawrych 2006, 96). In contrast to his brother, Abdul Frasheri was in favor of an autonomous Albania, as will be evidenced in the subsequent sections, particularly within the discussions of the League of Prizren. Like their fathers, Ali Sami Yen, son of Sami Frasheri, was a significant founder of the second oldest Turkish football club, Galatasaray, and passed away in Istanbul as a Turkish citizen. Meanwhile, Midhat Frasheri, son of Abdul Frasheri, achieved a noteworthy career as a diplomat and state official in independent Albania.

From the perspective of Sunni Muslim Albanians, it is apparent that many of the early prime ministers in independent Albania were also Sunni Muslim Albanians. Mehmet Akif Bey (Ersoy), who is still considered a national hero and poet in Turkey due to his authorship of the Turkish National Anthem, was also a Sunni Muslim Albanian. Since his ideology was mainly influenced by Islamic thought, he was against the independence of Albania and became a significant figure in the Turkish Independence War and its aftermath. Instead of becoming a citizen of the newly established independent Albania in 1912, he chose to remain a Turkish citizen. Although he did not write many poems about Albanians, in *Safahat*, his most notable poetry collection, which contains all of Akif's poems, he vehemently opposed Albanian nationalism in accordance with his Islamic beliefs. In his work "*Süleymaniye Kürsüsünde*" (On the Pulpit of Süleymaniye), he addresses Albanian nationalism as follows:

*"This nation cannot walk with Albanianism and Arabism
Neither Turkism...
The God made you as members of a family,
Leave the separation between you."*⁸

Therefore, while the role of Bektashi Muslim Albanian elites, specifically with regard to the cultural rights and literature of Albanians, was more prominent than their

⁸ The Turkish version of the poem
 "Arnavutluk, Araplıkla bu millet yürümez...
 Son siyaset ise Türklük, o siyaset yürümez!..
 Sizi bir âile efradı yaratmış Yaradan;
 Kaldırın ayrılık esbabını artık aradan"
 (Ersoy 2022, 206).

Sunni Muslim counterparts, the differences between Frasheri brothers indicate that no sweeping generalizations can be made about the preferences of Bektashi Muslim Albanian elites over their Sunni Muslim counterparts in favor of an autonomous/independent Albania. There was a significant discrepancy even between the brothers. A similar example can be cited with Mehmet Akif and his significance for the Turkish people. Therefore, it can be considered normal that on both factions of the Muslim community, there were elites who advocated for an independent Albania and those who opposed it.

The gatherings on the alphabet hold significant importance in terms of uniting the Albanian elites of diverse faiths residing in various cities and the diaspora, while also facilitating the creation of a network. As demonstrated through the example of Sami Frasheri, these scholarly pursuits signify that the aspiration for self-determination remains distant, particularly among Muslim Albanians. However, the established network with the Protestant translation teams, and in particular, the Bible society, will prove to be exceedingly crucial for the subsequent Albanian identity, which began to take shape. Despite the existence of varying perspectives regarding the adoption of Arabic or Greek script for the Albanian alphabet, the usage of Latin characters, agreed upon collectively by Albanian elites of different religious affiliations through negotiations, highlights the significance of the Albanian language as a unifying element (Olgun 2019). That revolutionary unification was also the early news for the multireligious nation-state of Albania.

The absence of cultural or political cohesion, coupled with religious diversity among Albanians, rendered the Albanian language the sole unifying force. As Hobsbawm (1992) contends, language constitutes one of the four stages of the second aspect of national consciousness. Given that none of the religions had the potential to unite all Albanians, language emerged as the primary adhesive for the nation-building process (Duijzings 2002). Furthermore, as Clayer (2013) posits, the printing press, newspapers, and book publications played a critical role in Albanian nationalism, particularly in the absence of uniform religious networks and schools. The significant collaboration of Albanian elites, irrespective of their religious affiliations, in promoting language and alphabet standardization exemplifies the transformation of initial endeavors by Protestant missionaries into a national renaissance. Despite being Bektashi Muslims, the Frasheri brothers, Naim and Sami, cooperated with the Bible Society, which aimed to establish

Protestant educational institutions in Albanian territories. Midhat Frasheri, the nephew of Naim and Sami Frasheri and the son of Abdul Frasheri, later became the minister of education in newly established Albania, and also provided his backing to the Bible Society (Docì 2017, 125).

His appreciation can be understood from his quotes: *“National sentiment is so strong as to quiet down every difference that the diversity of religions could create. Albania has never known the bitterness of religious hate, and whatever is the creed, Catholic, Orthodox, Islamic, the Albanian is always a good patriot. Above all, I feel obligated to offer appropriate recognition for the contribution of the British Bible Society, for its services toward our country and literature, through the translation of Scripture into Albanian. It is impossible to speak of the Albanian literature without mentioning the work and determination of those who have continued this noble work for long and against many difficulties”* (Young and Cakolli 2011, 48).

In addition to Muslim nationalist thinkers, Christian figures such as the Catholic Christian Vaso Pasha also emphasized the significance of setting aside religious differences. In his renowned poem "Oh Albania, Poor Albania," he highlighted the divisions within Albanian society, underlining the need to transcend religious dissimilarities and commit oneself to Albanian unity. By accusing not only Muslim Hodjas but also Christian Priests for deceiving Albanians, Vaso Pasha's poem can be interpreted as anti-clerical and anti-religious. However, the notion of the early Albanian National elites cannot be viewed as a direct reaction to religion; instead, they regarded religion as secondary to their national identity and did not consider it an obstacle to the unification of Albanians.

*" Albanians, you are killing your brothers,
 Into a hundred factions you are divided,
 Some say "I believe in God," others "I in Allah,"
 Some say "I am Turk," others "I am Latin,"
 Some say "I am Greek," others "I am Slav,"
 But you are brother, all of you, my hapless people!
 The priests and the hodjas have deceived you
 To divide you and keep you poor.
 Awaken, Albania, wake from your slumber,
 Let us all, as brothers, swear a common oath*

*And not look to church or mosque,
The faith of the Albanian is Albanianism (shqyptarija).*
(Skendi 2015, 169–70)

Aleksander Stavre Drenova (Asdreni), another notable Albanian Orthodox Christian poet, also stressed the significance of overcoming religious disparities to save their country in his renowned poem "The Voice of the Flag" (Duijzings 2002). As evidenced, the Albanian language had become the most crucial factor for the elites to counter the dividing attempts of their neighbors in regard to their religious differences. According to them, national unity should be founded on cultural and linguistic cohesion.

Despite progress being made in achieving linguistic unity at the alphabet level, the perception of Albanian identity among Albanian elites, who continued their activities in different centers of the Ottoman Empire and Europe, was not entirely uniform. As indicated by Sami Frasheri's remarks, Muslim Albanians, who constituted the majority of the Albanian population, had not yet entertained the idea of independence. Although demands for independence may have been expressed by Albanian Orthodox and Catholic Christian elites, they had not yet been articulated. Additionally, studies on the Albanian language had not yet received significant public attention. Since the people were still largely subjects of the Ottoman Empire, religious differences continued to play an important role in defining identities. At this point, the protection of the rights of the Albanians started to gain significance in the emerging new order in the Balkans, which can be viewed as the primitive stage of the idea of independence. The mounting external threats to the Albanian nation further played a crucial role in enabling the elites to set aside their religious disparities. The elites began to perceive the need to come together as a necessity.

2.4 The External Threats for Albanians and the Formation of the League of Prizren

The development in Albanian language and Albanian national identity, which commenced with the endeavors of Christian Albanians and was expedited with the aid of Protestant missions, gained momentum when Muslim Albanians joined the effort at the end of the 19th century. Despite this, the allegiance of Muslim Albanians, particularly

Sunni Muslims, to the Ottoman Empire remained powerful. However, the events that unfolded in the Balkans towards the end of the 19th century helped Albanians, including Muslims, to cultivate a sense of national identity. The League of Prizren, which is expounded upon in this section, became a turning point for Muslim Albanians, as it enabled them to form a national identity and plant the early seeds of independence. The revival of the Albanian language, illustrated in Section A of Figure 2, and the establishment of the League of Prizren, depicted in Section B of the same figure, in response to newly encountered external threats, contributed to the emergence of nationalist sentiments among a wider segment of Albanian elites, representing diverse religions.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was struggling with military defeats and economic woes. In addition, the emergence of nationalistic ideas began to erode the Empire's cohesion. Greece proclaimed its independence in 1832, and the Serbian insurgency began in 1804, resulting in their independence, along with Montenegro and Romania, in the Treaty of San Stefano of 1878. At the same time, the Bulgarian principality was officially established. Conversely, the uprisings in the Albanian region did not originate from nationalistic demands in the first half of the 19th century. Although there were rebellions in Albanian territory in the 1830s and 1840s, they appear to be connected to the Ottoman government's implemented reforms. Nevertheless, the massacre of 400 Albanian *Beys*⁹ in Monastir by Mehmed Resid Pasha in 1830 also contributed to these non-nationalistic revolts being etched in the memories of the following period (Clayer 2013, 121).

In the 19th century, the modernization endeavors in the Ottoman Empire expedited. In 1876, the Empire announced its first contemporary constitution, referred to as the "Fundamental Law" (*Kanun-u Esasi*). According to this constitution, two distinct assemblies were established under the jurisdiction of the Sultan, namely the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber of Notables (Gawrych 2006, 39). It is evident from the constitution that the notion of Ottomanism prevailed. Specifically, Articles 8¹⁰ and 17¹¹ emphasized that all Ottoman subjects, irrespective of their faith, would be treated

⁹ A title given to senior officers, provincial governors, and nobles.

¹⁰ "All individuals of the Empire are, without distinction, called Ottomans whatever their religion or sect" (Gawrych 39).

¹¹ "All Ottomans are equal before the law and equal in rights and duties regardless of religion and sects" (Gawrych 39).

equitably under the law and that they were all Ottomans, regardless of their religion (Gawrych 2006, 39).

In 1877, the Balkans were simmering. Being aware of the situation, a group of Albanian elites orchestrated a secret gathering in *Yanya*, led by Abdul Frasheri. In an effort to safeguard all Albanian territories, they began to concentrate on the notion of administrative self-rule for a solitary Albanian province. Demands such as the appointment of Albanian officials, establishment of Albanian language schools, and the confining of military service by Albanians to Albania were also widely concurred upon (Gawrych 2006, 40). One of the most significant political events that amplified Albanian nationalism was the Ottoman Empire's defeat against the Russian Empire in the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian war. As per the Treaty of San Stefano, the Turks were supposed to withdraw from the Balkans, except for Macedonia and Eastern *Rumeli*. However, a contentious aspect of the Treaty of San Stefano was assigning some Albanian-majority lands to newly established Balkan states (Olgun 2019).

Tsar Alexander declined to revert to the status quo and decided to redefine the Balkan borders in line with Russian ideals. The San Stefano agreement mandated the establishment of an autonomous Bulgarian principality with a populace of roughly 5 million, and the lands bestowed upon Bulgaria encompassed Albanian-majority territories. Of greater significance, this Bulgarian principality, under Russian control, had access to the Aegean Sea via Kavala, which was not easily acceptable to Western states. Romania, Montenegro, and Serbia were also gaining independence. Similar to Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina also enjoyed autonomous governance. This agreement inflicted significant territorial losses and economic challenges upon the Ottoman Empire in both the east and the west. Albanians, on the other hand, felt threatened as some of their regions were lost to other Balkan states, and the Ottoman power was inadequate to counter this new border (Gawrych 2006, 43).

The Ottoman Empire's defeat accelerated the promotion of nationalist ideas among the elites of the two religions, beyond their religious loyalties (Skendi 2015). The Albanian elites were alarmed by the lands granted to the newly established Slavic states and realized the need for precautionary measures. The growing influence of Russia and the complex consequences of the Treaty of San Stefano compelled European powers to take action, resulting in the Berlin Congress (Olgun 2019). In response to these developments, the "Committee for the Defense of Albanian Rights" was established in

Istanbul to advocate for Albanian rights and lands at the congress. The committee's main objective was to defend Albanian lands against the newly founded Balkan states, as expressed by Vaso Pasha, one of its members. The famous letter of Vaso Pasha from Necip Alpan's book can be translated into English as follows:

"The Albanian nation has the honor of presenting its wishes to the Berlin Congress and informing that it is ready to defend its lands and other national and vital rights, which are to be plucked from its bosom and given as gifts to other nations, with its military power and possibilities" (Alpan 1978, 52).

The committee also called for a congress to gather Albanian elites from different Albanian speaking lands. In response to the committee's call, a congress was held in Prizren on June 10, 1878, just three days before the Berlin Congress. The congress was attended by 300 delegates from different Albanian regions and 14 Muslim members from Bosnia who gathered at a mosque in Prizren. The League of Prizren (June 1878-1881) was established to develop strategic actions for the apparent future defeats of the Ottomans and to defend Albanian rights against external forces (Clayer 2015). However, the requests for help from the members from Bosnia did not receive much attention, as Albanians were primarily focused on dealing with their own problems (Gawrych 2006, 45). Abdul Frasheri chaired this conference and stressed that, if required, even blood could be shed to defend their rights. Of greater significance, he underscored the necessity of an autonomous and integrated Albanian province. Nonetheless, his ideas were not embraced by the majority of the congress attendees, given that they entailed a longing for a unified and self-governing Albania with national and cultural rights (Gawrych 2006, 46).

Sheikh Mustafa, a Sunni Muslim religious official from *Tepedelen* (Tepelana), was elected president by the committee members. One of the crucial resolutions passed by the delegates was to dispatch a memorandum named "the League of Albanians" to Istanbul, stating that they would resist any occupation aiming at their territories. They also contended that the League would protect the lives, properties, and dignity of non-Muslim Albanians as well. The committee called upon all Albanian lands to provide soldiers for possible and existing occupations on their soil, and finally, it declared that both Ghegs and Tosks, Muslims and non-Muslims, had their oaths or "*besa*"¹² to defend their lands

¹² Pledge of Honor in Albanian.

(Gawrych 2006, 46–47). As evident, the demands of this memorandum had a regional character, and there was no emphasis on schools, autonomy, and unification of Albanian lands. The only aspiration was to protect the status quo before the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 (Gawrych 2006, 47). In addition, the League dispatched these memoranda and petitions not only to Istanbul but also to Berlin, with the aim of influencing the congress's decision. Another significant development was that Muslim elites endeavored to prioritize their national identity over their religious identity, so as to wield greater influence over the European powers and to demonstrate their autonomy from the Muslim-Christian discord in Bosnia or Bulgaria (Gawrych 2006, 47–48).

The endeavors of the Albanian elites failed to get a substantive response in Berlin. Even Bismarck remarked during the Congress that "There is no Albanian nationality." It can be argued that the primary objective of the congress was to impede the expansion of Russia. The Treaty of Berlin was signed on July 13, 1878, and the territorial arrangement in San Stefano was reorganized. One of the most conspicuous differences was the reduction of the Bulgarian Principality's territory. Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro were recognized as independent states, but Macedonia and Central Albania were restored to the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, compared to the San Stefano Treaty, the outcomes were relatively favorable for Albanians (Gawrych 2006, 48–49).

After the Prizren meeting, the "Debre Unionist Society" and the "Toskland Unionist Society" persisted in making appeals via letters addressed to Istanbul. It should be emphasized that the Debre Unionist Society was predominantly composed of Ghegs due to the fact that Debre is situated in the northeastern region of Albanian lands, on the north side of the Shkumbin River. As the league involved both Ghegs and Tosks, it also included a diverse mix of Sunni/Bektashi Muslims and Catholic/Orthodox Christians. These two groups attempted to substantiate their requests by asserting that one-third of the population was Christian, while two-thirds were Muslim, and that they all spoke the Albanian language in the Albanian territories (Gawrych 2006, 50). It appears significant to assert comparable demands through petitions from diverse elites or regions within the empire, in a similar vein to the Prizren League's decision. One of the key demands was to establish a single Albanian province instead of being divided under separate administrative entities. Albanians began to question why they could not fulfill such a dream, similar to how Bulgarians had their own principality (Gawrych 2006, 51).

Although the League of Prizren is often regarded as the initial political entity established by Albanians, its primary objective was to protect Albanian territories from other Balkan nations, rather than to create an autonomous state. To put it differently, the League of Prizren was a defensive union whose aim was to maintain the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and protect Albanians. Nevertheless, not all participants shared the same objective, they had varying goals. While some representatives advocated for solidarity among Muslims, others argued that it was not a Muslim gathering, but rather considered Albanians as a distinct national identity separate from Muslims. Moreover, the latter group asserted that Albanians should distinguish themselves from Turks, Serbs, and Greeks (Inglis 2013).

The external threat posed by Serbs and Russians acted as a catalyst for early Albanian unification, demonstrating that Muslim and Catholic Christian Albanians were more closely aligned with one another than with any Serb or Greek. Muslim and Christian individuals were active participants in the League (Duijzings 2002, 3). Given that the congress held in Prizren, a northeastern Albanian city, predominantly inhabited by Ghegs, who predominantly adhere to Sunni Islam and Catholic Christianity, the initial meetings were attended by individuals from these communities. As per Skendi (2015, 36), limited participation from the southern Tosk region was attributed to temporal and geographical constraints. Nonetheless, it should be noted that one of the most significant figures within the League, Abdul Frasheri, was a Bektashi adherent hailing from the Tosk region. Consequently, it can be posited that while the representation favored the Ghegs, the league did not exclusively pertain to the Gheg community. Furthermore, as Abdul Frasheri concurrently held membership in the Central Committee for the Defense of Albanian Nationality. As discussed earlier, it shows the paramount significance of the committee that issued the initial summons for the gathering.

One of the most important features of the league was its resolution to assume the role of a central governance body for Albanian territories. They called for the establishment of the other committees in diverse regions of Albania, all operating under the central headquarters in Prizren. The governing aspect of both the league and its subordinate committees is evident in their authority to make decisions pertaining to tax collection, arms distribution, and the mobilization of the populace to defend against external forces (Skendi 2015, 37). Following the gathering held in Prizren during the month of July, numerous members of the league directed their attention towards their respective regions

with the aim of establishing localized committees and organizing local military units. Consequently, variations emerged among these committees. For instance, the committee situated in the town of Abdul Frasheri comprised a greater number of Bektashi adherents and fostered robust affiliations with Bektashi *tekkes*¹³.

Conversely, the *Iskodra* (Shkodra) committee demonstrated a greater proportion of Catholic members in contrast to their counterparts, whereas in *Yanya*, the number of Orthodox Christian Albanians was higher due to its geographical proximity to Orthodox Greece (Skendi 2015, 38, 41). For instance, the primary two envoys representing Albanians at the Berlin Congress were Bektashi Muslim Abdul Frasheri and Orthodox Christian Jani Vreto (Glenny 2012, 142). Alongside Vaso Pasha, Baca Kurti Gjokaj is also known for his endeavors during the league and the Albanian resistance against Montenegro, as a Catholic Albanian nationalist (Elsie 2015, 46).

While the notable figures of Albanian resistance against external forces can be augmented, the Albanian elites from diverse religious and sectarian backgrounds up until this point exemplify the early unification of Albanians. The gathering of the league was initiated from Istanbul by the Committee of Albanian rights, which included distinguished individuals representing two distinct religions and four different religious sects. As the league convened in Prizren, predominantly comprising Sunni Muslim and Catholic Albanians within a madrasa, Sheikh Mustafa Tetova, a prominent Sunni Muslim, was elected as the president, and the welcoming speech was delivered by the well-known Bektashi Muslim Abdul Frasheri, who, alongside Jani Vreto, an Orthodox Christian, represented Albanians at the Berlin Congress. Additionally, Catholic figures Vaso Pasha and Baca Kurti Gjokaj played pivotal roles in the struggle, encompassing both cultural contributions such as the development of the alphabet and the struggle on the battlefield against the Montenegrins.

The league's impact spread swiftly throughout various regions of Albanian territories. Consequently, despite differences among committees regarding religious majority and the idea of independence, the outcome was of great significance for the future formation of the Albanian nation. Elites from all religious affiliations among Albanians collaborated to safeguard the territorial integrity of Albanian lands and endeavored to protect their homeland, irrespective of the dominant religious population in those regions. Although

¹³ A dervish or Sufi lodge or place of worship (For the context of this thesis, the word 'tekke' is mostly used for the worship place of Bektashi Muslims)

numerous Albanian elites participated in this struggle, Table 2.2 highlights several significant figures who have been mentioned thus far in the discussion.

Table 2.2: Some Albanian Leading Figures during the League of Prizren

Sunni Muslim	Bektashi Muslim	Orthodox Christian	Catholic Christian
Sheikh Mustafa Tetova	Sami Frasheri	Jani Vreto	Vaso Pasha
Iljaz Pasha Dibra	Abdul Frasheri		Baca Kurti Gjokaj

Nonetheless, the rising military and economic dominance of the League was increasingly perceived as an internal threat by Ottoman officers. Consequently, the League was forcibly disbanded, which led to the emergence of "alternative means of struggle" for Albanian nationalism (Rrapaj and Kolasi 2013). Although some leaders of the League persisted in their roles in the Turkish army and civil service, many were exiled. However, it is crucial to mention that the League's dissolution did not bring an end to the Albanian national movement. Instead, it galvanized the movement with its ethos and became a symbolic representation of the Albanian national awakening (Hall 1994, 10). The significance of the League for future generations can be comprehended from the poem written by Catholic Christian Albanian Gjergj Fishta, who was only ten years old when the League was dismantled in 1881.

*“As for the Sultan of Istanbul
Who to Montenegro’s king
Offers Plava and Gusinye,
Scutari, the Northern Highlands,
Go and tell him that Albania
Is not a basket of figs
Just to be handed to one’s friends?
But it is the motherland of our fathers
Motherland of Skanderbeg,
Motherland of Mojs Golemi
And of Leka Dukagjini . . .”*

(Gawrych 2006, 69).

However, the Prizren League should not be regarded as a comprehensive national organization uniting all Albanian elements. Despite being a significant beginning, it is notable that participants from the Northern Albanian regions were not particularly enthusiastic about matters such as autonomy and cultural rights. Instead, they joined forces with the aim of protecting Albanian rights within the empire and defending against external threats (Gawrych 2006, 69). Therefore, it can be argued that the League of Prizren can be regarded as a pivotal moment for the Albanian national movement due to its successful endeavors to unite Albanians irrespective of their religious affiliations, and transform a cultural movement into a political union (Rrapaj and Kolasi 2013). As is evident, external threats from Russia and the newly formed Balkan states precipitated the emergence of Albanian political unity, overriding their religious disparities. Although it was not founded on the ideals of independence, the Albanian League, which was formed to defend against external threats, began to be viewed as a potential danger by Ottoman administrators when they requested a single province, after being ruled under different administrative units for a long time. Despite being banned in 1881, the League's elites, with most of its pioneers exiled, continued to maintain their connections. However, this experience was significant in terms of demonstrating a new reality: the Ottomans were unable to protect the Albanians against newly occurring threats, compelling them to unite. For Muslim Albanians, though, the idea of independence was not yet prevalent. For the Ottoman Empire, which had adhered to the Millet System for years, there was no substantial differentiation between Albanian and Turkish people, as both were Muslims. At this juncture, the changing policies of the empire would begin to make the Albanian Muslims, who were the most resistant to independence, amenable to the idea of independence.

2.5 Parting Ways: The Central Government's Turkish Nationalist Pressure

The 19th century witnessed a surge of Western-style innovations and reforms within the Ottoman Empire. The *Tanzimat* reforms of 1839 accelerated the process of modernizing the existing regime, which had started in the 18th century. Many students who would play a vital role in the future nationalistic movements of Turkey, Albania, and the Arab world were sent to Europe, including the Young Turks who played the primary

decision-making roles in the Empire. *The Hatt-ı Humayun* of 1856, which granted new rights to non-Muslims, facilitated the organization of Albanian and Arab non-Muslims with those in other regions of the Empire.

As previously mentioned, the *Kanun-u Esasi* was declared in 1876, thereby introducing a constitutional order in the Empire. The proclamation of *Kanun-u Esasi* caused a shift in the Ottoman throne, and Abdul Hamid II, who pledged to adopt a constitutional order, ascended to power. Subsequently, the Ottoman-Russian war, which was previously mentioned, erupted in the following year, and its aftermath brought about significant territorial losses and economic hardships for the Ottoman state. Furthermore, the war led to the formation of new nation-states in the Balkans, causing a major alteration in the Balkans map. In response to these developments, Albanians began to form autonomous committees irrespective of their religious differences, and notably established the Prizren League. Although the Berlin Agreement did not impose as severe consequences on Albanians as the San Stefano Agreement did, the threats persisted, and it became evident that the Ottomans were incapable of adequately safeguarding Albanian territories from these threats.

The dissolution of the Prizren League in 1881 and the subsequent exile of many Albanian elites demonstrated a shift in the Imperial administration. Although the League was initially established with a protectionist motive and did not aim for independence, the discourse of autonomy began to gain momentum. It could be argued that the Islamism policy, which was attempted by Sultan Abdul Hamid II, following the significant territorial losses in the Balkans due to the rise of nationalist movements, resulted in other ethnic elements in the empire remaining loyal to the empire for a brief period.

It is an undeniable fact that for Albanians, particularly among Muslim Albanians, the existing nationalist movement was suppressed during the initial years of Abdul Hamid II's reign. However, this period is also significant as it witnessed the emergence of new elites among the Muslim ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire. Despite the rapid modernization that took place during Abdul Hamid II's 33-year rule, the opposition, which comprised newly educated elites from various nations within the Empire, gained strength. During this period, in an effort to enhance the loyalty of Muslim Albanians to the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic allegiance of these groups had to be augmented (Clayer 2013, 199). Although Muslim Albanians were the primary concern, the Empire also employed strategies to strengthen the loyalty of Christian Albanians by using threat of

Greeks and Hellenism. However, the risk of the formation of an Albanian consciousness was deemed more significant, and hence this matter received less attention. Moreover, the use of Albanian language in regional newspapers and state schools was prohibited, as it was believed that such measures could fuel demands for autonomy (Clayer 2013, 200). However, as previously stated, the Albanian elites in Istanbul persisted with their literary studies, including the development of a new alphabet, and strengthened their ties with Albanian elites in the diaspora. In 1883, a conference was held in Corfu with the aim of establishing a Greco-Albanian state or confederation. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, the Ottoman government accepted the idea of publishing a newspaper in Albanian in the capital, featuring contributions from the Frasheri brothers and some non-Muslim Albanians like Jani Vreto and Pandeli Sotiri, in order to counter the threat. However, after only one year, the activities of this periodical, named *Dituria*, were completely prohibited (Clayer 2013, 202). Indeed, this served as a precursor to the centralizing policies and implementations that would subsequently be recognized as the Despotism era, which can be characterized as the period between the repeal of the constitution and the Young Turk revolution.

For the Ottomans and Abdul Hamid, Albanians were a significant source of support in the Balkans. Albanians continued to hold positions in the sultan's guard regiment, army, and at various levels of the civil servants. Non-Muslim Albanians, on the other hand, were primarily appointed to translation offices and civil services linked to foreign affairs (Clayer 2013, 202–3). Although it was a necessity of the Ottoman *Millet System*, referring to Albanians as a single nation was specifically avoided in order to strengthen Ottoman dominance in the region. In provinces such as *Yanya*, where Albanians constituted the majority, the population was categorized based on definitions such as Muslim and Greek/Orthodox. Therefore, it was emphasized that the majority belonged to Muslims, not Albanians (Clayer 2013, 206). Also in this period, Abdul Hamid bestowed great significance upon schools not merely to advance western-style education, but also to enhance the Islamic commitment of his subjects. *Mekteb-i Sultani*¹⁴, was opened in *Yanya*, demonstrated the exceptional attention given to Albanians, being the first *Sultani* established outside Istanbul alongside Beirut (Gawrych 2006, 91–92).

¹⁴ The high schools following the Western education model during the late Ottoman era.

Despite the existence of the Islamist policies of Abdul Hamid and the state bureaucracy, they were unable to prevent the emergence of Albanian identity. A statement made by Sami Frasheri, the author of the first modern Turkish dictionary and a prominent Muslim Albanian intellectual, to the *Sabah* (Morning) newspaper in 1890, demonstrates that even among the Muslim Albanian elites, this policy was not found a response.

“According to Mizan (another newspaper) it is necessary to say ‘Muslims’ instead of ‘Albanians.’ These words are not, however, synonymous. Not all Muslims are Albanians and not all Albanians are Muslims . . . Our friend should know that though religion carries strong influence and great importance in all parts of the world, and especially in Eastern countries, race is considered more than religion in political meetings, congresses, and conferences” (Gawrych 2006, 102).

The Islamic discourse, which was endeavored to be reinforced throughout the 33-year reign of Abdul Hamid, failed to elicit the anticipated reaction from Albanians. The Albanian unrest and external threats, fueled by the Ottoman-Russian war, could not be adequately quelled by the policies implemented during this era.

It was not the case for only Albanians, unrest mounted in numerous regions of the empire, prompted by disparate ethnic factions against the despotic practices, and the emerging Westernized elite mobilized in diverse parts of the empire to terminate the epoch of Abdul Hamid. The suspension of the constitutional regime and parliament following the Ottoman-Russian war and the enduring absolute monarchy further intensified these reactions. The generation of adversaries, who came to be known as the Young Turks, arose from diverse ethnic and religious communities within Ottoman society. They established covert or overt organizations that sought freedom, culminating in the July Revolution of 1908 (Gawrych 2006, 140).

One of the opposition groups that emerged during this period was the Ottoman Union Society (*İttihad-ı Osmani Cemiyeti*), established by a Bektashi Muslim İbrahim Temo, an Albanian from Ohrid, along with Mehmet Reşid, Abdullah Cevdet, and Ishak Sukuti. The group was formed while Abdül Hamid was in power. It is important to mention that the first known member of the society, İbrahim Temo, also belonged to the Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings (Gawrych 2006, 141). Within a short period, members of various ethnic and religious backgrounds, including students and bureaucratic officials, were recruited into this organization. By 1889, exiled Ottoman subjects residing in Paris began to gather around a publication called *Le Jeune Turquie*, published by a Lebanese

Catholic Christian named Halil Ghanem (Gawrych 2006, 141). This community began to be referred to as the Young Turks, both by the European press and by their own designation. In 1895, these two groups merged under the name of the Ottoman Society of Union and Progress (*Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), better known as the Ottoman Community of Union and Progress (CUP) (Gawrych 2006, 142). Despite having many members both within and outside the Ottoman Empire, not all exiled subjects supported the community. This was especially true for minority groups, and nationalist sentiments played a significant role in shaping their stance. For instance, the Bulgarian newspaper *Drita*, which was circulated by Albanians, criticized the CUP for using solely the Turkish language:

“For us Albanians, it is necessary to fight for Albania, Albanians, and their language, and not for Turkey, Sivas, and Adrianople” (Gawrych 2006, 144).

In 1906, a group of soldiers and state officials established the Ottoman Freedom Society in *Selanik*, led by Mehmed Talat Bey. In 1907, this group merged with the Society of Union and Progress to form the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) (Gawrych 2006, 145). At the CUP congress held in Paris in December 1907, the objective of overthrowing Abdul Hamid was unanimously accepted by all members, and various methods to achieve this goal were discussed. What is even more remarkable is that the opposition to Abdul Hamid brought together diverse Ottoman elements and elites from various religions and ethnicities. However, one important issue that received relatively little attention was the post-Abdul Hamid period. Ethnic minorities, in particular, believed that a transition to a constitutional order and a more liberal social environment would be achieved, which is why the CUP enjoyed significant support. The following statement of Ismail Kemal, an Albanian member of the CUP, sheds more lights in order to understand the desires of the minorities:

“By union, the Albanians understood a grouping of different races under the flag of the Ottoman constitution, which would strengthen the empire by the union of all its peoples, guaranteeing to each its national existence.” (Gawrych 2006, 146).

Drawing on the example of İsmail Kemal Bey, widely regarded as the father of the Albanian nation for proclaiming Albanian independence in 1912 (Clayer 2013, 296), it becomes somewhat easier to comprehend the intimate ties between the CUP and the Albanian nationalist elites. An educated Albanian who had served in the Ottoman bureaucracy, Ismail Kemal Bey Vlora emerged as one of the chief opponents of the Abdul

Hamid regime. Alongside submitting petitions to the sultan, calling for administrative reforms in Albania, he endeavored to spread his ideas through national and international media. In 1899, he fled to Europe following an arrest warrant and an exile decree. He championed the intervention of the great powers in addressing the Albanian issue. What is more important that, Ismail Kemal identified himself as a Young Turk rather than an Albanian nationalist, particularly during his years of exile (Clayer 2013, 298). The network of Young Turks and Albanian nationalists constituted interconnected structures, particularly in the era of Abdul Hamid. Nevertheless, the separatist inclinations of certain Young Turks toward non-Turkish identities fostered a surge in Albanian nationalism within these groups, eventually resulting in the breakdown of these alliances, particularly following the subsequent revolution (Clayer 2013, 301).

In 1907, the unrest in Macedonia, mainly triggered by a poor harvest, began to gather momentum with the increasing number of local gangs. Seizing the opportunity of the mounting waves of rebellion and turmoil in the region, Resneli Ahmed Niyazi Bey, an Ottoman officer of Albanian origin, led a rebellion on July 4, 1908. Later, with the assistance of another Ottoman officer, İsmail Enver Bey, they successfully persuaded the Sultan to reinstate the constitution and the national assembly. This event, commonly referred to as the Young Turks Revolution, resulted in the two main leaders of the uprising being celebrated as "heroes of freedom" (Gawrych 2006, 150). This occurrence emphasized the active involvement of Albanians within the Ottoman bureaucracy and military, to the point that an Albanian Ottoman officer sparked the flames that ultimately ignited the Young Turk revolution.

Niyazi Bey who exposed the idea of Ottomanism, believed that the revolution would benefit all minorities in the empire. He expressed that working towards justice would ensure absolute equality among Turks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Vlachs, and Serbs, whom he regarded as brothers (Gawrych 2006, 151). Similarly, Enver Bey and the CUP also emphasized unity and brotherhood as evident from his statement, *"there are no Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, Jews, or Muslims. We are all equal; we glory in being Ottomans"* (Gawrych 2006, 154). The revolution and the CUP's goal of unity and brotherhood were inclusive of religious and ethnic minorities, which was evident from the participation of Albanian, Bulgarian, and Greek groups in street celebrations across Ottoman towns.

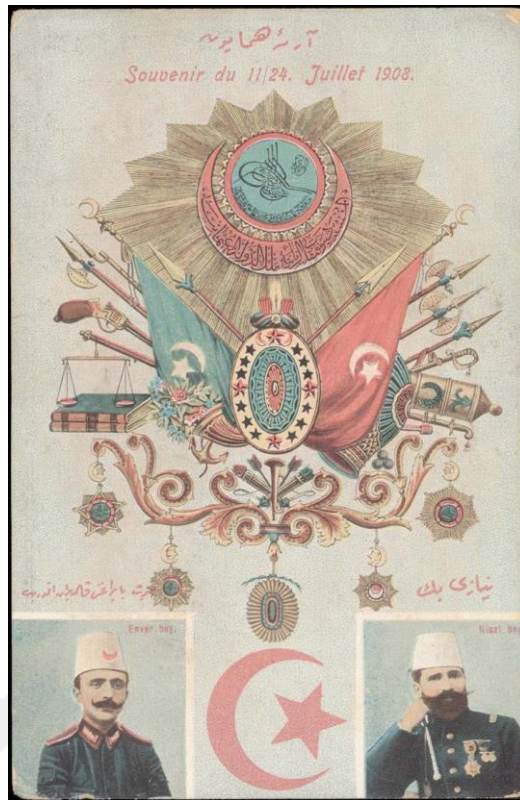


Figure 2.3: The Souvenir depicts Ismail Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey as "heroes of freedom" following the revolution.

Although the CUP announced its program following the revolution and implemented decisions such as elections, parliament, and the right to vote regardless of religion or ethnicity, which had already been decided upon before the revolution, Turkish remained the sole and mandatory official language and the CUP's allegiance to the notion of Ottomanism created a sense of uncertainty among minorities (Gawrych 2006, 156). As promised, the election took place in late November and early December, and Albanian candidates won majority of seats in the region that predominantly Albanians live. While some of these candidates were elected as CUP representatives, there were also independent candidates such as İsmail Kemal Bey Vlora (Gawrych 2006, 157). However, the absence of Christian deputies in the parliament, particularly, and the perception that non-Muslim Albanians are not adequately represented have caused unrest in Albanian regions.

The outcome of the 1908 elections in the Empire reveals the cause behind this unrest. The five *vilayets* in the Balkans under Ottoman rule were *Selanik*, *Manastir*, *Kosovo*, *Iskodra*, and *Yanya*. With the exception of *Selanik*, where there were no Albanian

representatives among the 12 deputies, Albanians secured victory in 25 out of the 37 seats in these four provinces. The distribution of seats can be observed in Table 2.3, providing a detailed breakdown.

Table 2.3: The Albanian Deputies in the Ottoman Parliament with respect to 1908 Elections¹⁵

Manastır (4/10)		Kosova (14/17)		İşkodra (3/3)		Yanya (4/7)	
Manastır (1/4)	Mehmet Vasıf Bey	Üsküp (2/4)	M. Necip Draga	İşkodra (2/2)	Murtaza Bey	Yanya (0/2)	
Debre (1/1)	İsmail Bey		Hoca Said Efendi		Şakir Bey	Ergiri (1/2)	Müfid Bey
İlbasan (1/1)	Hoca Abdullah Mahir Efendi	İpek (4/4)	Bedri Bey	Draç (1/1)	Esad Paşa Toptani	Berat (2/2)	Aziz Paşa Vriane
Görice (1/2)	Şahin Taki		Ahmed Hamdi Bey				İsmail Kemal Bey
Serfice (0/2)			Ali Haydar Bey			Preveze (1/1)	Hamdi Bey
			Hafız İbrahim Efendi				
		Priştine (3/4)	Hasan Fuad Paşa				
			M. Hamdi Efendi				
			Hasan Efendi				
		Prizren (3/3)	M. Emin Efendi				
			S. Şeref Efendi				
			Yahya Bey				
		Şenice (1/1)	H. Muhiddin Bey				
		Taslıca (1/1)	Ali Vasfi Bey				

Despite determining the religious affiliations of the Albanian deputies (Sunni/Bektashi Muslim) is possible based on their respective provinces either Gheg or Tosk, it becomes evident that all deputies were Muslims, either Sunni or Bektashi. Orthodox Albanians were generally categorized within the Rum millet according to the Ottoman Millet System, which implies that there might have been some Orthodox Albanians in the parliament. However, it is worth noting that no Catholic Albanians were represented in the parliament. This means that Catholic Albanian elites from the Gheg region, such as

¹⁵ The denominator symbolizes the number of representatives allotted to a particular region, whereas the numerator corresponds to the count of Albanian deputies elected for that specific district. The data for the table was derived from Aykut Kansu's book, "1908 Devrimi". (Kansu 1908).

Iskodra, who played crucial roles during the Albanian struggle against external forces within the Prizren League, did not have the opportunity to represent themselves in the Ottoman Parliament. Additionally, not all Muslim deputies shared the same views on Albanian national identity and the idea of independence. There were independent deputies, as well as candidates affiliated with the Committee of Union and Progress. Furthermore, the influence of the CUP had broader implications, leading to unrest even among the deputies who were elected as CUP candidates during the elections. Hafiz İbrahim, an Albanian CUP member, explicitly expressed the grievances that Albanians feel in the letter he sent to Talat Bey, demanding that the promises made before the revolution be fulfilled.

“Our Ipek (an Albanian city) Albanians thus are anxious about the Constitution . . . If we provoke this innocent people, if we cannot keep our promises, then the weapons in [their] hands will turn against the Constitution. We will be as the guilty one who did not keep his word nor do what he said. You know the Albanian besa” (Gawrych 2006, 163).

Following its policy of zero territorial loss after the revolution, the CUP faced several setbacks in its first year in 1908. Bulgaria gained complete independence, Austria annexed Bosnia, which it had controlled for 30 years, and Crete demanded to join Greece (Clayer 2013, 477). The CUP began to realize that the transition to a constitutional order alone would not be sufficient, and that a more centralized and stronger authority was needed to establish security and order in order to save the nation. Consequently, CUP policies started to become more centralist than Abdul Hamid's Islamism. For example, After the Monastir Congress in 1909, which was previously noted for the significance it placed on the Albanian alphabet, the CUP attempted to impede the development and usage of the Albanian language by using indirect methods (Gawrych 2006, 166). Even a *fetva*¹⁶ was obtained from the *şeyhülislam* stating that it would be unsuitable for Muslims to use the Latin alphabet. It can be perceived as a pragmatic religious strategy aimed at discouraging Muslim Albanians from adopting the Latin alphabet and, more significantly, impeding the development of the Albanian language among the Muslim population (Gawrych 2006, 182). Moreover, efforts were made to prohibit minority schools, which are protected under the constitutional provision of freedom of education for minorities, from utilizing their own language in these educational institutions (Gawrych 2006, 181).

¹⁶ A religious opinion.

During the covert meetings, prominent CUP members emphasized their wish for Turkish hegemony within the Empire (Gawrych 2006, 173). The policies, which had already become more centralized and highlighted Turkish identity, would be even more evident to Albanians in the uprisings that occurred between 1909-1912. The CUP's centralizing policies, which placed Turkish identity at the forefront and the failure to uphold the promises made before the revolution, were seen as a betrayal of the revolution in which Albanians had also played a significant role (Çelik 2004, 356).

Albanians, who had collaborated with the CUP to overthrow the despotic regime, intensified their objections due to their unmet demands, which included the alphabet matter, alongside the Young Turks' growing Turkish nationalist policies. It is evident that Albanian national intellectuals joined the ITC with the expectation of receiving reduced taxes, constitutional entitlements, and educational reforms. However, their schools were shuttered, and the use of Albanian publications featuring the new alphabet was forbidden (Inglis 2013, 82). Additionally, their organizations, which aimed for administrative and cultural autonomy, were dissolved and banned. As a result, a rebellion movement emerged every year in the Albanian region between 1909 and 1912, and they can be considered not as distinct from one another, but as successive waves of the same rebellion. Moreover, the inability of Catholic Christian Albanians to represent themselves in the parliament during the elections heightened the reactions of Catholic Christian Albanians, particularly in the Northern Albanian Lands. In fact, the prominent role of Luigj Gurakuqi and Ded Gjo Luli (İdrizi 2018), both Catholic Christian Albanians, in the revolts preceding independence serves as evidence of this situation.

In 1910, the Ottomans suppressed the rebellions in *Pristine* and *İskodra* and imposed a state of emergency. The following year, another rebellion erupted in the same region, where Albanian guerrilla units, better equipped, inflicted approximately 8,000 casualties on the Ottoman forces. The fighting once again centered around the Kosovo region. Ismail Kemal Bey and Luigj Gurakuqi authored a memorandum demanding the Ottoman Empire to acknowledge the Albanian identity, unify the regions inhabited by Albanians into a single province, and establish Albanian as the official language in these regions' governmental institutions (Çelik 2004). The demands made by Hasan Bey Pristine to the central government during the 1912 rebellion illustrate the cause of the uprisings more clearly. These demands included "the unrestricted use of the Albanian language, recognition of Albanians as a nationality with all associated rights, recognition of the

Albanian language as an official language in Albanian provinces, increased use of local taxes for schools, appointment of officials who spoke Albanian, use of Albanian in local courts, and the performance of peacetime military service only in Albania" (Gawrych 2006, 194).

The events that unfolded during the suppression of the uprisings signify the severe rupture in the Albanians' social fabric. The gravity of the situation is evident from the distribution of this flyer in Albanian territories by Albanian extremists:

"Albanians, brothers. Wake up from your painful sleep. Come to your senses. We shed our blood for them [Turks] like slaves. We fought against the enemies of the Turks, but the Turks treated or service very shamefully. Albanian blood made the earth red for the sake of defending the Turks in this world, but the Turks are now trying to obliterate our language from the face of the earth. Turks sent their Anatolian troops [against us] and burnt our homes. They closed down our schools and newspapers. They are preventing the reading of our beloved language. They have [attempted] to destroy our [national] existence . . . Come on Albanians. Unite with those who are working for the homeland. Work to gain our rightful desires" (Gawrych 2006, 196).

On July 22, 1912, *Pristine* came under the complete control of Albanian rebels. Following negotiations that commenced in August, the Ottoman government was compelled to accept the aforementioned demands in September. However, the next month marked the commencement of a significant event that would reshape the Balkan region. On October 8, 1912, four Balkan nations—Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro—supported by Russia, declared war on the Ottoman Empire, marking the beginning of the first Balkan War. On this day, Serbian and Montenegrin forces initiated an offensive against *Iskodra*. Due to the existing threat of Serbian and Greek occupation, Albanian elites totally recognized that they could not align themselves with the Ottomans. Moreover, the Ottoman Empire was preoccupied with defending Edirne, which was under siege by the Bulgarians. The Balkan Wars had effectively disrupted the territorial unity between the Albanian-inhabited regions and the Ottoman central government, making unity with the empire no longer feasible. On November 28, 1912, Albanian nationalists, under the leadership of Ismail Kemal Bey, declared Albania an independent state. Ismail Kemal Bey assumed the role of the first president of Albania. Shortly thereafter, in 1913, Albanian independence was officially recognized with the signing of the Treaty of London.

It is noteworthy to emphasize that the Albanian multireligious nationalism commenced in the early 19th century as an elitist endeavor similar to various other nationalistic movements. Despite originating from Christian minorities among the Albanian populace and their translation endeavors, this movement gained significant traction among national elites, including Muslim Albanians, with the backing of Protestant missions and their translation activities. The sense of uncertainty that intensified in the Balkans following the Ottoman-Russian war facilitated the elites in transcending their religious dissimilarities and fostering a sense of unity in safeguarding the Albanian nation. Despite existing aspirations of self-rule or independence during this era, such appeals were not vociferously expressed and were not accepted by majority, particularly amongst Muslim Albanians. The Albanians, who endeavored to unite with the Ottoman elites that stood against Abdul Hamid's rule, became disillusioned with the centralist and nationalist policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) that rose to power after the revolution. Following a decade of intense turmoil at the start of the 20th century, they succeeded in establishing a multireligious nation-state.

2.6 The State Policies Toward Ethnicity and Religion in Independent Albania

Although the origins of Albanian multireligious nationalism and the impact of elites from diverse religious backgrounds have been extensively discussed in previous sections, the management of this religious diversity and the effects of Albania's multireligious structure on its politics remain important inquiries. Since this chapter primarily focuses on the birth of multireligious Albanian nationalism, there will not be many details regarding the post-independence period. Nevertheless, analyzing the state policies toward ethnicity and religion; and the religious affiliations of Albanian chief politicians during the periods between the independence and the Italian invasion; the Communist era; and post-Communist Albania will provide valuable insights into the multireligious structure of Albanian nationalism and its impact on Albania.

2.6.1 The Independent Albania until the Italian Invasion (1912-1939)

Albania, which gained its independence in 1912 due to the Balkan Wars, was under Serbian and Greek occupation simultaneously during the same period. The official boundaries of Albania were to be determined by the great powers of the time, namely

Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, at the London Conference in 1913 (İdrizi 2018, 143). As a result of the conference, the Principality of Albania was recognized as an autonomous state. The Kosovo region and Western Macedonia were given the Serbs and Montenegrins, which continues to be a source of tension to this day, while most of the area referred to as the *Yanya* province in the Ottoman administration system was handed over to Greece. However, only 40% of the land recognized by the great powers as a legitimate part of the Albanian Principality, which declared independence, remained within its territory. Consequently, 1.2 million Albanians were left outside the boundaries of the Albanian state (Prifti 1978, 26).

Although independence was proclaimed by a group led by Ismail Kemal Bey, internal rivalries among the Albanian elites persisted until the Italian invasion in 1939. The competition between Ismail Kemal Bey and Esat Pasha Toptani, both Bektashi Muslims, exemplifies this conflict. The fact that these two Albanian elites shared the same religious background suggests that the existing struggle was not due to religious differences but rather a power struggle between prominent families in Albania. With the increasing disagreements, Esat Pasha Toptani, who also served as the Minister of Internal Affairs in the government formed by Ismail Kemal Bey, established an autonomous structure in Central Albania and moved to Northern Albania with the troops he gathered, declaring himself the prince of Albania (İdrizi 2018, 147).

Due to this turmoil, Ismail Kemal resigned in January 1914, recognizing that the European powers would intervene in the situation, and the Principality of Albania was placed under the administration of the International Commission led by Esat Pasha Toptani. To preserve Albania's status as a Principality with the intervention of the great powers, as decided in the London Conference, Prince Wilhelm of Wied, a German, was proclaimed as the monarch (İdrizi 2018, 148). The fact that the Prince, who assumed the leadership in March 1914, was not of Albanian descent and adhered to the Protestant Christian faith, which was almost non-existent in Albania, illustrates the absurd nature of this appointment.

Following the arrival of the Prince, the Turhan Pasha Permeti Government was formed in the same year. In 1914, a rebellion erupted in Albania with the backing of Esat Pasha Toptani, a critic of Prince Wilhelm. The uprising resulted in the departure of both Prince Wilhelm and Turhan Pasha Permeti from the country. Even though Prince Wilhelm's reign was effectively terminated, the Principality of Albania remained in

existence until 1925 when Ahmet Zogu seized control of the government and proclaimed the Albanian Republic.

The early years of the Principality of Albania, which gained independence at around the same time as the outbreak of the First World War, were marked by a series of short-lived government overthrows. It was not until the end of the war that effective state authority and a functional government were finally established throughout the territory. The religious affiliations of the ministers in the second government, formed by Turhan Pasha Permeti in December 1918, were crucial in highlighting the multireligious character of independent Albania. This government was the first relatively stable and free administration of independent Albania after the departure of the Prince and the end of the war.

Although there is no direct research on the religious affiliations of these ministers, combining the information from studies on Albania during the early independence period reveals the breakdown in Table 4. Out of the 14 ministers in the Turhan Pasha government formed in 1918, three were Catholic Christians, three were Orthodox Christians, and seven were Muslims. What is noteworthy is that although Turhan Pasha himself was a Sunni Muslim, there were no other Sunni Muslims in the cabinet. The fact that the Prime Minister did not appoint any ministers from the group closest to him in terms of religion, and those Christian members made up almost half of the cabinet, shows that Albania was able to maintain its multireligious character to a large extent after independence.

Table 2.4: Government (December 1918 – January 1920) of the Principality of Albania and the Breakdown of the Ministers by Religion ¹⁷

Sunni Muslim (1)	Duties	Bektashi Muslim (7)	Duties	Orthodox Christian (3)	Duties	Catholic Christian (3)	Duties
Turhan Pasha Permeti	Head of State and Prime Minister of Albania	Mufid Libohova	Deputy Prime Minister	Mihal Turtilli	Minister	Prenk Bib Doda	Deputy Prime Minister
		Mustafa Merlika Kruja	Minister of Posts and Telegraphs	Lef Nosi	Minister of National Economy	Luigj Bumci	Minister
		Mehmed Konica	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Petro Poga	Minister of Justice	Luigj Gurakugi	Minister of Education
		Sami Vrioni	Minister of Agriculture				
		Midhat Frasheri	Minister				
		Mehdi Frasheri	Minister of Interior				
		Fejzi Alizoti	Minister of Finances				

The arrival of the government led by Sulejman Bey Delvina, a Bektashi Muslim, into Tirana in January 1920 marked the ascension of Ahmet Zogu, the Minister of Interior at the time, to greater power. This event, following the removal of Turhan Pasha Permeti, signaled Zogu's increasing influence in the years to come (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 169). A review of the religious composition of Albania's prime ministers from the nation's early years of independence until the onset of Italian occupation in 1939 demonstrates a level of diversity that even modern nation-states find difficult to match. Table 2.4 offers a detailed breakdown of Albanian prime ministers by religious affiliation, until the Italian occupation.

¹⁷ For comprehensive biographical details of the ministers, please refer to the following sources: (Bido 2020), (Fischer and Schmitt 2022), (Olgun 2021), (Pearson 2004).

Table 2.5: The Breakdown of the Albanian Prime Ministers by Religion until the Italian Invasion (1912-1939)¹⁸

Sunni Muslim (4)	Term	Bektashi Muslim (7)	Term	Orthodox Christian (4)	Term	Catholic Christian (0)	Term
Turhan Pasha Permeti	March 1914-September 1914	İsmail Kemal Bey Vlora	November 1912-January 1914	Pandeli Evangjeli	October 1921-December 1921		
	December 1918-January 1920	Fejzi Bey Alizoti	January 1914-March 1914		March 1930-October 1935		
Hasan Bey Prishtina	December 1921-December 1921	Esat Pasha Toptani	October 1914-February 1916	Idhomene Kosturi	December 1921-December 1921		
Ahmet Zogu	December 1922-February 1924	Sulejman Bey Delvina	January 1920-November 1920	Fan S. Noli	June 1924-December 1924		
	January 1925-September 1928 - President (Albanian Republic)	Iliaz Bey Vrioni	November 1920-October 1921	Kostaq Kota	September 1928-March 1930		
	September 1928-April 1939 - King (Albanian Kingdom)		May 1924-June 1924		October 1935-November 1936		
Shefqet Bey Vërlaci	March 1924-May 1924		December 1924-January 1925				
		Xhafer Bey Ypi	December 1921-December 1922				
		Mehdi Bey Frashëri	October 1935-November 1936				

Despite the absence of a Catholic Christian prime minister during this time, Catholics held significant roles in the Albanian government, as demonstrated by their presence in the administration of Turhan Pasha Permeti. In 1925, Gjergj Fishta, a Catholic Christian, was appointed as the Minister of Education during the reign of Ahmet Zogu, who first declared himself president in 1925 and later became king in 1928, three years after his initial declaration. Fishta's leadership of the Monastir congress in 1909, which formalized the Albanian alphabet, highlights the substantial contribution of Catholics in Albanian society.

As stated on the Albanian Royal Court website¹⁹, Ahmet Zogu, who was forced to flee the country at the onset of the Italian invasion, belonged to the Gheg family on his

¹⁸ For comprehensive biographical details of the prime ministers, please refer to the following sources: (Fischer and Schmitt 2022), (Roszkowski and Kofman 2008).

¹⁹ For detailed information about Ahmet Zogu and his dynasty, please see the Albanian Royal Court website. Accessed May 7, 2023, <https://albanianroyalcourt.al/royal-house/>.

father's side, who were Sunni Muslims, and had Bektashi Muslim ancestry from his mother's Toptani family. He claimed to be a descendant of Skanderbeg. Additionally, by wedding the Catholic Hungarian Princess Geraldine Apponyi (Yavuz 2022, 41), he embraced three out of four diverse religions/sects, excluding Orthodox Christianity.²⁰

The wedding of Prince Leka, also known as the Crown Prince of the Zogu Dynasty, provides an excellent example to gain a deeper understanding of the Zogu administration's view of religion during his reign. After the Italian occupation, the Zogu Dynasty lived outside of Albania's borders. In 1975, Crown Prince Zogu got married in Spain, and the wedding ceremony included Orthodox, Catholic, and Muslim traditions, as his wife was Catholic. Indeed, this event highlights the multireligious nature of Albania. Despite being in exile, the prince had a marriage that was acceptable to all religious groups in his country.²¹

Under Ahmet Zogu's regime, the education system underwent a process of secularization and was separated from religious institutions, including both mosques and churches (Idrizi 2018, 158). The constitution, which was enacted in 1928 during the Kingdom regime, asserted that Albanians did not adhere to any particular religion, were free to practice their religion, and that the state ensured the protection of this freedom. However, it also stipulated that religion could not influence the state's affairs, especially in the judiciary, nor could it be used for political purposes (Yavuz 2022, 79).

Despite implementing some secularist policies that contributed to transforming Albania into a modern European state, the Zogu period can also be viewed as the start of a repressive stance toward religion that persisted under Enver Hoxa's rule. For instance, during this period, the veil for Muslim women was prohibited, and King Zogu suggested that prayers should only be performed while standing, based on the belief that it was prohibited for men to bow in Albanian tradition. Mithat Frasheri, who supported Zogu, argued that prayer should be avoided as they were Ottoman customs. In 1933, private schools were shut down, a move that dealt a severe blow to Orthodox and Catholic schools (Idrizi 2018, 162). Moreover, the Bektashi Muslim centers in the south were relocated to Tirana, and the Albanian Orthodox Church established its own church in 1937. This can be taken as an indication that Zogu aimed to maintain control and

²⁰ "King Zog and Queen Geraldine", *Albanian Royal Court*, accessed May 7, 2023, <https://albanianroyalcourt.al/royal-house/>.

²¹ "Leka I, King of the Albanians", "Marriage", *Albanian Royal Court*, accessed May 7, 2023, <https://albanianroyalcourt.al/leka-i-king-of-the-albanians/>.

influence over these decentralized authorities. The centralization of religious institutions in Tirana would create a favorable situation to prevent any potential opposition from these groups.

In November 1941, when the Italian occupation began to weaken, the Albanian Communist Party was established under the guidance of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Following the end of the occupation by Axis forces in Eastern Europe, one of the decisions taken by political parties in Albania during the Permet Congress in May 1944 was to prohibit Ahmet Zogu from entering the country. Additionally, the Albanian Communist Party's victory at the congress and the shift towards one-party rule were other significant developments (Idrizi 2018, 171). The country, which was under Italian occupation from 1939 to 1943 and German occupation from 1943 to 1944, was about to enter a new era in 1944.

2.6.2 The Communist Albania (1944-1991)

Following the triumph of the Communist Party in the elections, the Enver Hoxha era commenced in Albania, extending nearly half a century. Prior to Hoxha's rule, in 1938, 10% of the Albanian population was adherents of Catholic Christianity, 20% followed Orthodox Christianity, 55% practiced Sunni Islam, and 15% adhered to Bektashi Islam (Özkan 2012, 295). In addition, lineage persisted as the principal determinant of identity, and conventional familial relations also remained intact. The formation of a strong Albanian national identity would only be realized under Enver Hoxha, who implemented a harsh state policy (Clayer 2013, 560).

Enver Hoxha, hailing from a Bektashi Muslim Tosk family, toughened his stance towards religion as time passed due to the influence of Communism, while simultaneously employing severe measures to establish the concept of Albanian nationalism in the populace. During his early years, Enver Hoxha struggled to suppress opposition in Albania, both within the party and beyond. His primary trial was to eliminate Koçi Xoxe (1911-1949), an Orthodox and Macedonian Slav who had secured a place on the Albanian Communist Party's politburo with the backing of Yugoslav Tito. Hoxha accused him of supporting Tito and had him executed (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 277). These were also the years when Enver Hoxha effectively subdued opposition and began to govern Albania in the style of Stalin. One of the international repercussions of

this era was the official departure of the American and British embassies in 1946, with their return only taking place in 1991. As the last American ambassador J.E Jacobs cited, the Catholic Christians and Sunni Muslims within the country were the ones who suffer from the Enver Hoxa regime because of being the leaders of the opposition (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 281). This could be another example which shows the Gheg and Tosk division remained robust within the country during the early years of Enver Hoxha. Although the regime's brutal attitude towards religion was not initially apparent, the process of religious suppression accelerated during the subsequent period, encompassing not only the majority Gheg Catholic Christians and Sunni Muslims, but also the Tosk Orthodox Christians and Bektashi Muslims. For instance, while the 1946 constitution guaranteed the right to private property ownership, freedom of religion and worship (Yavuz 2022, 135), there was a significant shift in these policies once opposition was totally suppressed. Consequently, with the adoption of the new constitution in 1967, Albania became the first atheist state in the world to prohibit religion. In 1946, upon the convening of the new parliament, the monarchy was officially dissolved, and the country's name was changed to the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, which lasted until 1991. Enver Hoxha remained the head of state until his death in 1985.

Enver Hoxha's focus on Albanian nationalism is evident in his policies, as seen in the formation of the cult of Skanderbeg, which was fully established during this period, making him a national hero. The main square in the capital, Tirana, was renamed Skanderbeg Square, and large museums in cities and studies on Albania's cultural heritage, including folk costumes, songs, and dances, were accelerated during this time. Albania's honorable struggle against the Fascists in the Second World War was even depicted on coins, highlighting the country's national identity (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 303). One of the few positive aspects of the 1946 constitution for Albania was the rights granted to women. Regulations on issues such as marriage were placed above Albania's traditional family and regional laws, and serious penalties were imposed on those who violated these laws, thus promoting gender equality (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 304).

The Tosk dialect was declared as the official language of Albania during the rule of Enver Hoxha, despite the Ghegs being the majority in the country. This period was marked by the dominance of the Tosks. Enver Hoxha considered religion as a barrier to Albanian unity. Between 1965-69, he established close ties with China and launched a cultural revolution, which worsened the situation for Catholic Christians and Sunni

Muslims due to his stance towards religion and the Gëgs. Catholic Christians were perceived as internal agents of foreign intervention and traitors, while Bektashism and Orthodoxy were restricted, albeit not as harshly as Catholicism and Sunnism. All funding for religious institutions was cut off, and 1536 mosques, churches, monasteries and tekkes were shut down and repurposed into cultural or sports centers. The clergy were either imprisoned or killed, and even giving religious names to children was prohibited. The claim that Albanians were first forcibly converted to Christianity and then Islam was not only propagated through discourse, but also through exhibits at the Atheist museum in *Iskodra*. Moreover, the secular national holidays started to be celebrated as alternatives to religious ones (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 310–12).

To gain insight into the policies regarding religion under the rule of Enver Hoxha, may be referred to an extract from the memoirs of Bilal Simsir, who served as the Turkish Ambassador to Tirana from January 1985 (the year of Enver Hoxha's death) to January 1987:

“Albania does not celebrate Eid al-Adha as part of its atheistic beliefs. They have no Eid al-Adha. Eid prayers are not even mentioned in this country, they cannot be mentioned. Prayer is forbidden. The only mosque that has survived in Tirana is the Ethem Bey Mosque and there is always a lock on the door. It is unthinkable to hear the call to prayer here. I am curious about the inside of Ethem Bey Mosque and I hope to see the inside of it if I continue to stay in Albania. In the past, the mosque was always full during religious holidays. Now it stands quietly in its place as if sulking against time. I hear that even if Albanian citizens do not celebrate Eid al-Adha publicly, they celebrate it secretly in their homes” (Şimsir 2022, 192).

Therefore, it can be argued that Enver Hoxha considered Albanianism to be the religion of Albania, echoing the views of Vaso Pasha from earlier times. Unlike the intellectuals of the Albanian national awakening period, Enver Hoxha rejected the notion that multiple religions could coexist and instead pursued the elimination of religious practices that he believed were dividing the Albanian people.

Following Enver Hoxha's death in April 1985, Ramiz Alia, who interestingly came from a Gheg and Sunni Muslim family but had risen to prominent positions in the party and was considered Enver Hoxha's close associate, assumed the positions of party secretary and head of state. This suggests that having Gheg or Sunni Muslim roots was not a serious impediment to one's career advancement within the state, as long as the

regime's principles were strictly adhered to. When he came to power, the Cold War was drawing to a close, and the fall of socialist leaders in the Balkans was accelerating. Furthermore, Albania was facing a severe economic crisis. By 1989, the communist regime had lost its grip on power, and protests against the existing problems erupted in the streets. These unruly demonstrations eventually evolved into a wave of rebellion that spread across almost every city in Albania (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 327).

In December 1990, the Democratic Party of Albania was established under the leadership of Sali Berisha, who had risen through the ranks of the communist party despite being another Gheg Sunni Muslim, Berisha had gained popularity in Albania for his efforts to ease tensions during the uprising, particularly in relation to university students in Tiran. During the same month, the last statue of Stalin in the country was removed on the orders of Ramiz Alia (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 327). The mobilization against the communist regime continued, and in February 1991, the large golden statue of Enver Hoxha in Tiran's Skanderbeg Square, as well as statues of Hoxha in other cities, were destroyed by the public. However, the resistance of pro-Hoxha groups was also strong that the country was on the brink of civil war (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 329). In March 1991, Albania held its first multi-party elections, signaling the start of a new era.

As can be seen, a new Albania was born during the era of Enver Hoxha, who ascended to power following World War II and established a communist regime, founded upon the symbolic figures of Albanian nationalism and the cult of Enver Hoxha. It can be asserted that the notion of Albanian nationalism was reinforced by the symbols and ceremonies of this period. Not only the Catholic Christian and Sunni Muslim populations, who were predominantly of Gheg descent, but also the Bektashi Muslim and Orthodox Christian communities, who were mainly Tosks, were denied the freedom to practice their respective faiths. Under Enver Hoxha's leadership, Albania became the world's first officially atheist state, resulting in a general decline in religious adherence amongst the followers of all religions. This period, marked by a rise in intermarriage between people from different regions and religions, also serves as the backdrop for Edi Rama's comments at the outset of this chapter. Although Albania is a nation where diverse religious components coexist and its national revival owes to the contributions of all such elements, the persecution of all religious factions during the Enver Hoxha era muddled the lines between these groups.

2.6.3 The Post-Communist Albania (1991- Present)

Despite experiencing various political transformations, crises, and insurrections within the country, post-communist Albania has, on the one hand, undergone a phase where its borders were redrawn in the region, particularly in Kosovo with the disintegration of Yugoslavia. However, this part will not delve into these matters extensively. Rather, it will focus on the ethnic and religious policies in post-communist Albania and the allocation of prime ministers based on their religious affiliations to demonstrate the multireligious structure of contemporary Albania.

In 1991, the Party of Labor of Albania, Enver Hoxha's Party, won Albania's first multi-party elections with a 2/3 majority of seats in parliament. Fatos Nano, an Orthodox Christian who had pledged to introduce European-style reforms and spearhead the shift towards a free-market economy before the election, was appointed as the prime minister. However, the new administration was short-lived as street demonstrations and economic issues persisted, and Ylli Bufi, another Orthodox Christian, became the leader of the renamed Socialist Party of Albania and took over as the new prime minister. Therefore, it can be argued that Orthodox/Tosk dominance in socialist leadership persisted during the initial period of post-communist Albania. The new government included seven ministers from the Democratic Party of Albania, signifying the commencement of coalitions and a more conciliatory governance model in Albania (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 330).

Albania had a severe winter, making it challenging to obtain even basic provisions such as food and heating materials. As a result, the Bufi government's reign was brief, and Vilson Ahmeti, a Tosk from Fir (Fier), governed the country for four months until the elections held in March 1992. Following this election, where the Democratic Party garnered 60% of the votes, Alexander Meksi, an Orthodox Christian and the grandson of Vangjel Meksi, who played a significant role in translating the Bible into Albanian, was named as the prime minister. Concurrently, Alia resigned as the head of state, and Sali Berisha became the newly elected president (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 331).

During the presidency of Sunni Muslim Berisha and Orthodox Christian Meksi, both belonging to the same party, many socialist-era practices were abolished, and significant progress was achieved in social and economic reforms. Religious freedom was ensured. However, due to the Hoxha era's efforts to eliminate religion and its traces from Albania,

all four religious groups encountered difficulties in reacquiring their religious knowledge and recalling their practices, as the clergy was almost non-existent during the communist regime. To address the shortage of clergy, officials from different countries, such as the Turkey and the Arab Gulf region, were invited to provide religious education, specifically for training Sunni Muslim clergy (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 333). The restoration of old mosques and the construction of new ones were also significant goals for Sunni Muslim Albanians and other Muslim states. Moreover, Christian missionaries were sent to Albania during this period, indicating that it was a competition between various religious missionaries in the country (Babuna 2003, 7).

During the post-communist period, the organization of the 6th World Bektashi Congress in Tirana in 1993 was the most significant event for the Bektashi Muslim community in Albania. Unlike other religious groups, Albanian Bektashi Muslims faced significant challenges in terms of their limited access to religious education and financial resources, which made it difficult for them to connect with other Bektashi communities around the world (Babuna 2003, 5).

The appointment of Anastasios Yannoulatos, a Greek citizen, as archbishop of the Albanian Orthodox Church in June 1992, led to a crisis in Albania, particularly among the Orthodox community, since the ecumenical patriarch in Istanbul failed to locate a suitable candidate from within Albania to rebuild the religious structures of the Orthodox Albanians. The Albanian government accepted the situation on the condition that an Orthodox cleric of Albanian origin would occupy the position until they were qualified for the role. In June 1993, the government accused Anastasios Yannoulatos of promoting Greek separatism. As a result, Orthodox Christian Albanians protested these accusations. The authorities prohibited Orthodox demonstrations and unauthorized protests were forcefully dispersed by the police. Although the parliament passed a law on religious freedom in the early months of 1993, it added the requirement that religious leaders must be Albanian nationals and must be approved by the President. As a result, the national demonstrations and international reactions prevented the law from enforcing. However, it demonstrates the repercussions of the Albanian-Greek tension concerning the Orthodox Christian community (Abrahams 1996, 155).

The Catholic Christians, along with other religious groups, intensified their endeavors within the country with the help of the Catholic countries. In 1991, Ylli Pufi traveled to the Vatican, where he expressed remorse for the cruel and unjust treatment of

Catholics during Hoxha's regime.²² Two years after this apology, Pope John Paul II, the head of the Catholic Church, visited Albania in 1993.

The impact of this revival is apparent in the surveys carried out in 2006 and 2011, which indicate that the proportion of individuals who believe that religion is a crucial aspect of life rose from 32% to 48% (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 334). While religious rights witnessed significant developments, the political situation in Albania remained unstable. Berisha's attempts to increase the presidential powers through constitutional amendment and return to authoritarian policies, in contrast to the initial years of his term, triggered rising reactions within Albania. The Democratic Party's high votes in the 1996 elections were condemned by Western countries due to the undemocratic conduct of the elections. In February 1997, Albania was hit by a new revolt fueled by poor economic conditions and fear of a return to dictatorship, resulting in a violent suppression of demonstrations by the Socialist Party supporters, which further escalated the tension in the country (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 339–44). In March 1997, a transitional government was established to ease the tensions, marking the start of the second Fatos Nano era. The country was led by short-term governments under the leaders of the Socialist Party of Albania until Sali Berisha became prime minister between 2005 and 2013. Following his term, Edi Rama, who had served as the mayor of Tiran from 2000 to 2011, came to power as a member of the Socialist Party in 2013 (Fischer and Schmitt 2022, 365).

To gain a better understanding of the religious and ethnic politics of the post-Communist era in Albania, one can examine the constitution, which was drafted in 1998 and only became effective in 2007. The prolog²³ of the constitution mentions faith in God and other universal values, indicating that in Albania, not only divine religions but also other beliefs are to be respected. Furthermore, the prolog declares that Albania as a social and democratic state that relies on the spirit of religious coexistence and tolerance. Article

²² UPI, "Vatican may shortly re-establish diplomatic relations with Albania", last modified July 4, 1991, <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1991/07/04/Vatican-may-shortly-re-establish-diplomatic-relations-with-Albania/8218678600000/>.

²³ "We, the people of Albania, proud and aware of our history, with responsibility for the future, and with faith in God and/or other universal values, with determination to build a social and democratic state based on the rule of law, and to guarantee the fundamental human rights and freedoms, with a spirit of religious coexistence and tolerance" (OSCE -Albania 2007, 1).

3²⁴ reiterates the importance of religious coexistence, while Article 10²⁵ regulates the relationship between the state and religious groups, as well as the relationship among citizens with diverse religious backgrounds. Additionally, Article 10 asserts that there is no official religion in Albania, and the state is neutral when it comes to religion.

Table 2.6: The Breakdown of the Prime Ministers by Religion in Post-Communist Albania²⁶

Sunni Muslim (1)	Term	Bektashi Muslim (2)	Term	Orthodox Christian (4)	Term	Catholic Christian (1)	Term
Sali Berisha	September 2005-September 2013	Bashkim Fino	March 1997-July 1997	Fatos Nano	February 1991- June 1991	Edi Rama	September 2013-September 2017
		Ilir Meta	October 1999-February 2002		July 1997-October 1998		September 2017-September 2021
					July 2022-September 2005		September 2021-Incumbent
				Ylli Bufi	June 1991-December 1991		
				Aleksander Meksi	April 1992-March 1997		
				Pandeli Majko	October 1998-October 1999		

As is evident, post-Communist Albania has largely overcome half a century of oppression and dictatorial policies, not only in the political sphere but also in the religious

²⁴ “The independence of the state and the integrity of its territory, the dignity of the person, his rights and freedoms, social justice, the constitutional order, pluralism, national identity and inheritance, religious coexistence, and coexistence with, and understanding of Albanians for, minorities are the bases of this state, which has the duty of respecting and protecting them” (OSCE -Albania 2007, 1).

²⁵ “1. In the Republic of Albania there is no official religion.

2. The state is neutral on questions of belief and conscience and guarantees the freedom of their expression in public life.

3. The state recognizes the equality of religious communities.

4. The state and the religious communities mutually respect the independence of one another and work together for the good of each and all.

5. Relations between the state and religious communities are regulated on the basis of agreements entered into between their representatives and the Council of Ministers. These agreements are ratified by the Assembly.

6. Religious communities are juridical persons. They have independence in the administration of their properties according to their principles, rules and canons, to the extent that interests of third parties are not infringed” (OSCE -Albania 2007, 2).

²⁶ For comprehensive biographical details of the prime ministers, please refer to the following sources: (Fischer and Schmitt 2022), (Roszkowski and Kofman 2008).

domain, which is guaranteed by the constitution. External support has contributed to the revival and revitalization of forgotten religious practices, while Albania remains a modern nation-state, preserving its multireligious character. The nationalist and oppressive policies of both the Zogu and Enver Hoxha eras have reduced the long-standing differences between Ghegs and Tosks, and intermarriage between Albanians of different faiths has become more commonplace. Table 2.6 illustrates that representatives of all religious groups in Albania can occupy the country's highest political position, the prime minister's office. Moreover, despite having a Sunni majority within the country, there was only one Sunni-Muslim Prime Minister in post-communist Albania, which illustrates the overrepresentation of minorities. Furthermore, Albanian elites can unite in the same political parties regardless of their Gheg/Tosk or religious background. This confirms that every religion present in the country can be directly represented in the highest political office, and Albania has retained its multireligious national identity from its early days of national renaissance to the present day.

Chapter 3:

EGYPTIAN MULTIRELIGIOUS NATIONALISM: AN EARLY DEVIATION FROM ARAB NATIONALISM

Similar to Albania, which is thoroughly analyzed in chapter two, Egypt had Boutros Ghali, a Coptic Christian, as Prime Minister in 1908, despite the clear majority of Sunni Muslims in the country. Since then, Coptic Christians, comprising 10% of Egypt's population, have not only remained a minority in Egyptian society but have also served as a significant indicator of Egypt's multireligious nationalism, highlighting that Egyptian identity is not solely attributed to Muslims. In the modern era, there are observable practices that uphold Egypt's multireligious nationalism.

In 2011, following the ousting of Hosni Mubarak, Mohamed Morsi, the first democratically elected president of Egypt from the Freedom and Justice Party, which had close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, gained attention for potentially implementing an Islamic agenda. However, in his speeches, he placed significant emphasis on the unity of Egyptians, regardless of their religious affiliations. Morsi stated that both Muslims and Christians are part of the same nation.²⁷ In his farewell speech, Adly Mansour, who assumed the role of interim head of state after Morsi's removal in a coup d'état, commended Coptic Christians, acknowledging that the Sinai Peninsula was stained with their blood, and emphasized their status as genuine sons of the Egyptian nation.²⁸ Another significant example of recognizing and including Coptic Christians is the appointment of Boulos Fahmy Iskandar, a Coptic Christian, as the president of the Supreme Constitutional Court²⁹ by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who came into power through a military coup in 2013. This stands in contrast to predominantly Muslim countries in the region like Libya, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia, as well as Israel, which is a nation-state established based on Jewish identity, albeit with citizens practicing various religions. Egypt's

²⁷ "Those people are my beloveds. And the children of the nation, the Christians and their brothers, the Muslims." Wolf Blitzer, *Wilson Center*, last modified January 14, 2013, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/egypt-interview-mohamed-morsi>.

²⁸ "You are an integral part of the nation's fabric and Sinai was quenched with your blood that mingled with the blood of Muslims on its soil." Al-Masry Al-Youm, *Egypt Independent*, last modified July 4, 2014, <https://egyptindependent.com/adly-mansour-gives-farewell-speech/>.

²⁹ Mina Nader, "Sisi Appoints Egypt's First Christian Chief Justice", *The Medialine*, last modified February 2, 2022, <https://themedialine.org/by-region/sisi-appoints-egypts-first-christian-chief-justice/>.

approach towards incorporating its Coptic Christian minority into the fabric of its diverse religious nationhood remains an important question.

How did Egypt succeed in managing its religious diversity and become a multireligious nation? What factors contributed to its rare form of nationalism? How are Egyptian nationalism and Arab nationalism interconnected, and what roles did Cairo, Damascus, and Beirut play in shaping these nationalistic movements? This chapter examines Egypt's multireligious nationalism through a historical perspective and investigates the underlying causes that set it apart within its region.

Similar to Albanian multireligious nationalism, I argue that a series of necessary conditions, when combined, led to the emergence of multireligious nationalism in Egypt. I propose that the efforts of Muhammad Ali Pasha and Protestant Missions contributed to the revival of Arabic as a literary language, providing a platform for minority elites to express their nationalist ideas. During this period, Christian intellectuals within Arab Muslim-majority society initiated the movement for national cultural rights. The distinct cultural and historical position of Egypt set it apart from other Arab nations and fueled the rise of Egyptian territorial nationalism. Lastly, the British invasion of Egypt played a crucial role in uniting Egyptian elites across religious divides under the banner of nationalism. As a result, the concept of nationalism expanded to include a broader group of elites from diverse religious backgrounds within Egyptian society. Unlike in the case of Albanian multireligious nationalism, the nationalist policies of the Ottoman central government and their implications did not significantly impact Egyptian multireligious nationalism, despite their considerable effects on other Arab nations and nationalistic movements. This causal chain is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

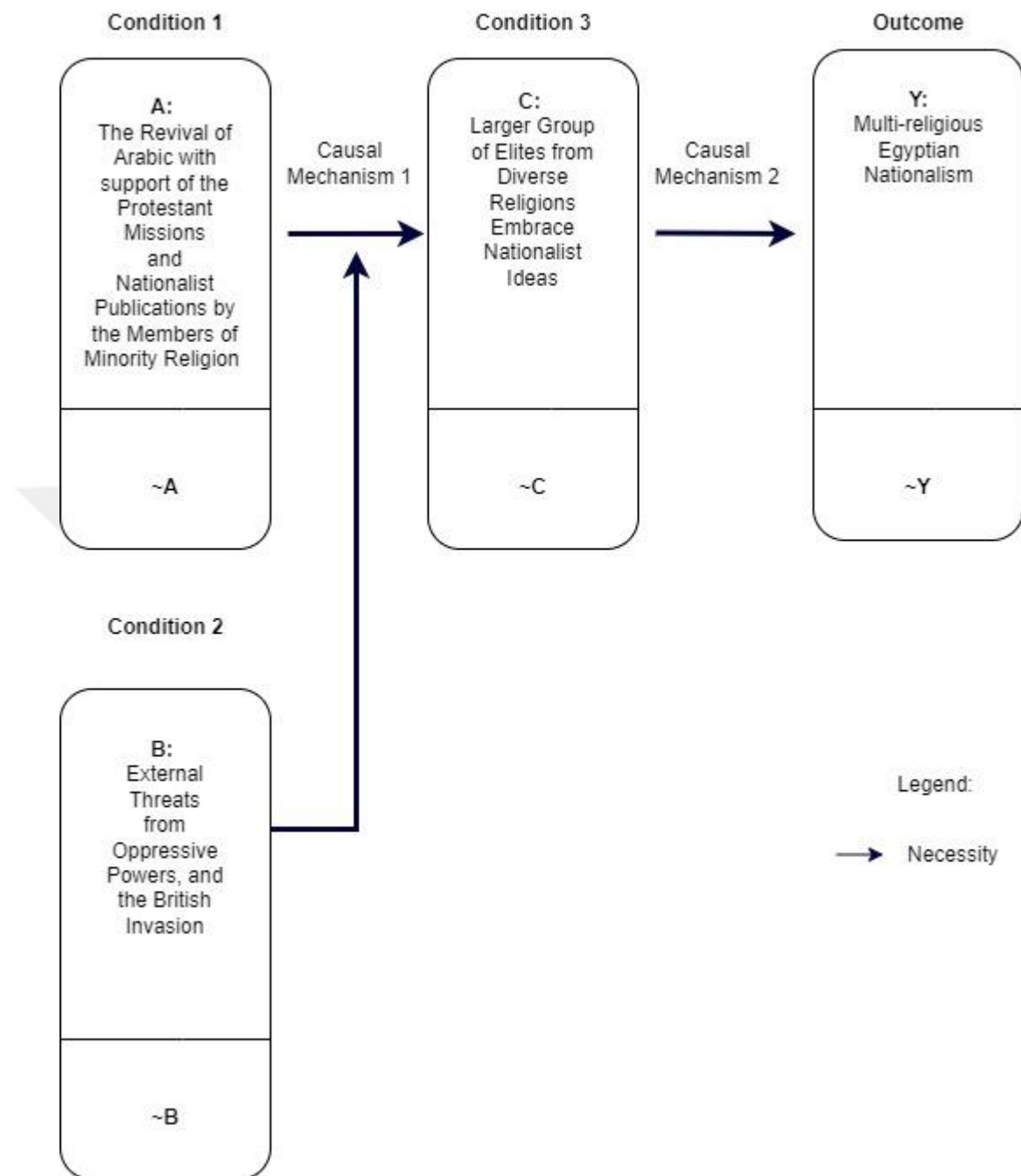


Figure 3.1: The Causal Chain Which Explains the Egyptian Multireligious Nationalism

In this chapter, after providing the historical and cultural background of Egypt, the subsequent parts will follow the structure outlined below. Firstly, the rule of Muhammad Ali in Egypt will be discussed to examine the conditions within Egypt prior to the national awakening. Next, the influence of Protestant missionaries on the revival of Arabic as a modern language will be analyzed. Subsequently, a detailed account of the British

occupation of Egypt and the mobilization of elites from various religious backgrounds, as well as the subsequent involvement of the general population in the movement against the British occupation, will be presented. Additionally, the reasons behind the lack of direct impact of the Ottoman administration's policies based on Turkish nationalism, which we perceive as having a catalyzing effect on Albanian multireligious nationalism, on Egyptian nationalism will be discussed. Finally, a comprehensive examination will be conducted on how Egypt's multireligious nationalist structure was manifested in the social and political spheres after the British occupation and spanning from the 1952 revolution to the present day.

3.1 The Historical and Cultural Background of Egypt

Egypt, one of the oldest settlements on Earth, dates back 5000 years. Although the fact that 90 percent of this land consists of deserts has raised questions about the reasons for long-term settlements and the existence of various civilizations, the presence of the Nile River, which nourishes the surrounding areas, flowing through the country in the south and north directions, has led to a concentration of population in these regions. Therefore, Egyptian lands have always been valuable and competitive regions. As Herodotus stated, "Egypt is the gift of the Nile" (Goldschmidt 2004, 1). Today, Egypt continues to be one of the most significant countries worldwide due to its status as the most populous Arab state, its importance in global trade facilitated by the Suez Canal, and its position as a leading center for education, literature, and art in the Arab world.

Even more prominently than Albania, which is regarded as the first case of multireligious nationalism in this thesis, Egypt possesses a crucial geopolitical position. Serving as a primary link between Africa and Asia, with access to the Indian subcontinent via the Red Sea and the Nile, Egypt has always been situated along trade and migration routes. Consequently, it has been a land where various states have vied for dominance. As a result, in addition to the indigenous population of Ancient Egypt, numerous civilizations have played a significant role in shaping the ethnicity of the present-day Egyptian populace. Therefore, Berbers, Persians, Greeks, Macedonians, Romans, Arabs, Turks, and Circassians have all exerted a substantial influence on the formation of Egypt and its people in the modern sense (Goldschmidt 2004, 9).

Despite these factors, contemporary Egyptian society primarily identifies with two core identities: Arab and Egyptian. While the official language is Modern Arabic, Egypt, like many other Arab countries, has its own distinct dialect. In terms of religion, which constitutes the main subject of this thesis, approximately 90 percent of Egyptian society identifies as Sunni Muslims, while the remaining 10 percent identifies as Coptic Christians (Goldschmidt 2004, x). Although Coptic Christians still employ the ancient Coptic language in their religious rituals, they also utilize their mother tongue, Egyptian Arabic, in their everyday interactions.

Egypt's historical significance and its relevance to both religions are evident in their references in both the Bible and the Qur'an (Goldschmidt 2004, ix). Furthermore, in order to grasp Egypt's multireligious nationalism, it is beneficial to briefly explore its historical processes and struggles. Following the Ancient Egyptian era, Greek civilization exerted dominance over the region. The name of Alexandria, the second-largest city in Egypt, originates from Alexander the Great, who played a major role in its foundation. Additionally, the region is now known as Egypt because the Greeks named it *aiggyptos*, referring to the people inhabiting the Nile region, drawing inspiration from the city of Memphis (*Hi-kiptah*), which served as the capital during the Ancient Egyptian period (Tignor 2011, 5).

During the Roman period that succeeded the Greeks, the expansion of Christianity in Egypt gained momentum alongside the Christianization of Rome. While the enduring impact of religious and cultural practices from the ancient era is still evident today, the cities of Egypt, particularly those along the Mediterranean coast, most notably Alexandria, underwent a rapid process of Christianization. This can be attributed to factors such as the influence of political will and their proximity to the region where Christianity originated.

Under Roman and later Byzantine rule from 30 BC to 640 AD, Egypt emerged as one of the earliest regions to embrace Christianity in the 4th century. During this period, Egypt also played a significant role in the theological debates within Christianity. These discussions, particularly concerning the nature of Jesus, led Egyptian Christians to diverge from the Orthodox Church in the 4th and 5th centuries, following the acceptance of the belief in the Holy Trinity at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. The central focus of this debate revolved around the identity of Jesus, questioning whether he was the Son of God, fully divine, or both divine and human (Tignor 2011, 117). The Council of

Chalcedon in 451 AD further fueled the process of disengagement, leading to the establishment of the Coptic Orthodox Church by Egyptian Coptic Christians. Factors such as the geographical distance from the center of mainstream Christianity and the presence of Egypt's distinct language and culture from ancient times can be seen as contributing to this accelerated divergence (Tignor 2011, 120).

While religious separation does not necessarily imply political separation, it is indeed true that it weakened political ties as well. However, these weakened ties with Christendom created favorable conditions for the relatively smooth invasion of Muslim Arabs in the 7th century. Under the leadership of Amr ibn al-As, the Arab Muslim army successfully invaded cities along the Nile, encountering minimal resistance from the Byzantine governor of Alexandria. Following the conquest of Egypt, the new capital was established in close proximity to the ancient capital and was named *Misr*, a term mentioned in the Qur'an and Islamic literature to refer to the region. With time, this name spread throughout the country and continues to be used, particularly among Muslims worldwide (Tignor 2011, 5).

That marked the initiation of Egypt's transition into a Muslim-majority country. The combination of conversions and Muslim migration to the region contributed to the increase in the Muslim population (Goldschmidt 2004, 7–8). However, unlike the Romans, religious tolerance and the provision of religious freedoms, albeit with varying forms of taxation, help to explain why Coptic Christians stayed in Egypt, despite the absence of Christian political authority being reinstated up to the present day.

Subsequently, Egypt came under the rule of two significant Arab empires, namely the Umayyads and the Abbasids. Towards the latter period of the Abbasid Empire, Muslim Turks, who had gained prominence within the Abbasid armies, began to govern Egypt. The relatively brief reigns of the Tulunids and Ikhshidids in Egypt were succeeded by the Shiite Fatimids from Tunisia. The Fatimids, upon conquering Egypt, established a new capital next to Fustat, which they named Cairo (al-Qahirah). In other words, one of the largest and most significant cities in both Africa and the Islamic world was founded by the Shiite Fatimids originating from Tunisia. Additionally, the renowned Islamic institution, Al-Azhar, which continues to hold importance to this day, was established by the Fatimids to promote Shiite doctrines (Goldschmidt 2004, 8–13). However, Al-Azhar transformed into a bastion of Sunni Islam when Saladin overthrew the Fatimids and assumed control of Egypt in 1171. Under the Ayyubids and Saladin, a vast empire was

established, stretching from Tunisia to Anatolia. Most notably, in 1187, Saladin recaptured Jerusalem from the crusaders, a victory that holds great significance among Muslims. Saladin's accomplishments are still revered, as the conquest of Jerusalem marked the second time it was captured, the first being during the time of Caliph Umar (Goldschmidt 2004, 48).

The Ayyubids were eventually overthrown by Mamluks, who were slave soldiers of Turkish/Circassian origin serving in their army. This event exemplifies the recurring pattern throughout history where the rulers and the people in Egypt spoke different languages. While the number of Christians in Egypt significantly declined in the 500 years following the Muslim conquests, there remained a substantial population of Copts who continued to reside in Egypt. During this period, although Arabic had become the native language for Copts, the Coptic language maintained its presence and significance in religious rituals and worship. Furthermore, for the Mamluks, the Copts were not merely subjects subject to differing taxation practices (*jizya*)³⁰ and practicing their own religion. Coptic Christians, who had long been engaged in agriculture since ancient Egypt, continued to play an important role in society during the Mamluk period, occupying positions in agricultural governance and participating in activities such as trade and crafts (Goldschmidt 2004, 53).

By 1517, the Ottomans, another formidable Turkish empire emerged from Anatolia, led by Selim I, had triumphed over the Mamluks in Syria and subsequently captured Cairo the following year, effectively bringing an end to the Mamluk state. In other words, after the era of Saladin, Egypt and the holy lands of Islam, including the Hejaz, came under the rule of the Turkic dynasties: first the Mamluks and then the Ottoman Turks. However, the Ottoman conquest rendered Cairo and Egypt as satellite territories, existing in the shadow of Istanbul for an extended period of time. For instance, as early as 1518, numerous skilled scholars, artisans, and government officials from Egypt were relocated to Istanbul and encouraged to continue their activities in the heart of the Ottoman Empire (Goldschmidt 2004, 56). However, the influence of the Mamluk Beys in Egypt persisted during the Ottoman period. Particularly during periods of weakened central authority, rebellions sporadically erupted due to the region's geographical distance from the imperial center, and the Mamluk Beys played a significant role in these uprisings. Nonetheless,

³⁰ A tax paid by non-Muslim populations to their Muslim rulers.

Ottoman control over the region remained largely intact until Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which posed a serious challenge to Ottoman authority.

In the late 18th century, the rivalry between France and Britain, the two major European powers, extended beyond their own territories and spilled into other regions. The outcome of their conflicts in places like Canada and India favoring Britain led France to adopt different strategies. Supporting the American colonies in their struggle against British rule, France invaded Egypt in 1798 with the aim of bolstering its position, particularly in relation to India (Goldschmidt 2004, 62).

Although Napoleon's occupation of Egypt, which had experienced numerous invasions throughout its history, was relatively short-lived, it had profound and lasting effects on the country's modernization process. In the context of history, three years may be considered a brief period, but Napoleon's invasion of Egypt set Egypt's trajectory apart from the rest of the Arab world. From an Orientalist perspective, Hans Henle argued that Napoleon "awakened the oriental princess from their thousand-year sleep" by introducing French revolutionary ideals such as liberty and equality (Tibi 1981, 54). The invasion facilitated the connection between Europe and Egypt through the involvement of scientists from various disciplines, the establishment of modern libraries, and, significantly, the introduction of a printing press with Arabic type (Tibi 1981, 54). Even Napoleon's statements aimed to strengthen ties with Egypt and prevent potential resistance against his rule. His first statement, written in Arabic on paper, began with "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful: there is no God but God" (Tibi 1981, 55). Napoleon, who was aware of the religious framework in Egypt and the significance of Islam, did not hesitate to emphasize his own faith in many of his statements during the occupation period. In one of his statements, Napoleon said,

"Peoples of Egypt, you will be told that I have come to destroy your religion. This is an obvious lie; do not believe it. Answer back that I have come to restore your rights and to punish the usurpers; that I worship God more than the Mamluks do; and that I respect His prophet Muhammad and the admirable Quran" (Herold 2005, 69).

Although Napoleon made efforts to win over the Muslim population, it is challenging to claim that these endeavors garnered significant support within Egyptian society. The Ottoman Empire, which strongly opposed the occupation of Egypt despite its diminished power at the time, joined forces with Britain, which was also uneasy about the occupation and the potential disruption of the route to India. In 1801, they successfully defeated the

French forces. Subsequently, through the agreements signed, the French and later the British withdrew from the region, while the Ottoman army remained to restore order (Goldschmidt 2004, 65). After stability was reestablished, the Ottoman administration appointed an Ottoman governor to the region, following its previous practices. However, this appointment marked the onset of a new era in the formation of Egypt in the modern sense. Following Napoleon's brief invasion (1798-1801), Egypt came under the rule of Muhammad Ali, widely regarded as the father of modern Egypt.

3.2 *Egypt Until the Awakening*

Napoleon's withdrawal from Egypt left a political power vacuum in the region. Muhammad Ali, who arrived with Albanian troops as part of the Ottoman army, was officially appointed as the Ottoman governor of Egypt. In 1805, this pasha, also known as Muhammad Ali of *Kavala* due to his birthplace, aimed to diminish the influence of other Ottoman and Mamluk Beys in order to consolidate his authority in Egypt. Inspired by the reforms introduced during the brief French occupation, Muhammad Ali enlisted the services of Joseph Anthelme Seve, who had previously served as a commander in Napoleon's armies, to establish a French-style army in Egypt. Subsequently, this commander adopted the name Soliman Pasha al-Faransawi, converted to Islam, and married an Egyptian woman (Tignor 2011, 210).

Thus, it can be contended that the process of modernizing Egypt, initiated by Napoleon, persisted under the rule of Muhammad Ali, who achieved a level of autonomy within the Ottoman territories. Despite lacking formal Western education, Muhammad Ali can be regarded as an enlightened ruler who emulated European practices (Tibi 1981, 57). With guidance from French experts, he propelled Egyptian modernization by establishing a contemporary military, introducing new educational institutions, and sending Egyptian students to Europe. Before long, he expanded his sphere of influence through force, extending from Sudan to Syria in defiance of the Ottoman Empire (Tibi 1981, 58). It is an intriguing coincidence that the emergence of Egypt as a nation-state is associated with an Ottoman pasha of Albanian Tosk origin, considering that the first case examined in this thesis is Albanian multireligious nationalism.

The modern army established by Muhammad Ali initially served the Ottoman Empire. It was utilized to end the Wahhabi uprisings in the Hejaz region, effectively

putting an end to the waves of rebellion that had reached Mecca and Medina through the deployment of this Western-style army. Subsequently, the Egyptian army, which had demonstrated significant successes in the Arabian Peninsula, was dispatched to assist the Ottoman central administration in suppressing the Greek revolt. However, the outcome did not meet the desired expectations (Tignor 2011, 211).

To establish an army in the Western model, French-style military schools and naval centers were established, playing a crucial role in developing the required officer class. Reforms were implemented in agriculture and the tax system to finance the army and the new state structure. Furthermore, commercial provisions were regulated, leading to increased tax revenues and enhanced economic prosperity compared to earlier periods. The population, which had declined to 3.8 million by the end of the 18th century, grew to approximately 7 million by the time of Muhammad Ali Pasha's death (Goldschmidt 2008, 66–67).

Having intervened and achieved success in numerous situations where the Ottoman army had failed or proved insufficient, Muhammad Ali gained significant political and military power, leading to increased demands from the central authority. Following the defeat in Greece, Muhammad Ali's relationship with the Ottoman Sultan deteriorated, resulting in tensions and escalating demands. This ultimately led to a physical conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Muhammad Ali. He dispatched his son, Ibrahim Pasha, to Syria and subsequently advanced into Anatolia. The situation became so critical that even Istanbul itself came under threat, prompting the Ottoman Empire to seek assistance from the Russians. With Russian support, the forces of Muhammad Ali were halted. Consequently, according to the agreement signed in 1833 under the guarantorship of Russia, Egypt, Syria, and Crete were placed under the control of Muhammad Ali and his descendants. This marked a right that had never been granted to an Ottoman pasha before (Goldschmidt 2008, 69). From 1841 onwards, Egypt began to function as an almost entirely independent state.

Muhammad Ali's Western-style reforms extended beyond the military domain. As elaborated in the upcoming section, cultural reforms and the opportunities extended to Western missionaries played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for the emergence of Arab nationalism and subsequently Egyptian nationalism. It is crucial to acknowledge the significant contribution of his son, Ibrahim Pasha, who held authority over Syria and the Levant, in this process. Upon assuming official rule in Syria, Ibrahim heralded a new

era for Arab nationalism. His reforms and innovations, coupled with the efforts of Arab Christians and Protestant missionaries in Greater Syria, contributed to his portrayal as a liberator and savior for Arab Christians (Tibi 1981, 73). In his declarations, Ibrahim emphasized his fight for the Arabs against the Turks, despite lacking Arab ancestry. He implemented similar educational reforms in Syria as those established by his father in Egypt, and notably, he created an environment conducive to Christian missions.

Similar to the emergence of influential elites in Albanian nationalism, as outlined in the second chapter, young Egyptians who pursued studies in Europe and Arabs from the Levant played a crucial role in the Arab revival, alongside missionary endeavors. Furthermore, during this period, Egypt established its first printing press, and a notable translation office was established, translating approximately 600 books from French into Arabic (Tignor 2011, 213). These endeavors by Muhammad Ali, despite his limited command of Arabic, not only facilitated the development of Arabic as a language in the modern sense but also created an avenue for the dissemination of Western ideas, particularly nationalism, within Arab society.

3.3 The Revival of the Arabic and the Emergence of the Nationalist Publications in the Arab World

Arab nationalism and its evolution were not monolithic (Jankowski 1991, 243). Differences existed across regions, and multiple nationalisms emerged within the same region. Some intellectuals aimed to foster a comprehensive understanding of nationalism encompassing all Arabs, while others pursued a nationalism with a territorial focus. By the late 19th century, among the Arabs, the majority of whom resided within the Ottoman Empire, there were factions advocating for complete independence as well as those desiring autonomous governance within the empire.

In contrast to the Arabs residing in the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt possessed a distinct historical and cultural framework. Its administrative ties with the Ottoman Empire had weakened since the Napoleonic occupation, and it had developed a more autonomous structure within the empire. This unique context contributed to the formation of a distinct understanding of nationalism in Egypt. However, Egypt maintained strong connections with the Arabian Peninsula as well. The historical ownership of both Egypt and the Arab Peninsula by entities such as the Mamluks and the Ottomans further reinforced the

interregional relations. The shared language, albeit with dialectal variations, and Egypt's central role as a hub for the study of traditional Islamic sciences also fostered this bond.

Following the Napoleonic invasion, Muhammad Ali assumed de facto control over Egypt, despite its nominal status under Ottoman rule. With his subsequent rise to power, he expanded his influence over the Hejaz and the Levant, including Syria and Lebanon. The Western-style reforms implemented by Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha had distinct consequences both in Egypt and the Levant. These reforms facilitated the emergence of a new group of elites, while missionary activities contributed to the transformation of cities such as Damascus, Beirut, and Cairo into hubs of education and cultural exchange for Arabs. It is noteworthy that many Arab intellectuals who rose to prominence during this period spent significant portions of their lives in these centers, further underscoring their significance (Goldschmidt 2008, 69).

Although this chapter primarily focuses on understanding the multireligious structure of Egyptian nationalism rather than Arab nationalism, the intertwined development of these two movements is evident, especially until the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. Given the pioneering role played by Egyptian rulers, this section will provide an overview of the emergence of Arab nationalism and analyze their influential contributions. Additionally, while not the primary focus of this thesis, it becomes apparent that the prevailing Arab nationalism in the Levant is also characterized by their multireligious nature. This is evident both in terms of the multireligious composition of intellectuals during the emergence of these movements and the multireligious nature of today's political elites. This section will delve into the pre-existing Egyptian nationalist sentiment, which was further strengthened by British occupation, the acceleration of Arab nationalist activities in the Levant under the leadership of Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim Pasha, the influence of missionaries and Western-educated Arab elites in the modernization of the Arabic language, and the multireligious nature of this complex landscape.

The 19th century witnessed a period of rapid Western-style reforms in both the Ottoman Empire and Egypt under Muhammad Ali. The *Tanzimat* Reforms of 1839 served as a significant milestone in terms of the changing rights of non-Muslims. However, these reforms had already commenced in Egypt under the leadership of Muhammad Ali and gained considerable momentum. The de facto annexation of Syria in 1831 by Muhammad Ali, presented a significant opportunity for non-Muslim Arabs in the region. Christian

Arab merchants in the Levant were particularly pleased with this dominion. Ibrahim Pasha's decision to grant ranks to Christian Arabs in the bureaucracy and his allowance for Western Christian missionaries to operate and establish schools in order to enhance education played a crucial role in this context (Antonius 1963, 88).

Particularly, considering that the Christian population in the vast Syrian region, including Lebanon, constituted one-third (Antonius 1963, 32), these developments held significance for the advancements made by Christian Arabs. They faced disparate taxation and fewer rights compared to their Muslim counterparts. While the transfer of Syria to the control of Muhammad Ali Pasha did not receive the same level of support among Muslims as it did among Christian Arabs, it still garnered considerable backing due to the notion that the envisioned Arab empire, pursued by Muhammad Ali or his son Ibrahim Pasha. In other words, rather than being part of the Muslim community of the Ottoman Empire, the idea of being members of an Arab Empire led by Muhammad Ali Pasha and reclaiming the caliphate from the Turks appeared appealing to many Muslim Arabs as well (Antonius 1963, 33).

Despite no significant changes in terms of taxation practices or anticipated rights for Christian Arabs, the relatively relaxed atmosphere fostered by Ibrahim Pasha greatly facilitated their endeavors. This continued even after the Levant reverted to Ottoman control in 1840.

Despite Arabic being the predominant language in the regions inhabited by Arabs, the bureaucratic and governmental language in the Ottoman Empire was Turkish. Arabic, during that time, was primarily employed for religious purposes, particularly in written form (Dawisha 2003, 18). Ibrahim Pasha's authority over the Levant prompted an increase in the activities of foreign missions in the region. In 1834, the Jesuits reestablished themselves in the area with Beirut as their center, while American Protestant Christian missionaries also swiftly commenced their endeavors (Antonius 1963, 37). A significant event during this period was the relocation of the Arabic printing press from Malta to Beirut by American Protestant missionaries. Previously, Arabic-language works had limited circulation and reach in the region and among individuals, primarily disseminated through a small number of printing presses in Istanbul (1816) and Cairo (1822) (Antonius 1963, 38). Malta served as a hub of significant cultural interaction and trade due to its active maritime activities and proximity to the Arab world. Following Istanbul and Cairo, the third Arabic printing press, in the modern sense, was established in Malta in 1825 by

the British Church Missionary Society. Its primary objective was to provide scientific and Christian religious texts in Arabic and Turkish to missionary schools in the Middle East swiftly and efficiently. Therefore, for the endeavors of American missionaries, this established institution in Malta held great importance. Eli Smith, a pioneer of American Protestant missionary, was initially assigned to Malta by the American Board of Control for Foreign Missions. Lebanon, under the control of Ibrahim Pasha and having a significant Christian Arab population, was a crucial location for these missionaries who aimed to extend their evangelical activities further east. Eli Smith journeyed to Istanbul, Cairo, and eventually Leipzig to develop a formal Arabic printing font. He learnt Arabic during that journey, resulting in the creation of the fonts known as American Arabic. The missionaries, led by Eli Smith, subsequently relocated the printing press in Malta to Beirut in 1842 (Roper 2004, 111) (Antonius 1963, 36). The transfer of the printing press from Malta to Beirut facilitated the production of textbooks, particularly for schools, and enabled the sequential transmission of ideas, at least to the educated elite (Antonius 1963, 42). Simultaneously, the transformation of primary school education for boys into a state-funded and subsidized program, as seen in Egypt under Ibrahim Pasha's leadership, along with the introduction of Arabic as the medium of instruction, indicated a shift in Arabic's role from being solely a language used for religious purposes (Antonius 1963, 37).

The endeavors of American Protestant and French Jesuit missionaries contributed to the resurgence of Arabic in various domains, facilitated by an increasing number of Arabic printing presses (Dawisha 2003, 18). Particularly, the Protestant missionaries, who had fewer colonial ambitions, studied Arabic for the purpose of evangelical Bible translation. Their efforts in modernizing Arabic language led to the modernization of colloquial dialects. Additionally, they collaborated with Arab scholars in their educational institutions and jointly undertook extensive translation initiatives (Tibi 1981, 59).

One of the foremost scholars, Nasif al-Yazijii (1800-1871), exerted a direct or indirect influence on many other writers. He played a crucial role in the translation of the Bible into Arabic and the advancement of classical Arabic literature (Tibi 1981, 76). Despite being a Catholic Christian Arab, his close association with Protestant missions led him to become one of the earliest Christian Arabs to convert to Protestantism (Tibi 1981, 76). With the assistance of Protestant missions, guided by Yazijii and Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883), Christian Arabs established the The Literary and Scientific Society in 1847 (Tibi 1981, 77). Concurrently, Nasif al-Yazijii authored grammar books, works

on logic, oratory, and literature for the curriculum of Protestant mission schools. His studies played a significant role in shaping future formal Arabic studies in Syria, Egypt, and other Arabic-speaking regions (Antonius 1963, 53).

Bustani, another Christian Arab intellectual, had the advantage of receiving a more Western-style education compared to his teacher Yazijii. As an Arab elite with proficiency in Western languages, Bustani taught in American schools in the region and played a crucial role in the translation of the Bible into Arabic, working alongside Eli Smith. His contributions extended beyond the Bible, as he also authored an Arabic encyclopedia and dictionary (Antonius 1963, 47–49). In this regard, the impact of missionary activities on the emergence of Arabic as a modern language parallels that of Albanian nationalism. It is not mere coincidence that encyclopedias and dictionaries assumed importance in both national movements, following the translation of the Bible and selected Western literary works.

In contrast to Christian Arabs, Muslims, similar to Albanian Muslims, generally leaned towards cooperation with Turks and sought increased autonomy within Arab territories (Dawisha 2003, 27). However, within the society of The Syrian Scientific Society, which was established in 1857 as a successor to the The Literary and Scientific Society, there were numerous Muslims, including Husain Baihum from a well-known Muslim family (Antonius 1963, 53). In other words, the remarkable transformation over the span of ten years involved the inclusion of Muslim Arabs in these societies. The community's efforts gained momentum with the participation of influential Muslim families and the second generation of the Yaziji and Bustani families.

The inclusion of Muslims, who were initially distant, in the consciousness of Arab nationalism, primarily initiated by Christian Arabs and missionary elements, highlights a parallel with Albanian nationalism. The significant similarity lies in the fact that, in both cases, Muslims constituted the majority, and the inception of nationalist movements originated from minority Christians and subsequently extended to encompass Muslims. Arab nationalist journalism flourished due to the efforts of Christian Arabs, leading to the emergence of numerous newspapers and magazines across the Arab world. Among these newly established publications were *Nafir Suriyya* (Appeal to Syria) and the magazine *al-Jinan* (The Paradises). Through these platforms, Arab nationalist ideologues seized the opportunity to disseminate their ideas (Antonius 1963, 54). Ibrahim al-Yazijii, son of Nasif al-Yazijii, delivered speeches advocating for the unity of Arabs, irrespective of their

religious affiliations, against Turkish rule. In one of the secret meetings of The Syrian Scientific Society, Yazijii shared an influential qasida with participants.

“Arise, Arabs, and awake!”

We are the origin of all greatness.

Humankind has drunk from the well of our achievement and-ask in the West of our glorious past.

Its marks are imprinted on the brow of time

But the memory of the past no longer satisfies us

Its shackles do not give us shelter

We shall strive for the heights

Until they rest upon pillars of substance” (Tibi 1981, 78).

Ibrahim Yazijii composed numerous works highlighting the historical accomplishments of Arabs and the superiority of the Arab nation. These works were able to reach a wide audience across the Arab region through the use of printing presses. Importantly, his writings emphasized the potential for establishing a promising future rooted in the rich history of the Arabs by bringing an end to Ottoman rule in the region (Antonius 1963, 54).

The influence of the national awakening grew stronger with the return of students who had received education in Europe and attended missionary schools. This, in turn, fueled the demand for potential Arab separation. The primary goal of these emerging elites was to emphasize the national distinctiveness of the Arab nation, transcending religious differences (Dawisha 2003, 26). For instance, al-Bustani argued that national solidarity, devoid of religious boundaries, was imperative to counter the Western and Turkish adversaries (Tibi 1981, 77). Additionally, the number of Arab societies both within the region and in diasporas increased. Organizations such as the Literary Club, the Ottoman Decentralization Party, *al-Qahtaniya*, *al-Fatat*, and *al-'Ahd* played pivotal roles in these endeavors (Tian 2009, 65).

Nevertheless, the reestablishment of Syria and Lebanon as formal Ottoman provinces in 1840 diminished regional autonomy. Concurrently, the implementation of repressive and Islamist policies by Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II led to the closure of these organizations. In essence, the relatively liberal environment in Syria deteriorated after the reestablishment, prompting many journalists, national ideologues, and organizations to

migrate to Egypt, which still retained a degree of autonomy (Tibi 1981, 152). This migration accelerated the Egyptian national awakening and marked the onset of a new era in the emergence of a nation-state.

Abdul Rahman Kawakibi exemplifies the relatively free environment in Egypt and demonstrates that the influential figures in the emergence of Arab nationalism were not solely limited to Christian Arab elites. Born in Aleppo in 1849, nine years after the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Syria, Kawakibi hailed from a prominent Muslim family in the region and received his education predominantly from Muslim institutions. In 1898, he relocated from Syria to Cairo, where he established close connections with Egypt's Christian and Jewish elites (Antonius 1963, 96). His book *Taba'i Al-Istibdad* (The Attributes of Tyranny), which comprised his writings in Egypt, was published and circulated in various Arab centers, particularly in Syria. As the title implies, the book critiqued Ottoman rule but did not advocate a Pan-Islamic approach, in contrast to Jamal al-Din Afghani, one of Kawakibi's contemporaries and influences, whose detailed examination follows in the subsequent section. Instead, Kawakibi's approach emphasized a significant distinction between Arab and non-Arab Muslims, elevating Arab Muslims above other Muslim communities based on his ideology (Antonius 1963, 97).

Despite the fact that Arab nationalist elites in the Syrian and Lebanese regions largely resided or spent time in Cairo, which served as a vital hub for intellectual discussions, they perceived it as a freer environment due to Egypt's autonomy. However, the British occupation of Egypt in the late 19th century had already started to accentuate divisions, particularly in the culturally and historically diverse Egyptian region. While Cairo remained significant for Arab nationalism throughout this period and into the 20th century, a regional understanding of nationalism gained traction in Egypt. Although the reforms initiated by Muhammad Ali Pasha had significant implications for both Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt's de facto independence from the Ottoman Empire and subsequent British occupation diverged from the narrative of the still Ottoman-controlled Arabian Peninsula.

3.4 The Egyptian Nationalism against the Invader

3.4.1 The Dawn of the Egyptian Territorial Nationalism

“My homeland, my homeland, my homeland

You have my love and my heart.”

The repetition of the word ‘homeland’ (biladi) in the Egyptian national anthem, appearing both at the beginning and end of all passages, is not a mere coincidence. Instead, it holds significant relevance to Egyptian territorial nationalism.

During the 19th century, the close connections between Damascus, Beirut, and Cairo, along with the travel and networking of nationalist ideologues within the region, played a crucial role in advancing Arab nationalism as a whole. Meanwhile, Egypt, with its relatively autonomous and liberalized structure dating back to the era of Muhammad Ali, laid the foundation for the development of Egyptian nationalism in a regional context. In particular, the return of young Egyptians who had pursued education in Europe during the Muhammad Ali era led to the emergence of a new discourse influenced by European ideas, particularly those from France.

Being one of these students, Rifa‘ah Rafi el-Tahtawi (1801-1873) was a pivotal figure in the awakening of Egyptian nationalism and the concept of homeland. During his studies in Paris, Tahtawi began to embrace the idea that the world consists of distinct nations, each with its own culture and characteristics. Upon his return to Egypt, he disseminated these ideas through his writings. Tahtawi translated the French concept of *patrie* as *watan*, meaning homeland in Arabic. For Tahtawi, Egypt, with its ancient pharaonic civilization, represented his homeland (Dawn 1991, 4). Building his theory on an Islamic foundation, Tahtawi argued that patriotism and Islam are not mutually exclusive. While he acknowledged the significance of Arabs to Islam, he identified the inhabitants of Egypt as Egyptians rather than Arabs. He attributed the unfavorable conditions in Egypt to the foreign occupation that it had endured (Hourani 1970, 79–80). Furthermore, as part of Muhammad Ali's extensive translation movement, Tahtawi played a significant role. This translation movement, led by Tahtawi, contributed to the rise of an educated elite familiar with European ideas. The concept of homeland that he developed later played a crucial role in the discourse of Egyptian intellectuals against the British occupation of Egypt. Moreover, Tahtawi's ideas were instrumental in the emergence of Egyptian nationalism as he traced Egypt's origins back to ancient Egypt and the geographical region it occupies. Furthermore, his ideas contributed to fostering familiarity and inclusivity towards non-Muslim elements and other ethnic groups that have historically inhabited the region.

During and after the Muhammad Ali era, the strengthening of nationalism within Egypt was not only influenced by the return of educated elites from abroad but also by Arab nationalists who faced challenges in finding freedom in Syria and Lebanon. This led to a wave of nationalism in Egypt. The migration of the Arab national literary movement and nationalist journalism to Egypt took place during the middle of the 19th century. Alongside Muslim intellectuals, many non-Muslim intellectuals also left Syria and Lebanon to establish themselves in Egypt.

Even though Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883), a Syrian Christian Arab nationalist mentioned earlier, did not reside in Egypt for an extended period, he had a significant impact on Egyptian multireligious nationalism as well. Between 1870-1886, al-Bustani and his pupils disseminated their Arab nationalist ideas through various publications. One of the most important of these was *al-Jinan* magazine, whose motto was "*love of the homeland is the essence of faith*" (*hubb al-Watan min al-iman*) (Tibi 1981, 77). In other words, the quote often mistakenly attributed to Prophet Muhammad today originated in the slogan of a magazine published by al-Bustani, a Syrian Christian Arab nationalist. Since he advocated for Arab unity regardless of religious differences, his ideas paved the way for Egyptian nationalists to consider the inclusion of non-Muslim Egyptians in the concept of the homeland, which Tahtawi had already begun to develop (Tibi 1981, 77). Three years after Bustani's death in 1886, *al-Jinan* was closed by the Abdul Hamid II government, marking a turning point for the migration of Arab nationalist journalism to Egypt (Tibi 1981, 77). Similarly, another Arab Christian nationalist theorist, Adib Ishaq (1856-1894), began his journey in missionary schools and later pursued further studies in Egypt. According to him, liberty was synonymous with the homeland, thus considering Arabs who became members of the Ottoman assembly as traitors to their nation (Tibi 1981, 79).

To comprehend the impact of non-Muslim Arabs on Muslim Arabs regarding the national awakening in Egypt, it is insightful to examine the close relationship between Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Adib Ishaq, and Yaqub Sanu (1839-1912), an Egyptian Jew, who joined forces to establish a newspaper. While Afghani believed that the only legitimate form of unity was the Islamic Ummah, encompassing all Muslims irrespective of their nationalities and languages, his disciples, such as Rashid Rida (1865-1935), influenced the masses in terms of national awakening (Goldschmidt 2004, 37). Rida argued that Islam was undermined by the oppressive rule of the Turks, who even

killed the Caliphs, and advocated for independent Arab action to revive Islam's glory. In other words, although Rashid Rida cannot be categorized as an Egyptian nationalist, his works sparked a national renaissance for Muslim Arabs in Egypt (Dawisha 2003, 25). Another Muslim scholar who was influenced by Afghani and migrated to Egypt to express his ideas was Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1849-1902). He explored the concepts of Pan-Arabism and Islamism through the interpretation of the Quran. Kawakibi even declared that if he had an army, he would have defeated Abdul Hamid within 24 hours to rescue Muslims from the Turks, whom he believed had ruined Islam (Dawisha 2003, 25).

In the 19th century, various Arab regions entertained ideas such as pan-Islamism, pan-Arabism, and pro-Ottomanism. However, it was the British invasion in 1882 that is widely regarded as the true catalyst for the emergence of Egyptian nationalism. This event bolstered the notion of Egyptian nationalism, which started to gain momentum in Egypt and took on a more territorial nature that allowed for the inclusion of Coptic Christians. To grasp the impact of the British invasion on Egyptian nationalism, it is crucial to comprehend the political atmosphere in Egypt following the reign of Muhammad Ali.

3.4.2 Egypt After Muhammad Ali

After the untimely death of Ibrahim Pasha in 1848, Abbas Hilmi I, the grandson of Muhammad Ali, assumed the role of governor in Egypt. One significant political shift during Abbas Hilmi's rule was his departure from the pro-French policy maintained by his grandfather, as he began to grant more influence to the British in Egypt. This shift was evident in the decision to award the railway construction project connecting Cairo and Alexandria to the British, serving as a clear indication of this change (Goldschmidt 2008, 72).

After Abbas Hilmi, his younger uncle, Muhammad Said Pasha assumed the position of governor in 1854. Under his leadership, the reform efforts gained traction, particularly through the influence of Ferdinand de Lesseps, who was Said's close French friend and advisor. De Lesseps implemented a top-down approach to westernization, characterized by a dictatorial style. With de Lesseps' guidance, the construction of the Suez Canal was initiated, leading to the establishment of the European-owned Suez Company (Goldschmidt 2008, 73). This move elevated Egypt's significance for Britain as well. The competition between Britain and France now shifted to a new phase. Another

noteworthy development during Said's reign, which would have implications for Egyptian politics in the future, was the opportunity for Egyptians from lower socio-economic classes to own land, expand their educational opportunities, and rise in the military and bureaucracy.

In 1862, Ismail Pasha, the son of Ibrahim Pasha, assumed governance. One year after, Egypt officially became a khedivate and Ismail Pasha became the first official khedive of Egypt. The term "Khedive," which has a Persian root, originally referred to viziers. However, in the context of Egypt, it signifies a kind of viceroy ruling Egypt through his dynasty. In other words, Egypt, which had been an autonomous region of the Ottoman Empire since Muhammad Ali, increased its autonomy under the khedivate. The main difference before and after the khedivate was the end of the tradition where the oldest member took power, and the succession began to pass from father to son. Nevertheless, the Muhammad Ali dynasty continued to rule Egypt until the monarchy ended in 1953.

During the reign of Ismail Pasha, notable developments included the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, the construction of roads, hotels, restaurants, and Western-style urban areas in the country. However, Egypt's financial situation deteriorated significantly due to those constructions and investments. Between the years 1878 and 1882, the Egyptian economy, along with all government revenues, came under joint British-French supervision due to the substantial debt owed by Egypt to these states. This system, known as the dual control, took charge of the Egyptian economy, resembling the structure of the Ottoman Public Debt administration. British, French, and Armenian ministers were included in the cabinet during that time, underscoring the assertion that Egypt was no longer merely an African nation but part of Europe (Goldschmidt 2008, 80).

However, the increased level of education during this period resulted in the growing nationalist sentiments among the emerging Egyptian elite. Simultaneously, there was a rise in reactions against the de facto rule of Egypt by countries such as Britain and France. The primary focus of nationalist demands was the excessive foreign intervention in Egypt. By the way, Egyptians from lower socio-economic classes and Coptic Christians, who had relatively higher levels of education, also began to secure positions within the bureaucracy during that time (Goldschmidt 2008, 83).

In 1879, Khedive Ismail was deposed by the Ottomans, and his son, Khedive Tawfiq, assumed the throne. This demonstrates that despite the increased autonomy of Ottoman governors in Egypt through the khedivate, the political influence of the Ottomans still

persisted. However, it also indicates that the Ottomans had no power to completely change the khedive, but only transferred authority to the son of Ismail Pasha, as promised by khedivate rule. Upon ascending to the throne, the new Khedive faced a choice between Britain and France, who controlled the country's economy, and the rising nationalist elites. Opting to appoint Riyad Pasha, a relatively pro-Western Circassian, as the head of the cabinet, Khedive Tawfiq took precautionary measures against the growing wave of nationalism. This included expelling influential figures such as Afghani and Ya'qub Sanu, as well as shutting down nationalist newspapers and broadcasting organizations (Goldschmidt 2008, 84).

The strengthened wave of nationalism in Egypt, fueled by the implemented policies and concessions made to foreign countries, sparked a significant mobilization that can be regarded as a pioneer moment in Egyptian multireligious nationalism. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the ascent of Egyptians from relatively lower socio-economic and farming classes in the bureaucracy and military was beginning to have significant consequences. It was from this group that Ahmad Urabi Pasha (1841-1911), who received a sound Islamic and military education, would play a vital role in the rising wave of nationalism. The national sentiment among Egyptians grew to such an extent that the slogan of the revolutionary movement led by Urabi Pasha against British hegemony and Khedive Tawfiq in 1881 was "Egypt belongs to Egyptians" (Hatem 2011). The significance of this slogan lies in its inclusive nature, encompassing all the different groups residing in Egypt and carrying regional implications.

The military strength of Urabi Pasha, combined with the demonstrations organized by Muslims and Coptic Christians from various segments of society, including peasants, landowners, bureaucrats, and merchants, led to the establishment of a new constitution in 1881 and the inauguration of the country's first legislative body with substantial representation, following the 1866 Representative Consultative Council, which was a semi-elected parliament. The Egyptian Council of Representatives of 1881, whose members were selected through staggered elections and appointments, began its duties in November 1881. Along with the cabinet, which included Urabi Pasha as the Minister of War, the parliament started to work for Egypt to act independently from Britain, especially in economic matters (Goldschmidt 2008, 87). However, Britain and France, who had significant economic investments in Egypt, were dissatisfied with the situation and threatened military intervention. Meanwhile, the Ottomans, though not publicly,

supported Urabi Pasha and believed that this rebellion could potentially benefit their own interests. The results of the Urabi Pasha rebellion, which were successful and led to, at least temporarily, the de facto transfer of power to the Egyptians and the initial steps towards representative democracy, did not last long. The parliament could only function for 3 months.

Due to increasing mobilization, the British forces successfully quashed the Urabi revolt in 1882 and officially invaded Egypt. This invasion marked a new chapter in Egyptian nationalism. In contrast to other Arab nationalisms, which maintained close ties with colonial powers, Egyptian nationalism emerged as an opposition to colonial powers, particularly Britain (Tibi 1981, 152). This became the most significant distinguishing characteristic between Arab nationalism in the Arabian Peninsula and Egyptian nationalism. From this perspective, it can be argued that the nationalist movements in North Africa, including Algerian and Tunisian nationalisms, as well as Egyptian nationalism, differed from their counterparts in the Arabian Peninsula due to their early contrasting stance against the colonial powers.

While the Urabi revolt was sometimes seen as pro-Ottoman or a jihad against non-Muslims, it did not hinder the involvement of individuals from various religions. The prevailing objective among the masses within Egypt was anti-British sentiment, whether it meant achieving reunification with the Ottomans, establishing a solely Arab state, or creating an Islamic-based governmental structure.

The stance of the newspaper *Al-Watan*, established in 1877 by the Coptic Christian Abd-al Sayyid, towards the British occupation can serve as an illustration of this circumstance. Even though labeling Arabs as invaders might be perceived as an expression of al-Watan's ethnoreligious minority nationalism, it can be argued that the Copts aimed to prevent the notion of potential Arab unification by considering Muslims within Egypt as Muslim Egyptians, rather than simply Arabs. Similar to previous nations that had occupied Egypt, the British were perceived as invaders. In 1884, the British administrators compelled the closure of *Al-Watan* newspaper, and one of its articles expressed the following sentiment:

“The Copts are the true Egyptians. They are the real masters of the country. All those who have set their foot on Egyptian soil, be they Arabs, Turks, French or British, are nothing but invaders” (Armanios 1998, 63).

The strong affiliation between the Coptic Christian politician Butrus Ghali, who would later become the Prime Minister of Egypt, and Urabi Pasha, further demonstrates the support of Coptic Christians for the rebellion. Furthermore, the participation of Patriarch Cyril V of the Coptic Church of Egypt as one of the signatories of the constitutional document implemented during Urabi's brief rule provides clear evidence of this support (Armanios 1998, 36).

The opposition to British occupation was not limited to Muslims and Coptic Christians; a small number of Jews within Egyptian society also expressed their dissent. The exile of Yaqub Sanu in 1884, as mentioned earlier, serves as evidence of a multireligious mobilization against the British occupation (Armanios 1998, 44). Likewise, among Muslim intellectuals, Muhammad Abduh, whom we have previously discussed, characterized the Urabi revolt as a movement of unity and collaboration, involving individuals from diverse religious backgrounds (Armanios 1998, 36). Abduh viewed the Urabi revolt as a unification of people of all races and religions residing in Egypt as Egyptians, as well as a struggle by Egyptians against the British (Armanios 1998, 36).

While the Khedive's structure and government persisted in Egypt, the country was de facto under complete British control due to the occupation. In other words, despite the khedives remaining the official rulers of Egypt, the British-appointed governors had become the primary authorities in the administration. For example, between the years 1883 and 1907, during the reigns of Khedive Tawfiq and Abbas Hilmi II, Lord Cromer served as the primary decision-maker in Egypt due to his role as the British colonial administrator and governor of the country. The British occupation rendered Egypt's status as an autonomous region of the Ottoman Empire merely a paper myth (Goldschmidt 2008, 93).

Khedive Abbas Hilmi II, the son of Khedive Tawfiq, ascended the throne in 1892 and initially had a harmonious working relationship with Lord Cromer. However, tensions arose between them due to disputes over certain bureaucratic appointments. Additionally, the British occupation of Egypt triggered reactions from various nations, particularly the Ottoman Empire and France. During this period, Egyptian nationalism surged across all segments of society, transcending religious divisions. In response to the British occupation, Egypt, as one of the ancient civilizations in history, was seen as

deserving self-rule by Egyptians themselves, without discrimination based on religion, emphasizing that the British should not govern Egypt (Goldschmidt 2008, 95).

Mustafa Kamil Pasha (1874-1908), a prominent figure in the political sphere during Khedive Abbas' reign, emerged as one of the key leaders of this movement. Mustafa Kamil Pasha, who pursued a law education in Egypt's Western-style institutions and gained prominence, including recognition from Khedive Abbas, through his educational pursuits and the magazines and newspapers he co-published with his friends. He was an Egyptian intellectual who traveled to Europe multiple times during his youth and advocated for an end to the British occupation of Egypt. He utilized his writings in the newspaper *Al-Liwa* to advocate for an end to British occupation and consistently expressed his aspiration for an independent Egypt. He actively sought support from the Ottoman administration, France, and other Western countries that were opposed to the British occupation (Goldschmidt 2008, 99).

The *Taba* Affair, which arose in 1906 due to the Ottoman forces' construction of a new fort on the western side of the Gulf of Aqaba, specifically on the shores of the Sinai Peninsula, elicited a reaction from Britain. Since Britain considered Sinai as a buffer zone between the Suez Canal and the Ottoman Empire, leading to the dispatch of warships to the Eastern Mediterranean. Despite not escalating into a full-fledged conflict, this incident had significant implications (Goldschmidt 2008, 101). The power struggle between the Ottomans and the British over the sovereignty of the Sinai Peninsula concluded in favor of the British. This event marked a significant turning point in the ongoing conflict between territorial nationalism and Islamism in Egypt. The British's severe punishment of the peasants who had supported the Ottomans in the region, including the execution of four peasants by hanging, reignited the nationalist movement rooted in the Urabi revolt. Consequently, a series of demonstrations organized jointly by Muslim and Christian Egyptians led to Lord Cromer's dismissal from his position in 1907.

Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, a Muslim Egyptian and the first rector of Cairo University, played a significant role during this period by promoting Egyptian nationalism in opposition to the British occupation. Al-Sayyid emphasized the idea of Egypt as a united nation with diverse origins. He asserted that Egyptians possess their own distinct culture, dating back to the time of the ancient Egyptians, and that the defining characteristics of Egypt are not primarily based on race or religion, unlike many other nations (Ansari 1960, 23). Al-Sayyid believed that Coptic Christians and Muslims could unite as one nation by

prioritizing their loyalty to their homeland over religious loyalty. He advocated for this united nation to oppose both the British occupation and pro-Ottoman and Islamist ideologies (Armanios 1998, 50-51).

Mustafa Kamil, while praising the rich history of Egypt, highlighted the long centuries of coexistence and harmony between Copts and Muslims. He advocated for the separation of religion and national life, emphasizing that Egyptians should learn to differentiate between the two spheres (Armanios 1998, 45). Through his efforts to modernize Islam, he aimed to strengthen the Egyptian national movement. Although he believed that Egyptian nationalism did not need to be defined by ethnicity or religion, he criticized Syro-Lebanese Arab nationalists due to their close ties with colonial powers (Tibi 1981, 154). Furthermore, Kamil believed in distinguishing between insiders and outsiders within Egyptian nationalism. In other words, according to him, people who live in Egypt, regardless of their religious affiliation, are considered part of the Egyptian nation, as insiders. His understanding of nationalism was closely tied to his homeland, emphasizing the concept of '*bilad*' (homeland). The political party he established in 1907 was named *al-Hizb al Watani* (National Party), comprising nationalist elites from Al-Liwa, and its main goal was to advocate for Egypt's independence. The funeral of Mustafa Kamil Pasha, who tragically passed away at the young age of 33, became a significant event that brought together Muslims and Christians. It stands as the most attended funeral in Egyptian history (Goldschmidt 2008, 104).

Mustafa Kamil Pasha's efforts furthered the process initiated by the Urabi revolt, which fostered closer ties between Muslims and Coptic Christians in opposition to the British occupation. In 1911, Coptic Christians held a congress to deliberate on Egypt's future and the role of Copts within it. Rather than adopting a condescending stance towards Muslims in Egypt. However, that does not imply that Coptic Christians had no criticisms and warnings for Muslim Egyptians. For example, the congress emphasized that the greatest error Egyptian Muslims could commit would be to exclude Coptic Christians from the fabric of Egypt (Armanios 1998, 70). As a testament to the interconnectedness of Muslims and Coptic Christians, a participant at the congress shared personal experiences from his childhood. He described Muslims visiting his home, the presence of a prayer carpet for their use during their stay, and highlighted the freedom his father had to attend church without any hindrance (Armanios 1998, 72).

During the congress, Tawfiq Dus, a Coptic Christian, expressed the aspiration for joint political action, emphasizing that the land of Egypt belonged to all Egyptians. His words foreshadowed a later involvement that we will encounter. *"Religion is for God alone, and the homeland for all its people"* (Carter 2013, 290).

Ramiz Tadrus, a Coptic Christian and editor of the *Misr* newspaper, asserted that the Coptic identity is not limited to being Muslim or Christian but rather encompasses every Egyptian. He emphasized that the name of the country itself has its roots in this shared origin (Armanios 1998, 88).

Similarly, Marcus Simaika, a member of the Egyptian parliament from 1907 to 1911 and a minister in Muhammad Said Pasha's 1910 cabinet, as well as the founder of the Coptic Museum in Cairo, expressed the following viewpoint: *"All of you are Copts. Some of you are Muslim Copts, others are Christian Copts, but all of you are descended from the ancient Egyptians"* (Armanios 1998, 88). Even though Muslim Egyptians did not identify themselves as Copts, Simaika's quote can be understood as a unifying factor, allowing the appropriation of Egypt's Coptic ancient civilization by all ethnic groups who live in Egypt as Egyptians.

Moreover, there were discussions about the representation of Coptic Christians within the parliament during the congress. While there are ideas such as implementing a certain minimum quota for Coptic Christians to ensure appropriate representation, there was no consensus on this topic. Indeed, the absence of Coptic Christians serving as deputies in the 1913-14 parliament, indicates the validity of the first group's demand. Since there were no Coptic Christian representatives in the parliament, four Coptic Christians were informally appointed to the parliament (Carter 2013, 133). However, the highest position attainable by an Egyptian was the office of Prime Minister, which was held by two Coptic Christians, Boutros Ghali and Yousef Wahba, and one Armenian Nubar Pasha from 1878 until the establishment of the Kingdom of Egypt in 1922. During this period spanning the late 19th and early 20th centuries, despite constituting only 10 percent of the population and being considered a minority, Coptic Christians held the prime ministerial position twice out of the 12 Egyptian Prime Ministers. This can be seen as an indication of a multireligious understanding of Egyptian nationalism, a feat that remains challenging to achieve in many countries even today. For a detailed list of prime ministers during this time period, please refer to Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: The Breakdown of the Egyptian Prime Ministers by Religion until the Independence³¹

Muslim (9)	Term	Coptic /Armenian Christian (3)	Term
Muhammad Sharif Pasha	April 1879-August 1879	Nubar Pasha	August 1878-February 1879
	September 1881-February 1882		January 1884-June 1888
	August 1882-January 1884		April 1894-November 1895
Riyad Pasha	September 1879-September 1881	Boutros Ghali	November 1908-February 1910
	June 1888-May 1891	Youssef Wahba Pasha	November 1919-May 1920
Mahmoud Sami el-Baroudi	January 1893-April 1894		
İsmail Raghib Pasha	February 1882-May 1882		
Mustafa Fahmi Pasha	June 1882-August 1882		
	May 1891-January 1893		
Muhammad Said Pasha	November 1895-November 1908		
	February 1910-April 1914		
Hussein Rushdi Pasha	May 1919-November 1919		
Tawfiq Nasim Pasha	April 1914-April 1919		
Adli Yakan Pasha	May 1920-March 1921		
	March 1921-March 1922		

Amidst the outbreak of the First World War, Egypt was transformed into a Sultanate as a means employed by the British to completely detach it from the Ottoman Empire, even though the association remained superficial. Nevertheless, Britain did not anticipate that the end of the war would serve as a significant turning point for the growth of Egyptian nationalism and the quest for an independent Egypt.

3.4.3 Independent Egypt

After the end of the First World War, there was a notable increase in reactions against Britain, which had exercised complete control over the administration and dissolved the parliament during the war. In the early days following the war, a delegation led by Saad Zaghlul (1857-1927) approached Sir Reginald Wingate, the British administrator of Egypt, requesting to initiate independence negotiations between Egypt and Britain. After the request was rejected, demonstrations erupted, and Britain opted to exile Zaghlul as a solution. This event became a significant turning point that ignited the spark of nationalism in Egypt. Subsequently, Wingate was relieved of his duties due to the demonstrations, and his replacement, Allenby, reversed the decision to exile Zaghlul.

After the exile, the notion of Egypt sending a delegation (Wafd) to the Peace Conference held in Paris to discuss the post-war global order began to take shape. The

³¹ Prime Ministers serving for less than 30 days are not included in the list. For comprehensive biographical details of the prime ministers, please refer to the following source: Modern Egypt Bibalex, accessed July 3, 2023, <http://modernegypt.bibalex.org/collections/home/default.aspx>.

delegation, under the leadership of Zaghlul, who had been exiled due to the demand for an end to British rule but was later allowed to return due to overwhelming public support, initiated the formation process of the Wafd party. This party would go on to significantly influence Egyptian politics until the 1952 revolution.

The founding members of the Wafd comprised 12 Muslims and 2 Coptic Christians. Among them were George Khayyut and Wasif Ghali, the son of former Prime Minister Boutros Ghali. Subsequently, Sunut Hanna, a Coptic Christian who had initially served as one of Prince's representatives at the Paris Peace Conference, joined the ranks of the Wafd at a later stage (Carter 2013, 60). The Wafd delegation sought to represent Egypt in a united and resolute manner at the conference, receiving letters of support from Jewish minority groups (Carter 2013, 63). On a broader scale, the Wafd aimed to secure a substantial presence in Egyptian politics following the conference, garnering support from various sectors, including Coptic Christians (Carter 2013, 161).

The absence of direct acknowledgment of Egyptian representatives at the conference, coupled with the recognition of Egypt as a state under British protection on the day the Wafd delegation arrived, altered the dynamics within Egypt and sparked increased reactions. To such an extent that Coptic priests delivered speeches from mosque pulpits, while Muslim imams preached in churches, all in the name of national solidarity, with religious differences momentarily forgotten. Furthermore, women participated in popular demonstrations for the first time in Egyptian history, highlighting the magnitude of the events (Goldschmidt 2008, 111). Notably, the Coptic priest Murqus Sergius played a significant role in these demonstrations, addressing the crowds from the pulpit of Al-Azhar, an institution revered not only by Muslims in Egypt but also by many Muslims worldwide.

In addition, reciprocal invitations were extended to Muslim imams, and churches and mosques became gathering places for Egyptian nationalists during this period (Carter 2013, 62). The intertwined waving of the cross and crescent flags during the demonstrations likely played a role in the later adoption of the cross and crescent as symbols of the Wafd party, indicating that these demonstrations exemplified a multireligious mobilization against British rule (Carter 2013, 61–62). The Wafd Party, whose emblem featured the cross and crescent together, championed the principle of equality for all Egyptians, regardless of their religion. Senout Hanna, a prominent Coptic Christian figure within the party, proclaimed that "Nationalism is our religion"

(Pennington 1982, 161). It is a notable observation that both cases of multireligious nationalisms within the thesis share a similar slogan for their nationalisms, as mentioned in the second chapter: "the religion of Albanians is Albanianism."



Figure 3.2: The Symbol of the Wafd Party

Youssef Wahba Pasha, a Coptic Christian who assumed the position of prime minister in October 1919 with British support, was accused of attempting to undermine the unity between Muslim and Coptic Christians. Therefore, his stance was criticized by Coptic Christian elites and publications as well, who contended that Wahba did not truly represent the interests of Coptic Christians (Carter 2013, 68). In December 1919, a Coptic Christian student named Iryan Youssef Sad made an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Wahba. He accepted this mission because of his own Coptic Christian background and believed that his assassination by a Muslim would jeopardize the unity between Copts and Muslims in their struggle for independence (Carter 2013, 69).

Culturally, there was a notable harmony between Muslims and Coptic Christians during this period. For instance, Muslims were invited to participate in Coptic Christians' Easter Festival, and Copts assisted Muslims in preparing for *Ramadan* (Carter 2013, 62). Referred to as the 1919 revolution, this movement led by Egyptian Muslims and Coptic Christians against British occupation paved the way for Egyptian independence in 1922 and served as a significant manifestation of multireligious Egyptian nationalism.

Consequently, Coptic Christians, who have a longstanding presence in Egypt dating back to ancient times, experienced a distinct historical trajectory. Initially, they diverged from the Orthodox Church and later coexisted with the Muslim population that settled in the region. During the era of Muhammad Ali, Coptic Christians began to differentiate themselves from other Christian subjects within the Ottoman Empire. As a result, Coptic Christians emerged as the largest minority group within a state characterized by an autonomous structure and an administrative center in Cairo. In the 19th century, the rise

of Arab nationalism in the Arab world, particularly in Syria and Lebanon, had an influence on Egypt and Cairo, which served as another significant cultural and political center in the region. While ideologies such as Islamism and Arabism played a role in fostering the nationalist sentiment in Egypt, the country's ancient culture and its long-standing autonomous structure, preserved through the Khedive institution, contributed to the development of a territorial nationalism that emerged earlier compared to the Arabian Peninsula countries. The domination of the Egyptian economy by European powers and later the actual British occupation of Egypt had a profound impact. This situation led to Coptic Christian and Muslim Egyptians setting aside their differences and uniting against the British occupation and threat. As a result, the idea of Egyptian nationalism, inclusive of all elements and different religions, was reinforced.

It is noteworthy to highlight that a primary concern arose from the unified stance of Egyptian Muslim and Coptic Christian elites, despite the fact that this threat was also Christian in nature. Even though there were Islamist movements opposing this non-Muslim threat in the Muslim-majority Egypt, similar to what occurred in Algerian nationalism, the prevailing sentiment among most Coptic Christians against the British invasion facilitated this unification. It is intriguing to observe that Coptic Christians opposed another Christian administration, namely the British. The reactions of Coptic Christian nationalist elites reveal that their opposition is rooted in their religious sect's disparity. Their strong belief in the significance of Coptic Christianity as a true and distinct identity within Christianity underpins this stance.

As a distinguished British missionary entity, The Church Mission Society dispatched its inaugural official missionaries to Egypt in the 1820s. The primary predicament that led to the opposition of Coptic Christians against the British Protestant missions stemmed from The Church Mission Society and its missionaries' perception that the Coptic Christians adhered to a "false gospel." The missionaries considered their beliefs to be tainted and erroneous. For instance, one of the early missionaries who journeyed to Egypt contended that "Their beliefs are in many respects corrupt, and among the poorer Copts great ignorance prevails and strange superstitions" (Gollock 1906, 84). However, it must be remembered that Coptic Christians played a vital role in the early division of Christianity in Orthodox councils. Their authentic and rooted Orthodox faith, which spans centuries, hindered a strong connection between Coptic Christians and the British Protestants. Furthermore, the British missions' arrogance was poorly received by the

Coptic Christians and did not foster a positive attitude. This could explain why Egyptian nationalism turned against the British invasion, encompassing its non-Muslim members within Egyptian society.

3.5 *A Missing Catalyst: The Central Government's Turkish Nationalist Pressure*

Unlike the impact of Turkish nationalism on Albanian multireligious nationalism, it can be argued that Turkish nationalist policies had limited influence on Egyptian multireligious nationalism during the Committee of Union and Progress period. This is primarily due to the fact that Egypt had maintained an autonomous structure since the era of Muhammad Ali Pasha. Moreover, the ties between the Ottoman Empire and Egypt had significantly diminished with the British occupation. During this period, Egypt served mainly as a headquarters for various Arab societies and a center for Arab diaspora, distancing itself from Ottoman influence. The activities of these societies primarily focused on Arab nationalism rather than directly impacting Egyptian nationalism. For instance, the Ottoman Decentralization Party, established in Cairo in 1912, sought to influence the central administration of the Ottoman Empire to adopt a more decentralized structure and raise awareness among Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula (Antonius 1963, 109).

During the late 19th and early 20th century, the nationalist policies of Ottoman Central Government was more pronounced in the Arabian Peninsula, which was still under Ottoman rule, similar to the case of Albanian nationalism. Debates surrounding the representation of Arabs in parliament and whether they should pursue a separate path from the Ottoman Empire were prevalent in the early 20th century. From the outset, there were Arab communities, particularly those residing in Europe, advocating for separatist and independence ideas, while others sought increased rights within the Ottoman Empire. However, the centralist policies of the CUP fostered greater cohesion among Arab elites and fueled their aspirations for independence.

An example of these dynamics is the Society of Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood, which aimed to promote Arabic education within Arab territories and advocated for new reforms in the administrative system. However, their objectives were prohibited following the decision of the CUP in 1908 (Tibi 1981, 82). Similarly, the Constantinople Literary Club, which sought Arab national-cultural autonomy, was dissolved and subjected to

persecution by the CUP as well (Tibi 1981, 83). These suppressive actions led to the emergence of secret societies and eventually culminated in the convening of the Paris Arab Congress in 1913, which brought together diverse Arabs irrespective of their religious affiliations. Indeed, the onset of the First World War marked the beginning of the Great Arab Revolt. As a consequence of the war, the Ottoman Empire experienced significant territorial losses in these regions. A Hashemite-led state centered in Hejaz, known as the Kingdom of Hejaz, was established. Furthermore, the territories of Iraq, the Gulf, and Syria came under the mandates of Britain and France in the post-war division of the Ottoman Empire.

From the 19th century onward, Egyptian Muslim nationalist elites, who started identifying themselves as Egyptians rather than Arabs, viewed the Arab revolt against the Ottomans as a betrayal. While some Ottoman sympathies still lingered in Egypt, the decisive factor was the collaboration with the British, who had occupied Egypt for an extended period (Goldschmidt 2008, 127). Despite aspiring for independence, many preferred Ottoman rule over British rule, as evidenced in the Urabi Pasha and Mustafa Kamil Pasha movements. Thus, it becomes comprehensible why Egyptian nationalists perceived the significant Arab revolt against Ottoman rule, conducted in cooperation with the British, in this manner.

In Egypt, anti-British sentiment had already reached its peak even before the outbreak of the First World War. During this period, a pro-Ottoman sentiment found significant resonance within Egypt, as evidenced by the Urabi Rebellion and the efforts and ideas of Mustafa Kamil Pasha. Additionally, despite Egypt's de facto independence, Egyptian elites maintained contact with the Ottoman center through their travels to Istanbul, particularly engaging with influential thinkers such as Afghani and embracing Islamist ideologies.

Therefore, it can be argued that the policies of rising Turkish nationalism, which had a pronounced impact on Albanian nationalism, did not have a direct influence on Egyptian nationalism. However, while not as widely embraced as Egyptian nationalism in the face of British occupation, the increasing pro-Ottoman sentiments in Egypt did lead to some disappointment with the Turkish nationalist policies implemented by the CUP. With the outcome of the First World War, the prospect of reunifying Egypt with Ottoman territories became unrealistic, and as a result, the pro-Ottoman elites in Egypt largely relinquished these ideas. Nevertheless, it is true that elites from diverse ethnic

backgrounds who had been involved with the CUP played influential roles in the formation of new nation-states or within mandates following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This phenomenon was not limited to specific regions but extended to various territories, including Egypt.

One of the most notable examples was Aziz Ali al-Misri, who emerged as a prominent figure in the military and CUP during the march on Istanbul against the Hamidian counter-revolution in 1909. His dissatisfaction with the policies of the CUP led him to establish a clandestine organization called al-Ahd and engage in the great Arab revolt against the Ottomans. Subsequently, he assumed the position of Chief of General Staff in Egypt (Tibi 1981, 156).

Al-Misri's impact becomes more evident in the process of the Free Officers taking power in Egypt through a coup/revolution in 1952, as detailed in the subsequent sections. Al-Misri served as a mentor to the revolution's pioneers and played a crucial role in shaping Egypt's military in the 20th century (Tibi 1981, 156). Essentially, a former member of the CUP emerged as one of the most influential figures of Egyptian nationalism after parting ways with the organization. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the CUP's centralist and Turkish nationalist policies did not significantly contribute to the rise of multireligious nationalism in Egypt, nor did they facilitate the unification of diverse elites as they did in Albanian nationalism.

Examining the historical evolution of the Egyptian national flag proves to be a significant indicator in this regard. The modern flag of Egypt bears similarities in color to the flags that emerged during the Arab revolt and prominently features an eagle. Its first usage dates back to 1958 following the 1952 revolution. Subsequently, in analyzing the policies of the Nasser era, the transformation of Egyptian nationalism into a Pan-Arab character will be explored in greater depth. The adoption of the flag that originated from the great Arab revolt, which continues to inspire numerous states in the Arabian Peninsula today, aligns with the policies implemented during this particular period. However, it is worth noting that the flag employed after Egypt gained independence in 1922 was distinct, showcasing a crescent and star on a green background, which is a common motif in anti-colonial Muslim nations. This provides compelling evidence that Egypt did not fully embrace the Arab identity and anti-Ottoman sentiments of the Great Arab Revolt until Nasser's rise to power and his subsequent Arab nationalist policies after the revolution.

3.6 *The State Policies Toward Ethnicity and Religion in Independent Egypt*

3.6.1 *The Independent Egypt until the 1952 Revolution*

In February 1922, the British acknowledged Egypt as an independent state due to the mobilization and efforts fueled by nationalism within Egypt, as well as the shifting global dynamics following World War I. However, certain matters such as the status of Sudan, British presence in Egypt, the rights of minority groups, and Egypt's defense were left unresolved for future discussions (Goldschmidt 2008, 115). King Fuad, belonging to the Muhammad Ali dynasty, assumed the role of Egypt's first monarch when it became a kingdom in 1922.

Among these points, leaving the status of minorities in Egypt undecided and subject to future deliberation was in particular perceived as a potential threat by both Muslims and Coptic Christians, as it raised concerns about possible British intervention. Coptic Christians, having trust in Saad Zaghlul, the leader of the Wafd party, aimed to be recognized as an integral part of Egypt rather than a minority. In April 1922, three Coptic Christians were included in the committee responsible for drafting Egypt's new constitution. These members did not object to the constitutional provision designating Islam as the state religion, on the condition that the state guarantees freedom of belief and worship. While establishing a state structure based on religion in Egypt posed potential risks for Coptic Christians, who comprise 10% of the population, it was also appealing for Coptic elites to be part of a unified Egyptian identity rather than being viewed as a minority. Given the circumstances at the time, a radical reaction to the declaration of Islam as the state religion was not preferred. Consequently, the Wafd party, considering Coptic Christians as an integral component, provided substantial opportunities for these elites to be actively involved. For Muslim elites, this situation offered a strategic opportunity to counter Britain's attempts at legitimizing potential new occupations through provisions that safeguarded the rights and overall condition of Coptic Christians. This mutually beneficial process ultimately reinforced the notion that Egypt belonged to all its inhabitants, regardless of their religious affiliation, be it Muslims or Coptic Christians (Ansari 1960, 44).

The Belgian constitution, which was alluded in 1911 Coptic congress, received earnest consideration during this epoch. The configuration of Belgium, adeptly integrating diverse ethnic components, proved pivotal in adopting this nation's constitutional model. For example, Marqus Hanna advocated for a Belgian-style system that would establish a quota for Coptic Christian representation in the Egyptian parliament and bureaucracy, considering it suitable for their political inclusion. However, there were voices within the community, including Abd al-Hamid Badawi Pasha, who opposed such a quota system. Badawi Pasha argued that implementing such a quota could lead to an irreparable division among factions and risk dividing Egypt (Hassan 2003, 39). As a result, drawing inspiration from the Belgian constitution, Egypt adopted a constitutional framework that constitutionally guaranteed the freedom of belief and worship for individuals of different religious backgrounds (Hassan 2003, 38).

The inclusion of Coptic Christians as a crucial element in the newly established state structure was also driven by their higher level of education in Egypt. Coptic Christians played a significant role in fulfilling the human resource needs of the bureaucracy. For example, in 1907, the literacy rate among Coptic Christians stood at 10.3%, whereas it was only 4% among Muslims (Armanios 1998, 55). By the end of the 19th century, Coptic Egyptians held prominent positions in various government departments, such as 45% of Egyptian civil servants were Coptic Christian (Pennington 1982, 1982). These proportions were quite impressive considering their proportion within the overall population and shows a huge overrepresentation of Coptic Christians within Egyptian civil service.

Culturally, the distinctions between the two groups became considerably blurred. While intermarriage rates between Muslims and Coptic Christians remained low, their coexistence in the same geographical region for an extended period made it challenging to discern them from each other based on physical appearance. Furthermore, both groups predominantly used the Arabic language in their daily lives, despite Coptic Christians maintaining the use of the Coptic language in their religious rituals. As a result, it became increasingly difficult to determine whether an Egyptian individual was a Coptic Christian or a Muslim solely based on their name, as both groups adopted names that reflected the Arabic language (Armanios 1998, 11).

The significant presence of Coptic Christians within the executive committee of the Wafd party in 1923, with 6 out of 14 members being Coptic Christians, and the inclusion

of 3 Coptic Christians among the 14 members of the second group involved in larger meetings, provided clear indications of the multireligious nature of post-independence Egypt (Carter 2013, 161). Coptic Christian members of the executive committees of the Wafd Party can be observed in detail in Table 3.2. It can be contended that 6/14 represents a substantial overrepresentation of Coptic Christians in comparison to their overall population. From this sense, both the Egyptian and Albanian nationalisms exhibit not merely inclusivity but indeed a considerable overrepresentation of Christians. The popularity of the Wafd party, as will be further explored later, demonstrated that it was not an exception but rather widely accepted by the general Egyptian public.

Table 3.2: Coptic Christian Members of the Wafd's Executive Committee
(Carter 2013, 161).

The Executive Committee (6/14)	Semi-members of the Executive Committee (3/14)
Sunut Hanna	Salama Mikhail
George Khayyut	Fahri Abd-al-Nur
Wasif Ghali	Raghib Iskandar
Wisa Wasif	
Makram Ebeid	
Marqus Hanna	

Founded in 1922 as a rival to the Wafd Party and one of the two main influential parties in the country's politics until the 1952 revolution, the Liberal Constitutional Party was known as a party led by generals without an army. There were four Coptic Christians out of fourteen among the party's executive committee, namely: Ilyas Awad, Tawfiq Dus, Salib Sami, and Amin Khayyat (Carter 2013, 182). Consequently, the Liberal Party was established with the intention of providing representation for Coptic Christians as well. However, due to criticism from the Coptic community regarding the Liberal press and the perception of inadequate recognition of Coptic Christians within the party, these individuals eventually left the party. As a result, the Liberal Party failed to garner the desired support from the Coptic population in elections. After the 1930s, there were no Coptic Christians in the party leadership, and none of the MPs elected from the Liberal Party in the 1938 and 1945 elections were Copts. Furthermore, in the 1950 elections, no Copts ran as Liberal Party candidates (Carter 2013, 183–84). As a result, the Liberal

Party, originally aiming to represent all of Egypt as a rival to the Wafd Party, transformed into predominantly a Muslim party.

Additionally, notable Coptic Christians such as Amin Ghali, Bulus Hanna Pasha, Kamil Bulus, and Mina Ubaid played significant roles in the al-Ittihad Party, which received support from the palace in 1925, even though some of them had switched from the Wafd Party for pragmatic reasons. However, it can be argued that the rival parties to Wafd did not consider Coptic Christians in Egypt as "the other" or as a minority either.

In the 1924 elections, Saad Zaghloul, the leader of the Wafd Party, which secured a landslide victory with 179 out of 211 seats, was appointed to form the government. According to the 1917 census conducted by the British, Coptic Christians, comprising 6% of the total population, obtained 10% of the parliamentary seats in this election, surpassing their overall representation in the country (Hassan 2003, 40). Interestingly, in the Delta region where the number of Coptic Christians was relatively low, Coptic Christians running on the Wafd Party's ticket were successful in winning seats. While the initial attempt fell short, in 1926, Coptic Christian Wisa Wasef was elected as the vice-president of the parliament (Hassan 2003, 40).

The 1924 cabinet held great significance as it marked the first time in Egypt's history that Egyptians led the cabinet after a prolonged period (Hassan 2003, 261). In pre-independence Egypt, it was customary to have a Coptic Christian serve as a symbolic minister (Carter 2013, 220). However, the inaugural Wafd cabinet formed in 1924 broke from this tradition by including two Coptic Christian ministers: Wasif Ghali as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Murqus Hanna as the Minister of Public Works (Carter 2013, 164). Moreover, the significance lies in the composition of the inaugural cabinet consisting of 12 ministers, which marked the first cabinet following independence. Notably, Coptic Christians were represented with a representation rate of 1/6. This holds relevance in understanding the dynamics of multireligious nationalism after the British occupation of Egypt. Table 3.3 provides detailed information regarding the names, positions, and religious affiliations of the ministers in the cabinet.

Table 3.3: The religious composition and responsibilities of ministers in the cabinet established by the Wafd Party in 1924 ³²

Name	Religion	Duties
Saad Zaghlul	Muslim	Prime Minister
Ahmad Ziver Pasha	Muslim	Minister
Ahmad Mahir Pasha	Muslim	Minister of Public Relations
Ahmad Mazlum	Muslim	Minister of Awqaf (Endowments)
Hasan Husein Pasha	Muslim	Minister of War and Navy
Ali Semshi Pasha	Muslim	Minister of Finance
Tawfiq Nadim Pasha	Muslim	Minister of Finance
Fathullah Barakat Pasha	Muslim	Minister of Agriculture
Nagib al-Garabli Pasha	Muslim	Minister of Justice
Muhammad Said Pasha	Muslim	Minister of Information
Mustafa Nahhas Pasha	Muslim	Minister of Transportation
Marqus Hanna Bey	Coptic Christian	Minister of Public Works
Wasif Boutros Ghali	Coptic Christian	Minister of Foreign Affairs

The newspaper *al-Siyasa*, affiliated with the Liberal Party, strongly criticized the Wafd for deviating from the tradition of having only one Coptic minister and instead appointing two Copts as ministers in 1924. However, until the year 1942, when the Coptic Christian Makram Ebeid, who served as the Wafd party's secretary general, resigned from the party, the Wafd party governments adhered to the tradition of having two Coptic ministers (Carter 2013, 220–21).

Makram Ebeid, a close associate of Saad Zahhloul and the secretary general of the Wafd party, as well as Egypt's finance minister from 1936–42, once stated, *"It is true that I am a Christian by faith, but I am a Muslim by fatherland"* (Ansari 1960, 31). These statements highlight Egypt's predominantly Muslim identity. However, the fact that

³² Since there is no comprehensive list of these ministers available in English, the information provided below has been translated by me from Arabic sources. *Modern Egypt Bibalex*, accessed July 3, 2023, <http://modernegypt.bibalex.org/collections/home/default.aspx>.

Ebeid, a Coptic Christian, held significant positions within the Egyptian bureaucracy and the Wafd party, which was a major force in the country's politics until the 1952 revolution, indicates that Coptic Christians were able to attain important roles within Egypt's diverse religious framework.

Under governments other than the Wafd, the tradition of having only one Coptic minister persisted. The exception was seen in the coalition governments of Aq-Nuqrashi in 1944 and 1946, where two Coptic Christian ministers were appointed (Carter 2013, 221). Nevertheless, it should be noted that there were certain areas where Copts faced limitations. For instance, Coptic Christians were never assigned to key positions in the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Education, and Endowments (Carter 2013, 221). During the Wafd governments from 1924 to 1942, Copts were primarily appointed as Finance Ministers. Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often saw appointments of Coptic Christians. However, in non-Wafdist governments, Coptic Christians were typically entrusted with the less influential roles such as Minister of Agriculture (Carter 2013, 222).

In general, there was no significant change in the number of ministries allocated to Coptic Christians, despite an increase in the total number of ministries from 12 in 1951 to 16 (Carter 2013, 222). Throughout this period, the tradition of having at least one Coptic Christian minister was upheld in all cabinets until the 1952 Revolution. For instance, when Kamil Sidqi was removed as Minister of Finance in 1943, another Coptic Christian was appointed as Minister of Civil Defense to ensure continued representation (Carter 2013, 220).

Until the 1952 revolution, elections in Egypt demonstrated a commendable representation of Coptic Christian officials in the parliament and the senate, relative to their population. Taking into account that 2/5 of the Senate was appointed, it can be argued that this was a significant achievement for a newly established nation-state in the early 20th century, which had recently emerged from occupation. It served as a notable indicator of Egypt's commitment to multireligious nationalism. Particularly in the elections of 1924, 1929, 1936, and 1942, which were won by the Wafd party, Coptic Christians secured a proportionally higher number of seats in both legislative bodies. In table 3.4, it can be found that the detailed information about the seats occupied by Coptic Christians and the ratio of Copts in the national parliament and the senate. Although there is no explicit decline over time in the representation of Coptic Christians within the

assemblies, it is noteworthy to mention that the proportion of Coptic Christian representation shows a direct correlation with the electoral success of the Wafd party.

Table 3.4: The seats occupied by Coptic Christians and the ratio of Copts in the National Parliament and the Senate until 1952 (Carter 2013, 143,146).

	National Parliament			Senate		
Year	Number of Copts	Number of Seats	Percentage	Number of Copts	Number of Seats	Percentage
1924	16	214	7.5%	11	122	9.1%
1925	13	214	6.1%			
1926	16	214	7.5%			
1929	20	235	8.5%	12	130	9.3%
1930						
1931	4	150	2.6%	15	100	15.0%
1936	20	232	8.8%	14	132	10.6%
1938	6	264	2.3%			
1939				19	147	13.0%
1942	23	264	4.5%	16	147	10.9%
1944				15	147	10.2%
1945	12	264	4.5%			
1946				13	147	8.8%
1950	8	320	2.5%	13	147	8.8%
1952				12	172	7.0%

The interment of Saad Zaghlul, the prominent nationalist leader of Wafd and Egypt, in a tomb constructed in the ancient Egyptian style following his demise in 1927, serves as a testament to the deep connection between Zaghlul, Wafd, and Egypt's historical heritage (Hassan 2003, 42). In this regard, the utilization of pharaonic symbols rooted in Egypt's ancient history has proven significant in bridging the gap between Muslims and Coptic Christians, as well as in shaping the Egyptian identity.

In 1936, amidst the resounding bells of war in Europe, the agreement between Britain and Egypt further solidified Egypt's independence, which had been attained in 1922. The treaty, famously known as the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, facilitated the withdrawal of British troops, leaving only a garrison with the sole purpose of safeguarding the Suez Canal. The British army's strength was restricted to a maximum of 10,000 personnel. Concurrently, there was an upward trend in the education level of Egypt's local

population, leading to the emergence of opportunities for impoverished and peasant Egyptians who had hitherto been excluded from bureaucratic roles, including the military.

In the 1940s, amid turmoil within the Wafd, the Muslim Brotherhood, which enjoyed societal acceptance and upheld Islamic values, continued to gain prominence throughout Egypt. However, as the Islamic discourse gained traction, the collective struggle of Muslims and Coptic Christians standing together against British occupation and the spirit of unity that had emerged began to wane. Incidents of attacks on churches and clergy members witnessed an upsurge in the 1940s, leading newspapers like *Al-Watan* and *Misr* to accuse the government of insufficient measures (Hassan 2003, 52). Alongside domestic politics, the situation in Sudan, Britain's ongoing control over the Suez Canal, and Egypt's conflict with the newly established Israeli state in the Palestinian territories north of the Sinai Peninsula following the Second World War all contributed to the overall instability in the country and triggered opposition against the monarchy.

3.6.2 Post-Revolutionary Egypt

The 1917 Balfour Declaration, which laid the foundation for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, marked the beginning of a distinct struggle for Egypt and other Arab countries in the region. It also resulted in the resurgence of Arab nationalism and Egyptian nationalism, which had diverged over time, due to the significant Muslim Arab majority in the Palestinian territories. Egypt's influential position among other Arab nations played a decisive role in this new challenge.

The potential risk of Transjordan's control over the Palestinian territories in the event of a victory prompted Egypt's involvement in the 1948 Palestine War. King Farouk made the decision to engage in the war despite opposition from the prime minister and the military bureaucracy (Goldschmidt 2008, 136). The resounding defeat against the newly established state of Israel brought about a significant shift in Egypt's balance of power. In 1950, Egypt held elections, resulting in the Wafd Party once again emerging as the leading party with 40% of the votes (Goldschmidt 2008, 139). However, this defeat, coupled with escalating tensions within the country during the 1940s, corruption within the Wafd and among the ruling elite, mounting national debt, and the autocratic rule of King Farouk, hastened the rise of anti-government movements in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood, Young Egypt, and Communist organizations, which were gaining

momentum within the country, were plotting for a new government (Goldschmidt 2008, 144).

As previously mentioned, there was a strong sense of Egyptian identity among the new generation of socioeconomically disadvantaged Egyptians who had actively entered the bureaucracy and military following the educational reforms of the 1930s. The Free Officers which composed of a group of soldiers from that background, seized power in a coup d'état in June 1952, which came to be known as the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. The group was led by Mohammed Naguib (1901-1984) and Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970), who would later become the country's leader.

During a meeting of the Egyptian Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) to discuss the governance of the country after the revolution, a majority of 7 votes favored a dictatorship model, while Nasser advocated for a democratic rule. Recognizing the impossibility of governing without Nasser, the committee eventually accepted the idea of democratic rule in line with Nasser's vision (Goldschmidt 2008, 147).

In 1953, the Revolutionary Command Council brought an end to the monarchy in Egypt, and Naguib assumed the role of the country's first president. RCC members were appointed to key ministerial positions, while the majority of the cabinet consisted of civilians (Goldschmidt 2008, 149–50). Nasser succeeded Naguib as President in 1954, following a power struggle between the two. Naguib was compelled to resign and was subsequently placed under house arrest, a situation that was later abolished by Anwar Sadat (1918-1981) in 1971.

Despite the overthrow of the monarchy in Egypt through the 1952 revolution, it can be argued that the country has experienced a regression in terms of political freedoms and representation compared to the pre-revolutionary era. Without delving into the specific details of post-revolutionary political events in Egypt, it is worth examining the extent to which the multireligious nationalism that was constructed in Egypt has been upheld, as well as the general situation of Coptic Christians and their political representation.

Following the dissolution of the party system in Egypt and the closure of the Wafd party, among others, there ceased to be a political network in which Coptic Christians played a direct and prominent role. The visibility of Coptic Christians, who previously held important positions in the Egyptian government, including the post of prime minister, and had a significant presence in parliament, significantly diminished after the revolution. The absence of any Coptic Christians in the Revolutionary Command

Council, which effectively governed Egypt between 1952 and 1956, was the initial indication of this shift. However, Nasser's regime did maintain the tradition of having a single Coptic Christian minister. For instance, Kamal Henry Abadeir, who had a military background, served as the Minister of Communications in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the ministries of treasury and foreign affairs, traditionally held by Coptic Christians, were no longer assigned to members of that community. Due to the absence of Coptic Christian representation in the initial elections held in 1957, Nasser took the step of directly appointing 10 Coptic Christians in the subsequent parliamentary elections (Pennington 1982, 164).

Under Nasser's authoritarian policies and the decline of civil-society activism, Coptic Christians became integrated into the new state system with a minority perspective, which had been their longstanding concern. The Coptic Church emerged as the representative of this minority group (Tadros 2009, 270–71). During this period, an implicit agreement was established between Nasser and Pope Kyrollos VI, the highest patriarch of the Coptic Church in Egypt. As the Patriarch held not only religious but also political authority among Coptic Christians, Nasser provided substantial state subsidies for the construction of churches and cathedrals, and made efforts to ensure the church maintained a strong political stance for his regime (Tadros 2009, 271). The bilateral relationship between the Patriarch and Nasser was so strong that it fell upon the Patriarch to visit Nasser's residence and explain the support of the Coptic community when Nasser contemplated resigning after Egypt's significant defeat in the 1967 war (Tadros 2009, 272). Additionally, Coptic clergymen were sent as representatives to important centers such as Washington, London, Paris, and the Vatican under the orders of Patriarch Kyrollos, aiming to influence the outcome of the war in favor of Egypt and express Egypt's concerns in the region (Sedra 1999, 225).

While Nasser could be characterized as relatively more secular during the earlier stages of his rule in Egypt, he also implemented an Islamic regulation of school curricula (Luke 2022, 44). This move can be seen as an attempt to establish a version of Islam that aligned with the ideology of the regime, as a means to counter the growing influence of the Muslim Brotherhood. Furthermore, in 1955, the introduction of the Unified Court system resulted in Coptic Christians no longer having their own separate judicial system (Tadros 2009, 271).

During this period, Coptic Christians were also affected by land reforms, leading to the loss of land and wealth for many land-owning Coptic families. Additionally, non-governmental organizations managed by Coptic Christians were placed under state control and subjected to joint administration. The Coptic Hospital in Cairo serves as a prominent example of this (Tadros 2009, 271).

The nationalization of the Suez Canal played a crucial role in Nasser's popularity among the Egyptian people. Following tense negotiations with the British, an agreement was reached in 1954, and a timetable for the withdrawal of British troops from the canal was established. However, there was visible dissatisfaction with the agreement within society. In fact, Nasser survived an assassination attempt during a speech in Alexandria in the same year, allegedly carried out by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (Goldschmidt 2008, 153). Due to the opposition from Britain and the United States towards Nasser's ambitious High Dam project, and the challenges faced in securing funding for the dam's operations, Nasser made the audacious decision to order the occupation of the Suez Canal Company. Nasser's words during this time demonstrated the enduring strength of Egyptian nationalism.

“The Suez Canal is an Egyptian canal built as a result of great sacrifices. The Suez Canal Company is an Egyptian company that was expropriated from Egypt by the British” (Goldschmidt 2008, 161).

Following the conclusion of the war between Britain, France, and the Egyptian army over the Suez Canal, with the intervention of the United States and the Soviet Union, Nasser emerged as a hero in Egypt and the Arab world, despite the significant defeat suffered (Goldschmidt 2008, 163). This process led to a resurgence of Arab nationalism in Egypt. In fact, in the 1956 constitutional amendment, Egypt was officially recognized as part of the Arab nation for the first time (Goldschmidt 2008, 164). The Palestinian issue also occupied a prominent place on the political agenda due to Nasser's aspiration to become the leader of the Arab world. As a result, in 1958, the United Arab Republic was established through the union of Syria and Egypt, upon the request of Syria, although it did not last long (Goldschmidt 2008, 165).

Amidst these developments, Coptic Christians in Egypt became uneasy with the growing emphasis on Arabism. The historical link between Coptic Christians and Egyptian Muslims was primarily rooted in their shared Egyptian identity. If Arabism or

Islam were to overshadow Egyptian nationalism, it had the potential to seriously undermine the national unity of the country.

In 1970, following the death of Nasser, Anwar Sadat (1918-1981), who had been associated with Nasser since the Free Officers period and served as his vice-president, assumed the presidency of Egypt (Goldschmidt 2008, 185). Additionally, a year later, Pope Shenouda III succeeded Patriarch Kyrollas as the leader of the Coptic Christian community. The election of the Patriarch by the Coptic Christian clergy, followed by confirmation through a Presidential decree (Pennington 1982, 167), was a practice established in 1957. This practice signified the official recognition of the Coptic Christian Patriarch as a state official by the government.

The relationship between Sadat and Patriarch Shenouda initially mirrored the dynamic between Nasser and the previous patriarch. In terms of church construction, which required state permission according to the law, Sadat informed the patriarch that if the requested number of churches was 30, he would allow 50 to be built (Tadros 2009, 272). Sadat depicted Egypt as a "land of tolerance, love, and fraternity," while Shenouda referred to Egypt as "sons of a single homeland" (Sedra 1999, 221). However, unlike Nasser, Sadat identified himself as the "believer President" and maintained a closer relationship with Islamic groups, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood (Tadros 2009, 273).

As a result of these policies, the relationship between Patriarch Shenouda and Sadat became strained. Sadat's proposal to hold a referendum on amending the second article of the constitution to declare Sharia as the primary source of legislation was a point of contention. The Patriarch argued that since Sharia is based on the Quran and Sunnah, it cannot be applied to Egypt's Coptic Christians. Additionally, the enforcement of the ridda law, which called for the execution of individuals who converted from Islam, was perceived as a threat to the Patriarch and the Coptic Christian community. In 1980, the Patriarch sent a message to the Coptic diaspora, particularly in the US, by canceling Christian Orthodox Easter celebrations and publicly criticizing Sadat for pursuing a policy of nationalism based on Islam (Tadros 2009, 273–74). The increasing attacks against Copts and the government's failure to take adequate measures were further sources of criticism. The tensions between the two eventually led to Patriarch Shenouda being placed under house arrest.

While there were no Coptic Christians in Sadat's inner circle, the number of Coptic ministers in the cabinet occasionally reached three, surpassing the quota of one that was in place during Nasser's era and the tradition of having two Coptic ministers in Wafd governments (Pennington 1982, 168). During this period, an interesting and unprecedented development in the history of Coptic Christians was the rise of Fouad Aziz Ghali within the military. In 1973, he was appointed to an important command position on the canal front, and even after 1980, he was appointed as a provincial governor, a position that had never been held by a Coptic Christian before. Another significant milestone was witnessed in the 1979 elections, where three Coptic Christian members of the National Democratic Party (NDP), the ruling party, were elected to parliament without being included in the Christian quota system that had been in place since the Nasser era (Pennington 1982, 168).

However, during this period, the representation of Coptic Christians in the civil service was declining over time. While the increased educational attainment among Muslim Egyptians compared to the early years of independence might have played a role in this decline, it is not the sole explanation. For instance, in 1977, only 10 Coptic Christians held leadership positions out of a total of 360 state-owned companies (Pennington 1982, 169).

The Egypt-Israel peace treaty, signed in Washington DC in March 1979, resulted in a strong backlash against Sadat within Egypt. The vehement opposition to this accord, viewed as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause, culminated in the assassination of Anwar Sadat by the Egyptian Islamic Jihad during a military celebration in October 1981. This event had an adverse effect on the prevailing perception towards Islamic movements in Egypt's contemporary era.

After the assassination of Anwar, vice-president Hosni Mubarak (1928-2020) assumed the presidency, thereby continuing the tradition of leadership succession in Egypt. Under the presidency of Hosni Mubarak, there were no dramatic changes in governance and policies. However, it can be noted that there was a decrease in tolerance towards the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic groups compared to the Sadat era. In 1985, Mubarak lifted the house arrest of Patriarch Shenouda, who had been placed under house arrest during Sadat's final term, as well as the arrest of around 30 Coptic Christian elites from that period. This led to the establishment of a strong relationship between Mubarak and the Patriarch, reminiscent of the relationship seen during Nasser's rule

(Tadros 2009, 275). The Church and the Patriarch continued to support Mubarak and his party, the NDP, throughout this period. Furthermore, Shenouda made significant changes in his policies after the end of his house arrest.

For example, Patriarch Shenouda, who had previously opposed amending the second article of the constitution during Sadat's time when it was under discussion, did not actively engage in these debates and even supported maintaining the article as it was (Tadros 2009, 277). However, other prominent figures within the Coptic clergy, such as Father Marcos Aziz and Magdy Khalil, argued for revising the article and contended that the church's significant involvement in political affairs hindered Coptic Christian Egyptians from acting as independent citizens (Tadros 2009, 278). In support of this viewpoint, they referred to the words of Girgis al-Gawhari, a Coptic Christian who served as Muhammad Ali Pasha's Finance Minister, and emphasized that Copts were not servants of the Patriarch but rather Egyptian citizens of the state established by Muhammad Ali (Sedra 1999, 224).

In the 1995 elections, none of the Coptic Christians were able to secure parliamentary seats outside of the designated quota. The number of Coptic Christian MPs in parliament was limited to 9, which was a decrease compared to the Sadat era (Sedra 1999, 222). Similarly, in 2005, despite Patriarch Shenouda publicly supporting Mubarak's re-election for a fifth term, no Coptic Christian Egyptians were elected as MPs from the NDP, which was under the control of the regime (Tadros 2009, 276). As a result, the representation rights of Coptic Christians, which had been diminishing since the Nasser era, and their ability to express themselves as independent Egyptian citizens, separate from the church, were gradually diminishing.

In 2011, with the onset of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and its subsequent spread to other countries in the region, including Egypt, the impact of this wave of unrest became apparent. The statement made by Patriarch Shenouda expressing support for Mubarak and his desire to restore calm in Egypt after the demonstrations began indicated the continuation of a longstanding implicit agreement between the regime and the Church. This agreement had existed to a certain extent since the Nasser era, and it resulted in limited representation and dialogue for Copts outside of the church.

"I called the president to thank him and to express my support and the people's support amidst these incidents. May Lord grant him strength to protect Egypt and sustain peace, order and power." (Amin 2020, 188).

However, it is evident that many Coptic Christians, particularly the youth, were dissatisfied with the long-standing autocratic rule in Egypt. During the protests against Mubarak, Muslims and Coptic Christians stood together, much like they did a century ago during the Urabi revolt. Coptic Christian demonstrators even joined hands with Muslims who paused the protests to perform Friday prayers in Tahrir Square, providing protection and solidarity against potential threats. Slogans such as "Christians and Muslims, one hand" and "The Unity of the Cross and of the Crescent" echoed the spirit of unity between the two religious communities during the revolution (Luke 2022, 46).

The Supreme Council of Armed Forces assumed control to oversee the transition after Mubarak was ousted by the revolution in February 2011. The adoption of the amended constitution took place in March 2011 with 77% of the vote. However, the exclusion of Coptic Christians from the constitution drafting committee resulted in tensions between Copts and Muslims in various regions of the country (Luke 2022, 46). In the early 2012 elections, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), which maintains close connections with the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Salafist Nour Party secured a majority in parliament, causing apprehension among Coptic Christians in Egypt regarding the future. The reemergence of Shayk Yousaf al-Qardawi and the proposition that Coptic Christians should be treated similarly to how non-Muslims were treated during the Muhammad Ali era intensified these concerns (Luke 2022, 47).

As a result of the elections, only 8 Coptic Christians were able to secure seats in parliament as deputies, and none of them belonged to the majority parties. Consequently, Copts found themselves in a marginalized position within the country. The passing of Patriarch Shenouda a few months prior to the presidential elections raised concerns regarding the representation of Coptic Christians. In an effort to address Coptic reservations, FJP leader Mohamed Morsi (1951-2019), who won the presidential election with 51.73% of the vote, appointed Samir Marcos and Anfiq Habib, both Copts, as the members of the presidential advisory team. This move aimed to alleviate concerns within the Coptic community. It is noteworthy that the close proximity of the deaths of Egyptian presidents and patriarchs is an unusual coincidence in Egyptian political history. After his election as president, Morsi did not attend the coronation of the newly elected Patriarch Pope Tawadros II in November 2012 (Luke 2022, 48). Morsi's failure to attend the coronation, without offering a valid reason for his absence, further exacerbated the

preexisting discontent within the Coptic Christian church and the overall sentiment of Copts in Egypt.

During this period, the country revisited the contentious decree regarding the source of legislation in Sharia law, reigniting debates. The Salafist Nour Party advocated for strengthening this article, while Coptic Christians sought to secure significant advancements following the revolution. Of particular concern to Coptic Christians is the potential alteration of their personal law status, which currently grants them the right to apply their own provisions in family disputes and similar matters (Luke 2022, 48).

The resignations of two Coptic Christians who were formerly part of Morsi's presidential advisory team in November, followed by their replacement with members from the FJP, triggered heightened reactions. The primary reason behind the resignations can be attributed to the contention that the above mentioned constitutional decree containing religious references would compromise the independence of the judiciary, coupled with the inadequate responses to the anti-Morsi demonstrations and the failure to retract the decree. Furthermore, in a recurring pattern throughout history, a new proposal for a constitutional amendment aimed at strengthening Islamic institutions and civil society organizations was approved with a 64% majority in 15-22 December 2012 Referendum, exacerbating tensions between Copts and Muslims. The relatively low turnout of 33% in the referendum indicated that not only Copts but also a significant portion of Egyptian society voiced their opposition to these new developments (Luke 2022, 48).

Nadia Zakhary, a Coptic Christian and one of the two independent female ministers in the cabinet formed during the cabinet of Hesham Qandil in the Morsi era, was appointed as the Minister of Scientific Research. Zakhary, who served as the sole minister representing the Copts in the Morsi cabinet, supported the criticism that Copts were underrepresented after the revolution. In response to this, Bishop Tawadros II, who succeeded Pope Shenouda after his passing in March, stated in an interview with Al-Shouruk newspaper that he would not congratulate the new administration for its failure to adequately represent the Copts.³³ While the criticism from Coptic Christians, who expected greater representation in both the parliament and the cabinet after the revolution,

³³ "I will not congratulate the new prime minister on the formation of the government because it is unfair... this ministerial formation came unjust to Copts." Yasmine Saleh, "Egypt's Christian leader slams 'unfair' new cabinet", *Reuters*, last modified August 4, 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-egypt-government-copts-idUKBRE87309H20120804>.

is understandable, the Church's opposition to the Morsi administration while not objecting to the tradition of having a single Coptic minister, as was predominantly practiced under Nasser and Sadat, highlights an inconsistency of opinion.

The policies of the Morsi administration not only displeased Coptic Christians but also secular Egyptians and the former state bureaucracy. Consequently, significant anti-Morsi demonstrations erupted across Egypt in June 2013. As a result of these protests, on July 3, 2013, the army, led by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, seized power and toppled the Morsi government, once again obstructing Egypt's pursuit of democracy after a brief period. Al-Sisi garnered support from figures such as al-Azhar Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb and Coptic Pope Tawadros II, both of whom congratulated the new administration. Amid escalating tensions and violence involving Muslim Brotherhood supporters, Sisi declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization in December 2013 (Luke 2022, 49).

The new constitution, which came into effect in January 2014 with a 98% approval rate, did not bring significant changes to the articles that had been a subject of debate for many years. Article 2³⁴ of the constitution once again establishes Sharia as the primary source of legislation, while Article 3³⁵ highlights that Christian and Jewish Egyptians have the right to apply their own provisions in personal status matters, religious affairs, and the selection of spiritual leaders. Article 47³⁶ protects Egypt's cultural identity, acknowledging its diversity, and Article 64³⁷ guarantees freedom of belief. Article 102³⁸ grants the president the authority to appoint 5% of the parliament members, a practice that has been in place since the Nasser era, without specifying that these appointees must be Coptic Christians.

³⁴ "Islam, Principles of Islamic Sharia: Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic is its official language. The principles of Islamic Sharia are the principal source of legislation" (Constitute Project 2014, 6).

³⁵ Christian and Jewish religious affairs: The principles of the laws of Egyptian Christians and Jews are the main source of laws regulating their personal status, religious affairs, and selection of spiritual leaders" (Constitute Project 2014, 6).

³⁶ "Cultural identity: The state is committed to protecting Egyptian cultural identity with its diverse civilizational origins" (Constitute Project 2014, 13).

³⁷ Freedom of belief: Freedom of belief is absolute. The freedom of practicing religious rituals and establishing places of worship for the followers of revealed religions is a right organized by law." (Constitute Project 2014, 16).

³⁸ "Composition: The House of Representatives is composed of no less than four hundred and fifty members elected by direct, secret public balloting. The President of the Republic may appoint a number of members that does not exceed 5%. The method of their nomination is to be specified by law" (Constitute Project 2014, 22).

In 2014, Sisi secured the presidency with an overwhelming 97% of the vote, effectively becoming the de facto leader of the country. Despite Sisi's measures and airstrikes in response to the escalating attacks on Coptic Christians and churches within Egypt, as well as the growing influence of ISIS in remote areas, these actions did not yield significant results. Nevertheless, Sisi was hailed as a hero when he attended the Christmas Eve Mass at Cairo's St. Mark's Cathedral on January 6, 2016. The Church aimed to maintain a similar version of the implicit agreement it had with presidents prior to the 2011 revolution, and thus it mobilized the Coptic electorate to support Sisi in the 2014 elections and subsequent elections in 2018 (Luke 2022, 49). The enduring nature of this support is evident in Patriarch Tawadros declaring Sisi the 'savior' of the Copts following Morsi's overthrow in a military coup in 2013 (Luke 2022, 50). This further corroborates the findings of Belge and Karakoç (2015), who conducted study which includes Egypt as one the cases in their study, revealing that Coptic Christians, a religious minority, favored military dictatorships as they opposed the prospect of Muslim majority rule.

However, Copts have not achieved the desired levels of representation and inclusion in institutions related to the military, security, and education under Sisi's leadership. However, the 2020 parliamentary elections witnessed the largest number of Coptic Egyptians running as candidates since 1952 (Luke 2022, 50). According to the 2014 constitution passed under Sisi, 24 Coptic Christians qualified for parliamentary seats as a result of the requirement for all parties to nominate a certain number of Coptic candidates. Additionally, 12 independent Coptic Christians were also included in the parliament. In total, Coptic Christians secured 36 out of 596 (6%) seats in parliament, which can be considered a relatively high representation rate for the post-1952 period.

The multireligious fabric of Egypt, established by Egyptian Muslims and Coptic Christians on the shared heritage of ancient Egyptian civilization and resistance against British occupation, provided a relatively healthier coexistence, despite challenges persisting until the 1952 revolution. Following the 1952 revolution, Egypt was governed by authoritarian regimes and one-man systems until 2011. While Coptic Christians are officially recognized as Egyptian citizens with allegiance to Egypt, they have sought a level of representation similar to that of the pre-revolution era.

During this period, the Coptic Church of Egypt and its Patriarchs not only served as religious representatives of the Copts but also held influence socially and politically. This governance structure, which facilitated easier control under authoritarian rule, elevated

the public significance of the Patriarchs and persisted as an implicit agreement between presidents and patriarchs. However, Coptic Christians' discontent with this arrangement was evident in their active participation in the anti-Mubarak demonstrations in 2011. In fact, Morsi's close association with Islamic groups that came to power following the 2011 revolution, coupled with the rising rhetoric in the country that heightened unease among Coptic Christians, resulted in strained relations between Coptic Christians and Egypt's first democratically elected government in 60 years.

After the 2013 coup d'état led by Sisi, the relationship between Coptic Christians and the state has largely resembled the pre-2011 period. However, it is important to acknowledge that there have been some gains in terms of representation. Nevertheless, what has been lost for Egypt's multireligious nationalism is the prominence of Coptic Christians in positions of power. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Copts held significant positions in the state, including the office of prime minister, and they had notable influence in society until the 1952 revolution. However, over time, their influence has waned, and they have become somewhat marginalized. While the tradition of having at least one Coptic minister in each cabinet has been maintained after the 1952 revolution, the significance and symbolic nature of these positions suggest a regression in preserving Egypt's multireligious character compared to the past

Chapter 4:

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this thesis is to elucidate the factors that led to the rise of Albanian and Egyptian nationalism, which serve as notable instances of multireligious nationalism. These nationalistic movements have managed to maintain and integrate their multireligious composition, setting them apart from the prevailing examples found in the general literature on nationalism. Firstly, in both cases, whereas the Muslim population constituted the majority, the presence and influence of minority Christian communities played significant roles in the formation of modern Albanian and Arabic languages. This influence was facilitated by the activities of Protestant missions in their respective regions during the 19th century. Thanks to the modernization of both languages and the expansion of printing press activities, the elites were able to disseminate nationalist ideas to broad segments of society. After that, Muslim counterparts started to participate in these endeavors, leading to the emergence of the notion that a nationalism based on a common language could encompass both Muslims and Christians.

Moreover, the shared experience of the threat of foreign invasion served for the unification of elites from different religious backgrounds in both cases. In the context of Albanian nationalism, the recognition that the Ottoman Empire was unable to maintain control in the Balkans following its defeat in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1878, along with increasing pressures from Russia, Serbia, and Greece, as well as the threats faced by regions inhabited by Albanians, prompted Albanian elites of various religious affiliations to unite and resist these external forces. On the other hand, the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, initially economic and later de facto, brought Muslim and Coptic Christian elites together in opposition to the occupation. While it did not have a substantial impact on Egyptian nationalism since it was no longer directly linked to Ottoman administration, the policies of the Ottoman central administration based on the Turkish nationalism after the Young Turk revolution played a role in convincing Muslim Albanian elites of the concept of independence and the establishment of an autonomous Albanian state. This, in turn, accelerated the development of multireligious Albanian nationalism.

The first chapter, comprising an introduction and theoretical framework, sheds light on other significant contributions of the thesis. Initially, it discusses the distinctive features of Albanian and Egyptian nationalisms in comparison to global nationalist trends, highlighting their deviant nature. Furthermore, it explores why the Egyptian and Albanian cases deviate from these trends, despite the role of religion often acting as a defining factor in nation-building. In this regard, the study emphasizes its fresh perspective on nationalism literature and, notably, its examination of the overlooked relationship between religion and nationalism. The research demonstrates the crucial role of religion, which has been frequently neglected, in the formation of Western European states where nationalism originated and the homogenization of their populations.

One of the thesis's significant contributions is the conceptual development of multireligious nationalism as a distinct concept within the field of social sciences. This concept is often misconstrued as religious tolerance and has not received sufficient scholarly attention. The concept of multireligious nationalism, which is also dependent variable in the cases of Albanian and Egyptian multireligious nationalisms, asserts the existence of three essential and interrelated conditions, which, when met together, are deemed sufficient. The first necessary condition is the coexistence of diverse religious groups within the society. However, this condition alone is insufficient, especially considering that numerous nations today fulfill this requirement. The second necessary condition is the absence of exclusionary practices targeting these minority religious groups during the nation-building process. Lastly, these groups must be recognized and integrated into the societal fabric.

The Comparative Historical Analysis method was selected as the methodology for this thesis due to the deviant nature of the cases under examination, as well as the long-term trajectory of their emergence and consequences. This method is believed to provide a more comprehensive explanation of how Egyptian and Albanian nationalisms effectively managed religious differences, in contrast to the prevailing trend of homogenization, and successfully fostered multireligious nationalist movements. Furthermore, the Comparative Historical Analysis method was deemed suitable for identifying the indicators of concept formation by drawing upon real historical examples. To operationalize the parameters highlighted at the indicator level of the concept, early national ideologues and prominent political figures from different religious backgrounds in Albanian and Egyptian nationalisms are examined. Additionally, the role played by

these multireligious elites in the emergence of multireligious nationalisms in Egypt and Albania is discussed to substantiate the alignment of the cases with the concept of multireligious nationalism.

The second chapter delves into the factors behind the achievement of multireligious nationalism by Albanians, setting them apart from neighboring nations in the Balkans. It commences by providing a historical and cultural background of Albania, followed by an exploration of the stages Albania went through leading up to the nationalist revival. Subsequently, the emergence of Albanian as a modern language is discussed, with particular attention to the role played by Protestant missionaries in this process. The chapter highlights how elites from diverse religious backgrounds utilized the newly emerging modern language to foster nationalist discourse and facilitate interactions among themselves. Moreover, the analysis delves into the impact of mounting threats against the Albanian presence in the Balkans and how these challenges brought the elites together, setting aside their religious differences. Furthermore, the chapter examines how the policies of the central authority of the Ottoman state, influenced by Turkish nationalism at the beginning of the 20th century, further strengthened and accelerated this unity. In the final section, the manifestations of multireligious nationalism in Albania, from its independence in 1912 to the present day, are explored, along with the changing ethnic and religious policies that have shaped this process. Notably, this section provides empirical evidence supporting the continuity of the multireligious structure among Albanian elites and politicians.

The final main chapter investigates the factors contributing to the inclusive understanding of nationalism that Egyptian nationalism was able to cultivate, incorporating Coptic Christians similar to Albania. Similarly, the chapter begins by providing the historical and cultural background of Egypt, highlighting the significance of Coptic Christians within Egypt and Christianity as a whole. It then briefly outlines the phases Egypt went through leading up to the national awakening in the 19th century. Special emphasis is placed on the era of Muhammad Ali Pasha, during which Egypt maintained formal allegiance to the Ottoman Empire but gained *de facto* independence. This period is crucial for the emergence of Arabic as a modern language in the Levant, particularly due to the relatively autonomous environment provided for Protestant missionaries. The following part explores how the British occupation of Egypt and the resulting territorial Egyptian nationalism, which had already taken shape, fostered the

convergence of Muslim and Coptic Christian elites. Furthermore, it explains why the Turkish nationalism-centered policies of the Ottoman central administration, which had an accelerating effect on the unification of elites from different religions in Albanian nationalism, did not significantly impact Egyptian nationalism. Lastly, the chapter examines the continuity of multireligious nationalism in Egypt with a focus on state policies, political and intellectual elites from that period until the 1952 revolution, and subsequently until the present day. Empirical evidence is presented to support the claims made regarding the continuity of multireligious nationalism in Egypt.

4.1 Limitations of the Thesis and Areas for Further Research

The thesis, which is a small-N study based on two main cases and comprises qualitative causal explanations, has limitations regarding its generalizability. Small-N studies are more prone to the issue of spuriousness, and there is a higher risk of attributing two variables that are causally related to each other to a different cause (Mahoney 2003, 363). However, given the limited applicability of the concept of multireligious nationalism and the fact that these cases are considered deviant, the study was conducted as a small-N study. Therefore, if the construct of multireligious nationalism presented in this thesis can be quantitatively measured and the number of cases can be expanded, it would allow for broader and more universally applicable causal explanations.

Furthermore, this thesis focuses on the initial period when Albanian and Egyptian nationalisms emerged. As highlighted in the first chapter, while religious homogeneity played a significant role in the emergence of nationalisms in Western European countries, today's world is characterized by diverse religious populations living in countries where they are not part of the majority religion and even acquiring citizenship. While the influence of increasing secularism on this matter warrants discussion, it is important to acknowledge that there may be nations that did not fall under the concept of multireligious nationalism during the time of nationalism's emergence but could be considered within this concept today. A more comprehensive study could explore the concept of multireligious nationalism in both the historical period of nationalism's emergence and the modern era, potentially expanding the scope of nationalisms under investigation.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the scope of nations encompassed by multireligious nationalism extends beyond the limited number covered in this study. Arab nationalisms

such as Iraqi, Lebanese, and Syrian Arab nationalism, for instance, can be included in the definition of multireligious nationalism, as evidenced by the role of Christian Arab elites in the modern resurgence of Arabic, as discussed in the second chapter. Furthermore, there are other examples such as Georgian nationalism in the Caucasus region, contemporary India, North Macedonia in the Balkans, and Nigeria in Africa. To strengthen the findings of the thesis, it would be valuable to examine neighboring nationalisms with similar historical backgrounds as shadow cases, alongside Albanian and Egyptian nationalism, to reinforce the causal arguments. However, due to the extensive nature of such an analysis, it would pose a significant burden for a master's thesis in terms of length and scope.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that the current dynamics of interethnic relations vary among countries such as Albania, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Georgia, and North Macedonia, even though they can all be considered within the concept of multireligious nationalism. Each country presents a unique pattern of interethnic relations in recent history and the present. For instance, Albania has a relatively peaceful past and present, despite having a greater number of religious groups. On the other hand, Egypt and North Macedonia can be seen as intermediate cases where tensions between groups have periodically escalated into violence. Lebanon and Syria, however, exhibit a highly violent pattern of interethnic relations. Given these differences, it would be beneficial to further develop and expand the scope of the concept of multireligious nationalism, leading to more comprehensive causal analyses. Furthermore, a comparative examination of the pattern of interethnic relations among countries falling under the concept of multireligious nationalism, would offer a valuable perspective to the existing literature on nationalism and ethnic conflict

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