Cinema Contested:
Regulation of Cinema in the Late Ottoman Empire

Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen

BA, Boğaziçi University, 2006
MA, Central European University, 2009

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I, **Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen**, confirm that the work presented in this dissertation is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the dissertation.

To the teachers who inspired me…

NOTES ON LANGUAGES AND TRANSLITERATIONS

This dissertation contains words from English, Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, and French. Non-English words are set in italic type. I have used Ferit Devellioğlu's *Osmanlıca-Türkçe Ansiklopedik Lûgat* (2001) and Sir James W. Redhouse's *Turkish and English Lexicon* (2006) for Ottoman Turkish words. All the translations are mine.

ABBREVIATIONS

The Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihâd ve Terakkî*): CUP.

The Military Office of Cinema (*Merkez Ordu Sinema Dairesi*): MOC.

The Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri): BOA.

The Prime Ministry Republican Archives (Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivleri): BCA.

The Society of National Defense (*Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti):* SND.

The Society of Disabled Veterans (*Malûl Gaziler Cemiyeti*): SDV.

The Society of Disabled Veterans Film Factory (*Malûlin-i Guzzata Muavenet Heyeti Sinema Film Fabrikası*): SDVFF.

The Republican Peoples' Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası/Partisi*): RPP.

ABSTRACT

Cinema Contested explores cinema regulations of the late Ottoman Empire (1890s-1920s). The dissertation uses Ottoman Turkish, French, Turkish, and U.S. archival sources to delineate the intentions of regulators, the practises and the impact of regulation on cinema's development across the sprawling Ottoman Empire. From the late nineteenth century, nationalist uprisings weakened the political authority of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909). In the early twentieth century, oppositional political groups pressed for constitutional government, which led to a political reformation. During the final years of the Empire, the turbulent conditions of World War I (1914-1918) created territorial and demographic transformations. Films were initially exhibited in this complex context, principally by foreign itinerant exhibitors, and quickly thereafter by Ottoman merchants. Regulation followed quickly, shaped by the concerns of the political and elite classes in relation to education, Islamic morality, and politics. These regulations also addressed the material operations of cinema, including safety, zoning, and licensing procedures. Cinema came under regulatory scrutiny as did printed media and public entertainments vis-à-vis its political function. Yet, the authorities' lax enforcement practises created a complex and ambiguous system. Ottoman legislators drafted a number of regulations over film exhibition, production and circulation. Multiple government agencies, at the central and local levels, endeavoured to control exhibition practises and venues. Regulations targeted specific audiences, notably children and women, who were seen as the 'future of the state' and 'bearers of the nation'. Discourses and practises of the Ottoman dominant class became particularly visible in the attempts to limit cinema-going, ban certain films, or promote educational and 'harmless' productions for 'vulnerable' audiences. This process was not simply repressive, but also helped shape how cinema would develop in the region. The dissertation provides a detailed historical analysis of the primary sources in order to reconstruct the multifaceted landscape of cinema regulations in this tumultuous region and period.

THE IMPACT STATEMENT

This research on cinema regulations in the late Ottoman era traces the development of cinema in Anatolia, the Balkans, and related parts of the Arabian Peninsula (1890s-1920s) by relying on Ottoman Turkish, French, Turkish, and U.S. archival sources. Since 2010 Dr. Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen has shared the outcome of her historical research at national and international conferences, workshops, and invited talks, and published scholarly articles. *Cinema Contested* is a solid resource for academics and offers an interesting subject matter for the public.

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When I was working on my undergraduate research project at Boğaziçi University's History Department in 2006, I happened to read an article entitled 'Woof, Warp, History'.[1] My 'aha' moment came when I realised the tools and methods to reconstruct cinema history via Professor Lee Grieveson's important article. By situating cinema history 'as part of social, political and cultural history,' his article inspired me immensely along the way.[2] Thus after my MA at Central European University in 2009, I contacted him for my doctoral proposal. In 2010, I was fortunate to get the chance to start working with him for my Ph.D. research at University College London (UCL).

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[1] Lee Grieveson, 'Woof, Warp, History', *Cinema Journal*, 44, 1, (Fall 2004), pp. 119-126.
[2] Ibid., p. 124.

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INTRODUCTION

❈ This dissertation was born out of curiosity to explore the ways in which the changing Ottoman state and its agencies shaped cinema's development in Anatolia, the Balkans, and related parts of the Arabian Peninsula (1890s-1920s). From the late nineteenth century, there were attempts to regulate cinematic devices, image content, operators, and screening venues in the region. Cinema did not exist in some detached dimension of mere entertainment, nor only as a modern means of communication, when it was embraced by the Ottomans in December 1896.[1] The government's involvement via law became necessary when films became at once a political, socio-cultural, and commercial interest. Regulations were intended to create trust between the state and entrepreneurs in the growing cinema market.

Why did the Ottoman state, at central and provincial levels, regulate cinema? How were the regulations drafted during the itinerant exhibitions and after the introduction of permanent cinema-houses? Did the imperial government manage to regulate film exhibition, production, and distribution in a standardised way during the tumultuous years of wartime? In what ways did legislators aim to regulate cinema-going and audiences? In response to these questions and many others, this research is a historical quest to explore how the state shaped cinema's development during the late Ottoman years in transition to the emergence of multiple nation-states. The use of primary sources throughout this dissertation will enhance our understanding of cinema regulations within this region and period.

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[1] 'Une curiosité photographique', *Stamboul,* (12 December 1896).

The regulation of early cinema in the late Ottoman Empire was dependent on various economic, political, technical, and socio-cultural factors which can be furthermore traced within the legislative acts and the draft regulations. Cinema became significant to the state at many levels. Commercial requirements such as maintaining licences and the permission to screen films had to be managed as the cinema industry gradually blossomed in the mid-1910s. It also became a question of physical safety as the operators used various power sources to project films and the nitrate used in film prints was a fire hazard. The content of films was also closely observed by state officials, principally related to concerns about political and moral order. Children and women audiences were monitored carefully. According to Ottoman officials, notables, and intellectuals, cinema-going, as a public activity, held moral, ideological, and physical dangers.

The objective of this dissertation is not only to focus on film-making and individual films but also to explore cinema history by including distribution, exhibition and cinema-going. Film-making is only one part of this cinema history. This dissertation traces the process by which films became available via foreign and local entrepreneurship, their circulation at various types of venues, and concerns about films' socio-political effects through the lens of wider political, legal and commercial structures. The study of cinema regulation enables us to better understand especially politics, ideology and international commerce.[2]

Over all, different agencies of the state were interested in film production, distribution, and exhibition at many levels due to film content, issues of liability and safety, and cinema-going. The central administration of the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âli*, central government) including a number of

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[2] Lee Grieveson, 'Woof, Warp, History', *Cinema Journal*, 44, 1, (Fall 2004), p. 123.

ministries chiefly police department (Z*abıta*) and the Ministry of Interior (*Dahiliye Nezâreti*), the Ministry of War (*Harbiye Nezâreti*), and various local authorities such as municipalities and governors shaped the cinema regulations. But also, the goals and interests of local and foreign film companies shaped the motivations behind regulatory practises of the early and silent cinema periods. Cinema entrepreneurs, operators, notables and intellectuals also interacted with this regulatory space. The process of making cinema regulations was multifaceted and dynamic, dependent on multiple parameters and figures.

Thus, this research will demonstrate how the changing Ottoman governments, certain groups of officials and the elite (intellectuals, bureaucratic and military officials, landowners and entrepreneurs) pursued their interests in cinema, while shaping and formulating cinema's varying functions at the turn of century. Throughout the chapters, I contend that central and local government officials gradually designed the regulatory body of cinema based on their specific moral, ideological and physical concerns in relation to film content, exhibition venues, and cinema-going. Yet, the process was fragmentary, especially due to the political turmoil and wartime conditions of an empire in demise. Furthermore, the dependency of Ottoman cinema on the international market and the institutional changes at stake during the political transition from an empire to multiple nation-states led to an ambivalent system of rules that was not ultimately put into practise. In the next section I examine the theoretical underpinning of this dissertation.

Regulation: Conceptual Framework

Scholars have defined the term 'regulation' within a wide range of studies from various angles. Regulation can take the form 'of social control and influence' practised by government or public agencies that can ultimately

create a restricted or facilitative structure.[3] Within the late Ottoman context, this historical contingency can be traced as well. The term regulation in Ottoman Turkish is *nizamnâme* or *tüzük* in Turkish, and means law, code or order, which had a number of literal equivalences depending on the cases.[4] A regulation finds its full meaning in a written document, be it a draft codification, a decree, or a tangible form of decision for the purpose of regulating. The term is multifaceted and complex and can be specifically understood as in the act of making regulations, concrete archetypical norms and practises.

As Robert Baldwin and Martin Cave suggest, the act of regulation can take three forms. Firstly 'as a specific set of commands' in relation to cinema regulations, for instance, the safety and security of audiences were assured by providing a set of rules regarding fire hazard, designation of exit doors, seating capacity, non-smoking areas, and the use of power for various exhibition venues and cinema-houses.[5] Secondly, regulation can be seen as 'deliberate state influence', defined by Baldwin and Cave as the direct state interference in the market.[6] Within the late Ottoman context, Sultan Abdülhamid II recognised the power of films and intended to use cinema to strengthen the public image of the Empire. Also, during the First World War years (1914-1918), the Military Office of Cinema (*Merkez Ordu Sinema Dairesi,* MOC), along with other official organisations, held the state's technical equipment power and resources, and thus supported early filmmaking. The use of films by the Sultan and the MOC's film production illustrates the state's direct interest in cinema and in regulating it accordingly.

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[3] Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation Theory, Strategy, and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1-2.
[4] H. C. Hony, *A Turkish-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 259.
[5] Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation*, pp. 1-2.
[6] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

Lastly, regulation creates forms of social control, which can be observed specifically in the attempts to introduce age restrictions for child audiences, gender segregation at venues, and banning 'obscenity' and similar content in films. According to the state, children and women were 'the vulnerable audience'. Here, the effects of this type of regulation 'are deliberate and designed', rather than merely incidental to other objectives.[7]

Within a multidisciplinary approach, the study of regulation borrows concepts from a number of disciplines such as law, economics, cultural and historical studies. For instance, in the study of media regulations, scholars point out the relationship between the governance and public interest for a working media market, and refer to the theories and concepts of political science and economy.[8] Peter Lunt and Sonia Livingstone write that their interest in the legacy of media policy research involves the range of strategies that regulatory agencies take 'as regards the interest of citizens and consumers in the realm of television, radio and telecommunications'.[9] Thus, the concept of 'public' becomes the focal point in the studies of media regulation. In this way scholars study both the perspectives of state and policy makers along with the consumers. Likewise, the agency of Ottoman audiences is an important topic in this research, such as age restrictions regarding children and segregation between male and female audiences at film screening venues. The efforts of government agencies to seek the interest of the audience or public interest are not a direct premise that the primary sources reveal. Although it is difficult to identify the issue of 'interest'

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[7] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[8] Helena Sousa, Manuel Pinto, Joaquim Fidalgo, Stanislaw Jedrzejewski, Elsa Costa e Silva, Ana Melo, Luís António Santos, Sérgio Denicoli, Mariana Lameiras, Marta Eusébio Barbosa (eds.), *Media Policy and Regulation: Activating Voices, Illuminating Silences* (University of Minho: Communication and Society Research, 2013).

[9] Peter Lunt & Sonia Livingstone (eds.), *Media Regulation Governance and the Interests of Citizens and Consumers* (London: Sage, 2012), pp. vii-xi.

and the outcomes of this intention, most of the decisions and practises in the realm of exhibitive restrictions show that officials principally took care of audiences' physical safety and security. Local government agencies checked the surroundings of venues (i.e. the location of the venue, the use of power, the operator's licence) and pressured cinema entrepreneurs especially during the maintenance application and renewals of licences.

Furthermore, Rakesh Kaushal indicates that 'regulation can best be understood as a set of institutionalized routines directed towards the achievement of certain desirable ends', and thus proposes that scholars must investigate the organizational framework of regulatory schemes.[10] Within this perspective, most regulations of media reveal information about the decision-makers from all forms of government to private broadcasters and agencies, their tasks and responsibilities. In the late Ottoman case, most of the textual archival materials, from draft regulations to complaints and licence applications, reveal important data about the division of tasks between central and local government agencies and also cinema entrepreneurs. Therefore, the chapters in this dissertation are designed to provide the relevant information about the specific individuals and institutions that made the decisions and practised rules that ultimately made up Ottoman cinema regulations.

Inspired by the perspective of Baldwin and Cave, I view the process of designing cinema regulations as the introduction of a manageable working system in which a clearly defined set of rules, restrictions, control and influence emerge in both deliberate and incidental practises for a developing cinema market. Regulation can be interpreted 'as all forms of social control and influence' by designing a set of rules that reflects the concerns of state

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[10] Rakesh Kaushal, 'Regulation', in Roberta E. Pearson & Philip Simpson (eds.), *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 527.

and the dominant class (bureaucrats, intellectuals, and elites).[11] Regulation can be both restrictive and facilitative. By means of direct commands of licence applications, guidance for the use of power for exhibitions, maintenance of safe venues for audiences and imposition of commercial obligations, by and large the government launched the emergence of cinema regulations. Notables and intellectuals also pressured decision-makers based on their concerns regarding 'harmful cinema'. This structure in which a regulatory scheme emerged led to certain measures and interventions that created limits.[12]

The Ottoman state's measures and interventions reveal themselves in the form of the censoring of certain films, limiting the age of the audience, restricting certain topics in film content, reinforcing gender segregation, and, last but not least, promoting a specifically designated space for exhibition venues. Yet, regulations did not only appear within this control mechanism. The state sought also an opportunist and modern approach and attempted to make use of films specifically in the realms of education and developing the public image of the Empire. The Ottoman state also assured facilitative means for a working structure of the cinema market by promoting film-making and supporting foreign and local cinema entrepreneurs. Here Annette Kuhn's observations on British censorship offer a useful insight. She interprets the censorship of cinema as 'a matter of relations' and 'a process' in which a series of relations between different institutions emerge and contribute to the regulations.[13] She questions the view of censorship as a repressive act and also points out the productive side of censorship. Kuhn

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[11] Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation*, p. 2.
[12] Lee Grieveson, 'Fighting Films: Race, Morality, and the Governing of Cinema, 1912-1915', *Cinema Journal*, 38, 1, (Fall 1998), p. 42.
[13] Annette Kuhn, *Cinema Censorship and Sexuality 1909-1925* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 127.

further notes that prohibition and productivity can be regarded 'as two sides of the same coin'.[14] This dimension of prohibitive and productive practises shapes the plethora of cinema regulations.

It is important to explore the meanings of censorship. Censorship is often connected to the acts of states and governing entities as a way of controlling the expression of political or 'immoral' ideas in films.[15] But it is also the fact that industries self-censor, for instance, by the late 1910s Hollywood self-censored throughout its classical history in order to avoid the intervention of state censorship and this self-regulation led to 'the standardization of nomenclature and codes of practice.'[16] Within this context, scholars of film studies tend to use the term 'censorship' interchangeably with regulation and more often to stress the control and the negative connotations of the act of censorship. Especially in today's societies, in which democracy, freedom and artistic endeavours are seen as a sign of development, this tendency can be seen in the evaluations of the late Ottoman period. I do not suggest a linear or monolithic notion of time, yet it is significant to point out the thin red line between the contemporary understanding of freedom of expression in arts in relation to the studies of regulation within the late Ottoman state and society. I look at the definitions and contexts in a particular period and state regime, and some of this work on self-regulation in liberal democracies is not germane to my exploration. Above all, the consciousness that historicism

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[14] Ibid., p. 127.

[15] Lee Grieveson, 'Censorship', in Roberta E. Pearson & Philip Simpson (eds.), *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 96-98.

[16] For the case of the Hollywood film industry, 'self-censorship' meant 'agreements regarding what subject matter would be available for competition.' See David Bordwell, Janet Staiger & Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 102.

provides is a useful approach to the past in which this dissertation aims to have.[17]

The problem emerges when 'regulation' and 'censorship' are used in the same context. In a recent interview, Nezih Erdoğan states that officials use the term 'regulation' to cover their hidden agendas. He notes that state institutions involved in censorship and used the terms 'regulation' when they aimed to avoid using 'censorship'.[18] Here Erdoğan emphasises the interchangeable use of the two terms. The conceptual difference he makes depends on the discourse analysis and he further suggests that there is no need to make a periodical division between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey when censorship is studied.[19] He appears to be inspired by the Foucauldian discourse analyses found in power relations. This important aspect of power relations in the understanding of cinema regulations may offer different point of views; yet my understanding of regulation is not reducible merely to the term of censorship even though it contains the act of control.

The Ottoman state was an imperial monarchy that functioned differently both from than the liberal states of the time and from today's democracies. The regulation of cinema was intended to create a manageable system of rules for a functioning cinema market in relation to existing commercial, political, and socio-cultural settings. When cinema first became available in the region, it posed relatively different problems due to its new technology and as a special form of entertainment in comparison with the existing theatre and media. In so doing, officials drew on certain cinema regulations

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[17] Nadir Özbek, 'Alternatif Tarih Tahayyülleri: Siyaset, İdeoloji ve Osmanlı-Türkiye Tarihi', *Toplum ve Bilim*, 98, (2003), pp. 234-254.

[18] Nezih Erdoğan uses the term 'denetim' in the Turkish text which can be translated as 'regulation' see Nesrin Yorulmaz, 'Prof. Dr. Nezih Erdoğan Sinemada Sansürün Türkiye'deki Macerası', *Psikesinema*, 3, (January-February 2016), p. 15.

[19] Ibid., p. 15.

which were already in use in Western Europe and attempted to adapt and adopt them according to their own needs and conditions in relation to the existing regulations of printed media and entertainments. At times, the Ottoman state answered the challenges of cinema. Like other countries, the issue of fire hazard and the control of film content were one of the concerns all around the world. Seeing cinema regulations merely as restrictive measurements against freedom of expression or films as a form of art does not appear to be a helpful for the case under study. Now, I turn to exploring more fully the literature on the topic of cinema in Turkey.

Literature Review

There are two tendencies in the writing of cinema history in Turkey. Firstly, the study of the regulation of cinema has been a neglected theme in the historiography of film studies. This aspect, which contributes to the second one, is the fact that scholarship has frequently focused on Turkey, not as the Ottoman Empire because hitherto primary materials have not been considered in most works on cinema in this region. Indeed, scholars should rectify this unbalanced approach, and I seek to change it in this dissertation.

The linguistic 'break' between the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, and the fact that few cinema scholars have a working knowledge of Ottoman Turkish, limits many cinema scholars' abilities to research this topic within the late Ottoman context.[20] Therefore, many studies on early cinema history have not relied extensively on sources from the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri,* hereafter BOA). Only a few

[20] Most of the sources before 1928 are in Ottoman Turkish within the Arabic and Persian alphabet which was the state language of the Ottoman Empire.

academics have used press reviews of daily newspapers and cinema journals of the time, and partially referred to the sources held at the BOA.[21]

There have been a few attempts to introduce an interdisciplinary approach and a wide range of materials on early cinema. For instance, a number of unpublished doctoral dissertations and M.A. theses have tackled the issues of early and silent cinema mostly by relying on press reviews and some archival sources.[22] Most importantly, a new generation of scholars such as Mustafa Özen and Dilek Kaya Mutlu have contributed much on the issue of the first film and the writing of cinema history in general. Mustafa Özen is the first scholar to partially review the daily newspapers of the time written in French and the Ottoman Turkish languages in his essays. He brilliantly manages to set some of the historical facts about early film-making. In his essays, Özen explores such questions as who the first film distributors were, who owned the venues for film screenings, what films did Pathé film in İstanbul offer audiences and the role of propaganda in early newsreels. The author explores the extensive political use of the early newsreels that

[21] For example: Mustafa Özen, 'Travelling Cinema in İstanbul', in Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), *Travelling Cinema in Europe: Sources and Perspectives* (Kintop Schriften, 2008).; Nezih Erdoğan, 'The Spectator in the Making: Modernity and Cinema in İstanbul, 1896-1928', in Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal and İpek Türeli (eds.), *Orienting İstanbul Cultural Capital of Europe* (Routledge, 2010).; Serdar Öztürk, *Osmanlı'da İletişimin Diyalektiği* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010).

[22] For a selection of the unpublished dissertations and theses written since the 2000s see Mustafa Özen, *De Opkomst van Het Moderne Medium Cinema in de Ottomaanse Hoofdstad İstanbul 1896-1914* (University of Utrecht: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 2007).; Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, *The Curtain of Dreams: Early Cinema in İstanbul 1896-1923* (Central European University: Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 2009).; Canan Balan, *Changing Pleasures of Spectatorship: Early and Silent Cinema in İstanbul* (St Andrews University: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 2010).; Saadet Özen, *Rethinking the Young Turk Revolution: Manaki Brothers' Still and Moving Images* (Boğaziçi University: Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 2010).

celebrate the Young Turks' Revolution in 1908. Özen's valuable essays introduce new historical figures and entrepreneurs into early film history.[23]

In 2009, two issues of *Kebikeç* featured special volumes covering various issues of film studies in Turkey. This stimulating attempt is a signal of upcoming interdisciplinary approaches that film studies will hopefully embrace in the coming years. The interview with historian Cemal Kafadar, the chapter on archives dedicated to the early works of film historians such as Rakım Çalapala and Nurullah Tilgen, as well as the critical essays of several scholars from different backgrounds lay the foundation for a complex and interdisciplinary approach that film studies in Turkey has lacked for a long time.[24]

However, there is wide confusion among some scholars on the historiography of this subject in the distinct milieu of cinema in the late Ottoman Empire. Predominantly, this view is due to the Empire's fragmentation from a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-language empire to a number of nation-states, including Turkey. I will below discuss the absence of 'Ottoman cinema' as a concept within the writing of cinema history.

a. Literature on Cinema Regulations

The study of the regulation of cinema within the context of the late Ottoman period is still fragmented and under investigation. By and large, cinema historians have worked mostly on the censorship of cinema particularly during the Hamidian era (1876-1909) and the early Republican

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[23] Mustafa Özen, 'Hareketli Resimler İstanbul'da, 1896-1908', in Ahmet Gürata (ed.), *Kebikeç*, (2006), 27, pp. 183-189.; Mustafa Özen, 'Travelling Cinema in Istanbul', in Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), (Kintop Schriften, 2008), pp. 47-53.
[24] Ahmet Gürata (ed.), 'Sinema ve Tarih', *Kebikeç*, (2009), 28, pp. 107-108.

years (mostly post-1939).[25] These articles focus on censorship practises as a repressive act that situates cinema regulations, first and foremost, under the practises of prohibition. The literature on regulation is constituted in this particular paradigm and is not informed by recent works on the productivity of regulatory bodies.[26] However, the term 'regulation' also delineates the wider institutional practises which can be productive for certain desirable outcomes based on the policy maker's use and interest in cinema.

I argue that cinema regulations within the late Ottoman context demonstrate a wide range of practises that also represent a utilitarian approach with progressive and positivist tones. Despite the elusiveness of regulations during the initial years of cinema, Ottoman authorities placed cinema among the latest advancements of technology and attempted to utilise it in educational settings in order to form public opinion and to promote wartime propaganda in which they attempted 'to influence attitudes and ideas on all levels'.[27] While restrictions over the exhibition and production of cinema existed, official actions were also taken to promote the development of films and cinema-going. In this research, therefore exploring the whole array of regulations which ultimately shaped the availability and use of early films.

In an article, entitled 'Söylemsel İnşalardan Üretilen Sansür ve Denetim Efsanesi (1896-1923)' [The Constructive Discourses on Censorship and the

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[25] Âlim Şerif Onaran, *Sinematoğrafik Hürriyet Özellikle Bu Filimlerin ve Film Senoryolarının Kontrolu Bakımından Değerlendirilmesi* (Ankara: T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı Tetkik Kurulu Yayınları, 1968).; Özkan Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda Sinema Filmlerinin Sansürü* (İstanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası, 1963).; Dilek Kaya Mutlu, 'Film Censorship during the Golden Era of Turkish Cinema', in Daniel Biltereyst & Roel Vande Winkel (eds.), *Silencing Cinema: Film Censorship around the World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 131-148.

[26] For a selection of recent works on the broader concept of regulatory bodies see Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation*.; Annette Kuhn, *Cinema Censorship*.

[27] Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton, 'Propaganda: A Misnomer of Rhetoric and Persuasion?', in Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton (eds.), *Propaganda Political Rhetoric and Identity 1300-2000* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. 9.

Legend of Regulation (1896-1923)], Serdar Öztürk attempts to pinpoint the empirical and theoretical problems that current scholarship has been facing in the study of censorship.[28] He examines a number of works from Western models on the regulation of cinema and successfully theorizes and employs those concepts in the context of Ottoman cinema regulations. He refutes the previous scholarships' arguments by offering a wide variety of archival sources. Öztürk sheds light on the so-called first banned film, *Governess (Mürebbiye,* Ahmet Fehim, 1919), and claims that there was another example of censorship in earlier periods. He asserts that the first censorship practise was the banning of the exhibition of a film that contained the images of Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876) in Mersin in 1902.[29] Öztürk argues that this act was the first incident of censorship in Ottoman cinema history. Although his work is useful in many ways, his search for 'the first censorship act' does not appear to be fully important mission. Because in Ottoman cinema history, there must have been other incidents that are not recorded, or which researchers have not yet discovered at different archives. The state archives in İstanbul contain most of the imperial records but also other local sources found at other former territories of the Empire may provide valuable data. In addition to this, locating 'the first censorship act' is less significant than examining the reasons and goals behind 'the censorship act'.

Most of the academic and quasi-academic scholarship on the cinema history of the Ottoman Empire characterises the Hamidian era as 'backward' in terms of the development of cinema in the Empire. Scholars criticise Sultan Abdülhamid II for his 'oppressive policies' and the censorship practises particularly in regard to press and publishing of other media. This view

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[28] Serdar Öztürk, 'Söylemsel İnşalardan Üretilen Sansür ve Denetim Efsanesi 1896-1923', in Deniz Bayrakdar (ed.), *Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler Sinema ve Politika 8*, (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2011), pp. 43-56.
[29] See *Chapter 1*.

confines the scholars and they consequently misinterpret the Hamidian cinema regulations.[30] There is a difference between the policies on press and cinema regulation in the Empire, which is visible in the primary sources. Recently a revisionist approach can be observed in the works of Mustafa Özen and Saadet Özen.[31] Both of these authors' perspectives are critical of the existing scholarship on the cinema history of the Hamidian era (circa 1896-1909). They offer a solid historical and ideological context in which the Sultan's opportunistic and modern view can be observed in relation cinema regulations. Yet, mainstream scholars' over-emphasis on the censorship of printed media and other communications in the Hamidian era limits our understanding of the time. This perspective is conveyed in the articles of Nijat Özön and Burçak Evren.

Nijat Özön's article, entitled 'Sansürden Kesitler' [Snapshots of Censors], focuses on the censorship practises over the press and publishing in general during Sultan Abdülhamid II's regime. He also describes some of the censorship practises in the cinema of modern Turkey.[32] His one-sided historical view of the period tends to explain the practises of censorship by focusing on the 'despotic regime' of the Sultan. Burçak Evren's short article, entitled 'Abdülhamid ve Sinema' [Abdülhamid and Cinema], introduces new data. Evren also explores 'the first censorship act', as Serdar Öztürk does in

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[30] Nijat Özön, 'Sansürden Kesitler', in Agâh Özgüç (ed.), *Türk Sinemasında Sansür*, (Ankara: Kitle, 2000), pp. 145-162.; Nijat Özön, *Sinema*, p. 113.; Savaş Arslan, *Cinema*, pp. 25, 31.; Burçak Evren, 'Abdülhamid ve Sinema', in Agâh Özgüç (ed.), *Türk Sinemasında Sansür* (Ankara: Kitle, 2000), pp. 136-137.; Burçak Evren, *Türk Sinemasının Doğum Günü*.; See *Chapter 1*.

[31] Mustafa Özen, 'Travelling Cinema in Istanbul', pp. 47-53.; Mustafa Özen, '"Hareketli Resimler", pp. 183-189.; Mustafa Özen, 'Visual Representation and Propaganda: Early Films and Postcards in the Ottoman Empire, 1895-1914', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 6, 2, (2008), pp. 145-157.; Saadet Özen, 'Padişahın Filmi Suret ve Propaganda', *Doğu Batı*, 75, (November, December, January 2015/2016), pp. 181-198.

[32] Nijat Özön, 'Sansürden', pp. 145-162.

his article.[33] Unfortunately, Evren does not provide any reference information about this new data, which makes the article problematic. He primarily examines the extent of censorship practises during the era of Sultan Abdülhamid II and questions the case of the exhibition of the afore-mentioned *Governess* in 1919. Evren pays attention to the significance of substantial research in the BOA; however, he fails to include necessary details of his sources in this article. Thus far, I have evaluated scholars who consider the region and period that this dissertation covers. Above, under the section of 'Regulation: Conceptual Framework', I also referred to the sources on cinema and regulation that have suggested different ways of exploring the breadth of regulatory space in this period.

The problem facing late Ottoman cinema is that many scholars see it merely as cinema in Turkey, without paying attention to the specificity of the Ottoman context. There is wide misunderstanding among some scholars of the historiography of this subject, predominantly due to the Empire's fragmentation from a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-language imperial regime to the formation of the nation-states, including Turkey, during the same period in which cinema was initially introduced to the region. There are three main issues emerging from this fact. The first compelling difficulty is related to the periodisation of the early film history and the construction of a historical chronology that captures the bygone times. Secondly, the issue of defining early films is a problem among the scholars and excluding non-Turkish individuals from the scene is a common fallacy. Lastly, the existing scholarly works on the subject randomly use the first-hand sources such as governmental decrees, official records and press reviews. However, in this dissertation, I have sought to find and explore new

[33] Burçak Evren, 'Abdülhamid ve Sinema', pp. 136-137.

historical documents. Here, I attempt to look at areas of controversy and above-mentioned problems in the literature.

b. The Nationalist View of Cinema History

This research is an attempt to transform the existing practical and theoretical problems raised by contemporary scholarship, both academic and quasi-academic works. It appears that there is a lack of chronological, institutional and geographical divisions between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, which has been constructed within a nationalist view. On the one hand, this nationalist view breaks from the past with the Ottomans, even though there is still continuity and similarity. On the other hand, the entire Ottoman cinema history is Turkified by excluding other ethnicities of the Empire especially in reference to filmmaking. This can be observed in the efforts to create a Turkishness with the scholars' choices of cinema entrepreneurs included and the turning points covered in their writings. Mainstream scholarship attempts to formulate a national cinema historiography instead of a transnational one. This attempt over the Ottoman period is a pure construction. In a broader sense this is the reflection of a legitimizing the state in the form of 'crude nationalism' seen in the post-imperial regimes of the Balkans and Anatolia.[34] When studying cinema history of the region, a distinction must be made between different institutions, political and administrative leaders, changing society and practises of states throughout the periods. For instance, new institutions founded for cinema during the Republican era may be quite distinct from the late Ottoman period. Legal practises change over time and 'certain trends,

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[34] Frederick F. Anscombe, *State, Faith, and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands* (New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 4.

ideology, structure and political outcomes surrounding cinema definitely emerged in the 1920s'.[35]

Certainly, categories of current works undermine different formations of state and society, namely the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. I do not suggest an arbitrary separation of the two. Furthermore, there may be distinctions and similarities between Ottoman and Turkish cinema history – if we can mention the existence of those cinemas based on state and social formations.[36] The majority of scholarship does not employ the terms 'Ottoman film', 'Ottoman filmmaker', and/or 'Ottoman cinema', but compartmentalises history into national cinema discourses. This view emphasises the 'Turkishness' of cinema.[37] Why do scholars consent to the use of 'Ottoman painting', but not that of 'Ottoman cinema'? The employment of 'Ottoman cinema' would help to identify not only individual films of Ottoman filmmakers and cinematographers (such as Sigmund Weinberg, Yanaki and Milton Manaki,[38] Fuad Uzkınay, Ahmet Fehim, Şadi Fikret Karagözoğlu and Cemil Filmer), but also Ottoman cinema-going, the experience of cinema, the film distribution and exhibition, and as well as cinema regulations during the late Ottoman period. Distinguishing what is 'Ottoman' and 'Turkish' about the 'Ottoman' and 'Turkish' cinemas still remains problematic. National cinemas absolutely exist, and Turkey is one of those. I contend that this notion is not found only in today's Turkey but can also be traced in other histories of cinema in the former territories of the

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[35] Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, 'Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives: Inventory of Written Archival Sources for Ottoman Cinema History', *Tarih: Graduate History Journal*, (2013), 2, 3, Boğaziçi University Department of History, p. 22.

[36] Ibid., p. 23.

[37] Serdar Öztürk's works successfully escape from this sort of compartmentalisation see Serdar Öztürk, 'Söylemsel', pp. 43-56.; Serdar Öztürk, *Osmanlı'da İletişimin Diyalektiği* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010).

[38] I refer to the Manaki brothers' names written as in Turkish, Yanaki and Milton Manaki, instead of other versions in Macedonian, Greek or Aromanian.

Empire. However, we need to seek to find some alternatives for the Ottoman period, such as imperial and transnational cinema histories.

This dissertation covers a vast geography as much as sources allow. My choice is not determined by a 'Neo-Ottoman' understanding but is mainly related to the Ottoman heritage that is found, even if only slightly, in the Balkans, Anatolia, and Arabian Peninsula. Cinema history of this region is the common area that ties together the vast geography and its people. In certain regions, specific cases might have happened, but those areas were still under the control of imperial capital İstanbul. As examples will demonstrate, when a concern occurred in relation to cinema in areas such as in Beirut and Thessaloniki, elites or officials of the region would contact the administration in İstanbul. The period under study requires the attention on this vast geographical span of the Ottoman territories.

In a recent work, entitled *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*, Savaş Arslan notes the speculations about the existence of the first 'Turkish' film of 1914 and he questions 'the possibility of a Turkish film when there was no Turkish state.'[39] While Arslan highlights the differences and multiplicity of cinema within the 'national cinema' discourse, he wonders if we can argue 'that the Turkish cinema predates the Turkish Republic.'[40] Throughout his book Arslan successfully builds his arguments about the Yeşilçam cinema of Turkey which was for him 'a practise of nationalisation'. He suggests that Yeşilçam cinema formed 'the terms and terminology of Turkification.'[41] However, he does not go beyond this and does not apply his theories to Ottoman cinema, which he also covers in his book. The danger is that the

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[39] Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 33.
[40] Ibid., p. 33.
[41] The Yeşilçam cinema covers the period roughly from the 1950s through the 1980s. See Ibid., p. xi.

specificity of cinema in the Ottoman period is lost in this process of nationalist narrative.

c. Periodisation

For the purpose of pinpointing problems regarding chronology for Ottoman and Turkish cinema history I will briefly look at the works of Nijat Özön, Rekin Teksoy, Âlim Şerif Onaran and Giovanni Scognamillo, who chiefly do not employ the concept of 'Ottoman cinema'. Özön's chronology places the arrival of the *cinématographe* in 1896 in imperial İstanbul as the starting point of 'Turkish cinema'.[42] According to Özön, the period entitled 'The Arrival of Cinema in Turkey' ends with Fuad Uzkınay's newsreel in 1914. The second period, 'the First Steps', covers the years 1914 to 1922, until the director Muhsin Ertuğrul's initial films; and the so-called 'Stage Performers' period covers the years of 1922-1924 and 1928-1939.[43] He descriptively lists the opening of the first cinema-houses, the film exhibition in various venues. Nevertheless, Özön is a pioneer in transcribing some of the early film critics from the Ottoman Turkish art journals of the period for the first time. Thus, the above-mentioned authors and contemporary scholars refer very often Özön's translations of the critics.

Rekin Teksoy's chronology follows Özön's in many respects, even though he avoids a year-based periodisation. Teksoy similarly suggests the arrival of cinema in 1896 as the starting point and addresses film-makers such as Fuad Uzkınay, Sedat Simavi and Ahmet Fehim as 'the Pioneers of Turkish Cinema' and covers the years of synchronised sound in film-making as 'The Founder

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[42] Nijat Özön, *Türk Sineması Tarihi (Dünden Bugüne) 1896-1960* (Ankara: Antalya Kültür Sanat Vakfı, 2003).
[43]Ibid.

of Cinema in Turkey: Muhsin Ertuğrul'. Teksoy slightly alters the years of Muhsin Ertuğrul's film-making.[44]

Âlim Şerif Onaran does not offer a different perspective. Again, the starting date is 1896, yet he offers a different periodisation from 1916 and 1922, as the first narrative films were made during these years. Onaran's 'Stage Performers' period covers the years 1923 to 1939 in which he signals the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Many similarities exist between Özön and Onaran's works in terms of ignoring the socio-cultural context of the period and tumultuous political events. Indeed, both works lack historical context.[45]

Lastly, Giovanni Scognamillo's book, *Türk Sinema Tarihi 1896-1959* [*Turkish Film History 1896-1959*], covers the early years of cinema in two different chapters: 'Cinematograph in Turkey' and 'Film-makers: From Weinberg to Uzkınay'. He provides more accurate historical data.[46]

Even though most of the above-mentioned works do offer a wide range of materials, a historical methodology that situates cinema within a larger framework of visual and entertainment history is necessary to accurately locate the development of cinema in this milieu. Furthermore, Nijat Özön, Rekin Teksoy, Âlim Şerif Onaran and Giovanni Scognamillo approach the history and society of the time with an emphasis on national cinema history based on the political formation of Turkey. The above-mentioned books do not use any terms such as the 'Ottoman', 'Ottomannes' or 'Ottomanism' and there is no concept of 'Ottoman cinema' at all. As a result, the periodisation and the chronology of the historical materials are distorted. Fortunately, this tendency was recently challenged by Savaş Arslan's book, *Cinema in Turkey*,

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[44] Rekin Teksoy, *Turkish Cinema*, Martin Thomen & Özde Çeliktemel (trans.), (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayınları, 2008).
[45] Âlim Şerif Onaran, *Türk Sineması*, 1, (Ankara: Kitle Yayınları, 1999).
[46] Giovanni Scognamillo, *Türk Sinema Tarihi 1896-1959*, 1, (İstanbul: Kabalcı, 1990).

in which he successfully avoids the pitfalls of defining cinema based on its 'Turkishness' and instead suggests pluralities for the writing of cinema history.[47]

d. Discussions on Uzkınay's Film

To date there has been some disagreement and confusion as to how to regard the first-made films within the late Ottoman Empire. A newsreel filmed during this period entitled *The Destruction of the Russian Monument in Ayastefanos* (*Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesi'nin Yıkılışı*, Fuad Uzkınay, 1914) has been called the first 'Turkish' film by many contemporary film historians.[48] This film was filmed on November 1914 by Reserve Officer Fuad Uzkınay with the help of the Austrian-Hungarians, probably with the Company Sascha-Meester Gesellschaft.[49] Uzkınay's newsreel has not survived and contemporary sources are too scarce to allow a detailed construction of its existence as the first 'Turkish' film. Another group of scholars, including Burçak Evren and Mustafa Özen, suggest that newsreels made by Yannakis and Miltos Manaki in May 1905 should be considered first within the filmography of Ottoman films.[50] The Manaki brothers chronicled the Young Turk Revolution in many ways in their films (i.e. *Turks Speaking on Freedom*, 1908).

Yet, Özön crowns Uzkınay's newsreel as the first 'Turkish' film in his *Türk Sinema Tarihi* [Turkish Cinema History] and starts the chronology of film history, dividing the dates as 1914 -1922 for the early years.[51] Additionally,

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[47] Savaş Arslan, *Cinema*.
[48] Film scholars supporting this as the first Turkish film include Nijat Özön, Rekin Teksoy and Giovanni Scognamillo. See Nijat Özön, *İlk Türk.*; Rekin Teksoy, *Turkish*.; Giovanni Scognamillo, *Türk*.
[49] Nijat Özön, *İlk Türk Sinemacısı Fuat Uzkınay* (Türk Sinematek Yayınları, 1970), pp. 8-10.
[50] Burçak Evren*, Değişimin Dönemecinde* Türk *Sineması*, (İstanbul: Leya, 1997).; Mustafa Özen, 'İkinci Meşrutiyet '.
[51] Nijat Özön, *Türk Sineması*.

Dilek Kaya Mutlu's essay uses memoirs of the time and attempts to trace Uzkınay's newsreel.[52] Similarly Nijat Özön, in his book entitled *İlk Türk Sinemacısı Fuad Uzkınay* [*The First Film-Maker Fuad Uzkınay*], questions the existence of the film and adds that there is no physical evidence of this newsreel at the Turkish Land Forces Photo-Film Centre where most early film records are kept today in Ankara.[53] This claim shows that *The Destruction of the Russian Monument in Ayastefanos* of 1914 still determines the start of film-making in the Empire. However, a number of sources indicate that this film was screened İstanbul. The newspaper *İkdam* announced the screening at Ali Efendi Cinema alongside war reports and discussions of the Greater Holy War (*Cihâd-ı Ekber/jihad*) that was declared in mid-November 1914.[54]

A contradiction within these competing claims is that the early films, while made in a multi-ethnic historical context, are being interpreted by scholars through the lens of later nationalist discourse. During the late Ottoman era, nationalist movements and proto-nationalist sentiments became gradually more significant and the difference between 'Ottoman' and 'Turkish' became increasingly blurred.[55] Yet, the categorisation and definitions used for early films need critical attention and should not be guided by nationalist discourse. Many of the film entrepreneurs and film-makers operating within the Empire at this time, such as Sigmund Weinberg and the Manaki brothers, represented the different backgrounds and

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[52] Dilek Kaya Mutlu, 'Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesi: Kim Yıktı Kim Çekti Kim Yazdı', *Seyir*, 3, (Spring 2006), pp. 12-21.
[53] Nijat Özön, *İlk Türk.*
[54] 'Ayastefanos'taki Moskof Heykelinin Tahribi', İkdam, 25 December 1914.: cited in Nezih Erdoğan, *Sinemanın İstanbul'da İlk Yılları Modernlik ve Seyir Maceraları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınevi, 2017), pp. 159-160.; Also, on 26 December 1914, *Tasvir-i Efkâr* announced the film's screening at the same venue, see İ. Arda Odabaşı, *Milli Sinema Osmanlı'da Sinema Hayatı ve Yerli Üretime Geçiş* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2017), p. 27.
[55] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 166.

ethnicities that were found in a multi-national empire. For instance, Burçak Evren's book on Sigmund Weinberg is an important step in the way to include important Ottoman cinema entrepreneur in the writings of cinema history.[56] In this descriptive book, Evren writes about Weinberg's biography and his contribution to film-making in the Empire. He also includes the polemics on the Uzkınay's newsreel in *Türk Sinemasının Doğum Günü* [The Birth of Turkish Cinema] by gathering evidence from oral histories, memoirs and extensive secondary sources.[57]

Archives: Sources and Methodology

If we were back in the 1990s Turkey and reading the scholarship on cinema history within the late Ottoman period, we would be surprised to learn that most of the works on the topic would not rely on any state archives' sources, neither written nor visual. Back then there was limited curiosity about the early and silent cinema history of the region. Journalists and authors interested in films occasionally published works with no academic framework.[58] The Ottoman cinema was almost absent in publications. The topic was foreign to the Ottomanists. Research in Turkish was limited, even almost absent in the literature of English-written academia. This is still the biggest problem in the current state of our knowledge about the topic and

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[56] Burçak Evren, *Türkiye'ye Sinemayı Getiren Adam Sigmund Weinberg* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1995).

[57] Burçak Evren, *Değişimin.*

[58] It is important to point out Giovanni Scognamillo's account that he and Nijat Özön conducted research at the İstanbul Belediyesi Atatürk Library's periodicals and they could not find any data on early and silent cinema. It appears that their research attempt at the municipal library was unsuccessful at the time. However, I was able to locate a number of resources from the same library since the late 2000s. Deniz Bayrakdar (ed.), 'Interview in 'Sinema ve Tarih' (Cemal Kafadar, Agâh Özgüç, Giovanni Scognamillo, Deniz Bayrakdar)', in *Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler Sinema ve Tarih,* 5, (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2006), pp. 26-27.

has been fortunately confronted since the early 2000s.[59] Yet, cinema history in Turkey has not fully welcomed its 'archival turn'.

a. Filmic Evidence

Visual sources in the form of photography, postcards, caricatures and the illustrated press are often used as evidence by social scientists and Ottomanists.[60] The relationship between cinema and history is a long and strong one since historical films, as a genre, attempt to depict the events of the past visually. Also, archival films in the form of actualities and newsreels vividly document the past, and thus become a visual source for the construction of history. In other words, history and cinema feed each other.

In Turkey, cinema scholars often express regret about the scarcity of resources on the early and silent cinema periods. Undoubtedly, there is lack of primary visual sources; many early and silent films have been reported lost and destroyed. Most of the archival films are either in the hands of individuals or preserved at foreign institutions and the Turkish Armed Forces' Photo Film Centre (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Foto Film Merkezi*). The Photo Film Centre inherited the collection of the MOC. The MOC was founded by Enver Pasha

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[59] There are only a few works that rely on archival research that I mentioned in the *Literature Review*, and a few unpublished dissertations began to gradually break the conventional research operations. For example, the following dissertations rely on archival work: Mustafa Özen, *De Opkomst*.; Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, *The Curtain*.; Saadet Özen, *Rethinking*.; Also following authors conducted archival research in their publications Serdar Öztürk, 'Söylemsel İnşalardan'.; Serdar Öztürk, *Osmanlı'da*.; Ali Özuyar, *Babıali'de Sinema*.; Ali Özuyar, *Devlet-i Aliyye'de*.

[60] For instance, Palmira Brummett, in her well-known work on the Second Constitutional period (1908-1918), makes extensive use of cartoons. Her way of reading the satirical works of artists and jokes in everyday life reveals important data about the topic and period and her novel and valuable methodology is very inspirational for many historians. See Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press 1908-1911* (New York: SUNY Press, 2000). Another example of the use of visual sources belongs to Tobias Heinzelmann who refers to the caricatures of humour magazines such as *Karagöz*, *Kalem* and *Cem* in his book. His extensive comments on each caricature vividly show the possibilities of historians' interpretation of images. Tobias Heinzelmann, *Osmanlı Karikatüründe Balkan Sorunu 1908-1914* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004).

circa 1914 and as semi-official film production company. Merchant and filmmaker Sigmund Weinberg and soldiers Fuad Bey [Uzkınay] and Cemil Filmer made fictions and documentaries for this institution during the late Ottoman and early Republican years.[61] The Photo Film Centre still holds numerous remaining, important filmic data, namely fiction and non-fiction films produced during the late Ottoman era. Also, the films that a number of foreign companies made in the region can be accessed via the Centre. However, this institution does not offer any public or scholarly access into its holdings. Film historian Nijat Özön is the only scholar who is known to have seen the collections of the Centre for research purposes, in the late 1970s. The centre's contradictory practises still remain unsolved. My 2012 and 2017 applications to access their collections were declined due to concerns over the copyrights. These are two key problems facing scholarly research possibilities: sensitivities concerning the ownership of films and institutional control of filmic evidence.

Although the Photo Film Centre does not have the capacity of a national film archive, its work in preserving early and silent films is equally important. In fact, many of the films have been transferred to digital format due to the efforts of Mimar Sinan University's Department of Cinema and TV. Even if these films have not yet been catalogued, we can be thankful that they have been preserved by the institution. In 2015, the Photo Film Centre shared some of its holdings to celebrate its anniversary for the first time. A number of these films are also co-productions and different versions are often available in online archives of the co-producing country.[62] Filmic sources are not only found in Turkey, but also in other former Ottoman territories. For

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[61] See *Chapter 2* in this dissertation.
[62] www.sabah.com.tr/medya/2015/06/17/tsknin-ilk-kez-yayinladigi-tarihi-goruntuler (Accessed on 5 July 2015).

instance, the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Department of Bitola, the Cinematheque of Macedonia; the Bibliothèque des Archives Françaises du film, the Bois d'Arcy and François Mitterrand Bibliothèque Nationale de France in France; the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. and the National Archives in Maryland in the US; and the British Pathé along with other private film archives in the UK.[63] Additionally, some archives have advertised parts of their archives online. There are collections covering the period released in this manner by Gaumont, and the EYE Film Museum.[64] These can be viewed in digital format via online sources.

b. Written Sources

The evidence on which historians rely may vary between textual and visual sources, even the types of evidence may change. There are multiple ways to reach events and peoples of the past. It is possible to state that a good historian's craft shows that 'all evidence is here; all here is evidence.'[65] There is an abundance of written archival records regarding the subject at state archives. Trained as a historian, I benefit from my Ottoman Turkish skills. Thus, the originality and significance of this dissertation stem firstly from its focus on an understudied theme, and secondly from its use of the rich sources of various archives. Not only do I deal with the methodological problems in the writing of cinema history in this region and period, but I also combine a historical approach with concepts from film studies.

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[63] Particularly, Saadet Özen's extensive archival research at the Cinematheque of Macedonia and the Bitola Archives in Macedonia unveil important data about the Manaki brothers' filmmaking with a critical perspective, see Saadet Özen, 'Balkanlar'ın İlk Sinemacıları' mı? Manaki Biraderler', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 219, (March 2012), pp. 60-67.; Saadet Özen, 'Manakilerin Objektifinden Hürriyet', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 220, (April 2012), pp. 50-57.
[64] See http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/Ottoman.; http://www.gaumontpathearchives.com/index.php?urlaction=docListe&langue=EN (Accessed on 29 March 2017).; See the EYE Filmmuseum https://www.eyefilm.nl/en/about-eye/publications/eye-international-catalogue (Accessed on 15 April 2017).
[65] Michael Stanford, *A Companion to the Study of History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 142.

Archival sources concerning the subject of late Ottoman cinema are scattered in various collections of the BOA, as well as at the Prime Ministry Republican Archives (*Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivleri,* hereafter BCA), and at national, public and university libraries throughout Turkey. Not only are the archival sources in Turkey helpful for a study on Ottoman cinema, but also archives in other former Ottoman territories and Western countries can be explored. For instance, archives in Macedonia, as well as in the national archives of France, the USA and the UK, countries which distributed films throughout the region, can provide a solid form of primary materials. The bulk of this dissertation aims to combine national and international archival sources in order to explore cinema regulations of the late Ottoman period.

I conducted research at BOA and BCA between 2007 and 2012, which helped me to frame a more accurate and elaborate history for the Ottoman's approach about cinema. The BOA is the most voluminous archive for the study of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states due to its approximately 150 million documents.[66] I purposely dived into the state's records with the motivation to manage what has been neglected for a long time. Archives are the sites of history that offer scholars multiple visions of bygone times and people.[67] This dissertation reaches out the archival written sources that reflect the late Ottoman cinema regulations.

Most of the sources at BOA are written in Ottoman Turkish, in the combination of the Arabic and Persian alphabet that was used in pre-1928 years. They are composed of mostly in *rik'a* hand-writing style and also contain a number of printed materials and newspaper clips attached to the cases. There are also some sources in English, French and German relating to the subject. Reading the sources in Ottoman Turkish and extracting meaning

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[66] Attila Çetin, *Başbakanlık Arşivleri Kılavuzu* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1979), pp. 35-36.
[67] Nandana Boze & Lee Grieveson, *Using Moving Image Archives* (A Scope E-Book, 2010), p. 1.

from them was a long and challenging process. However, these archival sources opened multiple views by offering a rich variety of examples.

State archives are chiefly the spaces of official and collective memory. It is possible to explore both state-centric perspective and the entrepreneurs' views in their various forms of correspondence (i.e. via telegraph, hand-written petitions). As one of my main research objectives is to trace the historical figures who regulated cinema during the transitional period and war years, BOA provided the changing institutional and individual cases in relation to cinema. For instance, I was able to gather data about different regulations based on censor officers' investigations and also among various state institutions such as the Ministry of Interior (*Dahiliye Nezâreti*), the Ministry of War (*Harbiye Nezâreti*). Archival sources allow me to scrutinise different concerns and diverse strategies about late Ottoman cinema regulations.

The materials that have been used in this dissertation are from seven different divisions of the BOA which reflect the broader issues in regard to film production, distribution and exhibition practises in the Empire. I rely mostly on the records of the Yıldız Palace catalogue and various sections of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education (*Maârif Nezâreti*), the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Nezâreti*), and the Police Office (*Zabtiye Nezâreti*) records, which I gathered from the BOA.

The holdings of the Yıldız Palace mostly include sources about the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909). The documents from this division chiefly cover the topics of licence applications, the use of power sources during exhibitions, banning of exhibitions, *the Conditions of the Cinematograph Privilege*.[68] The Ministry of Interior catalogue houses a wide

[68] The major catalogues I used from the Yıldız Palace Catalogue are as follows: *Yıldız Perakende Dahiliye Nezâreti Maruzatı*, *Yıldız Hususi Maruzat*, *Yıldız Sadâret Resmî Maruzat*, *Yıldız Perakende Arzuhal Jurnal*, *Yıldız Perakende Dahiliye*, *Yıldız Perakende Elçilik Şehbenderlik ve*

range of records on the internal affairs of the state. I analysed the sources that are relevant for the regulation of cinema. This includes investigations of film content and banning of films, requests for exhibition, licence applications, and reports submitted about regulations, records of cinema-houses, and draft regulations.[69] Selected subjects under the records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are covered in this dissertation, for instance, the war propaganda of Allied and Central Powers, and the Ottoman states censorship policies within this context.[70] Censorship policies in regard to theatrical performances, film exhibitions at official institutions, cases at customs, theatrical privileges and such can be accessed at the catalogues of various *İrades* (official order).[71] The holdings of the Ministry of Education were useful for tracing special screenings for training purposes, children and women's cinema-going, Ministry's policies on cinema.[72] Different records about the film screenings, opening of cinema-houses, moral concerns about film content can be accessed at the Ministry of Police's Catalogue.[73]

Apart from the national state archives in Turkey, I was able to conduct archival research in Centre des Archives diplomatiques in Nantes, the Library

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Ateşemiliterlik, *Yıldız Perakende Yaveran ve Maiyet-i Seniyye Erkan-ı Harbiye Dairesi*, *Yıldız Perakende Tahrirat-ı Ecnebiyye ve Mabeyn Mütercimliği*, and *Yıldız Perakende Umûmî*.

[69]A detailed list of The Ministry of Interior Catalogue that this dissertation refers to are as follows: *Dahiliye Nezâreti Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti Beşinci/Altıncı Şube*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti Asayiş Kalemi*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti Emniyet Kalemi*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti Kalem-i Umûmî*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti Muhasebe Kalemi*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti Muhaberat ve Tensikat Müdüriyeti*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti Evrak Odası Kalemi*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti İdari Kısım*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Kalem-i Mahsus Müdüriyeti*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Mektubi Kalemi*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Muhaberatı Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Şifre Kalemi*, *Dahiliye Nezâreti Umur-ı Mahalliyye ve Vilayat Müdürlüğü*, and *Dahiliye Nezâreti Mektubi Kalemi*.

[70] These topics can be found in the following catalogues: *Hariciye Nezâreti İstanbul Murahhaslığı*, *Hariciye Nezâreti Siyasi,* and *Hariciye Nezâreti Tercüme Odası*.

[71] Such as *İrade-i Dahiliye*, *İrade-i Dosya Usulü*, *İrade-i Hususi*, *İrade-i Rüsumat*, and *İrade Şura-yı Devlet*.

[72] *Maârif Nezâreti Meclis-i Kebir Maârif*.

[73] I refer to the *Zabtiye Catalogue* of the BOA.

of Congress in Washington D.C. and the National Archives in Maryland. These two international archives were useful for finding data about the region, so I had the chance to compare different states' records to those of the BOA. The U.S. Consular and Trade Reports included in this dissertation allow me to locate the Ottoman cinema market within a broader regulatory body and stress the foreign entrepreneurs' interest in the region. I was able to collect data from British National Archives in London and Centre des Archives diplomatiques of La Courneuve in Paris. However, most of the data I found in these two institutions are from the early Republican period (post-1920s). Most probably an extended time frame for deeper research would yield more data for the earlier period that is studied in this dissertation.

Lastly, periodicals in the form of newspapers, magazines, and trade journals are valuable written sources, including their illustrations and photographs.[74] By exploring a number of periodicals I was able collect substantial information about the commercial groups, intellectuals' view on cinema and various topics from film exhibition to production practises. *Stamboul*, *Le Moniteur Oriental, Temâşâ, Yeni Mecmua, Yarın, Perde ve Sahne*, *Tanin*, *Sinema Yıldızı*, and *Süs* offer useful materials to trace various historical accounts of the regulatory body of cinema and broader issues of exhibition practises, film content and the social history of cinema-going in the late Ottoman Empire.

Michael Stanford suggests that historians' sources can be considered as 'hard and soft evidence, intentional and non-intentional evidence, and primary and secondary sources' in his book on historical methodology.[75] In the light of Stanford's argument, I contend that the way I rely on archival

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[74] Richard Abel, 'History Can Work for You, You Know How to Use It', *Cinema Journal,* 44, 1, (Fall 2004), p. 109.; Burçak Evren, 'Başlangıcından Günümüze Sinema Dergileri,' in *Türkiye'de Dergiler ve Ansiklopediler (1849-1984)* (İstanbul: Gelişim Yayınları, 1984), pp. 135-148.
[75] Michael Stanford, *A Companion*, p. 142.

sources is definitely historical, relating to the past events. I explore the history of cinema regulations within the late Ottoman context by 'assuming that time and place in which a structure or a process appears make a difference to its character'; in other words, I am able to 'generalize soundly' for analysing cinema regulations.[76] Collecting archival sources, classifying information based on themes and chronologies, and highlighting the relevant cases are the basic historical analysis in this dissertation. When applicable, I point out similarities and differences between regulation cases and show the transformation of the data in a set of time frame. Furthermore, I introduce the relevant secondary sources under the light of primary sources in this dissertation.

My interpretations of primary sources follow a series of interdisciplinary approaches adopted from film studies. Therefore, I seek to revisit the definition of regulation and censorship by borrowing concepts from film studies and media studies' scholarship. Thus, I provided a short section about the concepts of 'regulation' and 'censorship' based on film studies above. I analyse the available filmic evidence based on the thematic categories of the chapters in relation to regulation. For instance, I explore *The Governess* (*Mürebbiye*, Ahmet Fehim, 1919), as primary filmic evidence, within censorship practises during wartime conditions. I situate French itinerant operator Promio's films in İstanbul based on the historical context of the Hamidian period.[77] Despite focusing on the analysis of aesthetics of these films, such as 'the study of camera movement, composition, lighting,

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[76] Charles Tilly, *Big Structures Large Processes Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), p. 79.
[77] See Chapters 1 and 2.

performance, sound, or colour', I rather evaluate them as historical evidence in relation to cinema regulations.[78]

Structure of the Chapters

This dissertation has four different chapters that are organised thematically. While each chapter focuses on different subjects, the study period is 1890s-1920s. *Chapter 1* covers the last years of the Hamidian era, which marks the arrival of cinema and the end of Sultan Abdülhamid's reign (1890s-1909). *Chapter 2* chiefly concentrates on the war years (1914-1920s). Whereas *Chapters 3* and *4* encompass the late Ottoman era without a specific time frame between the years of 1890s-1920s. This chronological choice is not a linear one, but it provides a useful methodological tool for a contextual base and turning points of cinema regulations within the late Ottoman era.

One of the central premises of *Chapter 1* is to understand cinema regulations in relation to the existing legal practises and censorship policies about press and entertainments. A number of critical historical examples, including the *1903 Conditions of Cinematograph Privilege*, that demonstrate the elusiveness of rules are examined, as they exemplify distinct aspects of constituting regulations. Certain exhibitions were definitely banned during this period, yet the chapter aims not only to analyse the repressive acts and restrictions on cinema, but also to scrutinise the Hamidian state's different experiences and practises of cinema –be they productive, supportive and utilitarian.

Wartime Regulations is the topic of *Chapter 2*. It traces Ottoman legislators' censorship practises during the First World War (1914-1918) and the Armistice Period (1918-1922). During the war years, there were multiple historical figures who oversaw the regulatory body of film exhibition,

[78] Robert C. Allen & Douglas Gomery, *Film History Theory and Practice* (New York: Knopf, 1985), pp. 35-36.

distribution, production and cinema-going. My examination of the *1914 Censorship Act*, the *1916 Draft Regulation* and other legal acts reveals that wartime conditions affected the broader regulatory space. Whilst the Ottoman army sought to strictly control cinema with the *1914 Censorship Act*, the Army's wartime strategies also endorsed filmmaking in the Empire for propaganda purposes via the MOC. In this chapter, I also present individual propaganda films and the ones that were censored. In so doing, the claim that *The Governess* (*Mürebbiye*, Ahmet Fehim, 1919) was 'the first censored film' needs to be re-examined due to lack of evidence and the historical context of wartime policies.

Chapter 3 demonstrates the transition from itinerant exhibition practises to the introduction of cinema-houses, which led to the need to regulate exhibition venues. The problems emerged in relation to the cinematic devices, customs and municipality requirements, zoning and licensing procedures. Legislators' concerns in regard to exhibition venues raised the health and safety aspects of cinema regulations. For this purpose, I carefully examine the *1916 Draft Regulation* and the Republican years' *1924 Ordinance* in a comparative perspective.

Chapter 4 examines the ways in which Ottoman intellectuals, elite and bureaucrats answered the challenges of early cinema. What kind of regulations were put into together against the 'immoral' films? Was there any regulations set by the Ottoman authorities for children and women? In asking these questions, I focus on a number of important archival cases that portray concerns about 'immorality' in films, such as obscenity, nudity, violence, and crime, as well as those that give information about the audience profile. The Ottoman official's objective of regulating cinema-going and of censoring certain films were affected by the political and religious ideologies of the time.

CHAPTER 1
REGULATIONS INTENDED

This chapter examines the intentions of the Hamidian authorities to regulate cinema in managing the film production, exhibition and circulation between 1896 and 1909 in the Ottoman Empire. Beginning with the introduction of cinema and until the final years of the Hamidian era, I pursue a number of research questions throughout this chapter: How did the Hamidian censorship policies affect cinema regulations? Was Sultan Abdülhamid II the main decision-maker to limit cinema, as previous scholarship has claimed? Did the Sultan directly impose any systematic regulation over the expansion of cinema? Partly I claim that scholars' overemphasis on the Sultan's restrictions misunderstands the ways in which the Hamidian state functioned. I therefore suggest that it is useful to look beyond one person to see how the Ottoman state operated at different levels, from the central authorities to the local governments.

Some of the questions are about the state's actions and their consequences: Who regulated cinema both in the centre and provinces in the large terrain of the Empire? Did the legislators intend to design a centralised and standardised legal framework specifically for cinema? Why did these decision makers want to regulate cinema? Throughout the chapter I have specific objectives which lead on to bigger questions about how the state functioned, which regulations were created, and how consequently cinema developed in the Empire. In doing so, it will explore the conditions that were drafted in the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege*. This document stands as the blueprint for cinema regulations by revealing the state's agenda to standardize the material conditions of exhibition, inspecting and monitoring of films, and the production criteria.

In the existing literature, there are studies that define the Hamidian era mostly as the period of prohibitions for cinema due to Sultan Abdülhamid II's suppression of constitutional demands, the censorship of the press and the Sultan's personality. Nijat Özön, Savaş Arslan, Ali Özuyar, and other mainstream cinema historians claim that cinema's arrival and expansion in the Empire was quite slow and limited during the Hamidian era because of Sultan Abdülhamid II, and that consequently it could flourish only after the dethronement of Sultan.[1] Özön claims that the Sultan's anxieties and fears were the main hindrance for cinema's development in the Empire.[2] Likewise, Savaş Arslan writes that the first cinema-house could be opened only after the fall of the Sultan, thus claiming that he was the obstacle to the cinema entrepreneurship.[3] These authors view the Second Constitutional period (1908-1918) as the start of freedom in various fields. The motto of the 1908 revolutionaries, freedom, equality and fraternity (*hürriyet, musavat, ve uhuvvet*), represents the transformation that took place during this era and it was a constitutional attempt to transform the Empire. Yet, the situation was more convoluted than that: various forms of control took place both in the Hamidian era and the Second Constitutional period. Repression of certain ideologies such as separatist movements and the restriction of the press did

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[1] Nijat Özön, 'Türk Sinemasına Toplu Bir Bakış', *Türk Dili*, 17, (1 January 1968), p. 268.; Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 31.; Burçak Evren, *Türkiye'ye Sinemayı Getiren Adam Sigmund Weinberg* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1995), p. 22.; Ali Özuyar, 'II. Meşrutiyet'in Modernleşmede Önemli Bir Araç Olan Sinema Üzerindeki Etkisi', in Zekeriya Kurşun, Cemil Öztürk, Yasemin Tümer Erdem, Arzu M. Erdoğan (eds.), *100. Yılında II. Meşrutiyet Gelenek ve Değişim Ekseninde Türk Modernleşmesi Uluslararası Sempozyumu Bildiriler* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008), pp. 447-456.

[2] Nijat Özön, 'Türk Sinemasına', p. 268.

[3] Savaş Arslan, *Cinema,* p. 31. When the first permanent cinema-house opened in İstanbul in 1908, Sultan Abdülhamid II was still the monarch until 1909 hence Arslan's argument misunderstands the circumstances also when we consider this fact.

not end totally during the Second Constitutional era. The regulation of cinema and the practises of censorship still continued in a more systematised way with legislators' attempts to introduce a centrally managed imposition of rules for exhibition, distribution and production purposes. The new government, the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihâd ve Terakkî,* CUP), kept censoring certain films and controlled cinema-houses, implementing taxation and setting a moral code for film content and exhibition spaces.

A number of scholarly works on the Hamidian era challenge this reductionist perspective between the two periods and the Sultan's attempts to support cinema's development in the Empire. For instance, Mustafa Özen and Saadet Özen's works show a multi-layered historical perspective and the 'modern side' of Sultan Abdülhamid II when approaching cinema.[4] Their valuable findings open up a new dimension by stating that the Sultan did not only repress cinema but also aimed to benefit from this new technology for re-creating the public image of the Empire and his regime during the moment of a political legitimacy crisis.[5] My inquiry into the regulation of cinema during the Hamidian era is inspired by these existing perspectives. Thus, this chapter will explore which films were available and how they were circulated in the Empire within the larger regulatory space.[6] This regulatory space, based on Lee Grieveson's use, refers to 'the wider structures and more general aims of

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[4] Saadet Özen, 'Padişahın Filmi Suret ve Propaganda', *Doğu Batı*, 75, (November, December, January 2015/2016), pp. 181-198.; Mustafa Özen, 'Travelling Cinema in Istanbul', in Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), *Travelling Cinema in Europe: Sources and Perspectives*, (Kintop Schriften, 2008), pp. 47-53.; Mustafa Özen, '"Hareketli Resimler" Istanbul'da 1896-1908', *Kebikeç*, 27, (2009), pp. 183-189.; Mustafa Özen, 'Visual Representation and Propaganda: Early Films and Postcards in the Ottoman Empire, 1895-1914', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 6, 2, (2008), pp. 145-157.

[5] Selim Deringil, 'Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)', *IJMES*, 23, (1991), pp. 345-359.

[6] Rakesh Kaushal, 'Regulation', in Roberta E. Pearson & Philip Simpson (eds.), *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 527.

a particular interventionist system'.[7] For instance, especially for the case of the Hamidian era, the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege* presents information about the politics, education and the moral structures of the society in relation to cinema from which it is possible to discern the policy of the state about cinema. Apart from 'interventions' and 'measures' that were practised, I move forward to scrutinise the regulations that targeted cinema, in a broader sense the government's use of film for setting a public image for the Empire and Sultan.

Early cinema regulations were affected by the Hamidian state's ideology, social and political instability, opposition movements and policies on printed media and other communications. Researching cinema regulations and legislative authorities' actions is challenging because of their arbitrary actions, ad hoc practises and the way bureaucracy functioned differently at central and local levels. The terrain of cinema regulations is complex, and it is important to proceed with caution in trying to understand it. Particularly during the Hamidian era, both itinerant exhibitors and authorities operated in an expeditious manner but always within a process of negotiation for the cinema business. This was the era in which the authorities still gathered information about the new technology of cinema and dealing with exhibitions' uncertain physical conditions, the technical aspect of cinematic devices and the function of moving pictures in political and socio-cultural fields. In order to understand the state and previous regulations, it is also worth examining the conditions of the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege*.

In order to comprehend the state's approach to regulate cinema, it is important to trace the institutional background of printed media, performing arts and entertainments, in other words, the existing regulations in relation

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[7] Lee Grieveson, 'Fighting Films: Race, Morality, and the Governing of Cinema, 1912-1915', *Cinema Journal*, 38, 1, (Fall 1998), p. 42.

to governmental institutions and Sultan Abdülhamid's II policies. I do not here attempt to cover the total history of these media in the Empire; rather I aim to trace the existing legal formulations, censorship and policies about press and entertainments in relation to cinema as it developed in connection to other forms of media. It is possible to explore, for instance, regulations of theatrical performances and observe the connections between the regulations of theatrical performances and cinema's proto-regulations. I contend that cinema emerged in the context of an already regulatory arena that focused on entertainments, visual arts and press.

In this chapter, I will first focus on the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II and then move on to further questions of censorship by following a chronology in regard to the historically important regulatory steps taken during the Hamidian era. Then, I will introduce the existing regulations of entertainments and press in relation to cinema and finally will examine the conditions of the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege*.

A Brief Overview of Historical Setting

In 1876, Abdülhamid II (1842-1918) ascended the Ottoman throne with a promise to extend a constitutional government in 1876. The Sultan dissolved the Ottoman parliament in 1878 after the devastating conditions of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878. This action characterised what some scholars call the Sultan's 'autocratic modernization' for over thirty years of his reign.[8] Stanford J. Shaw states that this Parliament was 'the culmination of a century-long process of change' starting from the reign of Sultan Selim III (r. 1789-1807) and the Tanzimat period (1839-1876); and the Ottoman

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[8] Selcuk Aksin Somel, *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire, Ancient Civilizations and Historical Eras*, 7, (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003), p. 3.

representative government ended a number of times.[9] For some scholars, 'the 1876 Parliament was a failure' and Sultan Abdülhamid II was one of 'the most despotic' rulers who represented 'Eastern tyranny'.[10] Selim Deringil notes that the Hamidian rulers and the Sultan, first and foremost, aimed to 'preserve the state', as all states do.[11] Ethnic and political rivalries, the diminishing power of Ottomanism, the changing balance of international power politics led the Sultan to use his power in order to bring back 'the natural order of things.'[12] Hence he intended to maintain his order by using different strategies; for instance, he implemented Pan-Islamism to fight against the delegitimizing of order among Ottoman subjects.[13]

Following the defeat of the Ottomans in the Russo-Ottoman War, the Treaty of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin were held in 1878; consequently, the Empire lost a large amount of territory and population in the Balkans. By 1870 the total population of the Ottoman Empire was 26.65 million, whereas in the 1890s it decreased to 22.33 million, due to the loss of territory and population movements with a slight percentage increase in the populace of Muslims.[14] All this was the result of the 'rise of intra-European nationalist movements' which later initiated a number of 'cultural and political difficulties' for many empires during the nineteenth century.[15] The Hamidian rule was also burdened by the financial crisis of 1875 and the controversial nickname of 'Sick Man of Europe' was frequently used to

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[9] Stanford J. Shaw, 'The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movement before 1876', *IJMES*, 1, (January 1970), p. 51.
[10] Ibid., p. 51.; Selim Deringil, 'Legitimacy Structures', p. 345.
[11] Selim Deringil, 'Legitimacy Structures', p. 345.
[12] Ibid., p. 345.
[13] Ibid., pp. 354-356. These crises were seen in many parts of the Empire, such as today's Iraq, Syria, and Hijaz. Subjects of these regions were opposed to the Ottoman state.
[14] Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914 Demographic and Social Characteristics* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 72.
[15] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London: Verso Books, 1991), p. 83.

portray the devastating situation of the Empire in the international realm.[16] As a result, 'it was this defensiveness that was to become the hallmark of the later periods of Ottoman ideology.'[17]

As was the case in other empires, like those of China and Iran, the Ottoman Empire was struggling with oppositional movements such as the Young Ottomans (*Yeni Osmanlılar*) and the Young Turks (*Jön Türkler*) that advocated constitutionalism. Faced with nationalist and separatist movements on a number of fronts, the Hamidian state employed various ideologies to protect the solidarity of the Empire such as Ottomanism and Pan-Islamism and attempted to introduce administrative reforms.[18] It was also these ideologies and policies that informed the Hamidian state's actions on cinema regulations, as I will demonstrate in relation to the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege* and other regulation instances.

Under these circumstances the Hamidian administration re-introduced the existing public image traditions and statecraft, which had previously existed during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) and the Tanzimat era. The state reverted to approaches used before. Selim Deringil suggests that the Hamidian state re-invented them with an Islamic emphasis.[19] Centralisation and the spread of educational institutions were also increased to fight the existing problems.[20] The 'legitimacy crisis' of the Hamidian state and the Sultan was 'experienced in the world at large in the same period' and the Ottoman case was chiefly an 'imperial adjustment to the challenges of

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[16] Gökçen Alpkaya & Faruk Alpkaya, *20. Yüzyıl Dünya ve Türkiye Tarihi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2004), pp. 57-60.
[17] Selim Deringil, 'Legitimacy Structures', p. 345.
[18] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 4.
[19] Selim Deringil, 'The Invention of Tradition: Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire 1808 to 1908', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35, 1, (January 1993), pp. 6-13.
[20] Ibid., pp. 6-13.

the times' such as that being felt in other historic empires.[21] Thus, during his reign Sultan Abdülhamid II aimed to preserve the Empire in a peaceful atmosphere by strategically dealing with the Great Powers, he attempted to overcome economic and military problems, reforming the administrative structure of the government and solidifying his authority in various parts of the Empire.[22]

Unlike other Ottoman Sultans, Sultan Abdülhamid II secluded himself in the Yıldız Palace due to security reasons and gradually established various control mechanisms through a set of symbols to expand his power over the Ottoman subjects.[23] These symbols were borrowed from the Islamic motifs that could be visible during the official ceremonies such as the Friday prayers, his dynastic *arma* (*Arma-i Osmânî*), the coat of arms, and the Sultan's tughra (*Tuğra*) which were used in correspondence and public space (i.e. official buildings, mosques, and fountains) throughout the Empire.[24] He appointed censor officers and established a secret police service which functioned to assess any threat within the bureaucracy and the subjects. According to the Sultan's view, this system of clandestine services and the implementation of daily security reports, called *jurnals*, was a good way to fight against the 'subversive ideas' that threatened to harm the state and himself.[25] The Sultan still exercised legislative control in his highly centralised administrative

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[21] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876–1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), p. 166.
[22] Benjamin C. Fortna, 'The Reign of Abdülhamid', in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Turkey in the Modern World*, 4, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 47.; Feroz Ahmad, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu', in Marian Kent (ed.), *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu ve Büyük Güçler* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p. 3.
[23] Feroz Ahmad, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu', p. 8.; François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, Ali Berktay (trans.), (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2006), p. 148.
[24] Selim Deringil, İktidarın *Sembolleri ve İdeoloji II Abdülhamid Dönemi (1876-1909)*, Gül Çağalı Güven (trans.), (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), pp. 31-64.
[25] Stanford J. Shaw, 'Sultan Abdülhamid II: The Last Man of the Tanzimat', in *Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu (Bildiriler)*, 25-27 December 1989, (Ankara: Milli Kütüphane, 1991), p. 187.

system. He also used modern means to observe the development of the Empire. For instance, he installed photographers to photograph new roads, railroads and buildings. He founded various censorship committees, which were chiefly administered from the imperial capital, and had inspectors monitor plays, concerts, film screenings, social gatherings, and all forms of printed media. As Stanford J. Shaw writes: 'the police, the spies, the censors, the palace secretariat and the *mabeyincis* (vizier)' were the main figures who exercised 'a kind of personal dictatorial control never seen in the Ottoman Empire before.[26]

Whilst the Hamidian state was centralising at home and becoming more defensive in the arena of foreign affairs, the Ottoman intelligentsia was being exposed to the new forms of secular modernism emerging in Europe. [27] The growing enthusiasm for European ideas and lifestyles did not diminish their Islamist counterparts and dualism still existed in the intellectual realm.[28] The new technological innovations of the second stage industrial revolution, the telephone, telegraph, automobile, gramophone and cinema, were introduced to the Empire by the initiative of local and foreign merchants starting from the nineteenth century.[29] These innovations were quickly adopted by certain segments of Ottoman society. The elite, in other words intellectuals, bureaucratic and military officials, landowners and merchants, by and large inhabitants of the urban centres of the Empire, began to benefit from the fruits of Western advancements in the late 1890s.

Western music and stage arts contributed to the blossoming of *Alla Franca* (Western European) values in urban settings and Westernised Ottomans promoted and celebrated European mores. During the Hamidian

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[26] Stanford J. Shaw, 'Sultan Abdülhamid II', p. 189.
[27] Selim Deringil, 'The Invention of Tradition', pp. 6-13.
[28] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief*, pp. 138-141.
[29] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 52.

era, European theatre troupes visited Ottoman cities and artists such as Blanche Arral, the Belgian soprano, and the legendary Sarah Bernhardt performed in the Empire.[30] The Ottomans gradually welcomed the latest cinematic innovations, and the state did not immediately initiate a centralised regulatory framework to address the challenges of cinema upon its arrival. Understanding and highlighting these important events and the historical setting of the period is necessary when considering the Hamidian state's approach to moving pictures. After this brief overview, let us focus on the issue of censorship during the Hamidian era which will set the background for a better understanding of cinema regulations.

Censorship

Censorship during the Hamidian era was mostly practised by censor officers, secret police and inspectors. These officials, within certain bureaucratic institutions, by and large, interpreted the existing set of rules regarding printed media and entertainments, and then gradually introduced a number of amendments to the legal procedure.[31] Throughout the years, closing down enterprises led the authors, editors, actors and business owners in the publishing and entertainment sectors to internalise certain restrictions and limits. Fatmagül Demirel indicates that even though there was systematised censorship in this period, the number of publications in the form of books, magazines and newspapers, immensely increased.[32] Ebru Boyar notes that this increase was partially due to the Hamidian subsidy paid

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[30] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief,* pp. 138-141.; Ayşe Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamit* (İstanbul: Güven, 1960), p. 68.
[31] Fatmagül Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür* (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 2007), p. 153.
[32] Ibid., pp. 153-154.

to the printed media.[33] Boyar adds that the newspapers *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, *Tarik*, *Saadet* and others were supported financially by the state, and even some of them were granted concessions or privileges, thus most of the newspapers could function 'thanks to the protection of the palace'.[34]

Donald J. Cioeta's work on censorship in the Ottoman provinces of Lebanon and Syria offers new insights into Hamidian censorship.[35] He states that 'The Ottoman Empire, like all states, limited to some extent the content of publications for reasons of national security, to protect public morale and order, to preserve public morality, and to protect individual reputations.'[36] Based on this argument, it can be concluded that censorship was the justification and necessity of the ruling elite in reference to the political stability and order in the Empire during the legitimacy crisis, separatist movements, the loss of territory and population, and above all the heyday of diminishing prestige in the international realm.

Most scholars' view of the Hamidian censorship is based on Sultan Abdülhamid's II personality, defined as 'being suspicious, full of fears, almost as paranoid' which eventually leads to the current one-sided scholarship.[37] Even the lists of forbidden words, which were allegedly ordered by the Sultan for censorship, were compiled based on rumours and they always contained 'polemical exaggeration'.[38] Consequently, authors such as Cevdet Kudret, Alpay Kabacalı, and Orhan Koloğlu assume that the start of Second Constitutional period directly meant the end of censorship since Sultan

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[33] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press and the Palace: The Two-Way Relationship between Abdülhamid II and the Press, 1876-1908', *Bulletin of SOAS*, 69, 3, (2006), p. 432.
[34] Ibid., pp. 430-432.
[35] Donald J. Cioeta, 'Ottoman Censorship in Lebanon and Syria, 1876-1908', *IJMES*, 10, 2, (1979), pp. 167-186.
[36] Ibid., p. 180.
[37] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, 'Sunuş', in Fatmagül Demirel, II. *Abdülhamid Döneminde*, p. 13.
[38] Donald J. Cioeta, 'Ottoman Censorship', p. 178.

Abdülhamid was dethroned.[39] The printed media did escape investigation by the censors after the 1908 Revolution and the numbers of journals, newspapers published at this period sharply increased.[40] However, these publications could run only for a short time due to the lack of the state subsidies that the Hamidian government had provided.[41] Despite the fact that the Hamidian era was an autocracy, it is important not to focus only on 'one individual', even though in this case he was the Sultan; instead it is worth tracing the interrelations of a number of political figures and bureaucrats within institutional arrangements who determined the *de facto* censorship policies.[42] As Stanford J Shaw indicates, a number of higher and lower level bureaucrats and officers contributed to the creation of the 'personal dictatorial control' at this time, which resulted in a gradually expanding interventionist system.[43] This perspective may yield a better understanding of the Hamidian era, in particular for the case of censorship.

The censor officers watched over Ottomans at different public venues, from coffeehouses and theatres to hammams and taverns. They collaborated with the police in order to enforce the regulations. The censor officers were 'the eyes of the Sultan', watching over people and reporting 'suspicious', 'oppositional', 'immoral', and 'illicit' activities to the central government.[44] Printed media and the performing arts were the focus of censor officers since these communications were considered among the most influential ways to

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[39] Cevdet Kudret, *Abdülhamid Devrinde Sansür* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1997).; Alpay Kabacalı, Başlangıcından *Günümüze Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü* (İstanbul: Literatür, 2000).; Server İskit, *Türkiye'de Matbuat İdareleri ve Politikaları* (İstanbul: Tan Matbaası/Başvekâlet Basın ve Yayın Müdürlüğü Yayınlarından, 1943).; Orhan Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği* (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2010).
[40] Orhan Koloğlu, *Osmanlı'dan 21. Yüzyıla Basın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2006), p. 87.
[41] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press', p. 432.
[42] Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, 'Prime Ministry', p. 25.
[43] Stanford J. Shaw, 'Sultan Abdülhamid II', p. 189.
[44] Marco E. L. Guidi, 'My Own Utopia' The Economic of Bentham's Panopticon', *Euro. J. History of Economic Thought*, 11, (August 2014), p. 405.

spread ideologies of and among oppositional groups. Most of the constitutionalist intellectuals who were opposed to the Hamidian regime had the chance to express their ideas via newspapers, literature and plays.

Fatmagül Demirel notes that constitutional opposition and rising nationalist movements initiated ways of institutional intervention with printed media and entertainments.[45] The central state gradually established a number of censoring and policing agencies under state ministries. As the below data indicates, most of the theatres in urban centres were easily accessible to the censor officers. Let us now explore how the censor officers and the police controlled the theatrical shows:

> […] After a while, a number of theatres in Beyoğlu [a district in İstanbul] started to ignore the regulations and warnings of the censor officers. Once the censor officers noticed this practise, local theatre-owners and foreign troupes were asked to go to the police office to explain the content of their plays. [...] They were strictly ordered to follow the instruction of censor officers and remove certain words and lines that censor officers banned before. The police warned them to have an agreement about this rule with foreign troupes as well. Theatre-owners were asked to follow the regulations meticulously. [...] They were responsible for making an agreement with foreign troupes. In the case of failure to follow these rules the police noted that punishment would be applied to both Ottoman and foreign theatres.[46]

The censor officers' practises were not always the result of the Sultan's direct order and were confirmed by the central authorities. There was a huge discrepancy in the policies between the provinces and the central administration. Sometimes, ad hoc inspections functioned as a way for officers to set the rules themselves. Censor officers took some decisions independently and attempted to suppress certain newspapers and theatres within their own terms. In some cases, censor officers used their initiative

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[45] Fatmagül Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde*, p. 43.
[46] BOA.DH.MKT, 800/39, (2 May 1905).

and expanded their limits because 'the rules of censorship were not fixed' and were ambivalent at many levels.[47] For instance, in 1892 a play performed by French troupe, which had already been inspected and approved by police and censors, was cancelled at the last minute on the whim of officers in İstanbul.[48] The justification for the cancellation was the content of the play, which referred to the 1789 French Revolution and contained the words of 'revolution', 'rebellion', and 'mutiny', and such. In their complaint, the theatre troupe and the French Consulate noted that it is urgent that 'an officer and a committee (*bir memur ve hey'et*) should be appointed to inspect and approve the plays.'[49] The troupe saw themselves as the victims of ad hoc practises of censor officers and police in the absence of a specialised preview committee.[50] In brief, censor officers targeted both 'explicit expressions' and 'covert allusions' of revolutionary ideas and nationalism.[51]

Historical and political studies show that governments have different policing and surveillance methods. For instance, Michel Foucault defines government's function as 'the techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour.'[52] In his own term 'governmentality', he shows the ways in which European governments function 'in a specific principle of political method and practise' that was common for liberal governments.[53] Foucault's

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[47] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press', p. 422.
[48] BOA, İ.DH, 1279/100707, (21 June 1892).
[49] BOA, İ.DH, 1279/100707, (21 June 1892).
[50] BOA, İ.DH, 1279/100707, (21 June 1892).
[51] Nalan Turna, 'The Ottoman Stage Politicization and Commercialization of Theatres, 1876-1922', in Suraiya Faroqhi & Arzu Öztürkmen (eds.), *Celebration, Entertainment and Theatre in the Ottoman World* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2014), p. 324.
[52] Michel Foucault, 'Security, Territory, and Population', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Michel Foucault: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984: Volume I Ethics* (London: Penguin, 2000): cited in Lee Grieveson, 'On Governmentality and Screens', *Screen*, 50, 1, (Spring 2009), p. 180. For more on this topic see Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 5, 12, 20.
[53] *The Foucault Effect*, p. 26.; See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Alan Sheridan (trans.) (New York: Penguin, 1991). While the Foucauldian concept of

important ideas and his cases are principally for liberal ideologies and can explain only some of the issues in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, here it is important to think specifically about the administration of Hamidian government.

Censor officers and the system of spying dates back to the early modern period of the Empire. Cengiz Kırlı places the system of surveillance within the framework of new technologies of power that were used to police the public via monitoring, inspecting, informing and spying in the mid-eighteenth century Ottoman context.[54] He adds that the daily reports of the Hamidian era served as a punishment; the ultimate aim of the secret police and investigators was to identify 'the threat' and then to punish them.[55] This mentality, Cengiz Kırlı mentions, once again shows that it was an autocratic state that had the power to define the limits of its subjects. Borrowing from Anthony Giddens' concept of the 'co-ordination of human conduct', it is possible to see surveillance as 'a direct supervision' in the Hamidian context.[56] Censor officers along with police and inspectors, as the agents of surveillance, collated and integrated information for administrative, political and legal purposes in this monarchic rule.[57] This was an empire in which the public was being watched by a number of visible and invisible figures, from censor officers to police and informants. I will now move on to the informative and administrative function of censorship in the printed media.

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governmentality for modern Western forms of government is a helpful model for understanding liberal states, for the period under study I rely on certain administrative concepts that are specific to the historical context and time.

[54] Cengiz Kırlı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu Osmanlı Modernleşme Sürecinde "Havadis Jurnalleri" (1840-1844)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), pp. 1-8.

[55] Ibid., p. 7.

[56] Ibid., pp. 44-46.

[57] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of the Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 44-46.

Regulating the Printed Media

The censorship of printed media, such as books, journals, newspapers 'was not a new phenomenon.'[58] Fatmagül Demirel indicates that Sultan Abdülhamid II did not enforce new press regulation, but inherited it from his predecessor, Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876), and the 1857 *Regulation for Printing Houses*.[59] One of the earliest censorship committees during the Hamidian era was organised in 1878 under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior (*Dahiliye Nezâreti*) and was known as the Printing Committee (*Matbuat Kalemi*) or the Printing Committee of the Ministry of Interior (*Matbuat-ı Dahiliye Müdürlüğü*).[60] The Printing Committee was in charge of inspecting printed and visual materials published in Ottoman Turkish and other vernacular languages of the Empire.[61]

In fact, the regulations covering the exhibition and production of moving pictures were inherited from the *Printing Houses Regulations* of 1888 that addressed issues such as the publishing procedures of newspapers and books, the staging of plays, the reproduction of photographs and various depictive images, and the process of licensing these activities.[62] The 1888 *Printing Regulations* was an attempt to clarify the existing laws and regulations; however, it still had 'a level of ambiguity' and thus censor officers implemented ad hoc practises in a flexible manner for interpreting the rules.[63] Under this regulation, the censor officers located at the Ministry of Interior were in charge of inspecting the daily press and the books were

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[58] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press', p. 420.
[59] Fatmagül Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid,* p. 153.
[60] Server İskit, *Türkiye'de Matbuat*, pp. 98-99.
[61] At the turn of the century, there were a number of languages used in the Empire: Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Greek, Ladino, Serbian, Syriac, Albanian, Kurdish, Rumanian, and numerous Caucasian tongues. See M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief*, p. 33.
[62] Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü* (İstanbul: Literatür, 2000), p. 54.
[63] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press', p. 422.

inspected under the authority of the Ministry of Education.[64] The 1888 *Printing Regulations* stated that newspapers would be warned, censored, suspended, or abolished if they failed to follow censor officers' decisions. Based on journalists' actions in relation to the rules, sometimes newspaper issues were banned, and some newspapers were closed altogether.[65]

The censor officers monitored the intelligentsia's ideas in newspapers, theatre, and other forms of media and communications. They issued warnings and collaborated with the police for punishment. Obedience to the censor officers was the precondition of order at certain public settings. They were in charge of censoring the so-called 'inappropriate' and 'unlawful' text from newspapers, journals, and books.[66] These officials were also asked to submit news reports to the central administration, the palace, the Grand Vizier, and the Ministry of Interior. Topics varied, but any news report that included information about oppositional ideas in current events, politics, or government drew scrutiny. The police were in charge of punishing the subjects or closing down the venues. The officials justified these regulatory actions as necessary to maintain the loyalty of their subjects, social cohesion, and stability of the Empire. For instance, in 1889 the author from *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* sent a petition to the Sultan because of the arbitrary actions of censor officers and accusations of not being loyal to the state.[67] There were a number of cases of authors and owners of publications being accused of disloyalty. The authorities aimed to guard against the presentation of material 'harmful' to the Empire and the Sultan.

While the number of censor officers is not clear, they were much less influential in the provinces due to the limitations of a low budget and vast

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[64] Ibid., p. 422.
[65] Fatmagül Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde*, p. 76.
[66] Here I translate the word '*münasebetsiz*' as 'inappropriate' and '*gayr-ı caiz*' as 'unlawful'.
[67] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press', p. 428.

geography.[68] Without a doubt, the policing practises of censor officers were broad that absurd cases can be found. For instance, the word star (*yıldız)* was banned because that was the name of Sultan Abdülhamid's palace.[69] As was the word nose (*burun*), as it was deemed a code word for the Sultan, known as having a 'relatively big' nose.[70] The terms revolution (*ihtilâl*), mutiny (*isyan*) or synonyms of them were also disallowed in printed media and books.[71]

Ebru Boyar contends that the censorship of printed media was created in 'a symbolic arrangement' from which both publications and the state benefited.[72] On the one hand, the state controlled the press and had the 'means of spreading propaganda' for the sake of cementing the 'loyalty' of its subjects; on the other hand, the press profited by gaining the Sultan's financial support and protection.[73] In the case of the press, censor officers acted as intermediaries' between the Yıldız Palace and the authorities of printed media. In brief, the Sultan was aware of the value of the press and made use of newspapers for self-publicity when needed, such as during the times of crisis, public events and important political events.[74] As a policing and inspecting force, censor officers did not diminish during the post-1908 years. They collaborated with police officers and other government agencies during the CUP period to monitor printed media and other entertainments.[75]

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[68] For instance, Abdülhamid Kırmızı notes that there were only two censor officers in Beirut in 1906 and there were three in Baghdad in 1907. See Abdülhamid Kırmızı, *Rules of the Provincial Empire: Ottoman Governors and the Administration of Provinces, 1895-1908* (Boğaziçi University: Ph.D. Dissertation, 2005), pp. 137-142.
[69] Yavuz Selim Karakışla, 'Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in İstibdat Döneminde (1876-1909) Hafiyelik ve Jurnallik', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 119, (November 2003), p. 17.
[70] Ibid., p. 17.
[71] Ibid., p. 17.
[72] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press', p. 432.
[73] Ibid., p. 432.
[74] Ebru Boyar, 'The Press', p. 424.
[75] BOA, DH.EUM.MTK, 80/6, (24 January 1915).

Regulating Entertainment

Now I turn to exploring the regulation of public entertainment. The scholarship covering issues of regulation in relation to censorship in the Hamidian state prominently addresses the actions of censor officers and the Sultan's autocracy.[76] In the case of cinema regulations, understanding the function and role of these officials within the institutional arrangements will help explore the relationship and the negotiation between the state institutions, officials and entrepreneurs of entertainments and cinema respectively.

The staging of performances and plays, in particular, was subject to licensing by the Printing Committee and police forces in İstanbul, and the Ministry of Education (*Maârif Nezâreti*) in the Ottoman provinces. The Ministry of Education collaborated with the Ministry of Police (*Zabtiye Nezâreti)* for inspecting the texts of theatrical plays.[77] In addition to the inspection of theatrical shows by censor officers, the Committee of Inspection and Examination (*Encümen-i Teftiş ve Muayene Kurulu*) was in charge of performing a pre-examination before the censor officers.[78] In 1883, apart from the Printing Committee and police forces, a special officer was assigned to control and inspect plays staged at theatres and similar venues.[79] This was an Islamic policy and an attempt to manage 'public morals' and to remove 'inappropriate' elements from plays.

By 1890 a new committee emerged to preview and inspect staged performances. Under the authority of the Sixth District Municipality (*Altıncı Daire-i Belediye Müdüriyeti*), this committee was charged with censoring

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[76] Fatmagül Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde*.; Cevdet Kudret, *Abdülhamid Devrinde*.; Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıcından Günümüze*.
[77] BOA, MF.MKT, 13/48, (29 September 1873).
[78] Cevdet Kudret, *Abdülhamid Devrinde*, p. 57.
[79] BOA, ZB, 13/75, (21 June 1883).

licences for theatrical performances and providing necessary licences for the troupes in İstanbul.[80] The preview committee collaborated with the police and censor officers. An archival source reveals that censor officers were present at the venues when the actual play was staged.[81] In 1893, officials enforced a decree for the preview and inspection of staged performances.[82] Following this, in 1894, the copy of *Censorship Act* (*Sansür Talimatnâmesi*) was sent to the Office of Ministry of Education in İzmir due to the increase of forbidden themes staged at the theatres.[83] This *Censorship Act* contains six clauses indicating the subjects that officials considered detrimental:

> Clause 1: It is forbidden to use words that are against the interests of the government, any religion or sect, and those which reference a governmental authority or rulers of other nations, even innuendo. It is also forbidden to incite the public, and to use words which threaten public safety.
> Clause 2: It is forbidden for actors in licensed entertainments to dress up in costumes representing the Islamic outfit, such as the Muslim woman's veil, scarf, burca, *alla turca* outfit or new styles, or even the clothing of religious authorities (like priest, rabbi and other clerics) in the form of turban and cassock.
> Clause 3: The depiction of the monarch in plays and his disparagement, proclaiming the defeat of the present government or other nations, and describing military defeat, showing flags of countries in an inferior position, displaying of mutiny and rebellion are prohibited.
> Clause 4: The censor officers are in charge of confiscating adaptations of foreign stories that are about internal affairs and are contrary to different religions and ethnicities.
> Clause 5: It is forbidden for local troupes to stage a performance that is contrary to Islamic tradition such as the abduction of a girl by force or banditry.
> Clause 6: The adaptation of stories from *The Thousand and One Nights* is forbidden.[84]

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[80] BOA, İ.DH, 1200/93908, (10 November 1890).
[81] BOA, İ.DH, 1200/100523, (18 June 1892).
[82] BOA, DH.MKT, 2063/110, (14 October 1893).
[83] BOA, MF.MKT, 239/36, (23 August 1894).
[84] BOA, MF.MKT, 239/36, (23 August 1894).

Authorities were clearly concerned about religious concerns and issues of political legitimacy not only for the Ottomans but also for other countries. The depiction of eroticism was also another justification of bans at theatres. In 1896, the *Regulation of Theatre, Ortaoyunu, Shadow Play and Puppet Shows* (*Tiyatro, Ortaoyunu, Karagöz, Kukla Oyunları Nizamnâmesi*) was enforced which initiated a new emerging regulatory paradigm, responding to the dysfunctional legal system by amendments and new set of rules.[85] This detailed regulation provided rules for obtaining licences, presented information about harmful and offensive content, and introduced a more clearly defined way of control. The regulation for public performances also shaped cinema regulations.

Specifically, the Ottoman authorities saw some intellectuals' works as 'detrimental' to the official ideology and they were exiled based on the reports of censor officers and police.[86] For instance, while Namık Kemal (1840-1888) launched the modern theatre with his influential works, he was also a supporter of the constitutional opposition, the Young Ottomans in 1865. One of his prominent plays, *Fatherland or Silistra* (*Vatan Yahud Silistre*, 1873), caused public protest in support of constitutionalism, which opposed the Hamidian regime. After the play, demonstrations took place and the state exiled some Young Ottomans, including Namık Kemal, and censored the play.[87] However after the 1908 Young Turk's Revolution this play became the symbol of the constitutional government and was staged frequently.

Foreign theatre troupes' plays were also censored due to their transmission of information about political opposition. For instance, in 1904 a puppet show took place in Tepebaşı Theatre in İstanbul which contained -

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[85] BOA, Y. PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896).
[86] Carter Vaughn Findley, 'The Tanzimat', in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Turkey in the Modern World*, 4, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 23.
[87] Selcuk Aksin Somel, 'Namık Kemal', p. 210.

according to the official source - ‘inappropriate words,’ in French, particularly referring to the demands for reformation; such as: ‘The country calls for reforms. Unless the state provides reforms, people will force it. Because the time we live in now requires us to be modern.’[88] Censor officers found these wordings ‘unlawful’, the use of such ‘inappropriate words’ was banned in staged performances on the grounds that ‘could confuse people’s minds.’[89]

My goal here is to establish and understand the existing regulatory space in relation to the censorship practises of monitoring, inspecting, and banning moving pictures. Yet, it is important to note that there was a relationship between existing regulations and the role of censor officers, and cinema, but at times they were ad hoc. This is not entirely surprising considering the overlapping mandates of the various official bodies in enforcement between urban centres and provinces. Especially when the available data is analysed, I observe a gap between the discourses and practises of cinema regulation. The justification for controlling and banning the screenings mostly appear to be made due to the ‘inappropriate’ content of moving pictures in relation to obscenity, political opposition and disloyalty to the state and Sultan.

The Blueprint of Cinema Regulations

During the early years of cinema, the normative process and practises of regulations were intricate, extensive and fluid, rather than a rigid structure. Eventually a series of relations between different institutions would emerge on a case-by-case basis. Similarly, Annette Kuhn describes film censorship in Britain as ‘a matter of relations’ and ‘a process’ rather than a fixed object.[90] There are cases in which Ottoman institutions and local authorities failed to

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[88] BOA, İ.HUS, 111/112, (8 December 1904).
[89] BOA, İ.HUS, 111/112, (8 December 1904).
[90] Annette Kuhn, *Cinema Censorship and Sexuality 1909-1925* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 127.

follow central authorities' procedure or practised their own agenda, specifically in the realm of the exhibition, circulation and production of moving pictures.

In relation to cinema, Ottomans could encounter censor officers in venues such as coffeehouses, theatres, concert halls, and taverns, places where moving pictures were circulated before permanent cinema-houses were established.[91] As I will examine below, the conditions of the *1903 Cinematograph Privilege* suggested that the Sultan approved all local film productions about Ottoman officials.[92] The strategies used to regulate and manage cinema were epitomised by the 1904 decision of the Ministry of Interior to organise a preview committee.[93] In this way film exhibitions could only be held if, and only if, the operators or the owners of venues maintained a licence for film exhibition.[94] Yet, this legal decision was not enforced, only practised in an ad hoc manner.[95] As was the case with other laws on cinema, the 1904 decision was in statute only. These features of cinema regulations indicate ambivalence. Unenforced regulations tend to create 'jurisprudential problems' in various ways, one of those being the ad hoc banning of films.[96] The duties of censor officers varied during the late Ottoman era. Archival sources reveal that censor officers could view the moving pictures at venues and their related technical and media components such as cinematic devices (projectors, cameras), lamps, and the film content, including handbills. They

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[91] Sigmund Weinberg opened the first permanent cinema-house in İstanbul in 1908 in collaboration with the French Pathé. See *Chapter 3* in this dissertation.
[92] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 5.
[93] BOA, DH.MKT, 823/38, (20 February 1904).
[94] BOA, DH.MKT, 2609/116, (28 January 1906).
[95] BOA, DH.MKT, 823/38, (20 February 1904).
[96] Ruth Gavison, 'Incitement and the Limits of Law', in Robert C. Post (ed.), *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation* (California, CA: The Getty Research Institute Publications and Exhibitions Program, 1998), p. 65.

also dealt with financial matters such as ticketing problems at venues and the gathering of taxes from film screenings.[97]

During the Hamidian era, early attempts to regulate cinema represent a period of uncertainty. Regulation enforcement was carried out with regard to specific individual cases in relation to the existing regulations and the officers' interpretations of the rules. In brief, I mapped out how existing regulations were used and repurposed in the time of cinema. Below I will explore the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege* in which we can observe the attempts to set the rules for production criteria and the exhibition procedure for inspecting and monitoring films.

Seven years after the arrival of moving pictures to the Empire, a legal inscription was drafted to grant privilege to cinema entrepreneurs in the Ottoman Empire. *The Conditions of the Privilege of Screening Cinematograph in the Ottoman Empire* (*Memâlik-i Şâhânede Sinematograf Temâşâ Ettirilmesinin Şerâit-i İmtiyâziyyesi*) can be accessed at the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives' Yıldız Catalogue where the documents from the Hamidian era are preserved today. It has the signatures of two Ottoman subjects, İbrahim bin Yunus and Ahmet from Makrıköy (Bakırköy) district of İstanbul.[98] My research suggests that there is no clear information about these two figures, who might have been entrepreneurs and who initiated the drafting of the conditions of cinema exhibition probably in collaboration with the Sultan's committee of advisors. I argue that the text was formulated in this way, because of the official language, which can be seen in this type of legal documents (i.e. other types of commercial treaties, theatre privileges), the content of the conditions with an emphasis on Sultan's role for the approval of film exhibition and production, and the recognition of official institutions

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[97] BOA, DH.MKT, 1113/35, (29 August 1906).
[98] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903).

in relation to specific liabilities. For instance, the clauses reveal that Sultan Abdülhamid II is the central power to grant the rights for film screenings.[99] Above all, the content of the privileges defines the responsibilities of the grantee individual or company, and requires loyalty to the Ottoman state, courts, and Sultan Abdülhamid II.

The Clauses

The conditions of the privilege include 26 clauses, which focus on the issues of exhibition, cinema-house equipment use, film content, cinema's educational role, and moral concerns. Clause 12 indicates that the conditions refer to any cinematic apparatus that was available during the early cinema period.[100] The text indicates different forms of devices, be it *cinématographe*, *bioscope*, *kinetoscope*, or magic lantern. This clause also points out that apart from those mentioned, the privilege addresses any other automatic device that could be used by grantees.[101]

This document sought to target Ottoman merchants, either as individuals or several companies, who may have wished to be cinema entrepreneurs. The clauses address the potential grantees directly. While the final execution of the privilege remains inconclusive, as the individuals or companies granted those is still unknown, the clauses themselves are significant enough to enable us to study the assessment of cinema in the eyes of Ottoman authorities and their intentions for regulating it. I propose that the conditions of *Cinematograph Privilege* of 1903 may be distinguished from one another based on three main characteristics: the economic and legal liabilities, the moving picture's educational value, and the perceived morality of film content. Let us examine the conditions more closely.

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[99] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clauses 2 & 5.
[100] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 12.
[101] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 12.

a. Economic and Legal Liabilities

The Hamidian officials in collaboration with İbrahim bin Yunus and Ahmet from Makrıköy designed the privilege to enable any Ottoman or foreign entrepreneur to freely make and exhibit films in the Empire. Regarding non-Ottoman entrepreneurship, specific clauses defined the economic and technical issues in relation to administrative and legal problems and the rights for the Hamidian state to control the practise of these grantees. For Hamidian officials, it was beneficial to grant privileges due to 'the fiscal interests of the state' as long as legal state intervention was possible under the law of the Empire.[102]

In terms of their function, the *Cinematograph Privilege* was quite different from the capitulations that were granted to foreign merchants. From the sixteenth century the Ottomans extended capitulations (unilateral privileges, *ahdnâme* or *uhûd-ı atîka*) to certain countries and foreign merchants in order to regulate the trade and trade routes in the Empire.[103] It is important to clarify that the *Cinematograph Privilege* is similar to the theatre privileges in the sense that the exhibition and production of moving pictures could be practised under a manageable Ottoman legal structure.[104] The *Cinematograph Privilege* did not extend business rights only to non-Muslim merchants, it was open to both Muslim and non-Muslim entrepreneurs. The capitulations were important especially during this time because the European countries relied on them to interfere in the political

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[102] Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* Halil İnalcık & Donald Qataert (eds.), 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 1997), p. 51.

[103] Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı Ekonomisi ve Kurumları*, Gökhan Aksay (trans.), (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), p. 21. For more on capitulations see Selcuk Aksin Somel, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 50.

[104] Edhem Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western Trade', in Suraiya N. Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Turkey in the Modern World*, 3, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 293, 297.

affairs of the Ottoman Empire.[105] Steven Rosenthal claims that the capitulations created 'a political and cultural dependence' especially on the non-Muslim bourgeois under the regulations of embassies and non-Ottoman courts.[106] Several clauses of *Cinematograph Privilege* make it clear that the moving picture entrepreneurship must conform to the law of Ottoman courts. This proposed cinematograph company, referred to in the privileges as *the Cinematograph and Magic Lantern Spectacles Screening Corporation* (*Osmanlı Sinematograf ve Lantermajik ve Menâzır-ı Muhtelife İrâ'esi Şirketi*) must be located in İstanbul under the Ottoman court regulations.[107]

Indeed, the tradition of granting privileges was not a new practise in the Ottoman Empire. Privileges had previously been granted to companies for municipal works from transport to illumination of streets, also different newspapers, artists and troupes were granted privileges for theatre and opera performances. For example, the Gedikpaşa Theatre, founded by the actor and director Güllü Agop, was granted privileges in 1870.[108] The Gedikpaşa Theatre was thereafter called the Ottoman Theatre and was liable to the Ottoman courts for ten years.[109] Likewise, the Naum Theatre was granted privileges to stage theatrical performances in the district of Beyoğlu in İstanbul and was subject to certain regulations.[110] However, there is no information suggesting that the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege* was granted to a firm or an individual at that time. The conditions of the privilege had to

[105] Selcuk Aksin Somel, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 50.
[106] Steven Rosenthal, *The Politics of Dependency Urban Reform in İstanbul* (London: Greenwood Press, 1980), pp. 5-6.
[107] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 19.
[108] BOA, I.ŞD, 18/77, (7 June 1870).
[109] In the Empire different *millets*, meaning the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, were liable to various courts and protection of different countries' embassies and regulations. Güllü Agop was granted theatre privileges and his theatre had to obey the rules of Ottoman courts see Gıyasettin Aytaş, *Tanzimatta Tiyatro Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2002), p. 23.
[110] BOA, HR.TO, 472/21, (19 February 1860).

be confirmed by the Supreme Council (*Şûrâ-yı Devlet*) in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works (*Nafia Vekâleti*) based on information provided by entrepreneurs.[111]

Ali İhsan Öztürk notes that central government managed most of the privileges granted in the realm of city public works, even though the type of services provided were run by the local governments.[112] Policy makers aimed to change this policy during the Second Constitutional period but could not manage to transform the tradition of working via the ministries. In the realm of public entertainments, including cinema, the same circumstances affected the plethora of regulations and, if enacted, the *Cinematograph Privilege* would have been confirmed by the Supreme Council, sill, it is not clear whether it was passed.

Clearly, entrepreneurs and state officials aimed to create and maintain a legal framework for the development of a cinema market via the drafting of the cinema privileges. Cinema historian Ali Özuyar claims that this document is the first cinema regulation (*nizamnâme*) in the history of Ottoman cinema, probably due to the content of the clauses which extensively define the obligations, restrictions and limits of cinema exhibition for the first time.[113] By relying on legal scholarship, Ayhan Ceylan rightly asserts that the privilege is quite different from that of a regulation and suggests that 'Ali Özuyar misread the document.'[114] As I noted, granting privilege is dissimilar from designing a set of rules for the regulatory space. A privilege, for instance in the realms of transport, entertainment, and printed media, had to be

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[111] BOA, İ.ŞD, 18/77, (7 June 1870).; Metin And, *Osmanlı Tiyatrosu, Kuruluşu, Gelişimi, Katkısı* (İstanbul: Dost Yayınevi, 1999), pp. 55-56.

[112] Ali İhsan Öztürk, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e İmtiyaz Usulüyle Yürütülen İstanbul Belediye Hizmetleri (Yap-İşlet-Devret Uygulaması) (1852-1964)* (İstanbul: Kültür A.Ş., 2010), pp. 43-44.

[113] Ali Özuyar, *Devlet-i Aliyye'de Sinema* (Ankara: Deki 2007), p. 12.

[114] Ayhan Ceylan, 'Osmanlı Dönemi Türk Sinemasında Hukuki Düzen', *Türk Hukuk Tarihi Araştırmaları*, 9, (Spring 2010), p. 11.

implemented in accordance with the regulations, but only the grantees who obtained the rights of performing that business were liable to follow those conditions. A privilege could be for a certain period of time; in other words, after the end of a contract similar rights could be granted to different entrepreneurs and companies. For instance, if enacted, the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege* would be granted only for 35 years, then it would have been renewed.[115]

Regulation, as a term, has been defined in many ways based on the approaches in different disciplines.[116] Here, in the case of cinema, it is possible to define regulation as the institutional attempt to create 'a working structure of within which all personas, be they governments, broadcasters or regulators have to operate and in which their duties should be clearly defined.'[117] Regulation can be interpreted 'as all forms of social control and influence' by designing a set of rules and state's concerns; yet it can be both restrictive and facilitative.[118] It is better to approach the differences and similarities of granting privileges for a business and setting up the force of law in written rules within these boundaries. These conditions could introduce 'a manageable legal structure' to control and monitor the grantees while defining their rights to participate in the cinema market.[119]

While the conditions classified the rules of ticket pricing, taxation, fees, circulation of moving pictures and the rules on the grantee's profit, the *Cinematograph Privilege* was designed to be beneficial to the state in terms of the financial output of the business. As clause three indicates, 'the grantees must undertake to pay 10.000 Ottoman Lira to the Empire and the

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[115] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 1.
[116] Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation Theory, Strategy, and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 1.
[117] Rakesh Kaushal, 'Regulation', p. 527.
[118] Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation*, p. 2.
[119] Edhem Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western Trade', pp. 293, 297.

fee will be transferred to government agencies at the discretion of the Great Sultan.'[120] Clause four defines the responsibilities of grantees in terms of other payments:

> Apart from the above-mentioned fee [10.000 Ottoman Lira], the grantees must pay the remaining revenues to the Ottoman government after paying the per annum salaries of employees, taxes, rent and other general expenses of exhibiting and distributing moving pictures, paying of the debts and accrued increase. Ten-percent of this remaining profit will be transferred to the Treasury Office [*Hazine-i Celile-i Maliye*] of the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan will decide to pass the revenue to government agencies as he orders.[121]

In this way, the Hamidian state was not going to be liable for any financial burden while profiting from the privilege. The grantees were also exempted from paying the custom taxes (*gümrük resmî*) for foreign films, as clause twenty-one notes.[122] The real purpose of this regulation was to encourage the grantees to export moving pictures under certain standards of economic liability without blocking them. Rather than suppressing the cinema business, the Hamidian officials intended to introduce the *Cinematograph Privilege* under certain economic and legal rights which would develop cinema throughout the Empire and positively contribute to the Hamidian state. This instrumental privilege is considerably well established in terms of the details on regulations and economic issues by enforcing the Hamidian state's legal framework. It appears that the privilege was written in conjunction with the Hamidian authorities, as it reflects economic framework and known regulations of the government. The privilege includes information about forms of fees and salaries, and specialised taxation conditions. Even though there is no clear fixed ticket pricing schedule for the general public, the

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[120] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 3.
[121] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 4.
[122] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 21.

privilege states that film screenings for the purpose of training should be free for Ottoman officials, whereas in educational settings an inexpensive fee should be charged.[123]

The officials aimed to reinforce the notion of Ottomanness throughout the privilege when we scrutinise some specific liabilities such as the use of language and the details regarding the grantees' staff. The privileges enforced that apart from engineers and experts of the devices, the operator and projectionist and other technical staff of the grantees must be Ottoman citizens (*teba'a-i Osmâniyye*).[124] Moreover, the entire staff must wear a fez and those who are in touch with the public must speak in Ottoman Turkish.[125] Indeed, not only was Ottoman Turkish the mandatory language for interacting with the general public, but it was also required that the official language of correspondence with the Hamidian officials was Ottoman Turkish.[126] These restrictions are particularly significant because the Hamidian state sought to deal with the grantees under a standard legal procedure for the purpose of control and inspection.

The Hamidian authorities also enforced the use of Ottoman Turkish translations along with the information in other languages, similar to the regulations on stage performances and printing. [127] For instance, the handbill of Pera exhibitions shows how these screenings addressed a diverse range of audiences in Ottoman Turkish, Armenian, Greek and French. It contains all major languages to promote the 'living pictures' among the İstanbullian starting from the late 1890s. The handbill is a visible illustration of how Ottomanism and its symbols were reflected in the Hamidian policy under the

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[123] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clauses 2, 7, 12.
[124] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 17.
[125] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 18.
[126] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clauses 18, 20.
[127] Cevdet Kudret, *Abdülhamid*, p. 112.

Printing Houses Regulations even before the creation of the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege*. Also, it was important for the Hamidian state to order publishing information both in Ottoman Turkish and other languages; as a result, the censor officers could examine various sorts of handbills, including the ones for moving pictures.

Archival sources show that any printed materials regarding film exhibitions were inspected by censor officers prior to public announcements. For instance, a 1909 report from a censor officer shows how he checked the handbill of the Palmira Printing-house, located in the Beyoğlu district of İstanbul, and suggested the removal of some parts of it after his examination. The archival document does not provide further detail about the content of the handbill. But this case shows that the failure of the printing-house to obey censor officer's instructions resulted in the prohibition of the handbill.[128] Therefore, the clause reinforcing the use of Ottoman Turkish aimed to allow the inspection process to run smoothly.

b. Education and Cinema

From cinema's inception, its educational value became clear, especially in Western Europe and North America. Starting from the early 1890s, local authorities in the US aimed to implement cinema within 'the theatre and classroom thereby becoming two of the central sites of childhood and adolescent activity.'[129] The power of cinema for teaching purposes led to a number of genres worldwide, from popular educational films to training films. During the early cinema period, educational cinema were informative

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[128] BOA, DH.MKT, 1113/35, (29 August 1906).

[129] Eric Smoodin, 'What a Power for Education! The Cinema and Sites of Learning in the 1930s' in Charles R. Acland & Haidee Wasson (eds.), *Useful Cinema* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 19.

films for the general public and pedagogical films for students.[130] The Ottoman case was similar to that of its contemporaries. Several clauses of the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege* delineate film as an important tool to be used for education in schooling, farming, and official vocational settings. This emphasis on film's effective pedagogical value is evident in clauses of 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10. Yet, the entertainment and amusing elements of cinema are not addressed by the conditions.

Obviously, cinema would have been used by school teachers and army trainers along with already existing instructive materials. The privilege supports the educational use of moving pictures, in accordance with Ottoman and Islamic beliefs, if, students and officials would benefit from them. Clause 5 of the *Privilege* indicates that any moving pictures, including the manoeuvres of the Ottoman army and battlefield images, must be filmed in a lawful and objective way.[131] Hence, this clause suggests that any educational productions which did not reflect the official view in relation to Ottomanism and Islam would be banned.

In this sense, the approach to the films was positivist as an adaptation to the new technology.[132] From the nineteenth century, various regulations and reforms in the Empire strove to introduce 'rational order and progress among Ottoman administrators' in a positivist sense. [133] Within Hamidian ideology, most schools introduced new methods of emphasising Ottoman and Islamist elements, mixing their curriculum with a balanced Western notion.[134] As a result, it is not unexpected to discover that the state aimed to employ

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[130] Luke McKernan, 'Education' in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 214-215.
[131] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 5.
[132] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief*, p. 138.
[133] Selcuk Aksin Somel, *Historical*, p. 85.
[134] Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam*, *the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 5, 21.

cinema, especially in schooling, for various training methods in curriculum, as the privilege exemplifies. It is important here to focus on several clauses that embody the educational function and the uplifting values of moving pictures. The emphasis in the clause is indeed given to the education of Ottoman officials (soldiers, fire fighters, and other similar occupations), farmers and students schooling at various levels, from *madrasas* to universities.

Clause 6 which addresses the attempts to train and educate the Ottoman army by using moving pictures, stands out as a tangible example of how the Hamidian state recognised cinema's educational role. The clause states that the privilege grantees are responsible for making films about different divisions of the Ottoman army and 'their training, manoeuvring, official ceremonies, scouting, hunting and policing.'[135] The best examples of these filmed sequences were planned to be exhibited once a week free of charge to various members of the army, such as 'navy and fire fighters,' as a part of their training.[136]

As a result, the state could support the educational forms and methods of various official institutions by using cinema effectively. By intending to grant the cinema privilege, the state would encourage the grantees to make moving pictures for training purposes among the Ottomans officials. These films could serve to improve skills, implement new methods and assist trainers and teachers by showing models from various divisions of the state to other bodies. This element demonstrates on the one hand an opportunist aspect in order to use moving pictures as a teaching tool; on the other hand, they could be used as a propaganda tool to influence the officials according to the state's ideology.

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[135] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 6.
[136] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 6. 'Navy and fire fighters': *bahriyye ve itfâ'iye asâkir-i şâhânesi*.

Similarly, clause 8 illustrates that cinema found a new place with its educational role rather than its commercial value or entertainment aspect:

> The privilege grantees will be in charge of screening films to the villagers and assist them to learn about the development of agriculture, the use of agricultural equipment, and information on animal husbandry, farming poultry, method of collective grain warehousing and development of other agricultural industries via moving pictures.[137]

The privilege indicates that entrepreneurs and state officials were interested in the utility of cinema in modernising various practises, agriculture, for example. The two dynamics are related, but also separate. Moving pictures were seen as an effective tool to educate farmers about implementing new techniques for agriculture and animal husbandry by introducing the latest methods of farming, cultivating and storing, and modernising the agricultural practises. This suggests that the legislators would not have been repressive about the circulation and exhibition of moving pictures among different communities of Ottoman society. This clause was indeed parallel to the *Printing Houses Regulations*, which mandated that publications inform the public about the advancement of industries in the Empire.[138]

Clause 10 states that the privilege grantees would provide films about natural sciences to the students at the madrasas, schools and universities in order to assist in their improvement, education and well-being.[139] It states that 'screenings will be held for students upon request, subject to a reasonable fee.'[140] Curricula beyond science were not specified as potential subject matter in the conditions. This attempt to educate students via films

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[137] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 8.
[138] Cevdet Kudret, *Abdülhamid*, p. 38.
[139] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 10. Natural sciences: *ulûm u fünûn*. *Madrasas*, various schools and universities: *medâris*, *mekâtib* and *Dar-ül- fünûn*.
[140] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 10.

was possible under one condition, though, which was that the Sultan would inspect and censor them. ‘Inappropriate’ images or content would not be circulated under the authority of the Sultan.

Given the fact that most Hamidian schools had a curriculum of Ottoman and Islamic elements, the introduction of cinema could be a useful instrument for various reasons.[141] Historians agree that education was very important for Abdülhamid II, since he is quoted as saying that ‘education is the pre-requisite of progress.’[142] As Cezmi Eraslan notes, the Hamidian state organised the education policy as a way to transform the Empire and its subjects according to the needs of its time.[143] From public education to agriculture, and from commerce to social life, the Hamidian officials sought to reform the Empire under Islamic and Ottoman notions, while benefiting from the new technological offerings of the time.[144] The religiously affiliated Hamidian schools emphasised curriculum with Islamic notions and included subjects on ‘Arabic, the Qur’an, and classical Ottoman history.’[145] For Hamidian officials, ‘industrious students devoted to religion and the Empire ought to be schooled in the latest advancements of modern civilizations.’[146] As cinema was one of those latest advancements, moving pictures were welcomed under the supervision of an official educational setting.

For the Hamidian state, clause 10 demonstrates that natural sciences were the focus. To look at a contemporary example, the pedagogical use of moving pictures in Iran at the time predominantly focused on ‘reading,

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[141] Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial*, p. 5.
[142] Cezmi Eraslan, *II Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 1992), p. 235.
[143] Ibid., p. 235.
[144] Ibid., p. 235.
[145] Benjamin C. Fortna, ‘Discipline in a late Ottoman Provincial Secondary School, 1903’ in Camron Michael Amin, Benjamin C. Fortna, Elizabeth Frierson (eds.), *The Modern Middle East A Sourcebook for History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 48.
[146] Cezmi Eraslan, *II Abdülhamid*, p. 235.

Western table manners, and parenting', as the cinema historian Hamid Naficy, explains.[147] In fact, archival sources suggest that later, during the Second Constitutional era, a few schools employed moving pictures for the purpose of instruction, such as Konya Technical School and the İstanbul Police Academy.[148]

Clauses 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 of the conditions reveal that under the control of the Sultan and the existing censorship regulations, the use of films for teaching and training purposes was not detrimental as long as public morality and the religious education of the public were preserved. The conditions suggest that the virtual imperial elements, amalgamated within Islamic and Ottoman notions, could together represent the power of the Ottoman state via moving pictures at various educational milieu. According to the authorities, this type of institutional production could serve the advancement of the state's officers and subjects and consequently protect the Empire's future. After pursuing the reflections of educational value in the *Cinematograph Privilege*, it is worth elaborating on the relevant conditions in regard to morals.

c. Morals and the Film Content

Concerns over moving pictures' effect on public morals were also taken into account in the drafting of the conditions of the *Cinematograph Privilege* of 1903. Clauses 9 and 16 raise the issues of the protection of health, the religious education of children, family life and public morals in relation to

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[147] Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Cinema, The Artisanal Era 1897-1941*, 1, (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 102.

[148] BOA, DH.UMVM, 78/41, (27 October 1919).; BOA, DH.EUM.MH, 148/78, (22 February 1917). Konya Technical School: Konya Sanayii Mektebi and İstanbul Police Academy: Dersaadet Polis Mektebi.

screening moving pictures.[149] In *Kamus-i Türki*, Şemseddin Sami defines morality (*ahlâk*) as various forms of the human soul and heart that are inherited from birth and formed by good conduct. Şemseddin Sami classifies the concept as corrupted morals (*fesat ahlâk*) and scientific morals (*'ilm-i ahlâk*).[150] Here my interpretation of morals in relation to the use of moving pictures is similar to Benjamin Fortna's interpretation of morals in schooling. As he formulates it, 'the term "morals" was given little positive definition', rather its absence and negative content were emphasised.[151] This is indeed the case in most of the sources related to moving pictures. A number of reports to the central administration and indeed, the privilege conditions themselves, point out 'immorality' of images and the 'inappropriate' sides of moving pictures. 'Public morality' is linked to the deep-rooted and customary qualities of a society.[152]

The legislators were concerned about the possible 'dangerous' effects of moving pictures, as similar issues were dealt with in printing images for various publications or in censoring 'obscenity' during the staging of plays. For instance, the selling of 'inappropriate photos' was prohibited in İstanbul in 1902. A number of moving pictures were banned by police forces in the mid-1900s on the grounds of 'inappropriateness.'[153] Indeed, this notion of 'inappropriateness' is not easy to define and a number of archival sources show relatively vague meanings. I encountered statements referring to

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[149] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 9 and 16. See my translations for specific terms in the clauses: Protection of health: *hıfz-üs-sıhha*, religious education of children: *terbiye-i etfâl*, family life: *hayât-ı âile* and forms of morals: *âdâb-ı ahlâk*.
[150] Şemseddin Sami, *Kamus-i Türki* (Dersaadet: İkdam Matbaası, 1317 [1899/1900]), p. 82. Moral corruption: *fesat ahlâk* and morals as scientific morals: *'ilm-i ahlâk*.
[151] Benjamin C. Fortna, 'Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools', *IJMES*, 32, (2000), p. 379.
[152] Ibid., p. 379. 'Public morality' is 'ahlâk-i umûmi'.
[153] BOA, DH.MKT, 584/12, (26 September 1902).; BOA, DH.MKT. 823/38, (21 February 1904).; BOA, ZB, 328/6, (14 November 1908).

certain images that were considered 'immoral', which may be indicating the erotism found in films.[154] The morals here would have been those that reflected 'Ottoman values' and Islam as most of the Ottoman population was Muslim.[155]

In fact, the privilege partially describes the notion of a supposed 'morality'. Clause 9 emphasises that these moving pictures should be 'the most decent and esteemed ones' which would help preserve traditional family life and religio-moral teachings for children and their general health.[156] These were morals that expected subjects to be devoted to their empire and Islamic principles. The state's policy for raising children and its goal for public education was to have morally correct, good mannered citizens who were completely loyal to the Sultan and the Empire.[157]

The moral focus is also found within the following excerpt from clause 16: 'The screening of moving pictures that stem from superstitious beliefs, useless and unsuitable images will be prevented' and 'foreign productions which are contrary to decency and chastity are forbidden.'[158] In fact, this condition specifically targets the foreign moving pictures in contrast to the Ottoman productions and highlights the 'obscenity' may be found in the content. Foreign moving pictures in particular had to meet a certain moral

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[154] 'Immoral' is '*ahlâka mugayir*' or '*âdâb-ı umûmiyye mugayir*'. These statements are not clear in the documents. Some of them refer to the 'obscenity', and some consider the use of political leaders' images as 'immoral'. The term is vague in the usage. See BOA, ZB, 328/6, (14 November 1908).
[155] Benjamin C. Fortna, 'Islamic Morality', pp. 374-375. Here, the Islam chiefly refers to the dominant Sunni Islam excluding sects such as Alevism.
[156] 'The most decent and esteemed ones': *en nezîh ve mergub*. The traditional family life and religio-moral teachings for children: *terbiye.*
[157] Selçuk Akşin Somel, 'Regulations for Raising Children during the Hamidian Period', in François Georgeon & Klaus Kreiser (eds.), *Enfance et jeunesse dans le monde Musulman*, (Paris: Maisonneuve and Larose, 2003), pp. 216-217.
[158] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 16.

standard and decency in order to be exhibited before the public throughout the Empire. I will examine this subject in *Chapter 2*.[159]

The Conditions of Cinematograph Privilege attempted to grant permission to Ottoman grantees to exhibit and make moving pictures under a certain manner of religio-moral values based on Ottoman and Islamic elements. The Hamidian state tolerated some of the moving pictures since the 'political discourse of moral conduct was characterised by both flexibility and extensiveness.'[160] When we examine other activities of the Hamidian era, certain events such as lotteries were considered to be against Muslim morals; however, the state allowed the use of lotteries for charity purposes. By and large, moving pictures were available under certain restrictions and the main criterion was to follow the values of public morals in a decent manner. This mediated process of drafting privilege suggests that via moving pictures the latest advancements of the West were blended into the Ottoman socio-cultural values emphasising the religio-moral principles and notion of family life. The state's utilitarian approach, as presented in the conditions of privilege, is both productive and prohibitive depending on the political, social and cultural ends. Below I will explore cinema's place within Sultan Abdülhamid II's approach to films and the literature on this topic, which focuses on the characterisation of this historical figure in relation to cinema's development in the Empire.

Films under Regulation

Concerns regarding cinema appear to emerge when films were seen to corrupt public morality, criticise political power, disseminate politically oppositional ideas, and represent Ottoman officials, such as the Sultan and

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[159] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 16. Here the moral standard referred as 'âdâb-ı ahlâka münâfî olmayanlar'.

[160] Nadir Özbek, 'Philantropic Activity, Ottoman Patriotism and the Hamidian Regime', *IJMES*, 37, (2005), pp. 65-66.

soldiers, or other nations. Whilst I trace these concerns below, I explore de facto enforcement via specific attempts to regulate films within an ambivalent system of rules based on existing regulations of entertainment and printed media.

a. *Jurnal*: Banning of Inappropriate Views

In 1902, a news report (*jurnal*) sent to the Ministry of Interior portrayed 'the banning of pictures' that had been screened at Manoli's Tavern in Mersin.[161] The ban was ordered because the operator Dimitri's screening contained the image of Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876) riding a horse along with other European leaders' images .[162] The archival document reads that 'a number of images with the help of a cinématographe machine' were exhibited at the tavern and it was 'inappropriate' and 'disrespectful' to the memory of the deceased Sultan.[163] The document notes that the report was sent to the local administration. The Governor of Adana later contacted the Ministry of Interior and informed the authorities about the screening of the Sultan's image at the tavern. The Ministry of Interior confirmed the ban but noted that it was not forbidden to screen other images about various topics except the political ones. [164]

Another interesting case regarding the circulation of Sultan Abdülaziz's photograph is found in a news report to the Yıldız Palace dated December 19, 1895. The spy, fascinated by his discovery of Sultan Abdülaziz's photograph at the Military Academy Library, broaches a sensitive subject.[165] Sultan

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[161] There were a number of spy reports and the Ottomans called them as *jurnals*. Here I refer to the news reports, also called *jurnals*.
[162] BOA, DH.MKT, 537/38, (10 July 1902).
[163] BOA, DH.MKT, 537/38, (10 July 1902).
[164] BOA, DH.MKT, 537/38, (10 July 1902). The exhibition might have run as a 'slide show', instead of an edited film.
[165] Faiz Demiroğlu, *Abdülhamid'e Verilen Jurnaller (50 Yıldır Neşredilmeyen Vesikalar)* (İstanbul: Tarih Kütüphanesi Yayınları, 1955), pp. 51-52.

Abdülaziz, dethroned after a *coup d'état*, committed suicide in 1876.[166] In fact, his death was a sensitive subject because some believed that he was assassinated. Thus, even after Sultan's death, his image and the defence of the former Sultan were important to Hamidian officials, especially given the Sultan's divine role as the Islamic caliph and 'God's shadow on Earth.'[167]

In contrast, Sultan Abdülaziz initiated the imperial patronage of photography, and he hired Abdullah Frères and Vasilaki Kargopoulo to make photographs of the imperial family.[168] Bahattin Öztuncay states that photographs of the imperial family, including Sultan Abdülaziz's portraits, were exchanged as gifts on anniversaries or during visits, housed in fine frames or albums, and 'with few exceptions' there was no restriction of their sale and dissemination at shops and studios.[169] Despite the fact that Sultan Abdülaziz did not attempt to limit the usage of his image during his reign, the examples above indicate that spies, censor officers and government agencies considered them sensitive. Different historical figures attempted to control 'the uncontrollable', the dissemination of photography, films and other visuals in the Empire.[170]

Indeed, the Hamidian era gradually witnessed the control of the circulation of images such as postcards and portraits. This was regulated by the broader censorship practises of all printed media. Edhem Eldem contends that 'restrictions had hardly any impact, as most of the material circulated

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[166] Selcuk Aksın Somel, *Historical*, p. 2.

[167] Hakan T. Karateke & Maurus Reinkowski (eds.), *Legitimizing the Order the Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 41.

[168] Bahattin Öztuncay, 'The Origins and Development of Photography in İstanbul', in Zeynep Çelik & Edhem Eldem (eds.), *Camera Ottomana Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire 1840-1914* (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), p. 92.

[169] Ibid., p. 92.

[170] Zeynep Çelik & Edhem Eldem (eds.), 'Forbidden Kitsch', Camera *Ottomana Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire 1840-1914* (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), p. 238.

through foreign post offices over which the Ottoman authorities had little jurisdiction.'[171] In brief, the administrative system of non-government and government agencies at their localities made it impossible to impose a set of rules and enforce them under one hand in this multi-ethnic empire.

In relation to this fact, the banning of the *cinématographe* screening in Mersin suggests that the news report was probably formulated by the censor officer in collaboration with the police and sent to the Ministry of Interior by the Governor of Adana. The Ministry of Interior, the Governor, censorship officers and the local police forces collaborated in finding that the depiction of Sultan Abdülaziz was not suitable at a tavern. Special attention was given to prevent any unauthorised contact between the Sultan's image and the subjects, even virtually via the use of *cinématographe*. According to local and central officers, an unauthorised representation of Sultan Abdülaziz could damage his image in the eyes of the public. Thus, the local authorities acted to ban the exhibition and hastened itinerant operator Dimitri's departure from Mersin.[172]

Serdar Öztürk claims that this act was the first incident of censorship in Ottoman cinema history.[173] He suggests that film exhibition was subject to regulation by the authorities. The news report was sent to the Ministry of Interior; in reply, the Governor stated that 'It was not suitable to screen the images of the great Ottoman Sultans'. [174] Yet, authorities added that it was not harmful to show other images. Öztürk further notes that screening of the

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[171] Edhem Eldem, 'Powerful Images-The Dissemination and Impact of Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1870-1914', in Zeynep Çelik & Edhem Eldem (eds.), *Camera Ottomana Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire 1840-1914* (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), p. 111.
[172] BOA, DH.MKT, 537/38, (10 July 1902).
[173] Serdar Öztürk, *Osmanlı'da İletişimin Diyalektiği* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010), p. 133.
[174] BOA, DH.MKT, 537/38, (10 July 1902).

Sultan's image to the public was controversial throughout the Empire.[175] Öztürk's conclusions overstate the conditions of screenings and the concerns regarding the film content. As will be seen below, in 1905, three years after this banning incident, Sultan Abdülhamid II himself became the subject of a film. This film was shot during the Friday prayers. Following this, the Sultan was seen in two other films, in 1908.[176]

The 1902 banning incident is definitely a repressive act; however, I hesitate to identify this incident as the first censorship act in Ottoman cinema history. Firstly, the act of investigating 'the first' censorship act is not a fully meaningful task for the examination of cinema regulations. Instead I am interested in exploring the structures that defined censorship practises and led to a discourse by various personas which eventually formed the regulatory space for cinema. Secondly, the arrival of cinema in December 1896 suggests that there must have been other cases that are not recorded, or not yet discovered by researchers. Although the year 1902 is a relatively early time, there might have been other incidents of censorship within the large territory of the Empire. By relying on the state sources, we may not be able to locate what happened in the provinces. Thus, the review of local sources and the press may yield more findings. Above all, the ban on the display of Sultan Abdülaziz's image via the use of *cinématographe* is an act of censorship performed by a number of local authorities including censor officers, police and the Governor of Adana and the Ministry of Interior. There is no further ordinance forbidding the display of Ottoman Sultans in films.

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[175] Ibid., p. 315.

[176] These films are *The Friday Prayer at the Hamidiye Mosque* (Pathé Frères, No 2465, 90 metres, 1908) and *the Opening of the Ottoman Parliament* (*L'Overture du Parlement*, Sigmund Weinberg, 1908).

b. Severed Heads in Film

On October 1903, Ottoman diplomats in Spain contacted the central government in İstanbul, reporting on an upcoming screening of a film in Barcelona entitled 'Atrocity of the Ottomans.' The film was supposedly shot by Bulgarians or other locals in the region and depicted a fight between Muslims and local 'bandits' in the province of Rumelia in 1903. It was reported that screenings took place in Spain and other European countries under the same title. The Hamidian statesmen were concerned about the political content in the film in relation to cinema's power to shape public opinion in Europe.[177] The practise of decapitations, public executions and the display of corpses were common in the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the twentieth century.[178] Central authorities and officials in Monastir claimed that the film was fraudulent, and believed that it was meant to raise the highly sensitive topic of 'the Macedonian Question' and other legitimacy crises.[179]

At this historical moment, Macedonia was still one of the Balkan provinces controlled centrally by the Ottoman Empire.[180] However, by the middle of the nineteenth century decentralisation had begun and the region witnessed a series of multi-ethnic clashes. The population was composed of Slavs, Greek, Turks, Albanians and other ethnicities and the society was also multi-religious. Powerful notables controlled the territories as the central administration 'exercised little real control over local affairs' and 'the

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177 BOA, İ.HUS, 110/1321B, 075, (8 October 1903).
178 İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia 1878-1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 226.
179 BOA, İ.HUS, 110/1321B, 075, (8 October 1903).
180 Phokion Kotzageorgis, 'Ottoman Macedonia (late 14th – late 17th century) The Ottoman Conquest', in Ioannis Kolipoulos (ed.), *The History of Macedonia*, (Thessaloniki: The Museum of Macedonian Struggle Foundation, 2007), p. 130.

peasantry suffered the most from the system.'[181] The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) ended with the loss of Balkan territory and population by the Empire. There is no a clear consensus about when the challenge to the legitimacy of Ottoman rule of Macedonia started. Some scholars claim that it started after the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, which initiated the autonomy of the Bulgarians under the Orthodox Church.[182] Others assert that the 1856 Ottoman Reform Edict (*Islahat Fermanı*) that ensured political, social and economic realignments was the main cause of the Macedonian Question. However, Basil C. Gounais indicates that these two events combined to create a series of issues, including inequalities in the infrastructure, taxations and credit systems.[183] Eventually various dynamics and reactions led the followers of 'modernisation' and 'separatists' to clashes; reforms implemented by the central government did not meet people's demands.[184] Education played an important role in shaping nationalism and political ideologies that eventually caused divisions in the region.[185] This gradually followed the formation of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), which the Ottoman authorities did not discover until 1897.[186] The goal of the organisation was 'the full political autonomy of Macedonia and Thrace.'[187] A series of uprisings took place against the

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[181] Duncan M. Perry, 'Death of a Russian Consul: Macedonia 1903', in *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 7, 1-2, (1980), p. 201.
[182] Basil C. Gounaris, 'The Historiography and Cartography of the Macedonian Question, the Contest for the Ottoman Inheritance in Europe', in Ioannis Kolipoulos (ed.), *The History of Macedonia*, (Thessaloniki: The Museum of Macedonian Struggle Foundation, 2007), p. 218.
[183] Basil C. Gounais, 'National Claims, Conflicts, and Developments in Macedonia, 1870-1912, From the Bulgarian Exarchate to Bulgarian Independence', in Ioannis Kolipoulos (ed.), *The History of Macedonia*, (Thessaloniki: The Museum of Macedonian Struggle Foundation, 2007), p. 184.
[184] Basil C. Gounais, 'National Claims', p. 184.
[185] Ibid., pp. 184, 202.
[186] Duncan M. Perry, 'Death of a Russian Consul', p. 202.
[187] Basil C. Gounais, 'National Claims', p. 190.

Ottoman government, which increased in the winter of 1902.[188] In 1903, there were approximately 2,700 armed supporters of the Macedonian Committees.[189] Conflict increased, and 'the mutual hostility of Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks and the irreconcilability of their aspirations in Ottoman Macedonia' initiated the Balkan Wars in 1912.[190]

It is not surprising, then, that the news about all this political turmoil found its place in the visual space. Apart from the above-mentioned film, the Western illustrated press published a series of photos and articles about the severed heads in 1903. Edhem Eldem brilliantly summarises the news in these foreign journals and newspapers, and he describes a number of photographs about this case in his recent work.[191] Unfortunately, I have not located the film itself, but the photographs vividly portray the incident of decapitations. There are a number of versions of the photographs in which a group of men in their fezzes and uniforms pose for the camera, bearing arms alongside a pedestal that contains severed heads. In this setting the men in fezzes symbolise the Ottoman officials and the severed heads their alleged victims or enemies. *La Vie Illustrée*, dated 28 February 1903, portrays the story behind these photographs:

> The Turkish atrocities in Macedonia- facing the camera. A group of Turkish soldiers pose for the photographer, with the heads of their victims; 'The Turkish Atrocities in Macedonia- the 'Vainglory' of Murder. Officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers, and gendarmes of H. M. Abdülhamid having their photograph taken with the heads of their tortured victims'.[192]

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[188] Ibid., p. 190.
[189] Ibid., p. 190.; The Young Turks Revolution of 1908 also found support in this region, see Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building from the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 76-78.
[190] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 170.
[191] Edhem Eldem, 'Powerful Images', pp. 106-153.
[192] Ibid., p. 123.

In the foreign press, not only were the Ottoman officials accused of violence and cruelty, but the Sultan was blamed. The use of photographs and the film about warfare between the rebels and the Ottoman army was a powerful tool to inform the public, especially at an international level. As seen below, these images were used to accompany the articles written to describe the 'violence and torture' witnessed in the region.[193]

Edhem Eldem contends that ten days after the first publication of this news in the Western illustrated press in February 1903, Ottoman authorities attempted to suppress 'the display and availability of these images probably in photographer's shops.'[194] Later, Ottoman authorities in Monastir proved that the photographs in the foreign press belonged to 'the severed heads of Greek bandits killed at Goritsa in 1890/1891. Yet this fact did not change the reality since the Ottomans had a long tradition of 'post-mortem humiliation' practises.[195]

When the news about the film of 'Severed Heads' reached the central authorities in October 1903, the threat was almost unstoppable in the growing visual space of photography and cinema. According to the authorities, the film insulted Islam and blamed Muslim Ottomans for the violence depicted by the filmmakers. Similar to the photographs, authorities advocated that the film did not reflect reality and the images were the misrepresentation of the Ottoman officials.[196] Indeed, it was forbidden to describe Ottoman administrators and soldiers in a disreputable manner and depict any forms of mutiny and defiance or the humiliation of any nation in the staged performances before the public.[197] This regulation could be valid

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[193] Ibid., p. 124.
[194] Ibid., p. 126.
[195] İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties*, pp. 226, 228.
[196] BOA, İ.HUS, 110/1321B, 075, (8 October 1903).
[197] BOA, MF.MKT, 239/36, (23 August 1894).

also for the images used in cinema. However, local opposition groups produced this film in a region where the central regime was relatively less powerful. After being screened in a number of European countries, the film was to be hosted in Barcelona. Thus, the authorities aimed to stop the screening as they did for sales of the photographic images. Eventually, a notification from İstanbul to the Embassy in Madrid meant to prevent the film's release. Edhem Eldem notes that it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the photographs published in the Western press were forgeries.[198] Likewise, I contend that a similar conclusion is also valid for the film, although the Ottoman authorities advocated that the film misrepresented reality. All in all, Ottomans were not successful in persuading the international public, but they tried to prevent the sales of the photographs within the territories of the Empire and lobbied against the release of the film in Barcelona.[199]

This episode shows that while Ottomans were faced with political turmoil, their opponents shaped public opinion in the international realm via the use of media. Apart from the actual warfare, a new type of fight began in the visual space between the Ottoman authorities and the local opposition movements who collaborated with Western European countries. While both photography and cinema portrayed political conflict, violence, and crimes successfully, the visual space also created an arena where neither the intervention of the Sultan nor of the governmental agencies could manage to regulate. The tools the state had to fight against 'the dangerous images' were not enough. The dissemination of the film was quicker than was expected. At this point the Ottomans did not counteract by producing a film.

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[198] Edhem Eldem, 'Powerful Images', pp. 126-129.
[199] BOA, İ.HUS, 110/1321B, 075, (8 October 1903).

Sultan Abdülhamid II and Cinema

Casting the Hamidian era (1876-19019) in binary terms, such as situating the Sultan based on his certain personal traits undermines our precise understanding of historical developments in relation to cinema. While negative depictions, mostly affected by the atmosphere of the Second Constitutional period, describe Sultan Abdülhamid II as a 'despotic' or 'conservative', other scholars depict him as a 'modern' and 'reformist' leader.[200] The scholars who emphasise his reforms argue that Sultan Abdülhamid II implemented reforms similar to the sultans of the Tanzimat period by modernising the Empire in many ways. After the gradual growth of publications on the Hamidian era in the last few years, we also encounter a revisionist approach that sets Abdülhamid II and his policies in a solid historical and ideological context. These scholars evaluate him as a significant historical figure instead of attributing to him various idiosyncratic characteristics based on his leadership.[201] Historians have begun to escape from these so-called 'conservative', 'modern', and 'authoritarian' depictions of the Sultan and have moved forward to tracing the Hamidian era within the events, turning points and historical developments that took place during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Using this approach in studying Hamidian cinema

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[200] Nijat Özön, 'Sansürden Kesitler', in Agâh Özgüç (ed.), *Türk Sinemasında Sansür* (Ankara: Kitle, 2000), pp. 145-162.; Nijat Özön, *Sinema*, p. 113.; Savaş Arslan, *Cinema*, p. 31.; Stephen Bottomore, 'Turkey/Ottoman Empire', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 646.; Stanford J. Shaw, 'Sultan Abdülhamid II', pp. 179-197.; Mustafa Özen, 'Travelling Cinema', pp. 47-53.; Mustafa Özen, '"Hareketli Resimler"', pp. 183-189.

[201]Selim Deringil, 'Legitimacy Structures', pp. 345-359.; Selim Deringil, 'The Invention', pp. 3-29.; Benjamin C. Fortna, 'The Reign', pp. 38-61.; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected*.; Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyal Devlet Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşruiyet 1876-1914* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004).; François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*.; Engin Akarlı, 'II. Abdülhamid: Hayatı ve İktidarı', in Kemal Çiçek (ed.), *Osmanlı*, 2, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999), pp. 253-265.; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, 'II. Abdülhamid'in Saltanatı (1876-1909): Kızıl Sultan mı? Ulu Hakan mı?', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 103, (July 2002), pp. 10-19.; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, 'Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in', pp. 12-21.

regulations within certain events and examples will best describe this historical era.

For some historians, the Hamidian regime operated with rampant ‘corruption and favouritism’ under the patrimonial rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II.[202] For others, the Sultan introduced ‘well-intentioned but poorly organized’ reforms throughout his reign.[203] Sometimes the Sultan is described as an ‘anti-imperialist’ for his fight against the Great Powers.[204] Still others occasionally consider him as a ‘bourgeois sultan’ due to his taste in music, love of theatre and opera, and his conformist and isolated family life at the Yıldız Palace.[205] This image validates the claim that he was an admirer of Western arts and civilisation.[206] Even this image is reinforced by certain actions that he undertook that I will explore below.

Firstly, scholars of cinema history misinterpret the Sultan’s involvement in cinema due to their over-emphasis on the censorship of printed media and other communications and their portrayal of his regime as ‘authoritarian’.[207] While I attempt to reveal the Sultan’s involvement in cinema I approach the cinema regulations by also including the broader state institutions’ efforts. Indeed, the Hamidian state was a patrimonial monarchy under the rule of the Sultan. However, he was not always repressive to moving pictures, and some of his initiatives suggest that he supported the development of cinema in the Empire. Thus, I aim to evaluate the period both within the prohibitive and facilitative models of regulation.[208]

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[202] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey a Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), p. 84.
[203] Stanford J. Shaw, ‘Sultan’, p. 179.
[204] Feroz Ahmad, ‘Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun’, p. 13.
[205] François Georgeon, *Sultan*, p. 163.
[206] François Georgeon, *Sultan*, pp. 159-163.
[207] Nijat Özön, ‘Sansürden Kesitler’, pp. 145-162.; Nijat Özön, *Sinema*, p. 113.; Savaş Arslan, *Cinema*, pp. 25, 31.
[208] Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation*, p. 1.

Secondly, this binary representation of the Sultan can be seen in Western literature as well. In 1909, in *Ciné Journal* Robert Fleurus described Sultan Abdülhamid II as the 'Red Sultan' referring to 'blood', implying his autocracy, and claimed that cinema arrived to the Empire very late because of the autocracy of the Sultan.[209] He asserts that it was the Sultan's vizier (*mabeyinci)* Arap İzzet Paşa's trip to Iran that cinema became available in the Empire.[210] Stephen Bottomore also contributes to the emergence of a predisposed evaluation by concentrating on the Sultan's personality and on his supposed fear of electricity.[211] Furthermore, Bottomore's formulations on the Islamic principles from the Koran, his arguments based on the 'prohibition on the filming of human bodies' over-generalised the Islamic world in the understanding of cinema and the modern world.[212] Although Bottomore is careful about his judgements about various monarchs from the Islamic world, his emphasis is not accurate with respect to the Hamidian era.[213] After all, Sultan Abdülhamid II was the caliph, the religious leader of the entire Islamic world, for over thirty years. My archival research does not yield any reference to the Sultan's religious criticism of cinema. Instead, the Sultan and his officials were concerned about the potential threat of cinema due to the political opposition, the legitimacy crisis, the depiction of erotism and public morality.

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[209] The descriptions about Sultan Abdülhamid II vary in many ways, here Robert Fleurus refers to him as 'thirsty tyrannical reactionary', 'murderer' indicating the 'blood' by calling him the 'Red Sultan'. Stanford Shaw adds that contemporaries all around the world used terms such as 'Abdül the Damned', 'Abdül the blood drinker' or the 'Red Sultan'. See Stanford Shaw, 'Sultan Abdülhamid II', pp. 179-180.
[210] Robert Fleurus, 'Abdul Hamid et le Cinéma', *Ciné Journal,* 2, 39, (May 1909), p. 10.
[211] Stephen Bottomore, 'Turkey', p. 646.; See *Chapter 3*.
[212] Stephen Bottomore, 'The Sultan and the Cinematograph', in *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 6, 2, (July 2008), p. 121.
[213] Indeed, there was a long tradition of 'being photographed' for the Ottoman imperial family, even bareheaded photographs of princes, starting from the 1860s. This shows that the tenets of religion did not occupy an important place in the use of photography among the Ottoman imperials. See Bahattin Öztuncay, 'The Origins and Development', p. 92.

Even though the Sultan was seen as an autocrat, Stanford J. Shaw's proposal to 'look at him in his own context and his own time' may be a well-placed assessment in order to stay away from the present cinema scholarship in fashioning the Sultan as a despot in all matters.[214] François Georgeon notes that Abdülhamid II was a modern 'bourgeois' who took advantage of the offerings of his time like a true conformist and reflected certain models of Western culture in his policies.[215]

It is worth exploring the Sultan's view on visual culture in more detail. Prior to cinema, Sultan Abdülhamid II considered photography as an instrument of governance and a tool to help maintain his power and legitimacy at home and around the world. After all, as Sultan Abdülhamid II once told his chief secretary Tahsin Paşa while reviewing a newspaper, 'every image is an idea.'[216] This is also the reason why the Sultan initiated a photography album that was meant to represent the Empire around the world.[217] Yıldız Albums of Sultan Abdülhamid II, composed of 51 albums, included the photographs of 'the entire coastline of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn; historical artefacts; state buildings and establishments; and military schools'.[218] The Sultan sent approximately 1800 photographs, mostly taken by Viçen Abdullah, to the Library of Congress and the British Museum Library in 1893. A copy also remained in the İstanbul University Central

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[214] Stanford J. Shaw, 'Sultan', p. 180.

[215] François Georgeon suggests that the Sultan's traits and manners, his outlook and fashion, the decoration and furniture he preferred, his interest in literature and taste in music were all modern. Georgeon describes Sultan Abdülhamid II 'a bourgeois Sultan' and I agree with him because of the Sultan's lifestyle and taste in arts and literature, see François Georgeon, *Sultan*, p. 163.

[216] Tahsin Paşa, *Sultan Abdülhamid, Tahsin Paşa'nın Yıldız Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1990), pp. 356-357.

[217] Selim Deringil, *İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji II Abdülhamid Dönemi (1876-1909)*, Gül Çağalı Güven (trans.), (İstanbul : Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), pp. 195-196, 198.

[218] Bahattin Öztuncay, 'The Origins and Development', p. 82.

Library.[219] Also the Sultan had pictures taken of the servants of the Palace, candidates of military schools, and his photographs during the Friday Prayers at the Hamidiye Mosque near his residence.[220] Mustafa Özen contends that by using of visual images and films 'the sultan was able to display his power in a most modern and efficient way; not just within his empire, but also in foreign countries.'[221] Even though Sultan Abdülhamid II 'considered his portrait to be a private matter and was reluctant to share it with the public', he used photography 'as a showcase of progress and stability, he was also wary of seeing his pictures get out of hand through uncontrolled distribution' and that was especially the case with his own portrait.[222]

An archival source uncovers Sultan Abdülhamid II's award to Pierre-Victor Continsouza, a French inventor and engineer, in appreciation of his cinematographic invention. In his letter, dated December 29, 1898, Continsouza thanked the Sultan for his medal of Fine Arts.[223] As 'a bourgeois Sultan' Abdülhamid II was clearly interested in Western theatre, opera and photography, and also showed attention to films from early on. He consequently welcomed and awarded Continsouza, whose device was later further developed by Pathé Frères.[224] In 1900, Continsouza contacted the Ottoman authorities for permission to bring coal from Marseille for the *cinématographe* screening at Halep Çarşısı Theatre in İstanbul.[225] The coal provided the energy for coal gas for the screenings as electricity was not widely available in the capital during this time.[226] According to this record,

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[219]Ibid., p. 82.
[220] Mustafa Özen, 'Visual Representation', p. 147.
[221] Ibid., p. 147.
[222] Edhem Eldem, 'Powerful Images', pp. 116-118.
[223] BOA, Y.PRK.TKM, 2/34, (29 December 1898).
[224] Laurent Mannoni, 'Cinématograph Lumière', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 127.
[225] BOA, Y.A.RES, 110/44, (16 December 1900).
[226] See *Chapter 2*.

Continsouza's licence application was approved; moreover, he was granted a right to screen films in other parts of the Empire.[227]

> To His Majesty Sultan Abd-ul Hamid,
> Victor Continsouza thanks the Majesty for the gift of two hundred cents. The Majesty has kindly sent him the medal of Fine Arts for presenting his invention, a *cinématographe*, to the Majesty. Your Majesty's most humble servant.
> Ed. Salla Continsouza.[228]

Sultan Abdülhamid's appreciation of the latest advancements was not unique to his reign and policies, as it is possible to find examples of other sultans who embraced new inventions of the Western technology to show their appreciation, authority and supremacy by recognising and approving them.[229] Above all, the Sultan was aware of cinema's function and power in transmitting knowledge. Thus, he ordered a number of embassies to send informative moving pictures, especially on China's political conditions, in 1902.[230] Yet most of the films that arrived were about the European leaders and their troops in China at different periods of time.[231]

Linked to the development of cinema during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, there are two clauses in the *1903 Conditions of Cinematograph Privilege* that establish the Sultan as the commissioner and the authority to monitor and inspect film productions. Clause 5 states that

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[227] BOA, Y.A.RES, 110/44, (16 December 1900).
[228] BOA, Y.PRK.TKM, 2/34, (29 December 1898).
[229] For instance, Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-1861) awarded the American inventor of the telegraph (1845), S. Morse with a medal for his accomplishment after the test of the telegraph at the palace on August 9, 1847. The Ottoman Empire utilised the telegraph during the Tanzimat period in order to have a rapid communication within different state institutions such as military and civil bureaucracy and to strengthen the centralised state formation. 'Telgraf', in Nuri Akbayar & Ekrem Işın (eds.), *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 7, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), p. 243.
[230] BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA, 40/1, (12 April 1902).
[231] BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA, 40/1, (12 April 1902). During this time, the Boxer Rebellion took place in China between 1899 and 1901. See Jan Palmowski, *Oxford Dictionary of Contemporary World History from 1900 to the Present Day* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 130.

any armed conflicts of bandits, manoeuvres of the army, or any war scene of the Ottomans must be filmed in a lawful and objective way (*namûskârâne ve bî-tarafâne*). These productions about the state must be viewed by the Sultan at the palace prior to any screening to the members of the Ottoman army or the public. Moving pictures under the above-mentioned themes must not be exhibited without the confirmation of the Sultan.[232] This condition not only confines productions regarding military and political issues of the Empire within certain arrangements, but also positions Sultan Abdülhamid II as the ultimate inspecting and censoring authority over local film-making.[233]

Indeed, Sultan Abdülhamid II, as the political authority of the Empire, was 'the very source of law.'[234] While he maintained the ultimate authority to censor certain locally produced moving pictures, there was still potential for contested practises. While the Anatolian and Rumelian provinces of the Empire were under the control of the centralised state, other Balkan, African and Arabian provinces were less directly under the authority of the central state.[235] Official institutions and local authorities in the provinces could fail to follow the central authorities' procedures or could practise their own agenda, specifically in the realm of exhibition and production. As I have shown above, the censor officers' ad hoc practises were also the reflection of this discrepancy about the de facto nature of the regulatory space.

Various archival sources recount that at times governors and police took actions on a case-by-case basis. In the provinces, there are different accounts about the 'dangerous' moving pictures. However, the archival record of the provinces is limited and there might have been some cases of censorship or

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[232] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 5.
[233] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903).
[234] Hakan T. Karateke & Maurus Reinkowski (eds.), *Legitimizing the Order*, p. 38.
[235] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief*, p. 7. The autonomous provinces stretched from Algeria to Yemen, Bosnia to the Caucasus, and Eritrea to Basra.

restrictions that went unrecorded. For instance, no report to the central authority exists regarding the Manaki brothers, who actively produced films in the Balkans during the Hamidian era.[236] Indeed, Saadet Özen indicates that there is no indication that the brothers even edited and screened their films publicly.[237] This is an issue that needs further research. It may be because they operated in one of the regions (today's FYR of Macedonia) not affected directly by the central administration's cinema regulations, even though Hamidian centralisation was at its high point. Or there may be still be unreleased documents at the state archives which may solve this puzzle. Currently only 120 million out of 400 million documents are available to the researchers at the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives. [238]

Cinema regulations, embedded in diverse forms of discourses and practises, were probably shaped under various complex power relations. For instance, clause 5 ordered that the Sultan must personally inspect any moving pictures that contain a reference to Ottoman officials.[239] Indeed, this was the intention of employing the censor officers as 'the eyes of the Sultan.' The ultimate power that the Sultan embodied as a censoring and inspecting

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[236] The Manaki brothers shot a number of films directly about the Empire, especially the ones about the 1908 Revolution of the Young Turks in quest for a constitutional regime. Some of those are as follows: *Manifestations on the Occasion of Young Turks' Revolution*, 1908; *Turks Having Speech on Hürriyet*, 1908; *Processions on the Occasion of Hürriyet*, 1908; *Military Orchestra Parade, Coaches and Cavaliers*, 1908; *Turkish Sultan Reshad Visiting Bitola*, 1911. Their first film is *the Weaver* or *the Grandmother Despina* (1905). This information is gathered from the Film Archive of the Cinematheque of Macedonia, yet there is no catalogue number used in the archive, see http://www.maccinema.com/Catalog.aspx?p=519 (Accessed on 1 July 2015). For a detailed view on the Manaki brothers see Saadet Özen, *Rethinking the Young Turk Revolution: Manaki Brothers' Still and Moving Images* (Boğaziçi University: Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 2010).

[237] Saadet Özen, 'Balkanlar'ın İlk Sinemacılarından Manaki Biraderler', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 219, (March 2012), p. 65.

[238] For further information on sources about cinema at the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, see Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, 'Prime Ministry', pp. 17-48.

[239] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 5.

authority of moving pictures was probably a complex process between governmental agencies and officials, as I examined above.

The reason behind the formulation of this condition in the privilege likely stemmed from the Sultan's central and monarchic rule. The authorities controlled cinema during a sustained legitimacy crisis typified by constitutional demands, the nationalist movements, and the heyday of international political propaganda.[240] The existing political crisis and the nationalist aspirations of various Ottoman ethnic subjects was the justification for maintaining the unity of control cinema the Ottomans. According to Erik J. Zürcher, at this time 'the most two intractable were the Macedonian and Armenian problems.'[241] Secret committees, guerrilla activities, and nationalist organisations were continuously active in the Balkans and Anatolia. There was suspicion that a new generation of officers and bureaucrats who were not 'loyal' to the Sultan were expanding their power with liberal and constitutional ideas which led to the Hamidian state's more oppressive acts. [242]

Particularly, Abdülhamid II's approach to imported films was cautious as they could be 'harmful' to his own political power and legitimacy by depicting other political leaders and situating the Ottomans in an 'inferior' position. Hence, the representation of Ottoman military and officials in films must be portrayed with dignity, and the task of inspecting them was assigned to the Sultan himself, the ultimate power in the Empire. This concern was also reflected in the above-mentioned *Censorship Act* of staged performances in 1894.[243]

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[240] François Georgeon, *Sultan*, p. 158.
[241] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 86.
[242] Ibid., p. 90.
[243] BOA, MF.MKT, 239/36, (23 August 1894).

While the Hamidian ruling elite sometimes censored the circulation and exhibition of certain moving pictures, the Sultan planned to utilise cinema for certain purposes based on his understanding of cinema's political function. Thus, it is important to scrutinise the *Cinematograph Privilege* in regard to the Sultan's political and legal roles:

> The grantees of the privileges are in charge of screening newsreels about the military showing, at a reasonable ticket price, different divisions of the army, significant buildings and the monuments of the time including the substantial advancement of the Empire to the subjects in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, even in the remote villages. The grantees of the privileges must strive to show his Highness the Sultan's kindness, grace and benevolence to his entire subjects via these films in order to show that they are the servants of the Sultan.[244]

By borrowing Nadir Özbek's argument about voluntary activity during the Hamidian regime, I similarly propose that the draft privilege portrays the attempt to integrate cinema into 'the regime's power strategies while containing them through strict supervision.'[245] Clause 2 shows that the political agenda about cinema was utilitarian and opportunistic due to the condition to depict the Sultan's philanthropic activities and the advancement of the Empire by displaying its monuments and edifices in moving pictures.[246]

The framework that the privilege provided for moving pictures could help impact on public opinion in accordance with the Hamidian ideology and further strengthen the solidarity and loyalty of the Ottomans, even 'in the remote villages,' as clause 2 clearly indicates.[247] This clause states that moving pictures were to be used to improve the image of the Empire among state officials and subjects and to be screened for free or inexpensively. I suggest that along with the clause 2 there are a number of indicators in this

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[244] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 2.
[245] Nadir Özbek, 'Philantropic Activity', p. 64.
[246] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903).
[247] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 2.

text revealing the intention to benefit from moving pictures in educational settings and propaganda purposes.

In so doing, the conditions intended to influence the public opinion of Ottoman subjects by emphasising the developing image of the Empire. Moving pictures could be a tool to support the Sultan's power and to try to guarantee the loyalty of the subjects and could help regain the Empire's prestige in the international realm. Stephen Bottomore claims that the Sultan's commissioning of a film about the Anatolian Railway of the Empire proved that he was 'convinced of the utility of film.'[248] In this instance of patronage, the Hamidian state made a practical decision to benefit from the functionality of moving pictures by showing modernised transport in the Empire.[249] The investment in modern transport and infrastructure could be visible via films. However, there is no further information about whether this film was shot. Yet, Mustafa Özen writes that apart from the above-mentioned intention, 'the sultan gave permission to foreign operators to make shots of his army' in order to reinforce the power of the state whilst hoping to shape public opinion.[250]

Sultan Abdülhamid II became the subject of three films, in 1905 and 1908. In this way, even though he was secluded at the Yıldız Palace, cinema made him mobile. Let me now trace these productions briefly. After the 1905 assassination attempt on the Sultan, a film captured his image during Friday

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[248] Stephen Bottomore, 'Don Ramirez/Spanish Showman Active in Turkey', *Who's Who of Victorian-Cinema*, "www.victorian-cinema.net/ramirez (Accessed on 15 June 2015). Currently there is no further information about the date of this commission and Bottomore adds that 'It is unclear whether these films were actually made, but Abdul Hamid's interest in the cinema continued, and by 1906 he was employing an English "bioscope attaché" to screen travel films for himself and his harem in the palace.' More examples of this kind can be also found in the sources from the Prime Ministry Archives in İstanbul as I will demonstrate below.

[249] Likewise, in Iran Shah's patronage in the realm of cinema was quite influential yet the Ottoman case is a modest example in royal patronage for cinema. See Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Cinema*, p. 39.

[250] Mustafa Özen, 'Visual Representation', p. 148.

prayers. This shot was taken approximately two weeks after the bombing and was likely done in order to prove he was still alive, and not one of the 26 victims.[251] Also this incident was depicted via the use of photographs entitled, *Bomb Incident Record*, showing similar images of the Sultan leaving the *Selamlık* ceremony; and other photographs included evidence such as bombs and mines.[252] Another film, *The Friday Prayer at the Hamidiye Mosque* (Pathé Frères, No 2465, 90 metres, 1908) depicted the Sultan and the royal family in their carriages along with the crowds gathered for prayer at the palace premises. The Pathé Catalogue lists the screening of this film in France in September 1908 and it was most probably available in other European countries at the time.[253] Finally, in the third film, the Sultan appeared in *the Opening of the Ottoman Parliament* (*L'Overture du Parlement*, Sigmund Weinberg, 1908), although 'he was not the centre of attention.'[254] This film was made after the constitutional revolution of the Young Turks against the Sultan in July 1908. His appearance in this film during the ceremonies shows his support for the parliamentary regime.

Saadet Özen indicates that these films prove that the Sultan used moving pictures for political goals, especially during moments of crisis. On the other hand, the strict control of his image and portraits in the public space was depended on specific goals and political agenda.[255] The power of cinema could convey certain messages and the Sultan was aware of this fact. The 1908 film could be viewed in reference to the Young Turk Revolution and his struggle to claim the Sultanic and monarchic rule in collaboration with the

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[251] İbrahim Yıldıran, 'Selim Sırrı Tarcan ve Türk Sinemasının Erken Dönem Tartışmalarına Katkı', *Kebikeç,* 27, (2009), p. 225.
[252] Bahattin Öztuncay, 'The Origins and Development', p. 98.
[253] Saadet Özen, 'Padişahın Filmi', p. 187.
[254] Mustafa Özen, 'Visual Representation', pp. 150-151.
[255] Saadet Özen, 'Padişahın Filmi', p. 189.

new constitutional and liberal regime. I contend that both of these films exemplify this idea. Above all, the Sultan attempted to do the same with his photograph albums project, the awarding of medals and honours, and the organising of official ceremonies to influence public opinion.[256]

Conclusion

The central subject in this chapter was the attempt to discern the authorities' intentions to regulate cinema by introducing specific legal decisions. For this purpose, I firstly analysed the existing regulations of printed media and entertainments in relation to censorship. I focused on the censor officers who functioned as 'the eyes of the Sultan' along with the regulatory institutions that usually administered the legal actions. Secondly, I examined the *1903 Conditions of Cinematograph Privilege* which was the blueprint of regulations revealing the intentions of the authorities to manage cinema through a set of rules. Thirdly, I scrutinised the controversial topic of Sultan Abdülhamid II and cinema in the quest to build a critical approach against the existing literature and to reflect the historical context in relation to visual culture and entertainment. In this way, my solid findings have established how the regulation of cinema at this period is misinterpreted by a number of scholars.

Understanding the multifaceted and complex process of cinema regulations was firstly possible by exploring the existing regulations of printed media and entertainments because the authorities had certain deep-rooted concerns about the political opposition, the loyalty of its subjects, and the issue of public morals. Throughout the Hamidian era, cinema regulations were practised on an ad hoc basis in relation to the existing regulations of the *Printing Houses Regulations* of 1888, the 1894 *Censorship Act* for staged

[256] Benjamin C. Fortna, 'The Reign', p. 53.

performances, the 1896 *Regulation of Theatre, Ortaoyunu, Shadow Play and Puppet Shows* and other precursory rules.

Again, the Hamidian authorities dealt with many rapid changes, political, technological and otherwise, during this period. The legislators' approach to the challenges posed by cinema reflected the fact that they sought the needs of their time. I will present other historical examples to support this argument in the following chapters. The total surveillance of the bureaucracy in daily life affected cinema regulations as well. Hence in this chapter, I described the cinema regulations of the Hamidian era as ongoing interrelations practised by the Sultan and his officials, who eventually reflected the aim to blend Ottoman and Islamist notions with cinema while benefiting from moving pictures.

The *1903 Cinematograph Privilege* is the authorities' attempt to introduce a standardised and centralised legal framework for exhibition purposes. I could not locate any second party who signed this document. The evidence in hand shows that this document was formulated for a person or company to initiate the cinema entrepreneurship for thirty-five years, the final execution of the privilege remains inconclusive. The twenty-six clauses were very much the reflection of the 'administrative power of the state' seen in the realms of the printed media, entertainments and cinema.

I propose that Hamidian cinema regulations were less about censorship as a repressive practise and more as a productive use of cinema. This chapter explored the state's intentions to employ films in educational settings for vocational training, instructing sciences and introducing new technologies in farming, shaping public opinion and constructing public morality via both censorship and propaganda. ⊠

CHAPTER 2
WARTIME REGULATIONS

Wartime Regulations explores cinema regulations during the First World War (1914-1918) and the Armistice period (1918-1922). Regulations directed at cinema in this period display political and strategic concerns regarding the wartime conditions. After the Young Turk Revolution (1908), Sultan Abdülhamid II ruled the Empire for one more year in collaboration with the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihâd ve Terakkî,* CUP) under the constitutional regime. Then, in 1909, Sultan Mehmed V (Reşad) (r. 1909-1918) came to throne and governed the state with the CUP. Later, Sultan Mehmed VI (Vahdettin) (r. 1918-1922) was the last Sultan of the Empire during the transitional years towards a number of nation-states.

In the midst of this political atmosphere, cinema regulations were significant to the CUP in order to conduct the state's ideology that emphasised national values and Turkism.[1] Starting from the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the CUP along with a number of elites began to formulate Turkish nationalism in alliance with Ottomanism and Islamism. Their broader concerns were reflected in draft laws regulating cinema and in instances of film censorship. Especially after the break of First World War in 1914, the Ministry of War (*Harbiye Nezâreti*) began to engage in cinema regulations and censorship policies. War propaganda initiated the CUP's counter-propaganda and filmmaking in the Empire. Thus, under the auspices of the Minister of War, Enver Paşa, the Military Office of Cinema (*Merkez Ordu Sinema Dairesi,* MOC) was founded circa 1914.

[1] Hasan Kayalı, *Jön Türkler ve Araplar* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), p. 92.

The Ottoman Empire had been in a state of social disintegration since the Balkan Wars. The economic and socio-cultural changes during the wars created new boundaries of ethnicity and religion, raised the cost of living, brought women into the workplace, and contributed to the growth of wealth in certain segments of society.[2] The psychological effect of the painful defeat in the Balkan Wars weighed upon members of the army.[3] Above all, the struggling economy and lack of certain, basic needs such as bread, gas and sugar caused chaos and disputes in Ottoman society, especially in the capital.[4] Meanwhile, 'the war period witnessed capital accumulation by small merchants of Muslim and provincial origins'.[5] These 'new moneyed men' gradually changed social relations. On the one hand the entertainment life, use of alcohol, gambling, and human trafficking increased, on the other hand poverty became visible with the increasing numbers of beggars in the streets.[6] These newly emerging war profiteers were also the customers of cinema-houses and other popular entertainments.

Within this background, this chapter discusses the changing institutional practises of film restrictions, showing the discourses and practises of various personas and competing ideologies around the censorship of films within the broader regulatory space of the late Ottoman Empire. Interventionist policies over printed media and entertainments could be observed in the visual space, including photography and film. The normative system of film

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[2] Nur Bilge Criss, *İstanbul under Allied Occupation 1918-1923* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999), p. 22.
[3] Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914 The Ottoman Empire and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 23.
[4] Zafer Toprak, 'Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda İstanbul', *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 2, (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı & Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), p. 240.
[5] Zafer Toprak, 'Nationalism and Economics in the Young Turk Era', in Jacques Thobie & Salgur Kançal (eds.), *Industrialisation, Communication et Rapports Sociaux en Turquie et en Mediterranée Orientale* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), p. 262.
[6] Zafer Toprak, 'Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda İstanbul', p. 243.

censorship was still arbitrary in action due to the lack of enforced regulations created specifically for film production, exhibition and circulation early in this period.

The first attempt to regulate cinema occurred after the break out of the war. The 1914 *Censorship Act* initially led to the strict control of the press, theatre and cinema.[7] Police and censorship officers worked with the Ministry of War at this time to control the regulations of cinema.[8] Yet, the Ministry of War did not directly target cinema with this *Censorship Act*; it was an interventionist legal decision over all entertainments, printed media and other communications including telephone, telegraph and correspondence. In later attempts to solve the problems that cinema posed, legislators aimed to constitute a centrally administered regulatory space with the help of governmental institutions under a number of ministries. For this purpose, in 1916, legislators designed the *Draft Regulation* which was amended throughout the war years.[9] This document set the rules for 'inappropriate' content in films; in other words, it clearly stated which images could not be screened in films. Legislators' attempts to design this written set of rules reveal their concerns about cinema and the priorities in shaping the broader regulatory space from opening up of cinema-houses, preview committees, issues of film content and other technical aspects of exhibition venues.[10] It appears that the efforts to control cinema were outlined on paper, but the

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[7] *Sansür Talimatnâmesi* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Askeriye Süleymaniye, 1330R/1914).

[8] BOA, DH.EUM.MTK, 80/6, (24 January 1915).; BOA, DH.EUM.KLU, 15/23, (24 January 1915).

[9] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916). (Hereafter the *Draft Regulation*, *Tiyatro, Sinema ve Benzeri Eğlence Mekânlarının Açılış ve İdâreleri Hakkında Düzenlenen Kanûn Tasarısı*).

[10] In this chapter I refer to this document in relation to the issue of film censorship specifically, I explore technical clauses covering the exhibition rules in *Chapter 3*. In *Chapter 4*, I trace my discussions around audiences in relation to this *Draft Regulation* as well.

Draft Regulation was not enforced. Below, I indicate several conditions from the text, which display this de jure regulation of cinema.

During the wartime period, legislators did not enforce a standardised cinema regulation, but rather took strategic actions due to the ongoing war. For this purpose, I critically refer to the existing literature, which identifies Ahmet Fehim's film, *The Governess* (*Mürebbiye*, 1919) as 'the first censored film' of this period. Some of the scholars' arguments are invalid and I show so by using archival sources and highlighting lack of evidence. Apart from the wartime *Censorship Act*, there is hardly any evidence that the *1916 Draft Regulation* and other decisions were enforced. In the midst of the war, censorship laws were drafted, but in the chaos of this moment, as the Empire was fading, these regulations appear not to have been enforced.

The Battle over Cinema

This period saw the rise of separatist movements, inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions and European Great Powers' interventions. The Ottoman Empire entered the First World War in November 1914 on the side of the Central Powers.[11] The Empire lost 'virtually all its European possessions' and the Allied Powers invaded the Empire following the end of the First World War.[12]

The CUP's answer to these multiple challenges was initially 'Ottoman citizenship,' in order to save the Empire. However, as Erik J. Zürcher notes, the CUP soon realised how difficult it would be to achieve.[13] Throughout the First World War, influential members of the CUP such as Enver Paşa, Talat

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[11] Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road*, p. 17.
[12] Feroz Ahmad, 'War and Society under the Young Turks, 1908-18', *Review*, 11, 2, (Spring 1988), p. 266.
[13] Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk*, p. 57.

Paşa and Cemal Paşa were actively involved in the politics of the Empire.[14] The CUP sought to gain legitimacy and power in the world, like other European empires. However, in this period the ideologies of Ottomanism, Turkism and Islamism did not evolve in a 'linear fashion' and were used interchangeably in an opportunistic manner depending on political circumstances.[15] At the time, Ottomanism meant the efforts to unite 'all of the ethnic and religious communities,' without religious affiliations under the banner of Ottoman citizenship.[16] Islamism emphasised 'the community of Muslims' and Turkish nationalism focused on 'the common historical roots of the Turkic peoples'.[17]

In the years following the defeat of the First World War, a number of new nation states emerged. One of them, the Republic of Turkey, was founded under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] through the national resistance movement (1919-1923), although Sultan Mehmed VI (r. 1918-1922) was still the legitimate political power in the Empire until the opening up the Great National Assembly in April 1920. The Sultan was this time challenged by the independence struggle directed by the Assembly.[18] In brief, the wartime years witnessed a series of catastrophes and power transitions under the fog of wars: foreign power occupation, violence, massacre, population exchanges, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, food shortages, epidemics, and despair. Confronted with these dramatic events, then, what was the legislators' objective with the regulation of

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[14] Enver Paşa (1882-1922): War Minister (1914-1918).; Talat Paşa, (1874-1921): Interior Minister (1909-1911/1913-1918), Finance Minister (1914-1917), and Grand Vizier (1917-1918).; Cemal Paşa (1872-1922): Navy Minister (1914-1918), II. Army Commander in 1914, IV Army Commander (1914-1917) see Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road*, p. viii, xiv.
[15] Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk*, pp. 213-235.
[16] Ibid., pp. 215-216.
[17] Ibid., pp. 215-216.
[18] Ibid., p. 14.

cinema? What strategies did they use to shape cinema? What role did propaganda films play in regulating cinema? Let me now explore cinema regulations within the framework of these questions.

Throughout the First World War, cinema regulations were set by special ordinances. The CUP government attempted to regulate cinema centrally within other entertainments and communications. The CUP government, in collaboration with the Ministry of War, made the legal decisions during the wartime years. This wartime condition led to contested cinema regulations. Disparate powers, such as the bureaucrats of CUP, the Sultan, the police, the Ministry of War and the Ottoman Imperial Army (*Osmanlı Ordu-yu Humâyunu*), censor officers, and the Allied High Commission oversaw the activities relating to cinema in the Empire. Cinema was subject to competing authorities, leading to a complicated and unclear situation.

This process of establishing wartime cinema regulations is initially seen in the *Censorship Act*, which was passed and enforced by the Ottoman Ministry of War in 1914. The Ottoman Imperial Army, especially, began to control the arena of entertainment, post and telegraph services, press, and other means of communications and transport, including cinema. The CUP became more and more authoritarian with its control over the state apparatus. Censor officers were employed to control printed and visual media, and other public entertainments as in the previous Hamidian regime. With the *Censorship Act*, police forces became actively involved in the censoring practises by collaborating with the army.[19]

The *Censorship Act* had 61 clauses, charging institutions in the army and state bureaucracy and their officers to become censors, mandating the censorship of official and unofficial correspondence in post and telegraph,

[19] BOA, DH.EUM.MTK, 80/6, (24 January 1915).; BOA, DH.EUM.KLU, 15/23, (24 January 1915).

and prohibiting editorials about politics in printed media without permission.[20] The use of any information about the political and military conditions of the Empire in theatre and films was also prohibited.[21] As a result, any form of judgment or information about internal or foreign affairs was strictly forbidden. Clause 59 in the act reads as follows:

> All film ribbons and the theatrical performances which will be staged for the first time should be sent to the Directorate of Censorship and Inspection in İstanbul, and, in the provinces, to the censorship inspector. Only previewed and approved productions are allowed to be exhibited.[22]

As Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton write, 'the great innovations of the First World War in the use of cinema, press, cartoons and other media led to a more centralised monopoly on information and propaganda than ever before.'[23] After the development of this type of new media, such as telegraph and cinema, the propaganda techniques that were available gradually increased after the 1910s.[24] Cinema was seen as means of communication that was also capable of influencing certain faiths, beliefs, and loyalties among a targeted public, especially during wartime.[25] Cinema served the aim of propaganda in terms of conveying a message to the targeted public in order 'to influence attitudes and ideas on all levels'.[26] Particularly when two

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[20] *Sansür Talimatnâmesi*, (1914), Clause 59.
[21] Turhan Turgut, 'I. Dünya Savaşında Osmanlı Posta Sansürü', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 243, (March 2014), p. 83.
[22] *Sansür Talimatnâmesi*, (1330R/1914). Here the term used for 'film ribbon' is 'sinema şeridi'.
[23] Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton, 'Propaganda: A Misnomer of Rhetoric and Persuasion?', in Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton (eds.), *Propaganda Political Rhetoric and Identity 1300-2000*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. 14.; For a more nuanced work on the role of caricature see Eberhard Demm, 'Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, (1993), 28, 1, pp. 163-192.
[24] Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton, 'Propaganda: A Misnomer', pp. 9-10.
[25] Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, Hans Speier (eds.), *Propaganda and Communication in World History: The Symbolic Instrument in Early Times*, 1 (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii, the East-West Centre, 1979), p. 5.
[26] Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton, 'Propaganda: A Misnomer', p. 9.

genres combined, newsreel and fiction, cinema appeared to be a powerful propaganda tool in the early twentieth century.[27]

The Allied and Central Powers relied on views from the battlefields to shape public opinion. The countries in the war were in need of high morale, patriotic solidarity and national unity. They were ready to use their capacity to control public opinion in this regard.[28] All belligerents had their war strategies and agenda for the dissemination of propaganda via use of textual and visual media in order to transmit a certain ideology. For instance, archival records suggest that Britain exercised a great deal of propaganda, particularly in Hejaz, the Iraqi and Palestine Fronts in order to weaken the Ottoman Empire's legitimacy in the region.[29] The CUP was concerned about the Allies' use of propaganda films against the Central Powers, including themselves. For instance, in 1915 the Russian forces in Constanza screened *cinématographe* shows depicting 'The Gallipoli or the fall of the Austrian and German forces at the battlefield'.[30] A telegram sent to the Ministry of Interior indicated that the Greeks and Armenians watched the *cinématographe* with applause, hinting at the joy felt after the failures of the Central Powers. However, Ottoman authorities noted that these images were from 1913 military manoeuvres between Germany and Austria. According to CUP, if it were true, the problem, was, firstly the use of older images in films as if they belonged to the current war. Secondly, the telegram's text implies the uneasiness of being humiliated via films. The Ottoman officials were not happy with the use of films by the Russians in Constanza. According to them these films were untrue.[31]

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[27] Ibid., p. 10.
[28] John Horne, 'Public Opinion and Politics', in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I*, (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), p. 280.
[29] BOA, HR.SYS, 2113/12-15, (20 November 1917).
[30] BOA, DH.EUM.5Şb, 13/24C, (30 May 1915).
[31] BOA, DH.EUM.5Şb, 13/24C, (30 May 1915).

Similarly, in 1915 a report sent from the Ottoman Embassy in Thessaloniki to the Foreign Ministry reported a screening held for French, Greek and English soldiers at the Olympia Cinema, indicating the Allies' propaganda activities. The Embassy also attached an article entitled 'A Beautiful Expression of Sympathy', published on 29 December 1915 by *Opinion*. The *Opinion*'s article read as follows:

> Yesterday, the Olympia Cinema screened a projection of special films representing the French army in the field. French officers, superior Greek officers, among them Colonels Metaxas and Messalas, and special guests from English offices attended the film session. The audience enthusiastically applauded the French troops who were on the screen. […] The Greek officers, French and English, all in one as a community, felt the same way, with love and gratitude. Upon leaving, Franco-Greek-English officers were photographed and filmed by the operators of the French Ministry of War. These films thus are official documents attesting, once again, that Greece cannot and will never forget the liberating France.[32]

These examples demonstrate that the propaganda films of the Allied Powers could affect public opinion and the military forces. The Ottoman authorities did not welcome them, they enforced a total military censorship policy in an attempt to protect national unity. Most of the time, however, they were in a position to defend themselves and constantly counter the Allies' propaganda during wartime.

One dimension of the political goal of making and screening wartime films was for a favourable depiction of the Central Powers in opposition to 'the enemy', the Allied Powers. The CUP also collaborated with the German and Austro-Hungarians for propaganda purposes and screened their patriotic films at conferences and exhibitions throughout the Empire. Most of their productions appear to praise political leaders and attribute to them a 'God

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[32] BOA, HR.SYS, 2389/3, (1915).

like' role in the conduct of the war. For instance, *Ferah*, a journal owned by the theatre of the same name, reported that a number of German propaganda films were screened in İstanbul in 1915. In this programme, seven propaganda films were screened, entitled 300 Years of History of the German Army. The announcement listed the following films: *Prince Bismarck Administers the Heroic Soldiers at Paris Garrison in 1870-1871, The Battle of France-Germany, The governors of Saxony and Bavaria*, *the Manoeuvres of Germany during the World War in 1914*, *His Excellency Emperor Wilhelm's Arrival to His Yacht*, *and The Battle of Germany and France in 1915*.[33] The news also included a slogan attributed to 'the Great Diplomat' Prince Bismarck: 'We, the Germans, fear God and but nothing else in the world.' These explicit propaganda films emphasised the glory and victories of Emperor Frederick, Emperor Wilhelm and Prince Bismarck in order to support the war effort.[34]

In 1916, correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the police reveals that the Austrian Gold Schmitt Company asked for a permit to screen and make films in the Empire.[35] The telegrams show that the Ottoman authorities confirmed the film exhibition request in Anatolia. In this way, Gold Schmitt could screen films about the Austrian's war strategies. However, the Austrian travelling operators were followed by the police while travelling in different provinces. Later, the company requested permission to make films about the Empire; yet the travel permit was only for the exhibition of newsreels in Konya, Niğde, Halep and Adana in 1916. Later, the Austrian Gold Schmitt Company was banned from travelling in the Empire due to their production goals which involved with travelling all around the Empire.[36]

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[33] *Ferah*, 57, (İstanbul: Sancakciyan Matbaası, 29 January 1330/1915), p. 3.
[34] Ibid., p. 3.
[35] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 61/115, (26 February 1916).; BOA, DH.ŞFR, 62/107, (22 April 1916).
[36] BOA, DH.ŞFR, 62/107, (22 April 1916).

Hakan Aydın notes that films depicting the Gallipoli front were screened in Konya and an emotional atmosphere was observed among the public.[37] By addressing the films to students, statesmen and soldiers, who might have already been sympathetic to the state's agenda, the state aimed to reinforce its message for patriotism and unification under the hardship of war.[38]

a. The Military Office of Cinema

The Military Office of Cinema (*Merkez Ordu Sinema Dairesi, MOC*) was founded circa 1914 under the auspices of the Minister of War, Enver Paşa.[39] This official organisation functioned as the only production institution for filmmaking and supported the making of the early propaganda films. The technical staff, cameramen and cinematographers, were principally soldiers who later became pioneers of filmmaking and cinema-house entrepreneurs.[40] The Ottoman Army supported the production of several films at different fronts, such as the Dardanelles and also in İstanbul.[41] While films provided information for military purposes about different war theatres, they were also used for war propaganda purposes in order to

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[37] Hakan Aydın, 'Sinemanın Taşrada Gelişim Süreci: Konya'da İlk Sinemalar ve Gösterilen Filmler (1910-1950)', *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 19, (2008), p. 64.

[38] BOA, DH.UMVM, 78/41, (27 October 1919).; BOA, DH.EUM.MH, 148/78, (22 February 1917).

[39] Nijat Özön, *Sinema El Kitabı* (İstanbul: Elif, 1964), p. 114.

[40] Sigmund Weinberg opened the Pathé Cinema in 1908 and was one of the most influential film distributors and producers in the Empire. Fuad Bey [Uzkınay] worked as a cinematographer and directed a number of documentaries. Cemil Filmer started his career as a cameraman, and later opened a number of cinema-houses in the country, Lale and others, see Cemil Filmer, *Hatıralar Türk Sinemasında 65 Yıl* (İstanbul, 1984).

[41] Other wartime newsreels produced by the Ministry of War and the MOC were as follows: *Retreat of the Allied Forces at the Battle of Anafartalar* (*Anafartalar Muharebesi'nde İtilaf Ordularının Püskürtülmesi*, MOC, 1915), *Galician Operation* (*Galiçya Harekâtı*, MOC, 1915), *The Battle of Dardanelles* (*Çanakkale Muharebesi*, MOC, 1916), *The General Townshend* (General Townshend, MOC, 1916), *The Funeral of Von Der Goltz Pasha* (*Von Der Goltz'un Cenaze Merasimi*, MOC, 1916), *The Arrival of the German Emperor in İstanbul (Alman İmparatoru'nun Dersaadet'e Gelişi*, MOC, 1917), and *The Visit of the German Emperor to the Dardanelles* (*Alman İmparatoru'nun Çanakkale Ziyareti*, MOC, 1917) see Nijat Özön, 'Türkiye'de Sinema', in Rekin Teksoy (ed.), *Arkın Sinema Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul, 1970), p. 454.

influence the civilians and bureaucrats and affect their national sentiments and values.[42]

The wartime circumstances intensified the banning of the Allied Powers' films. The MOC aimed to influence public opinion, to support patriotic solidarity and unity among the Ottomans. The MOC's main goal was similar to that of the British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) in terms of encouraging 'collectivism and public spirit' by using film.[43] However in functionality, MOC did not have the support of a big film industry like BEF and made only a few wartime newsreels to counteract foreign propaganda and create patriotic solidarity.

In the midst of wartime concerns regarding cinema, the Ottomans attempted to produce a number of war newsreels and collaborated with the Germans and Austro-Hungarians in order to increase support for the war and keep their war cause valid in the eyes of the public. The state and the army aimed to control and censor the Allied Powers' use of wartime films in the Empire. Ottoman authorities could not ignore the power of cinema during the war years. While the MOC produced propaganda films, the state and the army aimed to control and ban the Allied Powers' wartime films in the Empire.

One of the productions made by the army was *The Destruction of the Russian Monument in Ayastefanos* (*Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesi'nin Yıkılışı/ Ayastefanos'taki Moskof Heykelinin Tahribi*), which was filmed on November

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[42] Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sinema ve Propaganda, 1908-1922', *Kurgu Online International Journal of Communication Studies*, (June 2010), 2, (Eskişehir: Anadolu University Press), pp. 10-11.
[43] Rebecca E. Harrison, *Admission for All How Cinema and the Railways Shaped the British Culture, 1895-1948* (University College London: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 2014), p. 108.

1914 by Ottoman Reserve Officer Fuad Bey [Uzkınay].[44] The film was co-produced with the Austrian Sascha-Meester Gesellschaft, co-belligerent of the Ottomans.[45] This early newsreel, which has not survived, aimed to chronicle the public destruction of this monument, a symbol of the Russian victory over the Ottomans in the Russian-Ottoman War (1877-1878). CUP considered the monument as a threat to Ottoman sovereignty during the First World War and its destruction important. By filming the public destruction of the monument, the film sought to establish unification and public support for the armed forces and the CUP government.

In 1915, Ahmed Necati Bey, a photography teacher at a Teachers' College (*Dar'ülmualimin-i Aliyye*), went to the Gallipoli front to make battlefield films. He was funded by the Ministry of War. The goal was to screen these films to students and members of the army.[46] Most Ottoman wartime films were about the dispatch of military supplies and ammunition, images of prisoners of war, and protests against the occupation of the country. It appears that the military attempted to create a sense of patriotism and solidarity as well as an eagerness and morale for war.

The Army also sought to use film in their training in an entertaining manner. For instance, Major Hafız Hakkı**,** serving as the commander of the Third Army in 1915, requested that a *cinématographe* be brought to Erzurum in order to entertain the soldiers who might have had low morale.[47] Hafız Hakkı was an important figure in the Ottoman Army who wanted to improve the conditions of the soldiers by introducing educational reforms. Hafız Hakkı

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[44] For a detailed discussion of this film, see Dilek Kaya Mutlu, 'Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesi: Kim Yıktı Kim Çekti Kim Yazdı', *Seyir*, 3, (Spring 2006), pp. 12-21.; Rekin Teksoy, *Turkish Cinema*, Martin Thomen & Özde Çeliktemel (trans.), (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayınları, 2008), p. 17.
[45] Nijat Özön, *İlk Türk Sinemacısı Fuat Uzkınay* (Türk Sinematek Yayınları, 1970), pp. 8-10.
[46] BOA, MF.MKT, 1210/33, (8 July 1915).; BOA, MF.MKT, 1211/34, (25 August 1915).
[47]BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 27/64, (21 February 1915).

was an idealist who saw the 'impoverished, unhealthy, and uneducated recruits' in the army's ranks for regular military service.[48]

The Army's interest in employing propaganda films can also be seen by their attempt to open a cinema-house in 1919. The Ottoman Reserve Officers Association (*Osmanlı İhtiyât Zâbitan Cemiyeti*) tried to establish a cinema-house for the benefit of army members. The defeat of the Empire and the control mechanisms of the Allies during occupation years prevented this effort.[49] In the midst of ongoing strategies for the use of films, the Ministry of Interior intended to regulate cinema through police and municipal agencies in *the 1916 Draft Regulation.* I turn now to explore this regulation.

The 1916 Draft Regulation

The *1916 Draft Regulation Concerning the Management and Opening of Theatres, Cinema and Similar Entertainment Venues* was specifically designed to control leisure activities related to theatre, cinema, dance shows, circuses, concerts, and festivals through 60 clauses.[50] Regulations particular to cinema are indicated in clauses 31 to 39. Some of the conditions about theatres are also valid for cinema regulations. The drafting of this resolution took a long time.[51] There is correspondence dating back to 1918 between the Ministry of Interior, varying state institutions and Ottoman Consulates in European countries (Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, France and Sweden) which shows the

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[48] Major Hafız Hakkı (1878-1915) see Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road*, p. 32.

[49] Ali Servet Öncü, 'İstanbul'da Mütareke Döneminde Yedek Subay Teşkilatlanmaları', *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 40, (2009), p. 350.

[50] G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', p. 265.Clause 31 refers to the other parts of the regulation relating the conditions in cinema-houses. Clause 31: Clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26, in the first part under the regulations of theatres, govern the construction and establishment of cinema-houses that are liable to the conditions referred in above-mentioned clauses, including those the ones under *the Criminal Code*. Yet if a cinema-house is established in a space such as a garden or land, instead of a building, the establishment is exempt from clauses 2, 4, 7, 18, and 20.

[51] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).

legislators' plans to seek regulation models for cinema.[52] This evidence indicates that legislators aimed to amend the *Draft Regulation* before its enforcement.[53] The wartime conditions, political priorities and bureaucratic uncertainty postponed the enforcement of the draft resolution. Yet, it still gives an insight into what the state was intending at this moment. Clause 33 and 34 concern the previewing of films, the details as follow:

> Clause 33:
> The programmes that cinema-houses will screen should be sent to the General Directorate of Public Security and the Safety Secretariat in İstanbul and in the provinces to the highest civil servant official at least twenty-four hours in advance. If the programme is subject to revision, or if additional details are requested pertaining to the programme, those must be provided.[54]
> Clause 34:
> For films that will be shown for the first time at cinema-houses, they must first be sent for approval by the Chief of Police in İstanbul and the head civil servant in the provinces. Films that are not previewed by the officials and censured productions are forbidden to be exhibited.[55]

The General Directorate of Public Security and the Safety Secretariat in İstanbul (*Dersaadet Polis Müdüriyet-i Umûmiyyesi)*, and the highest civil servant official in the provinces are charged with previewing films.[56] The fact that the Chief of Police is charged with evaluating the film content shows that cinema-going was considered an issue of public safety and security. The practise of previewing, as stated, is quite structured in dividing the

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[52] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/60, (23 June 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/8, (21 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/7, (20 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/3, (3 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK. 29/15, (22 October 1918).
[53] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 38/12, (29 May 1918).
[54] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[55] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[56] The wording is '*en yüksek mülkiye memuru*'.

responsibilities among police officials and civil servants, setting a specific time frame for film preview before public screenings.[57] The 1914 *Censorship Act* controlled cinema activities centrally during the war years under the authority of military along with the collaboration of police and the Directorate of Censorship and Inspection. This 1916 *Draft Regulation* appears to be linked to this military decision by charging police forces with previewing the films prior to screenings in İstanbul during these years. There is no special committee assigned from other officials of the ministries as was practised during the Hamidian era.

It is worth comparing this *Draft Regulation* to the regulations of the preceding period, because there is a shift from the 1903 *Cinematograph Privilege* I discussed in *Chapter 1*. Before 1909 years, the Hamidian officials directed the censorship of entertainments and printed media via the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education (*Maârif Nezâreti*). These two institutions made decisions about what to control. The representatives of other governmental institutions, such as the Printing Committee of the Ministry of Interior (*Matbuat-ı Dahiliye Müdürlüğü),* enforced the rules accordingly.[58]

Similarly, the conditions of the *Cinematograph Privilege* stated that the productions made in the Empire must first be viewed by Sultan Abdülhamid II at the palace prior to any screening to the members of the Ottoman army or the general public.[59] Also censor officers, as intermediaries, had the de facto right to view these locally produced films during the Hamidian era. The privilege designated Sultan Abdülhamid's ultimate authority for the approval

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[57] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[58] Server İskit, *Türkiye'de Matbuat İdareleri ve Politikaları* (İstanbul: Tan Matbaası/Başvekâlet Basın ve Yayın Müdürlüğü Yayınlarından, 1943), pp. 98-99.
[59] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 5. I use the terms 'a lawful and objective way' for 'namûskârâne' and 'bî-tarafâne' in Ottoman Turkish.

of the local productions that was about Ottoman officials.[60] In contrast, the *Draft Regulation* of 1916 distributes power to police officers, charging them with specific tasks. The post- 1909 government was run by the CUP, while Sultan Mehmed V was still the dynastic leader of the Empire. Under the parliamentary regime, Sultan Mehmed V is not positioned as the ultimate power to regulate cinema in this 1916 text, in comparison to the regulation of 1903 and the case of Sultan Abdülhamid II.

Elements of proto-Turkism or Turkish nationalism can also be observed in cinema regulations, such as the issue of language for intertitles in films. Clause 35 concerns the language of the text that accompanies the films' images. At this period intertitles accompanied the films mostly in the original language. The clause indicates that 'For films, the text used must be in Turkish. Only after Turkish, can approval for additional languages be sought.'[61] The text required the authorities' preview. The clause does not state any condition about orations, which could be practised at screenings. During these years, Ottoman intellectuals formulated a 'policy of Turkish nationalism' and propagated it in their works.[62] The same wave also began to affect the officials, especially after the unsuccessful attempts to reach the Ottoman subjects via the ideologies of Ottomanism (a united citizenship) and Islamism. The *1916 Draft Regulation* also replicates the state policies and the atmosphere of the time, with its references to proto-Turkism or Turkish nationalism.

Most of the entertainment handbills in the Empire reflected the use of the multiple languages of its people. Apart from Ottoman Turkish, other

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[60] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903).

[61] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916), Clause 35. The wording for intertitles in the text as follows: '*izâhen perdeye âks ettirilecek yazıların*'.

[62] Erol Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918) Propagandadan Milli Kimlik İnşasına* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), pp. 101-102.

languages such as Greek, Armenian and French were commonly used in the press and other publications. Theatre troupes could act in various languages, depending on the venue and audience profile.[63] The debates and petitions about the use of Turkish in screenings can be followed in other archival documents. For instance, a number of varied disputes about Şark Cinema in 1914 show that a university student's demand for the use of Turkish script at a *cinématographe* screening grew and caused a series of protests. At the end of the negotiations between the police, the municipality and the cinema-house entrepreneurs, the owners promised to introduce intertitles in Turkish during the screenings. An officer in charge of checking the screenings was authorised to close down the business if the owners failed to keep this promise.[64]

In this atmosphere of growing multiple nationalist ideologies, reflections of Turkism could be observed in other instances regarding the use of language in films. The CUP began to promote Turkishness more fervently, starting in 1913 after the first Congress.[65] Thus it was not a coincidence to see demands for the use of Turkish in film screenings. Erol Köroğlu contends that cultural nationalism also expanded in many other realms of life.[66] Proto-nationalism, in the form of Turkishness, shaped the intellectuals' works and cultural politics eventually affected the Ottomans' daily life and spectacles of the time. In the same vein, shop signs and any type of publicity were required to be in Turkish in the Empire.[67] In 1914, approximately 100 students, supporters of the CUP, protested the use of foreign languages at cinema-

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[63] Güliz Atsız, 'Osmanlı Tiyatrosu Tarihçiliğine Eleştirel Bir Bakış Sarı Çizgisiz Tarihyazımı', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 174, (June 2008), pp. 10-11.
[64] BOA, DH.EUM.EMN, 52/17, (13 March 1914).
[65] Erol Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı*, p. 157
[66] Ibid., p. 157.
[67] Feroz Ahmad, 'War and Society', p. 276.

houses in İzmir. The students declared that 'We want to see Turkish'.[68] The Governor, police, consulates, and cinema entrepreneurs exchanged correspondence about the demands. After negotiations and protests, it was clear that the application of Turkish in films' intertitles was not an easy task. Later, protests at cinema-houses required the interference of the French Consul, and the issue seemed to be unresolved.[69] It is not clear whether or not these happenings affected the *1916 Draft Regulation*, yet surely the nationalist atmosphere of the Second Constitutional era influenced the broader regulation issues.

Let me now examine the conditions specifically designed for film control and censorship. These conditions vividly portray which images could not be screened and which images could be screened in films:

> Clause 36: The exhibition of any images disrespecting and humiliating the recognised subjects of the Well-Protected Domains and the religious principles is forbidden.
> Clause 37: The exhibition of any film that harms national life, that could breach public order and inappropriate scenes that are contrary to decency and chastity is forbidden. [70]

Obscenity also appears to be a sensitive topic that I further discuss in *Chapter 4*.[71] It seems that the concept of 'national life', in clause 37, is a generalised and fuzzy term, that could allude to both Ottomanism and nationalism during the wartime period when this text was formulated. Erik J. Zürcher contends that the government, the CUP, 'formed their policies under the impetus of fast-changing political realities of the day and used the ideological toolkit available to them in an essentially pragmatic manner.'[72]

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[68] BOA, DH.KMS, 15/5, (17 February 1914). In Ottoman Turkish 'Türkçe yazı görmek isteriz', referring to the intertitles.
[69] BOA, DH.KMS, 15/5, (17 February 1914).
[70] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916), Clause 37.
[71] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916), Clause 37.
[72] Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk*, p. 218.

The ideological debates over Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism among scholars and the intellectuals of the time is a topic of debate. The policies of the CUP were shaped under all of these three ideologies mutually depending on their needs.[73]

Clause 36 of this *Draft Regulation* also bears the imprint of Ottomanism due to the protection of multi-religious and multi-ethnic elements and the prohibition of their humiliation in films.[74] This understanding shows that the government did not have clear-cut divisions between these ideologies at the time, but formulated the *Draft Regulation* based on political conditions and social needs. Here, the bureaucrats in charge, the General Directorate of Public Security and the Safety Secretariat in İstanbul and the highest authority in the province, could make the decision during previews if films contained any offensive and insulting message.

Furthermore, clause 36 and 37 are similar to the Criminal Law's 99th clause, part 3. These clauses are similar to the clause 4 from the *Decree* dated on 28 February 1921. According to this *Decree*, 'the exhibition of any staged performances disrespecting and humiliating the recognised religious and ethnic subjects of the Well-Protected Domains (*Memâlik-i Osmaniyye*), contrary to public morals and safety, is forbidden'.[75] Clause 5 indicates that films, like staged performances, must be viewed before screenings, as they may be in opposition to existing religions and may contain forbidden and controversial ideas to incite the public.[76] It appears that five years later this *Draft Regulation*, the authorities attempted to organise a preview committee with the 1921 *Decree*. This is a legal link which clearly shows legislators' desire to mandate a systematic set of rules about film censorship.

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[73] Ibid., pp. 215-216.
[74] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916), Clause 36.
[75] BOA, HR.İM, 48/56, (3 March 1923).
[76] BOA, HR.İM, 48/56, (3 March 1923).

Clauses 38 and 39 explain that cinema-house managers found in violation of the conditions stated in the clauses 32, 34, 35, 36, or 37 were subject to the penalties in accordance with the Criminal Code. Police was charged with taking action in these instances.[77] During the amendments of this *Draft Regulation*, the Ottoman Imperial Army also raised concerns about cinema and other entertainments and enforced the 1918 *Censorship Ordinance*.[78] The main objective of this new legal step was directly related to the wartime conditions.

Censorship Ordinance

In 1918, another *Censorship Ordinance* was passed by the Ottoman Army regulating theatre, concert, and cinema advertisements in the public sphere. The army prohibited the publicising of luxurious and sumptuous entertainment. The justification was due to their nature containing luxury and indulgence. Except for charitable activities, entertainments were banned.[79] According to this ordinance, cinema-going promoted extravagance, waste and damaged the war efforts. The publicising of luxurious entertainments could diminish the morale of the soldiers.[80] Thus, this ordinance was shaped by considerations of the hardship and despair that soldiers were facing. These justifications appear to be reminiscent of the concept of 'total war' in an effort to introduce the battlefield into civilian life, as Çiğdem Oğuz indicates. She contends that entertainments in the public sphere during the war years created concerns among authorities and the army declared martial law.[81]

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[77] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916), Clause 38 and 39.
[78] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
[79] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
[80] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
[81] Çiğdem Oğuz, 'Milli Mesele ve Maddi Gereksinim Arasında: Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Eğlence Yerlerini Düzenleme Çabaları', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 267, (March 2016), p. 82.

> In order not to reduce the endurance of military troops at the severe battlefield, it is forbidden to share, publish and sell any written announcement, notice, and publication of those materials in the Ottoman press and publicity in the streets about theatre, cinema, concert, exhibition and related festivals and feasts due to their nature containing luxury and indulgence except those the ones indicating a vital need and organised for the poor and for charity organisations.[82]

Nevertheless, according to the 1918 *Censorship Ordinance*, any encouragement of wealth and waste in publications, advertisements and sales of media in the streets were banned.[83] The motivation behind this decision was to keep the morale of the soldiers and impoverished populace high during the war years.[84] In case of disobedience, either the army or the General Directorate of Public Safety punished oppressors.[85]

The Armistice Period (1918-1922)

In the aftermath of the First World War, the Empire was exhausted militarily, economically, financially and morally.[86] The signing of the Armistice of Mudros on 30 October 1918 meant the end of the war for the Ottoman Empire. This treaty initiated the start of the Armistice period, in November 1918; as a result, the Allied Powers seized control of harbours, the transport system, and of the gendarme and police forces in the Empire. Under 9 different commissions, one of them being the Censor Office, the Allied Powers began to rule the defeated empire.[87] Committees composed of the British, French and Italian police and soldiers began to subdue İstanbul, yet due to resistance and counter-activities, further military intervention took

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[82] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
[83] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
[84] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
[85] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
[86] Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk*, p. 189.
[87] Mehmet Temel, *İşgal Yıllarında İstanbul'un Sosyal Durumu* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1998), p. 18.

place. After the struggle between the Allies and Ottoman officials, the de facto Allied military presence began in İstanbul on 13 November 1918, but the capital was officially occupied by the Allied Powers on 16 March 1920.[88]

The occupation was followed by public protests in İzmir and İstanbul in May 1919 at different districts and they were filmed by the Society of National Defense (*Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti,* SND).[89] Meanwhile a resistance movement against the occupation was organised by a number of commanders, and the Kemalist group under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal was one of them. By 1919, Sultan Mehmed VI (Vahdettin) (r. 1918-1922) and his cabinet sent Mustafa Kemal to Anatolia thinking that his presence in İstanbul might pose a threat to themselves.[90] In fact, this nationalist movement took back İstanbul in October 1923.[91]

During this period, multiple authorities, not only the central government in İstanbul, but also the Allied Powers, practised censorship over the press. Yet, the Allied High Commission did not take Sultan Mehmed VI's regulations seriously, announcing that 'they would neither accept the application of the decree to their nationals, nor recognise any limitations on the powers of the Allied Commission on the Press.'[92] The Allied censors were sensitive to the representation of nationalist news and to how current political issues were presented in editorials. Thus, any public gatherings, even those which were merely for entertainment, were regulated. Coffeehouses, theatres, and taverns were considered spaces for potential political agitation and public disorder. Therefore, the Allied Powers implemented visible control

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[88] Mehmet Temel, *İşgal Yıllarında,* pp. 2-6.; Nur Bilge Criss, *Istanbul under Allied,* pp. 1-2.
[89] Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, *Curtain of Dreams: Early Cinema in Istanbul, 1896-1923* (Central European University: Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 2009), p. 58.
[90] Nur Bilge Criss, *Istanbul under Allied,* p. 3.
[91] Ibid., p. 2.
[92] Ibid., p. 49.

mechanisms and took measures against resistance, public disorder, and political gatherings.[93]

In 1919, some regulations about going to theatres, cinema-houses, restaurants and bars were strictly enforced in İstanbul. The Allied High Commission, located in İstanbul, banned screenings of German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian films during the occupation years.[94] Accordingly, the Ministry of War informed the İstanbul Guardianship (*İstanbul Muhafızlığı*) and other military authorities in the Empire about the Allied Powers' Ordinance.[95] In practise, the Allied High Commissioners in İstanbul could grant permission to the public. For instance, the Allies permitted the Armenian Scholars' Association to entertain at the Cinema Pathé until 1.00 in the morning on September 4, 1920.[96]

In relation to the censorship of printed media and entertainments, it is possible to argue that cinema regulations were put into practise by the defeated Ottoman state and the occupying Allies. It is important to note that understanding the complex process of cinema regulations is difficult, especially in a situation with two different authorities imposing control over entertainment. A number of scholars have evaluated these conditions through the lens of prohibitive measures without presenting hard evidence. They conclude that *The Governess* in 1919 is 'the first censored film'. Below I will explore the misinterpretation of historical events in relation to *The Governess*.

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[93] BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 2/2-2, 4, (16 March 1919).
[94] BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 2/2-2, 4, (16 March 1919).
[95] BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 2/2-2, 4, (16 March 1919).
[96] Centre des Archives diplomatiques in Nantes, 36PO/1/406, (31 August 1920).

a. ***The Governess***

A good example of the discussions about the Allied Powers' control mechanism in the Empire is the director Ahmet Fehim's *The Governess* (*Mürebbiye*, 1919). This fiction film has a special place in the cinema history of Turkey in regard to censorship literature. The Society of Disabled Veterans' Film Factory (*Malûlin-i Guzzata Muavenet Heyeti Sinema Film Fabrikası*, SDVFF) produced *The Governess* in 1919, during the occupation of İstanbul. Fuad Bey [Uzkınay], from the MOC, was its cinematographer. Originally 90 minutes long, the only existing copy of the film runs for approximately 1 minute 25 seconds.[97] Thus, it is difficult to make extensive comments about the film's content. *The Governess* is a critique of Ottoman Turks' imitation of Western mores and lifestyle. A number of authors assert that *The Governess* was 'the first censored film.'[98]

In the history of cinema regulations, it is crucial to determine easy-made judgements about censorship practises, and this film is one of those examples. In fact, this argument can be refuted in many ways. In 1962, Nijat Özön wrote that *The Governess* became the symbol of 'silent resistance' during the war years because the Allied Powers stopped its distribution in Anatolia.[99] In his statement, Özön did not claim whether or not *The Governess* was the first

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[97] For a view of the copy see www.sabah.com.tr/medya/2015/06/17/tsknin-ilk-kez-yayinladigi-tarihi-goruntuler (Accessed on 5 July 2015).

[98] Özkan Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda Sinema Filmlerinin Sansürü* (İstanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası, 1963), p. 10.; Agâh Özgüç, *Türk Sineması Sansür Dosyası* (Koza Yayınları, 1976), p. 22.; Giovanni Scognamillo, *Türk Sinema Tarihi 1896-1959*, 1, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi, 1990), p. 28.; Âlim Şerif Onaran, *Türk Sineması*, 1, (Ankara: Kitle Yayınları, 1999), p. 15.; Ali Özuyar, *Babiâli'de Sinema* (İstanbul: İzdüşüm Yayınları, 2004), p. 73.; Rekin Teksoy, *Rekin Teksoy'un Sinema Tarihi* (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayınevi, 2005), p. 60.

[99] Nijad Özön, *Türk Sineması Tarihi (Dünden Bugüne) 1896-1960* (İstanbul: Ekicigil Matbaası, 1962), p. 48.; Nijat Özön, *İlk Türk Sinemacısı*, p. 19.

censored film. Later, other authors such as Özkan Tikveş described *The Governess* as the first censored film in the cinema history of Turkey.[100]

This argument is mistaken for three reasons: firstly, there is currently no record showing the banning of *The Governess* by the Allied Powers. Despite an extensive search at the Prime Ministry's Ottoman and Republican Archives, I have not found any archival source supporting this argument. The authors, neither Nijat Özön, who asserts the Allies' intervention, nor the others, who follow his argument to erroneously claim that this 'censorship' happened, do not provide any sources in their writings.[101] Özkan Tikveş, Agâh Özgüç, Giovanni Scognamillo, Âlim Şerif Onaran, Ali Özuyar and Rekin Teksoy somehow find in Özön's proposal that the film is 'silent resistance,' a justification to label *The Governess* as 'censored'. Serdar Öztürk also criticizes these authors and their distortion of Nijat Özön's statement due to the lack of evidence.[102]

Secondly, after the de facto occupation of İstanbul in 1918, the Allied High Commission took control of entertainment life, correspondence, transport and other means of communications.[103] Even though Sultan Mehmed VI also actively enforced a number of ordinances for the security of the state and public, the Allies contested his power constantly.[104] The Allies set the opening and closing hours of certain businesses, including theatres

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[100] Özkan Tikveş, *Mukayeseli Hukukta,* p. 10.
[101] Ibid., p. 10.; Agâh Özgüç, *Türk Sineması,* p. 22.; Giovanni Scognamillo, *Türk Sinema*, p. 28.; Âlim Şerif Onaran, *Türk Sineması*, p. 15.; Ali Özuyar, Babiâli'de *Sinema*, p. 73.; Rekin Teksoy, *Rekin Teksoy'un Sinema*, p. 60.
[102] Serdar Öztürk, 'Türk Sinemasında Sansür ve Yeni Belgeler', *Galatasaray İletişim*, (June 2006), pp. 47-76.; Serdar Öztürk, 'Söylemsel İnşalardan Üretilen Sansür ve Denetim Efsanesi (1896-1923)', in Deniz Bayrakdar (ed.), *Türk Film Araştırmalarında Yeni Yönelimler Sinema ve Politika,* 8, (İstanbul: Bağlam, 2009), pp. 43-56.
[103] BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 2/2, (7 March 1919).
[104] Nur Bilge Criss, *İstanbul under Allied,* p. 49.

and cinema-houses.[105] Therefore, within the war conditions, all theatrical performances and exhibition of films were inevitably under strict control. I contend that this control mechanism is misinterpreted.

Lastly, in *The Governess*, the protagonist is a French governess (Angèle) who is portrayed as a lustful *femme fatale* who seduces a number of men at a mansion in İstanbul. According to the above-mentioned authors, who follow the censorship narration, the French state, one of the occupying forces, was not happy with the film's content because of the depiction of the French nation. In fact, there is no source to validate this claim. I do not find this argument convincing. The Allies regulated entertainment activities, including cinema, and this alleged censorship event would not have been enforced based on merely the subject matter of *The Governess*. The notion that the film was censored strictly on content is also challenged by the fact that the film is an adaptation of Hüseyin Rahmi [Gürpınar]'s book of the same name, which had been previously staged several times when the French were not occupying the Empire. The producers of the film likely thought that investing in a film of a well-known story was not a risky venture, and it was a successful construction of public morals thus the film was produced.

The story is a powerful depiction of 'national morals' according to İ. Galip Arcan, who attended the film premier in 1919 in İstanbul. It was a criticism of Ottoman Turks' new, *alla franca* lifestyle, more than of the Western values themselves.[106] Still Nijat Özön's interpretation, placing the film in the 'silent resistance' discourse is flawed when the production details are examined. Even if we accept that *The Governess* was censored, it is not clear which authority practised the censorship. There is no direct evidence proving that

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[105] Centre des Archives diplomatiques in Nantes, 36PO/1/406, (31 August 1920).; BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 2/2-2, 4, (16 March 1919).

[106] İ. [Galip Arcan], 'Mürebbiye Filmi', *Temâşâ*, 17, (1919/1335), pp. 1-2.

the French censored the film. Above all, neither primary nor secondary sources reveal that it was the Ottoman officials.

b. Legal Acts

During the Armistice period, there was not a unified system of cinema regulations even though the Ottoman Imperial Army centrally imposed censorship and a number of ordinances about entertainments in the public sphere. In theory, cinema regulations had a structured legal basis for cinema in the light of above-mentioned 1916 *Draft Regulation*, yet it was not finalised or enforced. In 1918, the Ministry of Interior and the police charged the Military Headquarters of Intelligence Office (*Karârgâh-i Umûmi İstihbârât Şubesi*) as the licence provider for film exhibition venues in İstanbul. The police officers were responsible for investigating and punishing the institutions without exhibition licences.[107]

An important step taken to stop the Allied Powers' potential threat to local filmmaking was the dissolution of the military-owned production company. In 1919, the Military Office of Cinema and its semi-official charity organisation, the MMC, which produced newsreels and fictions, were both closed down after the defeat. Under the rule of Mehmed VI and his cabinet, the *Ordinance* declared that the Society of Disabled Veterans (*Malûl Gaziler Cemiyeti, SDV*) had the right to inherit the equipment and films from these organisations. [108] The Military Museum (*Askeri Müze*) also stored some of the valuable films as an independent organisation.[109] The legislators' protective decision to replace the equipment between these semi-charity organisations is directly linked to the Empire's defeat. In a way was this policy

[107] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/51, (15 February 1918).
[108] BOA, İ.DUİT, 116/9, (22 November 1919).
[109] BOA, İ.DUİT, 116/9, (22 November 1919).

a guarantee for the local film production without the direct interference of the Allied Powers.

Between the various authorities that held power over cinema, there was always an area in which the enforcement of rules was lax, as cinema entrepreneurs sought their own profits, and sought to meet audiences' demands and the international market norms. Cinema entrepreneurs, for instance, were required to pay tax for charitable organisations out of ticket sales for such as the Poor House (*Dârülaceze*) and the Ottoman Red Crescent (*Hilal-i Ahmer*). However, in practise there was an arbitrary and fluid zone in which entrepreneurs or state officials could act without accordance to the legal requirements. But officers had difficulties collecting the necessary payments for which entrepreneurs were legally responsible. It is not surprising that there was a conflict of interest between the state and entrepreneurs. At the time of conflict, entrepreneurs, state institutions and consulates were involved in determining the conditions and solving problems, as most of the cinemas were owned by foreign entrepreneurs in the Empire.[110] This atmosphere of contested regulations, and the lack of enforcement can be followed vividly in the words of a cinema inspector, Sahib Bey, who was in charge of collecting taxes from cinema-houses in İstanbul from 1917:

> Entertainment venues were required to pay tax in support of charitable organisations at the time. However, in a period in which no one adequately complied with the law, the entertainment venues in Beyoğlu and its surroundings in particular would either try to pay less, or not to pay at all [...] It is true that generally most of the cinemas and theatres were not fully complying with state's legal decisions. [...] It is worth considering whether or not cinema inspectors, who are in charge of inspection and regulation (*teftiş ve denetiminden*), adequately perform their duties.[111]

[110] See *Chapter 3*.
[111] BOA, DH.UMVM, 116/71, (18 October 1921).

Within these unregulated circumstances the central authorities attempted to enforce a new taxation system in 1922. Sultan Mehmed VI and his cabinet passed the *Ordinance*, which was drafted by the Ministry of Finance (*Maliye Nezâreti*), to introduce a ten-percent tax increase for theatre, cinema and concert tickets. Legislators considered this new tax regulation on entertainments necessary due to inflation and budgetary deficits in the aftermath of the war.[112]

Conclusion

The central subject in this chapter is cinema regulations during the First World War (1914-1918) and the Armistice period (1918-1922). Understanding the multifaceted and complex process of cinema regulations is firstly related to the politics of the CUP and the wartime atmosphere, and secondly to the changing wartime powers who had the political and legal means to control the entertainment, communication and everyday life of Ottomans, including cinema and cinema-going. Throughout the war period, the CUP, Sultan Mehmed V and Sultan Mehmed VI, the Ottoman Imperial Army, the Allied Powers, and other various state institutions initiated certain control mechanisms and attempted to practise them. Cinema in the Empire primarily depended on the foreign market; most of the cinema-houses were owned by foreign entrepreneurs and corporations. Yet, legislators did not have a mechanism to inspect the imported films systematically before their circulation and screenings throughout the Empire. At various times, it was not possible to enforce the regulations specifically created for film circulation, exhibition and production due to contested interests over

[112] BOA, İ.DUİT, 99/11, (18 February 1922).

cinema, the arbitrary bureaucratic system and the turbulent wartime conditions.

The CUP did not formulate a censorship act specifically designed for cinema. The 1914 *Censorship Act* covered a number of topics, one of them being cinema. A board of preview was specifically designed under the Ottoman Imperial Army's *Censorship Act*. The Directorate of Censorship and Inspection in İstanbul and the censorship inspector in the provinces were charged with the preview of films. In 1915, the bureaucrats introduced a number of amendments into this act and police forces were assigned to view the films during exhibitions.

Besides the wartime regulations, I examined the 1916 *Draft Regulation* that aimed to regulate the construction and establishment of screening venues which introduced a legal framework for exhibition practises. The *Draft Regulation* had a similar concept by charging the police and civil servants with examining films, but it was not enforced in reality. In relation to cinematic space and film content, this law required that cinema-houses obtain a licence. The legislators attempted to regulate circulation and exhibition practises, and the physical safety of premises. Apart from the 1914 *Censorship Act*, which was officially practised, there was no official board of censors specifically practising previewing and inspecting film content.

The power of cinema and the political goals of the authorities introduced the use of propaganda via films. Along with visual and textual propaganda, wartime newsreels became visible especially during the First World War. The Allies and co-belligerents' propaganda films were under strict control and were at times banned because of the potential 'danger' to Ottoman politics, internal and foreign affairs.

The Military Office of Cinema aimed to produce Ottoman propaganda films to screen to students, soldiers and bureaucrats. The productions were specifically endorsed by the Ministry of War. Meanwhile, the CUP, via the

Ministry of War, censored the unwanted wartime films that could open communication with a number of viewers around the world. This did not mean that they could not make their own propaganda films for their war time causes, though. Films such as *The Battle of the Dardanelles* (1915) and others served this aim.

The history of how the CUP regulated cinema during war years is a reflection of cultural policies, legal system, bureaucratic institutions, market relations, and the politics of the time. The Allies had different control mechanisms based on the wartime politics, public safety and other priorities throughout the Ottoman territories during the Armistice period. Nevertheless, in the cinema history of the Ottomans, there are individual control mechanisms targeted specific film screenings. At times this arbitrary control was practised by local authorities, at times it was central; but it was never conducted in a totally standardised way. Therefore, it is time to reconsider the place of *The Governess* in the scholarship, as scholars have never found hard evidence to prove that it was 'the first censored film' by the Ottoman officers.

I have argued that the legal attempts I scrutinised in this chapter reveal the authorities' mindset and intended rules over cinema. The written enforcement in a form of legal code is not the only way to follow the regulations as the policies inscribed could be altered in practise. The policies mandated by the state could be different in practise, as an ongoing process towards cinema regulations. The perspective considering the process and practises as whole can enhance our understanding of the history of cinema regulations in the late Ottoman context.

CHAPTER 3
REGULATING EXHIBITION

This chapter, *Regulating Exhibition*, scrutinises the regulation of film exhibitions within the late Ottoman context, over the period 1896-1920s. Film exhibitions became a central subject in the process of legal enforcement around the world due to the health and safety issues during the early cinema period.[1] Cinema crossed a number of terrains as a form of entertainment and representation, and as a new form of technology. Early film exhibition venues drew concerns due to potential physical harms to the audiences apart from the film content. Theatrical and non-theatrical venues raised issues regarding the safety and health of audiences, which gradually led to the process of monitoring, controlling, and the enforcement of rules over the entrepreneurs. Cinema needed a technical, infrastructural and spatial support, which affected the regulation process unlike entertainments of foreign theatre troupes, performing arts or visual devices prior to cinema. With its novel technology, cinema posed different problems such as the use of power, nitrate film, and the expertise of the film operator to screen films. Devices for projecting films, qualifications of the operator, the flammable nitrate film stock, and other physical characteristics of cinema-going created a different kind of material concern in comparison to other theatrical entertainments. These physical threats were both real (i.e. fire hazard, physical health and safety of audiences), but also metaphoric, as a concern over ideology.[2]

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[1] William Uricchio, 'Law and the Cinema: Regulating Exhibition', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 374.
[2] William Uricchio & Roberta E. Pearson, 'Constructing the Audience: Competing Discourses of Morality and Rationalization during the Nickelodeon Period', *Iris*, 17, (Autumn 1994), p. 51.

In this chapter, I examine the entry of cinematic devices at customs, post offices and the process of licence applications for public film exhibitions, which initiated a number of official investigations about cinema's technology, and the standardisation of premises that specifically designed for film projection and exhibition. International film companies and a number of state institutions, from the police and the municipality to customs and central administrative offices, determined how films were projected. The authorities attempted to inspect cinematic devices and premises where exhibitions took place. While this process was principally between the state and cinema entrepreneurs, long negotiations and diplomatic interference also became necessary. At times conflicts emerged between the two parties and consequently various central and local institutions, along with the diplomatic bodies and international film companies, struggled over cinema fiercely. Contestations emerged due to the material function of cinematic devices about items such as power sources, projectors and licensing procedures between foreign operators, companies and Ottoman officials.

Film exhibitions still took place with or without official licences and the authorities attempted to regulate exhibitions to control and introduce a manageable market for early cinema. But cinema's technology and potential safety threats were not clear in the eyes of legislators during the initial years of cinema's arrival in the Empire. The process of the state's legal intervention in the field of exhibition practises forms the basis of my main research objective in this chapter. In the case of regulating film exhibition, Ottoman legislators and officials sought to pressure cinema entrepreneurs to provide a safe and secure venue, and a defined material spatial organisation. This argument is visible when the aspects of economy, politics, technology, and the public security and safety issues are considered as a whole in relation to film exhibition practises.

My research has discerned that until 1916, there was no specific attempt to formulate a law about the material aspects of cinema, specifically about where and how to exhibit films and who could run the exhibitions; in other words, these issues were based on the whims of the operators and the owners of the venues. An exception to this is the two clauses of the *1903 Cinematograph Privilege* indicated that 'a special building' had to be built for exhibitions.[3] This situation does not necessarily mean that this was a period without regulation. In fact, the existing policies and regulations of entertainments that were relevant to cinema provided an ad hoc base for film exhibitions. Nevertheless, cinema's technology required the use of a power source, electricity or other forms of energy, and the operators had to have a certain level of projecting expertise to run the equipment, unlike the theatrical performances. Thus, a key part of regulating cinema was regulating electricity. Ottoman legislators planned to introduce a standard process of regulation for spatial arrangements, and for public film exhibitions via *the 1916 Draft Regulation Concerning the Management and Opening of Theatres, Cinema and Similar Entertainment Venues*.[4] After this regulation was drafted, a number of amendments were made between 1916 and 1918; yet no evidence exists proving that the *Draft Regulation* was fully enforced.[5]

Only with the issuance of the *1924 Policing Cinema and Theatres*, did the authorities attempt to impose a more specific ordinance regarding the issues of the material aspects of film exhibition during the early Republican years.[6]

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[3] BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ, 46/16, (29 March 1903), Clause 13.
[4] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[5] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/60, (23 June 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/8, (21 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/7, (20 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/3, (3 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/15, (22 October 1918). Here a draft law refers to a written act which is already discussed and planned to have an executive force. However, in its legal form, a draft law does not have a power to lead to enforcement. *Chapter 2* examined this issue as well.
[6] Hereafter the *Ordinance*.

In these circumstances, some of the regulations drew on earlier ones; some were specific to the new technology or were specifically about electricity. These were only collected together for the time in 1916, and again, more fully in 1924. Even drafting a number of rules did not directly constitute a working enforcement of rules. War conditions, and the transition from empire to nation-states, put this regulatory framework on hold, although central and local authorities continued to regulate film exhibition on a case-by-case basis. Yet, these legal documents make the historical turning points at which we can constitute the mentality, intention and concerns of legislators regarding film exhibition.

The Existing Exhibition Regulations

When the Ottoman authorities first encountered cinema, they relied on the existing regulations inherited from performing arts and entertainments. One of the earliest legal licensing procedures that affected film exhibitions in this manner was the *1896 Regulation of Theatre, Ortaoyunu, Karagöz and Puppetry*.[7] This regulation had four parts and contained thirty-two clauses. Some of the clauses directly address pre-cinematic devices, the licence procedure and their use.[8]

According to the first clause, entrepreneurs owning businesses of theatres, ballrooms, *café-chantants*, and exhibiting any type of spectacles such as illusions, puppetry, shadow theatre (*karagöz*), *commedia dell'arte* (*ortaoyunu*), concerts, panorama, or pantomime were subject to maintaining a licence regardless of the language used in these performances or the type of spectacles. It was forbidden to run an establishment without an official licence.[9] Both foreign and local entrepreneurs were to obtain it from

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[7] *Tiyatro, Ortaoyunu, Karagöz, Kukla Oyunları Nizamnâmesi*, hereafter the *1896 Regulation*.
[8] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896).
[9] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896), Part 1, Clause 1.

municipalities. When there was no municipal governance, the highest civil servant official in the provinces (governor '*vali*' and other provincial officials) was in charge of providing the licence.[10] The licence was a written contract between the entrepreneur and the state showing that the business owners and artists were liable to observe the exhibition regulations of the Empire.

There are a number of issues covered in this regulation in relation to the content of performing arts regarding religion, politics, and literature; the rules specific to exhibition practises are stated in the third and fourth parts. Clause 3 notes that foreign entrepreneurs who had an entertainment business in the Empire were treated by the same norms as those applied to Ottoman subjects (*teba'a-i Devlet-i Aliyye*).[11] Clause 25 of the third part indicates that a special officer, called the controller investigator (*tatbikat müfettişi*) appointed by the municipality or the Police Office, was responsible for checking and controlling whether or not business owners and artists were meeting the conditions of the licence. The controller investigator was to submit a written report either immediately or within 24 hours in the case that licensing conditions were not met.[12] The controller investigator was in charge of the application and enforcement of the licence conditions specifically by paying attention to public entertainments (*lu'biyyât*) and immoral pleasures (*lehviyyât*).[13] Additionally, Ali Özuyar writes that collecting tax revenues was

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[10] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896), Clause 2.
[11] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896), Clause 3.
[12] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896), Clause 25.
[13] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896), Clause 26. There is a difference between the uses of these terms: '*Lu'biyyât*' indicates any type of entertainment and spectacle seen as moral. 'Immoral' entertainments such as 'sinful' acts between men and women, any 'sensual' shows from dancing to acting and gambling are defined as '*lehviyyât'* and attributed as immoral pleasures in this document. Yet, there is still confusion over the use of these terms. A number of sources reveal that '*lu'biyyât*' also had a bad connotation during the First World War years. See Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Kadın Özgürlüğü ve Feminizm (1908-1935)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2014), p. 123.

one of the tasks of controller investigators.[14] Clause 27 points out the amount of the fine to be paid depending on the crime, which varied based on the level of the act, and in the case of the repetition of the same crime. The fines were between 1 lira and 50 liras.[15] Apart from paying a fine, the offending business could be either completely closed down or terminated. In the case of social disorder, the business owners would have been punished according to the Imperial Criminal Law (*Ceza Kanunnâme-i Hümâyunu)*.[16] Here, social disorder probably refers to any disagreement between the business owners and officials, or offensive situations among audiences due to the content of exhibition.

The appendix of the 1896 regulation specifically divides the institutions dealing with visual materials in two parts. The first part mentions that the magazines and programmes published by entertainment establishments had to be inspected by the Investigations Committee of Entertainments and Immoral Pleasures (*Lu'biyyât ve Lehviyyât Tedkîk Komisyonu)* in İstanbul. In the provinces, delegates from municipalities working for the Investigation Bureau were responsible for performing a similar duty. The second part of the appendix regards taking portraits, showing pictures, and opening up venues to display panoramic views (*panoramahâne küşâdı*). In this document the terms moving pictures, film or cinema are not used. During the initial years of cinema there were a number of terms used for cinema in Ottoman Turkish, such as 'curtain of dreams' (*hayal perdesi*), 'living pictures' (*canlı fotoğraf*) and 'cinema ribbon' (*sinema şeridi* or *sinema kurdelası*).[17] Thus, the

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[14] Ali Özuyar, *Devlet-i Aliyye'de Sinema* (İstanbul: De Ki Yayınları, 2007), p. 103.
[15] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896), Clause 27 and 28.
[16] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896), Clause 29.
[17]The daily newspaper, *Stamboul*, named this invention, which was in use after December 1896, as either *photographie vivante*/living pictures *cinévitagraph* or *cinématographe*. See 'Théâtres', *Stamboul*, (12 December 1896).; 'Théâtres', *Stamboul*, (17 March 1897).; 'Théâtres et Concerts', *Le Moniteur Oriental*, (23 January 1897). On 26 January 1897, *Le Moniteur*

use of visuals in the 1896 regulation might refer to different forms of pre-cinematic gadgets, from the *camera obscura* to the magic lantern and from *phantasmagoria* to still photography. Merchants selling paintings and sculptures, or any form of three-dimensional arts were exempt from maintaining a licence.

Apart from this very detailed regulation, the Supreme Council (*Şûrâ-yı Devlet*) passed a decree on the physical conditions of the buildings that exhibited theatrical performances in 1899.[18] The state targeted poorly constructed and unkempt theatrical spaces for renovation according to the public health law (*hıfzısıhha kavâ'ini*). These 'ramshackle' theatres in the Direklerarası and Vezneciler districts of İstanbul were ordered to be re-built from stone or brick, instead of wood. The buildings should have had an iron roof construction covered with plaster, and the seating areas, including the box seats, had to be built with fire-proof construction material. Consider, for example, the 1899 inspection of the Ottoman Theatre (*Osmanlı Tiyatrosu*), owned by Talat Paşa, and another theatre in Vezneciler, owned by Mrs. Emine İffet. The inspection report reflected that the two buildings did not meet the physical requirements and were inadequate on the basis of the health and safety standards of public entertainment venues. Based on the decision of the İstanbul Municipality (*Şehremaneti*) and the Ministry of Interior (*Dahiliye Nezâreti*), these theatres were required to follow the

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Oriental mistakenly reported to its readers about the *cinévitagraphe* being used at the Odéon Theatre. In fact, it was a *cinématographe*. See 'Théatres et Concerts', *Le Moniteur Oriental*, (26 January 1897). There is confusion among the local newspapers of the day in categorising this new invention, which reflects competition over the patents and the unsettled naming convention among inventors of projection devices. Moreover, author Refik Halid [Karay] (1888-1965) states that his brother and uncle were among those in İstanbul referring to film screenings as 'living pictures' at the time see. Refik Halid [Karay] 'Sinema', *Deli*, (İstanbul: Semih Lûtfî Kitabevi, 1939), pp. 82-83.

[18] BEO, 1413/105935, (14 December 1899). Bab-ı Ali Evrakı, hereafter BEO. (*Tiyatro oyunu sahneleyecek binaların sahip olması gereken fiziki özellikler*).

conditions of the licence agreement. It was, for instance, compulsory to have a water pump and enough running water supply for to put a fire out if one started. The Supreme Council ordered investigations into all the theatres in the Şehzadebaşı district and closed down those that were in poor physical condition. The Ottoman legislators sought to introduce a safe environment at theatres for the public by inspecting theatrical spaces and the physical conditions of buildings.[19]

In 1902, two theatre owners, the above-mentioned Mrs. Emine İffet and Hasan Efendi of Dream Works Troupe, applied for a licence at the Ministry of Interior. In their petition, these establishments indicated that their theatre buildings had been renovated according to the 1899 regulations; a number of entrance/exit doors and fire prevention measures were added, including running water supply. Consequently, the Ministry of Interior inspected the buildings and contacted the Grand Viziership (*Sadâret-i penâhı*) granting them the licence.[20]

Another revealing account shows that the authorities could sometimes use the regulations as a justification for not granting any licence, although the actual venues were built in a durable material. For instance, during Ramadan in 1904, Kâmil Efendi, a theatre owner in Şehzadebaşı, requested permission to exhibit a performance. However, the answer from the Yıldız Palace was negative. The archival record reveals that Sultan Abdülhamid II did not find staging plays appropriate during the month of Ramadan and the authorities had to find an excuse for not granting the licence. Indeed, this cause appears to contradict against the long tradition of entertainments allowed during this month even during the Hamidian era. The note reads that '[…] entertainments like staging plays should be banned during the holy

[19] BEO, 1413/105935, (14 December 1899).
[20] BEO, 1957/146720, (30 November 1902).

month of Ramadan […]'.[21] Yet, the authorities' reply to Kâmil Efendi did not mention the Sultan's alleged decision and answered that his theatre was not constructed of stone or brick but was a wooden construction, and thus permission was not granted. The decision stated that the material used in this building was against the public health and safety regulations, and a fire hazard.[22] Other film exhibitions were banned due to concerns for physical safety, and religious or moral 'safety'. These cases show that the authorities cited various reasons for limiting performances in theatre establishments and that it is difficult to ascertain the actual reason for the censorship, due to the number and profile of the policy makers, from central to local authorities.

A fire incident in 1908 at Hasan Efendi's theatre in the Şehzadebaşı district of İstanbul demonstrates that a number of establishments did not follow the licence and exhibition rules and the enforcement of the municipality. The record indicates that fire started in one of the boxes on the second storey of the theatre and the cause was allegedly the use of coal gas. Yet there is no clear information about whether or not there were any casualties. After the incident the newspaper *Saadet* announced that according to the regulations of the İstanbul Municipality and the Council of State (1899), theatre buildings had to meet the physical standards that were set, and to construct their buildings by use of stone and iron; old buildings were to be renovated. However, there were still a number of theatres in the capital that were physically in poor condition and of potential harm to the public (*selâmet-i umûmi*).[23] *Saadet* further wrote that it was the task of the municipality to inspect these theatres and impose regulations.[24] *Saadet*'s

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[21] BOA, Y.A.HUS, 480/114, (6 November 1904). The note in Ottoman Turkish is as follows: '[…] *şehr-i mübarek-i sıyâmda tiyatro gibi vesâit-i sefâhatin men'i lazımeden […]*'.
[22] BOA, Y.A.HUS, 480/114, (6 November 1904).
[23] BOA, DH.MKT, 2645/30, (3 November 1908).
[24] BOA, DH.MKT, 2645/30, (3 November 1908).

pressure on the authorities suggests that even though policy makers were taking some steps and creating regulations for a safe and functioning entertainment premises, in practise these regulations were not successfully applied. Therefore, health and safety concerns continued in the realm of public entertainments. The newspaper, anxious about possible fire hazards, mentioned an incident that took place in Salonika due to the use of electricity for a cinematograph device (*sinematograf makinası*). The news as follows:

> Here is an example:
> On Monday, the first day of the religious holiday, at around 2 o'clock, during the cinematograph exhibition, the cinematograph device in one of the box seats across from the stage was burnt into ashes due to an electrical fire at the Salonika Beyaz Kule Terakkî Garden's Winter Theatre. The fire spread to other seats; women, children and men ran to the glass doors scared to death and broken glasses caused injuries. Luckily, there was no loss of life. The fire was immediately extinguished.[25]

Fire prevention was one reason for the regulation of exhibitions the world over. In 1897, in France 120 people were burned alive due to the use of a non-electric source of light.[26] Nitrate was in fact the biggest fire hazard. The nitrate film stock, a fragile and self-flammable material, could be affected by temperature and 'could easily catch fire'.[27] The non-metallic elements used in the nitrate cellulose were more flammable than the lamps and dynamo due to the oxygen.[28] There were similar cases in the Ottoman Empire, for instance, Sabuncuzade Louis Alberi, the translator for the Yıdız Palace, wrote that a film which he was watching in 1902 ended suddenly, and

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[25] BOA, DH.MKT, 2645/30, (3 November 1908).
[26] Jean-Jacques Meusy, 'France/Regulation' in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 248-258.
[27] Nicholas Hiley, 'Great Britain/1909-1914: Exhibition, Audiences and Regulation' in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 283.
[28] Nezih Erdoğan, 'Erken Sinemanın Kazası Nitrat Yangınları ve Önlemler', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 255, (March 2015), p. 57.

he linked that to an electricity failure. However, 'the audience, believing that the machine had exploded, trampled each other trying to escape'.[29] A film exhibition hosted at Arap İzzet Paşa's mansion, an agent (*mabeynci*) for the Yıldız Palace, ended calamitously in a fire in the 1910s as well.[30] The mansion was illuminated by electricity and the same power was used for the film screening. However overheated wires caught fire and one person died.[31] In brief, the Ottoman authorities were concerned about the cinema projector's lamp and other potential fire hazards due to the use of various power sources.[32]

New technologies, like cinematic devices, raised the authorities' concerns about potential safety issues, as well as socio-cultural and political anxieties in relation to the availability of these communications. The newspaper *Saadet*'s concerns about the entertainment venue's physical features in relation to safety reflect a certain type of mentality that was expressed in the regulatory attempts. Officials sought to provide a safe environment at film exhibition venues by maintaining secure surroundings at these venues. Legal obligations had to be followed by several parties; including official institutions and the owners of exhibition buildings. Enforcing the laws meant officials must follow the regulatory framework, including inspections and granting the licence for performing arts and entertainments. Yet, entrepreneurs also were liable to prevent unwanted outcomes through compliance. As most of the entertainment venues, both theatrical and non-theatrical spaces, hosted film exhibitions before the

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[29] Sabuncuzade Louis Alberi, *Yıldız Sarayı'nda Bir Papaz*, Mehmet Kuzu (ed.), (İstanbul: Selis Yayınları, 2007), p. 252.

[30] Sermet Muhtar Alus, 'Eski Paşaların Bazı Merakları, Garip Tabiatları ve Hususîyetleri' Nuri Akbayar (ed.), *Masal Olanlar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997), pp. 277-278.

[31] Nezih Erdoğan, 'Erken Sinemanın Kazası', p. 58.

[32] Mustafa Özen, 'Travelling Cinema in İstanbul', in Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), *Travelling Cinema in Europe: Sources and Perspectives* (Kintop Schriften, 2008), p. 47.

introduction of permanent cinema-houses, it is not clear that each film exhibition was granted a licence separate from the actual non-cinematic licences of other entertainments that entrepreneurs obtained from the municipality. Therefore, film exhibitions became a target for officials (the police, censor officers and controller investigators) within constantly changing and fluid negotiations with itinerant exhibitors and entrepreneurs.

One of the reasons for this situation can be connected to the omnipresence of film exhibitions in the Empire. Itinerant exhibitors were able to travel in the Empire with their cinematic devices and were willing to screen films at various regions and venues from coffeehouses, theatres, and concert halls to taverns, pubs, schools, museums and gardens, which created an unregulated arena for legislators and officials.[33] Let me now examine particular aspects of film exhibition venues beginning with itinerant exhibition.

Itinerant Exhibition

As an 'international tradable product' films became available in the Empire through a number of channels and personas, and this situation posed various questions regarding the technological, material and spatial conditions of exhibitions.[34] Throughout this chapter, I use two different classifications while exploring the regulation of exhibition practises on the basis of theatrical or non-theatrical venues. The first is the travelling exhibition, which mostly took place at pubs, museums, fairs, taverns, and coffeehouses. The second is the introduction of specifically built venues for exhibition: cinema-houses. Along with the projection equipment, itinerant exhibitors carried 'a

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[33] For an overview of a few locations, see Yorgo Bozis & Sula Bozis, *Paris'ten Pera'ya Sinema ve Sinemacılar*, Sula Bozis (trans.), (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013), pp. 119-123.

[34] Gerben Bakker, *Entertainment Industrialised the Emergence of the International Film Industry, 1890-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 165.

repertoire of film prints' to screen at a number of cities and countries.[35] Most of these exhibitors, commonly referred to as showmen, were connected to international companies and determined the programme screened at these venues. There were also smaller entrepreneurs who 'showed the same repertoire of films for a much longer period of time by travelling from town to town.[36] Itinerant exhibitions dominated until circa 1908; cinema-houses became popular later with only sporadic use of itinerant exhibition.[37]

Itinerant Exhibitors at Ottoman Customs

> A few months ago, during Ramadan, I went to Şehzadebaşı with a friend, after not having been there for some time… Across from the coffeehouses, 'Circus!' *Ortaoyunu*! A few steps later, 'Phonograph!', *karagöz*! And next to that 'Cinematograph!' Edison was watching the *ortaoyunu*, *karagöz* was listening to Edison. Edison! This great innovation of the new world presented with the marvels of ancient Asia, is quite the contrast, isn't it?[38]

This is how author Sami Paşazade Sezai described the carnival-like atmosphere on a Ramadan night in 1898 in the Şehzadebaşı district of İstanbul.[39] There were advertisements for shadow theatre (*karagöz)* and cinema found side-by-side. This goes to show that by 1898, with the increasing number of foreign moving pictures in İstanbul, cinema had

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[35] Corinna Müller, 'Germany/Exhibition', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 273.

[36] Charles Musser, 'Itinerant exhibitors', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 340.

[37] The first permanent cinema-houses were opened in İstanbul (1908) and İzmir (1909). Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine the start and end of travelling cinema. Mobile film exhibitions were quite common at least up until the late 1920s. During the early Republican years, the state initiated a travelling cinema programme via the People's Houses (1932), although the project ran only for a short time. See Özde Çeliktemel-Thomen, 'Halkevleri'nde Eğitici Sinema Repertuarı: Erken Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Sinema, Eğitim, Propaganda (1923-1945)', S*ineCine,* 6 (2), (2015), pp. 49-75.

[38] Sami Paşazade Sezai, 'Musâhabe', Zeynep Kerman (ed.), *Sami Paşazade Sezai*, (İstanbul: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1986 [1898]), p. 86. [Original publication: *İkdâm*, 1441, 16 Temmuz 1898].

[39] The author Sami Paşazade Sezai (1860-1936).

become just another type of spectacle offered during festive Ramadan nights.[40] Sami Paşazade Sezai evaluated this situation in terms of the contrast between East and West, with cinema as 'the great innovation,' bringing the 'new world' to 'ancient Asia'. The arrival of cinema in the Empire was connected to a number of Western European and North American entrepreneurs' keenness in making profit from exhibiting and renting films and selling their devices during the early cinema period.[41] The origins of itinerant exhibitors were varied, but they were mostly from Western Europe, Northern America or non-Muslim subjects of the Empire who had contact with the West.

The court jester of the Yıldız Palace, Bertrand, was charged with presenting local entertainment to the palace inhabitants as well as that which came from the Western Europe. Sultan Abdülhamid's daughter, Ayşe Osmanoğlu, wrote that Bertrand was the first person to screen a film at the palace.[42] The first private screening outside the palace was held at Beyoğlu's Sponek Pub on December 1896, and included 'the press and several invitees' among the audiences.[43] The entrepreneurs and palace officials that heard of this new invention made contact with film equipment firms in Western Europe and America directly, or through diplomatic representatives in the city, and began to increase their knowledge in this area.[44] The organisers of

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[40] Sami Paşazade Sezai, 'Musâhabe', p. 86.

[41] Jacques Rittaud-Hutinet, *Le Cinéma des Origines: Les Frères Lumière et Leurs Opérateur* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1985), pp. 141-147, 158, 230.

[42] Ayşe Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamit* (İstanbul: Güven, 1960), p. 68.

[43] 'Théâtres', *Stamboul*, (12 December 1896). For detailed information about the first film exhibition, see Mustafa Özen 'Travelling Cinema in İstanbul', *Travelling* Cinema', pp. 47-54. For another view, see Ali Özuyar, 'Türkiye'de Gösterilen İlk Filmler', Çevrimiçi *Türk Sineması Arşivleri*:http://www.tsa.org.tr/yazi/yazidetay/12/turkiye%E2%80%99de-gosterilen-ilk-filmler (Accessed on 10 July 2015).

[44] For instance, the photographers O. Diradaur and Theodore Vafiadis contacted the Lumière brothers for further information about the invention of the *cinématographe*. See Jacques Rittaud-Hutinet & Yvelise Dentzer (eds.), *Letters: Auguste and Louis Lumière Correspondances*, Pierre Hodgson (trans.), (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), p. 24.; Nijat Özön,

film exhibitions during this time were artists, business people and foreign itinerant exhibitors who were in tune with the latest technology. For instance, the businessman Sigmund Weinberg, the painter Henri Delavallée, the music hall and circus master Ramirez, the court jester Bertrand and the Yıldız Palace translator Sabuncuzade Louis Alberi were all known as film exhibitors during the early years of cinema's arrival to the Empire. Foreign entrepreneurs such as the engineer and film equipment manufacturer Pierre-Victor Continsouza, the French Louis Janin, the Lumière brothers' operators Alexandre Promio and Francis Doublier, and others introduced cinema to the Ottomans. As Nezih Erdoğan suggests, those who first introduced İstanbul to cinema were principally non-Muslims, or, in other words, outward looking, worldly Ottomans (*cihânîler*).[45]

The historian Şevket Pamuk indicates that international trade regulations had been shifting since the 1830s, after the Ottomans signed the Baltalimanı Treaty with the British Empire.[46] This treaty marked the end of the Ottoman Empire's trade monopoly in its own territories. First, the British gained free trade rights and, gradually, other European powers began to have privileges in the Ottoman territories. Foreign entrepreneurs paid less tax and custom fees and had a more advantageous position in comparison to the local merchants.[47] The profitable state of doing cinema business in the Ottoman territories was obvious to entrepreneurs. From early on, French companies - Pathé, Éclair and Gaumont - supplied films and cinematic devices

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Sinema El Kitabı, p. 113. For a review of films sent from Berlin to Sultan Abdülhamid II., see BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA, 40/1, (12 April 1902).

[45] Nezih Erdoğan, 'The Audience in the Making: Modernity and Cinema in İstanbul, 1896-1928', in Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal & İpek Türeli (eds.), *Orienting İstanbul Cultural Capital of Europe* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 131.

[46] Şevket Pamuk, 'Kapitalist Dünya Ekonomisi ve Osmanlı Dış Ticaretinde Uzun Dönemli Dalgalanmalar 1830-1913', *Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Gelişme Dergisi*, Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Özel Sayısı, (1979-1980), p. 164.

[47] Ibid., p. 165.

in the Empire. These companies 'dominated international film distribution before the mid-1910s' around the world.[48]

Foreign itinerant exhibitors at the Ottoman customs were required to obtain permission to enter the Empire with their devices, yet it is not clear whether or not film content was also inspected. Official institutions undertook special investigations about cinematic devices' technology and their function, such as lamps and the use of power for projecting films. After getting permission, the operators had to maintain a licence for the exhibition venue from the municipality or other legal authorities such as the governor. However, unlicensed venues still existed. Thus, the police were in charge of locating unlicensed entrepreneurship, along with other officers, such as censor officers and controller investigators.[49]

a. Louis Janin at the Customs

Different type of conflicts about the regulation of exhibitions can be followed from a number of Ottoman archival sources. For example, an order of the Customs Office dated June 17, 1896 portrays the historical context and the negotiations about the entry with cinematic devices into the Empire.[50] The French Louis Janin wished to bring an electric lamp into the Empire in order to screen the *cinématographe*. His application was adjudicated by no less than four Ottoman institutions: The Customs Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *(Hariciye Nezâreti Vekâleti)*, the Grand Vizier (*Sadr-ı a'zam*), and the Bureau of Science and Technology (*Fen Müşâvirliği*).[51] This case shows that Ottoman officials were concerned about the infrastructural and logistical issues of projecting images by the *cinématographe*, a relatively

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[48] Gerben Bakker, *Entertainment Industrialised*, p. 187.
[49] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/51, (15 February 1918).
[50] BOA, İ.RSM, 6/1314R-2, (20 September 1896).
[51] BEO, 829/62216 62216, (19 August 1896).; BEO, 843/63218, (26 September 1896).

unknown technological innovation. The correspondence by the several offices reveals that the customs officials wanted to consult the Bureau of Science and Technology for further inspection of Janin's equipment, yet this investigation took a long time to be finalised. Thus, Janin eventually asked diplomats at the French Embassy to intervene, who also provided the information about the content and electrical structure of the latest technology of the *cinématographe*.[52] Correspondence gathered from the Department of Post and Telegraph (*Telgraf ve Posta Nezâret-i Behiyyesi*) shows that the Bureau of Science and Technology determined that the *cinématographe* was a device that 'shows the movements of humans and animals by means of photographs'.[53] The final inspection report reads:

> This electrical device, which requires a continual power source obtained from an electrical arc lamp, can simply be installed and used in a day. Additionally, the above-mentioned apparatus can be exhibited in a theatre or any similar premises without any hazard, as is the case in major cities of Europe where it is greatly appreciated.[54]

As a result, the Grand Vizier sent a messenger to the French Embassy with the final decision of the Ottoman officials, welcoming the use of the *cinématographe*.[55] Stephen Bottomore reads Louis Janin's application under the light of the widespread prohibitive cinema historiography. He argues that Abdülhamid II's supposed fear of electricity marked an 'inauspicious

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[52] Edhem Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western Trade', in Suraiya N. Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Turkey in the Modern World*, 3, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 319.
[53] BOA, İ.RSM, 6/1314R-2, (20 September 1896).
[54] BOA, İ.RSM, 6/1314R-2, (20 September 1896).
[55] Further information on this issue can be also found in the Centre of Diplomatic Archives in France, Nantes which houses the correspondence exchanged between different departments of France and the Ottoman Empire. See Mustafa Özen, 'Travelling Cinema', p. 53.

beginning' for cinema 'when Lumière operator, Louis Janin brought a *cinématographe* to Constantinople [İstanbul] in May 1896'.[56]

Based on Bottomore's interpretation, one may wonder if electricity was the only source for powering cinematic devices. Were there other power sources to screen films? As 'the hallmark of modernity', electricity was one of the most important developments for cinema especially for film making and exhibition.[57] During the early years of cinema, a typical camera and projector required a source of light which was placed behind the entire device, apart from the lens and the positive film.[58] Besides electricity, a certain type of energy such as coal, oil, gas or ethyl-oxygen burners, and limelight (composed of oxygen and hydrogen gas) could also provide the source of light for projection. Cinema entrepreneurs promoted their devices based on the features of the camera and the source of light that they used, and when electricity was available most of the entrepreneurs would have promoted their shows by emphasising its presence.[59] During the first public *cinématographe* screening, one technician was solely in charge of the electric lamp at the Grand Café in Paris.[60] In Russia, 'the source of light was not

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[56] Stephen Bottomore, 'Turkey', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 646. Bottomore notes: 'He [Louis Janin] spent several months vainly trying to persuade the authorities to let him project films and departed before permission was grudgingly granted. The problem was that Sultan Abdulhamed [Abdülhamid] feared electricity and so banned the use of all electrical apparatus. Official doubts remained, and cinema was slow to take off in Turkey [Ottoman Empire].' Stephen Bottomore, 'Turkey', p. 646.

[57] Kristen Whissel, 'Electricity', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 217.

[58] Laurent Mannoni, *The Great Art of Light and Shadow, Archaeology of the Cinema*, Richard Crangle (trans.), (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2000), p. 453. Some of the cameras, called 'reversible camera' could be used both as a camera and projector at the same time. In fact, the Lumière brothers' *cinématographe* was a reversible camera.

[59] Laurent Mannoni, *The Great*, pp. 457-458, 461. For instance, at a show in Berlin in 1895, Max Skladanowsky's *bioskope* was alleged to restore 'life precisely in all its natural detail' by using electricity, hence the audience could feel like they were 'looking at reality'.

[60] Laurent Mannoni, *The Great*, p. 461.

electricity but mainly ether-oxygen burners' in the early 1900s.[61] Nevertheless, dynamos were commonly used for delivering electrical power when the infrastructure for electricity was not available.

In the Ottoman Empire, the difficulty for itinerant exhibitors was providing a power source to run the cinema projectors. The operators relied on a number of chemical power sources. The French inventor Victor Continsouza, for example, applied for permission from Ottoman authorities to bring coal from Marseille in order to provide the power source for his film exhibitions.[62] Coal gas was widely consumed not only for the exhibitions but also for heating and illumination in the Empire.[63] The use of limelight was replaced with electricity, as was the case for film exhibitions in Aleppo, Baghdad, Maskat, and Aden in the 1910s.[64] Electricity was not widely introduced until later, and in this way cinema was tied to the development of electricity in the Empire.

How did the late arrival and the partial use of electricity affect film exhibitions in the Empire? Let me present one of the audience's experiences. The author Ercüment Ekrem Talu recalls his experience of early cinema in İstanbul at the Sponek Pub in 1896, one in which the power source played a central role in bringing the *cinématographe* to life.[65]

> There was no electricity in İstanbul in those days. Abdülhamid's disquiet prevented the arrival of electricity to the country. The smell of petrol used in the lamp to start the *cinématographe*'s camera and to illuminate the film was disturbing to the audience.

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[61] Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and its Cultural Reception* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 17.
[62] BOA, Y.A.RES, 110/44, (16 December 1900).
[63] Nurçin İleri, *A Nocturnal History of Fin de Siècle İstanbul* (Binghamton University, NY: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 2015), p. 190.
[64] 'Moving Pictures in the Orient, Great Success of This Class of Entertainment', *Weekly Consular and Trade Reports*, 1, (March-June 1910), (Washington D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers), p. 645.
[65] Ercüment Ekrem Talu (1886-1956) was a student at Galatasaray Lycée of İstanbul at the time that first public film exhibitions took place at Sponek Pub in Beyoğlu in 1896.

> A person who approached before the curtain explained the reason for this pitch darkness. And right after that the show began.[66]

Another venue that hosted films, Fevziye Kıraathanesi in Şehzadebaşı, used petrol as a power source during their screenings.[67] Amidst all this contradictory information, electricity was also the main power source for a number of film exhibitions, as wealthy individuals could use their resources to install electrical systems at their homes. For instance, Sabuncuzade Louis Alberi, the translator for the Yıdız Palace, invited the public to a film exhibition at his house on İstanbul's Prinkipo Island (*Büyükada*) in 1904 to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the enthronement of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Sabuncuzade Louis Alberi, who learned how to operate the phonograph and projector himself, relates his memory in this manner:

> 1 September – Today was the 28th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty. I was busy today with wiring the electricity at the house to celebrate the occasion. After sunset we turned on the electric lamps and watched the films with the guests.[68]

It is clear that during the reign of Abdülhamid II electricity as a source of lighting existed on a limited basis in the Empire, especially in the capital. It was principally used in the Yıldız Palace and other premises such as embassies, state offices and hotels in the imperial capital. The public use of electricity was available in the provinces such as in İzmir and Salonika in 1905 and in Damascus in 1907, with the Sultan's approval. Since the Tanzimat period İstanbul's streets had been illuminated by gas, petrol, coal and

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[66] Ercüment Ekrem Talu, 'İstanbul'da İlk Sinema ve İlk Gramafon' *Perde Sahne*, 7, (1943), p. 14. Talu describes the scenes from following moving pictures and most probably these are Lumière brothers' productions: *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* (*L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat*, Lumière brothers, 1895, Vue No 653), *Spanish Bullfight* (Lumière brothers, 1897).

[67] Reşad Mimaroğlu, 'Fevziye Kıraathanesi', in Reşad Ekrem Koçu (ed.), *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 10, (İstanbul: Koçu Yayınları, 1971), p. 5727.

[68] Sabuncuzade Louis Alberi, *Yıldız Sarayı'nda*, pp. 306-307, 315.

kerosene lanterns, but not by electricity. By the Second Constitutional period the lighting of İstanbul by electricity gradually became an important agenda for the authorities.[69]

The implementation of electricity indicates various priorities of the state: the ongoing financial burdens, the long modernisation process, infrastructural inadequacy associated with the direct control of subjects and surveillance. All influenced the use and control of cinema and its implementation of regulating cinema. For instance, implicit in the implementation of the telegraph (1855) and the telephone (1881), especially during the Tanzimat period (1839-1856) and Hamidian era (1876-1909), was the drive to transform existing communications based on the latest advancements of the world. U.S. consular reports record that the Austro-Hungarian Ganz Company was granted the rights to build a power house in İstanbul in 1910; the company's bankruptcy slowed the entire process.[70] It was not only the Ganz Company that sought rights to build a power plant in İstanbul, but other rival companies from Germany, Britain and France also showed interest in this lucrative project. These companies and Ottoman authorities competed for privileges for the electrical power contract, which also slowed down the entire process.[71] Finally, in 1911, Ganz Gas and Electric Company collaborated with the Banque Générale Credit Hongrois and the Banque de Bruxelles and founded the Silahtarağa Power Station in 1911 in

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[69] Zafer Toprak, 'Aydınlatma' in Nuri Akbayar & Ekrem Işın (eds.), *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 1, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993), p. 478.; Orhan Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği* (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2010), pp. 274-275.

[70] 'News from Turkey', *U.S. Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, (21 December 1910), No. 144, (Washington D.C.: The Bureau of Manufactures, Department of Commerce and Labor), p. 1111.

[71] Emine Öztaner, *Technology as a Multidirectional Construction: Electrification of İstanbul in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (İstanbul Şehir University: Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 2014), p. 69.

the Golden Horn district of İstanbul.[72] I contend that in the Ottoman Empire, like anywhere else in the world, the technology of cinema had to be understood first. In order to provide energy and premises for film exhibitions, certain basic infrastructure, investment and initiative were required – i.e. this is a broader question of 'modernisation' that encompasses electricity, and cinema as one phenomenon of that.

The gradual arrival of electricity to the Ottoman territories has created a certain literature in regard to Sultan Abdülhamid's restrictions and personal figure. Stephen Bottomore and Nijat Özön position cinema regulations during the Hamidian period as mostly suppressive and restrictive due to their preconditioned attempts to label the entire Hamidian era as 'despotic' and 'prohibitive' in relation to the use of technological innovations of the time.[73] Their ideas do not bear resemblance to archival sources revealed in this study. Nijat Özön also points out that cinema did not flourish until the Second Constitutional period due to Abdülhamid II's restrictions about the use of electricity.[74] Bottomore's interpretation regarding Louis Janin's application in relation to electricity is similar to Özön's.[75]

Thus, the assumptions centred solely on Abdülhamid II's personal choices and character do not prove an acceptable explanation for properly scrutinising the regulations of film exhibition. I see the Sultan's actions as opportunistic and pragmatic; he sought to use films for his own political legitimacy to affect public opinion.[76] Scholars' attempts to situate

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[72] Nurçin İleri, *A Nocturnal History*, p. 191.

[73] Nijat Özön, *Sinema El Kitabı*, p. 113.; Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 31.; Burçak Evren, *Türkiye'ye Sinemayı Getiren Adam Sigmund Weinberg* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1995), p. 22.

[74] Nijat Özön, *Türk Sineması Tarihi*, p. 18.; Nijat Özön, 'Türk Sinemasına', *Türk Dili*, 17, (1 January 1968), p. 268. For a similar view see Stephen Bottomore, 'Turkey', p. 646.

[75] Stephen Bottomore, 'Turkey', p. 646.

[76] See *Chapter 1*.

Abdülhamid II's policies as an obstacle against cinema's growth, and their efforts to depict him only as a figure of prohibitions are unconvincing when fully analysed against the sources from the Ottoman Archives. I suggest that one needs to consider the intricate process of cinema's growth in the Empire within economic, political and technical aspects in relation to the institutional and commercial conditions for a cinema market. Since electricity was not widely available, various sources of energy provided the light and power for early exhibitions in the Empire. The lack of electricity was not a major obstacle because films were made available through other power sources.

b. Promio at the Customs

> I have little to say about my trip to Turkey [the Ottoman Empire], if not the very great difficulty that I had while bringing my shooting camera. During the reign of Abdul-Hamid, any device with a crank was suspected in Turkey thus it was necessary for the Embassy of France to intervene. Later on, in order to enter [the country] freely, also some coins had to be delicately forgotten in the hands of some officers. Finally, I could work in İstanbul, İzmir, Jaffa, Jerusalem and other cities.[77]

In 1897, the Lumière brothers organised a world tour to promote the *cinématographe* under the supervision of a number of operator-projectionists with a 'Catalogue of Views for the Cinématographe'.[78] The Lumière brothers' camera operator Alexandre Promio (1868-1926), travelled to the U.S., to various countries in Europe and to the Ottoman Empire in order to promote the *cinématographe*.[79] Based on Promio's memoirs, it appears that Ottoman customs officers made it difficult for him to bring the

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[77] G.-Michel Coissac, *Histoire du cinématographe de ses origines a nos jours* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1925), pp. 196-197.
[78] Laurent Mannoni, *The Great*, p. 463.
[79] Jacques Rittaud-Hutinet, *Le Cinéma des Origines: Les Frères Lumière et Leurs Opérateurs* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1985), p. 236. In some sources his name is written as 'M. A. Promio' or 'Eugene'.

cinématographe into the Empire. Promio's account exhibits the elusiveness of cinema regulations specifically at the customs especially in regard to the acts of customs officer.

His observation offers a glimpse into how the *cinématographe* and any potentially 'suspicious device with a crank' was at first unwelcome in the Empire. Echoing the experience of Louis Janin, intervention by the French Embassy was required to overcome bureaucratic obstacles. While at face value, his complaint may appear to be legitimate, it also highlights that these operators were unaccustomed to the Ottoman trade procedure and regulations. In the eighteenth century, Western trade in the Empire was normally practised under certain negotiated criteria and diplomacy via the respective countries' embassies or consular bodies due to the Western traders' limited power in the local market. While trade relations in the nineteenth century gradually changed to integrate the Ottoman economy into the Western market, the customary negotiated trade environment existed widely during the time of Promio's tour.[80] European states had to use diplomatic relations to protect their merchants via the diplomatic services while doing business with the Ottomans.[81] The confirmation of the French Embassy was essential for the authorities' custom regulations since this new machine's functions and technical content were still unknown to many Ottoman officials. Promio's experience shows the complex business relations, yet similar customs cases can be observed in the archives when Austrian, Italian or other European companies' diplomatic bodies attempted to negotiate for cinematic trade opportunities in the Empire.[82]

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[80] Edhem Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western Trade', p. 285.
[81] Ibid., p. 304.
[82] BOA, Y.A.RES, 132/72, (11 September 1905).; BOA, İ.RSM, 28/2, (26 May 1907).

According to Promio, the negotiations of the diplomats and bribe were arbitrary and illicit acts. Yet what he experienced at the border was a quite common practise for business and trade in the Empire. Tipping or bribing Ottoman officials was perceived as 'normal,' unless it involved blackmailing or violence by the officials, who were employed in the provinces with some autonomy.[83] According to Sultan Abdülhamid II, tipping was practised less during his reign, yet was still expected by some officers due to financial hardship and the low wages of their services. Abdülhamid II claimed that the Westerners who considered this as corruption on the part of the Ottoman officers, 'should not compare them to Western officers and to their high economic standards'.[84] Consequently, the Ottoman officers were inclined to ask for 'tips' in return for their services, as observed in the case of Promio.[85] The itinerant exhibitors of the Lumière brothers were not only under legal and economic inspections in the Ottoman territories, but also in other empires during the same years. For instance, the Lumière brothers' camera operator, Charles Moisson, made a short film sequence in Austria without paying the necessary taxes. Thus, he was subject to a judicial act while filming there and the authorities consequently 'outlawed the work of the French company in Austrian territories' in 1897.[86] Thus, any itinerant operator could encounter official restrictions all over the world as the cases demonstrated.

Promio was able to film various scenes of the Empire for audiences around the world. When he came to İstanbul in 1897, he filmed scenes of the

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[83] Edhem Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western Trade', p. 310.
[84] In fact, Abdülhamid uses the term 'tip' instead of 'bribe'. This quotation is from his memoirs entitled 'The issue of tipping' which dates from 1896. However, a number of scholars claim that this memoir was not written by the Sultan himself. Sultan Abdülhamid, *Siyasi Hatıratım* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1987), pp. 77- 78.
[85] Ibid., pp. 77-78.
[86] Paolo Caneppele, 'Austro-Hungary', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 51.

Bosphorus and Golden Horn. Today this film is known as *Panorama of the Bosphorus* (*Panorama des rives du Bosphore,* No 417, 1897), which depicts different boats parading along the shore. Another film, *Panorama of the Golden Horn (Panorama de la Corne d'Or,* No 416, 1897) demonstrates the residents, boats and port in İstanbul. He also shot *Parade of Turkish Infantry* (*Défilé de l'infanterie turque,* No 414, 1897), showing soldiers marching in the streets of İstanbul with rifles on their shoulders. He made various other films throughout the Empire in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Beirut.[87] I contend that Promio had a successful tour throughout the Empire in 1897. His films shot at different locations suggest that there was little further official intervention or regulation of his activities, unless he made his films outside the control of local authorities.[88] In conclusion, the initial concerns of the officials about the *cinématographe* were resolved after the negotiations of the French diplomats in İstanbul.

In fact, Promio and others were allowed to operate in many parts of the Empire once the requisite legal expectations were met, according to the customary trade regulations of the Ottomans. In 1905, the Austrian Fransz Protoska wanted to enter the Empire with a dynamo to use for film exhibition. As was the case with Janin and Promio, the Bureau of Science and Technology investigated the technical device.[89] When the process took too

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[87] Rittaud-Hutinet, *Le Cinéma*, pp. 145, 146, 158, 231. Some of these films are *A Street (Une Rue, No 406*) and *Porte of Jaffa, East Coast (Porte de Jaffa: côté oust, No 402*) in Jerusalem and *Souk-el-Fakhra* (*No 413)* in Damascus, and *Square of the Canons* (*Place des Canons, No 410*) in Beirut. See the website for a catalogue of all the films produced by the Lumière Company between 1895 and 1905 (1428 films in total). (Accessed on 11 July 2015). catalogue-lumiere.com –http://catalogue-lumiere.com/

[88] In 1899, representatives of the Lumières, Francis Doublier and his assistants, visited İstanbul while on tour into Sofia, Cairo, Athens, Bombay, Bucharest, Shanghai, Pekin and Yokohoma. See Rittaud-Hutinet, *Le Cinéma*, pp. 158, 230.

[89] BOA, Y.A.RES, 132/72, (11 September 1905).

long, the Austrian diplomats filed a complaint and consequently the permit was granted.[90]

Another customs application during the Hamidian era proves that authorities inspected cinematic devices and electrical machinery before permission was granted to operate in the Empire. In 1907, the Italian Cinematograph Troupe from Naples applied to the Customs Office in İzmir to bring a dynamo and other electrical machinery into the Empire for film exhibition. The archival report, signed by Grand Vizier Ferid, indicated that the Bureau of Science and Technology confirmed 'the low voltage of the electric power of the devices' and there was no harm in granting the licence.[91] The Italian Cinematograph Troupe also confirmed that they were going to use a dynamo for film exhibition purposes and return all of their devices to Naples at the end of their tour.[92]

In 1908, another Italian citizen, Filippo Ornaghi, requested a licence for electrical devices to screen films in İzmir and Salonika. Based on the report of the Bureau of Science and Technology, 'motors of the electrical machinery inspected were found suitable for industrial use and illumination purposes', and consequently Grand Vizier Ferid decided to pass the application to the Deposit Office of the Customs Administration (*Rüsûmat Emaneti*).[93] However, the answer from the Yıldız Palace highlighted the importance of Sultan Abdülhamid's 'sensitivity', thus, 'a meticulous inspection should be performed so that special officials can censor these [images] in case they find

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[90] Şevket Pamuk, 'Kapitalist Dünya', pp. 164-165. Indeed, the privileged status of consular bodies worked against the economic well-being of the Empire in terms of law taxation, yet these foreign itinerant exhibitors contributed to the spread of cinema.
[91] BOA, İ.RSM, 28/2, (26 May 1907). The low voltage (*az tazyikli*) appears to be an important criterion for the Bureau of Science and Technology as it indicates the common fire incidents occurred due to the differences of voltage and electric variations. Devices requiring higher voltage could cause problems with devices' function and eventually fire hazard.
[92] BOA, İ.RSM, 28/2, (26 May 1907).
[93] BOA, İ.RSM, 30/12, (8 January 1908).

them detrimental for the state and the community.'[94] Nevertheless, these cases reveal that after the inspection of certain devices had been completed, the itinerant exhibitors were permitted to enter the Empire with their devices. Itinerant exhibitors were granted a licence for the use of cinematic devices, even though other officials from various institutions – the police and censor officers – kept an eye on film exhibitions, specifically for what was available on the screen and how films were exhibited.

c. Applications at the Municipality

Based on the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 (*Kânûn-ı Esasî*), the capital city of İstanbul and other provincial governments were regulated separately by the city councils. The city councils were managed by the mayor (*Şehremini*) and appointed by the Sultan. The mayor and councils regulated the financial issues and policies of their cities.[95] Municipalities were also tied to the ministries, and at times the police and the military had the right to inspect and intervene or collaborate with the practises of municipal officials.[96] Municipalities were required to provide essential infrastructural services to its inhabitants. The services included building roads, maintaining health services, policing, public safety, illumination and heating.[97]

One of the municipal tasks was granting licences to public entertainments. Municipal records from the Second Constitutional era (1908-1918) show that the organisation of entertainments without a proper permit or licence were investigated by the police and they had the right to close

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[94] BOA, İ.RSM, 30/12, (8 January 1908). Here the 'special officer' is referred as '*memurîn-i mahsusa'*, which probably implied the censor officers and controllers.
[95] Tarkan Oktay, *Osmanlı'da Büyükşehir Belediye Yönetimi İstanbul Şehremaneti* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2011), pp. 45-47, 54.
[96] Ibid., p. 48.
[97] Nurçin İleri, *A Nocturnal History*, pp. 44, 180.

down businesses without licence.[98] Authorities required the registration of technical devices and the use of power for projector or camera. Itinerant exhibitors obtained the film exhibition licence for non-theatrical venues after getting the confirmation from the Customs Office. Especially in İstanbul, after a number of newly built cinema-houses began to flourish, municipalities were also after the commercial liability that these establishments owed to them.[99]

State archives reflect the rise of licence applications during the year of 1908. Most of these applications were filed by foreign itinerant exhibitors and were specifically for the use of electricity for exhibiting films. These cases suggest that policy-makers were actively following the existing regulatory codes. This was particularly the case with the Austrian Menchepich's application for film exhibition at a Labrino Tavern in the Beyoğlu district of İstanbul.[100] The Sixth District Municipality (*Altıncı Daire-i Belediye Müdüriyyeti*) wrote that the operator planned to use a dynamo and electrical power for this exhibition.[101] The correspondence between the officers at the municipality show that the location was inspected and permission was not granted due to the close proximity of the Labrino Tavern to the British Embassy's garden and an Armenian Church. Especially the 'motor and dynamo' were found detrimental due to the zoning regulations.[102] The Labrino Tavern could host a film exhibition as a commercial venue by obtaining a licence, yet the authorities' negative decision was related to its surroundings.

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[98] Ayhan Ceylan, 'Osmanlı Dönemi Türk Sinemasında Hukuki Düzen', *Türk Hukuk Tarihi Araştırmaları*, 9, (Spring 2010), p. 15.
[99] BOA, DH.MUİ, 27/2-1, (14 November 1909).
[100] The name could also be read as Chepik.
[101] BOA, ZB, 56/45, (11 January 1908). The Sixth District Municipality was responsible for the districts of Galata, Beyoğlu, Pangaltı, Kurtuluş, and Tophane.
[102] BOA, ZB, 56/45, (11 January 1908).

A similar case can be observed when a number of inhabitants of the Sultan Bayezıd neighbourhood in İstanbul sent a petition to the police office requesting permission to exhibit a cinematograph in the garden of Mustafa Efendi's restaurant during the holy month of Ramadan in 1908. The itinerant operator who submitted the petition was an Italian national named Lakesendel.[103] Since the screening was going to take place in a residential area, the inhabitants wanted to ensure that they approved the planned screening by adding their signatures in the petition sent to the Police Office.[104] In this way neighbourhood audiences showed their interest in films during the festive times of religious holidays.

In 1908, Sultan Abdülhamid II issued a special decree about the banning of a film exhibition on a tug boat in İstanbul. The decree reads:

> ... [T]he complaint reports that two French operators attempted to rent a derelict ferry number 18, previously of *Şirket-i Hayriyye* [Ottoman joint-stock company], and a tug boat in order to screen cinematograph images for the public with a cinematograph machine while plying the shores of the Bosphorus, the Princes' Islands, Makrıköy [Bakırköy] and the Gulf of İzmit. Due to the harm (*mehâzirine mebnî)*, it is hereby ordered and decreed by his majesty the Sultan that this cannot be allowed. [105]

These French operators probably did not obtain the necessary licence for the film exhibition on a ferry on the shores of the Bosphorus. Based on the decree it appears that authorities were informed about the operators' attempt to rent a ferry and tug boat after a complaint. There is no further information regarding an official application for permission to the municipality for the exhibition. As the French operator Promio's case portrayed, he was able to make films on a boat along the Bosphorus in 1897. But in his case, there may not have been any concerns about the safety of

[103] 'Lakesendel' might be the Ottoman Turkish spelling of the name.
[104] BOA, ZB, 56/79, (12 September 1908).
[105] BOA, İ.HUS.1262/83, (20 July 1908).

the public.[106] Looking closely through the historical records one finds evidence on the emergence of cinema, in various forms, in this period. Some of that relates to itinerant exhibitors as I have pointed out and some to issues such as zoning and licensing.

For instance, Burçak Evren claims that the Sultan's order to ban the Frenchmen renting the ferry is the first instance of censorship during the late Ottoman era.[107] I contend that this argument is not valid because Evren misinterprets the case by reading the source erroneously. He claims that the ban was about filmmaking in the ferry, rather than the exhibition of cinematograph on a ferry.[108] The term used for exhibition in the document is '*temâşâ*', and it states that the operators were renting the ferry to screen the cinematograph to the public, as seen in the Ottoman Turkish: '*güya ahaliye sinematograf resimleri temâşâ ettirmek için*'.[109] My reading of this document is similar to Mustafa Gökmen's, as he states that the French operators sought to launch a mobile cinema.[110] Nevertheless, in the record it is not indicated whether or not operators planned to make films. Evren asserts that the decree's emphasis on 'harm' alludes to the reason of this prohibition; and it shows the fuzziness of the concept of harm and, indeed, it is unclear.[111] The 'harm' may be related to the authorities' concern about the use of a derelict ferry for the public film exhibition. Therefore, his assertion of the first act of censorship does not appear to be convincing.

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[106] *Panorama of the Bosphorus* (*Panorama des rives du Bosphore,* Alexander Promio, 1897, Vue No 417).
[107] Burçak Evren, 'Abdülhamid ve Sinema', in Agâh Özgüç (ed.), *Türk Sinemasında Sansür* (Ankara: Kitle, 2000), pp. 136-137.
[108] Burçak Evren, *Türkiye'ye Sinemayı Getiren*, p. 21.
[109] BOA, İ.HUS, 1262/83, (20 July 1908).
[110] Mustafa Gökmen, *Başlangıçtan 1950'ye Kadar Türk Sinema Tarihi ve Eski İstanbul Sinemaları* (İstanbul: Denetim, 1989), p. 14.
[111] Burçak Evren, 'Abdülhamid ve Sinema', p. 138.

This decree clearly is an example of the state's censorship of a film exhibition. However, it is difficult to conclude that it was the first act of censorship, as Evren asserts. It is worth studying the reasons and nature of official restrictions over cinema in order to understand the underlying causes, such as the authorities' concerns, their discourses and practises, along with the negotiations between entrepreneurs and the state. As a number of the above-mentioned cases demonstrate, it is possible to mention multiple forms of censorship in the areas of filmmaking and exhibition. Therefore, the attempt to specify the first act of censorship appears to be void, largely a pointless task, and impossible at the moment. Moreover, there may still be undiscovered sources to show other forms of bans at local and central levels throughout the vast geography of the Empire even prior to this incident.

For the case of a cinematograph exhibition on a derelict ferry along the Bosphorus in 1908, it is uncertain whether or not a legal procedure was in place to inspect the devices and the ferry. The attempts to host a film exhibition on an abandoned ferry that could be moved only by using a tug boat was considered dangerous, most probably due to the nature of the mobile transport and the fact that a large number of people would be on board throughout the journey. The action the authorities took to restrict this event appears to be related to safety concerns as it would have been logistically difficult to provide aid in case of fire on the vessel. There was, in fact, the case in Russia in 1906 when oxygen lamps for a projection machine caused a fire on 'a floating electrical theatre' on the Volga River.[112] The barge, that could accommodate 500 people, was moved by a river steamer and the fire started before the arrival of the audiences, thus no one was hurt.[113]

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[112] Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia*, p. xix.
[113] Ibid., p. xix.

The French operators' plan to exhibit films on a ferry is similar to the above-mentioned cases by being an example of temporary and mobile exhibitions. Most of the cases show that when a number of operators applied for a licence, the authorities inspected their cinematic devices and the venue. According to the 1896 regulation, it was compulsory to maintain a licence even for itinerant shows, amusement fairs and other type of temporary exhibitions in open air venues.[114] The question of how a venue could be safe and appropriate becomes clearer when the process of licence application is scrutinised as a whole. It required any theatrical and non-theatrical venue to be physically safe. Consider, for example, the licence application of the Italian national Pascale Dimitri in 1911 to exhibit a cinematograph at a coffeehouse in Uşak. Authorities declined his request on the basis of the venue's poor physical conditions. The entry to the coffeehouse was reachable only by a high and winding staircase which did not provide a safe exit for audiences in case of emergency. The authorities indicated that the venue did not meet the emergency regulations and evacuation plan, thus the coffeehouse was found inappropriate for a public film exhibition. [115]

Exhibition at Cinema-houses

Cinema-houses, as spatially bounded buildings, were specifically designed for film screenings or converted from theatres and other large constructions to film exhibition spaces. Thus, they raised a number of issues from licensing to projection practises and safety concerns, such as fire prevention, guidelines on the use of a projector, the use of energy to run the devices, and clearly located entrance and exit ways at premises. Unlike itinerant exhibitions, cinema-houses could be the target of official

[114] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896).
[115] BOA, DH.İD, 65/2, (18 April 1911).

investigations, because they were easy for officials to locate directly. The theatrical and non-theatrical spaces (coffeehouses, taverns, pubs, schools, museums, restaurants and gardens) in which itinerant exhibitors hosted their film repertoire had varying physical conditions, thus policy-makers' attempts to introduce a standardised spatial formation were restricted. I do not claim a clear-cut end for under the two spatial divisions, itinerant exhibition and cinema-houses, though. Permanent theatrical and non-theatrical spaces, which either exhibited films along with other performances or ones that were converted into cinema-houses, both called for the introduction of new technologically specific regulations for film exhibition. The theatre-oriented licensing was inadequate to answer the needs of this novel technology.

a. The Settings of Cinema-houses

When cinema gradually became a growing public entertainment in the Empire, a number of foreign and Ottoman entrepreneurs sought to take more permanent steps in the goal of increasing profits and expanding their businesses. French Pathé had already connections with the Ottomans via the engineer-inventor Pierre-Victor Continsouza since 1898. Sultan Abdülhamid II even sent him the medal of Fine Arts to show his appreciation of Continsouza's achievements with Henri René Bünzli and Charles Pathé.[116] Eventually Pathé collaborated with the İstanbullian merchant Sigmund Weinberg who owned a Bon Marché in the Beyoğlu district of İstanbul and was willing to make films of the Ottoman Imperial Army (*Osmanlı Ordu-yu Humâyunu*) free of charge in 1899.[117] In 1908, Weinberg and Pathé collaborated to open the first permanent cinema-house in the Empire, Pathé

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[116] BOA, Y.PRK.TKM, 2/34, (29 December 1898).; Laurent Mannoni, 'Pierre-Victor Continsouza', p. 154.; Laurent Mannoni, 'Bünzli, Henri René', p. 86.

[117] BOA, Y.PRK.MYD, 22/60, (23 October 1899).; Burçak Evren, *Türkiye'ye Sinemayı Getiren*, p. 16.

Cinema.[118] Already a provider of photographic merchandise, Weinberg also became Pathé's distributor in the Empire.[119] The second Pathé cinema-house was opened in İzmir in 1909.[120] Thus, 'the largest and most influential French film company' became a film exhibitor and distributor in the Ottoman Empire until circa the First World War (1914-1918).[121]

Trade opportunities in the cinema business gradually grew in the Empire. While Europeans started the trade the region, Americans began to search for possible trade alliances.[122] They were not only interested in exhibition but also in selling American film supplies and devices.[123] American Weekly Consular and Trade Reports make an important observation about the commercialisation of the cinema market in the Empire:

> It is a question of only a short time until every important town in the Middle East has a moving picture theatre. At present France has practically a monopoly of the business of furnishing films,

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[118] Burçak Evren, *Türkiye'ye Sinemayı Getiren*, p. 44. According to Evren, the Pathé Cinema was renamed several times in the following years: as Belediye Cinema in 1916, Anfi Cinema in 1919, Asri Cinema in 1924 and Ses Cinema in 1941.

[119] Nijat Özön, *Türk Sineması Tarihi (Dünden Bugüne) 1896-1960* (Ankara: Antalya Kültür Sanat Vakfı, 2003), p. 34.;

[120] Oğuz Makal, 'Tarih İçinde İzmir'de Sinema Yaşantısı', *Sinema Yazıları*, (Summer 1993), p. 32.

[121] Richard Abel, 'Pathé Frères', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010) p. 505.

[122] 'Foreign Trade Opportunities, No: 5901 Cinematograph Films', *U.S. Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, No. 133, (8 December 1910), (Washington D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers), p. 920.; 'Foreign Trade Opportunities, No: 6468 Cinematographs and Supplies', *U.S. Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, No. 74, (30 March 1911), (Washington D.C.: Daily Consular and Trade Reports, Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers), p. 1232.

[123] 'Cinematograph and Supplies American Consul's Report in Asia Minor, *U.S. Daily Consular and Trade Reports,* No: 6468, (1911), (Washington D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers).; 'Foreign Trade Opportunities, No: 5901 Cinematograph Films', U.S. Daily Consular and Trade Reports, No. 133, (8 December 1910), (Washington D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers), p. 920.; 'Foreign Trade Opportunities, No: 6468 Cinematographs and Supplies', U.S. Daily Consular and Trade Reports, No. 74, (30 March 1911), (Washington D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers), p. 1232. The list of cinema-houses recorded in 1922 shows that Americans only owned one venue starting from 1919 in İstanbul see BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922). See Appendix.

> but there seems to be no reason why American manufacturers might not share in the business.[124]

Indeed, especially during the First World War, the U.S. began to have its own share in the cinema market, not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in Europe. The emerging Hollywood studios were to obtain a lasting presence in the world market starting from the mid-1910s.[125] In 1910, the American Consul George Horton of Salonika encouraged American cinema entrepreneurs to collaborate with the Ottomans. His report stated:

> There are four moving-picture shows in operation in Salonika, and another is soon to be opened. About 3,500 people attend these shows nightly, paying an average admission fee of 2 piaster (8.8 cents). The films are obtained in Italy and France and are mostly rented from the concerns that furnish them. […] Cinematograph shows are popular in the other big towns of this district, and it may be said that business is booming. There are no regular theatres in any of these towns and moving-picture shows have the amusement field practically to themselves. There is no reason why Americans should not get their share of this business if they would take the trouble to look after it.[126]

A number of international film companies gradually started cinema businesses, particularly in the field of film exhibition and distribution especially in İstanbul.[127] The cinema market in the Empire depended on this international network and aggressive competition. A number of scholars highlight Sultan Abdülhamid's strict censorship of the press and alleged opposition to innovations during his reign; I instead have searched evidence to offer a more nuanced picture of this period. I contend that cinema was

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[124] 'Moving Pictures in the Orient, Great Success of This Class of Entertainment', *U.S. Weekly Consular and Trade Reports*, 1, (March-June 1910), (Washington D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers), p. 645.
[125] Gerben Bakker, *Entertainment Industrialised*, p. 185.
[126] 'Moving Pictures in Turkey, Cinematograph Shows are Popular in Saloniki', *U.S. Weekly Consular and Trade Reports*, 1, No. 41, Serial No. 41, (20 August 1910), (Washington D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Manufacturers), p. 558.
[127] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).

available in empire from early on via a number of channels and itinerant exhibitors during the Hamidian era. Let me first focus on how the existing scholarly literature portray the period.

Nijat Özön, for instance, claims that cinema was mainly practised by itinerant exhibitors and did not have a permanent place during the Hamidian era until the year of 1908, when the Young Turk Revolution took place against the monarchy.[128] Burçak Evren asserts a similar view, depicting the Second Constitutional era as the period of freedom and the milestone of flourishing cinema market in comparison to the Hamidian era.[129] Likewise, Savaş Arslan contends that 'audiences in İstanbul had to wait until the fall of the conservative sultan Abdulhamid II in 1908 for the first film theatre'.[130] I observe that there is a tendency among these scholars to connect the opening up a permanent cinema directly to the Sultan's actions and changing political leadership, but not to the existing infrastructure for cinema business, international entrepreneurship and audiences' demand for films. Yet, the earliest permanent cinema in Iran was opened in 1904, in Britain 1906 and in Russia it was 1907, which shows that the opening of the first cinema-house in İstanbul in 1908 was timely in comparison to its contemporaries.[131] At times, scholars perceive cinema merely as a cultural and artistic phenomenon and disregard its basic requirements such as a fiscal base, sophisticated equipment, infrastructural needs, and technical expertise and this is in fact the case for Ottoman cinema historiography.[132]

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[128] Nijat Özön, 'Türk Sinemasına', p. 268.
[129] Burçak Evren, *Türkiye'ye Sinemayı Getiren*, p. 43.
[130] Savaş Arslan, *Cinema*, p. 31.
[131] Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Cinema, The Artisanal Era 1897-1941*, 1, (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 39.; Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia*, p. 19.; Annette Kuhn, *Cinema Censorship and Sexuality 1909-1925* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 13.
[132] Denise J. Youngblood, *Soviet Cinema in the Silent Era 1918-1935* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), p. viii.

Records about the number and features of cinema-houses in the Ottoman Empire are fragmented and mostly about the urban centres of İstanbul, İzmir and Salonika. İstanbul was the main hub for cinema market throughout the region. Based on the number and range of cinema-houses in the city, it is possible to further examine the information presented in the regulation of film exhibitions in the following part. One of the earliest sources indicating the number of cinema-houses in the capital comes from the İstanbul Municipality (*İstanbul Şehremâneti*). According to the two different records of the Statistical Journal of İstanbul Municipality (1329 and 1330 Senesi İstanbul Belediyesi İhsaiyyat Mecmuası), covering the years of 1913/1914 and 1914/1915, there were 25 cinema-houses in İstanbul on the eve of the First World War.[133] There were seven districts in the capital indicating the cinema-houses which did not show any changes in the numbers between 1913/1914 and 1914/1915. The details of the records can be viewed in Table 3.1:

The Number of Cinema-houses in İstanbul in 1913-1915	
Beyoğlu	14
Kadıköy	3
Adalar	3
Beyazıt	2
Bakırköy	1
Üsküdar	1
Anadoluhisarı	1
Total	**25**

Table 3.1: The number of cinema-houses in İstanbul in 1913-1914.[134]

There are multiple secondary sources on the number of cinema-houses in İstanbul. For instance, Cesar Raymond's geographical survey on the

[133] *1329 Senesi İstanbul Belediyesi İhsaiyyat Mecmuası*, 1330, (Dersaadet: Matbaa-i Arşak Garivyan, 1913/1914), p. 345.; *1330 Senesi İstanbul Belediyesi İhsaiyyat Mecmuası*, 1331, (Dersaadet: Matbaa-i Arşak Garivyan, 1914/1915), p. 301.

[134] *1329 Senesi İstanbul Belediyesi İhsaiyyat Mecmuası*, p. 345.; *1330 Senesi İstanbul Belediyesi İhsaiyyat Mecmuası*, p. 301.

Beyoğlu (Pera) district of İstanbul, most likely published in about 1915, reports that there were 11 cinema-houses: ‘Amphithéatre de Petits-Champs, Cirque de Péra, Cinéma Central (1911), Cinéma Cosmographe, Cinéma Etoile, Cinéma Luxembourg, Cinéma Magic (1914), Cinéma Orientaux (1912), Cinéma Weimberg (Pathé Cinéma, 1908), Théâtre Odéon and Théâtre d’Hiver de Petits Champs’.[135] Ali Özuyar notes that ‘there were more than twenty cinema-houses’ in İstanbul by 1914 which considerably increased during the war years.[136] Nezih Erdoğan meticulously lists the permanent and seasonal exhibition venues in his recent work, both theatrical and non-theatrical ones, including cinema-houses between the years 1896 and 1922; and it appears that the number of cinema-houses drastically rose between 1914 and 1915.[137] Likewise, this fact is visible in İ. Arda Odabaşı’s latest book, in which he highlights the parallelism between the increase in the number of cinema-houses in İstanbul and the MOC’s film production in 1914 along with the initial publications on cinema during the same time frame.[138] Above all, cinema’s development in the empire was dependent on several determinants such as newly established cinema-houses, local film production, cinema publications, audiences’ demand for films, and the emergence of narrative films and various film programmes.

In addition, the municipality records of İstanbul display quite rich data on the city’s cinema-houses. The data that I gathered from the BOA reveals the number of cinema-houses between 1918 and 1921, and the owners or

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[135] Cesar Raymond, *Nouveau Plan de Péra* (Constantinople [İstanbul]: Librairie Raymond, [1915]), p. 15.
[136] Ali Özuyar, *Sessiz Dönem Türk Sinema Tarihi (1895-1922)* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2017), p. 230.
[137] Nezih Erdoğan, *Sinemanın İstanbul'da İlk Yılları Modernlik ve Seyir Maceraları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınevi, 2017), pp. 274-275.
[138] İ. Arda Odabaşı, *Milli Sinema Osmanlı'da Sinema Hayatı ve Yerli Üretime Geçiş* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2017), pp. 18-19.

leaseholders of the venues. There is also a classification based on the permanent and seasonal cinema-houses. The location of cinema-houses is divided according to the municipal district of five neighbourhoods: Beyoğlu, Galata, Kadıköy, İstanbul (Suriçi), and Makrıköy (Bakırköy). Seasonal film exhibitions took place mostly around the festive days of the holy month of Ramadan, thus a number of venues are also listed under this division. This municipality record was either kept during licence applications or used for taxation purposes, even though the purpose is not clearly stated.[139] Ali Özuyar's work on cinema-houses shows how the municipality of İstanbul gathered tax revenues from a number of cinema-houses in 1921.[140] The below-charts display the number of cinema-houses and the film exhibitions in İstanbul.

There were 27 permanent and seasonal cinema-houses in 1918, 32 in 1919, 72 in 1920 and 88 in 1921. The data in Table 3.2 indicates that the number of commercial cinema-houses in İstanbul more than tripled from 1918 to 1921; thus, the itinerant exhibitors were challenged by this new range of venues, their fixed film repertoire and longer programmes. The largest increase during this period was from 1919 to 1920, where the number of cinema-houses more than doubled in one year (Table 3.2).[141]

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[139] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).
[140] Ali Özuyar, *Devlet-i Aliyye'de Sinema*, pp. 113-123.
[141] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).

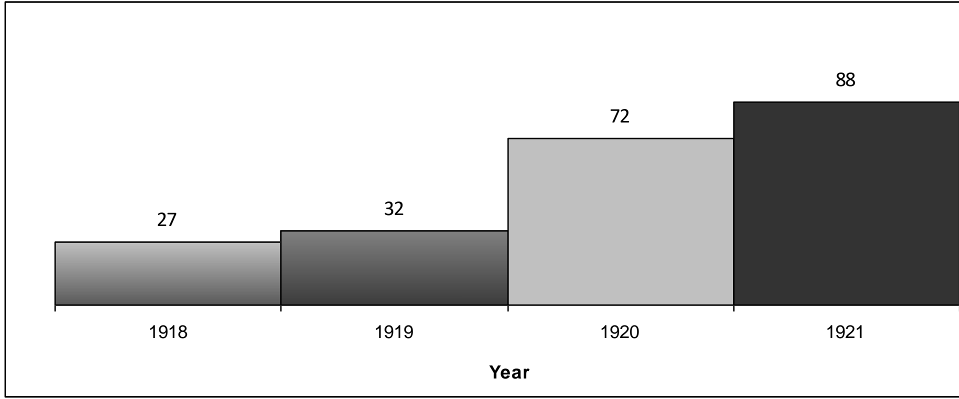

Table 3.2: Number of cinema-houses in İstanbul in 1918-1921.[142]

There are two periods of growth in the number of cinema-houses. The first wave started between the years of 1914 and 1915 as indicated above. According to Burçak Evren, the reason for this increase was the foreign entrepreneurs' interest in looking for new markets.[143] Entrepreneurs converted old theatres, circus buildings and music halls into commercial cinema-houses.[144] Also, cinema market in the Empire was developing in many ways from cinema-going to production and the change in exhibition practices due to film length and genres, which affected the cinema-houses as a whole.[145] The second wave took place during the Armistice Period, between 1918 and 1921, as can be seen in Table 3.2. Wartime leisure definitely witnessed a gradual rise in the number of cinema-houses. There were 24 permanent cinema-houses in the city in 1918, 25 in 1919, 37 in 1920 and 49 in 1921. The permanent cinema-houses were largely located in the Beyoğlu district and spread to other parts Suriçi, Galata, Kadıköy, Makrıköy. The largest increase was recorded from 1919 to 1921; almost a fifty-percent

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[142] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).
[143] Burçak Evren, 'Sinemalar', in Nuri Akbayar & Ekrem Işın (eds.), *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 7, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), p. 8.
[144] Ibid., p. 8.
[145] İ. Arda Odabaşı, *Milli Sinema*, pp. 18-19.

increase can be observed in the number of permanent cinema-houses in İstanbul (Table 3.3).[146]

Table 3.3: Number of permanent cinema-houses in İstanbul in 1918-1921.[147]

The number of seasonal cinema-houses, including the premises located in gardens, increased dramatically from 1918 to 1921 in İstanbul. There were only 3 seasonal cinema-houses in 1918, 7 in 1919, 35 in 1920, and 39 in 1921. The highest increase was experienced from 1919 to 1920, when the numbers increased 5 times (Table 3.4).[148] These seasonal cinema-houses, mostly located in the Anatolian side of the city, in Kadıköy and Üsküdar, were typically active during the summer time, religious holidays and other festive periods. They were cheaper than the permanent ones and served as a popular leisure activity especially for families with children.[149]

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[146] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).
[147] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).
[148] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).
[149] Burçak Evren, 'Bahçe Sinemaları', in Nuri Akbayar & Ekrem Işın (eds.), *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 1, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993), pp. 540-541.

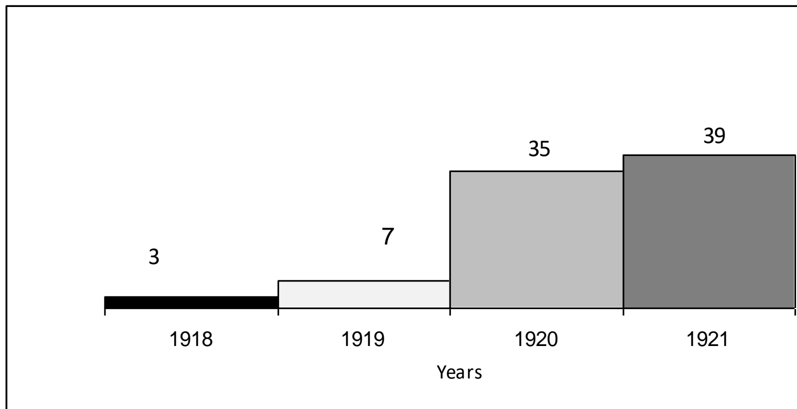

Table 3.4: Number of seasonal cinema-houses in İstanbul in 1918-1921.[150]

The available data suggests that there were more permanent cinema-houses in İstanbul than seasonal ones between 1918 and 1921, but only slightly. Permanent cinema-houses made up fifty-three-percent of the total number, while seasonal cinema-houses made up forty-seven-percent as seen in below chart (Table 3.5).[151] The high number of seasonal cinema-houses may be related to the above-mentioned reasons such as the summer-time cinema-going, cheaper tickets at gardens, and the general celebratory atmosphere of festive periods in which films were screened along with other live entertainments.

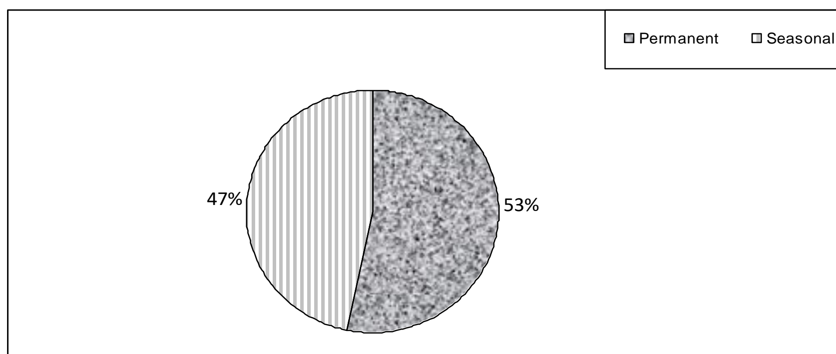

Table 3.5: Permanent vs. seasonal cinema-houses in İstanbul, 1918-1921.[152]

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[150] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).
[151] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).
[152] BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).

b. Regulating Exhibitions at Cinema-houses

The commercialisation of cinema-houses created an arena for municipalities and police wherein security and safety issues at these venues became the target of the authorities. The safety of audiences at cinema-houses was the focus of authorities, as reflected in the *1916 Draft Regulation Concerning the Management and Opening of Theatres, Cinema and Similar Entertainment Venues*, which contained clauses about the technical and physical aspects of regulating film exhibitions at cinema-houses. The increasing number of cinema-houses in urban centres made it possible for the authorities to initiate this centralised imposition of law. In other words, more permanent spaces emerged, more concrete regulation followed.

The *1916 Draft Regulation* was amended several times, and for this purpose legislators looked for regulation models from Europe in order to grasp the function of cinematic devices, the operator's responsibilities and the logistics of projecting practises.[153] Therefore the Ministry of Interior sought information about cinema regulations in countries such as Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, France and Sweden.[154] In reply to this investigation, the Ottoman Empire's Honorary Consulate in Geneva wrote that there was military censorship of film exhibition and printed media in France. The information was gathered and passed to the Ministry of Interior.[155] It appears that other consuls also contacted the Ministry and sent the requested information.

After the Ottoman Ministry of War passed the *Censorship Act* in 1914, all theatres, including cinema-houses, had to submit copy of their programmes

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[153] *Tiyatro, Sinema ve Benzeri Eğlence Mekânlarının Açılış ve İdâreleri Hakkında Düzenlenen Kanûn Tasarısı*.
[154] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/60, (23 June 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/8, (21 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/7, (20 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/3, (3 August 1918).; BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/15, (22 October 1918).
[155] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 29/15, (22 October 1918).

to the police.[156] Subject matter regarding politics or the war was forbidden. During this time, wartime conditions delayed the finalisation of the *1916 Draft Regulation*, even though preliminary concerns were stated in the document and a number of amendments were introduced between 1916 and 1918. It still remains unclear whether or not this draft regulation was passed by the Parliament. However, the regulations indicate a clear resemblance to the police regulations regarding exhibition rules, which were adopted in 1924. The Law Enforcement Agency (*Emniyet Teşkilatı*) implemented *The Policing of Cinema and Theatre* in 1924, and it was in use until 1937.[157]

It is important to note that even though both of these documents have similarities in content, the document drafted in 1916 is a regulation (*nizamnâme taslağı*) that was centrally prepared by the Ministry of Interior in collaboration with the Police and the Security General Directorate (*Emniyet-i Umûmîyye Müdüriyeti*) for enforcement throughout the Empire. The 1924 document is an ordinance (*talimatnâme*) set by the Police Office on a more local level, probably by an alliance of municipalities. Both of these documents targeted licensing procedures directly and the responsibilities and liabilities of entrepreneurs. The *1924 Ordinance* states that prior to the opening of the cinema-house, three copies of its facilities and equipment plan will be provided to the municipality, and an inspection will be performed by the municipality.[158] Any changes made after opening must be explained in writing to the municipality, and a new inspection will be performed.[159] Scrutinising specific clauses from the *1916 Draft Regulation* and the *1924*

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[156] *Sansür Talimatnâmesi*, (1330R/1914).
[157] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de Zabıta Tarihi Gelişim ve Bügunkü Durum* (Ankara: Kozan, 2008), pp. 637-639.
[158] Ibid., pp. 637-639.
[159] Ibid., pp. 637-639.

Ordinance shows themes that continued throughout this period in the regulatory framework are found in both of the documents.

Clause 31 of the *1916 Draft Regulation* addresses the licence requirements and makes distinctions between buildings and open-air venues. The authorities' goal seems to be locating each business physically, checking the premises for public safety and enforcing special requirements based on the venues' features. Once a venue was registered with the municipality during the licensing procedure, officers from the police to censor officers and controllers could also review the content of the programme during the actual screening and could ban films that they considered 'harmful', 'illicit' or 'dangerous'. The state also aimed to standardise laws and legal consequences in the regulation of these spaces. Thus, any entrepreneur without a proper licence or those failing to follow the regulations was subject to the Criminal Code.

The clause 32 show the authorities' concern about public health and safety in cinema-houses. It states that aside from customary laws, nine conditions would apply to the running of cinema-houses. These principally concern the technical and logistic issues affecting the physical safety of the premises, with an emphasis on fire prevention. Ventilation to improve air quality and safety in the projection room was an important dimension.[160] The 1921 report of İstanbul's 44 cinema-houses reveals that cinema-houses were poorly constructed and that their ventilation needed improvement.[161] Whereas it reported that 'the lighting and heating in the cinema- houses were fairly good in the majority of the cases.'[162]

[160] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[161] G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', in Clarence Richard Johnson (ed.), *Constantinople To-Day or The Pathfinder Survey of Constantinople A Study in Oriental Social Life*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 265.
[162] Ibid., p. 265.

In the *1916 Draft Regulation*, the first condition of clause 32 is that carbon lamps must be the source of the reflective light used during the projection. Also, the projector should be encased in an appropriate and small fireproof room, which is situated away from the direction of the public exit (second condition). This small room should store the device, which should be covered with an exhaust system equipped through the ceiling of the structure (third condition).[163] The *1924 Ordinance* also covers the issue of power used in the cinema-houses and notes that if a coal lamp is used for projecting, the coal should be stored in a self-closing iron container. However, it also highlights that licenced cinema-houses and theatres are obliged to illuminate the premises only using electric lighting. Those venues that are allowed to operate must be in accordance with the regulations of high voltage electricity promulgated by the Ministry of Public Works (*Bayındırlık Bakanlığı*). The *Ordinance* also emphasises the use of coloured hazard lights, which should illuminate the interior of the cinema saloon and its exits during the entire exhibition.[164]

The third and fourth conditions state that the projection room should be ventilated and capped by metal, and that a bucket of water should be found nearby.[165] It is known that newly built cinema-houses, such as Elhamra (1921) in İstanbul, had a separated projection room located at the balcony level.[166] Likewise the conditions of the projector room in the *1924 Ordinance* notes that the projection room, which contains 'the cinematograph machine,' must be fire resistant, and must have a device to circulate air as to not retain smoke. Also, the room, to be at least 12 metres square, must be at least two

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[163] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[164] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* p. 638.
[165] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916). For the projector, the term used in the text is '*cihâz-ı âkise'* which can be translated as reflective device.
[166] Orhan Duru, *Amerikan Gizli Belgeleriyle Türkiye'nin Kurtuluş Yılları* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2001), p. 255.

metres wide and three metres tall. The window from which the projection passes must have a shutter made of a fire-resistant material. There is a meticulous description of how the shutter should be used: the shutter must automatically close if the operator removes his foot from the lever holding the shutter open. Otherwise it is stated that a shutter is required only in the case where the window is at least 5 millimetres in thickness and is affixed into the wall or another fire-resistant material.[167]

Deadly fire incidents were very common in the Empire, due to the lack of efficient firefighting system and wooden constructed buildings. Between 1918 and 1923, 3,460 houses burnt in İstanbul due to the devastating fires, caused by various reasons.[168] Thus, fire prevention measurement is one of the central issues in both the *Draft Regulation* and the *Ordinance.* The *1924 Ordinance* states that fire resistant rooms should not emit smoke. Doors must open outwards and should be locked whilst the cinematograph is in operation. If the projection room has doors that open to the cinema saloon or to the corridor these must also be fire resistant. In addition, the *Ordinance* states that while the device is in use by an operator, two fire retardant blankets and a bucket of at least 10 litres of water must be in the projection room at all times, in case the film catches fire.[169]

The *Ordinance* and the *Draft Regulation* both refer to the easily flammable nitrate celluloid. The fifth condition of clause 32 considers that issue, stating that 'as the film reels through, it should be fed into a metallic chest' to prevent it from becoming a fire hazard.[170] The *Ordinance* indicates that 'the film should wind easily from one iron spool to another' as during

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[167] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* pp. 638-639.
[168] Nur Bilge Criss, *İstanbul under Allied Occupation 1918-1923* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999), p. 29.
[169] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* pp. 638-639.
[170] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).

these years hand-cranked devices were very common. Also, other details included in the *Ordinance* are as follows: the films should be stored in a metal or other sort of fire resistant container and only films required for immediate use should be kept in the projection room. To protect the film ribbon from heat, there should be a protective shield between the lens and the ribbon itself. Moreover, the device's setup should conform to the electric standards set by the Ministry of Public Works. The *Ordinance* specifies that the areas surrounding the storage area of the films 'should be covered in iron or another similar fire resistant material, and the films themselves should be hung from an iron cord'.[171] Similarly, conditions six and seven of the *Draft Regulation* state that 'two workers must assist in operating the projector, and that two buckets of water should be in their reach'.[172] Although the two official regulations show the authorities' concern about fire hazard, the 1921 report about cinema-houses indicates that authorities were not good at enforcing them. In brief, cinema-houses still lacked a sufficient measurement against fire hazard.[173]

The *Ordinance* mandates that 'only operators who have reliable skills and abilities are able to operate the machine,' which is similar to the *Draft Regulation* by sorting out the duties of film exhibitor. The *Ordinance* further notes that 'other than this operator, no one should be allowed access to the projection room. Only the projection staff are permitted to enter the room. A notice to this effect should be posted on the door of the room'.[174] For instance, the contract for Ali Efendi Cinema in İstanbul reveals that owners of the venue had to determine the operator's duties and the implementation

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[171] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* pp. 637-639.
[172] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[173] G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', p. 265.
[174] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* p. 638.

of electricity wiring in 1914 which is indeed earlier than when these two regulations were formulated.[175]

Smoking, both in the projection room and inside the exhibition hall, is referred to in both of the documents. The eighth condition of 1916 *Draft Regulation* states that 'smoking is not permitted in the projection room'.[176] The 1924 *Ordinance* covers the issue of smoking, delineating different locations at the venues, the screening hall and the projection room respectively. It mandates that 'smoking, the use of fire or of a torch is prohibited in the projection room. Also 'smoking is prohibited in cinema saloons except when all of the lights are illuminated.' Thus, not only the operator but also the audiences are not allowed to smoke during the screening. [177]

The last condition of clause 32 requires that the projection room should not have overheated lighting and should have only small and metallic entries for wiring.[178] The *Ordinance* enforces more strict regulations about the control of a power source. It imposes a certificate of inspection in every six months performed either by a licensed electrical engineer or the electrical department's staff at municipalities.[179]

The *Ordinance* further ordered a certain seating plan for audiences at cinema-houses. In 1921 there were three cinema-houses in İstanbul with a seating capacity of approximately 1000.[180] For instance, Elhamra Cinema's seating plan was arranged meticulously, with a space between the stage and performing level of the orchestra. The first-class seats contained ample

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[175] Mustafa Gökmen, *Başlangıçtan*, p. 32.
[176] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[177] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* p. 639.
[178] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[179] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* p. 638.
[180] G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', pp. 264-265.

spacing between each row.[181] The venue had 21 box seats, 200 leather seats (wide and comfortable), 200 upper level seats, 300 first and 200 second class seats available for audiences.[182] Considering that this venue hosted many audiences, the authorities attempted to regulate it for the audiences' health and safety. The *Ordinance* provides detailed space measurements and refers to the health of audience's eyes in regard to measurements and distances in the saloon. It also states that the number of audience cannot outnumber the seats of the venue, so that in cases of emergency evacuation would be possible. The *Ordinance's* stipulations about emergency exits further show the aim to improve health and safety. 'Cinema-houses should at least have two exits with doors at least 90 centimetres wide and opening outwardly when pushed. A sign should be posted writing "Emergency Exit". The nearest exits should be marked with signs on the walls and illuminated with red lights.' [183]

> The seats in the theatre should be attached to one another and upholstered. The seating capacity of the premises should be established by the municipality prior to its opening. The first row of seating should be at least three metres from the stage. Each seat should have a width of 50 centimetres and the space between each row should be 100 centimetres. Having audiences stand in the aisles or other spaces in the venue is prohibited during performances. Over the main door of the cinema saloon, the following sentence should be clearly displayed: 'The Mayor only permits audience in seated areas during performances', no standing is allowed.[184]

Both the *Ordinance* and the *Draft Regulation* state that cinema-house owners were liable to the licence conditions. The *Ordinance* indicates that 'permission to open a cinema-house will be provided only once the facilities

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[181] Ali Özuyar, *Devlet-i Aliyye'de*, p. 126.
[182] Giovanni Scognamillo, *Cadde-i Kebir'de Sinema* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1991), p. 36.
[183] Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de,* p. 639.
[184] Ibid., p. 639.

and equipment is compliant with the regulation. In case of changes made at the venues, cinema owners had to inform the municipality.[185]

Conclusion

This chapter provided an examination of the issues and challenges of regulating film exhibitions within the late Ottoman era. I focused on a number of historical cases about the existing regulations of entertainments, and the regulatory space for projecting films at varying theatrical and non-theatrical venues. I contended that the individual censorship cases and the inscribing and enforcement of certain laws met where legislators and policy makers sought to promote the common good, specifically for film exhibition purposes. Drawing on a number of documents, with the emphasis on restrictions, inspections, obligations and interventions, sources revealed that government agencies' measures were, by and large, in alliance with the interest of audiences. Regulating film exhibition operated on several levels. Central authorities directly attempted to provide safe and secure environs at film exhibition venues by imposing certain restrictions and creating specific legal conditions for projection practises. Government agencies attempted to perform their institutional duties, such as licensing cinema-houses for gathering revenues and bureaucratic purposes.

The Ottoman state had some form of control and restriction over film exhibitions by relying on the existing regulations of entertainments. I highlighted the existing regulations and other specific cases regarding the exhibition practises. Even though there was no specifically enforced set of laws about film exhibition during the initial years, I contended that this was not a period of unregulated development. *The 1896 Regulation of Theatre, Ortaoyunu, Karagöz and Puppetry* and other existing entertainment laws and

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[185] Ibid., p. 639.

policies showed that legislators and policy makers borrowed some of the rules from those that were relevant to cinema. Nevertheless cinema, with its own novel technology, infrastructural arrangements, and its challenging spatial needs, required a new set of standardised rules.

I provided a framework within two classifications in this chapter: itinerant exhibition and exhibition at cinema-houses. Film exhibition was not highly regulated during the itinerant era, which is roughly the period starting from the arrival of cinema into the Empire in 1896 up to the gradual rise of cinema-houses in the 1910s. This mobile exhibition form, which continued even after the introduction of permanent cinema-houses, was challenged by the unsettled issue of infrastructural inadequacy and technological needs within the larger process of Ottoman modernisation. Causes of other restrictions regarding film exhibition varied depending on the feature of the projection venues, their proximity to public buildings, the safety measurements, the characteristics of the cinematic devices and the projection power source.

During the itinerant exhibition period, the novel technology of cinema was unknown among Ottoman authorities. Therefore, a number of government agencies – the Ministry of Interior, the police, customs office, and municipalities – inspected and attempted to regulate the technology of cinematic devices, the power source, the devices' function, and the venues' physical suitability. These regulatory agencies designated other official institutions and a number of officers (i.e. controller investigator, police) that could oversee the material necessities regarding cinema. This process also aimed to establish a legal framework for film exhibition. Sometimes these government agencies collaborated with other relevant institutions (i.e. the Bureau of Science and Technology), that I traced throughout the chapter. The legal decisions taken by government agencies eventually had to be confirmed

by the ultimate power of the state and force of the law, in other words the Sultan or, after 1909, the Parliament.

After the opening up of the first cinema-house in 1908 in İstanbul, the number of permanent and seasonal cinema-houses gradually rose throughout the First World War years. For this purpose, I examined sources that displayed regulatory instruments and legal attempts to define, limit and improve the conditions at film exhibition venues. Two documents in particular show the conditions of exhibition regulations, legal obligations, licensing, liabilities, and strategies to create a secure and safe environment at film exhibition venues: *The Draft Regulation Concerning the Management and Opening of Theatres, Cinema and Similar Entertainment Venues* in 1916 and *The Policing of Cinema and Theatre Ordinance* of 1924. Whereas the *Ordinance* was in use during the early Republican years, yet its efficacy in enforcement still remains unknown. Nevertheless, today the conditions of the both documents provide a tangible guide in order to understand Ottoman legislators and policy makers' mentality and goals to regulate projection venues, including theatrical and non-theatrical ones, and exhibition practises.

CHAPTER 4
REGULATING THE AUDIENCE

This chapter analyses the discourses and practises of the Ottoman dominant class (bureaucrats, elite, and intellectuals) over children and women audiences regarding the regulations of cinema-going and film exhibition venues. The members of this particular class either had the power to change the socio-cultural policies or the influence to affect the regulatory body by providing an ideological framework. I will focus on a number of important archival documents that portray the concerns of 'immorality' in films, such as obscenity, violence, and crime, as well as those that give information about the audience profile and other entertainments at film exhibition venues. Firstly, my goal is to explore the criticisms of film content and exhibition venues in relation to child audience. Secondly, I will take into account the restrictions over female audiences that were imposed by Islamic law, religio-moral obligations and the reshaping of gender roles in relation to cinema in the late Ottoman context.

I suggest that the discourses and practises about child and female audiences are at times protectionist, at times didactic and elitist. Both those sets of characteristics are similar. Sources examined here reveal that the Ottoman elite sought to protect and educate the vulnerable audiences and at times the practises suggest divergence. This observation aligns with the official regulations, which have rambling, and varied directions based on the problems cinema posed. In *Chapter 1*, I laid out the intentions and goals of Ottoman officials whilst drafting the exhibition, distribution and production practises for the cinema business to flourish in the Empire. I contend that the Ottoman legislators were interested in seeking the interests of both the state and the public. The cinema regulations about child and female audiences

tend to be unclear in its directions and it is not definite as to how these regulations were practised. In order to regulate film exhibitions, Ottoman officials took ad hoc, but practical decisions in order to maintain social order. Sometimes Ottoman officials' unplanned, arbitrary and irregular practises paved the way to form regulations, particularly for cinema-going. This element is also significant to follow the tacit rules about women's representation in films because Muslim women were not allowed to act in any theatrical performance.

Below, I attempt to explore different aspects of cinema's regulation by relying on a number of primary materials. For instance, Refik Halid [Karay]'s *Troubling Cinema* (1918) is a useful portrayal of the late Ottoman cinema conditions, with references to 'obscenity', 'immorality', and 'danger' supposedly found in films. Refik Halid [Karay]'s emblematic ideas about the dangers of cinema can also be found in other intellectuals' writings during this time.

Dangers of Cinema

> We prohibit our children from bad friends, bad books, but we bring our children to cinema ourselves. In the same way, we only hint around at home about the birds and the bees to help children understand, but then we bring them to the cinema where we show them half-naked men and half-naked women dallying with each other. […] Once upon a time cinema was joyous, gracious and a delightful entertainment. Cinema is a useful invention if films are carefully chosen, and at one time it was a fun, elegant, and lovely amusement. […] At one-time cinema would bring to life well-known works from important writers, it would gratify us. It's not like that at all anymore. […] The biggest enemy of the people is cinema. Cinema is the teacher of immorality. […] Now we are watching leftover films from the West that have been discarded from every other country but sent to us as if they are something dear. We let our children watch all those films. It is a shame to expose our families every day to the dirty underwear of the West.[1]

[1] Refik Halid [Karay], 'Sinema Derdi', *Yeni Mecmua*, 43, (May 1918), pp. 320, 322.

In May 1918, the author Refik Halid [Karay] wrote a piece entitled *Troubling Cinema* (*Sinema Derdi*) for a journal called *Yeni Mecmua*. Refik Halid set his pen to paper and claimed that 'cinema muddied our blood', 'films profaned women and children' like 'the dirty underwear of the West'.[2] The whole question of 'obscenity' in Refik Halid's piece reveals concerns within the late Ottoman spectacle culture by emphasising the 'immorality' and 'danger' supposedly found in the Western films. In this piece, Refik Halid argues that women imitate the actors they see in films. He wrote that children learnt theft from films and they saw nudity and sexuality at cinemas.[3] Refik Halid advocated that in a society where sexuality was thought of as cautious and secretive, the screening of immoral films was incorrect. He felt that the bad role models in films would produce negative effects in Ottoman society. He feared that vulnerable audiences would 'mistake representations for reality' in films.[4] At the same time, Refik Halid claimed that cinema was at times 'useful' and 'informative' and at times 'immoral' and 'dangerous'. Was this simply due to a conflicting state of mind or the unregulated cinema atmosphere in the Empire?[5] Or because cinema was at times both things: 'useful' and 'dangerous'?

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[2]Ibid., pp. 320, 322.
[3] Ibid., pp. 320, 322.
[4] Lee Grieveson, 'Cinema Studies and the Conduct of Conduct', in Lee Grieveson & Haidee Wasson (eds.), *Inventing Film Studies* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 25.
[5] Indeed, in his later works Refik Halid emphasised the educational and entertainment value of cinema. In 1921 he fictionalised Ankara, the newly emerging capital of Republican Turkey, as the modernised, high-tech capital of the nation in his work *If Desire Says So …* [*Hülya Bu Ya...*]. He envisioned a world of communications provided by films 'ultra large screens in which films could circulate the news at every hour'. In his eyes, this was the most developed version of films. In 1939, Refik Halid celebrated the new technology of cinema within the scientific developments of the century. Watching the first 'moving images' at the age of 6, he referred to cinema in concepts of speed and relates it to other innovations introduced in communications and transport. He mentioned how he watched examples of early comedies and felt excited, surprised and astonished. Again, in his story, *Appreciation of Kadıköy* (*Kadıköy'ünü Takdir*), Refik Halid portrays 'the civilised streets' of Kadıköy, a district of İstanbul, within a joyful and happy atmosphere of feasts, cinema hawkers, theatre-goers

Refik Halid's concerns are significant because they are a part of the broader discursive positioning of the Ottoman dominant class. He was particularly anxious about the use of 'obscenity' in films and its effects on 'vulnerable' women and children. As an influential intellectual of the time, he wanted to share his ideas with the readers of *Yeni Mecmua*. It appears that he also hoped to spur change in the quality of films, as he claimed that cinema represented 'dangerous' and 'immoral' ways of life from the West, crime and debauchery. He was convinced that 'cinema is the teacher of immorality'.[6] Yet, Refik Halid was not alone in claiming that cinema was a problem. Ottoman bureaucrats, elite and intellectuals were also alarmed about the 'moral corruption' caused by cinema.

Apart from cinema, the dangers of erotism and pornography reflected in photography and ephemera had a relatively devoted customer base in İstanbul.[7] In Ottoman shadow theatre, *karagöz*, 'obscenity' and 'indecent' jokes were common and even 'the phallus of puppet characters' was shown on stage occasionally.[8] Shadow theatre, represented intimacy by staging stories that took place in hammams, recreational areas or brothels.[9] The rule of nudity and the visibility of male-female intimacy were explicitly expressed on the curtain.[10] Furthermore, Ahmed Râsim indicates that traditional performing arts, both *ortaoyunu* and *karagöz*, often represented obscenity

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interact in a lively atmosphere. He depicted the people of Kadıköy as enjoying their lives within the world of plays and films that were presented to them.

[6] Refik Halid [Karay], 'Sinema Derdi', pp. 320, 322.

[7] Edhem Eldem, 'Görüntülerin Gücü-Fotoğrafın Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yayılması ve Etkisi, 1870-1914', in Zeynep Çelik & Edhem Eldem (eds.), *Camera Ottomana Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Fotoğraf ve Modernite 1840-1914* (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), pp. 109-110.

[8] Cevdet Kudret, *Karagöz*, 1, (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1992), p. 40.

[9] Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (London: University California Press, 2006), p. 147.

[10] Daryo Mizrahi, 'Osmanlı'da Karagöz Oyunları', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 181, (January 2009), p. 50.

in a word, act and expression on the stage.[11] However Dror Ze'evi notes that from the end of nineteenth century political authorities began to control the use of 'sex and sexuality' in shadow theatre, and other genres and areas; 'they were either transformed into almost sterile genres in which sex and sexuality are seldom discussed, and even then always obliquely'.[12] The state justified its intervention within the discourse of morals, danger of prostitution and contagious disease.[13] The same can be observed in the production and sales of photography and ephemera, and the exhibition and production of films.[14] However, erotic stories became very popular in the late Ottoman era. As Fatma Türe contends, 'starting with 1908 up to the late 1920s, these stories were published uncensored,' and consequently that 'sexual taboos began to weaken in part due to these erotic stories'.[15]

As long as the devoted customers of 'obscenity' existed, it appears that screenings and local productions attempted to serve the audiences' demands. Even though Ottoman officials aimed to ban them, and certain segments of society were against these exhibitions of 'obscenity' for the sake of 'vulnerable' children and women. So how was cinema integrated to this discourse on obscenity? What constituted obscenity in film? Which exhibitions were targeted by?

While there are no detailed reports on the content of films describing what erotism and pornography meant at the time, Ottoman officials found certain films 'obscene' and 'immoral' based on Islamic law and religio-moral

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[11] Ahmed Râsim, 'Muhtelif Temâşâlarda Kadın', in *Muharrir Bu Ya*, (Ankara: Devlet Kitapları, 1969/1926), pp. 96-97.
[12] Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire,* p. 165.
[13] Ibid., p. 165.
[14] BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 45/9, (13 October 1918).
[15] Fatma Türe, 'The New Woman in Erotic Popular Literature of 1920s İstanbul', in Duygu Köksal & Anastasia Falierou (eds.), *A Social History of Late Ottoman Women: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 176.

values. In the catalogue of Pathé-Frères, the initial films containing erotism and pornography in Western Europe date back to 1902. For instance, *The Scenes of an Erotic Character* (*Scènes grivoises à caractère piquant*, 1902) and *The Sleeping Parisian Lady* (*Le Coucher de la Parisienne*, 1904) were the early examples of this genre. These films did not show actual intercourse, yet they contained seductive elements to arouse the male audience.[16] Also, Edison's *Soubrette's Troubles on a Fifth Avenue Stage* (1901) and *What Happened on Twenty-third Street* (1902) are two examples of erotism by exposing women's bodies'.[17] Indeed for Ottoman audiences, depictions and dialogue from Hüseyin Rahmi [Gürpınar]'s story entitled *Forbidden for Children* (*Çocuklara Yasak*, 1908) gives a glimpse of what could potentially be seen in these productions.[18] I will explore the story below.

Since most of the films imported into the Empire were foreign productions, the Ottomans might have been exposed to these above-mentioned seductive scenes as well. G. Gilbert Deaver's report indicates that cinema-houses of İstanbul screened 'suggestive' and 'immoral' films that were from the U.S., France, Italy and Germany.[19] It notes that these 'cheap and sensational' films would not have been allowed in America or England.[20] Similar to Refik Halid's concerns, Deaver's report concludes that, 'a board of censors' should be formed 'to eliminate immoral scenes from films,' implying that there was no committee previewing or examining films before or during

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[16] Paolo Cherchi Usai, 'Pornography', in Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 525-526.

[17] Daniel Czitrom, 'The Politics of Performance Theatre Licensing and the Origins of Movie Censorship in New York', in Francis G. Couvares (ed.), *Movie Censorship and American Culture* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), p. 29.

[18] Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, 'Çocuklara Yasak', in *Eti Senin Kemiği Benim* (İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1973/1908), pp. 28-32.

[19] G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', p. 265.

[20] Ibid., p. 265.

screenings.[21] In these years, the cinema enterprise aimed to make a profit by promoting 'blue soirees' and 'black nights' where films depicting obscenity were screened, as Deaver's report and other sources confirm.[22] Even though some of the venues maintained a licence to screen films, there was no system of previewing them before each exhibition. As noted, in 1904 the Ministry of Interior (*Dâhiliye Nezâreti*) began enforcing the preview of films, yet in practise it was not yet fully enforced.[23] According to the 1916 *Draft Regulation*, scenes contrary to decency and chastity were forbidden, yet it is not currently clear that this article was enforced officially at the time.[24]

The authorities would discover the 'inappropriate' content through complaints or during the police and censor officers' random visits to theatres and other venues. For instance, in 1907 the exhibition of a moving picture which presented 'violent images', and 'scenes of murder' at the Olympia Saloon (coffeehouse) in Salonika was not banned by police forces. However, a spy report sent to the central authorities noted that the images of mutiny caused anarchy among the subjects.[25] This incident came under scrutiny from the governor of Salonika in 1907. He later chastised the police for not actively terminating the screening.[26] Thus it is possible that any legal decision taken in İstanbul could not be fully practised based on the changing geography, bureaucracy and the gradual decentralisation of the Empire. At this time, it was forbidden to depict any form of mutiny or rebellion before the public in

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[21] G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', p. 265.
[22] Nezih Erdoğan, 'Basın Dilinde 'Canlı Fotoğraf ve Hakikilik' TSA: http://www.tsa.org.tr/yazi/yazidetay/32/basinin-dilinde-%E2%80%9Ccanli-fotograf%E2%80%9D-ve-%E2%80%9Chakikilik%E2%80%9D, (15 April 2015). (Accessed on 15 December 2015).; 'Sinematografyada Ahlâksızlık', *Tanin*, 99, (9 November 1908), p. 4.; G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', p. 265.
[23] BOA, DH.MKT, 823/38, (20 February 1904).
[24] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916), See Clause 37 in *Chapter 1*.
[25] BOA, TFR.I.A, 36/3508, (19 October 1907).
[26] BOA, TFR.I.A, 36/3508, (19 October 1907).

stage performances.[27] The central authorities and state institutions imposed a certain regulatory understanding over cinema. For instance, what is 'immoral', 'political' and 'inappropriate' in moving pictures can be followed in the incidents reported. Yet the struggle over cinematic space and dealings with imported films was more challenging; the geography was vast, and the regulations put in place by the Ottomans were sporadic.

In 1908, the Odéon Theatre in İstanbul's Beyoğlu district screened 'inappropriate' and 'immoral' moving pictures even though the institution had been warned by censor officers before. Eventually, the governor of Beyoğlu (*mutasarrıf*) banned the theatre from screening 'obscene' moving pictures several times.[28] Therefore, special attention was paid to certain venues and police, censor officers and other inspectors regularly inspected those notorious venues. These screenings at varying venues did not stop after sporadic attempts of regulation, and especially during the war years 'obscenity' was common to see on screen. Along with the Odéon, other Beyoğlu theatres continued screening 'obscene' moving pictures in the following years.[29] Theatre owners still had the ability to slip them into their programme discreetly.

Tanin, a newspaper, claimed that the imperative to make a profit seemed to have pushed some of these entrepreneurs into showing risqué films.[30] G. Gilbert Deaver's report also noted these profit-seeking cinema entrepreneurs who purposely chose to project 'immorality'.[31] In 1908, at the Odéon Theatre, after the main programme, a special show entitled 'Moving Blue Films' was presented to the audiences who represented a mixed age

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[27] Cevdet Kudret, *Abdülhamid*, p. 128.
[28] BOA, ZB, 328/6, (14 November 1908).
[29] Ali Özuyar, *Devlet-i Aliyye'de Sinema* (Ankara: De Ki, 2007), p. 26
[30] 'Sinematografyada Ahlâksızlık', p. 4.
[31] G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', p. 265.

group.[32] *Tanin* reports that these films were especially unsuitable for women and children, but they were profitable for the theatre. Particularly, adult male audiences were the loyal customers. Due to the content, women would leave the venue, but children from different age groups would remain and watch the screening until the end.

Furthermore, *Tanin* claims that it was the task of the 'moral' press to publicly inform the police and family members about the 'obscenity of moving pictures' at theatres. The newspaper additionally notes that first and foremost the police should locate these types of incidents and prevent their public exhibition. It concludes that the owners of the Odéon Theatre abused audiences' interest in moving pictures because curious ones who were willing to see the latest technology surprisingly found 'obscene' and 'inappropriate' images. In addition to erotic films, other suggestive and sensual performances were included in the programme during film exhibitions in these years. For instance, Zafer Toprak contends that during the war years Milli Cinema in İstanbul organised variety shows before film exhibitions in which half-naked Russian girls performed dance shows on the stage.[33] Toprak adds that these shows were in high demand, and that audiences would wait for them in long queues in front of the cinema-house.[34]

Whilst certain control mechanisms were practised and proposed, 'obscenity' in films was available for audiences also in Ottoman productions. *Binnaz* (Ahmet Fehim, 1919) is about an Ottoman courtesan of the same

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[32] 'Sinematografyada Ahlâksızlık', p. 4.

[33] Indeed, François Georgeon notes that the Russian women in İstanbul 'shook up the codes of conduct in force. They were instrumental, for example, in the abolition of sexual segregation on public transportation (ferries on the Bosphorus, tramways)', and the changing women's fashion see François Georgeon, 'Women's Representations in Ottoman Cartoons and the Satirical Press on the Eve of Kemalist Reforms', in Duygu Köksal & Anastasia Falierou (eds.), *A Social History of Late Ottoman Women: New Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 259.

[34] Zafer Toprak, 'Mütareke Döneminde İstanbul', in Nuri Akbar & Ekrem Işın (eds.), *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 6, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), pp. 19-23.

name. Binnaz is a seductive and playful woman and is troubled by having two love affairs. The voyeuristic male gaze, erotism of female beauty and the secretive kiss in the film push the limits of 'obscenity' in this film. Likewise, the depiction of the governess, Angéle, as a *femme fatale* in *The Governess*, (Ahmet Fehim, 1919) and her multiple love affairs with Turkish/Muslim men at an Ottoman mansion shows that local productions also challenged Ottoman morals. Even though this film was supposedly critical of 'immoral relationships' it would be worth to know why producers wanted to focus on this topic in first place, especially given the fact that there were only three fictional films made by 1919 in the Empire.

The producer of both films, a semi-official institution called The Society of Disabled Veterans (*Malûl Gaziler Cemiyeti, SDV*), and the Ottoman authorities did not seem to question the 'obscenity' in either *Binnaz* or *The Governess*. What did the Ottoman dominant class think about children and cinema against the backdrop of discussions on 'obscenity' in films? In what ways did officials control children's cinema-going? Below I will explore the topic of children and cinema in the late Ottoman context.

Children and Cinema

The study on the Ottoman childhood as a subject matter is limited and this is similar to the history of cinema writing within the context of childhood.[35] While scrutinising cinema and children, it is important to trace broader issues around childhood and the state which 'is always mediated

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[35] Zafer Çınar, 'Osmanlı Çocuk Tarihine Dair Genel ve Açıklamalı Bibliyografya', Haşim Şahin & Nurdan Şafak (eds.), *Osmanlı Dünyasında Çocuk Olmak* (İstanbul: Dem Yayınları, 2012), p. 211.; About children and cinema in modern Turkey see Osman Şevki Uludağ, *Çocuklar Gençler ve Filmler* (İstanbul: Kader Basımevi, 1943).; Hilmi A. Malik, *Türkiye'de Sinema ve Tesirleri* (Ankara: Hakimiyet-i Milliye Matbaası, 1933).; Serdar Öztürk, 'Sinemanın Çocuklar Üzerindeki Etkileri: Dr. Fuad Umay Bey'in Yasa Teklifleri Çerçevesindeki Tartışmalar (1926-1941), *Kültür ve İletişim*, 7, (2004), pp. 49-70.

through indigenous institutions, individuals, traditions and desires'.[36] Exploring the notion of childhood within the political agenda of the Ottoman elite may be useful. During the Second Constitutional period, the Union and Progress (*İttihâd ve Terakkî,* CUP) aimed at creating the 'national generation' that was patriotic and loyal to the state.[37] As G. Gürkan Öztan contends, Ottoman children became the hope and future not only for the family, but also for the state; children were considered as the potential citizen, entrepreneur, and soldier.[38] This political expectation also affected the 'national pedagogy', consequently the training at schools and instructors' rhetoric, children's books and magazines. The emphasis on 'national values' and the 'national generation' was a common theme in children's publications, which matched the policies of the CUP. In children's magazines, cinema's modernity was represented as the 'technological wonder' and the films began to serve as a propaganda tool to shape children's minds accordingly. For instance, *Çocuk Duygusu* announced cinema news by referring to the images of the Ottoman soldiers in films from battlefields in order to consolidate the feeling of the past and of descendants who had fought for their Empire.[39]

In December 1896, when cinema reached the Ottoman lands, no legal restriction seemed to be in place to limit the age of the Ottoman audiences.[40] Young people were certainly audiences such as the authors Refik Halid and Ercüment Ekrem, who were eight and ten years of age respectively when they

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[36] Benjamin C. Fortna, 'Preface: Childhood in the late Ottoman Empire and After', in Benjamin C. Fortna (ed.), *Childhood in the late Ottoman Empire and After* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), p. vii.
[37] Lâle Uçan, 'Osmanlı Çocuk Dergilerinin Çocuk Kimliği Üzerine Etkileri', Haşim Şahin & Nurdan Şafak (eds.), *Osmanlı Dünyasında Çocuk Olmak* (İstanbul: Dem Yayınları, 2012), p. 175
[38] G. Gürkan Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), p. 45.
[39] Lâle Uçan, 'Osmanlı Çocuk', p. 178.
[40] 'Une curiosité photographique', *Stamboul,* (12 December 1896).

watched their first film. Indeed, schools such as Galatasaray High School (*Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultani*) and others were used as venues for early film exhibitions.[41] According to Ottoman society, the definition of childhood varies based on a number of fluid criteria. In a multi-ethnic and multi-religious setting where 12-13-year-old children were able to marry, understanding and explaining childhood is problematic. In addition, for an empire which extended from the Arabian Peninsula, to Anatolia and the Balkans, it is impossible to suggest 'a linear childhood image' and 'a single approach that covers all geographies' in the Ottoman Empire.[42] Nonetheless, there were different views about children's cinema-going among the different social groups.

Especially during the month of Ramadan, children would find entertainment by watching *karagöz* shadow plays, comedy shows or attend *meddah*, apart from films, with adults. While many of these types of entertainment contained obscenity, these were mostly presented without censorship.[43] According to social norms, adults would accompany children to spectacles. As a matter of fact, as seen from the below 1909 description of *Karagöz* magazine, children going to film exhibitions would instead find themselves in a tavern, in place of a cinema-house. In the illustration, adults consuming alcohol are depicted opposite a father accompanying his children to the venue. The dialogue as follows:

> -Hi Mate, as it's my misfortune theatres are closed down. We were going to the movies. As I'm here I should get juiced up then I can go home. Kids, kiss your uncle. -How come? What if

[41] Refik Halid Karay, 'Sinema', in *Deli* (İstanbul: Semih Lûtfî Kitabevi, 1939), pp. 83-85.; Ercüment Ekrem Talu, 'İstanbul'da İlk Sinema ve İlk Gramafon', *Perde ve Sahne*, 7, (1943), pp. 5, 14.
[42] G. Gürkan Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun*, p. 3.
[43] Yahya Araz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çocuk Olmak 16. Yüzyıldan 19. Yüzyıllar Başlarına* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013), p. 138.

> kids spill the beans? –Ohh my dear, they're kids. What would they know? Let them sit downstairs. Come on![44]

Hüseyin Rahmi [Gürpınar] depicts these exhibitions in his story *Forbidden for Children* (*Çocuklara Yasak*, 1908). The story gives some hints about the 'customers' as it breathlessly recounts the content of the films, criticising erotism and pornography found in films.[45] *Forbidden for Children* tells a series of events that starts with a child going to watch a film with his father and ending up with men watching a film containing 'a naked woman'. The child's mother, questioning him upon his return home without his father, learns that 'shameful things were being shown'. The child is portrayed as a 'vulnerable' character who struggles to stay out of the pornographic world of adults. The mother figure is a symbol of morals, decency and chastity. There are two men characters in the story. One refuses to admit that he saw what was shown on the screen. He would only utter: 'if you see what's on the screen you'd become unclean'.[46] He only says what a servant told him, acting as if he did not see it: 'the film showed women wrestlers'.[47] The second man, though, seeing the disappointment that he caused his wife, explains the film content.

> -A woman strips on screen and enters the bath. - A man watches her over the curtain. The woman is swooning. - 'Did you watch it?' his wife asks. - 'Of course,' he responds, blushing. - 'You should be ashamed,' she replies.[48]

Forbidden for Children emphasises the need to protect children by keeping them away from the eroticism and pornography contained in films.

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[44] Halit Naci, *Karagöz'ün Gör Dediği*, (Adam, 1989).; *Karagöz*, 162, (January 1909).
[45] Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, 'Çocuklara Yasak', in *Eti Senin Kemiği Benim* (İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1973/1908), pp. 28-32.
[46] Ibid., p. 29.
[47] Ibid., p. 29.
[48] Ibid., p. 32.

This produces a family crisis for the men who are 'customers' of obscenity, peeping into someone else's privacy. With this story, Hüseyin Rahmi questions the nudity in relation to morality. The women characters in his story are the ones who explain the shame brought by watching obscenity in films, and that all agree that children should be kept away from cinema. Hüseyin Rahmi uses the familial strife portrayed in the story as a metaphor for social tensions that could be caused by exhibiting the eroticism and pornographic content. As described in *Forbidden for Children*, aside from *karagöz* and theatre, children were probably exposed to the realm of adult entertainment that included nudity through films. Aside from the designation of obscenity as illicit and corrupted because of nudity and sex, sometimes the Ottoman dominant class considered what was displayed on the screen as 'dangerous'.

a. 16-Year Age Limit

Children saw scenes of violence and murder in films. For example, as reported in the 1916 correspondence between the İstanbul Governorship, the police and Ministry of Interior, there were cases of children watching violent scenes of murder. According to the legislators, precaution should have been taken. There were no laws during these years establishing an age limit for children to watch films, yet archival records show that in 1916 the authorities recommended that children under 16 years of age not go to cinema-houses.[49] Officials thought that children viewing these murder scenes would become depressed, develop psychological problems, or become immoral.[50] There was a belief that children would attempt to commit the violent acts themselves after seeing them on the screen. Furthermore, the

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[49] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/22, (25 December 1916).
[50] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/22, (25 December 1916).

regulars at venues such as pubs, where films were exhibited, were not found 'proper' and 'moral' in general.[51] The correspondence stated that 'venues allowing low-brow and immoral women to perform comedy and singing on stage in an irreverent manner, wearing unseemly short dresses, speaking curtly, and songs containing seductive lyrics is a disgrace to national upbringing and public morals (*terbiyye-i millîyye ve ahlâk-ı umûmîyye*)'.[52] These concerns appear to be legitimate when 'the lack of regulation' and the economic and sexual exploitation and abuse of children were considerably high during this era.[53]

According to the letter, children who watched scenes of violence would become haunted by them and would become unable to tell right from wrong. A document from the Governorship of Beyoğlu (*Beyoğlu Mutasarrıflığı*) states that to guard against negative effects on the 'manners, innocence and temperament' of children, and to protect the future of society, an age limit on cinema-going should be established.[54] The police also found that allowing adolescents, especially Muslim girls, (*nisvân-ı İslâmiyye*) attend performances in these types of venues created negative long-term effects. Authorities were concerned with the general atmosphere at the venues where films were screened, as well as the effect that the films may have on the future of society. The police stated that plays and other similar entertainment should be reviewed prior to screening, and films that would contribute to children's scientific, scholastic and cognitive development should be chosen. The correspondence goes on to say that the police would work in conjunction with the Moral Police (*Zâbıtâ-i Ahlâkiyye Teşkilatı*) to protect public morals and the well-being of future generations.

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[51] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/22, (25 December 1916).
[52] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/22, (25 December 1916).
[53] Benjamin C. Fortna, 'Preface: Childhood', p. ix.
[54] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/22, (25 December 1916).

Whilst this correspondence suggests that these institutions believed that children under 16 years of age should not be allowed to go to the cinema and similar entertainment venues, it is unclear if any laws were passed concerning this during this time. It is possible that regulations promulgated by the İstanbul Governor and police could have prevented children from going to the cinema in some cases. These organisations also took action based on complaints from the public, restricting films and public screenings, which were considered as a threat to 'national pride and public morals'.[55] They supported the showing of films which were educational in nature and improved children's psychological development, supportive of their education and upbringing, and films in accordance with morals and chastity. However, the politics of cinema regulations were not directly shaped by the complaints and demands of the public, even though officials paid attention to them and attempted to answer the public's concerns.[56]

Nevertheless, cinema-houses kept screening 'immoral films' for children in the following years. For instance, 'Forbidden for Children' and 'Forbidden for Girls' were the catchy slogans for screenings in order to get young customers' attention in 1922.[57] Doctor Besim Ömer from the Directorate of Children's Protective Services (*Himâye-i Etfâl Cemiyeti Umûmiyyesi)* exchanged letters with the Ministry of Interior and the police in order to have these films banned immediately due to the 'immorality' found in posters and films themselves. In reply to the doctor's complaint, for example, the Directorate of Police in İstanbul offered assurances that they would forbid these types of 'immoral' screenings.[58] All these examples reveal that there was a growing interest about the upbringing of children at the societal level.

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[55] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/22, (25 December 1916).
[56] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/22, (25 December 1916).
[57] BOA, DH.KMS, 62/18, (22 June 1922).
[58] BOA, DH.KMS, 62/18, (22 June 1922).

As Benjamin C. Fortna notes, this child-oriented approach began during the late Ottoman era and continued during the post-Ottoman years; consequently, 'children were taken seriously as children'.[59]

In the light of this, we can now reconsider the comments of author Refik Halid in *Troubling Cinema*, about 'the dirty underwear of the West,' more concretely. Refik Halid was explaining the discomfort felt when exposed to uncensored 'obscene' cinema. He was also concerned with the effects that the stories portrayed may have on the public morals and family life. We will never know if Refik Halid would have still made his complaints in *Troubling Cinema* in 1918, had the 1916 draft law been passed and had 'immoral cinema' become more regulated by that time.[60] Yet, given the effects of war, arbitrary bureaucratic practises, and other institutional failures, the law was not executed, and the perceived 'danger' in cinema persisted. The contingent events of history and the crumbling state made these regulations effectively more rhetorical than practical. Below I will move to examine the discourses and practises of Ottoman officials, elite and intellectuals about women's cinema-going experience and the representation of women in cinema.

Women and Cinema

> There were veiled young women and their parents sitting on their divan and watching and applauding the smutty talk between the butler and woman [in *ortaoyunu*]. Even grandmothers, old ladies, and aunties behind the screen were watching all of it; they were all dying from laughter, from watching this immoral and course humour. What is not understood is not to be laughed at![61]

The existing socially constructed gender roles affected women's cinema-going from the start. Ottoman social institutions and entertainment venues

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[59] Benjamin C. Fortna, 'Preface: Childhood', p. x.
[60] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).
[61] Ahmed Râsim, 'Muhtelif Temâşâlarda Kadın', pp. 98-99.

usually segregated genders. Most of the venues exhibiting films functioned in this way during the late Ottoman era. In urban settings, matinees were exclusively for women. Public venues carried out mix-gendered exhibitions in a variety of ways, either having women seated behind men or having side-by-side seating separated by a screen. This was a regular practise among Muslim Ottomans and it did vary based on the age, class, religion, ethnicity and education of the Ottoman women in attendance. Indeed, the information about the Ottoman women's 'real and imagined' identities is quite limited, as is their experiences in the history of cinema.[62] Ahmed Râsim's work, entitled *Women at Various Spectacles* (*Muhtelif Temâşâlarda Kadın*, 1926) portrays women's attendance to a number of spectacles during Sultan Abdülhamid II's reign (1876-1909) and the Second Constitutional (1909-1918) era in a comparative perspective. Ahmed Râsim writes that Muslim women could watch *karagöz*, *ortaoyunu* and European plays either in family groups or in mix-gendered saloons with a special seating arrangement.[63]

Women's attendance at spectacles, prior to the cinema era, was subject to debate among politicians and the public. According to Ahmed Râsim, there was always 'turmoil' regarding the life of Muslim women.[64] During the Hamidian era, there was strict control of women: 'at times the afternoon and evening promenades were prohibited for women during the religious month of Ramadan, and other times going to shops in Beyoğlu, Bazaar and *Bonmarché* was forbidden'.[65] Despite this, at various secluded shows 'women were freely allowed to watch all sort of shameful things presented at the

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[62] Cemil Irvin Schick, 'Osmanlı Döneminde Balkan Kadınları Üzerine Birkaç Söz', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 192, (December 2009), p. 20.
[63] Ahmed Râsim, 'Muhtelif Temâşâlarda Kadın', pp. 98-99.
[64] Ibid., pp. 98-99.
[65] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

exhibitions, quite contrary to moral norms, and then the same women were required to be respectful towards public morals'.[66] Ahmed Râsim's text skilfully describes the conditions below:

> What I want to say is that for years, whether freely or strictly, women in our society have carefully crafted their own womanhood, taken the initiative to direct their lives; yet they've faced a surprising array of influences. And now, women are subject to the evil and distressful subjects found in *karagöz*, puppet shows and *ortaoyunu* and similar things on stage; European theatre; being stared on the street and at the market; pressure at home from mother, father, husband; and customs, always subject to moral obligations. What else do women have to go on, other than bits and pieces, time gone by?[67]

Ahmed Râsim made this retrospective observation in 1926 during the Republican years. He historically surveyed the women question in the late Ottoman era. Likewise, other intellectuals examined the position of women in society and wrote pieces about women's cinema-going experience at the time, which were strikingly similar to Ahmed Râsim's.[68] Let me now present different discourses that intellectuals had about women's cinema-going. In her 1922 essay, *An Analogy* (*Bir Mukâyese*), the author Halide Edib [Adıvar] gauges women's transformation by comparing and contrasting between East and West.[69] Halide Edib's essay is similar to other intellectuals' opinions in the way they refer to 'binary oppositions'.[70] Halide Edib categorises cinema as only for 'entertainment and pleasure', rejecting the thought that cinema could have any information or educational purpose. She divides women into two categories, those who are 'stunning' and those who are 'ignorant'.

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[66] Ahmed Râsim, 'Muhtelif Temâşâlarda Kadın', p. 98.
[67] Ibid., pp. 97-99.
[68] Halide Edib [Adıvar], 'Bir Mukayese', *Yarın*, 28, (1922).
[69] Ibid.
[70] Fatmagül Berktay, 'Yeni Kimlik Arayışı, Eski Cinsel Düalizm: Peyami Safa'nın Romanlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet', *Bilanço 1923-1998* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p. 268.

‘Stunning women’ are serious, tenacious, realist and outgoing women who attend educational gatherings and science clubs; whilst ‘ignorant women’ are those who attend cinema, plays, and parade around in Beyoğlu; one day married, the next being a divorcée with a lover.[71]

This follows other thinkers of the time who believe that ‘ignorant women’ were hedonistic and immoral.[72] Halide Edib saw cinema as an empty type of entertainment that tore down women’s ‘heart and soul’. She believed that ‘ignorant women’ dirtied the pure ‘Turkish womanhood’. Indeed, most of the dominant male discourse considered women as the figure to ‘represent the Empire itself, or its wealth, glory, survival, and honour’.[73] Thus Halide Edib argued that the government and press should have attempted to reform ‘ignorant women’ through education or marriage.[74] Refik Halid also agreed with Halide Edib’s methods as a way to develop women. Both authors contended that cinema was an obstacle to the development of women. Refik Halid made this clear when he stated that ‘after all the work that we have done to raise up women in this country, cinema comes along to tear it down and does as it wishes’.[75] In conclusion, Refik Halid’s and Halide Edib’s didactic and elitist claims place women audiences in a passive position in which historical women’s voice is unheard.

Ottoman women who had the access to certain high and middle-class venues could watch films during the early years of cinema. Women watched films in private houses and gardens, and at public and commercial venues they attended the matinees. Some cinema-houses organised daytime

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[71] Halide Edib [Adıvar], ‘Bir Mukâyese’.
[72] Fatmagül Berktay, ‘Yeni Kimlik Arayışı’, p. 270.
[73] Palmira Brummett, ‘Dressing for Revolution: Mother, Nation, Citizen, and Subversive in the Ottoman Satirical Press, 1908-1911‘, in Zehra F. Arat (ed.), *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (New York: Palgrave, 1997), p. 41.
[74] Halide Edib [Adıvar], ‘Bir Mukâyese’.
[75] Refik Halid [Karay], ‘Sinema Derdi’, pp. 320, 322.

exhibitions for children and women and kept evenings and night for men.[76] There are a few conflicting testimonials depicting women's cinema-going. Sermet Muhtar Alus asserts that the first mixed-gendered public film exhibition took place in the Military Museum in İstanbul. Alus describes the saloon as follows: 'Women at the back, men on the front and a screen between them'.[77] According to Reşad Ekrem Koçu, the Alemdar Cinema in İstanbul housed the first mixed-gendered exhibition, but 'the venue was divided into two by a screen, the women seated on one side and the men on the other side'.[78] However, Cemil Filmer claims that the first mixed-gendered public film exhibition was organised at the Ankara Cinema during the Republican years.[79] Gönül Dönmez-Colin notes that Muslim women had to wait to be an audience.[80] Yet, Dönmez-Colin assumes that cinema-going was exclusively open to men. Her assumption misplaces Ottoman Muslim women audiences in a position in which they could not see films at all during the late Ottoman era.

Metin And notes that Muslim women attempted to break gender discrimination at entertainment venues by a trick. He claims that Muslim women disguised themselves by dressing up like non- Muslim women and in this way, they went to the İzmir Sporting Club in 1909.[81] This hypothetical claim may lead to the debates about gender issues. This speculation suggests that when compared to Muslims, non- Muslim women were more visible in

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[76] Sermet Muhtar Alus, *Eski Günlerde* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), p. 65
[77] Ibid., p. 65.
[78]Reşad Ekrem Koçu, 'Alemdar Sineması', *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 2, (İstanbul: Nurgök Matbaası, 1959), p. 606.
[79] Cemil Filmer, *Hatıralar Türk Sinemasında 65 Yıl* (İstanbul, 1984), p. 126
[80] Gönül Dönmez-Colin, *Kadın, İslam ve Sinema,* Deniz Koç (trans.), (İstanbul: Agora, 2006), p. xii.
[81] Here the anecdote that Metin And mentions appears to be gathered from a press review that he conducted. However, And does not include references in his work. See Metin And, *100 Soruda Türk Tiyatrosu Tarihi* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1970), pp. 209-210.

social life and freer in public spaces than others. However societal differences and class divisions, urban and provincial settings, and new policies about the public spaces may refute this assumption.[82] Binnaz Toprak notes that the inequality in the Islamic culture 'rests on institutional arrangements to check the innate potency of female sexuality'.[83] Metin And's anecdote about Muslim women's cinema-going by disguising themselves as non- Muslims need more evidence and probably a more nuanced consideration of Islamic law (Sharia) and religio-moral practises.

Transformation during the Second Constitutional era led to the changes in socially constructed roles and the opening of new jobs for women, especially in the war years. After the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, numerous associations were founded with the aim of promoting females and 'intellectuals demanded equality between males and females'.[84] During the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the First World War (1914-1918), Ottoman women began to gain visibility in the public sphere as they did everywhere because men were at war. For instance, the Islamic League of Working Women (*Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyyesi*) was established in 1916 under the auspices of Minister of War, Enver Paşa, and his wife Naciye Sultan. Thus, Ottoman women could work as barbers, factory workers, even served in Women Workers Battalions (*Kadın İşçi Taburları*).[85] Whilst women actively served society, the war years also witnessed a number of 'radical ruptures'.[86]

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[82] For an account of women's night-out experiences within the late Ottoman context and present day See Nurçin İleri, 'Kent, Gece ve Kadınlar', *Saha*, 3, (April 2016), pp. 57-62.
[83] I base my explanation to Binnaz Toprak's reference to Islamic law as 'explained in the Koran and the Nisa Surah (IV). See Binnaz Toprak, 'Emancipated but Unliberated Women in Turkey: The Impact of Islam', in Ferhunde Özbay (ed.), *Women, Family and Social Change in Turkey* (Bangkok: UNESCO, 1990), p. 41.
[84] François Georgeon, 'Women's Representations', p. 249.
[85] Yavuz Selim Karakışla, 'Enver Paşa'nın Kurduğu Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu: Osmanlı Ordusunda Kadın Askerler', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 66, (June 1999), pp. 17-18.
[86] Leyla Kırkpınar, 'Türkiye'de Toplumsal Değişme Sürecinde Kadın', in *Bilanço 98*, *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p. 14.

Within the context of the progressive movement, women gradually began to act against traditional norms and customs. They sought a new way of life to overcome the barriers caused by their religious affiliation and gender roles. Muslim women actively attempted to break existing gender discrimination.

Elite Ottoman women participated in film exhibitions in various places.[87] For example, in 1919 the Disabled Veterans Cinema Factory (*Malûlîn-i Guzât Sinema Film Fabrikası*) organised the première of *The Governess* (*Mürebbiye,* Ahmed Fehim, 1919) in a small saloon for a guest list of 50-60 people. Among the guests were the director of the institution, Fuad Bey [Uzkınay], author of *The Governess*, Hüseyin Rahmi Bey [Gürpınar], senior government officials, representatives of various communities, journals and a number of prominent ladies.[88] Therefore, Cemil Filmer's claim that Muslim Ottoman women waited until the Republican period to go to the cinema at mix-gendered venues is possibly incorrect.[89]

On the contrary, Ottoman women began to be active in social, economic, political and cultural life prior to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, gradually benefiting from films and other technological innovations of the time.[90] Visibility for women in the public sphere was associated with factors such as class and education. Thus, watching films in public was more accessible for elite women and reflected social inequalities of the time. However, women from the lower and middle classes could also attend film

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[87] Ayşe Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamit* (İstanbul: Güven, 1960).; İ. [Galip Arcan], 'Mürebbiye Filmi', *Temâşâ*, (1919), 17. Due to the ticket price and general atmosphere of the cinema-houses, the elite were among the first to encounter the new invention of cinema. As an example, Ali Seydi Bey reports that hundreds of women from the harem of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad watched cinema in the palace garden. See Ali Seydi Bey, *Teşrifat ve Teşkilatımız Teşrifât ve Teşkilât-ı Kadimemiz* (İstanbul: Tercüman, [197?]), p. 59. It was not until the 1930s that cinema became common as a form of mass entertainment.

[88] İ. [Galip Arcan], 'Mürebbiye Filmi'.

[89] Cemil Filmer, *Hatıralar,* p. 126.

[90] Cemil Irvin Schick, 'Osmanlı Döneminde', p. 19.

screenings due to the adjustment in ticket's prices, based on seating plan and view at various cinema-houses.[91] This practise could allow a variety of audiences from different classes.[92] Despite impediments based on social class, religion or gender, Ottoman women were able to attend film exhibitions in various venues such as at schools, private screenings at mansions, during seasonal festive periods when films were screened along with other spectacles. In the early cinema period women were also some of most well-known film protagonists in the Empire, for instance Binnaz, the courtesan from İstanbul (*Binnaz*, Ahmet Fehim, 1919). Women's cinema-going was not prohibited by the state. However, archival material does show that conservative concerns pushed for the prohibition of Muslim women's cinema-going. These records also show the view of the state on this subject.

a. Cinematograph: Exclusively for Women

Several petitions and complaints sent to İstanbul called for the banning of Muslim women attending the cinema as this activity was considered against the Islamic law and customs of society. A group of Muslim men from İzmir sent a petition to the provincial governor in 1912 arguing for a prohibition of women's cinema-going.[93] According to the local *Ahenk* newspaper, the petition was signed by 600 İzmirites.[94] Even if this did not

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[91] At this point I base my analysis on class distinctions, which stem from the cinema-going. Apart from the exhibitions at cinema-houses, films were screened at gardens or other open-air spaces allowed for viewing by those outside of the upper class. Charity organisations, such as the Society of Navy (*Donanma Cemiyeti*), also arranged free film exhibitions for educational purposes during these years. Mustafa Gökmen has shown that cinema tickets approximately sold for 3-7 *kuruş*, based on the seat's position in the venue's plan. See Mustafa Gökmen, *Eski İstanbul Sinemaları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Kitaplığı Yayınları, 1991), pp. 21-24. By May 1921, there were 32 cinema-houses and 12 seasonal cinema-houses in İstanbul that offered venues of various capacities and sold tickets of different classes (first, second, and third). See G. Gilbert Deaver, 'Recreation', p. 264.; see *Chapter 3*.

[92] Ibid., pp. 264-265.

[93] Oğuz Makal, 'Tarih İçinde İzmir'de Sinema Yaşantısı', *Sinema Yazıları*, 93, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Basımevi Yayınları, 1993), p. 33.

[94] Ibid., p. 33.

change official policy, it shows that there was some support among certain groups for this type of ban related to women audiences.

The *ulema* and elite from Beirut sent several telegraphs to the Ministry of Interior in İstanbul on the same issue in 1913. The petition from Beirut is historically significant; as it is at the same time a complaint about the administration of Beirut Governor Edhem Bey. The petition mentions that the governor himself allows 'chaste Muslim women' to watch cinema. It says that 'cinema-houses are sinister, vile, coarse entertainments akin to tavern and brothels, and are against Sharia (*Şer'i* law) and Islam'.[95] The *ulema* and elite asked that the Ministry of Interior forbid Muslims, and especially women, from going to these establishments. The petitioners stated that they, the 'illegitimate' governor of Beirut, sent soldiers to stop them from petitioning him directly. The *ulema* and elite noted that since the Caliph Ömer [*Umar ibn Al-Khattab*] forbade women from going to the mosque, then it was obvious that Muslim women's cinema-going is against the law. The patriarchal religious intervention was at this stage in use against women's cinema going by referring to Sharia and religio-moral discourses.[96]

Governor Edhem Bey, under pressure from this influential group, sent a telegraph of his own explaining the situation. He wrote that the complaints were not true because 'this first exhibition was organised exclusively for women in Beirut'.[97] The answer received from the Ministry of Interior sided with the governor by stating that there was no harm with women attending film exhibitions. Yet, even though the Ministry rejected the request to ban women's cinema-going, it ordered the governor to treat requests from the group with favouritism in order to avoid further tensions.[98] The Ministry of

[95] BOA, DH.İD, 65/27, (21 January 1913).
[96] BOA, DH.İD, 65/27, (21 January 1913).
[97] BOA, DH.İD, 65/27, (21 January 1913).
[98] BOA, DH.İD, 65/27, (21 January 1913).

Interior charged Governor Edhem Bey with prohibiting women's cinema-going even though the exhibitions were entirely only for women. Ali Özuyar presents other facts in the case. Özuyar notes that the Ministry of Interior employed Sheikh al-Islam Mehmet Cemalettin Efendi, to stand their ground and support their cause. He writes that 'On 21 January, the Ministry of Interior informs the governor that "it is the wish of Sheikh al-Islam Mehmet Cemalettin Efendi that women do not watch cinematograph".'[99] Women's cinema-going was challenged by notables in Beirut, but film exhibitions for different segments of the society continued as officials promoted it. For instance, in 1917 the Directorate of Education planned to screen films for the youth in Beirut.[100]

This historical case from Beirut highlights the contested negotiations over cinema between the liberals and conservatives in an Ottoman province. The highest authority in the province, situated far from the centre of the Empire, arranged women-only film exhibitions. The upper conservative segments in Beirut felt that women's cinema-going was against Islamic law and customs. What is important here is the centre's response from the Ministry of Interior: there is no obstacle to women watching films. Although what is interesting is the Ministry of Interior attempted to find a third way that would also please the complainants. The central authority chose an approach that recognised that not meeting the demands of notables would cause adverse effects in society.[101] The central government's intention was not to take action against women at the cinema, the target of the complainants, but to find a way to calm their concerns. The state as a result did not enforce a common regulation yet attempted to solve the case. Serdar

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[99] Ali Özuyar, *Babıâli'de Sinema* (İstanbul: İzdüşüm Yayınları, 2004), p. 26.
[100] BOA, MF.MKT, 1223/24, (3 March 1917).
[101] BOA, DH.İD, 65/27, (21 January 1913).

Öztürk also affirms that the central government 'practises policy that swings like a pendulum, trying to appease both sides'.[102] Besides, there is no information directly on the films' content in this case, the conservative circles, emphasising the cinema-house as an 'immoral' and 'dangerous' space, justify their oppositions on the basis of religious obligations.

Apart from state agencies, semi-official organisations also did not see any obstacles to women watching films. For example, in 1916 the Society of the Navy (*Donanma Cemiyeti*) planned to exhibit a film screening accompanied with 'a number of useful conferences' at a university's conference hall in İstanbul during the month of Ramadan for Muslim women only. The Society requested assistance in this regard from the Ministry of Education by stressing the segregation and educational purpose.[103] The Ministry's response was negative: 'it is impossible to open a conference room at a university for a screening organised for Muslim women (*Muhadderât-ı İslâmiyye*)'. The unexplained negative decision may be related to logistics. Currently there is no further evidence to investigate this incident in a more nuanced way.[104] The above-mentioned cases may adversely portray the issue of women and cinema, in particular to Muslim Ottoman women's attendance. At this point it is worth remembering the multi-religious dimension of the Empire during these years. Nonetheless, there was an increasing number of exhibitions exclusively for women at various venues such as gardens, associations, and schools.[105] This suggests the demand of women for films and cinema's dissemination in the society.

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[102] Serdar Öztürk, *Osmanlı'da İletişimin Diyalektiği* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2010), p. 322.
[103] BOA, MF.MKT, 1216.71, (24 June 1916).
[104] BOA, MF.MKT, 1216.71, (24 June 1916).
[105] It is not clear whether or not this exhibition was organised also for men or Muslim women only, for further information see Mesut Çapa, 'Milli Mücadeleden Cumhuriyet'e Trabzon'da Tiyatro ve Sinema', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 94, (September 2001), p. 25.

b. Cinema and Women's Representation

When the first Ottoman films were produced during the early twentieth century, women's roles were played by non-Muslims. This was the case for the existing spectacle culture as well and reflects the tacit regulations over cinema. Women performers for Western types of theatres were mostly non-Muslims, from Greek, Armenian, or Jewish backgrounds. In case of failure to follow this custom, officials would punish these as 'unlawful' practises.[106] For Ottoman women acting was not, first and foremost, determined by talent and the desire to act, but was firmly restricted by ethnic and religious backgrounds.[107] The *1896 Regulation on Theatre, Ortaoyunu, Karagöz and Puppet Shows* indicates that Muslim women were forbidden to perform on stage.[108] Apart from this regulation, there is no specific official law designed to show this restriction in the realm of cinema.

Muslim Ottoman women's appearance on stage always created a concern among the Ottoman dominant class, similar to women's cinema-going experience and spatial divisions at screening venues. Therefore, filmmaking also became an arena where officials and film-makers followed certain existing regulations about the representation of women in locally made films. Muslim women did not take part in Ottoman productions. This was set by unwritten regulations, as an unspoken agreement between filmmakers and the state. The participation of Muslim women in performance arts was considered 'inferior', 'immoral' and 'dishonoured'; thus, acting in films as a profession had ethnic and religious categories.[109]

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[106] BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 16/63, (4 April 1890).
[107] This division can also be observed in the literature see Hülya Yıldız, 'Limits of the Imaginable in the Early Turkish Novel: Non-Muslim Prostitutes and Their Ottoman Muslim Clients', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 54, 4, (Winter 2012), pp. 532-562.
[108] BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 9/28, (11 June 1896). See, Third part, Clause 23.
[109] BOA, DH.KMS, 59/2, (3 October 1920).; BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 76/46, (29 September 1921).

The Ottoman dominant class criticised constructed eroticism found in performances by stars of the time. The image of women in décolleté with erotic acts in performing arts was associated with non-Muslim women. In the state's eyes, women were the symbolic bearers of the nation as mothers, consequently it was inappropriate for them to act.[110] Acting would contaminate 'the nurturing or reproductive powers' of the Empire, thus Muslim women had to be protected. As Palmira Brummett has brilliantly shown in her research on cartoons of women, the depiction of women was considered as a threat in relation to Western arts and even to 'European imperialism'.[111]

Apart from political ideologies, Islamic principles forbade Muslim women actresses at this time. After all, this religious law was set within unspoken and customary rules. Therefore, the representation of Muslim women both in theatrical acts and in films and the restrictions on Muslim women cinema-goers reveal the ideological goals and tacit regulations which maintained traditional order and patriarchal hierarchy.[112] This reality was in the process of happening in the realm of cinema, borrowed from the regulations of performing arts and entertainments. Yet, the late Ottoman era, as a transition to a number of nation states, shows a gradual transformation in the liberation of women in terms of acting and socialisation via cinema during the formation of Republic. The issue of representation of Muslim women and their visibility in films would gradually change during the early Republican years.

The long tradition of theatre and other spectacles paved a similar path to cinema. The protagonists of the two full-length Ottoman films, *Binnaz* and

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[110] Hülya Yıldız, 'Limits of the Imaginable', p. 541.
[111] Palmira Brummett, 'Dressing for Revolution', p. 41.
[112] Zehra F. Arat, 'Introduction-Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"', in Zehra F. Arat (ed.), *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (New York: Palgrave, 1997), p. 3.

The Governess, (Ahmet Fehim, 1919), were portrayed as 'loose women', a courtesan and a 'prostitute,' respectively. These characters were performed by non-Muslim actresses: Mademoiselle Blanche as Binnaz, and Rânâ Dilberyan as Faika in *Binnaz*; and Madame Kalitea as Angèle in *The Governess*. In this respect, the performers had to be chosen according to the existing norms since there was no codified regulation that was enforced specifically about Muslim women's performance in films.

At times, Muslim women attempted to break this unspoken rule which derives from customary gender roles. Police reports show complaints and tensions in relation to Muslim women's visibility in entertainment venues and performing on stage. In the early 1920s, the religious and ethnic origins of performers in theatres were strictly regulated. Ottoman legislators attempted to restrict Muslim women's appearances on stage, but they were not always successful in so doing. After a number of complaints and incidents at theatres, the Ministry of Interior and the police announced, in 1920, that it was strictly forbidden for Muslim women to perform at theatres. The Ministry of Interior justified their decision on the basis of 'religious rules' and 'Islamic principles'.[113] In 1921, the municipality of İstanbul, the Ministry of Interior and the Sheikh al-Islam banned Muslim actress Afife [Jale] from performing in the *Dar'ül Bedayi Ottoman Theatre Troop*.[114] Later, during the Republican years, the regulations changed and she was able to act and took her place as the first Turkish/Muslim actress in history.

Apart from the Islamic law regarding Muslim women's acting in film, the images of Western women in imported films created concerns among the Ottoman dominant class. This was the case in theatre and other visual materials such as photography, caricature and paintings in which women's

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[113] BOA, DH.KMS, 59/2, (3 October 1920).
[114] BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 76/46, (29 September 1921).

image became visible more directly for a special audience.[115] Through visual media women were seen as the object of the gaze and as role models for Ottoman women. From time to time, both liberal and conservative intellectuals wrote pieces about cinema's influence on lifestyle. On the one hand, they considered cinema's technology as a symbol of Western modernisation; on the other, they perceived films as the representation of stereotypical Western mores and lifestyles. Intellectuals perceived films as a cultural penetration of European imperialism by presenting new gender roles, fashion, eroticism, and the construction of 'modern women' via cinema who had the strength to reverse the customary lifestyles.

This is the case especially with the depiction of gender roles, relationships between women and men, and the constructed images of female protagonists in films. According to Refik Halid, 'the image of women', such as sexy, modern and independent, in films negatively affected the Ottoman audience.[116] For instance, the Italian actress Pina Menichelli (1890-1984) was very popular during this era.[117] The author Sermet Muhtar Alus called the seductive poses, décolleté and bleary-eyed look that were all the rage among young Ottoman women of the day 'Pina-esque'.[118] Yet, Refik Halid considered Menichelli as a corrupted example. According to him, every man who watched Western films was searching for a Menichelli in his life.[119] Refik Halid wrote that Menichelli had an effect on men by displaying 'a satanic allure, strutting around like a loose woman, who talks sweet and cuddles sweetly'.[120] At the same time, women also felt unsatisfied due to the

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[115] François Georgeon, 'Women's Representations', p. 251.
[116] Refik Halid [Karay], 'Sinema Derdi', p. 322.
[117] Sermet Muhtar Alus, *Eski Günlerde,* pp. 63-64.
[118] Ibid., pp. 63-64.
[119] Refik Halid [Karay], 'Sinema Derdi', p. 322.
[120] Ibid., p. 322.

depiction of the love affairs and the lifestyles of the heroines, as Refik Halid indicated:

> […] It is never enough for her that her husband treats her with love; that they spend life together in joy, fun, and wealth as they walk hand-in-hand in beautiful gardens, ride side-by-side in cars, having rendezvous over lakes and ponds. […][121]

Above all, Menichelli became the subject of literature at the time. Author Fahri Celâl Göktulga created a seductive character named Şehper Ziya, based on Menichelli, in his 1921 novel *Pina Menikelli*. Göktulga's Şehper channels Menichelli with her looks, fashion and attitude. The male character of the story, Refik Bey, recalls his 'chance meeting at the cinema' with Şehper Ziya.[122] Göktulga uses Menichelli as an example to portray the popularity of the star among İstanbulians. Ottoman periodicals included news about the famous Italian actress. For instance, the cinema magazine, *Sinema Yıldızı*, announced news about Menichelli's upcoming trip to İstanbul in the 1920s.[123] Besides the fans of cinema, the press and literature followed the stars of the day. These contradictory discourses and practises about the image of women in films suggest that intellectuals and audiences had varying opinions about women's cinema-going and representation via films based on their perceptions.

Representations of eroticism, nudity and allegedly 'immoral' images of women in films generated social tensions in relation to the state's alleged failure to censor films. Many of the images of women protagonists in films were considered images of the West, and indeed some of the Ottoman women already accepted this in their ideologies and outlook. Whilst a

[121] Ibid., pp. 320-322.
[122] Fahri Celâl Göktulga, *Bütün Hikayeler* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1973), p. 84.
[123] 'İstanbul Sinemaları/Pina Menikelli İstanbul'a Geliyor', *Sinema Yıldızı*, 1, 2, (19 June 1924), p. 11.

number of elite groups and the press blamed the West for contaminating Ottoman society via films, they also implied that it was the task of government to control and limit cinema's 'immoral' models for Ottoman women. 'As the focal point of conflict', the issue of women and cinema divided society 'between conservatives and liberals, between traditionalists and the partisans of modernization'.[124] Yet, these tensions and debates over women at the time would go a step further during the early Republican years, when Muslim women's images in films would become a desired symbol for the political cause towards the Westernisation.

Conclusion

A review of the complaints and petitions of the Ottoman dominant class reveals that there were shared concerns regarding cinema-going by children and women during the late Ottoman era. Therefore, the discourses and practises about children and women audiences were at times protectionist, at times didactic and elitist. The Ottoman dominant class created a stereotypical 'Western image' from the films, imported from Western Europe and North America, which included such themes as eroticism, criminality, violence, and the role models for men-women relationship. This idea claimed that the Western mores represented in films contaminated particularly 'vulnerable' children and women who were considered as the bearers of the state's future. Political authorities were concerned that the films and the environment of the exhibition venues were a threat to morals and values and the 'national generation'. Intellectuals of the time also contributed to the debate about the concerning effects of the encouragement of different societal norms and Westernisation by the films. The conservative elite was anxious that cinema was contrary to Islamic law, religio-moral principles and

[124] François Georgeon, 'Women's Representations', p. 269.

customary gender roles. Exhibition venues were seen as dangerous, both because of their demographic and social profiles, and immoral behaviours that occurred there.

The way that the Ottoman dominant class perceived cinema was certainly affected by the political and socio-cultural atmosphere of the time, highlighted by patriotic fervour, social despair, and a heightened sense of a fear of potential enemies during the wartime and the transitional years from an empire to a number of nation-states. The concerns and social tensions regarding cinema were complex and variable. The discussions about children's age restriction were not finalised with a certain official enforcement. Women's cinema-going also created tensions due to the visibility of women in public space and changing gender roles during the late Ottoman era. Women's cinema-going was not officially banned; however, the issue of women's visibility in film exhibition venues generated new tensions. Religio-moral and Islamic principles shaped Muslim women's participation in film-making by enforcing tacit rules inherited from the existing regulations of performing arts and entertainments. The representation of Muslim women in local films was not possible due to this unspoken law. The way this custom was practised was not officially written in documents, but can be followed in the acts of officials, that they banned Muslim women from acting.[125]

Particularly in the early Republican years, with cultural and political changes afoot, and in the light of ideologies such as 'Westernisation' and 'secularism', the relationship of women and children to cinema was one that was also changing. In 1923, the cinema magazine *Süs* invited women readers to the cinema with the headline 'The Latest Parisian Fashion at Elhamra

[125] BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 76/46, (29 September 1921).

Cinema'.[126] In these years, cinema supposedly provided a model for young Republican women who were eager to follow the changing fashions especially with the Western outlook. At the same time, films continued to influence children in many ways. According to a study done with students, children wanted to become a 'movie star' at times for 'making Turkish films' and sometimes they wanted to act in films for 'kissing like stars in films'.[127] Children had various reasons to watch films due to the way they were touched by the stars and stories in films. Yet, the parliament member Fuat Bey, like his Ottoman predecessors, petitioned the Turkish Parliament to put an age limit on child audiences.[128] No doubt, during the early Republican years, children and women cinema-goers' experiences began to change gradually due to the dominant modernising ideologies of the RPP. 'The radical break with Islam', women's emancipation and new gender roles in public space, education of female children especially introduced a renewed perspective in regulating cinema.[129] The government led Westernisation, and secularism in particular began to affect the Republican cinema regulations and specifically the enforcement of rules about cinema-going. ⌘

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[126] 'Elhamra Sinemasında Paris'in Son Modası', *Süs*, (15 September 1339/1923), p. 14.
[127] Hilmi A. Malik, *Türkiye'de Sinema ve Tesirleri,* p. 32.
[128] BCA, (Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivleri, Ankara).030.10.146.44.1, (1935).
[129] Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity', in Sibel Bozdoğan & Reşat Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1997), pp. 124-125.

CONCLUSION

Cinema Contested has analysed cinema regulations during the late Ottoman era. The four chapters have traced how cinema regulations began in the imperial years of the 1890s from existing regulations of printed media and entertainments and how this developed to the transitional period of the 1920s. Extensive archival research allowed me to locate the primary sources that reveal the origins and development of cinema regulation in the late Ottoman Empire. By so doing, I was able to present new findings about the form of draft laws, film controls, and regulations of exhibition and cinema-going in this region and period. I have endeavoured to render some of this historical material in terms of statistical data for a multi-dimensional interpretation of the sources.[1] I believe this research will enable other scholars to better understand the emergence, intention, and practises of cinema regulation as it developed in the early twentieth century.

Based on the solid findings, I presented that the late Ottoman cinema regulation at times was an ongoing process of imposing rules by multiple state agencies and at times regulation also exceeded the state due to the complexity of historical context (i.e. wartime, individual practises of officers).[2] Attempts to regulate film production, exhibition, circulation and cinema-going in their all elusiveness and ambivalent practises represented both restrictive and facilitative measures for the control and endorsement of

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[1] See *Chapter 3*.; George G. Iggers, *Bilimsel Nesnellikten Postmodernizme Yirminci Yüzyılda Tarihyazımı,* Gül Çağalı Güven (trans.), (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), p. 47.

[2] I refer to the First World War period as a historically contingent period in regards to cinema regulations as a number of authorities, the Sultan, Ottoman governmental agencies and the Allied Powers, altogether created the conditions to regulate cinema at this specific wartime period. See *Chapter 2*.

cinema. I contend that legislators' discourses and practises changed over time within the late Ottoman context. In brief, the legislators drafted a number of regulations, but some were not fully enforced. Today we can discern the intentions of the authorities and their approach towards films via a close examination of written archival sources.

By focusing on the authorities' attempts to regulate cinema I asked: which governmental and non-governmental agencies directly took part in regulating cinema? How did legislators intend to control film production, exhibition, circulation and cinema-going? What were the main objectives of the regulations? How did the historical context affect the cinema regulations? For instance, how did the First World War affect the cinema market and eventually the censorship of films? I furthermore sought answers for the following questions: How was film exhibition shaped in two different phases, within the itinerant exhibition and permanent cinema-house periods? How did legislators approach the regulation of film exhibition venues? What was their main concern to regulate cinema in relation to audiences? What role did gender and age play in this?

I scrutinised a number of draft laws, as they were formulated in a written document. In the absence of the standardised rules, I explored officials' practises. This process was inherited from existing regulations of entertainments, visual culture and printed media. A study without the evaluation of cinema in relation to this background of entertainment laws and printed media lacks historical context and misses the chance to locate the underlying logic of the attempts to regulate film production, exhibition circulation, and cinema-going. Enforcement of laws was not an easy task due to the political, socio-cultural, demographic and economic transformations, the rigid structure of the bureaucracy, and above all against the backdrop of the demise of an empire. It is important to recognise that initially cinema was not regulated directly by a central authority; rather the problems cinema

posed were dealt with by already existing rules and ad hoc practises of provincial agencies -police, censor officers, inspectors, and other local government agencies. Thus, multiple, central and local agencies directed the ongoing process of cinema regulations during the late Ottoman era.

Scholars approach the term regulation in a number of ways, based on their area of study. In this research I explained the term within the theories of film studies and the discipline of media in a broader sense.[3] Hence I defined cinema regulations as the institutional attempts of local and central authorities' imposition of a set of rules for film production, exhibition, circulation, and cinema-going. Whilst seeing it in this way, I highlighted the features of regulation as being both prohibitive and facilitative for cinema's development.[4] The emphasis merely on prohibitions isolates our ability to see practises away 'from their broader social and historical conditions of existence and affectivity' and this eventually led us to ignore regulations' productive dimensions in its outcomes.[5] The productivity of regulation emerges when clearly defined set of facilitative rules were imposed by the central and local legislators. For instance, in the case of cinema-houses, I demonstrated how zoning and licensing procedure worked. Cinema entrepreneurs were liable to offer safe, healthy and modern venues for audiences which eventually caused the dissemination of cinema-going. Productivity reveals itself when both parties – cinema entrepreneurs and legislators – seek the public interest genuinely.

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[3] Rakesh Kaushal, 'Regulation', in Roberta E. Pearson & Philip Simpson (eds.), *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 527.; Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation Theory, Strategy, and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 1-2.
[4] Robert Baldwin & Martin Cave, *Understanding Regulation Theory,* p. 1-2.
[5] Annette Kuhn, *Cinema Censorship and Sexuality 1909-1925* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 4.

Furthermore, I explored Ottoman cinema regulations as 'a matter of relations' and 'a process' rather than a fixed object.[6] This approach allowed me to pinpoint firstly why draft regulations were not easily enforceable, and secondly how the ambivalent system of rules functioned in the Ottoman cinema market. In so doing this, I aimed to overcome the preconception of existing scholarship, which is shaped within the understanding of censorship as an act and not a multifaceted, ongoing relation. A number of scholars portray the Hamidian era as the period of prohibitions and claim that cinema was less restricted during the Second Constitutional period. Nevertheless, this misunderstands the reality of the late Ottoman period.

Censor officers, inspectors and other local and central agencies were all vital forces in banning certain films. I explored this history in *Chapter 1*. During the arrival and spread of cinema, the Hamidian state was already in a legitimacy crisis; the authorities took into consideration existing constitutional demands and nationalist and separatist movements. Within this context, while legislators were extending regulations over cinema they saw it dangerously propaganda and a powerful tool to shape public opinion. Film studies' scholars of this period have tended to emphasise the role of Sultan Abdülhamid II as the monarch of the Empire without understanding his qualities and the context of the period. Frequently they assumed that the Sultan's alleged fear of electricity was the main hindrance for cinema. But this misinterprets the complexity of cinema's regulatory body, which was due to political turmoil of the tumultuous war years, the dependency of Ottoman cinema on the international market and the institutional changes at stake during a transition from an Empire to multiple nation-states.

[6] Ibid., p. 127.

Chapter 1 explored this history, and critically explained instead that the late Ottoman Empire, at both central and local levels, was not fearful of the new technology of cinema. Contrary to the assertations made by cinema scholars, cinema did not in fact arrive late in the Empire. A closer examination of archival sources reveals that cinema was able to flourish through the attempts of various Ottoman and foreign entrepreneurs, including the Sultan's recognition of this new technology and his intention to use it. Furthermore, by focusing on the practices of various institutions of governmental agencies', I noted that cinema regulations were not only shaped by the Sultan, but by a number of historical figures from different levels of the state. I also discussed Sultan Abdülhamid II's modest intentions to use cinema in order to shape public opinion, like his photography project. Additionally, the *1903 Cinematograph Privilege* was an important source, which revealed the authorities and entrepreneurs' efforts to introduce a regulatory framework for cinema. This document, which went unenforced, provided me with a valuable information for tracing the potential restrictions and use of cinema, especially in the realm of film exhibition and production. The 26 clauses portrayed topics for official film-making, the educational value of cinema and the moral impetus to safeguard the Ottoman cinema-going.

During the First World War (1914-1918), the Ottoman authorities censored films within the broader regulatory space of communications, transport, theatre and correspondence under the direct authority of the Ministry of War. *Chapter 2*, entitled *Wartime Regulations*, scrutinised the changing authorities' regulation of cinema, their concerns about film content, and the wartime effects on cinema. The *1914 Censorship Act* and the *1918 Censorship Ordinance* were the direct products of these wartime policing strategies. Within these circumstances, the Ministry of War established the Military Office of Cinema to make films specifically serving the wartime efforts. The Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Police

and the Security General Directorate, formulated the *1916 Draft Regulation* at this time, setting the licence procedure for cinema-houses, other exhibition and circulation rules, including licensing and legal liabilities of commercial premises. This *Draft Regulation* was amended but not officially practised. Yet, some of its conditions can be observed in the cinema regulations during the early years of the Republic of Turkey.

As Lee Grieveson suggests, examining individual films in detail 'can reveal a great deal about the operations and goals of censorship.'[7] For this purpose I presented the debates about the supposed 'the first censored film', *The Governess* (Ahmet Fehim, 1919). In so doing, I explored the controversies over this film by introducing a number of scholars' views and presenting first-hand evidence to represent the wartime conditions and censorship policies at this specific period. I concluded that the assumptions of mainstream scholarship lack hard evidence to place this film's status as 'the first censored film' in the history of cinema in this region. Above all, it is important to evaluate the place of *The Governess* within wartime regulations.

From its start the innovation of cinema caused concerns the world over about the social and political changes and the broader transformations it gradually occasioned.[8] Likewise, the Ottomans experienced cinema in the midst of a number of political and socio-cultural challenges. At the same time the new technology of cinema posed its own difficulties in the use of power sources and exhibition practises. Hence, *Chapter 3* is dedicated to regulations during the itinerant exhibition period and after the introduction of cinema-houses in 1908 in the Empire. Ottoman authorities maintained a cautious stand against the technology of cinema and inspected the function of this

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[7] Lee Grieveson, 'Censorship', *Oxford Online Bibliographies*, (Modified on 28 October 2011), http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/ (Accessed on 20 March 2014).
[8] Ibid.

new medium's equipment during the inception of cinema. This type of closer control caused discontent on the side of itinerant exhibitors and foreign enterprises, as explained in detail from different angles of the history.

However, in the eyes of the authorities it was a necessary step taken for the well-being and safety of Ottomans, especially in case of fire incidents. I argued that the authorities were first and foremost concerned about the exhibition venues and aimed to provide physically safe and secure environments for film viewing. Within this context, I pointed out an individual exhibition which was planned to take place along the Bosphorus on an abandoned ferry in 1908.[9] Based on this case and a number of examples, I concluded that due to the safety concerns unlicensed exhibition attempts were banned. To further explore the health and safety aspects of regulation, I analysed two important archival sources: The *1916 Draft Regulation* and the *1924 Ordinance*.[10] These documents revealed the conditions of exhibition, legal obligations, licensing, liabilities, and safeguarding the physical conditions of film venues.

In *Chapter 4*, I focused on audiences, particularly children and women, and the way they became the target of Ottoman legislators and elites. By relying on archival sources, I located cases that were specifically about these historical figures. The limits of studying Ottoman cinema history revealed itself especially on this topic of the audience, as it is difficult to trace their individual experiences, except through the lens of literary works.[11]

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[9] BOA, İ.HUS.1262/83, (20 July 1908).

[10] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916).; Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de Zabıta Tarihi Gelişim ve Bugünkü Durum* (Ankara: Kozan, 2008), pp. 637-639.

[11] I am aware of the fact that this is a common historical problem all around the world and specific to the periodisation, the history of early cinema. William Uricchio and Roberta Pearson write that there is a gap in evidence and 'almost no traditional documentation about the reception of films exists' regarding the early cinema history in the U.S. They furthermore note that most of the evidence is from 'high' culture subjects such as reviewers, reformers and censors which can be also observed in the Ottoman case. See William Uricchio & Roberta

My analyses on this subject laid out the discourses and practises of the Ottoman dominant class, on how they approached cinema-going of children and women and their presence at film exhibition venues. Certain films, in their portrayal of 'obscenity', 'crime', 'violence' and Western mores, and the profile of other attendees at venues created concern among them, especially in regard to the 'vulnerable' audience. In particular, intellectuals' elitist and didactic approach was vividly portrayed by the cases I have sensibly chosen. The central authorities' policy to spread 'national values' and safeguard the 'national generation' considered cinema-going as a threat to these ideologies. Furthermore, tacit regulations on women's participation in filmmaking were inherited from customs and the existing regulations of staged performances. Women's cinema-going also became a hot topic for some of the local elites on the basis of Islamic principles. These political discourses were not only protectionist but also were imposing actual audience to certain directions, especially for female audiences.

Another striking part in this research was the similarities and differences between the late Ottoman and early Republican period, which I will be briefly exploring here in this part, Conclusion. This quest to trace the history of cinema regulations within a comparative approach will hopefully yield further scholarship in the future. Recently scholars have tended to observe continuities across the regimes.[12] Benjamin C. Fortna, in his work on learning to read in the Ottoman and Turkish contexts, notes the continuity of

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Pearson, *Reframing Culture the Case of the Vitagraph Quality Films* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 6. A number of Ph.D. dissertations have investigated Ottoman spectatorship. For a meticulous review of literary works in search for cinema's reception see Meltem Göndem Öktem, *Sinematograftan Video'ya Türkiye'de Sinema Deneyimi ve Türk Edebiyatındaki Yansımaları* (Anadolu University: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 2010). For another dissertation see Canan Balan, *Changing Pleasures of Spectatorship: Early and Silent Cinema in Istanbul* (St Andrews University: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 2010).

[12] For a recent comparative perspective see Benjamin C. Fortna (ed.), *Childhood in the late Ottoman Empire and After* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016).

children's reading habits, even though there are certain ruptures and transformations between the two periods.[13] Likewise, beyond 'the chronological divide of 1923,' I observed that the Ottoman and Turkish authorities' concerns and institutional agenda over cinema had some parallels. There are continuities between the two states' cinema regulations, which films studies' scholars have not yet recognised. But there are also differences, since Republican Turkey introduced a centralised cinema regulation model. It is important to show this link, as the topic of this research can be integrated into the general scope of history and the writing of socio-cultural history of the region. I have discussed the late Ottoman cinema regulations. Now I want to look closely at what happened next. This point brings me to the section of regulations during the early Republican years, specifically pre-1939 regulations.

The legal steps taken to regulate cinema during the early Republican years were fuelled by new state's policies stressing its break from the Empire, but at the same time taking models from important and practical principles of the late Ottomans in order to manage the force of law over cinema. Moving beyond this thesis's timeline, stretching from the 1890s until the late 1920s, can reveal important insights in understanding how Ottoman cinema regulations were inherited by the new cadre of legislators in Ankara, the newly acclaimed Republican capital. Beyond this fact, looking at the new rules enables us to reflect back on what the preceding chapters explored in this dissertation. Initially, Ottoman cinema regulations provided a model for Republican legislators to shape their written rules, even though the cinema market was changing by the start of the sound era and locally made productions gradually increased during the early Republican years.

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[13] Benjamin C. Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 206-207.

New State New Regulations

In 1923, the Commissar from the Department of Interior Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (*Dâhiliye Vekâleti Vekili*) addressed the issue of film's inspections before public screenings due to the recent 'inappropriate' exhibitions about the Prophet Muhammad.[14] According to the report, these 'offensive' films were based on the history of Islam. The Commissar noted that it was absolutely inappropriate to screen films contrary to 'the traditions and sentiments of Islam,' that may offend Muslims.[15] In addition, the Commissar pointed out the decision of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (*İcra Vekilleri Hey'et-i Riyâset-i Celîlesi*) to organise a preview committee for imported and locally made productions before public screenings. Hence it was determined that state officials would inspect and approve films before exhibitions throughout the country. In response to the Commissar from the Department of Interior Affairs, the Councillor of the Department of Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Vekâleti Müsteşarı*) confirmed the arrival of the correspondence, which discussed the organisation of the preview committee for the inspection of films.[16] Legislators from different ministries aimed to release films only after the inspection of a censor committee.[17]

This 1923 source offers an important insight for tracing similarities between Ottoman and Republican authorities' concerns to certain actions dating back to 1921 and 1916. The Republican regulations reflect on some of the transformations from the Ottoman era. One of my observations is that the situation for film censorship does not change as dramatically as might be

[14] BOA, HR.İM, 48/56, (3 March 1923).
[15] Here the term used is 'hissiyât ve an'anât-ı İslâmiye'.
[16] BOA, HR.İM, 48/56, (3 March 1923).
[17] It is interesting to see that the name of the committee is actually 'inspection commission' (*Kontrol Komisyonu*) in Turkish.

expected. In this correspondence the Commissar included the *Decree* about the Criminal Law's 99th clause, part 3, dated 28 February 1921.[18] According to clause 4 in this *Decree*, 'the exhibition of any staged performances disrespecting and humiliating the recognised religious and ethnic subjects of the Well-Protected Domains or contrary to public morals and safety is forbidden.'[19] Clause 5 of the *Decree* indicated that 'films similar to staged performances must be viewed before screenings, as they may be in opposition to the existing religions of the country and contain forbidden and controversial ideas to incite the public.'[20] Apart from this link between the rules in 1923 and 1921 regarding film content, it is furthermore possible to find the same concerns and concepts used to describe the 'danger' or 'harm' found in films in earlier dates. Clause 4 and 5 were similar to the 1916 *Draft Regulation* in the way they described the principles of respecting various ethnic and religious communities, with emphasis on public morals and safety.[21]

The above-mentioned 1923 case is a correspondence exchanged between new ministries located at the Grand National Assembly in Ankara, which was founded in 1920 in opposition to the Ottoman government in İstanbul. Let me now briefly scrutinise the political changes took place during this time. Following the end of the First World War, the Empire witnessed the occupation by the Allied Powers. During this time Mustafa Kemal's [Atatürk]

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[18] BOA, HR.İM, 48/56, (3 March 1923). I translate *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Hariciye Vekâleti* as 'the Department of Foreign Affairs at the Grand National Assembly'. Here the term 'Hariciye Nezâreti' is not used by the new government in Ankara possibly in order to differentiate themselves from the ministries at İstanbul held by the Empire as the official proclamation of the Republic of Turkey was going to be on 29 October 1923, approximately seven months later after this correspondence was exchanged between official departments in Ankara.
[19] BOA, HR.İM, 48/56, (3 March 1923).
[20] BOA, HR.İM, 48/56, (3 March 1923).
[21] BOA, DH.EUM.VRK, 28/13, (20 September 1916), Clause 36 & 37. See *Chapter 2*.

(r. 1923-1938), oppositional movement against the Ottoman dynasty seemingly increased and gained military support. The last Ottoman sultan, Mehmed VI (Vahdettin) (r. 1918-1922), appeased the Allied Powers and he pursued an anti-nationalist, but pro-British policy throughout his reign.[22] At this time the members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) were gradually parting. Most of the members of the parliament came from İstanbul to support Mustafa Kemal's new government and the young republic in Ankara. The 1920 constitution replaced the old Ottoman constitution of 1876, which was amended in 1909. Through the adoption by the first assembly in January 1921, the *Law on Fundamental Organisation* (*Teşkilât-ı Esasiye Kanûnu*) passed which allowed the parliament to work in practise 'as a republic within the legal framework of the Ottoman Empire.'[23] In 1925, the *Law on the Maintenance of Order* (*Takrir-i Sükûn Yasası*) was proclaimed, which gave the government the right to censor printed media by suppressing and closing down newspapers and similar publications nation-wide until 1929.[24] The *Law on the Maintenance of Order* was used 'to silence all opposition' and by doing this, the government directly became 'an authoritarian one-party regime', as Erik J. Zürcher states.[25]

The existence of multiple regimes at this period, the first one rising in Ankara and the second one fading in İstanbul, led the emergence of two headed state-directed legal atmosphere which also affected cinema regulations at the time. The Allied Powers' imposition of rules appears to be dependent on the local governance and provincial official's practises to impose the relevant body of regulations. Republican elites' efforts to

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[22] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 142.
[23] Ibid., p. 175.
[24] Mustafa Yılmaz & Yasemin Doğaner, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Sansür (1923-1973)* (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 2007), pp. 6-7.
[25] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 184.

formulate cinema regulations emerged in this complex and elusive political structure. The constituting of new institutions and their enforcements led to contesting regulations against two different regime's power strategies.

As indicated, the lack of enforcement, especially of the above-mentioned 1923 decision, created an ambivalent atmosphere where ad hoc practises and contested outcomes typified late Ottoman era cinema. Above all, Republican legislators aimed to eliminate the exhibition of religious topics in films and establish a working enforcement of laws in regard to the organisation of a preview committee. This unstructured situation was to change gradually by setting the standards of film exhibition, production and distribution during the early Republican era.

In brief, Republican elite and statesmen were, by and large, educated at Hamidian schools, worked under the imperial government and had a mindset belonging to late Ottoman society. Continuities and ruptures between the two periods characterise this heritage, as well as the attempts to break from it, and thus the interrelation between this context and cinema's challenges.

Reflections

The *Introduction* not only provided information about the central premise of this research, the literature review and the methodological issues, but also extensively displayed the origin and feature of the primary sources that I gathered from a number of important nation-wide and international archives. From the inception of this study, I truly acknowledged the importance and need of archival research. My expertise in the Ottoman Turkish language and other Western languages gave me an immensely important tool to uncover the unknowns and overcome the inadequacy of our information about cinema regulations during the late Ottoman era. Analysing a number of governmental documents in the form of draft laws, decrees, correspondence, newspaper articles, reviews, advertisements, and

news rendered me to access the pathways of the past events. In this way, I had the chance to introduce and compare a number of primary sources and expand upon existing works by integrating new data. I challenged parts of mainstream scholarship due to its lack of hard evidence with this data and pointed out the absence of sources and their validation on specific topics. At times, I agreed with a few scholars' findings, but I always performed this by finding the original document, reading it myself and including my own interpretation for a scholarly integrated conclusion. This process also led to circumstances that I had to note several scholars' misreading and misinterpretation of primary sources. Therefore, this research suggests the revision of alleged censorship practises and in broader terms certain milestones in the cinema history of the late Ottoman period, based on my findings from each primary source.[26]

In brief, I suggest that we can further contribute to the writing of cinema history at this period and in this region by conducting more research at different institutions. In this work, the main source of the primary evidence came from state archives, notably the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in İstanbul, the Prime Ministry Republican Archives in Ankara, Centre des Archives diplomatique in Nantes, and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. and the National Archives in Maryland in the U.S. Indeed, I conducted research also at the UK National Archives in Kew and Centre des Archives diplomatiques in Paris, La Courneuve, in which I could only locate sources relevant for the early Republican period, the late 1920s and the early 1930s. More in-depth and longer periods of research will probably unveil more data on the late Ottoman period. I do not pretend here that I could access all of

[26] When I conducted research at Library of Congress in Washington D.C., the guide provided also helped me how to analyze primary sources along with other textbooks, see www.loc.gov.teachers (Accessed on 6 February 2011).

the relevant sources, as we consider the vastness of these state archives. In my view, Western European and the U.S. state archives render more about the Republican years and less on the Ottoman period. Therefore, it is important also to conduct research at foreign film company's records for further research. For instance, French companies such as Pathé, Éclair and Gaumont, as well as British Pathé, Russian Pathé and also Anglo-American Charles Urban traded with the Ottomans, sold their films and cinematic devices in the Ottoman Empire, and also produced films by sending their operators into the region. These film companies may provide important data, especially for the cases where we lack supporting documentation.

The absence of sources brings us to the use of films as historical and non-textual source in this research. As indicated most of the films from the early cinema period had a short life span due to their chemical nature and the lack of preservation. For this dissertation, I also pursued research in order to locate films and visual evidence that could be useful. At times I collaborated with other colleagues and institutions to trace films. My attempts were partially successful and, in this way, I referred to these films as primary evidence. However, Turkey lacks an official film archive and most of the locally made films are today located at the Turkish Armed Forces Photo Film Centre (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Foto Film Merkezi*), which declined my applications for archival research.[27] For instance, I could only view approximately 1:25 minutes of *The Governess* (Ahmet Fehim, 1919) online, which is a crucial film in the historiography of cinema censorship scholarship.[28] It is my hope that in the future, researchers will have the right to access these valuable sources at a civilian, non-profit archive and film

[27] As stated in the Introduction, my 2012 and 2017 applications to the Turkish Armed Forces Photo Film Centre were declined based on the justifications of the early films' copyrights.
[28] *The Governess* originally runs for 90-minutes. www.sabah.com.tr/medya/2015/06/17/tsknin-ilk-kez-yayinladigi-tarihi-goruntuler (Accessed on 5 July 2015).

museum in Turkey. Nevertheless, investigating the history of cinema regulations during the late Ottoman Empire can benefit with new and detailed research at different state and private archives by the introduction of authentic and nuanced interpretation of the primary evidence along with historical survey works. ⌘

APPENDIX

BOA, DH.UMVM, 117/45, (31 December 1922).

SEASONAL CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF BEYOĞLU, İSTANBUL, Table 1.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Varyete Theatre, at Taksim Garden	Leaseholder Mr. Leyman, foreign national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Osmanbey Tavern and Amusement Park	Leaseholder Rum (Ottoman Greek)
Unknown	Active	Active	Active	Şişli Villa Sterella	Leaseholder American firm, closed
Unknown	Unknown	Active (Rusinol)	Active (Jardin Paris)	Şişli Alkazar Garden	Leaseholder Mr. Keryan, closed
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Karaköy Lüks Cinema	Muslim
Active	Active	Active	Active	Şişhane Apollon Cinema & Theatre	Leaseholder Terziyan Efendi
Active	Active	Active	Active	Tepebaşı Theatre	Leaseholder Mr. Leyman, French national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Elhamra (New Splendid)	Burnt down
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Britannia	Leaseholder foreign national
Unknown	Active (Winter Palace)	Active (Winter Palace)	Active	Olympia	Leaseholder French national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Taksim Jimayaski	Leaseholder Russian national, demolished
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Taksim Terrarium (Yılanhane)	Leaseholder Russian national, demolished
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Taksim Russian Cinema	Leaseholder Russian national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Taksim Moskov Theatre	Leaseholder Russian national, demolished
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Taksim Küçük Varyete Theatre	Leaseholder Rafael, Ottoman, demolished
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Kasımpaşa Receb Efendi Theatre	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Kasımpaşa Anadol Stage	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Unknown	Kasımpaşa Esad Efendi Theatre	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Çeşme Meydanı Hayal Theatre	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Çeşme Meydanı Pehlivan	Unknown

Table 1 (Continued): The figure shows that in Beyoğlu, foreign nationals or foreign firms as seasonal cinema-house or theatre owners outnumbered Ottomans who owned seasonal cinema-houses or theatres. Of the 20 about which information was recorded, nine were listed as being in foreign ownership, three were listed as being owned by Muslims or Ottoman nationals, and information is unavailable on the other seven.

SEASONAL CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF GALATA, İSTANBUL, Table 2.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Beşiktaş Merkez Cinema	Muslim, closed
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Beşiktaş Sahne-i Temsil Theatre	Muslim, closed
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Arnavutköy Akıntıburnu Theatre	Closed
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Bebek Kino Palas	Moved to Arnavutköy (Minyon Palas), closed

Table 2: Information is provided about four seasonal cinema-houses located in the Galata district of the city, and of the four, two of them are denoted as having been owned by Muslims.

SEASONAL CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF MAKRIKÖY (BAKIRKÖY), İSTANBUL, Table 3.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Makrıköy Miltiyadi Efendi Casino & Cinema	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Ayastefanos Cinema	Unknown

Table 3: There is no detailed information about the owners of the two-seasonal cinema-houses operated in Makrıköy.

SEASONAL CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF KADIKÖY, İSTANBUL, Table 4.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Kadıköy Mühürdar Cinema	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Kadıköy Moda Park Cinema	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Kadıköy Moda Piccadillo	Leaseholder Russian national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Kadıköy Çifteçınar Park Cinema	Leaseholder Ottoman national
Unknown	Active	Active	Active	Üsküdar Park Cinema	Run by Muslim, closed
Unknown	Active	Active	Active	Anadolu Hisarı Cinema	Run by a Muslim
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Anadolu Hisarı Pehlivan	Run by a Muslim, open air

Table 4: The figure reveals that the seasonal cinema-houses were principally owned by Muslims or Ottoman nationals from 1918-1921. Of the seven venues, four of them are listed as having Muslim or Ottoman national owners, one was owned by a Russian national, and information is unknown about owners of the other two.

SEASONAL CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF İSTANBUL (SURİÇİ), Table 5.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Yenikapı (Karakin) Cinema	Unknown
Active	Active	Active	Active	Yedikule Armenian Ispatalya Cinema	Unknown

Table 5: There is no detailed information about the owners of the two-seasonal cinema-houses operated in Suriçi.

TEMPORARY FILM EXHIBITION DURING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN, Table 6.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Hilâl Garden Summer Cinema (Fevziye Avenue)	Run by an Ottoman firm
NA	NA	Unknown	Active	Cinema at Edirnekapı	Unknown
NA	NA	Unknown	Active	Cinema at Zeyrek Niyazi Bey School	School's garden
NA	NA	Unknown	Active	Cinema at outside of Topkapı	NA
NA	NA	Unknown	Active	Cinema at Kocamustafapaşa School	NA
NA	NA	Active	Unknown	Cinema at Çarşamba	NA
NA	NA	Active	Unknown	Cinema at Kocamustafapaşa	Land
NA	NA	Active	Unknown	Cinema at Etyemez	Coffeehouse

Table 6: There is information provided about eight temporary film exhibitions during the holy month of Ramadan. One was run by an Ottoman firm, but the operators of the others are not known. Two were exhibited in schools, another in a coffee house, and one near Topkapı.

PERMANENT CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF BEYOĞLU, İSTANBUL, Table 7.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Active	Active	Active	Active	Skating Theatre	Building owned by a foreign firm
Active	Active	Active	Active	Luxembourg Cinema	Leaseholder Ottoman firm
Active	Active	Active	Active	Odéon Cinema	Leaseholder Ottoman, Vasilaki Efendi
Active	Active	Active	Active	Palas Cinema	Sigmund Weinberg, foreign national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Orient (Şark) Cinema	Mr. Kyriakoupoulou, foreign national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Kozmoĝraf Cinema	Foreign firm, run by Mr. Kyriakoupoulou, shows daily
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Yıldız (Etoile) Cinema	Unknown firm, nationality unknown
Active	Active	Active	Active	Beyoĝlu American Cinema	Leaseholder Russian national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Majik Cinema	Leaseholder Italian firm
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Beyoĝlu Elektra Cinema	Leaseholder Bonmarché owner from Salonika, Muslim
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Şanta Klar Theatre	Leaseholder Patinaj, foreign national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Pangaltı Cinema & Theatre	Leaseholder Asadoryan Efendi, foreign national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Tepebaşı Anfi Cinema	Leaseholder Mr. Leyman, run by Mr. Kyriakoupoulou
Active	Active	Active	Active	Santral Cinema	Leaseholder Mr. Kyriakoupoulou
Active	Active	Active	Active	Majestik Cinema	Leaseholder Mr. Atanof, Russian national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Varyete Theatre (Royal Cinema)	Leaseholder Mr. Leyman, run by a number of entrepreneurs
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Müze American Cinema	Itinerant Mr. Feldman, Russian national

Table 7: There is information about seventeen permanent cinema-houses or theatres located in Beyoğlu. Foreign nationals or firms are listed as having been the owners of nine of the venues, and Muslims or Ottoman nationals of three of them.

PERMANENT CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF GALATA, İSTANBUL, Table 8.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Active	Active	Active	Active	Galata Ottoman Theatre	Leaseholder Nişan Efendi, Ottoman national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Galata American Theatre	Leaseholder Niko, Greek national
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Galata European Theatre	Leaseholder Asadoryan Efendi, Italian national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Galata Picnic Theatre	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Beşiktaş Şefik Theatre	A number of firms, rented out from a church
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Beşiktaş Elektra Cinema	Leaseholder *Karamanlı* (Orthodox, Turkish speaking)
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Ortaköy Cinema & Theatre (Venus)	Leaseholder Leon Efendi, Ottoman national

Table 8: There is information about seven permanent cinema-houses in Galata, of which three are listed as having been owned by Ottoman nationals, and two by foreign nationals or firms.

PERMANENT CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF MAKRIKÖY (BAKIRKÖY), İSTANBUL, Table 9.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Makrıköy Éclair Cinema	Leaseholder Jewish, Greek national
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Makrıköy Leşki Theatre	A number of firms, rented out from a church

Table 9: Figures show that there were two permanent cinema-houses in Makrıköy (Bakırköy), one was owned by a Greek national, and the other by a consortium of firms, and operated in a venue leased from a church.

PERMANENT CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF KADIKÖY, İSTANBUL, Table 10.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Active	Active	Active	Active	Kadıköy Kuşdili Cinema	Leaseholder Leon Sirochkin, Russian national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Kadıköy Moda Apollon Cinema & Theatre (Iris)	Owned by a church, run by Mr. Kyriakoupoulou
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Erenköy Cinema	Run by Ottoman national
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Üsküdar İhsaniye Cinema	Run by Albanian, Italian national
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Üsküdar İcadiye Cinema	Run by Armenian
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Üsküdar Mirahur İntibâh Theatre	Demolished
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Üsküdar Şemsi Theatre (Mirahur İntibâh)	Unknown
Unknown	Active (Malûl Gaziler)	Active (Malûl Gaziler)	Active	Kuzguncuk Cinema	NA [Malûl Gaziler]
NA	NA	NA	NA	Kadıköy Mısırlı Hotel, Garden Cinema	Run by a Muslim doctor
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Büyükdere Eski Daire Grand Cinema	Run by Monsieur Pierre, Italian national

Table 10: There is information about ten permanent cinema-houses in Kadıköy. Of the ten, three are listed as having been owned by foreign nationals and two of them by a Muslim or Ottoman national. One was operated by the semi-charity organisation and film production company Malûl Gaziler.

PERMANENT CINEMA-HOUSES AND THEATRES IN THE DISTRICT OF İSTANBUL (SURİÇİ), Table 11.					
1918	**1919**	**1920**	**1921**	**Name of the Venue**	**Owner of the Venue**
Active	Active	Active	Active	Ferah Theatre	Run by a Muslim, Ottoman national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Millet Theatre	Run by Süleyman, Ottoman national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Şark Cinema	Run by Şükrü, Ottoman national
Active (Milli Cinema)	Active (Güneş Cinema)	Active	Active	Felek Cinema	Run by an Italian national
Active (Hilâl Cinema)	Active (Hilâl Cinema)	Active (Hilâl Cinema)	Active (Ertuğrul Cinema)	Sâhir Operetta	Run by Ottoman Troupe
Active	Active	Active	Active	Ali Efendi Cinema	Run by Ali Efendi, Ottoman national
Active	Active	Active	Active	Alemdar Cinema	Owned by Mr. Sadık
Active	Active	Active	Active	Kemal Bey Cinema	Run by Mr. Kemal, Ottoman national
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Kumkapı Cinema	Run by Mr. Suad, Italian national
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Unkapanı Theatre	Demolished
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Fener Filburnu Cinema	Run by *Rum* (Ottoman Greek)
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Fener Midilli Cinema	Run by *Rum*
Unknown	Unknown	Active	Active	Samatya Sulu Manastır Cinema	Owned by a church
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Active	Yedikule Modern Cinema	Run by *Rum*

Table 11: There is information about 14 permanent cinema-houses in the Suriçi of İstanbul. Nine of them are listed as having been run by a Muslim or Ottoman national, and two are run by Italian nationals, according to the data presented.

Filmography

A Street (Une Rue, Alexander Promio, No 406, 1897).

Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat (L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat, Lumière brothers, Vue No 653, 1895).

Binnaz (Ahmet Fehim, 1919).

Galician Operation (Galiçya Harekâtı, MOC, 1915).

Manifestations on the Occasion of Young Turks' Revolution (Manaki brothers, 1908).

Military Orchestra Parade, Coaches and Cavaliers (Manaki brothers, 1908).

Panorama of the Bosphorus (Panorama des rives du Bosphore, Alexander Promio, Vue No 417, 1897).

Panorama of the Golden Horn (Panorama de la Corne d'Or, Alexander Promio, No 416, 1897).

Porte of Jaffa, East Coast (Porte de Jaffa: côté oust, Alexander Promio, No 402, 1897).

Processions on the Occasion of Hürriyet (Manaki brothers, 1908).

Retreat of the Allied Forces at the Battle of Anafartalar (Anafartalar Muharebesi'nde İtilaf Ordularının Püskürtülmesi, MOC, 1915).

Souk-el-Fakhra (Alexander Promio, No 413, 1897).

Spanish Bullfight (Lumière brothers, 1897).

Square of the Canons (Place des Canons, Alexander Promio, No 410, 1897).

The Arrival of the German Emperor to İstanbul (Alman İmparatoru'nun Dersaadet'e Gelişi, MOC, 1917).

The Battle of Dardanelles (Çanakkale Muharebesi, MOC, 1916).

The Destruction of the Russian Monument in Ayastefanos (Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesi'nin Yıkılışı/ Ayastefanos'taki Moskof Heykelinin Tahribi', Fuad Bey, [Uzkınay], MOC, 1914).

The Friday Prayer at the Hamidiye Mosque (Pathé Frères, 90 metres, No 2465, 1908).

The Funeral of von Der Goltz Pasha (Von Der Goltz'un Cenaze Merasimi, MOC, 1916).

The General Townshend (General Townshend, MOC, 1916).

The Governess (Mürebbiye, Ahmet Fehim, 1919).

The Opening of the Ottoman Parliament (L'Overture du Parlement, Sigmund Weinberg, 1908).

The Visit of the German Emperor to Dardanelles (Alman İmparatoru'nun Çanakkale Ziyareti, MOC, 1917).

Turkish Sultan Reshad Visiting Bitola (Manaki brothers, 1911).

Turks Having Speech on Hürriyet (Manaki brothers, 1908).

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BOA, DH.EUM.6. Şb, 31/29, (18 March 1918).
BOA, DH.EUM.6. Şb, 38/12, (29 May 1918).
BOA, DH.EUM.6. Şb, 45/9, (13 October 1918).

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BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ, 2/2, (7 March 1919).
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