6,000 Ottoman Bank employees, 1890-1930: A Sample of a Cosmopolitan Petty Bourgeoisie?

Vortrag (englisch)

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The Ottoman Bank archives in Istanbul hold a very rich series of staff records, consisting of some 6,000 individual files kept between the early 1890s and the early 1930s. The very detailed and highly standardized data contained in these files enable a reconstruction of individual profiles, based on such precise information as identity, nationality, religion, linguistic skills, education, former employment, professional skills, family links with bank employees, and references/recommenders. To add to this wealth of information, almost each file comes with a full-body photograph of the employee. The project involves the treatment of this rich database as a possibly representative sample of a white-collar petty bourgeoisie in a religiously, ethnically, and culturally plural environment, confronted to the radical transformations of the period, from the relative stability of a quasi-colonial situation of dependency (1890-1912), to the tragic and ideologically loaded decade of conflict before and after the Great War (1913-22), and finally to the dawn of a nationalist, modernist, and authoritarian regime under the Kemalist Republic.

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