

2- TRANSFORMATION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

2.1. Transformation of the Institutions and Laws

During the nineteenth century, a fundamental cultural change took place in the Ottoman Empire, in relation to European expansion.⁹⁶ Especially, in the years between 1683-1798 on the international stage, military defeats and territorial conflicts determined the era, when the imperial Ottoman state was much less successful than before. In those decades, the military balance shifted away from the Ottomans; Ottomans lost their superiority in military technology.⁹⁷ The collapse of the Ottoman army following its failure to take Vienna (1683), opened a new era in Ottoman relations with Europe. Europe became aware of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, and took to the offensive. In a century and a half of nearly continuous warfare, the Ottoman lost major territories.⁹⁸ Then, there seemed some efforts to hinder the decline. The reformers who began to determine political developments after the seventeenth century, tried to restore the Golden Age of Süleyman I. (1520-1566). The Ottoman administrators first became aware of the superiority of the West after the defeats in Vienna between 1683 and 1699; the Ottoman public officials thereafter increasingly accepted Western superiority in the military field and then, in political and social areas.⁹⁹ In this chapter, this process shall be evaluated.

The decline of the Ottoman Empire had begun at the end of the seventeenth century, which brought about a skepticism on the traditional system. Ottomans faced the task of deciding which problems could be solved and turned into a linear path towards a better social, political and economical situation in the eighteenth century. The

⁹⁶ Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, *Orientalism, Alla Turca; Late 19th/Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim Outback*, *Die Welt Des Islams*, Vol. 40, nr;2, July 2000, p. 139

⁹⁷ Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Empire, 1700-1912*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 37

⁹⁸ Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Cambridge University Press, 1976 V. I, p. 217

⁹⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reichs*, C.H.Beck, München, 2000, pp.84-85

Ottomans had close relations with the Western world, and they were aware of the rise of a new civilization, but they steadfastly remained away from Western developments because of their conviction that they were superior. After the early eighteenth century, Ottoman public officials became aware that their assumptions were no longer absolute truths. Therefore, the Ottomans began to accept that they had been overwhelmed and challenged by a superior military power. The many defeats became the main motivation for the rise of a new attitude among the Ottomans and against the West.¹⁰⁰

The period following the Treaty of Passarovitz (1718) is called the Tulip Era (1718-1730). The main characteristic of this era was a continued peace. The sultan, Ahmed II, and his chief minister, the Sadrazam İbrahim Pasha, decided to avoid war at all costs. At the same time, the Ottomans took an interest in Western culture and society, for new inspiration. The mutual interests of French and Ottomans determined where the Turkish public officials would look for inspiration.¹⁰¹ In this period, in the Kağıthane district of Istanbul, luxurious pavilions as well as statues, baths, gardens were built in order to emulate the French lifestyle.¹⁰²

Consequently, the Ottoman government sent Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi as a special envoy to the court of Louis XIV in 1720. As Berkes noted, “in addition to his diplomatic mission, which was to seek an alliance with France, he was instructed by the Sadrazam İbrahim Pasha to visit the fortress, factories, and the works of French civilization generally and report on the modern French institutions, which might be applicable in Turkey.”¹⁰³ He wrote the grand *vezir* not only about these things but

¹⁰⁰ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 24

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 26

¹⁰² Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 234

¹⁰³ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p.34. Özdemir considers the approaches of Berkes to the reforms among orientalist perspective. To this perspective, Ottoman reforms were achieved by external factors, the interest of Great Powers, French Revolution etc. For a critic of this approach; see; Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, Istanbul, 2003. Özdemir argues that the change of Ottoman classical millet system realized not by external forces but internal forces, namely economical autonomy of non-muslim groups, their group consciousness etc. See; Özdemir, pp. 38-39

also about what he saw in the streets, with particular attention to French military schools and training grounds.¹⁰⁴ Shaw notes that;

In his report, the aspects of French society and ways of doing things that differed most markedly from those of the Ottoman Empire's, such as the position and status of women, the manner in which the king and other high officials passed quietly through the streets of Paris, and most important, the wide use of the printing press could be found.¹⁰⁵

This period can be read as the beginning of the Ottoman intellectual awakening that became more concrete a century later in the Tanzimat period.¹⁰⁶

To introduce the military methods of the West, the Ottomans opened new schools, translated some European scientific works into Turkish. Berkes indicated that the Ottomans tried to modernize the military in the same manner the French and the Germans had done. He gives as an example the opening of *Hendesehane* in 1734, a new training centre, or school of geometry.¹⁰⁷ In fact, there is no doubt that modern mathematics was introduced into the Ottoman Empire through the military channel.¹⁰⁸ The Tulip Era came to end in 1730 because of an uprising against the reforms.¹⁰⁹ However, a more serious effort began in 1773, with the opening of a new school of mathematics for the navy.¹¹⁰ During the war (with the Russians, 1768-1774) Baron de Tott, an artillery officer of French nationality and Hungarian origin, was invited by Mustafa III (1757-1774) to train cannoneers in rapid artillery fire, to modernize the ordinance arsenal, introduce modern pontoon elements and to build new defenses for the Dardenelles.¹¹¹ It shows that these desires were continuation of the earlier idea that the Turkish problem was purely military and technological.

¹⁰⁴ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 235

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 235

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 235

¹⁰⁷ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 48

¹⁰⁸ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 48-49

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 61-62

¹¹⁰ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 49

¹¹¹ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, Volume I, p. 251

The man who was educated in the Ottoman tradition, as pointed out previously, believed in the superiority of Ottomans. The losses of the Ottoman territories were assumed by these traditional elites to be the result of an Ottoman failure, not of inherent Western superiority or Western innovations or even of Western weapons.¹¹² In the end, in the early phase of the “transformations”, the reforms did not have a lasting influence because some public officials saw no need for them. At the early phase of the reforms, the innovations were only in the military field, where their need was most apparent. This reform process resulted in the *Nizami Cedid* or “new order” of Sultan Selim III. (1789-1807). Nowadays, historians consider Selim III as a precursor of the Tanzimat Reforms.¹¹³ In this era, the *Nizam-i Cedid* army was established, which was able to use modern weapons and tactics.¹¹⁴

A few soldiers and officers in the “new order” learned European languages so they could read and translate European military manuals; Ottoman ambassadors were sent to some European capitals for the first time, so the Empire could participate in contemporary diplomatic events; meanwhile, there were many Europeans in the Ottoman capital. All of these factors brought about some awareness among Ottomans that European military success was due to something more than an Ottoman failure. Although the reformed army was successful, Selim was dethroned and killed, and his army was scattered by his opponents in 1807.¹¹⁵ According to Inalcık, the reasons for the opposition to Selim can be found in the social situation. Selim’s desire to create a regular army under his direct command threatened, on the one hand, the Janissaries’ dominant position in the state, and on the other, that of the notables (*ayan*). In addition, his financial measures created widespread discontent in the country and turned public opinion and the *Ulema* against him.¹¹⁶ Shaw summarizes the historical events as following;

¹¹² Stanford Shaw, Some Aspects of the Aims and Achievements of the 19. Century Ottoman Reformers, in; Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East, (ed) William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, The University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 30

¹¹³ Stanford Shaw, *ibid.*, p. 31

¹¹⁴ Robert Mantran, Les Débus de la Question d’Orient (1774-1839), in; Histoire de L’empire Ottoman, 1989, p. 438

¹¹⁵ Halil Inalcık, Political Modernization in Turkey, in; From Empire to Republic, Istanbul, 1995, p. 129

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 129-130

Leader of the movement who aimed to put Selim III back on the throne was Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, the *ayan* of Rumelia, marched against Istanbul together with his army. Alemdar seized the capital, put down the uprising, and demanded Selim's restoration to the throne. However, Selim had been killed in the meantime, Alemdar made Mahmud II sultan, and he became Grand Vizir. The notables did not make a united front against the Janissary corps in the history of the Ottoman Empire before that. A few decades ago, *ayan* of Rumelia had cooperated with the Janissaries against Selim III in 1806, while some powerful *ayan* in Anatolia supported Selim's New Order. Now the *ayan* of Rumelia and Anatolia united against the reactionaries in order to control the central government and guarantee their position in the provinces.¹¹⁷

The Grand Vizierate of Mustafa Pasha continued only for a few months, until November 1808. During his vizierate, he invited high officials, governors, pashas, and *ayan* from all over the Empire. In this meeting, a "deed of agreement" (*Sened-i İttifak*) was signed by the participators on 7 October 1808.¹¹⁸ The contradictions among the *ayan* and division within the government were being considered as the main cause of the decline.¹¹⁹ According to İnalcık, this document was a limitation upon the king's power imposed by local magnates, like the Magna Carta. However, he stresses, it was not, like the Magna Carta, of popular conception, a basis for liberal-democratic development. It indicates the diminution of the sultan's power and the rise of the provincial magnates.¹²⁰

After Selim III, Mahmut II (1785-1839) came to power and tried to carry on the reform movement. Berkes notes that the most significant aspect of the innovations initiated by Mahmud II was the emergence of the idea of an Ottoman state, composed of peoples of diverse nationalities and religions, based on secular principles of sovereignty contrary to the medieval concept of an Islamic empire.¹²¹ Between the removing of the Janissary army in 1826 and until his death in 1839, Mahmud II realized a great program of reforms. His reform strategy continued after

¹¹⁷ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 1976, pp. 275-276

¹¹⁸ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 74

¹¹⁹ Robert Mantran, *Les Débus de la Question d'Orient (1774-1839)*, in; *Histoire de L'empire Ottoman*, 1989, pp. 437-438

¹²⁰ İnalcık, *From Empire to Republic*, p.132

¹²¹ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 95

his death, and his line was followed even in the twentieth century.¹²² The period of reform commenced by Mahmud sparked off a new conception of society.¹²³ According to Berkes;

The implications of Mahmud's utterances concerning the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims before the laws of his administration may be demonstrated by his administrative measures as well as by the difficulties in harmonizing these measures and their underlying principles with the measures attempted within the field of education. One can infer from certain diplomatic events, from Mahmud's particular relations with the non-Muslim communities, and from his favoring of the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews who cooperated with him in the regime he had set out to build, that Mahmud wanted to abolish the millet divisions (religious division) in accordance with his concept of equality.¹²⁴

Because of increased centralization in the time of Mahmud II, the changes appeared, first in the structure of the central government, generally involving denigration of the traditional power of the military and religious classes in favor of an ever-expanding bureaucracy of administration centered in the palace.¹²⁵ In 1834, Mahmud II established the foundations for a new governmental administration, which has become identified with the Tanzimat. He dissolved the previous governmental organization and created the Porte, which became known to European diplomacy as the centre of government.¹²⁶ On the other hand, Mahmud II cared especially for his foreign service and the training of young diplomats and civil servants in the use of foreign languages.¹²⁷ One of the most important aims of the Tanzimat was centralization. When considering the thoughts of Sabahaddin Bey, based on decentralization, it is also important to emphasize the relations between *ayan* (provincial notables) and the Ottoman government. In the classical period, provincial notables had more rights and power. Gerber describes the situation before the beginning of the centralization policy as follows;

¹²² Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 79

¹²³ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 95

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, 95

¹²⁵ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 48

¹²⁶ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 87

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 88

Research on this topic dates back to Albert Hourani and his famous study of the provincial notables who appeared on the political scene in the 17. 18. centuries and usurped much of the authority of the central government in the provinces. More recent studies have gone into this topic in considerably greater detail, enabling us to observe more minutely the political dynamics under way. The point I wish to drive home is that reality is a far cry from either the Ottomans' being driven out of the provinces or intending to eliminate other forces from the scene. The generally accepted picture of the growing weakness of the Ottoman government in the provinces is not supported by a careful reading of the evidence. The Ottomans, in fact, quite willingly and intentionally cultivated a local elite to share in government. This is made clear, for example, in a study of 18. century Aleppo. Surprisingly, the local elite appear far from being suffocated or oppressed by the faraway imperial power. On the contrary, it constituted a symbolic part of that government. The Ottoman government itself filled only the two most important posts in the province, those of governor and judge.¹²⁸

The centralization policy of the Tanzimat did not solve the political problems of the Empire. On the contrary, political and social problems began to increase in the subsequent periods. It is worth noting here that the failure of the centralization policy of the Tanzimat reforms would provide a basis for the formation of the thoughts of Sabahaddin Bey, a liberal studied in this research, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Above, it was noted that many reforms were realized by the time of Mahmud II. The *Sadrâzam* and the *Şeyhülislam* (chief religious official) had represented two foremost institutions, one executive and the other consultative or interpretative in the classical Ottoman system. In the place of the *Sadrâzam*, Mahmud II assigned a *başvekil* (chief minister) and *vekils* to departments of government based on a new division of labour and powers. As many of the *Sadrâzam*'s prerogatives were given over to the new ministers, the new chief ministry became simply a coordinating agency and a transmitter between the government and the sultan. The status of the *şeyhülislams* office was also changed. It was pushed outside the realm of temporal government. Besides, Mahmud established a council to consider legal and judicial matters specifically outside of the realm of the sharia.¹²⁹ Mahmud proclaimed in 1838 what

¹²⁸ Haim Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam*, p. 142

¹²⁹ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 97

is known as the first Turkish penal codes. According to Berkes, “this regulation represented the first undertaking to establish a public law outside the sharia. These codes defined the responsibilities of government officials and judges and the proceedings to be taken against men of state shown by investigation to be in dereliction of their duties.”¹³⁰ The innovations provided an institutional basis for the emerging view that reform and progress were a continuing process. According to this view, reforms in the army and the administration had to be based on the improvement of an educational system, which would be able to give the knowledge required for Ottoman progress. Mahmud II thus initiated a new direction in Ottoman education.¹³¹ It is obvious that there were secular elements in the reforms of Mahmud II. Another feature of Mahmud’s innovations was that they had determining indications for Westernization. Into this category fall those innovations that caused much criticism within and without the country.¹³²

The reforms also covered many different areas. The clothing reform was extended to civilians in 1829. A decree of that year showed in detail the clothes to be worn by different classes of officials on different occasions.¹³³

According to Berkes, these changes were still only on the surface. The changes were confined largely to the urban population. They reached their maximum only in the army and among the officials and intellectuals in that order.¹³⁴ As a result, Ottoman society became patchwork a few decades later. The tensions between different parts of Ottoman society (traditional and westernized communities) determined the main characteristics of the second constitutional period.

Mahmud II. established the first newspaper in Turkish in 1831, called *Takvim-i Vekayi*.¹³⁵ The *Tercüme odası* (translation bureau) established by Mahmud played an

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, 97- 98

¹³¹ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II*, p. 47

¹³² Criticism of the Tanzimat reforms would become one of the most important issues of Young Ottomans and later, of Islamists.

¹³³ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 100

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 124

¹³⁵ Robert Mantran, *Les Débuts de La Question D’orient (1774-1839)*, 1989, p. 456

important role different from that originally intended. It became the main place for the newly emerging modern Ottoman intellectual class.¹³⁶

Mahmud II's reign created not merely a new consciousness of and admiration for the West but also a feeling that the traditional Ottoman way had to be left behind for the Empire's survival. The Ottomans accepted that they could no longer overlook Western culture. Consequently, many changes, which permeated different areas of their lives, from wearing dresses to language, thought and even entertainment, occurred.¹³⁷ The government emerged in Mahmud's time as the supreme functionary, the main agent of change and Westernization¹³⁸. However, in relation to this point, Berkes asserts that the weakest point in the Turkish political transformation was the fact that the new conception of government was not the product of the aspirations of a rising middle class, but rather a consequence of the traditional political authority in its struggle to maintain its existence.¹³⁹ In his words, "Turkish views of European civilization show the continuing lack of a clear understanding of the existence of a new economic system and doctrine behind the observed scientific and technological advancement of the West".¹⁴⁰ This lack of middle class support, on the other hand, determined the form of opposition against the reforms.

Beginning from the nineteenth century, the assembly of council, which was established to realize centralization, gathered more and more and at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the council became an important apparatus in the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴¹ Especially the Ottoman-Russian war in the years 1768-1774 increased the importance of this council in terms of the administrator wanting to share responsibility and realizing a common correspondence. At first, the council had been assembled just when a decision was made about war, peace, domestic and external security. However, a decade later the authority and responsibility of the council was

¹³⁶ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 128-132

¹³⁷ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, Volume II, p. 49

¹³⁸ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 133

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Carter V. Findley, *Madjlis al-Şura*, *Encycloepadia of Islam*, Leiden, 1979, V. 1082

broadened.¹⁴² The council consisted of members who were the most important administrators from the army, civil bureaucracy and scholars. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the council had become an inseparable part of the governmental structure.¹⁴³ According to Akyıldız, consultation, which played an important role in the Turkish and Ottoman tradition, was practiced in the council of state (*divan-ı humayun*). Administrative, financial problems and matters, which related to traditional (*örfî*) and Islamic law were discussed in that assembly. In fact, consultation was not limited to this council. When it was necessary, consultation was carried out in all the periods of the Empire. Consultation was practiced when a situation appeared which required assuming responsibility and unity of opinion among different social stratum.¹⁴⁴ As it will be seen in the subsequent pages, consultation is one of the most important themes used by the first Young Ottomans in their opposition and by Islamists accepting a constitutional regime at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, Young Ottomans and many Islamists founded their thoughts about constitutional regimes on the Islamic concept of consultation. Certainly, Ottoman experience of councils and the Islamic concept of consultation provided an important basis for the thoughts of Young Ottomans and Islamists.

2.2. Tanzimat

On 3 October 1839, the Tanzimat (Reorganization) Edict, which marked an important turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire, was proclaimed.¹⁴⁵ After the promulgation of the Tanzimat Edict, many changes occurred in basic social values for the first time in Turkish economic, political, legal and educational institutions. The years 1840-70 were indeed revolutionary in bringing Turkey and Europe into close contact and in furnishing conditions under which Europe began to

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ İsmail Hakkı Uzun Çarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, Ankara, 1984, p. 15

¹⁴⁴ Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Bürokrasisi ve Modernleşme*, İstanbul, 2004, p. 31

¹⁴⁵ Paul Dumont, *Le Période des Tanzimat*, in ; *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, Robert Mantran(ed), 1989, p. 459

export its influence directly. The impact of the West emerged most in the field of economy.¹⁴⁶

The fundamentals of the new regime were proclaimed in the Charter on November 3, 1839, about five months after Mahmud's death, by the time of his son, the young Abdulmejid (1839-1861). There were no concrete marks that indicated any English or French political impact on the Tanzimat Charter, and it is difficult to find traces of the Muslim political thinking of the past.¹⁴⁷ The ideas embodied in the Charter were simply a formulation of those that had become more or less crystallized during the latter part of Mahmud's reign. The charter contained the idea of limiting the arbitrary executive powers of the sultan..¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, it was proclaimed in the Edict that the principles of the security of life, honor, and private ownership, the abolition of tax-farming, regular and orderly conscription into the armed forces, fair and public trial of persons, and equality of persons of all religions should be applied.¹⁴⁹ The laws and traditions of Islam, the policy and practice of the Ottoman Empire, agreed in prescribing tolerance and protection for the non-Muslim subjects of the state, and in granting them a large measure of autonomy in their internal communal affairs. This toleration however, was based on the assumption that the tolerated communities were separate and inferior.¹⁵⁰ This was the most important difference from the traditional Ottoman system. As it will be seen in chapter 4, equality between Muslims and non-Muslims would be an important political discussion between Islamists, and this traditional difference among them would not appear on the pages of Islamist newspapers.

The founding of the Supreme Councils was one of the most important successes of the Tanzimat reforms. As remarked earlier, this had been begun by Mahmud II. These were the nucleus for the legislative bodies that were to follow during the

¹⁴⁶ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 137-138

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 144

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 145

¹⁴⁹ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 105

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 145

Tanzimat period.¹⁵¹ However, as the Charter did not provide for any popular representation, the source of legislation would be the councils of deliberation (*meşveret*). The new development here was that, in the past such bodies had been called or instituted only for the purpose of deliberation. They were advisory bodies with no lawmaking powers.¹⁵² On the other hand, İnalçık asserts that with the Tanzimat Edict, the main features of the European constitutions of the 1830's were combined with traditional Ottoman institutions. According to him, in the text of the edict, the basic principle of legislation was discovered not in natural rights but in the practical necessity of maintaining the existence of the Empire. In this regard, state power remained the ultimate goal as before; the people were still considered to be mere subjects of the state.¹⁵³ Besides, İnalçık says that in classical Islamic thought no principles of law could exist apart from the sharia. However, there had always been an independent category of laws called imperial laws or canons that were derived directly from the sovereign will of the ruler in the Ottoman Empire. They were necessary for the well-being of the Islamic community. According to him, the Tanzimat Edict was promulgated on the same principle, the legislation, which it envisaged, being thought necessary to regenerate the state.¹⁵⁴ This practical sense of the Ottomans was still apparent among the Ottoman public officials and even intellectuals of the second constitutional period.

The restrictions imposed on the government by the sharia and by the religious authority in these periods made the application of reforms especially difficult. However, a more radical step was taken with the promulgation of the Commercial Code, which was the first formal recognition in the Ottoman Empire of a judiciary system independent of the *Ulema*, dealing with matters outside the scope of the sharia.¹⁵⁵ According to İnalçık, the all-embracing sharia became the stronghold of traditionalism in the Ottoman Empire and this was the major difference between the

¹⁵¹ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II*, p. 76

¹⁵² Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 146

¹⁵³ Halil İnalçık, *Political Modernization in Turkey*, Istanbul, p.136

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 136

¹⁵⁵ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 112

Ottoman and Japanese modernization.¹⁵⁶ However, this point is more complicated than it seems. The opposition of the Young Ottomans, between 1865-1876, was based on the sharia. However, stressing the implementation of the sharia, the Young Ottomans aimed at getting rid of the arbitrary rule of the new bureaucracy class.¹⁵⁷ After a generation, Islamists would establish their discourse mostly on the sharia, but, on the other hand, they tried to absorb many modern thoughts, institutions and ways of acting within the sharia. This may stem from the function of the sharia in the Ottoman Empire. As pointed out earlier, the sharia and the *Ulema* functioned as the upholders of religious principles against bureaucratic expediency and as the defenders of the rights of their Islamic brothers.¹⁵⁸ In other words, sharia was providing a basis for the opposition against the sultans and bureaucracy in the Ottoman Empire.

In the period of Tanzimat, the bureaucracy captured the power. Despite the liberal pressures, Ali and Fuat Pashas, the most powerful members of the bureaucrats in this period, and the bureaucrat class made sure that the new Council of State would be subservient to the government and not prevent the flow of essential legislation.¹⁵⁹ As it will be shown later, Young Ottomans and later Islamists would be very critical of the Tanzimat bureaucrats on the grounds that they behaved arbitrarily. On the other hand, to create a nation underpinning their reformed state, the Tanzimat reformers promoted Ottomanism. Ottomanism produced a series of social and cultural changes that, paradoxically, increased the sense of common culture among Muslims and, at the same time, stimulated the rise of ethnic and regional consciousness.¹⁶⁰

Another important consequence of the Tanzimat Reforms was the centralization of the state. The chief beneficiary of the reforms was the civil bureaucracy. Bureaucracy became the vanguard of the Westernizing reforms. Consequently, the civil bureaucracy strengthened its power, both in Istanbul and in the provinces, and

¹⁵⁶ Halil İnalcık, *Political Modernization in Turkey*, p. 125

¹⁵⁷ See; Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, p. 397

¹⁵⁸ *ibid*, pp. 104-164

¹⁵⁹ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II*, p. 80

¹⁶⁰ Kemal H Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, p. 315

the Porte became more than ever the real center of government.¹⁶¹ Thus, there appeared a conflict between bureaucracy and local elites after the Tanzimat period. At this point, it would be enough to point out that Kurdish notables supported the liberal thoughts of Sabahaddin Bey, also at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire, as they were not satisfying with the centralization policy.¹⁶²

2.3. Economy

Tanzimat reforms refreshed trade in the Ottoman Empire. In April 1840, the establishment of an Ottoman bank, to be formed along European lines, with a guaranteed subvention from the government was authorized.¹⁶³ In addition, modern means of communication with European countries were established. During the Crimean War, the first telegraphic lines between Europe and Ottoman Empire were opened and front line journalism was born. This period also witnessed the beginning of road, railroad and harbor construction by foreign investment companies in the Ottoman cities.¹⁶⁴ Industry as well as agriculture came into direct contact with the capitalist markets. The importance of the Ottoman lands increased for the European economy both as a market for industrial produce and as a source of raw and agricultural materials. Modern economy began to penetrate the Ottoman Empire. Commercial companies, banks, insurance companies, stock changes, etc were also founded in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁵

The communication system was developed mainly with Ottoman capital and the Ottoman steamship companies were able to compete reasonably successfully with their European counterparts. Nevertheless, railroad building fell almost entirely to

¹⁶¹ Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire, The Sublime Porte 1789-1922*, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 152

¹⁶² Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties and Shifting Boundaries*, State University of New York Press, 2004. (*Osmanlı Devleti ve Kürt Milliyetçiliği*), Istanbul, 2005, pp. 127-137

¹⁶³ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 109

¹⁶⁴ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 139

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 140

foreign financiers, since it required the kind of capital and technical expertise that the Ottoman government and capitalists were unable to provide.¹⁶⁶ Two related effects of the modern economy began to operate in opposite directions in proportion to the degree of penetration.¹⁶⁷ Progress was made in certain agricultural areas in not only the extension of agriculture and the increase of productivity, but also in the amount of specialization or diversification.¹⁶⁸ However, these developments did not provide the formation of a modern national economy through a new integration with commerce and industry. On the contrary, the new agricultural branches confronted many troubles. Several agricultural areas became integrated with one or another European national economy. These developments created the conditions upon which the Ottoman Empire would disintegrate in the subsequent periods.¹⁶⁹ The new economic factors worked against the Ottoman economy in another way as well. The new trade damaged the medieval towns and their industries most severely. It changed the old relationships between the towns and their dependent villages. The traditional village economy was destroyed and the village communities remained inaccessible to any development.¹⁷⁰ These harmful effects of the new developments would constitute the main reasons which would leave Ottoman liberalism very narrow in scope at the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, there were positive effects of the reform. For example, because of the new and favorable conditions created by the Tanzimat and the general encouragement of private enterprises, trade and industry expanded in the years before 1876, though very little was done about agriculture.¹⁷¹ During the Tanzimat Period, there appeared an increasing differentiation between the urban Muslim Turkish population and the rural Turkish population. The artisan classes of the medieval guilds began to disappear from the economic realm. Besides, the Turkish business classes were underprivileged by comparison with both the Europeans and the non-Muslim traders

¹⁶⁶ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II*, p. 120

¹⁶⁷ Paul Dumont, *Le Période des Tanzimat*, in; *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, Robert Mantran (ed), 1989, p. 493

¹⁶⁸ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 141

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.* p. 141

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 141

¹⁷¹ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II*, p. 122

in the age of reforms. It was noted before that, during the Tanzimat Period new secular schools were founded. These schools educated the middle class and were the source of the administrative, military, legal and financial bureaucracy.¹⁷² The development of trade under the impact of the European economic penetration created further economic differentiation between Muslims and non-Muslims in the predominantly Turkish parts of the Empire.¹⁷³

In the nineteenth century, European visitors portrayed the Turks mostly as a people who did not engage in industry.¹⁷⁴ The economic situation of the urban non-Muslims, especially of the middle classes, was far from an independent capitalist class. However, before the Tanzimat, the Greeks especially had benefited from foreign trade and could compete with the foreign traders. Many non-Muslims, especially the Armenians, accumulated great wealth as the capitalist underwriters of the tax farmers and as usurers. By the beginning of the new era, there was a money-owning class only among the non-Muslims.¹⁷⁵

On the other hand, there were some attempts to build an Ottoman industry during the first half of the nineteenth century in the big cities. For example, a leather factory was founded in 1812 in Istanbul and many others at different times. However, most of the factories went bankrupt because of the competition from Western products, although there was a convenient situation for industrialization.¹⁷⁶

The nineteenth century was an era of profound structural change in the Middle East. It was clear that the influence of the Western powers on the Ottoman Empire promoted reforms and changes in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷⁷ The European influence

¹⁷² Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 142

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, p.143

¹⁷⁴ This situation will constitute main basis for nationalist economy movement at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire. This issue will be discussed in the chapter E.

¹⁷⁵ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 143

¹⁷⁶ Sadun Aren, *L'industrialisation dans L'Empire Ottoman*, in; *Economie et Sociétés dans L'Empire Ottoman*, (ed), Jean-Louis Bacqué and Paul Dumont, 1983, Paris, pp. 451-453

¹⁷⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein and Reşat Kasaba, *Incorporation into the World-Economy: Change in the Structure of the Ottoman Empire, 1750-1839*, in; *Economie et Sociétés Dans l'Empire Ottoman*, J.L. Bacqué-Grammont-P. Dumont (ed), Paris, 1983, p. 352

undermined the traditional authority of the state and led to the adoption of new legal and political institutions and procedures, which stimulated the growth of private landed property, trade and agricultural production, according to the needs of foreign markets. Ottoman trade during the second half of the eighteenth century became diversified, in both the main articles and the trade partners. The large areas of the Ottoman Empire were integrated into the global division of labor during the Tanzimat Period. At the same time, the Ottoman state was also being incorporated into the international system, the other important dimension of the capitalist world economy.¹⁷⁸

In conclusion, the recommendations, made by public officials as early as in Selim III's reign (1789-1807) included administrative and military reforms but also important economic and financial measures, aimed at increasing production. It was the consequence of all these developments that induced the government to issue the Edict of Tanzimat in 1839, in which the sultan's promise to respect the subjects' property, including land property, carried central importance. Then in 1858, the government started preparations to enact a new Land Code. This code was very important in creating new conditions for structural change and stratification. The code outwardly respected the liberal Islamic provisions concerning private property but legalized and regulated its transfer and usage for any economic and commercial purpose in accordance with the requirements of a market economy.¹⁷⁹ The consequence of the change in the concept of property was very important. First, the code opened the way to the establishment of landowners groups. Secondly, the government granted liberal property rights to individuals as incentives likely to increase interest in agriculture and stimulate production. Consequently, it honored without much inquiry claims to land ownership based on a variety of deeds including rental contracts.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 352. However, Wallerstein and Kasaba tend to strongly emphasize the role of external factors on the reform and changes. This approach will be evaluated in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁹ Kemal Karpat, *Some Historical and Methodological Considerations Concerning Social Stratification in the Middle East*, in; *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, selected articles and essays by Kemal Karpat, Leiden, 2002, p. 306

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 307

In other areas of the Ottoman Empire, such as Iraq, Syria and South Anatolia, tribal leaders and sheikhs registered the tribal land in their own name to become legally property owners overnight. After the market economy penetrated into those territories, the tribal sheikhs rented the land to tribesmen or used them as sharecroppers or agricultural workers.¹⁸¹ By the end of the nineteenth century, the upper class of the Anatolian and Middle Eastern cities was composed of land-owning groups, communal leaders, merchants, and heads of various religious orders, some bureaucrats and intellectuals who had some land interests.¹⁸² Because of the administrative reforms of the 1860's, these groups acquired political authority by becoming members in the newly established provincial and municipal councils. Finally, the Constitution of 1876 permitted these notables to become deputies and, for the first time, gave them a politically legitimate basis to voice their grievances against the bureaucracy, that is, the groups that had created them but opposed their effort to achieve full control of land and political authority.¹⁸³ As will be pointed out later, these tribal leaders and groups supported the thoughts of Sabahaddin Bey during the second constitutional period.

2.4. How to Look at the Reforms?

Studying Ottoman history and reforms is important also for the evaluation of the ideologies that appeared at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century. Whether Ottoman liberals were simply transmitting European ideas into the Ottoman Empire or Ottoman Islamists were repeating the ideas of Afghani or Abduh have importance in answering the questions also, whether their thoughts had economic, social, structural and cultural bases in the Ottoman context. Evaluating and criticizing the approaches that explain the Ottoman social structure and the reform process, we can go further in establishing our theoretical way and understanding the areas of problems. Bülent Özdemir evaluates all approaches to the

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 308

¹⁸² *ibid.*, p. 308

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 308

Ottoman Empire in his interesting study very successfully. I have used his work as the basis of this section.¹⁸⁴

According to Özdemir, “the Orientalist school”¹⁸⁵ shows “the decline thesis” as the causes of the reform process in the Ottoman State. Özdemir states “that those who explain the reform process with the “decline” thesis conclude that every attempt made by the Ottoman government for reforms was a reflection of the decline or dissolution of Ottoman society because, being a characteristic Islamic society, it was not changing over time due to its static social structure in which ethnicity, religion and tribalism were the only determinants in establishing groups. Ottoman society, it was thought, did not contain dynamic elements, which could accommodate society according to the needs of the time. Therefore, the activities of the state per se, and external forces were the causes of change in the Ottoman Empire.”¹⁸⁶ “Externalists” viewed it as the products of external forces¹⁸⁷ and the Ottoman state and ruling class as the main instruments introducing the reforms under the impact of external forces. The interests and activities of the Great Powers in the Empire were seen as a major force behind the reform process. Because Ottoman society was a typical Islamic society composed of ineffective ethnic and religious groups, the “externalists” stressed that organized pressure from below was not the issue in the Ottoman Empire. According to this view therefore, the ruling reformers group commenced the

¹⁸⁴ Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, Istanbul, 2003

¹⁸⁵ Özdemir calls researchers as orientalists, who do not give any place to the internal factors in the Ottoman social and structural development and reform movements in their analysis. However, it seems that this labelling is polemical. Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, p. 32. Because of that I prefer to call them as “externalist” on the ground that they have delineated the influence of the external forces in the reform process.

¹⁸⁶ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 28. Özdemir stresses that while the works of Niyazi Berkes, Roderic Davison, Robert Devereux, Standofrd Shaw, Frank E Bailey, Bernard Lewis reflect the same pattern or even use the same terminology such as “decline” and “corruption” as the contemporary Ottoman writings, Rifa’at Ali Abou- El-Haj represents a contrary view. Özdemir concludes, “By analysing nasihatname literature, such as writings of Koci Bey and Mustafa Ali, El-Haj discusses the issue of the introduction of new elements into the Ottoman ruling class and the struggle within the ruling elite. Also he points out the misuse and misinterpretation of the nasihatname literature in the writings of the historieans, in which Koçi Bey’s and Mustafa Alis’s writings are taken into account without further investigation as proof of the decline of the Ottoman Empire.” Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life* p.28. For the work of Rifa’at Ali Abu-El-Haj, see; *Formation of Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, Albany: Suny Press, 1991

¹⁸⁷ Kemal H Karpaz criticizes Niyazi Berkes’ this well-known work on the ground that it ignores the internal forces in the process of reforms. Kemal H. Karpaz, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, Boston, 2000. p. 9

reform processes in order to guarantee their positions, power and existence. As a result, changes did not take place in all aspects of society. They simply looked to the West in order to find remedies for the decentralization of the state and the corruption of its institutions. Furthermore, the causes of adopting of Western-inspired reforms were the close relations between Ottoman reformers and Western diplomats in the form of diplomatic links and Ottomans interest in European military, economic and commercial potentials which could guarantee the existence of the Empire and their positions.¹⁸⁸

Özdemir sees the works of the Wallerstein's as basis of the world-system perspective. According to him;

The world-system perspective, formulated by Wallerstein, developed a theoretical framework for Ottoman history. This approach argues the necessity of considering the Ottoman economy as part of a worldwide economic system. Therefore, the Ottoman transformation took place in the context of "peripherelization" of the Ottoman socio-economic structure, after it came in contact with world economic forces. Determining factors of the change in the Ottoman social structure are taken into consideration from a perspective in which forces of the capitalist world economy prevail.¹⁸⁹

According to the world-system approach, the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms were the natural outcomes diffusing the Ottoman Empire into the world-economy.¹⁹⁰ Inalcık criticizes İslamoğlu and Keyder, who are among the leading representatives of the world-system perspective, on the grounds that although they duly stress the role of the state, they do not offer an explanation for it or its function to maintain a specific socio-economic system.¹⁹¹ Özdemir stresses that world-system perspectives considered all reforms, which were applied after the Tanzimat, to be requirements of the economic integration in the world market. In another words, the Tanzimat

¹⁸⁸ Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, p. 30

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 31. "For the application of this approach, I. Wallerstein, *The Ottoman Empire and the Capitalist World Economy: Some Questions for Research*, *Review*, (II, 3, Winter 1979, pp. 389-398) Huri İslamoğlu İnan and Çağlar Keyder, *Agenda for Ottoman History* in; Huri İslamoğlu İnan, (ed), *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy, the 19th Century*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988, and, Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, p. 31

¹⁹⁰ Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, p. 31

¹⁹¹ Halil İnalçık, *From Empire to Republic*, p. 45

reforms and the modern institutions that emerged under the impact of Western economic penetration are seen as instruments to make possible its functioning as part of the world interstate system and to respond to global economic forces. In this context, the world-system approach formulated the Ottoman reform movements as a process including both external and internal factors. Externally, the Ottoman reforms were applied by the ruling elite in the direction of the requirements of the peripheral status of the Empire and channeled by capitalist world forces in order to take further steps in the peripheralization process. Internally, on the other hand, the reforms were the political responses to the changing socio-economic conditions of the Ottoman Empire under the impact of the capitalist world economy.¹⁹² There are different conclusions among the world-system perspectivists about the nature of the reforms. For example while Pamuk emphasizes the central bureaucracy as the key agent of change in the empire in the nineteenth century, Kasaba concludes that the activities of the groups of intermediary-financiers, tax farmers, and merchants were responsible for change in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century.¹⁹³

After criticising the assumptions of the “Externalists”, Özdemir alleges that;

Recent regional socio-economic studies stress that from the very start it is necessary to recognize the fact that the Ottoman socio-economic structure was subject to transformation under the impact of internal socio-economic forces, long before massive European influence accelerated this transformation. Thus the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms should have been a gradual and natural response of the Ottoman ruling class to the social and economic changes and pressure from below. There were classes and intra- and inter-class relations in Ottoman society, which was a dynamic and changing one. In what follows, we review some of the studies of this new trend in the historiography of the Ottoman Empire in order to appreciate a bottom-up view of the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms. It is generally accepted that both external and internal factors were involved in the process of socio-economic change in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, Istanbul, 2003, p. 31-32. Özdemir criticizes this approach on the grounds that it is not immune from a certain Eurocentrism. See; p. 32

¹⁹³ See; Reşat Kasaba, Çağlar Keyder, Faruk Tabak, *Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities and Their Bourgeoisies Review*, v.X, n.1 (Summer 1986), pp. 121-135. Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy, the 19th Century*, quoted, Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, p. 32

¹⁹⁴ Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, p. 32

Özdemir's main argument here is that the transformation of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century was not just the outcome of foreign influence. There probably were effective internal changes in the determination of the Ottoman reforms. According to this new approach, a view of Ottoman society itself, as a dynamic structure, is missing from the "Externalists'" explanations of the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms. The school is criticized for seeing the state as the only agent in the process of the Ottoman reforms, and equating the state with Ottoman society, thereby describing the people outside the state as ineffective in participating in the process of reform.¹⁹⁵

Şerif Mardin criticized Berkes well-known book *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* on the grounds that it did not consider Ottoman institutions and generally history to be autonomous.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, Mardin stresses in his other works the influence of Ottoman internal factors in the shaping of the thoughts of Young Turks and Young Ottomans.¹⁹⁷ In the same way, Abou-El Haj argues in his book *The Formation of the Modern State: the Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, that the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms should be evaluated in terms of internal forces, which were more crucial than the external forces in the determination of the reforms. According to him, dynamic internal factors that paved the way for the socio-economic changes of the period affected and prepared the ground for the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms. According to him, the relations of a powerful local elite with the central ruling class and their conflicting group ideologies formed the central dynamics of internal change in the Ottoman society. To illustrate the argument, Abou-El Haj stresses the importance of social conflicts especially in the seventeenth century, usually in the forms of peasant resistance and rebellion as the evidence of socio-economic change in Ottoman society. In addition, he emphasizes the evolution of the office of *Reisulküttab* as an example of the development of modern bureaucratic practices resulting from the internal needs of the bureaucratic specialization in order to accommodate the new functions and

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 33

¹⁹⁶ Şerif Mardin, *Türk Düşüncesinde Batı Sorunu*, in; *Türk Modernleşmesi*, İstanbul, 2000, p. 248

¹⁹⁷ See; Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thoughts*. Also, Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri*, İstanbul, 1994

requirements of the state.¹⁹⁸ In this account, it is possible to consider the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms to be the result of a continuous process dating back at least two hundred years. Özdemir emphasizes that the Ottoman reform policies can be seen as the responses of the Ottoman government to long-term internal changes within the Empire. In conclusion, the process of the determination and application of the Tanzimat reform is very much concerned and involved with internal changes. It is clear that the depiction of the impact of external forces as the only determining agent in this process is misleading unless we also take the internal dynamics of the Ottoman Empire account.¹⁹⁹

Özdemir sums up his arguments defining the theoretical models applied to the Ottoman reform process. According to him, there are three models, respectively; topdown, in-out and bottom-up. The “Orientalist school” formulated the top-down model, and considered the Ottoman society to be a mosaic of groups, which are relatively ineffective in the process of change. Within those groups, since the economic relations are unimportant when compared to the relations of ethnicity, religion and tribe, the causes of change should be looked for in terms of external forces²⁰⁰ In his own words;

The in-out model emphasizes the importance of the world market conditions in the nineteenth century Ottoman transformation. The economy is perceived in terms of trade activities. Control of trade and the distribution of production are considered to be the main determinants of economic relations. According to this model, nineteenth century Ottoman transformation has to be explained not only in terms of the internal dynamics of the Ottoman Empire but also mostly in terms of the impact of world capitalist forces. According to the bottom-up model, the Ottoman society should be conceptualized as a class-based social structure, because socio-economic relations are the real determinants of the Ottoman social stratification. Moreover, the change in the Ottoman Empire occurs from the consequences of the intra- and inter-class relations. Differentiations, which come from the changing conditions of the property structure, relations or production, surplus extraction and trade relations,

¹⁹⁸ Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, 1991, p.66, quoted from Özdemir, (2003), p. 34

¹⁹⁹ Bülent Özdemir, *Ottoman Reforms and Social Life*, p. 35

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 35-36

between the socio-economic relations of social groups are the main determining causes of change in the Ottoman Empire.²⁰¹

Haim Gerber is of the same opinion. According to him, contrary to usual belief, substantial traces of civil society existed within the fabric of the Ottoman state and Ottoman society in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and exerted considerable influence on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁰² Similarly, Teimberger stresses that considering Turkish reforms as being imposed from above is problematic.²⁰³ Conventionally, the Ottoman Empire was evaluated as a despotic state. This approach changed after some important works, which stressed the several forces in the state. Gilles Veinstein's work and some others suggest that the conventional thesis, which considers the Ottoman state as a pure case of sultanism or patrimonialism etc can no longer be accepted.²⁰⁴

In relation to this topic, Gerber says that the Ottoman government left many key social institutions and arenas of activity to the play of societal forces. According to him, the case of the guilds is particularly significant, not only because guilds played such a major role in the formation of an autonomous, communal civil society in medieval Europe, but also because an erroneous model of the guilds has been used to create a mistaken picture of traditional Ottoman society. Furthermore, Gerber asserts that the guilds and religious endowments (*waqf*) were autonomous. According to him, the big endowments not only constituted civil society by itself, but also they encouraged autonomous groups of citizens to pursue activities that gave some meaning to the idea of an Islamic city after all.²⁰⁵ Gerber adds that, contrary to Max Weber's patrimonial law, Ottoman law was not formless, intuitive and arbitrary and

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 36

²⁰² Haim Gerber, *Ottoman Civil Society and Modern Turkish Democracy*, in; *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (ed) Kemal. H. Karpat, Boston, 2000, p. 133

²⁰³ Ellen Kay Trimberger, *Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt and Peru*, New Brunswick, 1978

²⁰⁴ Gilles Veinstein, *La voix du maitre a travers les firmans de Soliman le Magnifique* in; *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*. Paris, 1992. Halil İnalcık, *Decision Making in the Ottoman State*, in; *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire*, (ed). C Farah, Kirksville, 1993

²⁰⁵ Gerber, *Ottoman Civil Society and Modern Turkish Democracy*, pp. 137-139

it was not an arbitrary imposition from above so much as an outgrowth from below.²⁰⁶

Findley is between the researchers who underline the role of the internal factors. According to Findley, the weakening of the Empire and its increasing dependence on Europe redirected the *ghazi* mentality toward diplomacy, good relations with Europe, and hence Westernization in general. Vulnerability to the infidels' love-hate relation with Europe, amid which those who knew most about the West – at first the scribal diplomats – became a vanguard of Westernization.²⁰⁷ To Gerber, this interpretation seems to explain many features of Ottoman/Turkish history after about 1839; “the new Western orientation adopted by the bureaucratic elite; its passionate sense of historic mission to disseminate these values to all layers of Turkish society”.²⁰⁸

Another well-known Ottomanist, Kemal Karpat, emphasizes that the history of almost every major Ottoman state institution and practice reflects a combination of old Ottoman ways with new ones created according to domestic needs and pressures, and sometimes European models. He says that this generalization includes the army and even the religious institutions. Continuity in essence despite any changes in form characterizes the Ottoman institutions of the reform era. For instance, the *Şura-yı Devlet* (State Council) which was created in 1867 to direct the legislative reforms and act as a supreme court is frequently considered to be the first official attempt to achieve public representation largely in order to satisfy the European governments. Actually, although modeled on a French counterpart, the Supreme Judicial Council and the Advisory Council were established by Mahmud II in 1838 to provide advice on reforms.²⁰⁹ Karpat suggests that the tensions in the agricultural sector that were the constant features of the Ottoman state became the key forces for reform in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ultimately, the land issue pitted the government and its bureaucracy against both the local-provincial administrators of the land and the tenants who actually worked the land. The government, by nearly

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 140

²⁰⁷ Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton, 1980, p. 58

²⁰⁸ Gerber, *Ottoman Civil Society and Modern Turkish Democracy*, p. 148

²⁰⁹ Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, pp. 12-15

sanctifying its property rights to the land, created a statist culture that impregnated every aspect of social life. Supplemented by an emphasis on communal solidarity, unity of faith and absolute obedience to the sultan, this statist culture prevented the clash of interests among the state, the land cultivators and the administrators from coming into the open. At the end, the administrators forced the government to keep the control of the land through *Sened-i İttifak* of 1808 between the government and the notables, meaning land administrators and their respective communities supported tax collectors now.²¹⁰

In conclusion, all these debates reflect the theoretical positions of the researchers. As remarked in the introduction chapter, one of the prominent aims of this investigation is to determine all factors that influenced the emergence of liberalism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the origins of the Ottoman reforms are not the focus of this research, all these approaches have importance in determining our theoretical positions. On the other hand, there is the possibility to participate in these discussions, examining social, cultural and especially the economical background of liberalism.

2.5. The Impact of Westernization on the Social Structure and Culture

The first Ottoman printing press was set up in 1726. Most of the books printed were about traditional Ottoman and Islamic thoughts.²¹¹ It was remarked that at the end of the seventeenth century, at least in military matters, Ottomans needed to adopt Western methods. It was undertaken to translate a considerable number of Western texts on military science. However, parallel with these efforts there were more attempts to translate and publish the most popular classics of Ottoman and earlier Islamic culture. During the nineteenth century, the movement culminated in a real

²¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 15

²¹¹ A. Adnan Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, İstanbul, 1991, p. 170

flowering of translations from the Arabic and Persian.²¹² According to Mardin, it is hard to describe the modernization of the Ottoman Empire, if this reaction is not taken into account. For example, the Young Ottomans were directly influenced by these figures of Ottoman classicism.²¹³ Popular Islamic themes and Islamic culture were also among the themes that were stressed by the Islamists during the second constitutional period. However, despite the interest in Ottoman classicism, the influence of Western culture on the Ottoman people continued to increase.

The increasing economic relationship between the West and the Ottoman Empire was another basis of the transformation of the Ottoman Empire. Göçek describes this process.²¹⁴ During the nineteenth century, the penetration of Western goods into Ottoman lands continued to increase. In the eighteenth century, Ottoman artists also started to explore Western forms such as miniature art, and they incorporated the Western innovation of the third dimension. The most significant aesthetic transformation was in the development of a new form of art after the Western mode.²¹⁵

Ottoman administrators encouraged the Ottoman interest in Western culture in the nineteenth century. For example, Sultan Mahmut II (1808-1839) patronized painting; he had his portraits hung in the official buildings that were being built during his reign. Another Ottoman sultan, Abdülaziz I (1861-1876), visited Paris, London and Vienna, the cultural centers of nineteenth century Europe and attended concerts and opera performances in these Western cities. After his return in 1871, Abdülaziz had his statue made. Hence, throughout the nineteenth century, Ottoman sultans commissioned Western-looking palaces, appointed European and minority architects and artists to build and decorate them, and furnished those places with imported European furniture and art objects. The new public buildings were also built in the

²¹² Mardin, *The Genesis Of Yount Ottoman Thoughts*, p. 203

²¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 203-204

²¹⁴ Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire, Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, pp. 37-40

²¹⁵ Abdullah Koran, *Eighteenth-century Ottoman Architecture*, pp. 303-327, in; *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, ed. T. Naff and R. Owen. Carbondale: Sothern Illinois University Press, 1977, p. 327

Western style. Western styles of clothing and forms of etiquette were gradually adopted, first by the sultan and his officials, and then slowly by the emerging elites. The influence of Western culture disseminated in Istanbul, and reproduced itself throughout the capital and the province. Foreign residents and minorities introduced Western goods and Ottoman embassies; the sultan and his household reproduced them through their consumption.²¹⁶ The transformation was occurring in minds as well as in life-styles.

Literature was also important in the shaping of the Ottoman world in the nineteenth century. The emerging bourgeois class is often analyzed through its connection with the mode of production and its economic origins. Nevertheless, on the other hand, such analyses do not take into account the different causes that relate the class to a cultural capital that is as decisive as labor power: social resources acquired through education and connections to the state. In the development of the Ottoman bourgeoisie, the cultural capital of class members acquired through Western-style education was as significant as the material capital of wealth attained through commerce and production. From about the middle of the nineteenth century the dissemination of Western ideas and the penetrating of Western social and political attitudes among the Turks was greatly accelerated by the rise of a new Turkish literature, differing both in form and in content from classical Ottoman writings. In the new Ottoman literature, the influence of French literature increased and it had begun to replace the classics of Iran as the source of inspiration and the model for imitation.²¹⁷

As remarked before, the emergence of an Ottoman middle class in turn sparked off intellectual refreshment and caused the emergence of a new Ottoman intelligentsia, which removed the *Ulema* from their traditional role of cultural leadership in the Muslim community.²¹⁸ The transformation of the intelligentsia was realized through Western style education, and through connecting to one another not by kin ties but

²¹⁶ Göçek, Rise of the Bourgeoisie p. 42

²¹⁷ Lewis, The Emergence, p. 133

²¹⁸ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II, p. 128

instead by the commonality of political and social goals which ultimately succeeded and gradually replaced the structural hold of households over Ottoman society. This common life experience produced a social group in its sociological sense indicating a group of individuals committed to sharing a similar life experience.²¹⁹ This new class emerged, according to Göçek,

...not by private property in the classical Marxist sense, but instead by specialized knowledge. The background of this new intellectual class was based not on the market but on its location within the state structure. In this context, the analogy between becoming class conscious and learning a foreign language holds, in that both present men with a new vocabulary and a new set of concepts, which permit a different translation of the meaning of inequality from that encouraged by the conventional vocabulary of society.²²⁰

At this point, it should be said that the Young Ottomans a few decades later would criticize the relative alienation of the new elites from general society by the Islamists.

Besides these developments, Karpat stresses another element of the Ottoman transformation. According to him, the Ottoman Empire like the rest of the Muslim world was subjected to capitalism and the threat of violent European occupation in the nineteenth century. Capitalism undermined, among other things, the economic-social foundation of the traditional endowments (*waqfs and imarets*), and above all the state-controlled land system, which kept continued to ensure the society's unique Islamic cultural features.²²¹ He further states that capitalism also stimulated the development of private property, the market forces that existed in various nucleus forms in all Muslim societies, and increased trade and profits and the production of local agricultural commodities. All these structural developments, aided by increased literacy, a modern school system, the press, and so on, created new Muslim middle classes with rationalist modes of thinking that appraised their own social position and the Islamic state in turn in a critical and worldly manner. The changes in the structure of society and state opened the way for the community to seek means based on its

²¹⁹ Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie* p. 81

²²⁰ *ibid.*, 82

²²¹ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 3

own intellectual and spiritual resources to assure its cultural and religious survival. The popular revivalist movements of the nineteenth century, for example, were the reaction of ordinary Muslim peoples and communities to the economic, cultural, and political transformation of classical Muslim society, as well as a local regional effort at adapting Islam to changed circumstances within an orthodox-Islamic frame of reference.²²² All these changes were evaluated and criticized by the intellectuals in subsequent periods.

These changes took place not only in the centre of the Empire but also in the provinces. The transformation of the relations between different communities in the Ottoman Empire was also an issue. For example, intercommunal relations in Syria witnessed a substantial transformation during the Tanzimat period. Although the Tanzimat regime aimed at creating a new pattern of inter-group accommodation and fraternity among all Ottoman subjects, in Syria it brought about, in effect, a polarization of intercommunal relationships especially between Muslims and Christians as well as between Christians and Jews.²²³ Moshe Maoz says that;

The relations between Muslims and Christians, which for generations were shaped by tolerable coexistence under Muslim dictates, became highly antagonistic under the reforms: the traditional Muslim attitudes of contempt for and humiliation of non-Muslims turned into deep hatred for Christians but not for Jews. The main conflicts between the Muslim common people and the non-Muslim minorities in the pre-reform period were, in effect, socioreligious. Muslims would occasionally force Christians and Jews to abide by the discriminatory religious and social rules, regarding restrictions on public worship and behavior. These included obligation to wear clothing only of certain colors as well as the prohibition to ride on horseback in towns or to walk alongside Muslims in the streets. In order to remind the non-Muslim minorities of their inferior status, Muslims would periodically maltreat and humiliate them, particularly those who transgressed the traditional discriminatory regulations.²²⁴

²²² *ibid.*, p. 3

²²³ Moshe Maoz, *Communal Conflicts in Ottoman Syria during the Reform Era: The Role of Political and Economic Factors*, in; *Christian and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, (ed) Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, Newyork, 1982, p. 92

²²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 93

During the Tanzimat regime, Ottoman reformers proclaimed abolishing the *cizye* (Kursiv) on the non-Muslim subjects, in 1855 and granted them equal political rights by the *Hatt-ı Humayun* of 1856. However, because of Ottoman-European conflicts, anti-Christian sentiment among the Muslims and local governors increased, so that new rights and arrangements about the situation of Jews and Christians failed.²²⁵ However, Ottoman administrators continued to promote Ottomanism in order to ensure the stability of the state. The most important point here for us is that equality between all Ottoman subjects was not only emphasized and promoted by the state but also by the first modern Ottoman intellectuals, the Young Ottomans, and at the first stage of the second constitutional period (1908) by the Islamists.

On the other hand, several phenomena influenced the Ottoman cultural world up to the time of the rise of the Young Ottomans. One of these traditional factors was the continuance of the Ottoman-Islamic ideals of the “good” state; the other, the survival of popular approaches toward authority and the third, the revival of traditional Ottoman-Islamic culture.²²⁶ The *Ulema* was a very important factor in the creation of this culture. One of the main contributions of the *Ulema* to the culture of Islam was an ideal picture of Islamic polity. The outstanding feature of this theoretical construction was its defense of the principals of Islamic right and justice against the rule of sultans.²²⁷ However, after the Tanzimat period, the *Ulema* began to lose their traditional role, though some of the members of the *Ulema* class worked in collaboration with the reformist sultans.²²⁸ However, their loss of prestige continued until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, this consequence of the reform process and Westernization was very decisive in shaping the political attitude of the *Ulema*. This was one of the reasons behind their inclination to participate in politics during the second constitutional period.

²²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 95

²²⁶ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis*, p. 197

²²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 197

²²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 217