YEMEN AS AN OTTOMAN FRONTIER AND ATTEMPT TO BUILD A NATIVE ARMY: ASAKİR-İ HAMİDİYE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the Ottoman attempts to control its frontiers and the frontier populations by basing upon the experience of the native army (Asakir-i Hamidiye) organized by Ismail Hakkı Pasha, who was a governor of Yemen province, between 1800 and 1882. This thesis positions Yemen into the context of the literature produced for the frontier regions; and tries to investigate the dynamics of the institutions and practices pursued in Yemen that differentiated from the financial, military and judicial institutions of the Tanzimat-era. This thesis puts forth that the Ottoman Empire was not a passive audience of imperial competitions of the nineteenth century, but engaged into the imperial struggles by undertaking aggressive measures with an imperialist mind and strategy. Herein, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the Ottoman ruling elites detected the Red Sea as a strategic region too. Therefore, the Ottomans reoccupied the highlands of Yemen and San'a; and this study delves into the governing strategies enforced in the province immediately after the reoccupation that contradicted with the Tanzimat reforms. At the same time this study discusses the similarities and distinctness of the different governing strategies sought for the frontiers with the colonial governing

techniques by taking into consideration the references of contemporary Ottoman ruling elites. In particular, using Asakir-i Hamidiye as a case study, this study probes why a native army was organized, and examines its similarities and distinctness with the colonial native armies by comparing it with other frontier militia forces as well. The debate on Asakir-i Hamidiye is based on a research at Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, and a survey on the provincial newspaper.

BİR OSMANLI HUDUT BÖLGESİ OLARAK YEMEN VE YERLİ ORDU KURMA TEŞEBBÜSÜ: ASAKİR-İ HAMİDİYE

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Emperyalizm, Kolonyalizm, Osmanlı emperyalizmi, Osmanlı hudut bölgeleri, Yerel ordu

Özet

Bu çalışma, 1880 ile 1882 yılları arasında Yemen valisi İsmail Hakkı Paşa'nın tarafından kurulan Asakir-i Hamidiye adlı yerel ordu deneyiminden yola çıkarak, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun hudut bölgelerini ve buralarda yaşayan nüfusu kontrol altına alma çabalarını sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Bu tez Yemen'i hudut bölgelerine dair yapılan çalışmalar bağlamında değerlendiriyor ve Yemen'de Tanzimat döneminin finansal, askeri ve adli kurumlarından farklı kurumların tesisine neden olan dinamikleri incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada ortaya konulduğu üzere Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 19. yüzyıl boyunca dünyada süregiden emperyal çatışmaların pasif bir izleyicisi olmamış, aksine agresif önlemler ve emperyalist bir akıl ve stratejiyle bu çatışmalara müdahil olmuştur. Buradan hareketle 1869 yılında Süveş Kanalı'nın açılmasıyla birlikte, Kızıl Deniz Osmanlı yönetici elitleri tarafından da bir stratejik bölge olarak algılanmıştır. Bu sebeple Yemen'in dağlık bölgeleri ile San'a şehrini yeniden işgal eden Osmanlıların ardından da Yemen coğrafyası ve nüfusunu kontrol etmek için merkez bölgelerde uygulanan Tanzimat reformları ile çelişebilecek çeşitli yönetim stratejileri geliştirdiği bu çalışmada tartışılmaktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda hudut bölgelerinde uygulanan farklı yönetim stratejilerinin kolonyal idare teknikleri ile benzerlikleri ve farklılıklarını, dönemin yönetici elitlerinin

referanslarını göz önünde bulundurarak tartışmaktadır. Bir vaka çalışması olarak, Asakir-i Hamidiye adlı yerel ahaliden teşkil edilen ordu, ne amaçla kurulduğu ve kolonyal yerli ordular ile olan benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları diğer hudut bölgelerindeki yerel milis kuvvetleri ile karşılaştırılarak tartışılmaktadır. Asakir-i Hamidiye'ye dair olan tartışma Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi'nde yapılan araştırmaya ve dönemim vilayet gazetesinin taranmasına dayanmaktadır.

To my mother and my father

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INTRODUCTION

This study will locate Yemen into the context of Ottoman frontiers with a comparative perspective and try to explore the characteristics of frontier rule in the nineteenth century by focusing on the attempt to build a native army, namely, *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, between 1880 and 1882. In fact, mainly two questions shape the study. Basing upon the that Ismail Hakkı Pasha initiated to organize a native army rather than enforcing compulsory military service for Yemeni men, this study tries to answer why the Ottoman governors required different governing strategies in the frontiers like Yemen, rather than introducing fundamental financial, military and judicial institutions of the *Tanzimat*. Especially the increasing imperialist competition around the frontier and the concrete presence of various imperial powers provoked the Ottomans to establish their authority as well as to win the obedience of local populations. Therefore, the Ottomans aimed to provide tranquil frontiers, where they would exercise their sovereignty and would protect the Empire against the outside imperialist encroachments. Within this context, Ottoman imperial governors sought any possible governing strategies to fulfill these tasks. This study aims to comprehend the dynamics which led the governing strategies differentiate from the *Tanzimat* policies.

Secondly, this study deals with a question of whether the peculiar governing strategies in the frontiers like Yemen could be interpreted as colonial governing strategies. Ismail Hakkı Pasha, the governor of Yemen between 1879 and 1882, presented the organization of *Asakir-i Hamidiye* as an example to the Indian Army serving for the British Empire in India. As in the example of establishing *Asakir-i*

Hamidiye, the Ottoman governors who were serving in the frontiers had started to apply to the colonial governing strategies as their references in the turn of the nineteenth century. In this sense, instead of taking the *Tanzimat* institutions as a model to pursue and to enforce in the frontiers, the governors were inspired from the colonial institutions and started to own a colonial repertoire. The usage of this repertoire as well as the colonial references would reveal a difference between the heartlands of the Empire and its frontiers in terms of governing strategies which were pursued. Yet, this study also questions colonial exclusionary policies of differentiation in the Ottoman imperial practices set up in the frontiers, and will examine the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* with this question as well. In other words, the nature of these imperial practices in the frontiers would be examined in the sense that whether they were projected for the integrationist aims or could be understood as the examples colonial exclusionary practices.

One of the assumptions of the study is that the imperial struggles triggered the Ottomans to control the Yemen and its population in order to defend the Empire. While the Portuguese threat instigated the Ottomans to set up an authority in Yemen in the sixteenth century, the British ambitions in the Red Sea starting in the early nineteenth century, and its occupation of Aden in 1838 reminded the Ottomans their old claim of sovereignty; and the Ottomans (re)occupied the Yemeni *Tihame* (west coasts) in 1849. Furthermore, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which escalated the imperialist competition on the both shores of the Red Sea, the Ottomans found a ground to easily dispatch the military force; and (re)occupied the Yemeni highlands and San'a in 1871.

Both the 1849 and 1871 occupations reveal the Ottoman response to the Western imperial encroachments and the engagement of the Ottomans to the imperial competition. Yet, this engagement was not limited with the example of Yemen. The reoccupation of the Yemeni Tihame and the highlands of Yemen can be positioned into a grand strategy of the Ottomans against the imperialist encroachments. Thus, the first chapter of this study discusses this grand strategy. The first chapter has mainly two parts. In the first part, I will be discussing the Ottoman response to the rising imperialism of the nineteenth century. Based upon the Ottoman attempts to expand its frontiers from Kurdistan, to the North Africa, I will show that the Ottomans had responded to the Western imperialist encroachments with an aggressive imperialist

mind. The Ottomans re(conquered) the lands on which they had an authority once in the sixteenth and seventeenth century; but this authority became limited, nominal or absent in the following centuries. A survey on these reoccupations and military expeditions for controlling the lands will challenge a tendency in the Ottoman historiography, which positions the Ottoman Empire as a passive audience of imperialist encroachments and imperial competitions. The first chapter indicates that the Ottoman governing elites were not the passive audience of intimidations to the Ottoman Empire and its domains. The Ottomans also sought to expand their sovereignty in the context of imperial competition for the sake of the Empire. The Ottoman reconquest, expansion and attempts to position sovereignty and legitimacy over the frontiers of the Empire in the course of the nineteenth century reveal the imperialist desires of the Ottoman authorities.

The second part of the first chapter deals with the Ottoman frontier rule, and tries to depict a framework to understand the dynamics of the frontiers as well as the Ottoman governing strategies in these regions. After depicting the challenges of the frontiers, I will show how the Ottoman governors responded to these challenges. In this sense this part shows that in order to claim their sovereignty in the reconquered frontiers, the Ottomans undertook vigorous policies to transform the frontiers. Yet, being aware of the difficulties of introducing the *Tanzimat* policies and institutions in these frontiers because of the local challenges, Ottoman governors considered any possible strategies –even those signifying a deviation from the *Tanzimat*– which would provide loyalty of the subjects. Finally, the first chapter compares the governing strategies in these frontiers with the colonial governing strategies as the Ottoman governors took colonial governing strategies as possible to enforce in the frontiers.

In the second chapter, I will survey a *longue-durée* historical background of Yemen, which would be an introducing part to understand the Ottoman rule in Yemen. I will discuss how the imperial struggles alerted the Ottomans to take control of Yemen both in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Secondly, I will depict a framework which includes the local challenges and Ottoman imperial strategies to keep the possession of Yemen in the first two decades of Ottoman rule. In this sense, the emphasis would be on the Ottoman governing strategies against the challenges of the presence of Aden Residency, and the difficulties of introducing Ottoman financial,

military and judicial institutions of *Tanzimat*. Finally, the chapter deals with the colonialism debate in the context of Yemen.

The third chapter takes the establishment of a native army, *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, in the reign of Ismail Hakkı Pasha as a case study. Based upon an archival research in the Prime Ministry Archives in Istanbul and a survey in the provincial newspaper, *The San'a Gazetesi*, the third chapter discusses the establishment of the native army as a part of Islahat (reform) projects of Ismail Hakkı Pasha. In the first part of the chapter, I will discuss the main concerns of Ismail Hakkı Pasha and the characteristics of his regime in Yemen. I argue that the fear of the *vali* that the population would shift towards the British in the south made him to apply integrationist strategies. Ismail Hakkı Pasha aimed to integrate the population to the imperial system; hence sought governing practices, which would be adoptable to the local customs and practices In the lack of conscription in the province, I will show that Ismail Hakkı Pasha sought a strategy to accustom the Yemenis to the imperial military institutions. In this sense he initiated the formation of a native army. The rest of the third chapter will focus on this army. Here, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* will be examined as a case to comprehend the Ottoman governing strategies in the frontiers. I will show the differences of *Asakir-i Hamidiye* from militia forces organized in other frontiers in terms of its organization, training and order. In this sense, the reference of Ismail Hakkı Pasha to the Indian army will be examined.

CHAPTER I

OTTOMAN IMPERIAL EXPANSION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: *TANZİMAT* IN THE FRONTIERS

The Ottoman army entered the Great War on September 29, 1914 by joining the alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungarian Empire. Although, it is very common in Ottoman-Turkish historiography that the decision put the Ottoman Empire into the war was taken by Enver Pasha, an Ottoman statesman who was highly influential between 1908 and 1918 as one of the three prominent leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), who made benefits available to the German interests, Mustafa Aksakal brings a highly different interpretation to the discussion of why the Ottoman ruling cadres decided to enter the war. By reminding that the Ottomans were also sharing the common idea that the war would have a short duration and they hoped to conclude a peaceful settlement, Mustafa Aksakal argues that the Ottoman statesmen hoped that the end of the war would result in a relatively secure international order in which the Ottomans would bolster the Empire without fear of external threat.[1] This interpretation is significant in the sense that the Ottoman ruling elites were still thinking with an imperial mind.

On the eve of the Great War, Ottoman ruling elites were anxious about the Empire's diminished power vis-à-vis European imperialism. Although the loss of the Libyan provinces to the Italians and the Balkan Wars had further put the Empire in trouble, the high-ranking cadres of the CUP were still seeking for methods of resistance

[1] Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and The First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 93.

to the Western imperialist encroachments and to keep the Empire in power. Though there is a vast literature regarding the continuity between the reign of the CUP and Mustafa Kemal's Republic in terms of nation-state formation and articulation of Turkish nationalism as an 'official ideology', this literature underestimates the fact that the CUP cadres were born to the imperial structure and lived in the empire.[2] Having thus been preoccupied by the Empire's concerns, they were dealing with the ways to keep the imperial structure alive rather than to build a national state. In this sense, instead of being the passive audiences of European imperialist encroachments, this concern led these ruling elites to apply aggressive measures too – as in the case of entering the War by initiating a military attack on Russia.[3]

Since the expansion became the first and foremost mean of the all kinds of empires – from ancient empires to the colonial overseas empires of the long nineteenth century – the Great War had emerged as an opportunity for the Ottoman elites to restore Ottoman sovereignty on its lost territories, and to further expand it in order to resurrect the Empire. However the consequences of the War could not satisfy these ambitions for the Ottomans. Yet, the emphasis here I want to make is not to demonstrate the failure of the Ottoman imperial anticipations, but to remind that even in 1914, the Ottoman ruling cadres were still acting with imperial ambitions, using imperial repertoires and appealing to imperialist political strategies. Instead of being peculiar to the CUP cadres in the context of war opportunities, these ambitions and reasoning constituted the main repertoire of the Ottoman governing elites through the long nineteenth century as I will discuss in this chapter.

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[2] Regarding Arab provinces, Hasan Kayalı demonstrates that instead of implementing concrete Turkish nationalist agenda, the CUP regime was still equipped with Ottomanism and Islamist discourse seeking for the integration of Arab population to the imperial rule. See. Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 116-143.

[3] Also, The Ottoman involvement in Libya after the Italian invasion was a good case to demonstrate the aggressive imperial aims of the Ottoman ruling cadres. Although it was invaded by the Italians in 1911, the CUP regime did not abandon its claim on Libya until the fall of the Empire, and aided the local resistance in order to reassert the Ottoman rule to Libya. For the involvement of the Ottomans to Libya after the Italian invasion, see. Rachel Simon, *Libya between Ottomanism and Nationalism: The Ottoman Involvement in Libya During the War with Italy, 1911-1919*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1987), 111-332.

The Ottoman governing elites were not the passive audiences of European imperialism and of its intimidation to the Ottoman Empire and its domains. The Ottomans also sought to expand its sovereignty in the context of imperial competition in order to resist Western imperialism. The Ottoman reconquest, expansion and attempts to position its sovereignty and legitimacy over its frontiers in the course of the nineteenth century reveal an image of the Ottomans as having imperialist desires; and this picture paves the way for a reevaluation of the *Tanzimat*-era.[4]

1. The Conventional Approaches: Ottoman Empire as a Passive Audience

Walter Benjamin reminds in his seventh Thesis on History that "to historians who wish to relive an era, Fustel de Coulanges recommends that they blot out everything they know about the later course of history.[5] One of the greatest problems of history writing is that a historian knows the end of the story. This knowledge overshadows the whole story and forestalls the construction of alternative paths. This is especially valid for the nineteenth century Ottoman history writing. Since the Empire collapsed at the end of the Great War, historians have been tracing the paths of the fall, and at least there is a consensus that the Empire was on the road toward cataclysm. Against this teleological approach, the Ottoman historiography has witnessed certain path-breaking and stimulating works in the last three decades which reinterpret the Ottoman 'modernization' in the long nineteenth century and position the nineteenth century Empire into a comparative global history.[6] However, the previous portrayals of the

[4] By the word *Tanzimat*, instead of referring to the Gulhane Decree read by Mustafa Reşit Pasha in 1839, I use it for the structural and spatial transformation and reorganization of the Ottoman Empire in the course of long nineteenth century.

[5] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans.Harry Zohn, (New York: Shocken Books, 1969), 256.

[6] For example, see. İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, (İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1983); Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Halil İnalcık, Donald Quataert (ed), An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1914, (Cambridge:

Empire as the 'sick man of Europe', or a 'semi-colony' of the great powers still obscure especially the comprehension of how the Ottomans responded to Western imperialism, and to its intrusions. The one common idea these depictions of the Empire – the 'sick man of Europe' or a 'semi-colony' of the great powers- share is that the Ottoman Empire and its governing elites were just passive audiences of the nineteenth century imperial competition and silent denunciators to the European encroachments to its territories, and of European interventions to its politics. As a matter of fact, these depictions pose the 'delay in the fall' as the outcome of the great powers' – especially British- interests in keeping the territorial integrity of the Empire.

1.1. The Empire as 'The Sick Man of Europe':

On January 9, 1853, Tsar Nicolas I of the Russian Empire described the Ottoman Empire as the 'Sick Man of Europe', and emphasized the peaceful partition of the Empire between the Great Britain and Russia in the near feature.[7] From that day to this, the phrase "Sick Man of Europe" has become popular in depicting the (geo)political and economic conditions of the Empire in the nineteenth century. Not just among European political, intellectual and orientalist circles, but also on the Ottoman side the phrase had been used to describe the Empire. Here, I will not discuss the usage of this phrase within the long nineteenth century context, but rather want to mention as to how the phrase dominated the comprehension of the Ottoman response to rising Western imperialism. The phrase mainly refers to the 'backwardness' of the Ottoman Empire which resulted from its economic and military weakness vis-à-vis European powers.

The conventional approach summarizes the circumstances of the 'Sick Man of Europe as below: Starting from the eighteenth century, the Ottomans could not keep pace with the European industrial and military advancement, which facilitated the

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Cambridge University Press, 1997); Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and The Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909, (*New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth Century-Ottoman Lebanon*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference, Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[7] Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History*, 79.

European colonial domination over the world. The imperial power was shaking, because the imperial center was not able to appease the centrifugal tendencies of the provinces, its military machine was too archaic to confront the European powers, the economy was weak as it was vulnerable to Western exploitation; hence she was in decline.[8] In this context, from the end of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-1774 (the emergence of 'Eastern Question') onwards European powers engaged into the Ottoman domains and intervened in its internal affairs in order to consolidate their own interests. The Great Powers – Great Britain, France and Russia –pressurized the Ottoman government directly or indirectly by supporting local rebellions. While competing for the expansion among each other; they used the Ottomans as a pawn to secure their diplomatic and commercial interests.[9] Yet, since the international balance of power would not lead to a peaceful partition of the Empire, they tried to keep the 'sick man' in a 'vegetative state' but not allow it to die.

Within this context, the Ottomans responded to the Empire's sickness through several reform attempts which mainly intended to introduce European administrative, military and educational institutions to the territories of the Empire. Especially, starting with the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839), the Ottomans initiated a centralization program, which has been often evaluated as a Western sort of modern state formation. However, these attempts could not recuperate the sickness of the Empire due to the exploitation of its resources by the rapacious imperialist powers, leading to the exacerbation of the economy, and because of the European/Russian-backed nationalist demands of the non-Muslim populations.[10]

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[8] For a very typical analysis, see. Charles Swallow, *The Sick Man of Europe: Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic 1789-1923*, (London: Ernest Benn, 1973), 5-105.

[9] Robert Mantran, "Şark Meselesinin Başlangıçları, 1774-1839", in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi II: XIX. Yüzyılın Başlangıcından Yıkılışa,* ed. Robert Mantran, trans. Server Tanilli, (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 2000), 45.

[10] See. Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, vol.2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). This is one of the leading books reflects the conventional historiography which succinctly comprehends the late Ottoman Empire from the declinist paradigm.

1.2. The Empire as a 'Semi-Colony':

These depictions were also complemented with the idea that the Ottoman Empire became a semi-colony of the Western imperialist powers and lost its independence. The state of being a semi-colony had been formalized with some conventions as well. For instance, according to Sina Akşin, the London Straits Convention (July 13, 1841) prevented the danger of the Empire becoming a Russian satellite, which was anticipated by the Treaty of Hünkar İskelesi of 1833; however as the Paris Congress of 1856 was signed, this meant for the Ottomans to become reduced to the level of a joint protectorate of the European powers. And Sina Akşin concludes that as the empire proved not to be able to cope with rebellions such as Tepedelenli, Mora and Kavalalı, it would have to accept this semi-dependent status.[11]

The works dealing with the position of the Ottoman Empire in the capitalist world system further enforced the thesis of the Empire being a semi-colony.[12] Especially, starting from the 1970s, historians and sociologists from the World System school started to postulate the nineteenth century Empire and its modernization as a process of its integration to the capitalist world economy. According to these scholars, integration of the Empire to the capitalist world market in the nineteenth century resulted in the reduction of the Empire to a 'peripheral' position in the world-economy that required a transformation of agrarian production, economy and social relations in accordance to the demands of the European markets. Furthermore, the *Tanzimat* was understood as "formalization of the peripheral status of the Ottoman Empire in the world economy by providing a legal framework in which the state could attempt simply to secure its portion of the surplus in a system on which it had now itself become dependent."[13]

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[11] Sina Akşin, "1839'da Osmanlı Ülkesi'nde İdeolojik Ortam ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin Uluslararası Durumu" in *Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, ed. Halil İnalcık and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), 142.

[12] For instance, Stefanos Yerasimos comprehends the nineteenth century as a process of economic colonization of the Empire by the Western imperialist powers – mainly Great Britain. See. Stefanos Yerasimos, *Azgelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye II, Tanzimat'tan 1. Dünya Savaşına*, trans. Babür Kuzucu, (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1977) 599-600.

[13] Immanuel Wallerstein et all., "The Incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the World-economy", in *The Ottoman Empire and World Economy*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu-İnan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 93.

The Empire further became dependent due to excessive loans from European markets–as well as with the imposition of the European finance capital via railway projects in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus, the peripheral status of the Empire limited the state to be a self-responsive agent like it operated in the 'classical age' between 15th and 17th centuries.[14] Now, instead of operating with its own political and geo-political interests, the Ottoman state had to request the guarantee of its existence from the core states of the capitalist world system. Yet, since the 'peripheral' status of the Empire had also put its territorial integrity into jeopardy and challenged its sovereignty as well, it opened the path of downfall of the Ottoman government.[15]

2. Revival of Ottoman Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century

The factual accuracy of these arguments in terms of the weakness of the Ottoman finances, including those internal and external troubles the Empire did face, cannot be rejected, yet a problem exists concerning the impact of these portrayals on historiography. All these arguments and depictions are complementary to the claim that the Ottomans in the nineteenth century could only exist by courtesy of the international balance of power, which required the territorial integrity of the Empire. The British ambitions to not allow expansion of Russia to the East Mediterranean by protecting Ottoman unity provided the survival of the Empire. Still, there is accuracy in this argument. As noted by Engin Deniz Akarlı, British strategy was based on the protection and 'strengthening' of the Ottoman Empire as a buffer against Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean from 1838 onwards.[16] Having been a buffer, Ottoman domains would have constituted both a barricade against Russian expansion and an easy passage for the

[14] For a disussion on the transformation of the Empire within the capitalist world economy, see. Immanuel Wallerstein et all., "The Incorporation of the Ottoman Empire", 89-97.

[15] Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and The World Economy: The Nineteenth Century*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 49.

[16] Engin Deniz Akarlı, "The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggles and Budgetary Deficits in Ottoman Politics under Abdulhamid II, 1876-1909", (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1976), 12.

British Empire to its Asian colonies. Yet, this conventional analysis – although it is true to a certain extent- posits the Ottomans as merely a passive audience of the nineteenth century imperialist competition and a silent agent. However, my point is that the Ottomans were far from being a passive audience of the imperial competition; they applied aggressive measures in order both to resist European expansion in Africa, and in Arabia; and also to maintain their own interests in the process of imperial competition and colonial partition. This chapter mainly deals with secondary literature on Ottoman frontiers which will pave the way for us toward a reevaluation of the Ottoman strategies and ambitions against the imperialist encroachment from 1830s to the 1880s.

As demonstrated by Mostafa Minawi, the Ottomans too engaged in the partition of Africa after the Conference of Berlin (1884-85). According to Minawi, instead of relying on silent diplomacy, the Ottoman government followed a competitive expansionist strategy along the Saharan frontiers of the Ottoman Libya and made its own claim of sovereignty in these lands.[17] This expansionist strategy was not peculiar neither to the reign of Abdulhamid II nor to Africa. From the 1830s onwards, the Ottoman reconquest of its old frontiers around where imperialist competitions intensified provides us a rather different story as it exposes the aggression and imperialist tendencies among the Ottoman ruling circles as a response to the European encroachments. Instead of watching the European imperialist actions passively, the Ottomans produced their own imperialist claims mainly based on expanding imperial sovereignty. A similar argument was made for the Chinese Empire under the Qing Dynasty. Although there has been a tendency to describe Qing China as a semi-colony of Western imperial powers, Tong Lam states that the Qing regime actively applied a geopolitical logic of colonialism to consolidate itself in order to resist further colonial intrusions and also to secure its own colonial enterprises that had been initiated long before the arrival of the industrial West.[18]

[17] Mostafa Minawi, "Lines in the Sand: The Ottoman Empire's Policies of Expansion and Consolidation on its African and Arabian Frontiers, 1882-1902", (PhD diss., New York University, 2011).

[18] Tong Lam, "Policing the Imperial Nation: Sovereignty, International Law, and the Civilizing Mission in Late Qing China", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 52:4 (2010): 884.

Starting in the 1830s, by military campaigns, the Ottomans reasserted themselves in certain North African, Arabian and mostly-Kurdish populated territories of the Middle East. Especially, the Ottoman reconquest of the territories around the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf demonstrates that the British presence provoked the Ottomans to expand towards these frontiers. Thus, the Ottomans were actually not the passive agents who just waited patiently for their fate to be sealed by the Great Powers – mainly British – but used imperialist repertoire and strategies by further expanding imperial frontiers. In this sense, the *Tanzimat* had a different meaning for the frontiers that I prefer to name as the revival of Ottoman imperialism which aimed to introduce old claims of Ottoman imperial sovereignty to these territories and to attempt to build an imperial authority and legitimacy.

The reign of Mahmud II had witnessed serious internal political crisis and external threats. Starting in the late seventeenth century the Ottoman imperial power was challenged with the wars with Habsburgs and Russians; from the late eighteenth century onwards this challenge resulted in territorial losses in the northern and eastern Black Sea regions particularly as a consequence of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774. It also witnessed the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 which was stopped by Cezzar Ahmed Pasha in Akka. However, after becoming the governor of Egypt in 1805, Mehmed Ali Pasha gradually established an autonomous rule. Furthermore, the Serbian revolt of 1807 led to an autonomous Principality of Serbia, while the Greek uprising of 1821 resulted in the formation of an independent Greek state in 1830. Mahmud II faced with the climax of Wahhabi movement as well as the aggression of Mehmet Ali Pasha's army in 1831-33. On the other hand France occupied Algeria in 1830. All these troubles helped to produce the conventional historiographical approach to define the nineteenth century as a period of decline. This argument was also supported by the Ottoman inability to deal with these problems and the consequent loss of territories throughout the century. However, as claimed by Peacock this period was different from the previous one because of two factors: the attempts of modernization and the expansion of the empire.[19]

[19] A. C. S. Peacock, "Introduction: The Ottoman Empire and Its Frontiers", in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A.C.S Peacock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 9.

A superficial survey on the frontiers – especially Arab and Kurdish – indicates the Ottoman expansion and consolidation after approximately two centuries of absence in these neglected remote areas. Alarmed by the threat of European intervention as in the case of the French invasion to Algeria, the Ottomans reconquered Libya in 1835. Starting in the 1830s, the Ottoman central government had attempted to integrate Kurdistan to the imperial center. Furthermore, imperial government initiated several military expeditions against Kurdish principalities in Cezire, and in the region of Malatya-Fırat between 1835 and 1839.[20] Yet most crucial step was the military expedition of 1847 against the Bedirhan Principality. After the 1847 expedition against the Bedirhan Principality, the Ottomans used various strategies to set themselves as a sovereign power of Kurdistan. The formation of British protectorate in Aden kindled the Ottomans to set their authority to the coastal Yemen in 1849. In eastern Arabia, the Ottomans revived their claims over al-Hasa and sought successfully to bring Kuwait and Qatar under their sovereignty. European competition over the Red Sea after the opening of the Suez, which also enabled the easy dispatchment of the troops for the Ottomans, reminded the Ottomans of their own claim in the highlands of Yemen, and in 1872 they reoccupied San'a. In North Africa, the Ottomans continued to recognize Mehmed Ali's descendants as hereditary governors of Egypt on the sultan's behalf.[21] These examples show that instead of retreating from imperial claims when faced with the European imperial aggression, Ottomans chose to expand their claim of territorial sovereignty and reenact their 'classical' imperialist vigor. Not just the territories where the Ottomans once had administration, but also regions such as Oman, whose rulers had established alliances with European powers through international treaties, also became the target of the Ottomans to impose their sovereignty.[22]

In this respect, the conventional periodization of Ottoman history cannot be applied to the abovementioned developments in these frontier regions. Following Oktay Özel, if we keep our scope to the Arab provinces, the term "Classical Age" of the Ottoman Empire seems to apply more to the nineteenth, rather than the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In his critique to the usage of the term "Classical Age" for the

[20] H. Von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, trans. Kemal Vehbi Gül, (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1967), 85-173.

[21] Peacock, "Introduction", 10-11

[22] Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History*, 13.

Ottoman history, Özel suggests that it would more accurately reflect the nineteenth century when the Ottomans started to actively look to these lands and tried to transform them by the interventions of their own institutions.[23] Furthermore, as stated by Peacock, the Ottomans also endeavored for the growth of their influence abroad in Africa and south-east Asia, especially among the Muslim rulers. For instance during the reign of Abdulhamid II, Ottoman governors of Hijaz and also specially appointed Ottoman officials tried to maintain close relations with the sultans of Zanzibar regarding the European encroachment in Eastern Africa and German expansion in the region.[24] Similarly, starting from 1873, the Ottomans had built close contacts with the Aceh Sultanate against Dutch colonial encroachments, and in the reign of Abdulhamid these relations were intensified.[25]

The *Tanzimat* process included an expansion towards Muslim frontiers, both in order to effectively control these regions, and to activate the loyalty of Muslim subjects against external imperialist threats. Although there is a vast literature about the politicization of Islam in the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1908) as a means to win an active support of the Muslim subjects towards keeping the Empire functioning and to enforce the legitimacy of the Sultan[26], it can be argued that from the 1830s onwards, in order to resist European imperial encroachments, the Empire endeavored to expand its authority over the Muslim populations and maintain their active loyalty. Regarding this, the emphasis made by Frederick Anscombe is noteworthy. According to Anscombe, the Empire had troubles with its Muslim subjects both in the Balkans and in the Middle East in the first decades of the nineteenth century, which undermined the imperial legitimacy in the eyes of its Muslim subjects. In the Balkans, local Muslims of Bosnia

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[23] Oktay Özel, "Modern Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında 'Klasik Dönem' " in *Dün Sancısı: Türkiye'de Geçmiş Algısı ve Akademik Tarihçilik* by Oktay Özel, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2009), 111.

[24] Hatice Uğur, *Osmanlı Afrikası'nda Bir Sultanlık: Zengibar*, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2005), 62-72.

[25] İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, *Güneydoğu Asya'da Osmanlı Türk Tesirleri*, (Isparta: Fakülte Kitapevi, 2004), 75-93.

[26] Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 136-207. ; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and The Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909, (*New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 44-67.

and Albania, perceiving that the Empire lacked concern for them and sensing Mahmud II's regime as an oppressive rule, were in a state of rebellion and protest.[27] Also, both Wahhabi threat to the Holy cities and Mehmed Ali Pasha's success to restore sultan's control, taking back Hijaz and suppressing this threat twice (1811-18, and 1836-39) further shattered imperial legitimacy.[28] Thus, Anscombe indicates that "instead of aiming to appease Christian subjects or foreign powers by appealing an agenda of Europeanization, reforms were shaped by, and for Muslim interests: healing divisions within the community of believers, reconciling their enduring goals and consolidating their energies upon defense against external threats."[29]

Despite the financial weakness and political disorder which deepened the legitimacy crisis of the Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottomans did not retreat from their imperial claims and sought to secure the acceptance of the state as a great power within the international system.[30] Since the Ottomans attempted to define themselves as an 'equal player' especially after the Peace Treaty of Paris (1856)[31], they produced similar imperialist claims in the regions such as Eastern and Southern Arabia as well as Africa. The Ottomans did not accept any challenge to their sovereignty and in such cases they sought to take aggressive measures or undertook extreme diplomatic pressures on the Great Powers. For example, when the Ottomans perceived British influence as a threat to their sovereignty in Iraq which might in turn endanger the Ottoman presence in the Gulf Region, imperial governors took some measures to barricade this influence in the 1880s. Especially those counted by Gökhan Çetinsaya—include the abolition of the British postal service between Baghdat and Damascus and its replacement by an Ottoman postal service; the registration of British citizens and British protected persons in Baghdat and the

[27] Frederick F. Anscombe, "Islam and the Age of Ottoman Reform", *Past and Present*, 208 (2010): 171.

[28] Ibid, 179.

[29] Ibid, 160.

[30] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains, 166.*

[31] Ussama Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence, and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform." in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen and Thomas Philipp, (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 31.

encouragement of an Ottoman rival to the Lynch steamship company on Tigris[32]; such measures demonstrated an anti-colonial resistance of the Ottomans, however with an imperialist mind.

3. Ottoman Expansion Before the Oppening of The Suez Canal

As I mentioned above, the Ottomans responded to European imperialist encroachments by expanding imperial sovereignty to the remote areas in North Africa, Arabian peninsula, and Kurdistan in the course of the nineteenth century. Although these lands were originally conquered by the Ottomans in the sixteenth century, they had been practically abandoned by the Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ottoman domination ended in Yemen in 1635; after the naval defeat in Lepanto (1571), direct Ottoman rule collapsed in Tunisia, Algeria and Tripoli – these were provinces which could be ruled only through sea connections; and Mamluk authority rose in Egypt and Basra.[33] When the Ottomans after centuries faced with critical internal legitimacy challenges and serious external threats by European imperial competition, they remembered their old claims on those lands and endeavored to reassert the Ottoman authority and legitimacy in these regions. However, local rulers had well established their authorities in those territories for approximately two hundred years, the Ottomans engaged in aggressive measures such as military expeditions and suppression of local reactions against the reconquest of these areas.

We can distinguish nineteenth century Ottoman reconquests in terms of two periods: before the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 and after it. The opening of the Suez Canal had further made the Ottomans focus their attention on the Red Sea and the Arabian Peninsula. The opening of the Suez Canal accelerated the colonial competition

[32] Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Challanges of a Frontier Region: The Case of Ottoman Iraq in the Nineteenth Century", in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A.C.S Peacock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 286.

[33] Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Arap Eyaletleri ve Günümüz Arap Devletleri: Tarihsel Bir Perspektiften Genel Bir Bakış", *Yeni Türkiye*, 1 (1995): 598; and also see. Jane Hathaway and Karl K. Barbir, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, (Harlow: Longman, 2008), 67-76.

around the Red Sea between Britain, France and Italy since it dramatically reduced the distance from the Western ports to the East and especially the road to India for the British. As remarked by Colette Dubois, the colonial competition triggered by the opening of the Suez Canal coincided with the increasing dominance of steamships which revolutionized maritime transportation, while the building of railroads revolutionized land transportation.[34] All these developments helped imperial powers to engage much more in imperial competition and in devoting harsh measures. These factors also increased the risk of loss of Ottoman influence in the Red Sea as well as in the Arabian Sea; thus the Ottomans responded by undertaking resolute measures too, as in the case of military expeditions to control the fringe territories of the Arabian Peninsula starting from the 1870s. Furthermore, as we understand from a letter sent from the Sublime Port to Yemen in 1871, the Ottomans, too, tried to benefit from new transportation possibilities. The opening of the Suez Canal was utilized as a means of easy access to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, hence the amelioration of the Ottoman Basra flotilla and the foundation of ports and fortresses along the costs of the Red sea paved the way for the Ottomans to strengthen and exhibit their power and prestige in Arabia.[35] In addition, the Ottomans intensified their attempts, in comparison to the previous period, to develop several strategies to control and rule the local populations.

3.1. Reconquest of Libya:

After Napoleon's temporal invasion of Egypt in 1798, North Africa once more entered the Ottoman imperial agenda. In 1830, France once again appeared in North Africa and this time they succeeded in invading Algeria. Both the growing power of Mehmed Ali in Egypt and the French invasion of Algeria alerted the Ottomans about North Africa and reminded the neglected terrains of Libya, which was under the authority of Qaramanlis at the time.

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[34] Colette Dubois, "The Red Sea Ports During the Revolution in Transportation, 1800-1914" in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 59.

[35] For the letter, Zekeriya Kurşun, *Basra Körfezi'nde Osmanlı-İngiliz Çekişmesi: Katar'da Osmanlılar, 1871-1916*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2004), 44-5.

Starting from 1820s the Qaramanli authority was enervated by the French attempts to end Barbary corsair's activities which were the main wealth source of the Qaramanlis in Libya. Furthermore, starting in 1830s a civil war started between the heirs of Yusuf Qaramanli who ruled Tripolit from 1795 and 1832. Both the English and the French consuls intervened the civil war and supported and aided one side against the other; that further led the political unity to disintegrate. By 1834 the Sublime Porte had become more distressed as the European powers' interventions and lack of political unity made Libya prone to British or French invasion. Sublime Porte decided that only an Ottoman intervention could protect Libya from invasion of the foreign powers.

In May 1835, Ottoman naval vessels came to Tripoli to aid in quelling the rebellion. The troop commander, Mustafa Necib Pasha, entered Tripoli on May 28 as the new governor. The reign of the Qaramanli dynasty was ended, and for the next seventy-six years the Ottomans were to rule directly.[36] However, as B. G. Martin says, the return of the Ottomans to Libya was the start of a 25 years period of repression and internal warfare on a scale not seen in Libya since the rise of the Qaramanlis.[37] Not only in Tripoli, but also those who had become tired of Turkish domination during the last years of Qaramanlis rule had developed a strong anti-Turkish opposition, particularly in the hinterland. The rebellious situation lasted approximately 25 years against Ottoman presence especially in the hinterlands. Since the abandonment of Libya would endanger the Ottoman sovereignty in North Africa and its ability to control Egypt, the Ottoman governors sent to Libya did not flinch from using violence against the rebellious elements of the province.

3.2. Return of Control over Hijaz:

Since its first conquest in 1517 by Sultan Selim I, the Hijaz region used to be a privileged province for the Ottoman rulers, since the Holy cities of Islam were part of it.

[36] For the rood to Ottoman reconquest, see. Lisa Anderson, "Nineteenth-Century Reform in Ottoman Libya", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 16 (1984): 325-8.

[37] B. G. Martin, "Ghuma bin Khalifa, a Libyan Rebel, 1795-1858", in. *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History V*, ed. Sinan Kuneralp, (İstanbul: ISIS Press), 57.

Also, the Hijaz included roads which were important for pilgrims. Hence providing security in Hijaz for the pilgrimage was an issue of Ottoman imperial legitimacy, especially for its Muslim subjects.[38] Thus, the occupation of the Holy cities by the Wahhabis seriously shattered the Ottoman imperial legitimacy. Also, British presence in Aden in 1838 forced the Ottomans to reset their imperial rule and legitimacy in the region while also restoring imperial rule along the Yemeni coastin the late 1840s.[39] All these developments forced the Ottomans to pay greater concern about the imperial rule in Hijaz. As William Ochsenwald remarks, although Mehmed Ali Pasha crushed the Wahhabi rule and regained the Hijaz for the Sultan, the Egyptians, like the Wahhabis, failed to set new institutions. Furthermore, the social diversity of local towns, general opposition to all religious innovations, an ambition to benefit from the Ottoman treasury, and concern on security of pilgrimage affairs paved the way for the Ottoman-Hashimite power, which was made possible and welcomed by the locals. However, the Ottomans could only change the balance of power by sending 2000 troops in 1841.[40]

3.3. Reconquest of Kurdistan:

In comparison to the Arab frontiers, the Empire's eastern frontiers were included earlier to the agenda of the *Tanzimat* reforms to establish central rule and to inject its administrative, financial and judicial institutions. Cities such as Erzurum, Diyarbakır and Harput were added to the *Tanzimat* agenda in 1844-45.[41] However, the imperial state also faced in those regions a series of rebellions led by local Kurdish principalities, especially in Van and Hakkari. After the conquest of Diyarbakır and other eastern provinces in the early sixteenth century, Kurdish principalities had enjoyed a certain level of autonomy. They had consolidated power while collecting taxes from the

[38] For its significance in the Empire's legitimacy-making, see. Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Haji under the Ottomans*, (New York: I. B. Tauris), 6.

[39] For the reconquest of Yemen, see. Chapter II.

[40] William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society, and State in Arabia: The Hijaz under the Ottoman Control*, (Ohio: Ohio State University Press), 132.

[41] Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu), 181.

members of their principalities and providing order in the regions.[42] For the eastern provinces of the Empire, the *Tanzimat* signalled a constant struggle of the Ottoman state to directly penetrate into the region by trying to overthrow the established order. To accomplish these, however, the imperial state had to overthrow the existing order which was based on the rule of autonomous principalities. However, it was not so easy for the imperial governments to provide that kind of order in the provinces due to the reluctance of local notables, who were accustomed to a significant level of autonomy as well as wealth. As a response to this unwillingness, the Ottoman imperial government resorted to military expeditions, as in the examples of 1845 against Han Mahmud in Van[43] and of 1847 against the Bedirhan principality.[44] Both Han Mahmud and Bedirhan strongly opposed the *Tanzimat* reforms, which they thought would deteriorate their authorities. The imperial state did not flinch from demonstrating its military superiority in order to bind these provinces directly to the imperial center and thereby mitigate the power of the local notables. In short, it was again the same; the consolidation of imperial control became possible only by a series of military expeditions.

3.4. Assertion of Authority over Southern Syria:

The Ottomans had receded from the southern frontiers of Syria and left the region to its local tribal rulers for two centuries. Since the region was including the pilgrimage routes from Damascus to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the governors of Damascus had been compelled to make payments to the strongest and most influential tribes of the region to provide secure passage of the caravans. When the Ottoman ruling elites attempted to expand their frontiers and consolidate their legitimacy starting from the mid 1830s, the region stood out to the Ottomans as it was a bridge to Arabia by which the Ottomans aspired to force their authority in the Najd and the Hijaz.

[42] See. Nelida Fuccaro, "The Ottoman Frontier in Kurdistan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead, (London: Routledge, 2011), 237-250.

[43] Cabir Doğan, "Tanzimat'ın Van'da Uygulanması ve Han Mahmud İsyanı," *History Studies* 3 (2011).

[44] See. Ahmet Kardam, *Cizre Bohtan Beyi Bedirhan: Direniş ve İsyan Yılları*, (Ankara: Dipnot, 2011), 299-365.

Furthermore, the fertile agrarian lands of Transjordan increased the appetite of Ottoman governors. Thus the Ottomans started to look for ways to establish control over this region. However, these policies could not be realized so easily. In May 1852, the Ottoman venture to introduce military conscription provoked a peasant rebellion in Ajlun. The Ottomans suppressed the rebellion by a military campaign and reasserted themselves in Ajlun. Although for 20 years the Ottoman presence remained very limited, the imperial governors coveted lands further south in the 1870s.[45]

4. Ottoman Expansion After the Opening of the Suez Canal

As I mentioned above, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 became a watershed for both the imperial competition in general, and for the Ottoman attempts to expand the frontiers. In order to secure former and new territories in the Red Sea and around the Persian Gulf against foreign encroachments, the Ottomans undertook huge military expeditions to reconquest the southern regions of Basra around the Arab Sea, and Yemeni highlands as well.

4.1. Reconquest of Eastern Arabia:

What provoked the Ottomans to expand the frontier towards eastern Arabia was the growing British presence in the region, and its (British India) political and commercial interests in the Arabian Sea. As demonstrated by Gökhan Çetinsaya, from the 1830s onwards the British had acquired the monopoly of European influence in the region; a large proportion of the trade of the Gulf was done with British India and British vessels dominated the Gulf merchant shipping.[46] Furthermore, the laying of a telegraph line in the 1860s from India to Faw, in southern Iraq, demonstrated the British

[45] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 21-48.

[46] Gökhan Çetinsaya, "The Ottoman View of British Presence in Iraq and the Gulf: The Era of Abdulhamid II", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 39 (2003): 194.

zeal to penetrate into the Gulf.[47] In order to increase their commercial superiority, the British had tried to maintain ties with the Arab sheiks in the region. By those ties and alliances with the Arap sheiks in the Gulf, the British patronized Maskat, Mukella, Oman and Bahreyn.[48] In response to these encroachments, the Ottomans articulated vigorous attempts to expand their authority and legitimacy in the region. Throughout the 1860s, the Ottomans initiated a bolstering of their naval presence in the Gulf.[49] However, the most intensified responses came with the governorship of Midhad Pasha in Baghdat between 1869 and 1872.[50] The fundamental desire of Midhat Pasha was to prevent the British commercial and political penetration to the region. He first initiated to attach Kuwait to the administration of Basra by maintaining ties with the powerful sheik family of Al-Sabah in 1869. The imperial government appointed Al-Sabah as a *kaymakam* and gave him a free hand in managing the internal affairs in return to his promise that Kuwait and Kuwaiti ships would fly the Ottoman flag. However, this was not only an issue regarding Kuwait, but an effort to reassert the Ottoman presence and authority in the Gulf region from Kuwait to Maskat, as a bulwark against British threat.[51]

Control of eastern Arabia would enable the Ottomans to both support the campaigns to Yemen and Asir and provide an Ottoman penetration in all Arabia. Imperial order in Nejd would provide secure and direct land links between Iraq and Hijaz; and a presence in Hasa would pave the way for the Ottomans' immediate retaliation to any threat from the Wahhabis.[52] With this strategic objective, Midhat Pasha undertook an aggressive policy against the growth of British influence, as Anscombe describes, "Wanting to unfurl the Ottoman flag over the Gulf region through

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[47] Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 13.

[48] Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Orta Çıkışı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), 80.

[49] Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Challanges of a Frontier", 284.

[50] For the governorship of Midhat Pasha, and his reforms in the province; see. Ebubekir Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq: Political Reform, Modernization and the Development in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

[51] Zekeriya Kurşun, *Basra Körfezi'nde*, 43.

[52] Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf* 19

military deployment."[53]Similar to the Libyan case, problems among the heirs of Faisal, the Wahhabi emir of Hasa, became an impetus for an Ottoman military campaign. Faisal's sons, Abdallah and Saud competed with each other for the succession to the emirate. While Abdallah was enthroned to the emirate in 1866, Sa'ud waged a war against his brother in 1870. Abdallah sought help from the sheik of Kuwait, who was under the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan.[54] Midhat Pasha immediately conceived this crisis as an opportunity and intervened. On 26 May 1871, an Ottoman force of 3000 men, supported by 1500 Arabs, landed in Hasa at Ra's Tanura.[55] After the deployment of the Ottoman troops, the Ottomans could succeed in asserting their power and Midhat Pasha established the *Necd Mutassarıflığı* including Hasa, Qatar, Nejd and Katif.[56]

5. Another Scene of Ottoman Expansion via Egypt

Another front of Ottoman expansion was effectuated via the Egyptian southward drive in the nineteenth century. Although Mehmed Ali Pasha's autonomous government in Egypt has been treated as one of the landmarks of the Ottoman decline, the imperial canter had not relinquished its prospect of sovereignty in Egypt. Egypt remained part of the Empire, as stated by Toledano, both politically and in terms of the culture of the ruling elite.[57] In this sense Egypt was much more Ottoman in comparison to the

[53] Ibid, 24

[54] For the competition between the two brothers, see. Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da*, 86-91.

[55] Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf* , 17-8, 29.

[56] Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da, 117*.

[57] Ehud R. Toledano, *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century Egypt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 77-87. Also in the discussion about the autonomous status granted to Samos island in 1832-3, Elektra Kostopoulou says that it prevent the island from joining the independent kingdom of Greece. I find her remarks useful in their application to the status of Egypt as well, in that she argues, on the contrary to the approach of autonomy being imposed on the Ottomans as a signal of their decline, that in fact official autonomy constitutes institutionalization of early imperial realities; seen as a political maneuver, it could be perceived as part of an effort for the empire to survive. See. Elektra Kostopoulou, "Armed Negotiations: The Institutionalization of the Late Ottoman Locality", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 33 (2013): 296-9.

previous two centuries. The imperial decree of 1841 confirmed the hereditary rule of Mehmed Ali, but also guaranteed the Ottoman sovereignty over Egypt. Thus, the Ottomans were eager to keep this status until the British invasion of Egypt in 1882 and benefited from this autonomous rule for securing its frontiers.[58]

The imperial center favored the Egyptian expansion in Africa as it perceived it as the expansion of the Ottoman sovereignty. When Mehmed Ali's expansionary desires towards Syria were thwarted, he turned his face to the south, and this time got support from the Ottomans. Both Mehmet Ali's campaigns in 1820-24 and his heirs' in 1849-77 extended the Ottoman frontier some 2000 kilometers further deep into Africa and the Ottomans promoted these expansions for the sake of the Empire.[59]

After the conquest of the Funj Sultanate in 1820-4, the imperial government declared an imperial decree stating the conquered lands of Nubia, Kordofan and Sinnar were to be ruled separately from Egypt for Mehmed Ali's lifetime which meant extra revenue for the Empire via separate tribute. Also, Massawa and Suakin were appropriated to Mehmed Ali on an annual lease in 1846. The Ottomans especially supported Khedive Ismail's expansionist ambitions which granted him the rule of most Ottoman territories on the African Red Sea in 1865.[60] In order to prevent the British and Italian expansions in the eastern Africa, the Ottomans granted Massawa, Zeyla, Berbera and Suakin in 1865 with an imperial decree to Egyptian administration, again with an obligation of separate tribute to the Ottoman treasury.[61] This paved the way for Ismail to further expand in Harar in 1877 and to attack Ethiopia as well. Additionally, the control of Somalia was granted to the Egyptian Khedivate, to provide security to the

[58] Also after 1882, the Ottoman Empire vigorously tried to keep its sovereign right in Egypt by diplomatic attempts, and until the Great War Egypt was nominally a land of the Empire, albeit just in paper. See. Süleyman Kızıltoprak, *Mısırda İngiliz İşgali: Osmanlı'nın Diplomasi Savaşı 1882-1887*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2010).

[59] John Alexander, "Ottoman Frontier Policies in North-East Africa", 1517-1914, in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A.C.S Peacock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 231.

[60] Ibid, 231-2.

[61] Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1996), 158.

region in 1880, on the condition of not challenging Ottoman sovereignty.[62] As stated by Alexander, when Ismail was forced to give up his rule, Egyptian expansion, which also carried the Ottoman suzerainty, came to its acme in the wide areas of the eastern Africa.[63]

6. Ottoman Rule in the Frontiers: A Deviation from the *Tanzimat*?

Eventually, the Ottomans extended their frontiers in the nineteenth century towards Africa and Arabia. However, it has been generally argued that these territories did not witness the Ottoman *Tanzimat* policies regarding the centralization of tax collection, conscription and also the introduction of modern administrative, financial, military and judicial institutions; an argument that concludes with the idea of an Ottoman failure in these frontiers. First of all, the *Tanzimat* itself was not a top-down and ubiquitous reform project which was implemented in every province of the Empire at the same time; instead it was shaped and re-shaped by the local dynamics. By looking how the local dynamics of Mount Lebanon configured the *Tanzimat* reforms, Ussama Makdisi suggests that the *Tanzimat* should not be understood as a coherent package of reform and argues that it was elaborated in its application as in its textual formulation.[64] Makdisi's suggestion can be extended for the entire empire; and the *Tanzimat* can be reviewed as a wider interaction between the imperial state and the local dynamics; hereby produced assorted and contingent reforms.[65] This struggle defined the content and the depth of the reform projects.

In fact, just in the 1870s the Ottoman imperial government was intent on consolidation of imperial authority in the frontiers, prompted by the rising imperial competition. The administrative, financial and judicial innovations were first

[62] Ibid, 155.

[63] Alexander, "Ottoman Frontier Policies", 233.

[64] Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth Century-Ottoman Lebanon*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 59-60.

[65] Isa Blumi makes a resemblance with the interactive dynamics under the *ayan* rule especially for the Western Balkans. See. Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 64.

concentrated in the regions near Istanbul; thus Musa Çadırcı describes the 1864 *Vilayet Nizamnamesi* as a crucial point after which the reforms involved the entire empire – only Yemen and Hijaz were excluded due to distance.[66] Yet, as Yonca Köksal demonstrated by comparing the reform process in Edirne and Ankara, there was variation in how reforms were applied, even in the core regions of the Empire, which resulted from various responses of local groups.[67]

After the reconquest of its frontiers, the Ottomans claimed the possession of the land and their sovereignty in these territories. In the context of the nineteenth century imperial/colonial context, in order to claim sovereignty, an imperial power should be based on evident exercise of functions of government over said territory.[68] Thus, in order to claim their sovereignty, the Ottomans undertook vigorous policies to transform the frontiers, starting with 1870s when the imperial competition accelerated around these areas in particular. Yet, the Ottomans were aware of the difficulties of introducing the *Tanzimat* policies and institutions in these frontiers because of the local challenges, thus they considered any possible strategies – even those signifying a deviation from the *Tanzimat* – which would provide the loyalty of the subjects.

In the minds of the Ottomans the loyalty of the local population to the imperial rule would ease the claim of sovereignty for the Ottomans, which would also strengthen the defense of the empire against the imperial encroachments of the Great powers. Hence, the from the *Tanzimat* policies and its institutions should not be treated as a failure of the Ottoman rule, but as the sign of Ottoman imperialist tenacity to control the frontier populations. In other words, the Ottoman governors did not produce a coherent and concrete *Tanzimat* agenda for these territories, but rather endeavored multifarious strategies to win the loyalty of the local population and integrate them to the imperial

[66] Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde,* 181.

[67] Yonca Köksal, "Imperial Center and Local Groups: Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne and Ankara", *New Perspectives on Turkey* 27 (2002): 108.

[68] According to Mostafa Minawi, especially after the Berlin Congress, manifestation and exercise of functions of government became the legal prerequisite of the imperial sovereignity in a colony. The Ottomans, too, engaged into the Scramble of Africa, claimed their sovereignity by referencing this legal framework in their African lands. See. Mostafa Minawi, "Lines in the Sand", 41. It needs to be noted that it was the legalization of a practice which was part and parcel of the nineteenth century colonial competition.

defense. In short, with Maurus Reinkowski's words, Ottoman policy in the frontiers was stuck in the dilemma between the exigency of *realpolitik* and the ambitious reform policy.[69]

When the imperial governors realized that the frontiers could not be ruled as the imperial heartlands like Anatolia or Syria because of the peculiar local dynamics, they choose not to implement the rigid administrative, fiscal and military institutions and policies of the *Tanzimat*.[70] As Anscombe compared the rule of Tepedelenli Ali in Epirus before the *Tanzimat* and the Ottoman rule in eastern Arabia in the late nineteenth century, there was a persistence of 'pre-modern' practices implemented in the frontiers as long as Istanbul's first and foremost interest was a secured frontier, which could be managed by promoting the provincial notables in their local interests and limiting the central interference in their affairs. Thus the military, administrative, legal and cultural standardization of the reform era was not in effect experienced in the frontiers.[71] For instance, addressing Hijaz, Ochsenwald argues that the Ottoman restoration of power was in fact the reinstatement of an *ancien regime* based on shared power; most of the changes in the program of military modernization and reorganization of the civil government specifically excluded Arabia from their application.[72] Furthermore, instead of a conscript army, many troops were recruited, trained and led in the casual fashion that had dominated the Ottoman army before the reforms of Selim III and Mahmud II at

[69] Maurus Reinkowski, "Double Struggle, No Income: Ottoman Borderlands in Northern Albania", in *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Change*, ed. Kemal Karpat and Robert W. Zens, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press), 240.

[70] For Yemen, Thomas Kühn, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism: Contesting Boundaries of Difference and Integration in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1919", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27:2 (2007): 316. According to Kuhn the Ottomans institutionalized the 'politics of difference', meaning that Yemen should be governed different form the imperial heartlands such as Anatolia and Syria due to the cultural differences.

[71] Frederick Anscombe, "Continuities in Ottoman Centre-Periphery Relations, 1787-1915", in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A.C.S Peacock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 235-6. In the same article Anscombe says that Ali provided security and frontier defence with the aid of irregular troops. This tactic should not be repeated after the decades of modernization, yet recurred in eastern Arabia to some degree. (245-6). Similarly, in theory the Ottomans should conscript men to the imperial army in Yemen, however, as I will discuss in the third chapter, the governor of Yemen Ismail Hakki Pasha recruited soldiers to a local army.

[72] Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society*, 132, 153.

the beginning of the nineteenth century.[73] In Kurdistan, for example, as Janet Klein said regarding the phenomenon of the *Hamidiye Alayları* (Hamidiye Regiments), when the imperial governors were faced with the impossibility of effective governing, tax collection and conscription due to the impervious tribal opposition, they incorporated these 'hostile' elements – the Kurdish tribes – and sought to transform them from a local challenge to state authority into a military arm of the state, by establishing tribal regiments.[74] Instead of demonstrating a failure of the Ottoman reform projects, all these examples show the Ottoman vigor to control the frontiers with flexible strategies, which mainly derived from the peculiar dynamics of these regions. I will now go into details of the dynamics of the frontiers which shaped the Ottoman imperial strategies and then continue with the main characteristics of the latter.

7. Challenges of the Frontiers

The aspiration to establish imperial authority on the outlying provinces was very much dependent on the intricacies of their geopolitical position, as well as the internal dynamics of their local population. Eugene Rogan counted three main factors which determined the dynamics of a frontier, namely the power of the local elites, the level of European encroachment and the local attitude towards the Ottoman rule. These factors also specified the Ottoman strategies of governance, assertion of legitimacy and the claim of sovereignty there.[75] Thus the Ottoman imperial rule in the frontiers took a contingent character, instead of being determined from the beginning and by Istanbul. Due to the contingent encounters, it was cumbersome to receive and comply to the agenda from Istanbul, hence the governors tried to find possible ways of controlling the region and establishing a legitimate rule within the context of frontier power relations, which extend both to the local and international arenas. For instance, as stated by Eugene Rogan for Transjordan, where the European presence and Great power strategic

[73] *Ibid,* 155

[74] Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zones,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 3-4.

[75] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 6.

interest were minimum, the Ottoman state enjoyed a relatively free hand in local rule and the reforms would appear to have solid foundations for a viable administration.[76]

The presence of foreign imperial powers around the frontiers did not only challenge the Ottoman rule, but also paved the way for the local population to posit one imperial power against another; thereby increasing the vulnerability of the Ottoman rule. In their article about the North American borderlands, Adelman and Aron say that Indian and mestizo peoples still found chances to negotiate favorable terms of trade with competing colonial regimes; that opportunity ended with the fixation of borders in which property rights, citizenship and population movement became the purview of state monopoly.[77] Since the Ottoman frontiers were susceptible to this fluidity as well, the securement of the loyalty of the local population against another imperial power became a hard but primary task for the Ottoman governors. Anscombe's example of the Arab sheiks' maneuvers to achieve their own benefits demonstrates the agency of the local powers in shaping the policy-making. According to Anscombe, Arab sheiks were the real source of change in the Gulf. These leaders sought freedom of action as in the pre-1870 period, however they also aimed to benefit from a powerful guarantor for the influence of their dynasty in their domains. [78] Evidently, the local elites in the frontiers were not the allegedly passive audience of change introduced by the imperialist competition in the course of the nineteenth century; they pursued their own interests within this change and were able to shape it. As Hala Fattah and Candan Badem stated, from the perspective of the regional players in the Arabian Peninsula, sheiks, rulers and merchants, one of the issue was whether to shift their loyalties from the Ottoman Empire to the British Raj or remain within the Porte's realm.[79]

Regardless of the fact that the fluidity prepared the ground for a space for the local notables to juggle their loyalties, the Ottoman response was based on the

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[76] Ibid, 17.

[77] Jeremy Adelman and Stephan Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empire, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in NorthAmerican History", *The American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 817.

[78] Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf* , 172.

[79] Hala Fattah and Candan Badem, "The Sultan and the Rebel: Sa'dun Al-Mansur's Revolt in the Muntafiq, c. 1891-1911", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 678.

integration of these provincial power brokers to the Ottoman rule against both external threats and local challenges. The Ottoman policy towards the notables included two dimensions at the same time. On the one hand, the imperial government was applying a policy of punishment of the local leaders, who were impervious to Ottoman loyalty, by sending them to exile or suppressing their authorities by military campaigns. However, this alone could not be sufficient to subvert the local dissent and establish control since the power structure of the state was weak in the newly reconquered frontiers. Thus, on the other hand, they sought alliances from local powers, too, by awarding them with appointments to the ranks of government, land distribution or tax exemptions.

Since securing Ottoman sovereignty against the external imperial powers and the internal challenges was the primary objective of the imperial governors, they sought a local support from the notable circles. A different track of Ottoman imperial rule, as Cem Emrence defined it, the Ottoman frontier governance combined efforts for increasing direct rule with negotiation and bargaining with the local leaders.[80] In fact, this track of imperial rule was a necessity for the Ottoman state, as was the case for the colonial empires of the time, as well. As Frederick Cooper stated, "the limits faced by the colonizing powers with the seemingly greatest capacity to act and the fullest confidence in their own transformative power and coercive capacity colonial states needed the legitimacy and coercive capacity of local authority to collect taxes, round up labor and they needed local knowledge."[81] Similarly, Timothy Parson criticizes the image of the omnipotent colonial state and states that British imperialists could govern their non-European colonies only by recruiting Africans and Asians to the bureaucratic mechanisms and have them help administering the colonies, while they endeavored to co-opt indigenous elites, as well.[82] In the sense of resembling colonial cooptation methods, the Ottoman imperial rulers resided to their traditional ways of negotiation and bargaining with the powerful local groups, which once in the 15-17th centuries oriented

[80] Cem Emrence, "Imperial Paths, Big Comparisons: The Late Ottoman Empire", *Journal of Global History* 3 (2008): 304.

[81] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 183-4.

[82] Timothy H. Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A World Historical Perspective*, (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 30.

the expansion of empire.[83] In this sense, we can also argue that the Ottomans reinvented the early methods of conquest and expansion of the Empire, as was described by Halil İnalcık, namely granting certain privileges like tax exemptions to the natives of the newly-conquered territories in return to their employment in the defense of the frontiers, while aiming for the gradual reconciliation of the local conditions to the Ottoman institutions.[84]

The Ottomans tried to get the support of influential families, tribal and religious leaders to assert their legitimacy in the eyes of the local population. In this sense, Anscombe, by looking into the case of eastern Arabia, is right to argue that the Ottomans dealt primarily with leading individuals or groups rather than with all classes of the society. He gives the example of the Ottomans having relations almost exclusively with the families of Al Thani and Al Sabah in Qatar and in Kuwait, and in Hasa where there were no dominant families, the state built alliances with the traders, land owners and local sheiks to benefit from their power and local knowledge, while attempting to set imperial rule.[85] For instance, the progress of the Ottoman imperial rule in Libya owed its success to its alliance with the Sanusi order, since its goals of education and commercial development coincided with the goals of Ottoman imperial governors.[86] Moreover, the Ottomans benefited from the wide network of Sanusi order which brought the Ottoman legitimacy to the remote areas of Libya. As noted by Ali Abdüllatif Ahmida, the Sanusi order consolidated the Bedouin tribes through its institutions of education and its management of trade; thus fulfilling the function of the state.[87] By granting tax exemptions and leaving them free in their internal affairs, the Ottoman legitimacy pervaded the local population.

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[83] For the usage of the strategies of negotiation and bargaining to expand and to maintain the imperial rule, see. Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 67-191.

[84] Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): 103-107.

[85] Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf* , 55

[86] For the Sanusi order and its role in the process of Ottoman imperial rule in Libya, see. Lisa Anderson, "Nineteenth-Century Reform"

[87] Ali Abdüllatif Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya: State Formation, Colonization and Resistance, 1830-1932*, (Albany: State University of New York Press), 32.

As for the North American historians the notion of frontier includes a contact zone between the imperial rulers and 'indigenous' societies, Eugene Rogan stated that the 'indigenous' societies the Ottomans encountered in the frontiers from Kurdistan through Arabia to North Africa had one thing in common: the frontier was a contact zone between the state and tribal society.[88] This interaction meant that the Ottoman imperial center and its governors first had to deal with and control the various lifestyles of the tribes. However, the frontier dynamics were not conditioned merely by the ambitions of the Ottomans. The military strength of the tribes, the political influence of their leaders, their position in the trade routes and their relations with the other imperialist powers were significant determiners of the efficiency of the Ottoman rule over the tribes as well as of the set of strategies of the Ottoman government.

In fact, since the Ottomans recognized the tribal structure as the main element of the frontiers, the strategies of asserting Ottoman authority translated into an approach of conciliating and appeasing the tribes. In this sense, we can also conclude that the Ottomans themselves turned the tribes into political units, since the Ottoman imperial rulers applied the issues of tax collection, conscription and loyalty on the scale of tribes instead of an individual base. Furthermore, as I mentioned above, the Ottomans contacted with the tribal leaders, rather than whole ranks of the society. For instance, after the conquest of Hasa, Midhat Pasha recognized Sheik Nasir as head of their confederation and made him *mutassarif* of a new Muntafiq *sancak*.[89] This is one – but typical – example that shows how the Ottomans recognized (and at the same time transformed) the tribes as political units.[90]

One of the main challenges to the Ottoman authority was of a rather different character than the sedentary frontier tribes, namely the existence of the nomadic tribes. The settlement of the nomadic people and tribes had become one of the main targets of imperial governors for all time, since the seventeenth century, in order to easily control them, collect taxes, prevent their attacks against the settled cultivators and to open

[88] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 6.

[89] Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf* , 98.

[90] For a similar discussion regarding how the Ottomans transformed the Kurdish tribes into political units, see. Hakan Özoğlu, "State-Tribe Relations: Kurdish Tribalism in the 16th and 17th Century Ottoman Empire", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 23 *(*1996).

empty lands to production.[91] In addition, especially the long wars of the eighteenth century had deteriorated the economy of the peasants and resulted in big population movements in Anatolia and Rumelia; thus the state undertook an initiative to settle the people for good.[92] However, the settlement of the nomadic tribes in the frontiers was also an imperative for the Ottoman governors as a means to barricade the fluidity that I mentioned above.

In the context of the fluid borderlands, the imperial state was unable to control the commercial and political engagement of the nomadic tribes with other imperial powers. Thus the settlement became a peculiar target for the imperial governors in the frontiers. As Gökhan Çetinsaya remarked for the Ottoman-Iranian border, since the transhumant Kurdish tribes inhabited both sides of the Iraq-Iran frontier and did not recognize any border, cross-border mobility of the tribes' loyalty and the conflicting international efforts to establish patronage over them created a constant tension for the Empire.[93] Due to the possible chance of new patronage from other imperial powers, it became a harder task for the imperial governors to secure the loyalty of the nomadic tribes. As for their commercial practice, smuggling became an uncontrollable and untaxed activity of the nomadic tribes, which caused a more alarming concern by the imperial governors to settle and regulate them.

In sum we can define the Ottoman strategies of dealing with the tribal populations as a policy of 'carrot and stick'. As implied by Ebubekir Ceylan in the context of the Ottoman dealings with the Iraqi tribes:

> "The policies followed by Ottoman governors against the tribes can be summarized as carrot or stick game and they varied considerably from granting favours to certain tribes, creating inter-tribal frictions, recognizing a rival chieftain within a given tribe, the use of military force, incorporation of the tribal structures into the provincial political mechanism, and settlement of the tribal confederations. The stick, in other words, the use of military force came usually

[91] Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Aşiretlerin İskanı*, (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1987), 39-48.

[92] Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun İskan Siyaseti ve Aşiretlerin Yerleştiilmesi*, (Ankara: TTK, 1988), 28-33.

[93] Gökhan Çetinsaya,"Challanges of a Frontier", 278.

when all other methods of 'politics of tribe' failed."[94]

Another challenge to the Ottoman rule in the frontiers was the encounter with the peripheral populations.[95] The penetration of imperial authority to the remote areas resulted in the Ottomans facing a population who had not encountered directly with the state bureaucracy before. In a way, for these peripheral populations the presence of the state in their terrains might have been perceived as a foreign invasion.[96] Beyond the resistance of these peripheral populations to the Ottoman attempts of settlement, collection of taxes and conscription, in the cases of non-Sunni religious peripheral populations[97] it was hard to build legitimacy upon the tenet of a Sunni-ortodox identity. Instead of just looking for inclusive mechanisms for these populations, the Ottomans appealed to coercive means, too, like conversion and outright suppression. Especially in the reign of Abdulhamid II, the imperial government articulated the Hanefi-Sunni interpretation of Islam as orthodox in its discourse to its Muslim subjects and aimed to indoctrinate this version of Islam in order to maintain their obedience. In other words, the Hanefi-Sunni interpretation of Islam had become the fundamental depiction of the Empire's identity, especially in the Arab and Kurdish populated regions, and was articulated as an 'official belief' which operated as the cultural bond for their relations with their subjects.[98] As a consequence, non-Sunni, heterodox or heretic subjects were not only excluded from this larger picture, but they were also considered to be the problem itself. The imperial government tried to maintain the loyalty of these subjects by endearing them to Hanefi-Sunni Islam with particular policies. The Alevi population of Dersim, Nusayris of Syria, Zaydis of Yemen, and Shi's of Basra was the examples *par excellence* of this kind of sects, and their beliefs were perceived as the basis of their

[94] Ebubekir Ceylan, "Carrot or Stick? Ottoman Tribal Policy in Baghdat, 1831-1876", *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 3 (2009), 173.

[95] I borrowed the term, 'peripheral population' from Selçuk Akşin Somel. According to Somel there are two kinds of peripheral populations in the Empire: religous and sociological. The former was the non-Sunni populations such as Jafari Shis, Zaydis, Alavis, Yezidis, Crypto-christians; and the latter included Kog Albanians, Bedouins, and Kurds. See. Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Modernleşme Döneminde Periferik Nüfus Grupları", *Toplum ve Bilim* 83 (1999): 181-196.

[96] Ibid, 197.

[97] Especially the Zaydis in Yemen proved a great challenge to the Ottoman authority since they had their own judicial, educational institutions. I will discuss this in the second chaper.

[98] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 66.

disloyalty. In order to solve this matter, imperial governors had to search for policies to 'correct their beliefs' (*tashih-i akaid*); this became, in the words of Selim Deringil, a 'watchword term' in the Hamidian regime.[99]

8. Establishing a Security Regime in the Frontiers

Since the Ottomans had perceived the frontier dynamics as possible challenges to the assertion of the Ottoman imperial rule, internal security became the primary objective for the imperial governors. John M. Willis's remark that the "frontiers were the space of security rather than law"[100] is outstanding for the Ottoman context. In order to defend the Empire against the other imperial powers, the Ottomans thought that tranquility had to prevail the frontiers; hence the security became the first and foremost agenda of the imperial governors. In this sense I prefer to define the frontier rule as a 'security regime'. For the Ottomans, once they could provide security and tranquility in the frontiers, their authority would be permanent and they would be able to collect taxes as well as conscript local population to the imperial army. Ahmed Cevdet Pasha's proposal for Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects this Ottoman perception. According to Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, in order to provide prosperity to the local population and tax revenues to the treasury, first the state should maintain security by the construction of military buildings.[101] Thus, what the Ottomans first did in the frontiers was usually fortification, introducing the troops and building barracks. Every new administrative center meant the expansion of the scope of state's security means.

For our scope, it is significant that the Ottomans had sought to integrate the local population to the security apparatuses, in an effort to look more legitimate in the eyes of the local society. The expeditions of the imperial army to suppress disturbances had

[99] Ibid, 49.

[100] John M. Willis, *Unmaking North and South: Cartographies of the Yemeni Past, 1857-1934*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

[101] See. Burcu Özgüven, "Palanka Forts and Construction Activity in the Late Ottoman Balkans", in. *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A.C.S Peacock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 178.

further incited local sentiment against the imperial army, which was perceived in effect as a 'colonizer force'. As a pre-emptive measure, the imperial governors appealed to local men for the filling of the ranks of these new security units. The recruitment strategies varied from region to region, but the most palpable populations, people settled from other regions, the members of allied tribes, were first preferred for these units' manpower.[102]

9. Frontiers in the Reign of Abdülhamid II[103]

Abdulhamid II started his career after the Ottoman expansion towards its frontiers, which had started from the 1830s, came to its climax. However, after the Russian War, with the Berlin Treaty of 1878, Abdulhamid II was forced to accept huge territorial losses in the Balkans which significantly changed the demographic structure of the Empire. 200.000 square kilometers, on which 5.5 million people lived, was lost.[104] Both the loss of these territories and the inflow of Muslim refugees increased the Muslim proportion of the Empire to 73.3 percent, according to general censuses of 1881/2-93.[105] This demographic change had certain impacts on the imperial policies. After 1878, the consolidation of imperial power in Asian and Arab provinces had priority for Abdulhamid II; and since the Muslim population became the 'bedrock' for the Empire, Abdulhamid II had further reason to call upon Islamic discourses and practices. As stated by Engin Deniz Akarlı, the Sultan's renewed concern for Islam mingled with the desire to redress the territorial losses, turned the government's attention to the Arab

[102] For instance in Hasa, the imperial government appointed the leader of Bani Khalid tribe as a regional governor. He founded a militia consisting from Bedouin Arabs, Kurds, Afghans, and Baluchis. See. Anscombe, "Continuities in Ottoman", 246-7. Or in Transjordan, The Circassian and Chechen settlers were active in the gendarme force. See. Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 67.

[103] Since my case study of the Asakir-i Hamidiye in Yemen covers the period between 1880-1882, I will not evaluate the reign of Abdulhamid II from 1876-1909, but just touch upon his first years in the throne regarding our context.

[104] Francois Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, trans. Ali Berktay, (Istanbul: Homer, 2006), 122.

[105] Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Character*, (Madision: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 148-50.

provinces.[106] Since the imperial competition escalated, Abdulhamid II embarked on a transformative agenda to consolidate imperial rule in the frontiers and an intensive effort to win the loyalty of the Muslim subjects living in the Arab and Kurdish frontiers.

However, it was not only the loss of Balkan territories, but also the challenges rising from Muslim subjects that alarmed Abdulhamid II and prompted his vigorous efforts to transform the frontier population to loyal subjects of the Sultan. Especially Abdulhamid II's suspicion and fear of an Arab caliphate as well as an Arab Government had further provoked him to consolidate his efforts to promote his caliphate title and win a religious fidelity of the Muslim population in the Arab and Kurdish frontiers. Especially certain incidents of discontent in Hijaz instilled fear in Abdulhamid II. Abdulhamid II feared that British supported Emir Husain would establish an Arab government during his term office in 1877-1880 and that secret attempts were being orchestrated to have the Arabs transfer their allegiance to the emir of Mecca as the leader of all Muslims.[107]

Thus, the Ottoman imperial attempt to consolidate the state's power and its prestige in the frontiers and to shape the loyalty of the Muslim population had been accelerated from the early 1880s during the reign of Abdulhamid II. The Arab provinces had been granted a privileged character due to the Islamic discourse and practices which sought to create a unifying identity as an imperial front in the context of international competition. Thus it would not be wrong to define the reign of Abdulhamid II as the reign of the intensified attempts to consolidate imperial rule in the Arab and Kurdish frontiers. Especially the traumas of the Russian War and the disturbances in the Muslim territories had provoked Abdulhamid II for consolidating policies, instead of pursuing new ventures of expansion, which had characterised the previous period.

Abdulhamid II had further sought to make alliances and appealed to inclusive methods with the Arab notables to set himself as a legitimate ruler in the eyes of the Muslim subjects. As noted by Jens Hanssen, after the closing of Parliament,

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[106] Engin Deniz Akarlı, "Abdülhamid II's attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System" in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986,) 76.

[107] See. Ş. Tufan Buzpınar, "Vying for Power and Influence in the Hijaz: Ottoman Rule, The Last Emirate of Abdulmuttalib and the British, 1880-1882", *The Muslim World* 95 (2005): 1.

Abdulhamid II ceremonially promoted the Arab provinces whose notables he tried to integrate into his personalized rule by positioning them at the head list of the imperial ceremonies.[108] In this sense, as argued by Engin Deniz Akarlı, instead of coercion, reconciliation dominated Abdulhamid II's rule in the Arab provinces, underlined by the emphasis on the Islamic foundation and the struggle to keep the Arab territories free from foreign intervention.[109]

Apart from awarding notables and using similar strategies to integrate them , Abdulhamid II also used imperial capital to invite local notables and sheiks as his own guests and as advisers to his imperial policies regarding the remote territories of the Empire. Abdulhamid II both benefited from the knowledge of these local notables on the affairs of the remote areas, and could manage to keep them under his control.[110] The vigorous efforts to create an actively loyal population through the spectrum of an Islamic ideology, however, could not always apply to the frontiers, as some of them were home to non-Sunni Muslims, as in the case of Zaydis' Yemen. Thus, as stated by Engin Deniz Akarlı, conflicting interpretations of Islam became a regular feature of the ongoing political struggle.[111]

10. Towards an Ottoman Colonialism?

The Ottoman historiography has witnessed a stimulating debate on colonialism, first provoked by two prominent Ottoman historians, Selim Deringil and Ussama Makdisi. According to Deringil, "[i]n the nineteenth century the [Ottoman] elite adopted the mindset of their enemies, and came to conceive of its periphery as a colonial

[108] Jens Hanssen, "Practices of Integration: Center-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire", in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen and Thomas Philipp, (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 71.

[109] Engin Deniz Akarlı, "Abdülhamid II's attempt to Integrate", 84-5. Stephen Diguid also emphasized Abdulhamid II's inclusive strategies to integrate Kurds to the imperial rule. See. Stephen Diguid,"The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," *Middle Eastern Studies* 9 (1973): 139.

[110] For instance, see. Ş. Buzpınar, "Abdülhamid II and Sayyid Fadl Paşa of Hadramawt", The Journal of Ottoman Studies 13 (1993): 238.

[111] Engin Deniz Akarlı, "The Tangled Ends of a Empire: Ottoman Encounters with the West and Problems of Westernization: An Overview" *Comparative Studies on South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 26:3 (2006): 361-2.

setting."[112] Ussama Makdisi also points out that while resisting Western political and colonial implications, the Ottomans recognized the logic of the time and progress of Western orientalism.[113] These two arguments mainly set the Ottoman colonialism as a survival tactic against the Western imperial encroachments and put forth that the Ottoman ruling elites were sharing the nineteenth century colonial mind while dealing with the Arabs and Kurds. The Ottoman orientalism/colonialism thesis mainly argues that the imperial state and its representatives running in the Arab and Kurdish regions perceived the local population as backward and unrefined people who needed to be civilized by the introduction of the Ottoman institutions. The reports written by the provincial governors graphically reflect the Ottoman articulation of the mentality of a civilizing mission that was planned and executed for the populations of remote frontiers.[114]

Especially the expansion of the Ottoman rule to the Arab and Kurdish frontiers in the nineteenth century paved the way for the Ottoman governors to encounter with the peripheral populations, whose lifestyles and beliefs had been perceived as 'uncivilized'. However, 'civilizing' in the language of Ottoman bureaucracy came to mean "correction of beliefs in accordance with Sunni faith, inspiration of loyalty to Caliph-Sultan and thus the acknowledgment of Ottoman central power, and finally to teach Ottoman Turkish."[115] Thus, we can argue that the distinction between the civilized and uncivilized was narrowed down to a question of obedience; and in this sense civilizing mission meant to transform the peripheral populations to obedient subjects of the Empire.[116] From this perspective, as argued by Şükrü Hanioğlu, the descriptions of

[112] Selim Deringil, " They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45 (2003): 311.

[113] Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 769.

[114] See. Cihangir Gündoğdu and Vural Genç, ed., *Dersim'de Osmanlı Siyaseti, İzale-i Vahşet, Tashih-i İtikad ve Tasfiye-i Ezhan, 1880-1913*, (Istanbul: Kitap, 2013, 54-167.

[115] Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 219.

[116] The itemization of Seyyid Hasan Hilmi, governor general of Mamuretulaziz, is very elucidating in this respect. He distinguishes the population of Dersim and their state of being civilized in accordance to their level of obedience:

Druzes or Maronites in Mount Lebanon, of Kurds, of Albanian highlanders, or of Arab bedouins as warlike savages were rather the manifestation of Ottoman frustration at these groups' pertinacious refusal to give up local practices and accept central administration.[117]

Although it is worthy to demonstrate that the Ottoman ruling elites articulated a similar discourse with their contemporary colonial rulers, missionaries and educators, still this affinity is not sufficient to describe the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire as a colonial one. In other words the notion of the empire being colonial cannot be traced just with textual analysis of the discourse used by the imperial governors while dealing with the peripheral populations.[118] As Fatma Müge Göçek warned, this argument requires comparative studies of Ottoman governors adopting a colonial attitude with

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"For the government, the tribes living in Dersim can be parted into three groups, the first group lives in Mazgird district and neighborhood near the military cohorts, who give their taxes, and are loyal to government; the second group is less near the military cohorts than the first group and although they are mixed up with administrative officials, military cohorts and civilized people, they were not accustomed with them, therefore they have still savage attitudes, yet still they pay their taxes; the third group is very far from the government and military cohorts and up until now they have not come to the administrative center and paid their taxes."

See. HasanHilmi. "MamüretülazizVali-iEsbakıEs-SeyyidHasanHilmi'ninLayihası," in *Dersim'deOsmanlıSiyaseti: İzale-iVahşet, Tashih-iİtikad, veTasfiye-iEzhan, 1880-1913*, ed. CihangirGündoğdu and VuralGenç, (İstanbul: KitapYayınevi, 2013), 64.

[117] Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History*, 88.

[118] Also we should keep in mind the relativity of the orientalist language, which thus cannot be a determiner of colonialism itself. For an example of this relativity and complexity, Broers indicates that while the "Italian intellectuals and politicians 'orientalized' the Mezzogiorno (the South) after unification in the mid-nineteenth century, seeing it as a region apart, unable to integrate, in an earlier discourse, into the more advanced society of the North, The French took a strikingly similar view of many of those very parts of Italy which were later regarded as being in the vanguard of modernization." See. Michael Broers, Cultural Imperialism in a European Context? Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Napoleonic Italy, *Past & Present*, 170 (2001), 154. In the Ottoman context the local elites also applied to same 'orientalist' discourse while describing the lower-class local people and propounded the 'civilizing mission'. For instance, as Isa Blumi noted, Şemseddin Sami, an Ottoman-Albanian intellectual, was proposing that the state inculcates Islam, modernity and civilization to reinforce loyalty to the regime among the previously ignored populations of Albania. See. Isa Blumi, *Reinstateting* , 110.

those serving the empire in less peripheral parts of the empire.[119]In my view, the issue of being a colonial empire should be explored beyond the level of discourse but should be traced instead in the legal and practical experiences of the Empire in the frontiers. However, in want of a consensus on when to define an empire as colonial, the issue becomes much more complex. While discussing anything about colonialism in the nineteenth century, the starting point should be that there was no monolithic colonial regime to serve as a model. In other words, according to the demographic, political and geographical features of the colonized populations and colonized spaces, one can witness several forms of colonial regimes in history. Moreover, in the face of political tensions, and resistance by the colonized subjects, contemporary colonial regimes might follow different tactical approaches. This variety is highlighted by the fact that imperial centers treated and administered their colonies within different realms in markedly different ways. For instance, the British Empire had administered its colonies in three distinct administrative categories: crown colonies, colonies with 'representative governments' and those with responsible governments – designating increasingly indirect forms of crown rule. Also the French Empire under the Third Republic had used several administrative settlements to organize its colonies. For instance, the Ministry of Colonies had ruled most of the territories, but Algeria was thought as part of France ruled by the Ministry of Interior, while Tunisia and Morocco were administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[120] However, one common thing among all colonial regimes was the legal, political and symbolic distinction and hierarchy between metropole and colony.

[119] Fatma Müge Göçek, "Parameters of a Postcolonial Sociology of the Empire" in *Decentring Social Theory*, ed.Julian Go (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing, 2013), 91. In this sense, the language used for the urban poor of Istanbul in the late nineteenth century had similarities with the language used for the peripheral populations. Their amelioration (terbiye) which became the main target of the Ottoman ruling elites, had as its objectivetheir use as work force in the labor market in the Capital, and the rendering of the peripheral population in agricultural laborers. For the public discourse towards the beggars of Istanbul, See. Nadir Özbek, "Beggars and Vagrants in Ottoman State Policy and Public Discourse, 1876-1914", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45 (2009): 786-790. modernity.

[120] David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 5.

European colonial administrations justified the axiom that the colonial subjects should be governed differently from the metropolitan subjects.[121] As Partha Chattarjee propounds for the Indians' rights and responsibilities under the British colonization, "the only civil society that the government could recognize was theirs; colonized subjects could never be its equal members. Freedom of opinion, which even they accepted as an essential element of responsible government, could apply only to the organs of the civil society; Indians were not fit subjects of responsible government."[122] The inequality between the colonizers and colonized was legalized, and colonized people were excluded from the legal frameworks and participation channels pursued for the metropole. As noted by Frederick Cooper, "maintaining the colonial regime required a coercive and administrative work to define hierarchies and police social boundaries."[123] In this sense, race played a crucial role in the making of distinctive and exclusionary politics. According to David Spur, the colonial situation is characterized by "the domination imposed by a foreign minority 'racially' and culturally different, over a materially weaker indigenous majority in the name of a racial (or ethnic) and cultural superiority."[124] Regarding this it is hard to trace this kind of legal distinction in the Ottoman Empire.

Ussama Makdisi argues that the Ottoman modernization process was based on racial distinction between a Turkish center and the Arab provinces.[125] Furthermore, the ruling elites of the late nineteenth century had started to inculcate Turkishness as a fundamental identity in their worldviews. This can be observed in Cevdet Pasha, a highly influential statesman and historian in the late 19th century. Ordered by Abdulhamid II him to examine historical and political events between 1839 and 1876, he explicitly refers to Turks as the fundamental element (asli unsur) of the Empire in his

[121] See, Ann Laura Stoler, Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda", in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[122] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories,* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 24.

[123] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism*, 27

[124] David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 5.

[125] Ussama Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism", 39-46.

notes for the sultan.[126] In a similar way, Osman Nuri Pasha, a provincial governor in the Arab provinces (who is quite representative of the provincial governors in the reign of Abdulhamid II), portrays Turkish and Anatolian soldiers stationed in Hijaz, Benghazi and Yemen as the fundamental elements of the Empire. In his proposals for policies to be taken regarding the Hijaz, he states, referring to the Arabs, that "even if it were possible today to blend all the Muslim tribes and nations together by causing them to lose their special characteristics through the application of rigorous policies, they would still be no more than the boughs and branches of the tree whose trunk would still be constituted by the Turks."[127] These are two examples – but not limited – that demonstrate how the Ottoman ruling elites imagined and constructed Turkishness as the fundamental identity of the Empire. Even so, imagining Turkishness as a fundamental element of the Empire did not result in the claim that the non-Turkish subjects should be governed differently from the Turks. Although the reproduction of cultural and racial distinctions between the European colonial powers and colonized subjects led to the permanency of 'politics of difference', as Edip Gölbaşı noted, the Ottoman authorities strived to close the cultural gap, and by appealing to conversion, education, settlement and conscription at least sought to create obedient subjects via an inclusive and collective identity. By doing so, the Ottomans desired to integrate 'uncivilized' populations to the imperial order rather than excluding them.[128] In other words, although the Ottoman ruling elites appealed to exclusivist discourses while defining their peripheries as backward and uncivilized, they envisioned an eventual social and political integration of the peripheral population – even attempted it via the notable circles.[129]

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[126] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Ma'ruzat,* ed. Yusuf Halaçoğlu, (Istanbul: ÇağrıYayınları, 1980), 44, 115.

[127] Deringil, *Well Protected Domains*, 68.

[128] Edip Gölbaşı, "19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Emperyal Siyaseti ve Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında Kolonyal Perspektifler", *Tarih ve Toplum* 13 (2011): 209. It needs to be noted that Edip Gölbaşı further claims that the Ottoman ruling elites sought an equal Ottoman citizenship. To my mind the examples I gave from Ahmed Cevdet Pasha and Osman Nuri Pasha show that the ruling elites were not imagining this kind of equality too.

[129] For the tension between the exclusivist discourse and integrationist policy in Beirut. See. Jens Hanssen, *Fin De Siecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

Although the Ottomans did not form a legal framework which formalized a distinction between metropole and periphery, and sought an integrative policy, still a comparison between Ottoman rule in the frontiers and contemporary colonial governing practices would be engaging in its potential to describe how the empire functioned in the nineteenth century. Firstly, in the scramble of imperial/colonial competition, the Ottomans sought an expansionist policy and reclaimed their old frontiers. In fact, the Ottomans engaged into this imperialist race first by extending their frontiers and then trying to claim their sovereignty in these territories. While claiming sovereignty, the Ottomans, too, appealed to imperialist and colonial repertoires.[130] Secondly, as I discussed above, the Ottoman imperial rule in the frontiers differed from the Tanzimat policies, which were best implemented in the imperial heartlands. Moreover, when faced with the peculiar dynamics of the frontiers, the Ottoman governors sought any possible strategies to control the population and maintain their obedience for the imperial defense, rather than attempting a rigid centralization policy. In this aspect, a probing of the resemblances of Ottoman policies in the frontiers with the colonial governing practices would be noteworthy. As I will discuss in the third chapter, Ismail Hakkı Paşa was inspired from the Sepoy army of British India and built a native army in Yemen between 1880-2. Since the frontiers were the scenes in which various governing and controlling strategies were displayed by different imperial powers, the interaction would be inevitable. Although this does not render the Ottoman Empire a colonial one, at least we can conclude that the Ottomans sought colonial administrative and military strategies in the frontiers in order to control the population. However, we should not forget that similar strategies designated in the first expansion of the Ottoman Empire between the 14th-17th centuries for the frontier defense, integration of the local population and alliance with the local notables had been used. Thus we can also interpret these strategies as the revival of Ottoman imperialist repertoires.

[130] As Selim Deringil showed, at the Berlin Conference the Ottomans began to refer to 'the rights and well established positions of the Sublime state in its colonies in Africa.' see. Selim Deringil,“ 'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery' ”, 323.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: OTTOMAN HISTORY OF YEMEN

1. From a Fear to the Imperialist Passions

When the news came in November 1870 that Asiri emir Muhammed Ibn Aiz rebelled and then broadened his uprising towards Yemeni Tihame (west coast of Yemen), the Ottoman high-ranking bureaucrats and generals were alarmed in Istanbul. The grand vizier Âli Pasha and Hüseyin Avni Pasha, who was the *serasker* (commander in chief) of the period, were the most anxious men among those. This time the issue was more convoluted than the previous cases of provincial unrest. In fact, Muhammed Ibn Aiz had rebelled in 1863 after a quarrel with the sharifs of Ebu Arish, and captured the castle of Cizan in Yemen before heading for Luhayya. The Ottomans had resolved the issue at that time by allowing the Egyptian khedive to send soldiers. After the march of the Egyptian soldiers, the sharif of Mecca, Şerif Abdullah and the governor general İzzet Pasha assured the obedience of ibn Aiz; and he was appointed as the *kaymakam* of Asir.[131] This time however, Âli Pasha and Hüseyin Pasha did not prefer the methods of conciliation, or demanding the Khedive to send Egyptian soldiers to assuage the rebellion. Instead, they planned an imperial campaign. In fact, the decision to conduct an imperial campaign was not just linked to the Asiri rebellion. It reflects the renewed and pressing Ottoman interest in the

[131] Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın Cild-i Evveli, trans. Nuri Akbayar, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 42.

region, which emerged within the new international context after the opening of Suez Channel in 1869.

The opening of the Suez Channel was a turning point in the 'new imperialism' and it positioned the Red Sea into a strategically essential point, since the British priority was to protect its Indian colony from the imperial competition. This required for the British to control the entire Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and crucial segments of the African coasts and their hinterlands.[132] As I discussed in the first chapter, instead of being a passive audience of the imperial competition, the Ottomans had ventured to strengthen their position by expanding their frontiers. In order to resist the encroachments of the Western imperial powers, the Ottomans applied aggressive imperialist measures as in their decision to reoccupy the Yemeni highlands. In this aspect, the anxiety of Âli and Hüseyin Avni Pashas shifted to an imperialist passion.

The presence of the British in Aden, and the increasing charm of the Red Sea for the imperial powers – particularly, for the British, French and Italians – had endangered the Ottoman control over the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, which was one of the main sources of imperial legitimacy over the Muslim populations of the Empire. In the minds of the Ottoman ruling elites, the danger around the holy cities would imperil the existence of the Empire. Thus, the Ottomans, in the context of rising imperialism, put the reconquest of southern Arabia and direct control over the region in their agenda. In other words, it was the emerging significance of the Red Sea for the imperial powers which reminded the Ottomans to protect the holy cities by securing direct control over Yemen as well as the entire Arabian Peninsula. Ahmed Muhtar Pasha succinctly explains why the Ottomans pursued an imperial campaign for Yemen. According to him, although it was an Ottoman duty to prevent Yemen from being acquired by other powers, since it was a neighboring region of the Holy cities, the Ottomans had not objected their absence from these lands before. The difference now was the opening of the Suez Canal, for it made the Red Sea a route to the Indian, Chinese and African coasts and hence brought it to prominence. From that point on, it became an evident possibility that Yemen would be targeted by the other powers; thus it became an indispensable task for the Ottomans to act

[132] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 68.

earlier than its rivals.[133] In this aspect, the emphasis made by Ahmed Muhtar Pasha on the opening of Suez Canal in terms of the reminiscence of the Ottomans' role to protect the Holy cities is particularly telling. In this sense, historian Ahmed Râşid Pasha was much clearer in expressing the Ottoman engagement in the imperialist scramble. According to him, since India and many lands in Africa became British colonies, the Russians expanded their possessions towards Asia, and Aceh turned into a Dutch colony, the Ottomans required to control Yemen by undertaking an imperial campaign. He states the urgency of the action: if the Ottomans were two or three years late to take this decision, Yemeni lands would fall under the control of the foreign powers.[134] Thus, although the later Ottoman accounts of the reoccupation of the Yemen made particular emphasis on the Ottoman role to protect the Holy cities,[135] the issue should be understood in the larger context of the Ottoman drive in the escalation of the imperialist struggles. It was the fear of Ottoman ruling elites concerning the deterioration of the Ottoman presence in the region as a consequence of the encroachments of the Western imperial powers, which led them to undertake imperialist strategies.

The rebellion of Muhammed Ibn Aiz made the precarious nature of the Ottoman power in the Arabian Peninsula rather visible. It showed that the fall of Hodeida would result in the collapse of the Ottoman authority in south-west Arabia.[136] For the Ottoman ruling elites, this fragile status could not be sustained in the newly emerging imperial context in the Red Sea. The only solution that came to the minds of the Ottoman bureaucrats was to establish direct control in the region. In order to do this, the imperial campaign they envisioned aimed both to subjugate the

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[133] Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 97-8.

[134] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen ve San'a*, vol.1 (İstanbul: Basiret Matbaası, 1291), 257.

[135] See. İsmail Hakkı Tevfik, *1911 Asir İsyanı*, trans. Ali Kemal (Filibe: Tefeyyüz Matbaası, 1936), 8. According to Ismail Hakkı Tevfik, if the Ottomans would have failed to keep the Khaliphate, the Sharif of Mecca would be a khaliph under the British control. Or see. BOA./YEE. 12-14, Mustafa Sabri Bey to the Palace, 29 Zilhicce 1297 (2, December 1880). In this layiha, Mustafa Sabri Bey depicts Yemen as a steel door of the Holy cities; and adds that if the Yemen would have been lost to the British, the Hijaz too would become the possession of the British, which would made the state of the great khalifate (hilafet-i kübra) worse than its already bad state.

[136] Robert Gavin, "The Ottoman Reconquest of Arabia, 1871-73", *History Today* 13 (1963): 776.

rebellion and afterwards occupy the Yemeni highlands. As emphasized by Robert Gavin, this was an entirely new orientation for the Ottoman policy toward Arabia.[137] Starting in the 1870s, the Ottomans took aggressive measures to prevent – particularly – British expansion in south Arabia.

As pointed by Thomas Kuehn, the Ottoman government was not only concerned about European imperial competition, but also suspected that the Khedive Ismail had similar designs in south-west Arabia.[138] Furthermore, like Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, some of the Ottoman state-led elites saw the Ibn Aiz rebellion as incited by Khedive Ismail.[139] In this sense, the Ottomans thought that the imperial campaign and the control of Yemen and Asir would also provide them the opportunity to check Khedive's influence in the region and prevent his intrigues.

Finally, as in all imperialist invasions or occupations, the highlands of the Yemen were also targeted by the Ottomans as a source of manpower and income. And throughout the Ottoman reign in Yemen, the Ottomans used to complain for not having taken advantage of 'this matchless wealth of Yemen'.[140] Though to control the highlands of Yemen and particularly to form San'a as a capital had a strategic significance in the imperial competition, its wealth, too, captivated the Ottomans.[141] The Ottomans made pragmatic calculations and acted with the idea of efficiency. For instance, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha explains the reason behind not occupying Sa'da, the city between the Asir and San'a, as that "the outgoings and force to be expanded would not be met by the income produced by its population."[142] Considering all these issues which kindled the Ottomans to control Yemen, it can be best compared

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[137] Ibid, 779-80.

[138] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference:Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 37.

[139] Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 42-3.

[140] See, Mevlanzade Rıfat, *Yemen Hakkında Dahiliye Nazırı Talat Bey Efendiye Açık Layiha*, (Kahire, 1326), 7.

[141] Walter Harris describes the wealth of Yemen: It was doubtless the luxuriance and agricultural wealth, added to the attractiveness of the climate of this portion of Arabia that won for the Yemen in former days the title Arabia Felix. See. Walter B. Harris, *Journey through the Yemen and Some General Remarks upon That Country*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1893), 7.

[142] Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 86.

with the first Ottoman expansion to Yemen in the sixteenth century. For the dynamics of imperial competition and the Ottoman paths of controlling Yemen and the local challenges it encountered, the early Ottoman expansion is instructive.

2. Ottoman Expansion in the 16th Century

When the Ottomans conquered Syria, Egypt and the Hijaz in 1517, the Portuguese forces had already entered the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. So, the Ottomans were already alerted by the Portuguese presence. According to Hulusi Yavuz, Sultan Selim I had ordered to build a navy while he was in Egypt in 1517, in order to dislodge the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean.[143] The Portuguese were a threat to the Ottoman Empire for its new Arab frontiers; and Portuguese operations in order to control the entrance to the Red Sea further provoked the Ottomans. As pointed by Salih Özbaran, in order to bolster their presence in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese aimed to control the Red Sea, and with this intention they destroyed the port of Jeddah near the Islamic holy lands in 1512 and burned the Mamluk fleet at Suez in 1513 before the Ottoman power expanded to the Arab lands.[144] This news caused worries among the Ottoman circles when they started to consolidate their authority in the Arab lands.

The conquest of Egypt in 1517 became a watershed for the Empire to further expand its territories in the Arab lands, and to engage in the imperial competition in the Red Sea and in the Indian Ocean. As emphasized by Özbaran, "with the overthrow of the Mamluk sultanate, it became incumbent on Selim I to maintain Egypt as the bastion of his extended empire against the Portuguese."[145] This was not just about benefiting from the lucrative trade in the Indian Ocean, but was also linked with providing security for the new frontiers in the Arab lands. In order to

[143] Hulusi Yavuz, *Kabe ve Haremeyn İçin Yemen'de Osmanlı Hakimiyeti, 1517 – 1571*, (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, 1984)

[144] Salih Özbaran, *Ottoman Expansion towards the Indian Ocean in the 16th Century*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2009), 49.

[145] Ibid, 62.

protect the newly conquered lands in the Arab regions, the imperial mind warranted further expansion towards the southern regions, in order to construct fortresses to secure the Holy Lands and Egypt. In that sense, a frontier formation in Yemen proved to be of a high strategic value for the Ottomans. As stated in the original report of Selman Reis to İbrahim Pasha in 1525, "with the conquest of Yemen, the total destruction of the Portuguese presence would be inevitable, for one of their fortresses is unable to support another and they are unable to put up a united position." Selman further added that "whoever controlled Yemen would be the master of the lands of India."[146]

Halil Inalcık shows that before 1517, the Ottomans helped their southern neighbor, the Mamluks by providing guns; and Rumi (Ottoman) volunteers were employed by the Mamluks in Yemen and at the Portuguese front.[147] The reign of Selim I had also witnessed Ottoman strategies to deal with Portuguese forces in the Indian Ocean, even in the form of outright clashes. During the reign of Sultan Süleyman, the Ottomans were even more eager to engage into the imperial politics in the Indian Ocean and to achieve political superiority. In the reign of Sultan Suleyman, the protection of the Holy Lands became one of the most significant tenets of legitimacy and a crucial foundation of political prestige for the Sultan. On the other hand, the Portuguese navy became at that time the most powerful in the world, and was challenging the Ottomans. Before 1538, the Ottoman forces clashed with the Portuguese several times, as is known from the examples of the defenses of Jeddah, as well as the expedition to Yemen and Aden by the admiral Selman Reis in 1517 and 1525.[148] However the most crucial confrontation in the sixteenth century was Hadım Süleyman Pasha's Diu expedition of 1538. Hulusi Yavuz, in his initial studies on the Ottoman expedition to the Indian Ocean, presents the issue as pertaining to the Islamic ambitions of Sultan Süleyman. According to Yavuz, the Ottoman naval push to the Indian Ocean originated from the need to protect Muslims and the Muslim state of Gujarat against the Portuguese threat. He says that

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[146] Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Explorations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 44-45.

[147] Halil İnalcık, "Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire", *Journal of Economic History*, XXIX, (1969), 109-110.

[148] Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Explorations*, 134.

Sultan Suleyman was agitated by the demand of a Gujarat envoy in 1536 for help against the Portuguese presence in the Ocean and South India. Upon this, the Sultan ordered Hadım Suleyman Paşa, who was then the governor general (*beylerbeyi*) of Egypt (from 1525 to 1535), had succeeded to regulate the administration and instituted Ottoman central control to a certain degree and also was in favor of action against Yemen and Aden, to build a navy.[149]

Hulusi Yavuz continues that the Sultan also perceived that a possible success in the expedition would bring security to the routes of pilgrimage to Mecca.[150] Although the protection of the pilgrimage routes and the Holy Lands as well as assistance to the Muslims in the world would bolster the political and symbolic prestige of the Sultan, who presented himself as the emperor and protector of all Muslims, the issue was not limited to that. The military expeditions could be best understood within the context of the empire-making process in the Arab lands versus the existing threat against the imperial strengthening posed by the Portuguese forces, as well as with the aim to control the trade in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.

The Ottoman navy, including 76 galleys and 20000 soldiers, had set sail from Suez on June 28, 1538.[151] However, the Diu expedition resulted with a failure for the Ottomans. Yet, as stated by Özbaran, this failure overlooks the fact that it was immediately after this expedition that the Ottoman province of Yemen was established[152] and this would at least contribute to secure a direct sea route from Egypt to the Indian Ocean, and ensure a permanent Ottoman military presence in the Arabian Sea.[153]

2.1. The First Episode of Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1538-1571:

On the way of his return from the Diu expedition, Hadim Süleyman Pasha conquered Zabid (west coast of Yemen) in February, and then established the

[149] Hulusi Yavuz, *Kabe ve Haremeyn*, 44.

[150] Ibid, 45.

[151] Ibid, 46.

[152] Salih Özbaran, *Ottoman Expansion,*84.

[153] Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age,* 66.

Yemen *beylerbeyliği* which also included the region of Aden in 1540.[154] Immediately after, until the Zaydi Rebellion of 1567, as stated by Blackburn, the Ottoman dominion in Yemen passed through "expansion, consolidation and contraction."[155] The main challenge the Ottomans faced came from the Zaydis. As in all its frontiers, the Ottomans used different governing methods which markedly departed from the practices pursued for the heartlands of the Empire. In the frontiers, the Ottoman rule was dependent on the local knowledge and power relations. In order to consolidate their power in the frontiers, the Ottomans relied on the gravity and know-how of local notables, hence attempted to craft alliances with them. In the context of early imperial strategies, by allowing a certain degree of autonomy to the local power-holders in the frontiers, the Ottomans aimed to integrate them to the imperial politics, especially in order to establish alliances against external imperial threats in the region. In this aspect, the peculiar situation in Yemen was determined by the sectarian governing practices. The Ottomans allied themselves with mainly non-Zaydi populations – the Sunni Shafis, and İsmailis, who were belonging to sub-sect of Shiis – of the region, not just for securing it against the Portuguese threats but also against the Zaydi claim over Yemen. This preference of alliances resulted in a sectarian rule in the region which kept the Zaydi imams in alert and paved the ground for them to consolidate their forces by using imamic legitimacy.

These sectarian ruling practices generated contradictions especially after the conquest of Ta'iz and San'a in 1547, where the Zaydi population constituted the majority of the population and the imamic legitimacy could enjoy a ready audience among the ordinary Zaydi peasants. As stated by Robin Blackburn, the opposing imamic and Ottoman forces engaged in often intense hostilities for the control of the lands north of San'a between 1547 and 1552. This confrontation came to an end when Ozdemir Pasha concluded a peace treaty with the Zaydis. According to the treaty of 1552, Zaydi Imam al-Mutahhar accepted Sultan Suleyman as his suzerain

[154] Hulusi Yavuz, *Kabe ve Haremeyn,* 47.

[155] Richard Blackburn, "The Collapse of Ottoman Authority in Yemen, 1560-1568", *Die Welt des Islams* 19 (1979): 119.

and recognized Yemen as an Ottoman province. In return, al-Mutahhar received the status of *sancakbeyi*.[156]

2.2. The Zaydi Rebellion of 1567:

Although, as stated by Hulusi Yavuz, the Ottoman official view towards the reasons of the rebellion – as reflected in the archival documents – was limited to the 'false beliefs' of the population; the essential reasons are to be found in the malpractices of Ottoman governors, and the levels of tax rates, which resulted in unjust rule over the local population and made them gather to revolt under the leadership of Zaydi imams.

A local uprising started in the highlands of Yemen in 1566 which became transformed into a major rebellion under the leadership of Zaydi imam al-Mutahhar in 1567; the revolt expanded through the inclusions of other local unrests to the whole of Yemen. In August 1567, rebel forces captured San'a.[157] In the early 1568, al-Mutahhar had succeeded to control both the highlands and the northern coastal plains of Tihame. This success of the imamic forces encouraged al-Mutahhar to order in April 1568 the complete expulsion of the Ottoman forces from Yemen.[158]

2.3. Sinan Pasha's Military Expedition of 1569 – 1571:

As a response to the rebellion, in March 1568, Yemen was reorganized under one *beylerbeylik* and Osman Pasha, the son of Ozdemir Pasha, was appointed as *beylerbeyi* of the newly organized Yemen Vilayeti and was granted a large force for a comprehensive military expedition to reoccupy Yemen.[159] Meanwhile, the Ottoman forces, attenuated and prevented from getting help from the sea, remained confined to Zabid. At the same time, the Ottoman imperial government appointed Sinan Pasha as commander-in-chief (*serdar*) with an imperial decree to reconquer Yemen.

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[156] Ibid, 120.

[157] Hulusi Yavuz, *Kabe ve Haremeyn,* 79.

[158] Richard Blackburn, "The Collapse of Ottoman", 166.

[159] Ibid,. 167

According to al- Makki, an Arab historian who wrote the history of the expedition upon Sinan Pasha's own request from him, Sinan Pasha left Egypt in January 1569 with "the army by land, mounted on horses, camels and mules."[160] In January 1569, Osman Pasha conquered Ta'izz, an important town southwest of Yemen, and with the help of Sinan Pasha's forces, reestablished Ottoman domination around Ta'izz in May 1569.[161] Al- Makki presents Sinan Pasha's help as a crucial contribution and a watershed for the reconquest of Yemen since the mountainous tribes disturbed the supplies of Osman Pasha's army and the soldiers were in a state of famine.[162] After this point, Sinan Pasha started a very suppressive expedition in order to eradicate the rebellion and then to rebuild Ottoman authority in the whole region.

By employing successful allegiance strategies and with support from Egypt, Sinan Pasha eventually defeated the Zaydi forces; he succeeded in brutally vanquishing the Zaydi forces around San'a and forced them to a peace on May 16th, 1570.[163] According to the peace treaty, the khoutbe should be read and coins should be minted all over Yemen in the name of the Sultan, and the Ottomans would settle in the lands which were previously under their authority. Thereby, Yemen was divided into two regions: the eastern and northern parts of the province would be under the control of al-Mutahhar but remain loyal to the Ottoman state; the other parts would be ruled directly by the Ottomans.[164]

The significance of Sinan Pasha's expedition lays in the question as of why the Ottomans needed such kind of brutal suppression of the rebellion. Similar to the reasons behind the Ottoman attempts of the first conquest of Yemen, the reconquest or the brutal suppression of Zaydi rebellion shows that Yemen stands as a crucial strategic gate for the Ottoman imperial politics: its empire-making in the Arab lands and engagement in imperial competition in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. Since

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[160] Qutb al-Din al-Nahravali Makki, *Lightening Over Yemen: A History of the Ottoman Campaign, 1569 – 1571*, trans. Clive Smith, (New York: I.B. Tauris), 16.

[161] Hulusi Yavuz, *Kabe ve Haremeyn İçin,* 98.

[162] Al-Makki, *Lightening Over Yemen,* 21.

[163] Hulusi Yavuz, *Kabe ve Haremeyn,* 107.

[164] Ibid*,* 110.

Yemen was a bastion for the Ottomans to achieve their imperial aims in both the Indian Ocean and the Arab lands, even the great rebellion could not change the indispensability of this region for the Ottomans. In the minds of the Ottomans, controlling Yemen was crucial to prevent further expansions of the Portuguese, which would pose a threat for the Ottoman imperial consolidation and expansion. The port of Aden is a good illustration of the Ottoman mind behind the imperial attempts. The recapture of Aden and overthrow of Zaydi control in the city, according to al-Makki was sought for forestalling a possible Portuguese occupation. According to al-Makki the Ottomans thought that if the "Frank" forces would occupy Aden it would be difficult to regain from them because of their improved knowledge of artillery and their care for ports and castles, in contrast to the Arabs; thus Sinan Pasha perceived the reconquest of Aden as a preemptive strike against a possible future Portuguese conquest which would deteriorate the Ottoman existence in the Red Sea, thereby the security of the Holy Lands.[165]

2.4. The Fall of Ottoman Authority

After the reoccupation of Yemen, tranquility dominated the region until 1598. Starting in 1598, the Zaydi Imam Qasım attempted several assaults to the Ottoman forces; however, he could not manage to overthrow the Ottoman regime in Yemen, which was only achieved by his son Imam Muhammed in 1636. As stated by Robin L. Bidwell, in addition to waging a prolonged war against Venice, the internal crisis of the Ottomans, which included the deposition of two sultans and a series of revolts in Anatolia itself, made the imperial center incapable of mounting an effective response to the Imam Muhammed's rebellion beyond sending a few detachments of Egyptian conscripts.[166] After San'a was surrendered in 1629, the Ottoman authority became limited to the coastline of Tihame; and finally in 1636 the Ottoman forces evacuated Yemen for Hijaz, while even many of the Ottomans decided to stay and enter the service of the Imam.[167] After the victory of the Imamic forces, the Imamic rule was established over Greater Yemen, from Hadramawt in the south to Asir in

[165] Al-Makki, *Lightening Over Yemen,* 30.

[166] Robin Leonard Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, (Essex: Longman, 1983), 23.

[167] Ibid, 23

the north. However, by 1728 the Zaydi power and unity declined as Aden, Sa'da, Najran, Marib and Kawkaban rised as quasi-states.[168]

3. Early 19th Century: The Return of Empires

The eighteenth century was the century of the crisis, and the decline of the Qasimi state. Firstly, new sources of coffee in the new Dutch and French colonies had marginalized Yemen's weight in the global coffee trade, which had been the main financial source of the Qasimi state. Territorial expansion of the Qasimi state was reversed and the control of the Imamate became limited to Northern Yemen that was followed with further losses in the early nineteenth century. Both economic and political crises resulted in increasing conflicts between the tribes, and ushered in a new period of chaos in Yemeni history.[169]

Starting in the early nineteenth century, coastal areas and the islands in the Red Sea once more became attractive terrains for imperial positioning. The British government and the East India Company were alerted by Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798. As a response to the French invasion, the British side, in order to secure its presence in India, started to search for a base in the Red Sea. Perim Island was chosen as the point to dispatch the troops in order to control the Straits of *Bab-el-Mendeb*. Because of the lack in the provision of water, Mocha, a port town in south-west Yemen, was substituted as the basis of provisions; however, strong anti-British feelings in Mocha forced the British to turn their face to Aden, as the Sultan of Aden welcomed the British troops. Thus, in September 1799 British forces were transferred to Aden and stayed there until the early months of 1800.[170] Retrospectively, this can be evaluated as a starting point of the imperial competition

[168] John Baldry, "al-Yaman and the Turkish Occupation 1849-1914," *Arabica* 23 (1976): 158.

[169] Vincent Steven Wilhite, *Guerilla War, Counterinsurgency, and State Formation in Ottoman Yemen*, (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2003), 90-1.

[170] R. J. Gavin, *Aden under the British Rule, 1839-1967*, (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1975), 22.

in the Red Sea, which would be one of the main determiners of the Yemeni history in the nineteenth century.

As stated by Caesar Farah, although the Ottomans had tolerated the establishment of trading factories in Mocha by European powers in the later part of the eighteenth century, the British attempts to establish close relations with the local chiefs and the Imam of San'a animated Ottoman suspicion.[171] A document from the early nineteenth century shows the Ottoman insistence on not allowing British encroachments in the region. The document, dated around 1822-3, shows the Ottoman fears that the British would gradually control Yemen like they penetrated into India. The document reveals Ottoman aggressive stance and concrete projections that the British encroachments in Mocha and their attempts to make alliances with the hinterland tribal chiefs would not be allowed, since Mocha was perceived as being near to the Holy lands; and it was stated that if necessary, troops should be dispatched by the Egyptian *vali*.[172]

The Ottoman willingness to prevent British encroachments coincided with the Egyptian governor Mehmed Ali Pasha's mission to suppress the Wahhabi threat in Nejd. Mehmed Ali's expedition towards Asir, where there were followers of Wahhabis, was extended to Tihame. Mehmed Ali guaranteed these areas to be left under the control of the Imam in return for the delivery of coffee supplies.[173] From that time onwards, British merchants appealed to their government to take serious measures to secure their trade operations based in Mocha.

At the same time, with the advent of steam navigation, the importance of the Red Sea as an international strait increased to a significant degree. As pointed by Robin Bidwell, the route through the Mediterranean and Red Sea to India would reduce a five-month journey down to two months, albeit by refueling at a point between Bombay and Suez. Regarding this, in order to increase maritime activities,

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[171] Caesar E. Farah, "Reaffirming Ottoman Sovereignity in Yemen, 1825-1840", in *Arabs and Ottomans: A Checkered Relationship*, ed. Cesar E. Farah, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2002), 488.

[172] Mümin Yıldıztaş, Sebahattin Bayram, H. Yıldırım Ağanoğlu, ed., *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Yemen*, (Ankara: Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2008), 353-6.

[173] Caesar Farah, "Reeaffirming Ottoman", 488.

British representatives made arrangements to dump coal at Aden and the Sira Island in 1829.[174] This, in fact, signifies the precursor of the permanent presence of the British imperial power which would instigate the Ottomans to take serious measures to strengthen their position in the Red Sea for the rest of the century.

4. Occupation of Aden

In 1833, a Circassian servant of Mehmed Ali Pasha's Egyptian Army, Muhammed Ağa, alias Türkçe Bilmez, had rebelled against Mehmed Ali Pasha and gathered many Egyptian soldiers around him. By seizing the Egyptian state funds in Jeddah and allying himself with the Asiri amir Ali bin Müceşşir he targeted Hodeida for capture. By benefiting from the weakness of the Imam of San'a, they invaded Tihama of Yemen, and ruled there approximately for a year.[175] Although Mehmed Ali Pasha did not have a military presence in Yemen until that time, the Türkçe Bilmez rebellion gave him an opportunity to send Egyptian troops into Yemen.[176] Mehmed Ali Pasha thus seized control over the whole of the eastern bank of the Red Sea from Suez to Bab-al-Mendeb by 1837.[177] As stated by El-Batrik, the next step was to seize Ta'izz, which created suspicions among the British circles that Egyptian forces were aiming to take the possessions of the 'shores at the entrance and at the outside of the Red Sea; and this led the reformulation of the British policy in the Red Sea.[178] While the Egyptian forces continued their southward expansion, the British forces under the command of Captain Haines invaded Aden in 1838 and started to contemplate on drastic measures to prevent Egyptian expansion; and finally in conjunction with Russia, Austria and Italy Mehmed Ali Pasha was

[174] Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, 31.

[175] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.1, 284-86.

[176] Ceasar Farah, "Reaffirming Ottoman", 489.

[177] John Baldry, "al-Yaman", 160-1.

[178] Abdel Hamid el-Batrik, "Egyptian-Yemeni Relations (1819-1840) and Their Implications for British Policy in the Red Sea", in *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, ed. P. M. Holt, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 285-88

pressured to evacuate Hodeida and other places in Yemen on 22 April 1840.[179] As pointed by Paul Dresch, as a part of the Grand strategy, the British prevented the presence of an autonomous Middle Eastern power in the Red Sea, but they remained in Aden.[180]

Captain Haines's seizure of Aden was not limited to the need of a place for a coaling station; it marks the British imperial plan in the Red Sea. According to Gavin, Aden was invaded in the context of a mercantile strategy, to develop a great commercial entrepot or to break the Egyptian monopoly of the Yemen coffee trade and redirect it to Aden and India.[181] More than this, the British presence in Yemen quickly served for geopolitical purposes, to maintain a strategic primacy in the imperialist competition, and to control the Red Sea against the French designs in the North-East Africa and Arabia.[182]

The British imperial authorities quickly attempted to secure their position in Aden by making alliances with the hinterland tribal chiefs. By preventing the unity of several tribes in the hinterland, Haines succeeded to ensure loyalty of these tribes. A month after the invasion, Haines proceeded to make Treaties of Friendship with his neighbor tribes, the Abdalis of Lahej, the Fadhlis of Shuqra and the Aqrabis of Bir Ahmad, Sultanates of Hawshabi, Lower Yafa, and some of the Subayhi tribes.[183] By doing so, the British imperial rule spread on the southern shores of Yemen; by the end of 1843, the presence of British Aden had been accepted by the people of its hinterland.[184]

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[179] John Baldry, "al-Yaman", 160-61.

[180] Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.

[181] R. J. Gavin, *Aden*, 28, 51.

[182] Ibid, 93.

[183] Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, 36.

[184] R. J. Gavin, *Aden*, 71

5. Ottoman Reoccupation of Yemeni Tihame

After the invasion of Aden, the British had set an imperial authority in southern Arabia, by establishing a direct rule in Aden through the Aden Residency, and an indirect rule in the tribal hinterland.[185] On the other side of Yemen, the evacuation of the Egyptian forces from the northern parts created a power vacuum, which could not be filled by the different tribal claims, which in turn incited the Ottomans to find ways to position themselves into the region. In 1843, The sharif of Mecca Husayn bin Ali Haydar of Abu Arish was granted the title of *Pasha* and accepted to pay an annual tribute to the Ottomans. By basing upon this treaty, the Ottomans led the Sharif Husayn to control Yemen in the name of the Ottomans. However, his rule was not popular and the Imam of San'a did not accept his authority. Until 1847 neither the imam nor the sharif was willing to undertake a military expedition against each other. In 1848, this situation came to an end by the Imam's push into Tihama.[186] However, neither side succeeded in defeating the other, which contributed to the chaos within Yemen.

In 1848, another candidate to the Imamate, al-Mansur Hashim, had announced himself as Imam in Sa'dah.[187] Fearing British encroachments and expansion towards the north, in 1849, when the political turmoil, tribal instability, and sectarian struggles between the Zaydis, Shafiis, and Ismailis came to the apex, the Ottomans decided for a direct involvement in the Yemeni affairs.[188]

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[185] John Willis states that colonial rule in the Yemeni south after 1839 was based on the distinction between direct and indirect rule as in India. See. John M. Willis, *Unmaking North and South: Cartographies of the Yemeni Past, 1857-1934*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 19-20.

[186] Anne K. Bang, *The Idrisi State in Asir 1906-1934: Politics, Religion, and State, and Political Prestige as Statebuilding Factors in Early-Twentieth Century Arabia*, (London: Hurst and Sons Company, 1997), 24.

[187] R. B. Serjeant, "The Post-Medieval and Modern History of San'a and the Yemen, ca. 953-1382/1515-1962", in *San'a: an Arabian Islamic City*, ed., R. B. Serjeant and Ronald B. Lewcock, (London, World of Islam Festival Trust, 1983), 89.

[188] Ceasar E. Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: Nineteenth Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule*, (London, I. B. Tauris, 2002), xiv, 58.

The adjunct of the sharif of Mecca, Kıbrıslı Tevfik Pasha presented a report (*layiha*) to the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Âlî*) targeted to appeal to Sultan Abdülmecid. Eventually, the imperial authorities decided to control Yemen by undertaking an occupation. This task was assigned to the Sharif and Kıbrıslı Tevfik Pasha. They started their expedition from Jeddah and arrived on 17 Cemazziyilahir 1265 (May, 10, 1849) to Hodeida.[189] The Imam Muhammed Yahya came to Hodeida to invite the Ottomans for the invasion of San'a. Consequently, Muhammed Yahya and the Ottomans signed a treaty which ensured the symbiotic relationship for the post-invasion period. The principal points of the treaty were as follows: the governance of the country would be under the jurisdiction of Imam, but as a vassal to the Porte; the revenues of the country would be equally divided; a thousand regular Turkish troops would be garrisoned in San'a.[190] Eventually, the Ottoman venture to invade San'a ended with a complete failure due to the resentment of San'a inhabitants to the Imam.[191] Still, this treaty shows that the Ottomans were ready to accept a vassal under the imperial suzerainty in the northern highlands, which, however, became undesirable after the opening of the Suez.

6. The Paths toward the Ottoman Reoccupation of the Highlands and San'a

After the reoccupation of the Yemeni western coast, the Ottomans attempted to reorganize the administrative divisions. Zabid became the center; and there were several *sancaks*, i.e. Hodeida, Mocha, Luhayya Abu Arish, each of them headed by a native *kaymakam* who was generally a head of a strong family. The reorganization of the administrative structure by granting the ranks to locally influential men aimed at controlling the country by pacifying the rival tribes and integrating the politically influential notables.[192] Yet, as Ahmed Râşid notes, due to the remoteness of the *vilayet* to the imperial capital, Yemen could not be incorporated into imperial

[189] Asaf Tanrıkut, *Yemen Notları*, (Ankara: Güzel Sanatlar Matbaası, 1965), 43; Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.1, 296.

[190] Waler Harris, *A Journey*, 69.

[191] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.1, 298-301.

[192] Ceasar Farah, *The Sultan's*, 60.

control; and the Ottomans had to wait until the opening of the Suez Canal, which paved the way for an easy access of the Ottoman troops and governors, for the importance of the Arabian peninsula to became greater and thus for the crucial need to develop for effectively administering Yemen.[193] The Ottoman authority remained nominal until the reoccupation of the Yemeni highlands. Especially, in the northern parts of the Tihama, or Asiri Tihama, from the first year of the reoccupation onwards, the Ottomans had to deal with the hostility and prolonged resistance of the Banu Mughyad tribes.[194]

In fact, before the opening of the Suez Canal, the British invasion of the Perim Island in 1856 with the aim to prevent French ambitions raised doubts among the Ottoman imperial circles about the Empire's political efficiency in the Red Sea, and its legitimacy over the Muslim population of the Arabian Peninsula. Provoked by the new imperial balance, the Ottomans hastened to set their flag over the Dahlac Islands as well as over the islands of Disseh, Adulis, Amphilla and Edd, which were either uninhabited or scarcely inhabited points along the coastline of Eritrea during the years 1861-62.[195] By doing these symbolic acts, the Ottomans attempted to show their claim of sovereignty and their presence within the newly emerging imperialist competition in the Red Sea.

As I mentioned before, while the opening of the Suez Channel shaped the prominence of the Red Sea for the imperial competition, it also shortened the distance for the Ottomans both in terms of immediate military dispatch as well as continuous imperial penetration into Yemen. In addition to that, the political, economic, and ecological turmoil in Yemen[196] also paved the way for the Ottomans to establish an imperial rule and to build up the consent of most segments and classes of the Yemeni society, whose political and economic strength was attenuated during the previous years of turmoil. In this context, most segments of the society

[193] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.1, 320-21

[194] Anne Bang, *The Idrisi*, 27-28.

[195] R. J. Gavin, *Aden*, 95-97.

[196] The mid-to-late nineteenth century is known to Yemeni historians as 'the time of corruption'. See. Paul Dresch, Tribes, Government and History in Yemen, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 212-18.

perceived the Ottoman imperial rule as a chance to connect with a wider world, and to overcome the crisis.

One of the main opportunities presented to the Ottomans in their endeavor to occupy and introduce imperial rule in Yemen was the lack of political unity in the whole region, but particularly in the northern highlands, i.e. the historical center of Zaydi Imams. As emphasized by Thomas Kuehn, by the late 1860s, two major power centers had emerged in the Yemeni highlands. The Sharaf al-Din family consolidated their authority in the northwest of San'a and set up themselves as the *amirs* of Kawkaban. Secondly, under the leadership of the Da'i, members of local Isma'ili community established an authority in the rich coffee growing region of Jabal Harraz in the central highlands. However, a large number of smaller lords also benefited from the disintegration of the Qasimi state.[197]

Rivalries between different claims to the Imamate continued during the nineteenth century, which forestalled any political unity. As stated by Caesar Farah these rivalries became more complex since the disturbances continued among the Zaydi imams as well as between them and their deputies vis-à-vis the *ulema* of Yemen.[198]

While the power vacuum in Yemen enabled the Ottomans to establish an imperial rule, and prevented a united resistance to the Ottoman invasion, economic and ecological crisis led the Ottomans to exploit the consent of the lower and merchant classes for their imperial cause. In this sense, it would not be wrong to say that the political alliance ensuring the reoccupation consisted of Ottoman imperial commanders and San'a merchants, who also played a critical role to pacify the lower classes by presenting the Ottoman imperial presence as a potentiality to improve the ruined state of economy.[199]

Factors such as the decrease in the coffee trade, the loss of the trade revenues from Red Sea ports, from which highland rulers had extracted a great amount of income, and tribal attacks to the trade caravans deteriorated the wealth and

[197] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 32-33.

[198] Caesar Farah, *The Sultan's*, 59.

[199] See. Isa Blumi, Frontier, 298.

operations of the merchants, and hence they shifted to the Ottoman side.[200] Furthermore, the ruined state of the cities and their hinterlands also contributed to the emergence of a local support for the Ottoman presence. Epigrapher Joseph Halevy, who visited San'a in 1869, emphasizes the huge population decline, from 200,000 down to 50,000 within twenty years (?), and the ruined buildings resulted from the tribal attacks.[201] Both the population decline and the tribal attacks to the city originated from an ecological crisis, which destroyed agricultural production, and led to a famine. Indicated by Gavin, as for Aden as also for the whole Yemen, famine and disease were the main visitors of the ordinary life. Cholera, rinderpest, drought and locusts often struck Yemen.[202] These ecological disasters led to significant political results. As noted by Isa Blumi, "starvation and mass migration became the theme of 1860s in the Yemen, where much of the population living in southern highland fled either to the coast or to Southern Yemen."[203] Especially those who remained in the highlands, found the solution in welcoming the Ottomans, or at least in not forming an opposition. Thus, the Ottoman imperial strategy to reoccupy the Yemeni highlands coincided with a very convenient conjuncture to manufacture the consent and maintain the support of the local population, particularly merchant classes.

7. Ottoman Reoccupation of the Yemeni Highlands and San'a

The Ottoman imperial elites pushed down their initial fear from the Muhammed ibn Aiz's rebellion and decided to endeavor an imperial campaign to both subjugate Asiri rebellion and reoccupy the Yemeni highlands in order to set up an Ottoman imperial rule along the eastern shore of the Red Sea. Although he had been appointed as the *kaymakam* of Asir after the 1863 Rebellion, Muhammed ibn Aiz aimed to extend his area of influence towards the Yemeni coasts by attacking

[200] Paul Dresch, *A Modern History*, 4; Ceasar Farah, *The Sultan's*, 59.

[201] In, Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, 45.

[202] R. J. Gavin, *Aden*, 132.

[203] Isa Blumi, "The Evolution of Red Sea Trade in the 19th Century and Ottoman Yemen", *Journal of Turkish Studies* 31 (2007): 163.

the Ottoman garrisons and expel them.[204] In response to that, and in accordance with the Grand Strategy of Âli and Huseyin Pashas, sixteen battalions of the Ottoman soldiers were assembled in Istanbul and assigned to the Commander-in-Chief Mehmed Redif Pasha, and Ahmed Muhtar Pasha. In 18 Ramazan 1287 (December, 12, 1870), Ahmed Muhtar Pasha and his five battalions which had already been formed and gathered at the Selimiye barracks, moved from Istanbul to Hodeida. When the news came that Muhammed bin Aiz captured Hodeida three days after Ahmed Muhtar Pasha departed from Istanbul, seven battalions under the command of Redif Pasha were also sent to Hodeida. In addition to Ahmed Muhtar Pasha's forces, the Hijaz commander Mirliva (Brigadier) Hasan Pasha also moved to Hodeida with a battalion and two hundred irregulars (*başıbozuk*). There were already two battalions existing in Hodeida; thereby Ahmed Muhtar Pasha had a total of eight battalions under his command before initiating the imperial campaign; and he chose Konfuda, a port town in southern Hijaz, as the center of the campaign. While preparing these battalions to the campaign, the Ottomans also provided the support of the sharif of Mecca, Şerif Abdullah, and the obedience of some tribes such as Ben-i Şeyb, Al Süleyman, Bil-Haris, Gavami, Bilkarn, Bilsemr Şamran, Al-Haşimiye. Furthermore, 200 soldiers of Bişe, normally employed in Jeddah from Bişe tribes, were recruited for this campaign.[205] On the other side the opposing force was made up entirely on mountaineers, who were armed with old matchlocks and had several cannon left by Mehmed Âli Pasha when he evacuated southern Arabia in 1840.[206] It was like a war between a modern regular army and a guerilla group. I wanted to give this picture to illustrate the difference between the Ottoman imperial army and the rebel forces; however I will not go into details of the military campaign.[207] From the account of Ahmed Râşid, on 8 Nisan 1287 (April, 20 1871), Muhammed ibn Aiz and rebellious chiefs surrendered to the Ottoman forces, marking the final stage of the control of Asir. After securing control of Asir, the

[204] İsmail Hakkı Tevfik, *Asir İsyanı*, 5.

[205] Ahmed Râşid, Tarih-i Yemen ve San'a, vol.2, (İstanbul: Basiret Matbaası, 1291), 5.

[206] Robert Gavin, "The Ottoman Reconquest", 776.

[207] For the details of the imperial campaign, see. Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2; Atıf Paşa, *Yemen Tarihi*, vol.2, (İstanbul: Şirket-i Tab'iye,1326), 8-114; Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 45-97.

Ottoman destination was San'a. However, before San'a, the Ottomans first subdued the Da'i Hasan bin İsmail, who had established a rule in Cebel-i Herrraz ten hours before arriving to San'a. Then, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha informed Istanbul on April 25, 1872 that Sa'na was occupied.[208] It might be worthy to focus on the strategies the Ottomans applied while crushing the Asiri rebellion and reoccupying the Yemeni highlands. This would give us the clues of the Ottoman imperial rule in the first decade after the occupation.

In fact, both during the subjugation of the Asiri rebellion and the occupation of the Yemeni highlands, the Ottoman forces benefited from their military and technological superiority. Ottoman superior firepower made resistance, whose recruits had limited access to modern firearms at that date, useless.[209] In this sense, it is worth to compare the first Ottoman occupation in the early sixteenth century, the second Ottoman occupation two centuries later, and the Nasserite suppression of the Egyptian revolutionary nationalists in the 1960s; as pointed by Serjeant, in all three cases, the success of the occupation initially based on possession of superior weapons and organization.[210]

Although the Ottoman forces benefited from their technological and organizational superiority, the campaigns of both Asir and the Yemeni highlands were managed by making alliances with the local notables; and the ultimate success was in debt to how the Ottomans shaped the local politics. This was a significant factor since the Ottoman forces were alien to the geography and climate of the region. In this sense a long quotation from Vincent Steven would be noteworthy to cover the Ottoman imperial strategy, as he defines it as 'Callwellian strategy':

> "During the Yemeni campaign, Ahmed Muhtar Paşa sought to repeat the paradigm of successful conquest that had been formulated in Asir, which was based on three major components: firstly, the campaign was preceded by a period of careful planning with extensive acquisition of intelligence from local sources. This would involve an attempt to gain local allies in the area of operations, both for the intelligence they could provide and as a means of

[208] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2, 45, 89, 109-10.

[209] Vincent Wilhite, *Guerilla War*, 142,

[210] R. B. Serjeant, "The Post-Medieval", 77.

subversion. Second, to employ a combination of speed, deception, surprise, and intimidation to achieve his objectives. As in the Asir campaign, the primary objectives were usually citadels or fortified towns which served as regional power centers. Thirdly, If stratagems and intimidation did not work, resort to pure force, to sieges and battles in which he would try to use his firepower to maximum advantage."[211]

Seeking local alliances was one of the fundamental strategies of the Empire, both for the military campaign and during the Ottoman rule. In order to mollify rival tribes, as well as their leaders, the Ottoman strategy was mainly based on establishing a patronage network between some of the notables and the Ottoman governors. The Ottomans applied a gift-giving policy and granted ranks to these notables to integrate them to the imperial authority. This policy was the prolongation of the 'divide and rule policy'. By applying it, the Ottomans could have a chance to operate more efficiently. For instance, during the Asiri rebellion, in order to overwhelm the opposition of the Mughaydis, who opposed the Ottoman rule since the Ottoman reoccupation of Tihama in 1849, the Ottomans gained support from its rival tribe, the Rijal-al-Ma;[212] this alliance made the Ottoman movement in the local territory easier and more efficient.

The nature of these kinds of alliances was symbiotic, as both sides were in need of each other and benefited from the alliance. In the context of the rebellion of Muhammed ibn Aiz, especially tribes and the merchants were badly affected from Aiz's militias' raid of Tihama – since the rebels locked the routes, stopped the trade between Yemeni coast and highlands, and created a food shortage. This led to the creation of a coalition consisting of different groups supporting the Ottoman campaign to suppress ibn Aiz out of Tihama.[213]As Ahmed Muhtar Pasha himself points out, one of the key figures of the Asiri campaign was Şeyh Ömer, who persuaded a significant number of notables not to oppose the Ottoman forces and turned these notables and tribes into allies of Ottomans; they proved to be invaluable

[211] Vincent Wilhite, *Guerilla War*, 168-9.

[212] Anne Bang, *The Idrisi*, 29-30.

[213] Isa Blumi, "The Evolution", 165.

especially in supplying transportation-camel procurement.[214] In return to his aid, the Ottomans granted Şeyh Ömer a wage, and also appointed him to the *meclis* of Asir.[215] By doing so, the Ottoman imperial governors attempted to ensure his loyalty and thus maintain the support for the establishment of imperial governance in the region. A document shows that the gratification of Seyyid Ali Harun, a notable and merchant of Hodeida, in response to his help in supplying military equipments during the occupation, led him to support the establishment of Ottoman imperial strategies in the following years. For the telegram line between Hodeida and San'a, he provided approximately five hundred poles; and in return, his trade facilities were supported by the imperial rulers.[216]

The entering of the Ottomans to San'a reveals the Ottoman strategies of conciliation and integration of notables as it puts forth the local notables' ambitions to benefit from the Empire. Before the occupation of San'a, the sheikh of San'a Muhsin Mu'ayyiz and notables like Hüseyin Çığman, came to Ahmed Muhtar Pasha to request freedom to exercise Zaydi rites within their community. In return they promised a peaceful entry of the Ottomans to the city, while trying to calm the Pasha about the previous violent incidents when Tevfik Pasha attempted to occupy the city in 1849.[217] Ahmed Muhtar Pasha indicates the aim of the campaign as to establish an imperial rule which became essential after the opening of the Suez, rather than taking revenge for the old incidents.[218] Indeed, he promised their liberty in religious matters.

By establishing these alliances, the Ottomans found a secure operational base, which paved the way for further expansions towards the northern highlands and a chance to establish the capital of a new Yemen vilayeti.[219] On the other side, by getting a promise from Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, the notables hoped to assuage the lower classes of San'a and make them familiar with the Ottoman occupation and

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[214] Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 49.

[215] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2, 49.

[216] Mümin Yıldıztaş et. al., ed., *Osmanlı Arşiv*, 360-61.

[217] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2, 109-110

[218] Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 75.

[219] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 17.

imperial authority. As asserted by Isa Blumi, "what exactly attracted locals to the Ottoman administration was not purely a result of the Ottomans' ability to project power, conjure up sentiments of religious solidarity or offer more than the British in terms of stipends. Rather, the Ottoman state rewarded pliant locals seeking opportunities to circumvent trade networks dominated by established regional leaders. Not only did new trade possibilities arise with the arrival of Ottoman authorities – garrisons needed to be fed, roads protected, tax collected – but an alliance with the Ottoman administration demonstrated to many locals until then sitting on the sidelines or previously being subordinated by southern Yemen's hierarchical society that they now could find new political and economic niches in the region."[220] In this aspect, both the Ottoman and Ottoman allied-notable discourses touched upon the same point that the introduction of the Ottoman imperial rule and its institutions would liberate the oppressed people, and trade and agriculture would increase the wealth of society, as wished by the Sultan, according to Ahmed Muhtar Pasha in his speech delivered in front of the people of San'a.[221] This alliance provided the occupation of San'a without a shot being fired. In order to guarantee the continuation of the loyalty and alliance, the Ottoman imperial governors granted lifelong wages to these notables and the Imam and appointed them to the *meclis* of San'a.[222]

Conciliation of the local elites by granting wages and ranks was a significant part of the Ottoman integration strategy during the campaign, which was also the precursor of a strategy that the Ottomans would attempt to implement at a greater scale during their rule in Yemen. In some cases, after suppressing a rebellion, in order to guarantee the loyalty of the rebellious tribes, the Ottomans granted wages to the tribal leaders, too. For instance, after quelling a rebellion in Kawkaban, a *kaza* of San'a, the Ottomans granted a wage to the previous rebellious amir and allowed him to settle in San'a.[223] In this case, the Ottomans also tried to break the ties of the *amir* with his tribe by placing him in San'a, where he would be under Ottoman

[220] Isa Blumi, "The Frontier", 298.

[221] Robert Gavin, "The Ottoman Reconquest", 779.

[222] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2, 115. Also see. BOA/ İ.DH. 657- 45735, 29 Receb 1289 (2, October, 1872).

[223] BOA/İ.DH. 48-2027, 26 Rebiülahir 1289 (3, July, 1872)

surveillance. However, this should not overshadow the violent methods the Ottomans used against the rebellious population, like killing or exiling both rebels and their ringleaders.[224] In short, coercion against the rebellious segments of Yemen was accompanied with integrative strategies.

After entering San'a, the Ottomans determined this city as the strategic capital to establish imperial rule and undertake further expansions in Yemen. Between April 1872 and 1873, Ottoman governors dealt with a series of rebellions around San'a and attempted to integrate these rebellious *kazas* to the new Yemen *vilayeti*. It took a year for Ahmed Muhtar Pasha's forces to reduce the rebellion of opponent tribes, to overthrow Sharaf al-Din of Kawkaban, and to suppress the al-Hadi tribe's rebellion.[225] All new suppressions, and the ensuing expansions of Ottoman rule were reported to the imperial capital as the attempt of reform (*ıslahat*), which indeed meant military incursion, pacification of the opponent tribal leaders and notables, and the beginning of tax collection.[226] However, as Ahmed Râşid notes, the imperial campaign did not extend towards Sa'da, Ma'rib, Yam and Ben-i Mervan tribes.[227]

8. Two Empires Face to Face: the British versus the Ottomans

While suppressing the rebellious tribes in the hinterland of northern highlands was one aspect of expansion, the other aspect included Ottoman expansion toward the hinterland of Aden. The Ottoman reoccupation of Yemeni northern highlands actually meant a physical encounter with the British Empire as it was already settled in Aden since 1838. At first, the British welcomed the increased control of the Ottomans in the northern highlands, perceiving that it would be easier to deal with a

[224] For the notables exiled to Yanya, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 62; to Istanbul, see, Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2, 53.

[225] Ceasar Farah, *The Sultan's*, 95-96.

[226] For the success of siege and ıslahat in Kevkeban, see. BOA/ A.MKT.MHM, 445-61, 15 Zilkade 1289 (14, January, 1873); for the Havelan and Şasan tribes in the east of Sa'na, see. BOA/ A.MKT.MHM, 466-17, 17 Şaban 1290 (10 October, 1873).

[227] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2, 237.

'quasi civilized' power rather than with unstable tribal or religious leaders.[228] However for the British there was an agreed reality that it was not the local dynamics which determined the relations of the Ottomans with the hinterland tribes, but the complexity of European diplomacy in which the Ottoman Empire was involved.[229] Since the fluidity of tribal loyalty originating from the frontier character was the case, the British could find ways to maintain the loyalty of the hinterland tribes. However, in the case of the presence of another empire the task became more difficult. This was especially valid in the case of Ottoman attempts to expand their authority towards the south, which could create crisis between the two empires. However, such a crisis could not be solved easily since the game was not played merely between two empires. The local population and the tribal leaders were also actors since the encounter between the two empires paved the way for the locals to shift their loyalties and to determine the terms of the alliances. As claimed by Isa Blumi, the face-to-face imperial relationship was transformed in such a way that local figures, often as lowly as a village elder, could incite a diplomatic uproar.[230] The fear of tribes shifting their alliances turned into a major concern for the Ottomans.

The encounter became much more real when the Ottomans attempted to expand their rule towards the south to the area of those tribes which already had tributary relations with the Aden Residency. Ahmed Muhtar Pasha states that the Ottomans sought to expand their authority towards Aden, however the loyalty of the sultan of Lahej to the British authorities and the British reluctance to change their relation with the hinterland resulted in the Ottoman withdrawal from their ambition.[231] However, the story was actually not as straightforward as Ahmed Muhtar Pasha presented in his memoir. In 1872, on the western borders of Lahej the Ottomans set up their authority via the alliance with the Zaydi Dhu Muhammed tribe, an old enemy of the Abdali Sultan of Lahej; then, the Ottoman troops centered

[228] Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, 45-46.

[229] R. J. Gavin, *Aden*, 137.

[230] Isa Blumi, "Redefining Tribal Pathologies: Yemen's Undeclared Dynamic Beyond the Gaze of the State", in *Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative Social and Political History of Albania and Yemen 1878-1918*, ed. Isa Blumi, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2003), 52.

[231] Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, *Sergüzeşt-i Hayatımın*, 86.

in Taizz, occupied the Abdali sultan's former Shafi allies in the Hajariya, and made a move to the borders of Subayhi zone. In October 1872, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha sent summons to the hinterland tribes to accept Ottoman suzerainty, and received a rejection from the Abdali while the Hawshabis accepted.[232] Especially those who had suffered under the weight of those rivals who had earlier British patronage, showed an ardent support for the Ottoman invitation.[233]

These expansionist attempts of the Ottoman Empire were met with anxiety and frustration on the British side. Now, the hinterland tribes acquired the opportunity to play the Ottoman card against the British. Regarding the turmoil, the Governor General of India, Lord Northbrook, first advised in February 1873 that a British protectorate should be established over 'the nine coastal tribes'.[234] In May 1873, the British Government announced its demand that the Ottomans respect the independence of the Abdali, Fadli, Awlawi, Yafi, Hawshabi, Amiri, Aqrabi, and Subayhi tribes.[235] As follows, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha continued his expansionist policy. The Amir of Dhala's submission to the Ottomans as an Ottoman official and Alawi sheik's acceptance of Ottoman suzerainty, and more seriously, the sending of Ottoman troops on the behalf of the brother of the Lahej Sultan further provoked the British to take serious measures to maintain the stability of the hinterland on behalf of the Aden Residency. At the end of October, Brigadier-General Schneider sent troops to Lahej to protect the rights of the Sultan; and finally, in December 1873, Ottoman forces were forced to evacuate Abdali, Hawshabi, and Alawi territories.[236] In fact, this was the end of Ahmed Muhtar Pasha's venture to penetrate into the Aden's hinterland. This tension of 1872-73 led the British to seek for more formal relations with its hinterland rather than continuing with a tributary system in order to defend Aden against the Ottoman ambitions. Although there was no attempt at that time to delineate formal borders, the British established Aden as a protectorate with

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[232] J. Gavin, *Aden*, 138-39.

[233] Isa Blumi, *Foundations of Modernity, Human Agency and the Imperial State*, (London: Routledge, 2011), 62.

[234] Ram Narain Mehra, *Aden-Yemen, 1905-1919*, (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1988), 19.

[235] John Willis, *Unmaking North*, 23

[236] Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, 47.

its hinterland.[237] The actual memory of this tension between the two empires left great mutual suspicion. The Ottoman governors always kept in mind the presence of Aden Protectorate in their south and tried to strengthen the loyalty of the frontier tribes and remained alarmed against British ambitions.[238]

9. Searching for Tranquility in the Province

After the occupation of San'a and the northern highlands of Yemen, the Ottomans attempted to establish an imperial rule and focused on the formation of San'a as a strategic capital. In the minds of the Ottoman imperial governors, the formation of a secure capital and a strong Ottoman administration would ensure the control of Yemen and its population; hence maintain the engagement of the Empire in the imperial competition in the Red Sea. Thus the Ottoman rule could be defined as a 'security regime' that perceived the state of tranquility as the initial base of the reforms. By establishing a security regime, the Ottoman ruling elites hoped to defend the Arabian Peninsula against the encroachments of other imperialist powers, particularly the British. With this mindset, the first target of the governors was to maintain tranquility in the region which would come along with a strong military presence as well as by controlling the population via both reforms and surveillance mechanisms.

One of the first enterprises of the Ottomans was to establish a branch of the imperial army in the region which would secure peace within the vilayet and its hinterland, and also act as a defense force in the Red Sea. In 1873, the Seventh Imperial Army was established by gathering the former soldiers of the battalions located in Yemen, Mecca, and Medina.[239] The establishment of a new branch of the imperial army in Yemen meant also urban renewal of San'a and the introduction of

[237] Z. H. Kour, *The History of Aden, 1839-1872*, (London: Routledge, 1980), 212.

[238] See. BOA/ A. MKT.MHM 469-25, 19 Şevval 1290 (10 December 1873): The Ottomans appointed a San'a governor, former Kudüs mutassarrıf, with a mission to forestall the British ambitions on Arab tribal chiefs to intrigue against the Ottoman Empire.

[239] BOA/A.MKT.MHM 451-8, 28 Muharrem 1290 (28 March 1873).

the Ottoman architecture to the urban scene. To provide a physical infrastructure for the employment of imperial recruits, the Ottomans immediately constructed barracks, arsenal buildings, and a military hospital.[240] Furthermore, for the surveillance of the society in order to maintain tranquility, and for prompt responses to incidents that could disturb peace, patrol stations were constructed at various points of the city. The construction projects were not limited to the military and security buildings; also various civic buildings like *hamams* and coffee houses were constructed and rented to merchants to run.[241] As a whole, these new construction projects had certain impact upon the urban scene of the city which can be understood as a part of the Ottomanization project. Furthermore, these projects implied to the population that the Ottomans intended for a permanent presence in Yemen. In this sense Thomas Kuehn's comparison between the years 1871-73 and 1849 is worth to emphasize, whereby the years 1871-73 featured the arrival of a new order.[242]

The main operations of the Ottoman ruling administration in Yemen in the first decade were to alleviate the resistance of the opposing tribes, integrate them to the Ottoman system and introduce the Ottoman institutions. However, the tactics were changing in accordance to the power balance as well as the vision of the *valis*. Though coercive and conciliatory tactics to establish an imperial rule went hand in hand, sometimes one of them was more dominant. Yet, looking retrospectively, the first two decades of the Ottoman rule was realized in a relatively tranquil atmosphere in comparison to the last two decades in which the Ottomans were faced with major rebellions. During the former period, there were no united rebellions against the Ottoman rule, although small-scale local uprisings always took place. Yet the Zaydi rebellions in the first period of Ottoman rule in the sixteenth century, leading to the evacuation of the Ottomans in 1636, as well as the San'a resistance of 1849 were always alive in the memories of the Ottoman governors who served in Yemen. Thus, the Ottoman governors always treated rebellions, even the small ones, with a great preoccupation; henceforth they mobilized provincial military forces at any incident, while employing at the same time conciliatory tactics.

[240] Ahmed Râşid, *Tarih-i Yemen*, vol.2, 244.

[241] Ibid, 245.

[242] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 6.

Starting in the late 1880s, the Zaydi resistance turned into the most significant challenge to Ottoman rule in Yemen. Especially, the Zaydi Imam's and his supporter's rejection of the sultan's claim to the caliphate was a serious challenge to a critical element of Ottoman dynastic legitimacy.[243] More importantly, what made the Zaydi opposition a real challenge to the Ottoman rule was their ability to establish a unified and organized opposition. Their own ancient institutions and ideological claims paved the way for channelling the discontent among the population into an organized political opposition against the Ottoman authority. Furthermore, the call for 'jihad' against the 'corrupt' Ottoman regime led to the population's coalescence for universal goals instead of particularist acting within the scope of tribal competition.[244] This political unity was a nightmare for the Ottoman ruling administration in Yemen. While comparing the Shafii uprisings in Tihama and the rebellions in Zaydi northern highlands, Rüştü Pasha, who was a brigadier, served in Yemen between 1905 and 1909, focuses on the inability of Tihama tribes to establish an organized rebellion as opposed to the Zaydi unity in the northern highlands.[245] However, Ottoman governors in their first two decades of office did not feel Rüştü Pasha's fear, since they did not face any large scale and organized opposition.

As Robin Bidwell points, during the first twenty years after the occupation of San'a, the Imam of Zaydis manifested himself as "a man of piety rather than of politics"; and the population, exhausted from previous ecological, economic and political crisis, remained quiet.[246] It seems that the propaganda of introduction of the Ottoman rule by the merchants, notables and Ottoman governors had met with public support, at least did not meet with a great objection. This is also related with the Ottoman military performance during the occupation of the northern highlands. Since the Ottomans acted with an imperial army which was superior in terms of its technology and organization, the tribes and population in general felt themselves

[243] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 8.

[244] Vincent Wilhite, *Guerilla War*, 33. For the call for jihad by the Zaydi imams and their propaganda, see. İhsan Süreyya Sırma, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Yıkılışında Yemen İsyanları*, (İstanbul: Düşünce Yayınları, 1980), 139-147.

[245] Rüştü Paşa, *Ah O Yemendir, Yemen Hatıraları*, ed. Faruk Yılmaz, (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2013), 60.

[246] Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, 54.

weaker than the Empire's forces; and the possibilities to own modern arms were limited for the population in comparison to the final two decades of the Ottoman rule, which coincided with an increase in arms smuggle in the Red Sea. As observed by Burry, "The relations between governors and governed in Yemen have undergone a radical change during the last decade or two, owing to Turkey's laxity or inability to check the surreptitious imports of arms. This covert traffic has gradually undermined the pillars of Ottoman rule. Now the population is as well armed as the forces of the government, far more numerous, and, on their own ground, more formidable, man for man."[247] And the imports of arms by the tribal population became one of the main concerns of the Ottoman governors in the 1890s and 1900s.[248] Thus the weakness of military power of the tribes and opposition forces, as well as the state of exhaustion of the population in the 1870s prevented the rise of an Imam as a unifying figure, as these conditions paved the way for the Ottomans to operate in the more tranquil province.

In the absence of large-scale organized rebellions, the first Ottoman governors dealt mainly with small-scale, local tribal incidents. Especially, the Arhab and Hashid tribes in the northern countryside were stubborn in refusing to acknowledge the Ottoman imperial rule. However, the reason behind these rebellions should not be understood as a basic anti-Ottomanism or sectarian anti-Sunni attitudes. The Ottoman occupation meant ensuing bureaucratic intervention to their lands, attempts to tax them; and ecological reasons like famines and droughts had provoked them to engage into opposition.[249]

Although the Ottomans surrounded and established controll over Kewkaban, after a long resistance in 1873, one of the tribal leaders in Kewkaban, Al-Mutawakkil Muhsin retreated to the unoccupied parts of Northern highlands to organize further resistance against the Ottomans and recruited supporters from those two tribes. The struggle of al-Mutawakkil Muhsin continued through the 1870s and took the form of prolonged armed confrontations between these tribes and the

[247] G. Wyman Bury, *Arabia Infelix or the Turks in Yamen*, (London: McMillan and Co. Limited, 1915), 175-76.

[248] For instance, see. Rüştü Paşa, *Ah O Yemen*, 150-51.

[249] Paul Dresch, *A Modern*, 5.

Ottomans.[250] Especially during the tenures of Ahmed Eyüp Pasha and Mustafa Asım Pasha, the Arhab and Hashid tribes attempted to assault the Ottoman forces and army arsenals and tried to forestall further Ottoman expansions towards the north.[251] Beyond the military response the Ottomans also applied the policy of divide and rule. During the governorship of Mustafa Paşa, on the one hand, he exiled eighteen influential sheiks of these tribes, including Imam Hamid-el-Din who would become Imam in 1879 after being released by Ismail Hakkı Pasha, to Hodeida. On the other hand, Mustafa Pasha appointed some sheiks to services in the Ottoman administration, and attempted to divide rebellious forces by employing the men from these tribes in gendarmerie forces.[252]

Although there was no great rebellion the Ottomans faced until 1891, as I mentioned, the memory of the old rebellions was strongly alive in the minds of the Ottoman governors; and the prolonged war with the Arhab and Hashid tribes continued to kept his memory alive . Thus, in order to defend the possession of the Arabian Peninsula in the rising imperial competition, the Ottoman imperial administration and its representatives in Yemen gave priority to maintaining peace in the region, particularly in San'a and its hinterland. The task was the Ottomanization of the province and its population. In the minds of the Ottoman governors, the Ottomanization of the province translated to the integration of the local elites, notables and power groups to the imperial system and the introduction of imperial institutions. As I mentioned before, coercive means against the rebellious groups were accompanied by politics of integration. For the Ottomans, if the tribal leaders – as well as the population at large – could be persuaded to accept the Ottoman system, peace within Yemen would be maintained. In order to integrate – i.e. Ottomanize – the provincial local leaders and the population in general to the Ottoman system, the Ottomans strived to both win the hearts of the notables and harmonize the Ottoman institutions with the local customs of the population.

As I discussed before, regarding the Ottoman methods of dealing with the rebellions, one of the main tools was gift-giving policy in seeking to maintain the

[250] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 97.

[251] Atıf Paşa, *Yemen Tarihi*, vol.2, 134-35.

[252] Ibid, 137.

loyalty of the local notables. In the minds of the Ottoman ruling elites, "the expenditure for the gifts to the sheikhs would be profitable in the long term since it would ensure the *ıslahat* (reform)."[253] This is important in the sense that the Ottomans sought the loyalty of the notables and their integration to the Ottoman system in order to maintain the *ıslahat* in the province. They were aware that without the consent and the support of the local leaders, the *ıslahat* could be neither implemented nor maintained. The integration policy was accompanied with the tested Ottoman policy of pitting loyal tribes against the other ones. It was a patronage system, but in essence a part of a divide and rule policy; some groups were excluded from it. Beyond the gifts and the administrative ranks in the *sancaks* or *kazas*, the collection of taxes became the main area of the struggle between the Ottoman provincial government and the local notables, as it was the bedrock of the patronage system. The Ottomans used the re-distribution of the duty of tax collection as a prominent element to integrate the local notables to the Ottoman system, hence ensuring their loyalties while stripping the stubborn local leaders of their privileges. As indicated by Thomas Kuehn, the most prominent local rulers lost their tax collection privileges while less important leaders and allies of the Ottoman government were allowed to continue as tax collectors of the Ottomans.[254]

The Ottomans had achieved some success in terms of creating loyal local elites at some point; however, the problem was how to introduce Ottoman administrative, military and judicial institutions. This task was much harder since the – particularly – highland Zaydi majority already had their own judicial and educational institutions, as well as distinct governing practices. Especially, the Qasimi state system had consolidated these institutions after the fall of first Ottoman rule throughout two centuries. It was a rather difficult task to substitute *Tanzimat* institutions, like conscription, *nizamiye* courts, centralized tax collection, with the incompatible institutions of the Zaydi majority. In addition to this peculiar circumstance, the frontier character of the province – as I discussed in the first chapter – made the governors seek for possible institutions and methods, which would be acknowledged by the locals and maintain their loyalty rather than force

[253] BOA/İ.DH 653-45397 29 Receb 1289 (2 October 1872).

[254] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 49.

them to accept the reforms and institutions of the *Tanzimat*. The possibility of the shifting in loyalties to other imperial powers – particularly conditioned by the presence of the Aden Residency – had always alerted the Ottoman governors. In short, it was a tug-o-war between the locals and Ottoman imperial governors on how to shape the local politics. Eventually, the unwillingness and resistance of the local population led the Ottoman governors not to apply the *Tanzimat* policies in the province. Consequently, for instance, the Ottomans did not undertake a detailed census, as the administration was unable to reach extensively into the around 6,000 villages.[255] Furthermore, the Yemeni young men could not be conscripted while the population did not prefer to apply to *nizamiye* courts.[256] According to Thomas Kuehn, the governor general Mustafa Asim Pasha, who was appointed in 1875, realized in an early date that the Ottoman rule could not be established with the same institutions as was established in the provinces of Ottoman Europe, Anatolia, or Ottoman Syria.[257] It shows that the Ottoman governors were aware of the need to develop another path of politics. Since the main task was to maintain tranquility by winning the hearts of the people, the application of different governing methods accustomed to the local population can be explained with the imperial ambitions of the Ottomans to involve the local population to the imperial project for the defense of the Arabian Peninsula. This will lead us to a debate on colonialism.

10. Was Yemen a Müstemleke?

Thomas Kuehn, in his book *Politics of Difference*, discusses the Ottoman rule in Yemen with the eponymous concept, which signifies the Ottomans' developing governing strategies that were different from the policies pertaining to the heartlands of the Empire. He defines the rule in Yemen as colonial Ottomanism, and he adds that this form of governance, especially in the 1870s to the late 1880s, was shaped

[255] William Ochsenwald, "The Impact of Ottoman Rule on Yemen, 1849-1914", in *Religion, Economy, and State in Ottoman-Arab History*, ed. William Ochsenwald, (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1998), 154.

[256] I will particularly discuss the conscription and judicial issue in the third chapter.

[257] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 16.

by the Ottoman perceptions of the Yemeni population as "backward" and "uncivilized.[258] However, as I discussed in the first chapter, these words are the reflection of the Ottoman inquietude from the failure in introducing the Ottoman institutions, and the acknowledgment of the resistance of the frontier people against them, rather than being the basis of a colonial framework that distinguishes the population in the colonies from the metropolitan citizens and aims to exclude the colonized people from the legal structure of the metropolis. Since all the relations of domination have been shaped by the struggle between the governing party and the governed people, they produce their own discourse; the discourse used by the Ottoman governors displays the weakness of the Ottoman control over the population. For instance, after stating the lack of census and property records in Hodeida, Rüştü Pasha says that "although the administrative organization of the *sancak* was structured like the administrative organization of Izmit, the population could not be resembled to the population of Izmit."[259] He means that the Ottomans failed to maintain the submission of the local population to the Ottoman authority and its institutions as successfully as in the heartlands of the Empire. The adjectives used for the local population in this sense tell us about the Ottoman governors' diagnosis about the malady of disobedience among the local population. It was not accidental that Muhammed Hilal Efendi, who served in 1879, at a time of relative tranquility, states that the Yemeni people have propitious customs, but only since he happened to find the population obedient.[260]

In fact, the fear of the Sublime Porte was to lose the right of possession of Yemen, and its domination over the Arabian Peninsula in the context of the new imperialism. That is why, for instance, Siverekli Nureddin Bey, who was a deputy of Siverek,called the imperial center to allocate more financial resources to Yemen by warning with the possible consequence of losing the Arabian Peninsula. But more interestingly, in order to bolster his argument, he gave the example that the British spent 200 million liras to pacify the Transvaal Rebellion even though the loss of

[258] Ibid, 143.

[259] Rüştü Pasha, *Ah O Yemen*, 61.

[260] For the layiha, see, İdris Bostan, "Muhammed Hillal Efendi'nin Yemen'e Dair İki Layihası", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 3 (1982): 306-321.

Transvaal would not have an impact in terms of the British possession of India.[261] It was the imperial ambition to control the population even with political strategies which would be understood as a significant derivation from the *Tanzimat*. In effect, when the Ottoman governors realized the resistance of the local population to the imperial institutions and practices –like conscription – they sought any possible methods of governance which would maintain the obedience of the local population, rather than insisting on imposing upon Yemen administrative agendas of Istanbul. Yet the ultimate target remained to gradually accustom the local population to Ottoman institutions of the *Tanzimat*.[262] But this goal was constantly postponed.

Since the Red Sea became a terrain of colonial practices, they impacted the Ottoman governors in their search for ways of ruling Yemen.[263] For example, in his conversation with Ahmed Feyzi Pasha, who was a governor of Yemen at that time, regarding the rebellion of 1891, Ahmed Feyzi asks Walter Harris what the British should do in India under similar circumstances.[264] And many Ottomans, in their reports, stated their strong interest as to how colonies like Sudan, Aden, Sevakin were ruled.[265] It is not a coincidence that this curiosity was concentrated when the Ottomans realized that the ultimate goal of introducing Ottoman institutions seemed to be impossible in the context of permanent rebellions in the Northern highlands, which challenged the Ottoman rule starting from 1891.

This context triggered the debate on how to rule Yemen; and now transforming Yemen into a *'müstemleke'* (colony) became a possibility for some. Cemaleddin ibn ül-Hatib was one among those who defended the idea to organize the Yemen administration as a *müstemleke*. He dedicated his book, *Yemen'e İsticlab-ı Nazar-ı Dikkat*, to this debate. Ibn ül-Hatib opens a debate about how to

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[261] For the layiha of Siverekli Nureddin Bey (March 4, 1911), see, Yahya Yeşilyurt, *Siverekli M. Nurettin Bey, Hayatı ve Yemen Layihası*, (Erzurum: Fenomen Yayıncılık, 2010), 43-78.

[262] As I will discuss in the third chapter, Ismail Hakkı Pasha aimed to accustom Yemeni men to the military service by recruiting them to the native army.

[263] I will discuss Ismail Hakkı Pasha's presentation of Yemeni native army as an example of Indian sepoys.

[264] *Walter Harris*, *A Journey*, 296

[265] For the comparisions of Siverekli Nureddin Bey, see, Yahya Yeşilyurt, *Siverekli*, 53; also see. Mevlanzade Rıfat, *Yemen Hakkında,* 14.

rule Yemen in his book, whether like a regular province (*vilayet-i mümtaza*) or like a colony (*müstemleke*). For him, Yemen should be governed in the form of *müstemleke* but also according to local customs.[266] Lütfi Bey as well, who was a deputy of Dersim during the Second Constitutional Era, was criticizing the rule of every province of the Empire with one uniform law, and proposing instead to administer Yemen by appointing locals to decide on how they want to be ruled. And he offered, in fact, a draft law to establish a local council (*meclis*) comprised from the local notables, who would decide on laws, regulations, and practices for Yemen.[267] Those two succinct examples reveal that the *müstemleke* form of administration was perceived as a way to persuade the local Yemenis to remain in the realm of the Empire. Furthermore, instead of framing a colonial difference, these proposals aimed at the integration of the Yemenis to the Empire. Thus, as in policies being recommended by these explicit defenses of the *müstemleke* form of administration in the 1910s, the Ottomans' abandonment of the judicial, military, financial, and political reforms of the Tanzimat in the 1870s and 1880s appear to be reflections of the power relations in the local scale in which the Ottomans were unable to impose imperial institutions easily. In this context, Ottoman imperial governors sought those governing strategies which were both attuned to the local demands and targeted the integration of the frontier people to the imperial politics, which in some cases resembled colonial governing methods, in order to keep the possession of the land in the frontier. In the next chapter, from this perspective I will discuss the tenure of Ismail Hakkı Paşa (1879-82) and his attempts to build a native army.

[266] Cemaleddin Ibn'ül-Hatib, *Yemen'e İsticlab-ı Nazar-ı Dikkat*, (Konstantiniye: Matba-I Ebuzziya, 1327), 4.

[267] For the layiha of Lütfi Bey (7 February 1911), see. Mehmet Çoğ, "Yemen Layihaları", *Fırat Üniversitesi Ortadoğu Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4 (2006): 174-183

CHAPTER III

THE TENURE OF ISMAIL HAKKI PASHA AND THE *ASAKİR-İ HAMİDİYE*

1. The Report of Ismail Hakkı Pasha

Before his appointment to the office of governorship in Yemen *Vilayeti*, İsmail Hakkı Pasha wrote a *layiha* (report) dated December 14, 1879 to the Palace describing the sources of the problems in the *vilayet* according to his view.[268] This *layiha* can be seen as a typical one, in that it reflects the struggles among the bureaucrats of the *vilayet*. Furthermore it is possible to come up with the hypothesis that Ismail Hakkı sought to oust the former *vali*, Mustafa Asım Pasha, and substitute him in this office. This assumption is highly probable, since the *layiha* made a significant impact on the Ottoman ruling cadres in the Palace, and eventually led to the appointment of Ismail Hakkı as the governor general of Yemen. That said, I would rather suggest to read this *layiha* to discern the concerns of Ismail Hakkı Pasha and the key features of his regime between 1879 and 1882.

[268] BOA/İ.DH. 796/64553, İsmail Hakkı Paşa to the Palace, 27 Zilkade 1296/12 November 1879.

Ismail Hakkı Pasha finds the reasons of the anti-Ottoman opposition and rebellion in the province in the malpractices and corrupt administration of Ottoman governors, and sees them originating from an overall oppressive regime. According to him, although the Yemeni population has a tendency to be loyal to the Sultan, insufferable treatment (*muamele-i takatfersadan*) by the Ottoman officials provoked the population to rise up against the Empire. Yet what became a nightmare for Ismail Hakkı Pasha was the population's potential to switch t*heir l*oyalty for the Aden Residency. İsmail Hakkı Pasha explicitly states that the extra taxes imposed on the merchants could result in their shift towards the British in the south.

Another criticism to Mustafa Asım Pasha's governance was about his attitude towards the Yemeni notables. Specifically, Ismail Hakkı Pasha strongly criticized the imprisonment of eighteen notables in Hodeida. According to him, some of those notables were among the ones who originally had urged Ahmed Muhtar Pasha to invade San'a; hence these were people who supported the Ottomans' effort to establish imperial authority in the *vilayet*. In response, former governors had appointed those notables to certain positions and bestowed them with significant medals. Furthermore, what was more striking for İsmail Hakkı Pasha was their impact over the people of Yemen, and in particular on their collective memory. Ismail Hakkı Pasha believed that the Ottoman authority required the integration of these notables rather than their exclusion from the imperial system. In fact, these ideas constituted the keystone of İsmail Hakkı Pasha's governance. The release of these notables was one of his first actions during his tenure.[269] In doing so, as well as by his release of previously imprisoned *ulema*, Ismail Hakkı Pasha aimed to bridge the gap between the Yemenis and their new governor.[270] In general, such acts formed a part of Ismail Hakkı's 'integrationist' policies in order to consolidate the Ottoman authority in Yemen.

Finally, in the *layiha* İsmail Hakkı Pasha emphasizes the need for a major military force to provide order for the *vilayet*. However, he states that bringing soldiers from other parts of the Empire to Yemen as part of the imperial army would

[269] Rüştü Paşa, *Ah O Yemendir, Yemen Hatıraları*, ed. Faruk Yılmaz, (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2013), 49.

[270] Caesar E. Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: Nineteenth Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule*, (London, I. B. Tauris, 2002), 96.

be rather expensive. Additionally, the inconvenient climate of Yemen for these soldiers would further weaken the efficiency of the army which in turn would become an ineffective financial burden for the Ottoman authority. During his tenure, İsmail Hakkı Pasha always underlined this concern; and it became one of the fundamental reasons for the Pasha to initiate the formation of a native army.

When the Ottoman ruling cadres read this report, they were deeply surprised about the apparent geopolitical importance of the province. A document sent to the Sultan in regard to İsmail Hakkı Pasha's layiha positioned Yemen as a strategically important place due to its contiguity to the Hijaz. Thus the document emphasized the significance of the security of Yemen. Yet, what mostly agitated the Ottoman bureaucrats was Ismail Hakkı Pasha's warning on the possibility of the people to shift their loyalty to the British Aden Residence.[271] Especially, those parts in the *layiha* emphasizing the precarious position of the Empire vis-a-vis the British due to the fluidity of the obedience of the population alarmed the Ottoman ruling cadres in the Palace. The document worryingly indicated the presence of the British as a problem in that they attempted to impress the Yemeni population through practicing a just treatment in the frontiers. In fact, this fear and concern was common in the reports informing the circumstances in Yemen. Muhammed Hilal Efendi also warned the capital in his *layiha* that the British presence in Aden led to the fluidity of loyalty among the population. He gave the example of the Katabe *kazası* (district) whose population started to withhold taxes by playing the British card.[272] This fear convinced the Palace to dismiss Mustafa Asım Paşa from the Yemen governorate. The document states that "since the inclinations of the people attracted the attention of the imperial government, a skilled and talented person (erbab-ı dirayet ve istidaddan) should be appointed to Yemen" as a governor general of the province; and called the *Meclis-i Vükela* to make a decision as immediately as possible.

As a result, Ismail Hakkı Pasha had made a major impact on the Palace with his *layiha*; and he was appointed as the new *vali* of Yemen in December 14, 1879

[271] BOA/İDH. 796/64453, 12 Zilhicce 1296/27 November 1879.

[272] İdris Bostan, "Muhammed Hillal Efendi'nin Yemen'e Dair İki Layihası", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 3 (1982): 311-12.

with the mission to change the present conditions in the region and engender the required reforms for the vilayet.[273]

2. Ismail Hakkı Pasha's Tenure, 1879-1882: Searching for Integrationist Policies

In fact, Ismail Hakkı Pasha had first come to Yemen earlier, in June 20, 1874 following the new military appointments for Yemen.[274] During his service both in the Seventh Imperial Army and as the San'a *mutassarıfı*, he had always dealt with the issue of providing the security of San'a and its hinterland against rebellious forces, especially those from Erşad and Arhab tribes, and took part in military operations against those rebellious elements.[275] Thus, when he became governor general, Ismail Hakkı Pasha gave priority to provide security and peace in the hinterland of San'a. There were different methods planned and used by Ismail Hakkı Pasha to achieve his goal.

Firstly, Ismail Hakkı Pasha attempted to extend the Ottoman presence and authority to the hinterland of San'a, especially towards those rebellious cores, by setting Ottoman administrative institutions there. In this sense, he believed that a new administrative organization would gradually ensure the loyalty of potentially rebellious tribes. For instance, in order to "reconcile the population of Beni el-Kadimi, Beni Avam, Arif Gaşim and Beni Edem tribes with the imperial government and to remove disputes", the areas where those tribes lived were united and organized as a *nahiye*.[276] At the same time, military operations always accompanied administrative reorganization with the aim to subjugate the rebellious forces in the hinterland. For example, he initiated a military campaign against the Havlan tribe; and when he succeeded in suppressing the rebellious forces, he collected the expenses of the operation from the leaders of the Havlan tribe as an

[273] BOA/ İDH. 796/64557-10, 29 Zilhicce 1296/14 December 1879.

[274] Atıf Paşa, *Yemen Tarihi*, vol.2, (İstanbul: Şirket-i Tab'iye,1326), 127.

[275] Ibid, 135-36.

[276] BOA/ ŞD. 2254/17, 8 Zilhicce 1297/ 11 November 1880.

example to discourage other potential rebellious activity.[277] In another example, upon the outbreak of a rebellion in the Sur Mountains north of San'a, Ismail Hakkı Pasha immediately sent battalions there to suppress the rebellion.[278] Counter-rebellious military operations ensured the *vali's* pledge to expand Ottoman imperial authority in the region.

These were two – but not limited – examples of military operations in the hinterland of San'a initiated by İsmail Hakkı Pasha. However, Ismail Hakkı Pasha's tenure coincided with only small-scale tribal rebellions which were sharing the character of the rebellions of the first two decades of Ottoman imperial rule in Yemen. Although İsmail Hakkı Pasha did not shy away from using superior military force against the rebels, it was the lack of organized united opposition that paved the way for him to consolidate Ottoman authority in the province. Within this context, as I noted above, Ismail Hakkı Pasha was able to initiate an integrationist policy. This policy may be explained in two ways. Firstly, he aimed to ally with the local notables to provide legitimacy for his authority both in the eyes of the local elites as well as to ordinary people. Secondly, İsmail Hakkı Pasha endeavored to establish an imperial rule which would tolerate traditional practices and customs of the Yemeni people. Yet, the ultimate aim was to win the loyalty of the population and made them acknowledge the imperial rule as well as familiarize them with imperial practices in the long run. In fact, this new flexible policy resulted from the weakness of the infrastructural power of the Ottoman state, and the refusal of the Yemeni population to accept Ottoman institutions. Thus, starting from the reign of Mustafa Asım Pasha onwards, Ottoman governors understood that they could not easily introduce the *Tanzimat* institutions to Yemen. According to Thomas Kuehn, while for Ahmed Muhtar Pasha in 1873 Ottoman administrative practices and institutions had been the model for governing the new province, towards the end of the decade Ismail Hakkı Pasha, as well as Mustafa Asım Pasha considered some practices of the British colonial rule as appropriate[279] In this aspect, the tenure of Ismail Hakkı Pasha was an example par-excellence in searching for the institutions which would both

[277] Atıf Paşa, *Yemen Tarihi*, 138.

[278] BOA/ İ.DH. 803/65061 3 Cemaziyilevvel 1297/13 April 1880.

[279] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference, Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 154.

mobilize the population to participate, and at the same time instill an active loyalty to the Sultan and the Ottoman imperial authority. Especially in the context of the urgency to defend the province in the imperialist struggle, Ismail Hakkı Pasha was required to get the consent of the population and the support of the local elites. Thus, he purposefully did not force to implant Ottoman *Tanzimat* institutions and practices in the *vilayet*, which would engender a rebellion. In this sense, *nizamiye* courts and conscription were the most crucial *Tanzimat* institutions, rejected by the local population. Ismail Hakkı Pasha's strategies in both the areas of law and military service speak volumes about the nature of his regime.

Since the *nizamiye* courts had been perceived as inconvenient to the Sharia rule and became one of the sources of rebellion in Yemen, Ismail Hakkı Pasha certainly sought for a legal reform. For the Ottomans, the issue was far beyond the reality of the failure in setting up a modern law institution. It was not that most of the Yemeni population rejected to apply to *nizamiye* courts. The presence of *nizamiye* courts itself endangered the Caliph-Sultan image of Abdulhamid II, since the locals perceived the *nizamiye* courts as institutions which violated the Sharia. To forestall damage to Abdulhamid II's image, Ismail Hakkı Pasha initiated a legal reform which would be in harmony with the customs and practices of the local population. Thus, in the provincial newspaper, *The San'a gazetesi*, dated July 6, 1881, it was announced – with the title of the "Abolition of Court of Justices in Yemen" (*Yemen mehakim-i adliyesinin lağvı)* – that the *Mahkeme-i İstinaf* ("Court of Appeal") and *Mahkeme-i Bidayet* ("Court of the First Instance") were abolished as a response to the demands from the locals; and it stated that the organization of courts would be "harmonized with the requirements of the local necessities" (*icabat-i mahalliyeye tevfikan*).[280] Thomas Kuehn interprets this act as the first round of legal reforms in the province of Yemen, in which the Ottomans broadened the responsibilities of the sharia courts at the expense of the *nizamiye* tribunals; in most districts the staff of the sharia courts consisted of people from the local *ulema*.[281]

[280] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 24 Haziran 1297/6 July 1881.

[281] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 110.

The other issue, Ismail Hakkı Pasha's response to the inability of the Ottomans to conscript native men in Yemen as well as his initiative to build a native army will be discussed in the remaining part of this chapter.

3. Later Debates on Organazing a Native Army

In his article in *The Mülkiye Mecmuası* ("Journal on Administration"), published in 1909, Abdülgani Seni, the *vilayet mektubcusu* ("Chief Secretary of the Provincial Administration") suggested to organize a native militia recruited from the tribal population of Yemen as a part of the grand reform project for Yemen. Abdulgani Seni reminded the reader about the experience of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* ("Hamidian Soldiers") organized by İsmail Hakkı Pasha; and stated that these soldiers served well in the past. By referring to the experience of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, he called for a re-organization of a native military force.[282] In fact, this proposal was not limited to Abdülgani Seni, but rather the organization of a native army had already become a vital debate among the Ottoman ruling elites who dealt with the Yemeni issue. What made a 'native army' a part of reform agenda was the failure of the Ottoman imperial government in introducing Ottoman administrative, judicial, financial and military institutions, as well as the state of permanent rebellions organized by mainly Zaydi imams since the 1890s. Thus, starting in late 1890s, the Palace expected reform proposals from the governors – sometimes it formed special reform committees (*ıslahat heyeti*) – in order to prevent the rebellions and reestablish Ottoman authority in the region. In this sense, organizing a native army/militia took a significant place among the reform proposals. Furthermore, as will be seen below, those who proposed to organize a native army always gave reference to the experience of *Asakir-i Hamidiye* of 1880-82 as an exemplary enterprise, as cited by Abdülgani Seni.

Under the challenge of Zaydi rebellions, organizing a native army had been often proposed with the aim to drain the manpower available for Zaydi Imams. For

[282] Abdülgani Seni, "Yemen'in Esbab-ı Asayişinden Milis-i Askeri", *The Mülkiye Mecmuası*, 8 (1325): 33.

instance, by giving references to both the 16th century and to the reign of İsmail Hakkı Pasha, Rüştü Pasha asserted that competent governors had utilized the available manpower of the Imams by organizing an opponent force from his possible recruits. According to him, dividing Imam's forces was an indispensable duty for the Ottomans to both disable the Imam's power and build a good administration in the province.[283] Siverekli Nureddin Bey was also an advocate of organizing a native army, and stated that "as was done in 1880, if we recruit ten thousand voluntary paid-men from the Yemenis, we would utilize those men, who otherwise would have been ordered by the Imam to assault us; and thus the power of the Imam would be impoverished."[284] Herein, both Rüştü Paşa and Siverekli Nureddin Bey perceived rebellious men as missionaries fighting just in order to receive a salary from the Imam. According to Rüştü Paşa, the Imam was recruiting landless peasants whose home towns were not suitable for agriculture.[285] Nureddin Bey was also insisting with a same tone that those who could not satisfy their needs in their home towns were joining the Imam's forces since the Imam collected taxes from the tribes with those same forces.[286] Thus, both of them – but not limited to those two – believed that the manpower under the disposal of the Imam could be immediately turned to the Empire's voluntary soldiers in the province, if the imperial government recruited them as paid local soldiers.

As was the case in the 1870s and 80s, the Ottomans could not conscript Yemenis to the imperial army in the 1900s as well. Therefore, they looked for alternative methods to organize men as a military force. As I stated above, the experience of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* inspired those authors of reform proposals in suggesting to organize a native army. Not just as an opposing force to the rebellious waves the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*'s being attuned to the customs of the Yemeni people also inspired the proponents. Since the imperial army seemed to be an 'alien' force for the Yemenis, the imperial governors suggested organizing military units which would be in harmony with the customs of the native people. In this sense, as I will

[283] Rüştü Paşa, *Yemen Hatıraları*, 37-39.

[284] Yahya Yeşilyurt, *Siverekli M. Nurettin Bey, Hayatı ve Yemen Layihası*, (Erzurum: Fenomen Yayıncılık, 2010), 53.

[285] Rüştü Paşa, Yemen Hatıraları, 39.

[286] Yahya Yeşilyurt, *Siverekli M. Nurettin Bey*, 55.

discuss below for the case of *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, the authors of reform proposals in the 1900s suggested to organize a local force whose voluntary recruits would wear their native uniforms rather than Ottoman imperial uniforms.[287] In their minds it would be through this way that the recruits would not feel as if they were serving an alien force.

This context was valid also for the 1880s. While not being able to recruit for conscription, Ismail Hakkı Pasha turned his attention to organizing a native army from the beginning. Although the *Kavanin-i Umumiye-i Askeriye* ("General Regulations Related to the Army") required general conscription, the Ottomans could not introduce this measure in Yemen. However, since general peace and imperial defense were much more urgent for Ismail Hakkı Pasha to keep the Empire vital in the Red Sea region, he looked for possible ways to utilize local manpower for the Empire in Yemen. In this respect, the security of San'a and a general tranquility in its hinterland were the primary objectives for Ismail Hakkı Pasha; and he set forth his plan to organize a native army.

4. The resistance of the Yemenis to Conscription

The case of the Asakir-i Hamidiye will reveal us that Ottoman governors who were serving in the frontiers did pursue alternative paths for controlling the population. The frontier character of a province translated into a volatile loyalty toward the Ottoman State among the local population, which rendered political legitimation of the Empire in the region rather fragile. Thus, instead of enforcing the reform projects of the *Tanzimat*, the governors in such regions preferred to look for any possible way to integrate the local population for the imperial defense and to provide tranquility. In the case of Yemen conscription was a crucial issue which showed the limits of imperial authority in this frontier. Thus, Ismail Hakkı Pasha's attempt to organize a native army signified that the Ottoman administration did

[287] For instance, The proposal prepared, and published in March 1910 by *Heyet-i Islahiye* whose members were Mahmud Nedim, Seyyid Hüseyin b. Abdülkadir, Seyyid Ahmed b. Yahya el-Kubsi, see. Mehmet Çoğ, "Yemen Layihaları", *Fırat Üniversitesi Ortadoğu Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4 (2006): 190-95.

concede this limit; on the other hand he was still ambitious to integrate local population to the imperial defense. In other words, establishing this kind of a special military unit contradicted with the spirit of the *Tanzimat* which proposed a universal conscription system for the imperial army. However, as I discussed in the first chapter, this policy also reveals the peculiarity of Ottoman imperial strategies in the frontiers.

As a response to the defeats against the Russian and Habsburg armies in the 18th century, starting during the reign of Selim III with the *Nizam-ı Cedit* Army, the Ottomans attempted to modernize their military. However, most importantly with the establishment of the *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* ("Victorious Soldiers of Muhammed") in the reign of Mahmud II, the Ottomans endeavored to institute a conscription system.[288] Especially with the *Tanzimat*, military service started to be defined as a 'citizenship duty' for the entire Ottoman population.[289] At the same time there were attempts to assimilate old militia forces within the imperial army. In other words the *Tanzimat* regime also strived to turn irregular forces into regular ones. For instance in the case of the *Evlad-ı Fatihan* ("Sons of the Conquerors") in Rumelia, after certain attempts to turn them into regular soldiers, the Ottoman government abolished the *Fatihan*-forces altogether in 1845, since these Rumelian provinces would "enter the orbit of the Tanzimat".[290] In 1846, with the *Kura Kanunu* ("Law of Drawing Lots"), military service was defined as an obligation and responsibility for all of the Muslim subjects; and it was repeated in the 1871 Law which was prepared in accordance with the *Kuvve-i Umumiye-i Askeriye Nizamnamesi* ("Regulation of Armed Forces") prepared by Huseyin Avni Pasha in August 1869. The first article of this law puts all the Muslim population in the

[288] Eric Jan Zürcher, "Teori ve Pratikte Osmanlı Zorunlu Askerlik Sistemi, 1844-1918", in *Devletin Silahlanması: Ortadoğu'da ve Orta Asya'da Zorunlu Askerlik*, ed. Eric Jan Zürcher, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2003), 91.

[289] Faruk Ayın, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tanzimat'tan Sonra Askere Alma Kanunları*, (Ankara: Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1994), 77.

[290] Y. Hakan Erdem, "Turks as Soliders in Mahmud II's Army: Turning the Evlad-ı Fatihan into Regulars in the Ottoman Empire", in *Beyond the Balkans: Towards an Inclusive History of Southeastern Europe, ed. Sabine Rutar*, (Zürich: Lit Verlag, 2014): 206.

Ottoman lands under the obligation of military service.[291] However, as in many cases of Tanzimat, there was a gap between the theory and practice in terms of the conscription. As stated by Zürcher, this new law was applied efficiently only in the heartlands of the Empire.[292] In this sense, Yemen is a convenient example to show this discrepancy.

After the conquest of San'a in 1872, in order to salute the occupation of this region and to state the strategic prominence of Yemen, Namık Kemal wrote an article at the *İbret* newspaper, which appeared on June, 20 1872. He underlined that this policy toward Yemen – the occupation – would have beneficial results for the Empire such as recruiting more than one hundred thousand men to the army. According to him, military service was limited to a few Muslim provinces in the Empire and this limitation reduced the necessary population pool for effective recruitment. Therefore, the occupation of Yemen would broaden the geographies of conscription since this region was inhabited by a Muslim population.[293] However, contrary to Namık Kemal's prediction, the Ottomans remained unable to introduce the conscription system to Yemen during the period of their presence. As claimed by Thomas Kuehn, local males of Yemen were excluded from compulsory military service because the imperial government feared that any enforcement of conscription service would result in serious opposition.[294] The resistance of Yemenis to conscription resulted in the deployment of imperial army units serving in the province in which there were no Yemeni soldiers. Thus, the Ottomans were not unlike an occupying force in the eyes of the local population.[295] Especially the military operations which were undertaken by the battalions of the Seventh Imperial Army against the rebellious forces strengthened this perception in the local minds.

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[291] Faruk Ayın, *Tanzimat'tan Sonra*, 13-25.

[292] Zürcher, "Teori ve Pratikte Osmanlı Zorunlu Askerlik Sistemi", 92-3.

[293] For Namık Kemal's article titled as *Mütalaa*, see. Mustafa Nihat Özon, *Namık Kemal ve İbret Gazetesi*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 1997), 68.

[294] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 13

[295] İhsan Süreyya Sırma, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Yıkılışında Yemen İsyanları*, (İstanbul: Düşünce Yayınları, 1980), 104.

5. Militia Forces in the Frontiers

The gap between the theory and practice in terms of the conscription issue was not exclusive to Yemen. In the frontiers in general, the Ottomans could not enforce compulsory military service – at least it remained very limited – as its imperial authority was limited in the engagement of local people to the imperial institutions. Yet, there were several experiments where Ottoman imperial governors attempted to form native/local militia/battalions for particular missions originating from the specific contexts of the frontiers. In these examples, the Ottomans always aimed at applying a local hue for their imperial policy in the specific frontier provinces. The most familiar and most studied one are the *Hamidiye Alayları* ("The Hamidian Regiments"), which was formed in the Kurdistan region on the basis of mainly Kurdish tribes in 1891. With the strategic alliances with Shafi tribal leaders, the Ottomans organized a native force there to forestall the development of an Armenian revolutionary movement, to use it as a buffer force against the Russians and also for the civilizing mission, which meant in fact to render the local Kurdish tribal population obedient to the state.[296] As another example worth mentioning, two battalions of militia soldiers were organized from the members of old timariot families in Bosnia. The *Bosna İhtiyat Süvari Alayı* was used as an assistant force to the imperial military units in their operations, especially against Montenegro.[297] Mithat Pasha also organized a militia force by recruiting men from the villages along the Danube to fight against the Bulgarian revolutionaries, who in turn received support from the Russians and Serbians.[298] In Wadi Bisha in Asir, Ottomans used

[296] For Hamidiye alayları, see. Janet Klein, "Çevreyi İdare Etmek: Osmanlı Devleti ve Hamidiye Alayları", in *Tarihsel Perspektiften Türkiye'de Güvenlik Siyaseti, Ordu ve Devlet*, ed. Evren Balta-Paker and İsmet Akça, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010), 106-9.

[297] Odile Moreau, "19. Yüzyılda Bosna'da Zorunlu Askerliğe Direniş", in *Devletin Silahlanması: Ortadoğu ve Orta Asya'da Zorunlu Askerlik*, ed. Eric Jan Zürcher, trans. M. Tanju Akad, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2003), 150.

[298] Mehmet Çelik, *Balkanlarda Tanzimat: Midhat Paşa'nın Tuna Vilayeti Valiliği,*

the Bisha soldiers which were formed from freed slaves and blacks in the Hijaz. They were employed for guard duty along the caravan routes, especially those routes between Jidda, Mecca and Taif.[299]

In fact, the Ottomans used to employ in the previous centuries local militias or mercenaries in the frontiers especially for the defense against incursions from imperial powers as well as against internal rebellions.[300] In theory, this kind of irregular defense or security forces should have been eliminated or turned into regulars with the *Tanzimat*-era.[301] However instead of pursuing top-down *Tanzimat* projects, Ottoman imperial governors found it more convenient to pursue ruling techniques within the contingent context of the frontiers, which was dependent on the relations with imperial powers, and the power relations between the local population and the Ottomans. In this juncture, establishing local militias became often much more practical for the Ottoman governors in different frontier regions and these took different forms. In this sense, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* in Yemen was rather similar to its contemporary examples in terms of its specific mission to integrate local men for the security of San'a and its hinterland against rebellious forces, and for ensuring imperial defense. However, instead of having an ad hoc basis of operation and training, as I will discuss below, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was closer to modern armies with its training, organization and order as well as its aim to raise examples of loyal citizens.

6. The *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, 1880-1882

6.1. To Accustom the Natives to Ottoman Military Institutions

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1864-1868, (İstanbul: Libra Yayıncılık, 2010), 99-100.

[299] William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society and the State in Arabia: the Hijaz under Ottoman Empire, 1840-1908*, (Ohio: Ohio State University Press), 158. As we have seen in the second chapter, these Bisha soldiers also joined to Ahmed Muhtar Pasha's forces in the Asiri Campaign.

[300] Virginia Aksan, *Ottoman Wars: An Empire Besieged, 1700-1870*, (Harlow: Longman, 2007), 56-73.

[301] Footnote: 23

Since their reoccupation of Tihama, the Ottomans benefited from local mercenaries which had been recruited particularly from the Yam tribe in the north of Yemen on an ad hoc basis for specific campaigns.[302] However, during the tenure of Ismail Hakkı Pasha, we see the formation of a rather different kind of locally recruited battalions. They were not recruited on ad hoc basis, but were projected as a part of imperial military forces, which would operate like a modern regular army. On April 11, 1880, four months after he was appointed to the office of governor general of Yemen, İsmail Hakkı Pasha informed the Palace that he organized a military unit recruited from the local people which would be employed in the province, and whose name was given in reference to the name of Sultan Abdulmaid II, i.e. *Asakir-i Hamidiye*. He states that, until that time (April, 1880) around one hundred men were recruited for this unit.

Although we encounter several *nizamname*s prepared for different irregular units, which also includes the *Hamidiye Alayları* in Kurdistan indicating the conditions and roles of the tribal militias, we do not find a comparable kind of a *nizamname* for the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*.[303] But from available documents we can discern that there were four main provisions which defined the conditions of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* in Yemen. These were as follows: first, they would wear their local uniforms; second, they would be employed in San'a and were not to be sent outside of Yemen, third, they would have the freedom to quit the service, and finally, they would receive seven riyal per month, and the government could not delay the payments.[304] At the first glance, these provisions tell us the peculiar position of the recruits of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* vis-a-vis the conscripts of the imperial army for whom the military service was compulsory, and in most cases they were forced to comply with this obligation. Regular soldiers had to wear imperial uniforms; and they could be dispatched to serve in different continents with very little payment and under miserable conditions. These differences reveal İsmail Hakkı Pasha's strong motivation to integrate the Yemeni men to an Ottoman military force.

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[302] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire*, 116.

[303] Bayram Kodaman, *Sultan II. Abdulhamid Devri Doğu Anadolu Politikası*, (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1987), 33-47.

[304] BOA/ Y. A. HUS 167-74, unsigned and undated document.

In light of the previous failed attempts at conscription and the refusal of the population to serve for the Empire in its regular army, the *vali* endeavored to offer different conditions for the Yemenis.In the long term the *vali* aimed to make Yemenis share the military service (*hidmet-i celile-i askeriyeden behredar edilmelerine mukaddeme teşvik olmak üzere*), and make them encounter imperial military institutions and regulations.[305] Thus, although these recruits were disbanded two years after their recruitment, the native army was constructed as a long term project to integrate the population to the modern military institution of the Empire as a way to engage them to the imperial defense for the holy motherland.[306] In this sense it might be worth to treat Ismail Hakkı Pasha's project as a part of integrationist Ottomanization strategy. He desired to Ottomanize the native population by introducing imperial institutions in locally-accepted forms. Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu argues that in order to integrate the Kurdish and Arab tribes to the center, the Ottomans enabled different strategies to integrate them to the army.[307] In this sense, *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was an example par excellence in the context of the lack of conscription in Yemen.

The tasks of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* were defined as to protect the castles, government offices, arsenals, and patrol stations. They could be dispatched to any required district like the *nizamiye* soldiers.[308] In order to perform these tasks, it was stated that they were to partake with the training and customs of the *nizamiye* army; and sometimes act together with them.[309] They were expected to protect the imperial institutions as well as the Empire's order in the province.

As shown by Ceasar Farah, most of the recruits were from the San'a families who were deprived from a decent livelihood and found it in their interest to be loyal

[305] BOA/ Y. MTV 8/26, 12 Safer 1299/3 January 1882.

[306] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 25Şubat 1296. The newspaper wrote: "*vatan-ı mukaddesimiz içun yetişdirmekde oldukları şu askerin fünun-ı celile-i talimiye ve adat-ı mukaddese-i askeriyeden temamiyle hıssa-mend olmalar…ı*"

[307] Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zorunlu Askerlik Sistemine Geçiş: Ordu-Millet Düşüncesi", *Toplumsal Tarih* 164 (2007): 40.

[308] BOA/ Y. A. HUS 167/74 18 Cemaziyelahir 1298/18 May 1881.

[309] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 8 Teşrin-i Evvel 1296/ 20 October 1880.

to the imperial government.[310] In a document which includes a critical report about the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, the recruits were defined as the subclasses of the province who had found the battalions as a chance to overcome their poverty.[311] As we have seen above, the latter desires for establishing a native militia in the province had targeted this class of the society to recruit. In this aspect, İsmail Hakkı Pasha succeeded in presenting the native army as a chance for them to improve their livelihood. In fact, this development accounted to the success of the *vali*, since this poor class of people was perceived as the potential man pool easily to be mobilized by rebellious imams.In other militias I referred to above, the imperial government established regiments through establishing alliances with local tribal leaders; and in most cases the tribal leaders took the responsibility to gather men from their tribes for the regiments. In this aspect, they were more like tribal militias. Yet, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* did not operate in this way; the tribes were not organized at the basis of regiments. On the contrary, the recruitment was personal-based similar to the institution of modern army. However, this does not mean that İsmail Hakkı Pasha with his sole initiative and effort recruited these men to the battalions.

Since the return of the Ottomans to San'a the Ottoman operations were realized with the help of local notables. In other words, the weakness of the Ottoman imperial government to enforce the imperial institutions and reforms (*ıslahat*) always required the alliance between influential notables and the Ottoman governors, hence their integration to the imperial policies. Ismail Hakkı Pasha was aware of this need of alliances before his appointment; and he engendered this alliance during his tenure starting with releasing the previously imprisoned notables. As his regime could be defined as an integrationist one, the establishment and functioning of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was part and parcel of this policy. While he was aligned with some of the local notables to establish the native battalions, he pursued these battalions as an apparatus to integrate the lower classes to the imperial policies too.

Although the *vali* did not designate tribes as the basis of battalions, he worked with the help of tribal leaders and notables to build the *Asakir-i Hamidiye,* as well as

[310] Caesar Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen*, 105.

[311] BOA/ Y. A. HUS. 167-74, unsigned and undated.

to recruit the men. An unsigned report from this period presented the establishment of this unit as the project of Ismail Hakkı Paşa with the local notables, Hüseyin Çığman and Ahmed el-Kıbsi in particular.[312] Ismail Hakkı also recruited lieutenants and other high ranking officers from the members of the notable families. For instance Galip Efendi, one of the notables, led his servant İbrahim Efendi to serve for *Asakir-i Hamidiye*. While informing Ibrahim Efendi's participation to the battalions as an officer, the provincial newspaper called for the notables (*sadat ve eşraf-ı ekabir*) to send their servants to the native army.[313]

Since general peace and order had been a fundamental concern for the imperial governors in the *vilayet* both for the heartlands as well as along the Empire's frontier, establishing a security regime became a prominent agenda. More than this, in the mind of the governors, the integration of the local people to this task would pave the way for a more tenable image of the imperial governance in the eyes of the local population. Furthermore, it would ease the functioning of the governance while alleviating the rebellious forces. Wyman Bury stated in 1915 after his journey that, "Ottoman officialdom in Yemen depends entirely for its dealing with the native population on Zaptieh or Arab gendarmerie. It is they who convey administrative orders to the people concerned, do their best to smooth the thorny was of the tax collector, act as intelligent agents, keep order in the bazaars, carry messages, and escort travelers and convoys entitled to the protection of government."[314] As for these tasks, subjugating rebellions and providing order to the province, especially in the rebellious hinterlands, the integration of the natives to the military force was required. Ismail Hakkı Pasha was aware of this and was stating that making natives accustomed to Ottoman military institution would strengthen the order of the province.[315] While an Ottoman military force consisting totally of

[312] BOA/ Y. A. HUS 167/74, unsigned, undated. However, this document presented the organization of this unit as a plot against the Empire. We do not have enough evidence to argue this; however it reflects the different factions both within the representatives of the imperial government and within the notables.

[313] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 22 Temmuz 1297/ 3 August 1881.

[314] G. Wyman Bury, *Arabia Infelix or the Turks in Yamen*, (London: McMillan and Co. Limited, 1915), 167.

[315] BOA/ Y. A. HUS 167/74, İsmail Hakkı Pasha to the Palace, 10 Kanunievvel 1296/22 December 1880.

conscripts coming from other geographies, a native appearance in the military force would engender the local consent. The historian al-Wasi stated that "rebellious tribes would submit merely on the appearance of these troops, because they were of the people of Yemen and the rebels feared to kill their brother Muslims."[316] In this sense, it functioned as a counter-rebellious apparatus for two years, formed from the local population, especially in the hinterland of San'a.

The general phenomenon of lack of participation of the local population to the imperial institutions within the *vilayet* conditioned the organization of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*. The document in April 1880 reveals that İsmail Hakkı Pasha himself initiated the organization this army. He was just informing the Palace and waiting for a decree after he had already set the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* forward. When he could not get an answer from the capital, he wrote again to inform about the unit and stating his expectation of an answer, and stating their numbers as three hundred.[317] This number reached 475 at the end of 1881[318]; and about 600 in 1882. Yet what is more striking here is that Ismail Hakkı Pasha, as a governor of a frontier *vilayet*, had the liberty to initiate a peculiar kind of *ıslahat* in the vilayet. İsmail Hakkı Pasha did not have a top-down agenda from the capital. Keeping in mind that İsmail Hakkı Pasha had been serving in Yemen for six years until his governor tenure, what he observed in Yemen was the strategic importance of Yemen *vilayeti*, hence the significance of imperial defense and the critical issue of the obedience of the population to the Ottoman imperial state. He suggested the establishment of Asakir-i Hamidiye as one of the solutions to the problems the Ottoman imperial rule faced in Yemen. Two main issues were in the mind of İsmail Hakkı Pasha while establishing this native military unit: strengthening the Ottoman military power in the province for the imperial defense and order within the province, and consolidating the obedience and loyalty of natives to the Ottoman imperial rule. In fact these two issues are interconnected. The Ottomans required the integration of the local people for the defense of the Empire in this frontier, and the successful defense of the Muslim motherland would cement Ottoman legitimacy.

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[316] Vincent Steven Wilhite, *Guerilla War, Counterinsurgency, and State Formation in Ottoman Yemen*, (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2003), 229-30.

[317] BOA/ Y. A. HUS. 165/74, 2 Ramazan 1297/ 8 August 1880.

[318] *Yemen Salnamesi*, (San'a: San'a Matbaası, 1298).

6.2. Recruiting the Yemenis for the Sake of the Empire:

The Ottomans reoccupied Yemen in the context of new imperialism, in order to keep the possession of the province, and they always needed both a buffer force against the encroachments of the other imperialist powers and establish a security regime within the province. Thus, one of the immediate aims became to increase the Ottoman military power in the region.[319] In this sense, especially the employing and integrating of native population into this force was perceived as a measure to strengthen the imperial defense as it would consolidate the native obedience. The *vali* perceived the organizing of a native army in a province like Yemen, in which approximately three million Muslims inhabited, as a powerhouse for the Ottoman power in the entire region.[320]

The defense of the province, hence of the Empire's presence in the Red Sea required the participation of the Yemeni people themselves due to the requirement of an a efficient military presence. However, as I discussed above, the Ottomans could not introduce the conscription system since it was not accepted by the local population. In order to accustom the native people with the Ottoman military institution, İsmail Hakkı Pasha used the method of a native army separate from *Nizamiye* army in the vilayet. The *Harbiye Nezareti* (Minister of War) at first also perceived their organization as a gradual transition for making them commingle to the military service until the functioning of conscription system there (*"o havalicede kur'a-i şeriye keşidesi usul-i mehasin-i şumulünün hayr-i icraya ve havline kadar tedricen askerlikle i'tilaklık maksadını temin için"*).[321] In this aspect, Ismail Hakkı Pasha presented the battalions of the Asakir-i Hamidiye as a way to familiarize the native people with the Ottoman military institutions. It was thought that when these recruits of *Asakir-i Hamidiye* progressed in the manners and orders of the

[319] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 17 Kanun-i Evvel 1296/29 December 1880.

[320] BOA/Y. A. HUS. 167/74, İsmail Hakkı Pasha to the Palace, 2 Cemaziyilevvel 1297/12 April 1880.

[321] BOA/ Y. MTV, 8-26, Harbiye Nezareti to the Palace, 12 Safer 1299/3 January 1882.

established military institutions and were familiarized to the Ottoman military institution, the Ottoman center would exert more power in the region.[322]

The *vali* thought that in the long term the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* would replace the need for a *Nizamiye* army, and would be responsible for the imperial defense in the province.[323] In fact, what the *vali* was looking for was simply an efficient military force. Until that time the Ottomans used to dispatch recruits to Yemen from the imperial heartlands. However, the climate of Yemen was itself a challenge for the soldiers who were not familiar to it; which resulted in great casualties and even deaths. For the imperial mind, this was creating an unfruitful military power in the region. Thus, Ismail Hakkı Pasha aimed to substitute the imperial soldiers with the native recruits of *Asakir-i Hamidiye* in the long run. According to him, with an increased number of native recruits the Empire would save itself from a financial burden originating from the dispatching of soldiers to Yemen, as it would forestall the casualties and deaths related to the adverse climate of Yemen. Furthermore, the *vali* planned to cover the expenses of the increasing number of new native recruits through these savings.[324]

In the new imperial age, like other imperial ruling elites in the world, the Ottomans were seeking an efficient domination by shaping the local balances and manufacturing a local consent for the Empire's presence. In this aspect, a native presence in the imperial military institutions was equal to winning active loyalty of the population which was the bedrock for the Empire's confidence. Furthermore, in the minds of Ottoman ruling elites, that meant engaging locals to the imperial objectives. Thus, the benefiting from the native population for the defense of the Empire and security of the province was defined as of great interest to the state and

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[322] BOA/Y. A. HUS. 167/74, 10 Kanunievvel 1296/22 December 1880.

[323] *The San'a Gazetesi* translated an article about *Asakir-i Hamidye* published in French-published "Mısır" newspaper. The writer wrote the article after seeing 13 soldiers who had been sent to Istanbul to the Sultan. I reckon he wrote the article based upon his conversations with Islam Bey, the lietuenant responsible for this group. He wrote that because of the distance of Yemen, in order to decrease the Turkish soldiers, this native army was established. See. *The San'a Gazetesi*, 6 Mayıs 1297/18 May 1881.

[324] BOA/ Y. A. HUS. 167-74, İsmail Hakkı Paşa to the Palace, 10 Kanun-i Evvel 1296/22 December 1880.

nation.[325] The task of creating a native army was depicted as a fundamental national requirement (*kaide-i milliye-i mucib*) since it would materialize the *ittihad-ı İslam*; and Ismail Hakkı Pasha's attempt to integrate the natives to the imperial defense was greeted as a patriotic desire.[326] Especially in the context of rising imperialism, the Ottomans deemed their Muslim subjects as the potential champions of the Empire and the Sultan. Especially after the great territorial losses resulting from the Russian War of 1877-78, the imperial elites further attempted to consolidate the Empire's authority in the Arab lands. This became a grand strategy against the other imperial encroachments in the reign of Abdulhamid II. However, the crucial point in this strategy was to mobilize the Muslim subjects and win their active loyalty for the imperial defense. In this sense, engaging the native Yemenis to the imperial defense was greeted as accommodating the interests of the state. Regarding the winning of the active loyalty of the local population, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was organized and trained like a *nizamiye* army in order to keep a regular native force as an apparatus of imperial defense and provincial security.

6.3. Yemeni Sepoys:

Although the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was organized as a separate unit from the *Nizamiye* army, in terms of its hierarchical structure and training it was like a regular contemporary army. In fact it was conceived as a modern regular army from the beginning. Ismail Hakkı Pasha was always implying with great attention and pride that their training and order were equal to the *nizamiye* drilling under the command of *nizamiye* officers.[327] In this sense, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was different from the traditionally employed frontier militia forces. For instance, when an article was published in a newspaper in Istanbul on the *Kuloğlu* soldiers in Tripoli and the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, *The san'a gazetesi* was compelled to answer it by emphasizing that the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was a modern army.[328] The article published in the provincial newspaper stated that there is a difference between *Kuloğlus* and the

[325] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 12 Ağustos 1296/24 August 1880.

[326] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 7 Mayıs 1296/19 May 1280.

[327] BOA/ Y. MTV 3/58, 1 Cemaziyilevvel 1297/11 April 1880.

[328] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 18 Teşrin-i Sani 1297/30 September 1881.

Asakir-i Hamidiye in terms of their equipment, order and training. The article stated that *Kuloğlus* were armed with old equipment and were not trained like modern armies; it further exclaimed that they were not real "soldiers". Saying that they were not real soldiers was a reference to their difference from the modern regular armies. In fact, *The San'a gazetesi* was trying to emphasize *Kuloğlu's* traditional militia character while portraying the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* as a modern army with an emphasis on the use of new training methods and modernized weapons. To a considerable degree, Ismail Hakkı Pasha's point of reference for the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was the Indian *Sepoys* ("*Hindistan'ın yerli askerine mümasil*") rather than the militia forces recruited from the local population operating in the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire.[329] As we discussed in the previous chapters, when the Ottoman imperial governors failed to introduce *Tanzimat* institutions and practices, they looked for any possible measures to control the population and earn their loyalty. In this sense, in some cases the colonial governing strategies impacted the Ottomans as showcased in the case of the native army. In the context of an increasingly precarious Ottoman position in Yemen in the 1900s, the Ottoman governors, for example Rüştü Pasha, problematized the lack of Yemeni natives in the Ottoman imperial army. Rüştü Pasha asked why the Ottomans could not recruit natives while Italians could do it in their recent colonies or as the British had succeeded to benefit from the Sudanese and Egyptians.[330] Similarly, when giving the Indian *Sepoys* as the example, there was the same question behind Ismail Hakkı Pasha's argument, and also the same desire to recruit the native men. Yet, the more significant emphasis while giving the Indian army as an example for the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, was that a native army could be trained and ordered like a *nizamiye* army, as in the Indian case. The regiments in the Indian Army were organized and trained on the same lines as the British imperial army and had British officers with Indian subordinates; and they played a great role in the conquest and the pacification of the subcontinent.[331] It was the personal project of İsmail Hakkı Pasha to raise Yemeni *sepoys* in the province and acquire a regularly trained, modernly organized native military force like the

[329] BOA/ Y. MTV 8/26, 12 Safer 1299/3 January 1880.

[330] Rüştü Paşa, *Yemen Hatıraları*, 151.

[331] Nadzan Haron, "Colonial Defense and British Approach to the Problems in Malaya, 1874-1918" *Modern Asian Studies* 24 (1990), 277.

Nizamiye army, which would strengthen the Empire's presence in the province and in the Red Sea.

6.4. With their local costumes: A Policy of Differentiation or Integration?

After voicing the above-mentioned concern, Rüştü Pasha suggests that in order to successfully recruit the natives, their own tribal customs should be pursued and they should be employed with their native manners.[332] In effect, Ismail Hakkı Pasha aimed to integrate the natives to the Ottoman military force by abiding to their local customs. That is reason for letting them don their regional apparel.[333] In the above-mentioned article comparing the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* with the *Kuloğlus*, it was stated that the only difference of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* from the *Nizamiye* army was their local costumes.[334]

In his prominent article on the costumes of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*, Thomas Kuehn sees the local costumes of the *Hamidian* recruits as the practice of differentiation. According to Kuehn, the "native uniform for locally recruited soldiers was part of a broader effort on the part of the representatives of the Ottoman government to create and reproduce difference between the local population and the soldiers and administrators from outside provinces."[335] However, rather than pursuing a differentiation, the Ottomans aimed to eventually integrate them to the Empire. For Ismail Hakkı Pasha the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was a tool to familiarize the natives, who had refused the conscription, to the imperial practices. It was the failure of the Ottomans that made the *vali* search for integration strategies which would open a ground for the Yemenis to practice their local customs, albeit within the imperial institutions. Ismail Hakkı Pasha pursued the Ottomanization of the natives,

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[332] Rüştü Paşa, *Yemen Hatıraları*, 151.

[333] BOA/ Y. MTV 3/58, 1 Cemaziyilevvel 1297/11 April 1880: "*cümlesine avam-ı ahaliyenin iktisa etdikleri misüllü siyah gömlek ve beyaz föteden bir seyakda elbise iksa…*"

[334] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 18 Teşrin-i Sani 1297/30 November 1881.

[335] Thomas Kuehn, "Clothing the 'Uncivilized': Military Recruitment in Ottoman Yemen and The Quest for 'Native' Uniforms", in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity, 1880-1914*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi, Christoph K. Neumann, (İstanbul: Eren, 2004), 144.

which meant to make them pledge "Padişahım çok yaşa" (Long live my sulan) while wearing their local costumes but keeping the firearms of the Empire in their hands. In this sense, rather than colonial differentiation as Thomas Kuehn argued, the Ottomans were aiming for the integration of the population, by winning their hearts and making them loyal to the Empire and the Sultan. The *vali* set a long term project, at the end of which the Yemenis would be compliant to conscription.

Furthermore, Thomas Kuehn draws similarity between the Indian army and the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* by stating that "the rhetoric about the Ottomans' civilizing mission together with the reference to British India suggests that grouping these local recruits into separate units and distinguishing them visually from the regular Ottoman troops through specific inferior to their commanding officers and fellow soldiers from other parts of the Empire. In other words, the uncivilized, to whom the civilizing efforts of the state were to be directed, had to be dressed differently."[336] However, the Ottomans could not conscript Yemenis to the imperial army; hence they offered them to join the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* with provisions different from the *Nizamiye* army as I stated above. Moreover, the British did not pursue to conscript Indians to the British army while the Ottomans did, but could not succeed. In a similar case, when the Bosnians refused to wear Ottoman uniforms, the Ottomans were forced to accept their local costumes.[337] Thus, it was the resistance of the Yemeni natives to the conscription practice that forced the Ottomans to search for alternative strategies rather than this being a deliberate differentiation strategy, originating from a colonial mindset of the Empire. Instead of reproducing the difference, in the long term the Yemeni population was envisioned to share the imperial practices, like conscription. In this sense, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* can be treated as part of a grand strategy of Ottomanization rather than an insantce of systematizing the cultural and traditional differences and excluding the frontier subjects from the imperial practices pursued for the imperial heartlands.

[336] Ibid, 150.

[337] Odile Moreau, "19. Yüzyılda Bosna'da", 148.

6.5. A 'School of Civilization':

An article by Hamid Vehbi in *The san'a gazetesi* presented the establishment of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* as a significant passage of *ıslahat* in Yemen. He adds that this reform project should be continued with the opening of high schools (*idadi mektebler*). According to him both institutions would make the people and the children of the *vilayet* meet with civilization.[338] For the frontiers where the Ottoman institutions were lacking and the power of the state was limited, the *ıslahat* was projected to win the obedience of the population, integrate them to the imperial politics, and hence make them loyal Ottoman subjects. Especially in the reign of Abdulhamid II, education became an important institution to achieve this end. In other words, education was projected as a substantial apparatus to indoctrinate imperial ideologies as well as to produce loyal subjects of the Empire and the Sultan-Caliph.

Military service was another apparatus to meet these goals, to raise loyal subjects who were defending the Empire and providing order by exercising imperial targets and ideologies. However, as was mentioned above, in frontiers like Yemen, there was a disparity between the goals of the imperial government and the actual degree of obedience of the local population, which resulted in weakness for the Ottoman imperial institutions. This distance was supposed to be spanned with a mission civilisatrice, which meant in this context the setting up of possible *ıslahat* projects to raise loyal subjects, even if these projects led to institutions that differed from the essence of the *Tanzimat*. As in our case, forming a native army was perceived as a part of this civilizing mission. This context also differentiates it from the traditional frontier militia forces. As in its organization and training, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was more like a modern army by which the civilizing mission was enacted. Ismail Hakkı Pasha imagined the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* as –with Hamilton's words – an engine for the manufacture of a particular type of human intellect and body.[339] Training and order aimed to create loyal subjects of the Sultan rather than providing merely the benefit of a frontier guard. Like the role of the French army in

[338] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 18 Eylül 1296/30 Eylül 1880.

[339] General Sir Ian Hamilton, Compulsory Service: A Study of the Question in the Light of Experience, (London, John Murray, 1910), 44.

France as stated by Eugene Weber,[340] the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* was projected as the school of civilizing mission where the education of citizenship would be given in the school of nurture ("*San'a'nın mekteb-i ereb ve terbiyesi*").[341] Ismail Hakkı Pasha thought that by means of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* the level of civilization in the province would increase.[342] The *Asakir-i Hamidiye* would fulfill this role by strengthening the loyalty and linking the population to the imperial government ("*ahalisinin canib-i hilafet-i menakıb saltanat-ı seniyeye olan irtibat-ı tabiyelerinin bir kat daha teyid ve teşyidi*").[343] Ismail Hakkı Pasha indicates that by an organization and regulation like the *nizamiye* army, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* would engage people to the military institution of the Ottoman civilization.[344] They were trained by Turkish officers and İsmail Hakkı Pasha was proud of his sons,[345] who were learning the chain of commands in Turkish.[346]

Both the provincial newspaper and the imperial parades were used for propaganda to visualize İsmail Hakkı Pasha's sons as the loyal, patriot subjects of the Sultan to the population of the province. İsmail Hakkı Pasha informs that the inhabitants of San'a and outside provinces came to watch their drills.[347] The army was constructed as a school of Ottoman civilization, which raised 'civilized' loyal and obedient subjects speaking Turkish and praising the Chaliph-Sultan, and who would be the models for the entire population. As in the cases of parades organized in San'a, the manifestation to the citizens of San'a of their loyal character as soldiers of the Sultan became a significant and most frequently used repertoire of the *vali*.

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[340] Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 298.

[341] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 22 Temmuz 1297/3 August 1881.

[342] BOA/Y. MTV. 3/58, İsmail Hakkı Pasha to the Palace, 1 Cemaziyilevvel 1297/11 April 1880.

[343] Ibid.

[344] Ibid.

[345] Historian al-Wasi wrote that Ismail Hakkı Pasha "took such care of their training and education that they became known as the sons of Ismail" see. Vincent Steven Wilhite, *Guerilla War*, 229.

[346] BOA/ Y.A. HUS 167-74, İsmail Hakkı Pasha to the Palace, 10 Kanun-i Evvel 1296/22 December 1880.

[347] BOA/Y. A. HUS, İsmail Hakkı Paşa to the Palace, 2 Cemaziyillevel 1297/12 April 1880.

For instance, while sending thirteen soldiers of *Asakir-i Hamidiye* to Istanbul in order to present this military unit to the Sultan, the *vali* organized a departure ceremony by inviting the inhabitants and notables of the province; and it is reported that the *Hamidian* soldiers made a parade in this ceremony to show their obedience to the Sultan.[348] This was how their loyalty to the Empire was visualized to the San'a population. The vali deliberately preferred the recruits of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* to march in the front ranks rather than the *nizamiye* soldiers. At the end of the parade, the imperial enthusiasm was demonstrated as they were chanting *"Padişahım Çok Yaşa"*.[349]

In two years, they had attended many military operations to subjugate the rebellions and to provide a tranquil hinterland as desired by the provincial governors. *The san'a gazetesi* was proud to announce their engagement to these campaigns. The newspaper informed the readers of their success with a valiant tone. For instance when they were sent to the Elhudda district to subjugate a small-scale rebellion, although the *nizamiye* battalions were also sent along with them, the newspaper wrote that "If god allows it, the *Hamidians* will return with glory; and prove their heroism and benefits to the motherland ("*hamidiyeler inşallah kariben kemal-ı şan ile avdet ederler de kahramanlıklarını ve vatana yararlarını bir kat daha ispat ederler*.")[350] When one soldier died in a military operation against a rebellion in Zemar district in the south of San'a, the newspaper treated it as the evidence of their valor ("*delil-i hamaset-i kahramaneleri*").[351]

7. Dismissal of Ismail Hakkı Pasha and Disbanding the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*

Both the appointment of Ismail Hakkı Pasha and the organization of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* were projects to strengthen the imperial defense in the frontier by

[348] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 17 Kanun-i Evvel 1296/29 December 1880.

[349] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 7 Mayıs 1296/19 May 1880; *The San'a Gazetesi*, 25 Şubat 1296/9 March 1881; *The San'a Gazetesi*, 8 Temmuz 1297/20 July 1881.

[350] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 6 Mayıs 1297/18 May 1881.

[351] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 4 Teşrin-i Sani 1297/ 16 November 1881.

creating order and raising an obedient population via *ıslahat* projects. In fact, the dismissal of the *vali* and the disbanding the native army were based on the same concerns. Regarding the strategical prominence of the Yemen province, the imperial government decided that Ismail Hakkı Pasha could not fulfill the mission, and İzzet Pasha took Ismail Hakkı Pasha's office with a memorandum dated in January 17, 1882.[352] In the first months of Izzet Pasha's tenure, the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* were disbanded with a mandate from the *Harbiye Nezareti*. Regarding the needs of the Seventh Imperial Army exacerbated from the dispatchment of three battalions to Tripoli, the decision addressed the rendering of these recruits to *nizamiye askeri* and emphasized the adaption of their recruitment and training to the regulations of the *nizamiye* army, namely not formulating a special military unit.[353] After the decision of the *Harbiye Nezareti*, the recruits of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* were gathered in the presence of governors and officers of the *vilayet* and were disarmed. Izzet Pasha offered them to join the *nizamiye* battalions or the gendarmerie forces of *zabtiye*. After the offer, fifty of those recruits did join the *nizamiye* and one hundred ten of them the *zabtiye* forces. The provincial newspaper presented it as a great reform (*ıslahat*) initiated by İzzet Pasha.[354] It is striking that both the organization and the disbandment of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* were greeted as an attempt to reform the province. Yet there is indeed a similarity in the sense that both celebrated their participation to the military service, whether in an *Asakir-i Hamidiye* or *Nizamiye* army.

Beyond the financial weakness of the Empire, it seems that the fear of rebellion preoccupied Izzet Pasha and the *Harbiye Nezareti* and explains the disbandment of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*. Since the conditions of the native recruits were better than the conscripts of the Seventh Imperial Army, it created a disturbance among the soldiers. This led Izzet Pasha to contemplate on the efficiency of the Ottoman military force in the province. Although it did not lead to

[352] BOA/ İ. DH 843/67742, 26 Safer 1299/17 January 1882.

[353] BOA/ Y. MTV 8/101, 20 Cemayiizevvel 1299/ 9 April 1882. This reveals different perspectives between the ruling cadres of the Capital and those serving in the province. Those in Istanbul were more rigorous with enforcing a unique law valid for the whole of the empire while governors in the provinces were seeking any possible strategies. However, this would be a discussion for another study.

[354] *The San'a Gazatesi*, 1 Temmuz 1298/13 July 1882.

a massive uprising, there were telling instances of desertion that reveal the sort of resistance among the conscripts against their hard circumstances vis-a-vis the native recruits.[355] Thus both the imperial government and its representatives in Yemen were alarmed. The ruling cadres thought that a possible uprising of the imperial conscripts would endanger the Ottoman presence in the province, as well as in the Red Sea. Therefore, Izzet Pasha saw the disbandment of the battalions as a preemptive action against this possibility.[356]

Petitions (*arzuhal*) came from Yemen that complained about the malpractices of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* and its officers against some tribes. In a petition that came from a member of the family of Sheikh Muhsin Ali, who was allied with Ahmed Muhtar Pasha during the occupation of San'a and its hinterland, the ruling cadres in the Palace were distressed, since it emphasized that those Arabs who faced the violence of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* started to turn their faces to the British neighboring the region.[357] Furthermore, the assassination attempt against members of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* shows that there was an active opposition against the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* from the local people.[358] All these caused great suspicion within the imperial circles about the Empire's presence in the Arabian Peninsula against the British encroachments.[359] This was the fundamental concern since the return of the Ottomans, and it opened the way for the disbandment of the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* and the dismissal of Ismail Hakkı Pasha.

When these fears combined with the suspicion of a massive rebellion and an opposition to the claim of Abdulhamid's Caliphate by the Zaydis, which had been an Achilles's heel of Abdulhamid II in the Arabian Peninsula, the imperial government became even more skeptical about the native army. I discussed the later ambitions in the 1900s to organize a native militia above. However, there had always been a counter-faction, opposed to the armament of the natives in a local militia. They

[355] BOA/ Y. A. HUS. 167-74, unsigned and undated.

[356] Rüştü Pasha, *Yemen Hatıraları*, 49.

[357] BOA/ Y. PRK. AZJ 4/102, 29 Zilhicce 1298/22 November 1881.

[358] *The San'a Gazetesi*, 19 Teşrin-i Sani 1296/1 December 1880.

[359] BOA/ Y. PRK. AZJ 4/102, 29 Zilhicce 1298/22 November 1881.

feared their turning of the barrels against the Ottomans.[360] There emerged a faction against the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* due to the same fear that these recruits would align with the counter-Caliph opposition, and would constitute its military arm. Although he could not assemble a large scale rebellion, the Zaydi Imam Hamid el-Din, who was released in 1879 with the aforementioned eighteen *ulemas*, claimed an Imamate and initiated an opposition to the title of Caliphate of Abdulhamid II, galvanizing Abdulhamid II's suspicions, which were first triggered by the Emir Hussain issue and were consolidated with the emergence of the Mahdist claim in Sudan in 1881. Especially the report presenting the *Asakir-i Hamidiye* as a potential force to strengthen the opposition of Caliphate (müdd-i el hilafe) augmented the pathological suspicion of Abdulhamid II.[361] Although Ismail Hakkı Pasha's integrationist policies and his attempt to promote the Sultan's charisma and his title in the province would reflect the soul of Abdulhamid II's Arab policy, these fears predominated Abdulhamid II's reasoning, and he thus came up with the decision to dismiss Ismail Hakkı Pasha, and disband the *Asakir-i Hamidiye*.

[360] For example, Ali Emiri defines the highland Yemenis as unreliable; plus, he was an opponent of establishing a native force. See. Yahya Yeşilyurt, "Ali Emiri'nin Yemen Islahına Dair Görüşleri" *Turkish Studies* 4 (2009), 2311.

[361] BOA/ Y. A. HUS. 167-74, unsigned and undated. I borrowed the term pathological suspicion from Vincent Steven Wilhite, *Guerilla War*, 133.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has made three key arguments. Firstly, by reevaluating the secondary literature written on the Ottoman frontiers in the last three decades, this study reveals the imperialist ambitions of the Ottomans in the course of the nineteenth century. As in the case of Ottoman expansion towards Yemen, the Ottomans had extended their frontiers in the nineteenth century by imperial military expeditions. This expansionary policy was projected as a response to the Western imperial encroachments. Thus, this thesis indicates that instead of remaining a passive audience of imperial competition, the Ottoman ruling elites were engaged in imperialist measures, and used an imperialist repertoire as well. Imperial defense became a crucial task for the Ottoman governors in the context of rising imperialism. One of the crucial strategies projected in the imperial circles was the policy of territorial expansion. In this sense, this study argues that extending Ottoman authority from Libyan territories to Kurdistan and Yemen was not an accidental response but a deliberate attempt of the Ottomans as a response to the rising imperial competition. In short, with the same mindset and repertoire as the other imperial powers, by applying military expeditions, and enabling expansionist policies, Ottoman authorities were engaged into the imperial struggle in the course of the nineteenth century.

The second main argument of this thesis is about the Ottoman governing strategies in the frontiers. By focusing on the Ottoman rule in Yemen, after the reoccupation of its highlands and San'a in 1871, this study demonstrates that Ottoman governors had pursued diverging governing strategies than the administrative policies maintained for the heartlands of the Empire, as they realized that the financial, military and judicial

institutions of Tanzimat-era could not be introduced to these remote frontier regions. The resistance of the local populations and their refusal to accept these institutions paved the way for Ottoman governors to search for other possible governing strategies in order to control the population and gain their obedience. Thus, instead of being persistent to set up the top-down Tanzimat institutions and practices, Ottoman governors sought institutions and practices that would be adoptable to the local practices. In this sense, this study demonstrates that the urgent need of imperial defense in the Red Sea led Ottoman governors to win the loyalties of the Yemenis and engage them to the task of imperial defense. Therefore, Ottoman governors looked for adoptable institutions and practices to their customs. In other words, it was the imperial ambitions of Ottoman governors to enforce governing strategies that diverged from the institutions and practices pursued in the core regions of the Empire.

Related to the second argument, the third main argument of this thesis is that the Ottoman governors were inspired to a major extent from colonial governing strategies, and colonial institutions. In particular, using the organization of the native army in the region (Asakir-i Hamidiye) as a case study, I have tried to show that Ismail Hakkı Pasha was inspired from the Indian Army of the British Empire; and initiated to build a native army for the task of the imperial defense and provincial tranquility. In this sense, this study demonstrates that it was not the perceptions of the Ottoman ruling elites, that was considering local populations as 'uncivilized' 'backward' or 'savage', that drove the Ottoman governors to search for colonial institutions. However, the resistance of the local people and their refusal of Ottoman imperial institutions motivated Ottoman governors to introduce similar institutions and practices of colonial regimes. Yet, this thesis demonstrates the existence of a nuance between the way that Ottoman authorities applied these colonial institutions and the colonial rule per se. Instead of deliberately producing differentiation and enforcing a colonial exclusionary policy, Ottoman governors –as in the case of Ismail Hakkı Pasha's native army– sought the integration of the local people to the imperial practices. In this sense, I have shown that, Ismail Hakkı Pasha organized a native army and recruited Yemenis to accustom them to the imperial military institutions. Herein, as I have mentioned before, the order, organization and training of the Asakir-i Hamidiye were designed like the Nizamiye army; and in this aspect it was distinct from local militias in other frontiers, which were operating on ad-hoc basis. In short, as the Ottomans could not conscript Yemeni people,

a British colonial institution had inspired Ismail Hakkı Pasha to realize perhaps limited degree of mobilization among the Yemeni population. Yet, it should be kept in mind that the British deliberately recruited Indians into a different unit of army as part of colonial differentiation policy, while they did not seek for conscription of the natives to the British imperial army.

Finally, as I noticed during the research, the Ottoman perception towards Yemeni people have become more of a pejorative nature in the last decade of Ottoman rule in comparison to the first two decades. Starting with 1890s, the Ottoman rule had been seriously challenged by the large-scale, organized Zaydi rebellions. These rebellions made the Ottoman rule fragile and its legitimacy precarious in the province. While the Ottomans were persistent to stay in Yemen, the pertinacious nature of the rebellious forces and their constant refusal of Ottoman institutions, made the Ottoman ruling elites apply a much heavier pejorative discourse. In the first two decades, due to the lack of great scale organized rebellions, it seems that Ottoman governors applied a more balanced language towards the Yemenis. This remains just a hypothetical assumption. On the other hand, the following factor also might have impacted the Ottoman governors to apply a more pejorative perception towards the Yemeni population: rising influence of nationalism among the Ottoman bureaucrats and generals, their perceptions of Turkishness as the core identity, and of Anatolia as the core region of the Empire. However, a comparison between the languages used by Ottoman ruling cadres in these different decades of Ottoman rule in Yemen requires an in-depth research, which awaits its researchers.

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