ULUSLARARASI SOYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER DERGİSİ
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND HUMANISTIC SCIENCES

Modernisation in the Tanzimat Period and the Ottoman Empire:
An Analysis of the Tanzimat Edict within the Scope of the Modern State

Tanzimat ve Osmanlı'da Modernleşme: Modern Devlet Ekseninde Tanzimat Fermanı'nın Analizi

Yusuf ÇİFCİ[1]

Abstract

The Tanzimat Edict (Imperial Edict of Reorganisation) is a turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire. It is considered to be the first official step of the attempts to become a modern state. A formal process was initiated with this edict and, within this context, the empire started to change the imperial structures and institutions and devoted considerable efforts to create a Western-style organisation. On the other hand, turning towards the West with the declaration of the edict, the Ottoman Empire ultimately found itself in a structural and cultural dilemma. It can be stated that actions for modernisation within the Empire were not a grassroots internal dynamic; rather, they were results of the insistence of the Sultan along with the pressure and encouragement by external dynamics. Developments in Western societies proved fatal for the traditional state with a chain of industrial, political and philosophical revolutions. Afterwards, replacing the traditional state, the concept and practice of the "modern state" were imitated by many other states including the Ottoman Empire. In this respect, with the dynamics of modernisation, traditional values acting as the sources of legitimacy in the traditional state were supplanted by modern ones. God is no longer the source of legitimacy; subjects have been replaced by citizens and law has been the cornerstone of the modern state. Mahmud II laid the social and structural foundations of the Tanzimat Edict, but the edict itself was declared during the reign of Abdülmecit I. The edict occupies a significant position within the theory of the modern state because it is a product of a period in which the Ottoman Empire shifted towards the axis of a modern state. The present study examines the historical and sociological conditions setting the scene for the Tanzimat Edict, the social and political structure altered by the edict and the impacts on the social and political context of the Empire.

[1] Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi, İktisadi İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü, Siyaset ve Sosyal Bilimler ABD, Dr. Öğretim Üyesi

✉ y.cifci@alparslan.edu.tr

⬤ 0000-0001-6453-0084

Öz

Tanzimat Fermanı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda bir kırılma noktasıdır. Ferman, modern devlet olma girişimlerinin resmi olarak ilk adımı sayılmaktadır. Bu fermanla birlikte formal bir süreç başlamış ve bu bağlamda imparatorluk mevcut sistemi içindeki yapı ve kurumları birer birer değiştirmeye başlamış ve Batı tipi bir organizasyon oluşturmak için pek çok emek sarf etmiştir. Diğer yandan fermanla beraber Batı'ya açılan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, nihai manada hem yapısal hem de kültürel bir ikiliğe girmiştir. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu içerisinde modernleşme eylemlerinin toplumdan gelen bir iç dinamik olarak değil de padişahın ısrarı ve dış dinamiklerin baskısı ve teşviki sayesinde oluştuğu söylenebilir. Batı toplumlarındaki gelişmeler geleneksel devletin boğazına sınai, siyasi ve de felsefi devrimlerinden oluşan bir olgular zincirini bağlamış ve onu sonlandırmıştır. Geleneksel devlet yerine ikame edilen "modern devlet" kavramı ve pratiği ise, sonraki süreçlerde, Osmanlı Devleti gibi diğer pek çok devlet tarafından taklit edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda modernleşme dinamikleri ile birlikte geleneksel devlette meşruiyetin kaynağı olan geleneksel değerler yerini modern değerlere bırakmıştır. Artık meşruiyetin kaynağı Tanrı değildir, tebaanın yerini vatandaş (yurttaş) almıştır ve hukuk, modern devletin mihenk taşı haline gelmiştir. Tanzimat Fermanı'nın toplumsal ve yapısal temellerini II. Mahmud atmış ancak, ilanı I. Abdülmecit zamanında gerçekleşmiştir. Tanzimat Fermanı modern devlet teorisi içinde belirgin bir konum teşkil etmektedir. Çünkü ferman Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun modern devlet eksenine doğru kaydığı bir dönemin ürünüdür. Bu çalışmada modern devlet teorisi ekseninde Tanzimat Fermanı'nı hazırlayan tarihsel-sosyolojik koşullar, Tanzimat Fermanı ile değişen toplumsal ve politik yapı ve Tanzimat'ın Osmanlı toplumsal ve politik ortamında yarattığı etkiler mercek altına alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Modern Devlet, Modernleşme, Tanzimat Fermanı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Değişim.

Introduction

For the most part of its traditional periods, the Ottoman Empire had been a "dominant power", stood against the West in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries and maintained its state philosophy. Having its unique government structure and organisation in the stated periods, the Empire interacted with the West for the first time during the Tulip Era (Ahmet III) and considered having more moderate relations with Western states. Losing its status as a "dominant power" in the global scene following this period, the Empire embarked on a quest to attempt to restore its former dominance. Meanwhile, the changes brought about by the industrial (England), political (France) and philosophical (Germany) revolutions in the West necessitated an "automatic" restructuring of the West. Addressing this necessity, the West has supplanted the Ottoman Empire as the "dominant power" in the global scene in the 18th and 19th centuries. Getting its share from this chain of revolutions (industrially, politically and philosophically), the Empire, like many other states, strived to become a part of this chain.

This chain of revolutions in the West contributed to the decline and fall of the traditional state models while conceiving the concept of "the modern state". This concept, as it was the case for the Ottoman Empire, improved the "imitative" skills of states that were modernised relatively later. One of the examples of the said imitation or, in other words, efforts for modernisation in the Ottoman history is the Tanzimat Edict. Also known as the Supreme Edict of Gülhane in the literature, the edict aimed to create an "Ottoman society" inclusive of all ethnic backgrounds from Azeri to Persian, from Turkish to Kurdish, from Muslims to non-Muslims. The reason for this aim is that in the pre-Tanzimat period, many material values (weapons, industrial tools, chemicals, drapery, shoes) had already been imported from the West; however, the need for an intellectual background for this chain of phenomena was understood with the Tanzimat Edict.

The Tanzimat Edict does not consist of legal regulations that may lead to many changes in the Empire's unique system of government but paves the way for such legal regulations. These regulations implemented with the edict created a duality within the existing system rather than creating an "Ottoman society". It can be claimed that the said duality occurred because all the changes in the Ottoman Empire were in the form of mere improvements because the regulations following the edict did not produce significant changes in the system but made additions to the old one. In this respect, the present article studies the Tanzimat Edict based on the Western dynamics suffocating the traditional state with a "chain of phenomena" and bringing about "the modern state". The objective of the study is to finds answers to the question of what changed with the Edict of Tanzimat. In this regard, one first needs to position the edict historically and sociologically.

Tanzimat and Modernisation: Positioning the Tanzimat Edict[2] in the Theory of the Modern State

The Tanzimat Period starts with the declaration of the Supreme Edict of Gülhane on 3 November 1839 and lasts until 1876. While the concept of "Tanzimat" (reorganisation) denotes a total shift and restructuring of the Turkish political, administrative, economic and social life (Eryılmaz, 1992, p. 91), the word itself means "organisation", "regulation", "structuring" and "reorganisation" (İnalcık, 1964, p. 611). There are many interpretations regarding the quality of the Tanzimat Edict. However, the general assumption is that the edict is a *charte* (charter) promising a change in the relationship between the authorities of the sovereign himself and the rights of the people rather than a constitution, law or contract (Berkes, 1978, p. 208). From this point of view, it can be said that the edict did not pave the path to liberty but merely admitted the existence of this path. However, even this was sufficient for the edict to be also called *Tanzimat-ı Hayriye* (Auspicious Regulations). In this regard, in order to find a comprehensive answer to the question of what changed with the Tanzimat Edict, one needs to analyse the impact and reign of Mahmud II, who laid the ground for the declaration of the edict.

Background of the Tanzimat Edict: The Initiative Role of Mahmud II

The institutions and the social structure in the Ottoman Empire in the classical age saw a dramatic change in the period from the Peace of Zsitvatorok[3] of 1606 to the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji[4]. The "classical institutions" continued to exist formally in this period, but their functions and content changed significantly. Therefore, the changes and transformations within the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries are mostly the results of the developments in the 17th and 18th centuries (Şahin, 2006, pp. 223-237). In this context, it can be argued that the

---

[2] Many events and conditions are considered to be the genesis of modernisation and the shift towards a modern state in the Ottoman Empire. The start of the Tulip Era or the signature of the Charter of Alliance (*Sened-i İttifak*) are some of the examples. However, the reason behind the decision to take the Edict of Tanzimat as the starting point as regards to the modern state in the present article is that it studies the "modern state" based on the said edict.

[3] The Peace of Zsitvatorok is a treaty signed between the Ottoman Empire and Austrian Empire on 11 November 1606. The Ottoman Empire and the Austrian Empire were exhausted after a 15-year war. The peace was restored with the signature of the treaty by Sultan Ahmet I and Archduke Matthias on behalf of Austria at the place where the Zsitva River flows into the Danube.

[4] The Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji (Küçük Kaynarca) is the treaty signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, ending the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 and leading to considerable territorial losses for the Ottoman Empire. The name comes from the town in Southern Dobruja where it was signed.

foundations of the Tanzimat Edict were formed in two and a half centuries. On the other hand, the orientation towards the west and the ideas of Westernisation are attributed to the Tulip Era[5] in many Turkish and other sources. It is stated that the relationships with the West shifted from hostility towards neighbourliness after the Tulip Era.

The declaration of the Tanzimat Edict, a turning point in the general characteristics of the Ottoman Empire, was not easy. The acceptance and declaration of such a document took around 250 years for the Empire. Even though there were many material reforms undertaken in this period, the necessity of changing intellectual aspects was realised much later. Furthermore, many material and intellectual reforms were not accepted and not considered to be legitimate as they were not considered to be suitable for the culture and traditions of the society. In fact, it is known that Selim III was killed during the revolt following the new attempted military structure called the New Order (*Nizam-ı Cedid*) (Suad, 2010, p. 84).

The sultan responsible for the sociological infrastructure and the content of the Tanzimat Edict was Mahmud II. It is known that the Empire was suffering from many "crises" following his accession to the Ottoman throne. In fact, believing that theses crises would be overcome with modern structures and organisations, Mahmud II continued on the process halted after Selim III. He started by abolishing the Guild of Janissaries, revolting against the Empire and, in this context, the central authority at every opportunity. When his actions are considered within the framework of the modern state; it is seen that the elements that are against the indivisibility, continuity and illimitableness of sovereignty, which are the features of the modern state, are eliminated. From this point of view, it can be argued that during his reign, Mahmud II endeavoured to form a central government and administration.

After acceding to the throne, Sultan Mahmud II waited for a period of around 15 years (1808-1826) for the sociological base to become more accommodating to the abolition of the Guild of Janissaries. In this context, it must be borne in mind that he appointed people close to him to important offices within the Guild of Janissaries as well as to the offices of Shayk al-Islam, Serasker and qadis near Istanbul (Yıldız, 2009). First of all, Mahmud II internalised the abolition of the Guild among the public and, as a result, declared "a state of emergency" in 1826 and officially abolished the Guild, showing it as the reason behind recent military failures, revolts in the Empire and all other negative developments. The Eşkinci Guild, meetings of which started even before the abolition of the Guild of Janissaries, and then the *Asakir-i Mansure-I Muhammediye* (Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad) were established in place of the Guild, constituting certain efforts to form a "modern state army" under the supervision of the Imperial Court.

In this new central army founded after 1826 and for which training was conducted vigorously, the policy was mandatory conscription in place of the Guild of Janissaries and, in this context, the army was a vital element as it formulates the dynamics of the modern state for the objectives of creating "an Ottoman people" and an "awareness of being Ottoman". However, the presence of many religions and ethnic origins within the empire halted this

---

[5] The Tulip Era is the period in the history of the Ottoman Empire starting with the signature of the Treaty of Passarowitz with Austria in 1718 and ending with the mob uprising instigated by Patrona Halil in 1730. The era corresponds to the reign of Ahmet III, with Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Pasha acting as the Grand Vizier. It is also known as a "period of pleasure and indulgence". The name given to the period comes from the tulip flowers raised in Istanbul at the time and later becoming a craze in the world. The era is included in the Period of Decline of the Ottoman Empire. The Tulip Era is also known as the first step towards Westernisation in the literature.

process of central structuring and significantly decreased its approval rates. Upon looking at the documents, information and developments particularly in the military domain from before 1839, one can see the Ottoman Empire attempting to acquire the monopoly of legitimate violence (Weber, 1996, p. 132) with the arguments of mandatory conscription and central army. In this respect, it can be argued that the foundations of the monopoly of violence, the cornerstone of the modern state, was laid during the reign of Mahmud II.

During the process of transition to mandatory conscription, many people were conscripted at a very young age. The cases of mass circumcisions of recruits, conscription by brute force, rebellions in provinces resisting conscription and the attempt to clear "the weeds" (Bauman, 1996) from Istanbul and the Empire shows that the state initiated a process of creating a homogeneous people. In this context, almost every guild (Guild of Janissaries, Guild of Djebedjis, *Deli* troops, Guild of Mamelukes, Yamaks of Bosphorus, idle men in Istanbul, Guild of Gardeners, boatmen, porters, fruit sellers, the Bektashi Guild etc.) and even dogs (!) were affected by the actions of the modern state to, as Bauman indicates, clean up the weeds and to conduct social engineering in the 1830s. In other words, all these people having a role in society in any way felt the impact of the shift in the Ottoman Empire towards the modern state. As it is known, the Guild of Janissaries and Bektashis were abolished and the remaining ones were both abolished and reorganised.

In the process leading to the declaration of the Tanzimat Edict; the problems instigated by Mehmed Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt, the 1938 trade agreement titled the Treaty of Balta Limani, the nationalist movements in the Balkans and the pressures from the Western states sharing the religious beliefs of the non-Muslim subjects within the Empire were the most effective factors. Under these historical and sociological conditions, the Ottoman Empire shifted towards the "modern state" and, ultimately, was obliged to declare the Tanzimat Edict. In this context, analysing the overall content of the edict and the relationship between its declaration and the impact of Western states might be beneficial to understand the basis of the present study.

Role of Western States in the Declaration of the Tanzimat Edict: Ambassador Canning

Even though the preparation of the Tanzimat Edict seems to be a self-imposed reorganisation in order to get out of the difficult state in which the Ottoman Empire had found itself, the other side of the coin denotes the influence of Western states. Renowned for the variety of religious and ethnic identities within its borders and once praised as a bringer of justice, the Ottoman Empire now faced accusations of injustice. While the world was becoming the stage for a variety of movements arising from the French Revolution, the Ottoman Empire penned the Tanzimat Edict to evoke a sense of being Ottoman. In fact, there is a paradox here. Although the Ottoman Empire declared this edict to create a national conscience and to enact a policy of Ottomanism, the edict accelerated the dissolution of the empire. In light of this, it can be claimed that Western states calculated the dilemma to be caused within the Empire due to the edict and therefore pressured the Empire to declare it.

The preparation of the Tanzimat Edict is based on the impressions of Mustafa Reşit Pasha, a long-standing diplomat of the Ottoman Empire, gathered from diplomatic relations. During his missions, he discussed the main content of the edict with administrators and rulers of foreign countries, especially those of Western states. The person mentoring Mustafa Reşit Pasha in this regard and whom he consulted in particular is Lord Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul. In fact, the advice of Ambassador Canning regarding the

focus on the safety of life and property formulated the essence of the Supreme Edict of Gülhane (Eryılmaz, 1992, p. 98).

The edict was declared in Gülhane Square, its namesake, by Mustafa Reşit Pasha (3 November 1839). Ambassadors in Istanbul, leaders of non-Muslim communities, ministers, representatives of craftsmen's and tradesmen's associations, ulama and high-ranking government officials were present during its declaration and the edict was officially communicated to allied states (Eryılmaz, 1992, p. 100). The communication of the Tanzimat Edict brought about a fracture for the Ottoman Empire. This fracture, without any doubt, brought the Empire closer to modern values. In this regard, the examination of the relationship between the edict and modern values seems to be necessary to identify its position within the theory of the modern state.

Tanzimat Edict within the Theory of Modern State: Changes and Reflections

The main argument made by the present study is the claim that the Ottoman Empire converged to the model of the modern state with the declaration of the Tanzimat Edict or the Auspicious Edict. To elaborate on this argument, it is necessary to explain the modern state. The concept and practice of the modern state originate from the West and the modern state is not founded upon a natural or spiritual succession as it is the case in the traditional state. The modern state can be regarded as a state structure positioned in contrast with the traditional state.

The modern state has an artificial aspect (Poggi, 2009, p. 116) and has physical, rational and legal features. Based on these characteristics, the modern state can be defined as "the mechanic organisation holding the monopoly of legitimate power and violence (police, army, gendarmes), taking up a determined and limited space on the face of the earth (borders), enjoying a functional structure based on this (bureaucracy), having a single decision-making body and unity as well as a capacity to use this unity in accordance with international rules outside its borders (sovereignty), limited and authorised to the most possible extent with rational laws and constitutions (law), having a single point of belonging (nationality)". Based on this definition, with the Tanzimat Edict, it cannot be argued that the borders were drawn in today's context, that a contemporary construction of sovereignty took place, that violence was monopolised, that a modern bureaucratic structure was formed, that a rational order in accordance with present standards was established or that an awareness of "being Ottoman" was created. However, when analysed in the conjunctural sense, the presence of a tendency towards these phenomena can be claimed.

Upon examining the text of the edict to make references to the legal foundation of the modern state, three aspects come to the forefront: (I) Safety of life and dignity; (II) Justice and equality in taxation; (III) Means and duration of conscription. These three elements can be explained as follows: (I) Safety of life, property and dignity: In modern states, the relationships between the state and the individual are determined by rules. The first condition of these rules is that the state stands at an equal distance to each individual. In this context, this article in the Tanzimat Edict, although not enshrined in laws, deems Ottoman subjects as equals. It must be noted that this item is actually designated for the non-Muslim subjects within the Empire. (II) Justice and equality in taxation: It was indicated in the edict that if the taxman is was not a person of *bona fide*, he would safeguard his own interests and all his actions would be nothing but injustice and cruelty, and that from the moment following the declaration of the edict, each individual would be taxed in accordance with their real estate assets and financial means, that the expenditure for the naval and armed forces of the state as well as other domains would be determined, limited and conducted based on laws (Eryılmaz, 1992, p. 107). In this context, it

can be seen that the basis for legal regulations to eliminate the obstacles regarding the matter of taxation was formed with the edict. (III) Means and duration of conscription: The reforms in the military field since the reign of Selim III and the idea of a new army became stronger in the Tanzimat period. The forced conscription without regarding the marital status of the person had led to many wrong and improper practices. Peaking during the reign of Mahmud II, these practices along with the long, 12-year duration of conscription was greeted with great consternation within the society. From this point of view, it is possible to claim that the Tanzimat Edict moved past these practices and created a margin of application suitable for "human dignity". As understood from these three aspects, the edict foregrounds the condition of egalitarianism. The edict also paved the way for legal regulations in this matter. Furthermore, it can be argued that mandatory conscription policies in modern states were adopted by the Ottoman Empire in this period. It must also be noted that the conscription practices and the statements and amendments in the text regarding conscription makes mandatory conscription more appealing and acceptable.

Another characteristic of the modern state is bureaucracy. The word "bureaucracy" incorporates the French root "bureau" meaning office and desk jobs and the Ancient Greek suffix of "cratus" signifying administration, governance or inspection (Nişanyan, 2018). Although also present in traditional states, what makes it different from modern state bureaucracy is that the driving force is the sense of responsibility. However, it is known that in modern states, as far as bureaucracy is concerned, technical responsibility substitutes moral responsibility, disregarding spiritual aspects and individuality (Bauman, 1997, p. 66). In this context, it might be reasonable to claim that the Tanzimat Edict was trailblazing. In fact, this "trail" would even pose a threat against the rule of the Sultan in the future. In this regard, according to Mardin, bureaucrats of the Tanzimat period believed that they were the only people who could restore the formal glory of the Ottoman Empire (Mardin, 1996, p. 127).

Even though the complete establishment of a technically responsible modern state bureaucracy was not accomplished with the Tanzimat Edict, it is possible to say that a central bureaucratic power and a new group of bureaucratic elites were created. This new Turkish (Ottoman) elite emerging with Tanzimat, particularly Mustafa Reşit Pasha and those following his example, believed that civilisation was the only way of salvation and saw themselves the only people that are capable of achieving it. Based on this, it can be argued that the phenomenon of the modern state in the Ottoman Empire emerged and flourished with the Tanzimat Edict.

Modern sovereignty is a phenomenon making modern state visible. For this reason, both concepts date back to the same time. In addition, it must be underlined that sovereignty is the primary founding concept of the modern/political/legal formulation process (Akal, 2005, p. 325). Upon analysing the Tanzimat Edict on the basis of the concept and practice of sovereignty, a feature of the modern state, as stated above, one can observe considerable efforts to establish central and semi-national sovereignty. In this context, the endeavours regarding mandatory conscription and central bureaucracy can be evaluated as steps taken in order to acquire the capacity to use sovereignty in a complete and unlimited manner.

A derivative of sovereignty, "borders" constitute another argument regarding modern states. Traditional states do not have strictly determined borders, but they have frontiers. Frontiers denote an area in the peripheral regions of a state where the centre and political authority is either dispersed or weak (Giddens, 2005, p. 73). The borders of a modern state, however, are the boundaries of sovereignty. As much as it is constrained with the rules of international law outside its borders, the modern state retains the right to be the "monopole of

power" within. In this context, even though the Tanzimat Edict does not draw external borders, the Statute for Formation of Province drafted after the edict initiated the process of defining local borders and gradually increased the rates of connectedness to the centre.

Modern states are based on a "monotype people". While the project for a "monotype people" does not create a problem in the West where the concept of the modern state emerged, it was significantly problematic for many states modernising at a later stage and "imitating" the modern state. Ernest Gellner indicates as follows about the modern state: "The state is the specialization and concentration of order maintenance. The 'state' is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may also be concerned with). The state exists where were order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They *are* the state" (Gellner, 2008, p. 74). In this regard, upon looking at the reforms of the Tanzimat period, one can see that a certain kind of specialisation is targeted particularly by public administration reforms. In this context, established in 1838 and separated into two branches in 1854, the *Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye* (the substitute for the court of cassation and the state council) has distinct features. In addition, the *Şura-yı Devlet* (the state council) established in 1860 is one of the examples in this regard.

In Gellner's words, nationalism is a "parasitic" concept because, as a concept, it is exclusively fuelled by the logic and concept of the state. One cannot talk of borders and therefore of a nation if there is no state. Furthermore, the absence of state means the absence of a nation, therefore, there are no problems between the governing body and the governed. Gellner's comments on nations are worthy of attention because a person without a nation is a person "without a shadow" because a person without a nation "defies the recognized categories and provokes revulsion" (Gellner, 2008, p. 77). In this respect, the Tanzimat Edict brought about many questions. Indeed, looking from this perspective, the edict can be regarded as a necessity rather than an innovation, because the convergence to the notion of the modern state in which the nation and the state are intertwined would only be possible for a "multi-religious" and "multi-cultural" Ottoman Empire with a superordinate identity of being "Ottoman". In order to create such an identity, the edict treats non-Muslims, Muslims and all other ethnic identities as the offspring of the same father.

The Tanzimat period also witnessed the standardisation policies in the educational methodology occurring in modern states. In fact, educational institutions, regarded as the places for raising "individuals" for the state and aiming the elimination of all other paradigms other than the status quo within the framework of the modern state, emerged in this period. Some examples in the Tanzimat period are *Mekteb-i Harbiye* (military school), *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye* (medical school) and *Mühendishâne* (school of engineering).

Within the scope of the modern state, the Tanzimat Edict can be evaluated using the concepts of "political participation" and "political unity". Political participation essentially starts with the divergence of the individual from individualism and integration into the political structure. As for political unity, it is actually an indicator of will. A society cannot attain political unity unless it has a will for existence. The political is an essential concept. The essentialness of the political derives from its determining aspect as a superior criterion (Bezci, 2006, pp. 51-52). Based on this, even though the principal aim of the Tanzimat Edict was not to create political unity, it is still possible to claim that it has caused a fracture on the process of politicisation. The most evident example for this is the description of "an equal individual" partially given by the edict. This scenario of equality depicted by the edict is, without any doubt,

one of the qualities of the modern state. However, another reflection of the modern state can be given as a secular (mundane) lifestyle. In this context, analysing the relationship between the conditions created by the Tanzimat Edict and secularity can be beneficial for comprehending the position of the edict within the theory of the modern state.

Secularity in the Chamber of *Hırka-i Şerif* and the Preservation of the Oath of the Sultan

Hırka-i Şerif[6] (the Holy Mantle) is the name given to the mantle of the Islamic prophet. The Chamber of *Hırka-i Şerif* is the room in the palace where these holy relics are kept. Even though the relics and the chamber are material objects, the meaning and importance attached to them are of spiritual nature. The placement of the Tanzimat Edict in this chamber after its declaration in Gülhane Square by Mustafa Reşit Pasha and the "oath" taken by the Sultan to confirm his allegiance to the text are quite thought-provoking, because the interpretations on the main theme of the text as well as the changes preceding and following the declaration, particularly the establishment of novel educational institutions (*Tıbbiye*, *Harbiye*, *Mühendishâne Mektebi*), show that education and other institutions in the Empire are brought closer, either directly or indirectly, to secularism and even positivism, the dominant school of thought of the time (Aksakal, 2010, p. 253). In this context, the "duality" mentioned at the beginning of the present study becomes apparent. This can be indicated as follows: The modernisation and secularisation supported by the holy mantle of the Islamic prophet and a hierarchy of rights protected by an oath positioned with positivist structures and organisation manifest the modern contradiction in which the Ottoman Empire found itself.

Undertaking such reforms in the traditional Empire in which metaphysical elements are still dominant resulted in the strengthening of the said duality. As can be seen, secularity, opposing its fundamental logic, was integrated into metaphysics. In reality, it can be claimed that this process cannot be called secularisation, because secularism is essentially a loss of traditional and cultural identity (Karpat, 2002, p. 81). From this point of view, it can be clearly stated that the Tanzimat Edict is a factor bringing the Ottoman Empire closer to the modern state.

When all these arguments are taken as the reference point, a confusion arises the relationship between the concept of the modern state and the Tanzimat Edict arises, because the modern state is based on reason. The existence of the modern state is recognised through laws and its limits are determined in the same way. Weber indicates that the modern state is a political organisation with a constitution and a legal code based on reason, founded upon reasonably articulated rules and laws (Weber, 1985, p. 14). Based on this, it can be argued that the sense of freedom expressed and given by the edict as well the inspiration for the establishment of the constitutional monarchy provided by it gave the main motivating aspect of the edict and carry significant meaning in this respect. However, it should be noted that the preservation of the text in the chamber of the holy mantle and the fact that the Sultan was only bound by an oath are not characteristic of an order founded upon reason.

---

[6] Hırka-i şerif, is the name given to the mantle of Prophet Muhammed. There are two mantles in Istanbul. One of them is preserved in the Chamber of the Mantle of Felicity (Hırka-ı Saadet) in Topkapı Palace. It is also known as Bürde-i Saadet and considered to be one of the symbols of the caliphate. The other one was once given to Uwais al-Qarani and inherited through generations to this day; it is now preserved at the Hırka-i Şerif Mosque (Mosque of the Holy Mantle) in Fatih.

The concept of "development" and modernisation are used synonymously in all theories of modernisation. Development can be defined as the "progress" of a society arising from its inherent social, political and economic dynamics. In this context, modernisation signifies a progression within the developmental process and a substantial change in the course of development (Çetin, 2007, p. 171). From this point of view, it can be stated that the Ottoman understanding of modernisation did not stem from its own internal dynamics.

There is no place in the world where the criteria of modernity are fulfilled while total modernisation is accomplished. It is not possible for everything within a place to modernise with the same pace and at the same rate, because the concept of modernisation arose with the Industrial Revolution and has spread into other regions in the world. However, the modernisation paces among the parts of society in the West are almost equivalent. As far as all other non-Western societies are concerned, one part of the society can be regarded as the driving force of modernisation. This can be the state itself, a leader, the army, bureaucracy or any other part of the society. In this context, it can be argued that the Ottoman modernisation found itself in a crisis as it started in the military but was not able to spread into other social aspects (Çetin, 2007, p. 171). Upon looking at the Tanzimat Edict, it can be observed that the modernising power is in the hands of the states. The state (the Sultan) delegated this power to the "bureaucratic" class with this edict. In fact, as stated by Eryılmaz, Mustafa Reşit Pasha, the most influential person in the formation of the Tanzimat edict, rose from the ranks as a new intellectual (a driving force).

Conclusion

The dominant intellectual patterns and frameworks in the Ottoman Empire went through considerable changes with the declaration of the Tanzimat Edict. From that day forward, the focus was on the concepts of human dignity and equality and, in this context, people were started to be seen as equals before judicial institutions, bureaucracy and the Sultan, the head of state. This aspect can be derived from the articles of the edict concerning non-Muslims and Muslims.

Upon being examined within the framework of modernity, modern structures and institutions and the modern state, the Tanzimat Edict can be regarded as a point of reference. Even though the initial bases of the edict were on equality, the edict, as a physical expansion, rendered reforms of the other parts of the social and political structure legitimate. In this context, the edict was considered to be the basis for all other consequent reforms and acted as a breaking point for the Ottoman Empire.

Regarded as an absolute monarchy for around six centuries since its foundation, the Ottoman Empire decided with this edict that making changes would not harm its traditions and that values can be preserved during the course of this change. The Empire admitted that the individual, although fractional when compared to the weight of the *parens patriae* that is the state, had significance and tried to preserve the hierarchy of rights, even though it attempted to do so by means of an "oath". In this context, it can be claimed that the Tanzimat Edict has an important place within the theory of the modern state.

In conclusion, this text, the first step towards the construction of the monopoly of legitimate violence that is one of the key features of the modern state, the spread of sovereignty to the every aspect of society, the rights protected by law, the attempts to create a consciousness of being "Ottoman" (nation), a technically responsible bureaucracy and a constitution, does not

answer to the question of what has changed. However, it is crucial as it evokes the consciousness of change among both the society and the Imperial Court.

Bibliography

Akal, C. B. (2005). *İktidarın Üç Yüzü*. Ankara: Dost.

Aksakal, H. (2010). Türk Modernleşmesinin Ambivalat Doğası: Modernleşme, Milliyetçilik, Medeniyet İlişkisi Üzerinden Türkiye'yi Okumak. *Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken Journal of World of Turks, 2* (1).

Berkes, N. (1978). *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*. İstanbul: Doğu-Batı.

Bezci, B. (2006). *Carl Schmitt'in Politik Felsefesi Modern Devletin Müdafaası*. İstanbul: Paradigma.

Bauman, Z. (1996). *Yasa Koyucular ve Yorumcular*. Trans. Kemal Atakay, İstanbul: Metis.

Bauman, Z. (1997). *Modernite ve Holocaust*. Trans. Süha Serthabiboğlu, İstanbul: Sarmal.

Bolat, B. S. (2005). Fransız İnkılabının Türk Modernleşme Sürecine Etkileri. *Gazi Üniversitesi Kırşehir Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 6* (1).

Çetin, H. (2007). *Modernleşme Krizi - İdeoloji ve Ütopya Arasında*. Ankara: Orion.

Eryılmaz, B. (1992). *Tanzimat ve Yönetimde Modernleşme*. İstanbul: İşaret.

Giddens, A. (2005). *Ulus Devlet ve Şiddet.* Trans. Cumhur Atay, İstanbul: Devin.

Gellner, E. (2008). *Uluslar ve Ulusçuluk*. Trans. Büşra Ersanlı ve Günay Göksu Özdoğan, İstanbul: Hil.

Karpat, K. H. (2002). *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi*. Ankara: İmge.

Mardin, Ş. (1996). *Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesinin Doğuşu*. Trans. Mümtaz'er Türköne vd., İstanbul: İletişim.

Nişanyan, S. (2018). *Nişanyan Sözlük - Çağdaş Türkçenin Etimolojisi*. İstanbul: Liber.

Poggi, G. (2009). *Modern Devletin Gelişimi*. Trans. Şule Kut & Binnas Toprak, İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Suad, A. (2010). *Osmanlı Padişahları ve Büyükleri*. Ankara: Tutku.

Şahin, M. (2006). Osmanlı Yöneticilerinde Zihniyet ve Batılılaşmanın Başlangıcı. *GÜ, Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 26* (3).

Yıldız, G. (2009). *Neferin Adı Yok*. İstanbul: Kitabevi.

Weber, M. (1985). *Protestan Ahlakı ve Kapitalizmin Ruhu*, İstanbul: Hil.

Weber, M. (1996). *Sosyoloji Yazıları*, Trans. Taha Parla, İstanbul: İletişim.