

OTTOMAN WESTERNIZATION AND POLITICS

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Abstract. This study will examine the Ottoman Westernization within its historical context. According to Baykan Sezer, the Ottoman Empire assumed the role of representing the East in the East-West relationship. The research investigates the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the modern West and its internal impacts are also included in the scope of the study. In this context, the axis of the Westernization policy within the ruling classes of the Ottoman Empire is discussed, as well as the resistance against this policy by both traditionalists and Western-oriented factions, such as the Young Ottomans, Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress.

Keywords: Ottoman, Westernization, state, Young Ottomans, Young Turks, Committee of Union and Progress.

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1. Introduction

When we look at history, we see that the effort for modernization first emerged in Europe. The “French Revolution”¹ in 1789 and the subsequent “Industrial Revolution”² resulted in the collapse of the medieval feudal order. As a result of the French and Industrial Revolutions, a new social order emerged in Europe. In the wake of these changes in the West, political and social issues arose. In order to find solutions to these emerging problems, sociology emerged as a social science discipline. Sociologists studied the social and political structure to address the problems that arose in modern Western

¹Until 1789, France was a country governed by an absolute monarchy. Between 1789 and 1799, the monarchy was overthrown in France as a result of the revolution and the country transitioned into the Republic era. This profound change is known in history as the “French Revolution”. The ideology behind the French Revolution was the Enlightenment Thought. The main views of the Enlightenment philosophers were to eliminate the tendencies of the feudal political regime and to abolish feudal traditions. Enlightenment thinkers such as Descartes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot argued that everyone was free and equal. Additionally, the Enlightenment thought weakened the power of the church. The Enlightenment philosophers criticized the religious and God-centered social structure and advocated for a society based on reason instead. “According to Touraine (1994), in the Enlightenment, “reason” is paramount and considering that the Enlightenment thinkers wanted to apply a life that aligns with reason to all of humanity, any kind of design should be constructed according to reason” (Usta, 2018).

²The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries emerged in Europe. The Industrial Revolution first began in England (Sucu, 2019).

society. In other words, sociology as a scientific discipline emerged in the West with the goal of solving the problems that arose during the modern era³.

In order to keep up with the modern world, the Ottoman Empire adopted the tendency to model itself after Europe. At the height of its power, the Ottoman Empire became the most powerful state in the East. To understand why the Ottoman Empire chose modern Western Europe as a model, it is necessary to first explain the historical relationship between the East and the West, as well as the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the West.

From ancient times, there has been mutual interaction and conflict between the East and the West. If we take the emergence of science as an example, scientific knowledge that initially emerged in civilizations such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China was later transmitted to the West (Ancient Greece), to the Islamic world during the Middle Ages and then again to the West (Unat & Topdemir, 2015). Although both the East and the West benefited from each other in the development of science, there was also competition and conflict between them. This interaction and conflict were not limited to the field of science, but also occurred in agriculture and many other areas. The Ottoman Empire, which was the most powerful state in the East for many centuries in the regions it ruled, occupied a balancing position between the East and the West. The Ottoman Empire was always an influential party in East-West relations and had the power to guide those relations. The Ottoman Empire balanced the relationship and conflict between the East and the West. In response to the West's desire to intervene in the Eastern production areas, the Ottoman Empire protected the Eastern production areas from such interventions.

The historical rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and the West, which resulted in the Ottoman victory up until the 18th century, changed thereafter. Developments in the West following the French and Industrial Revolutions allowed the West to surpass the Ottoman Empire. The successes achieved by the West in science and technology also provided significant advantages on the battlefield. Starting from the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire began to lose consecutive wars against the West. From the early 18th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire, having lost its supremacy over Europe, began to experience its first territorial losses as a result of these wars. At this point, the Second Battle of Vienna (1683), the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 and the Treaty of Passarowitz in 1718 became significant turning points. The wars the Ottoman Empire lost and the resulting treaties, left the empire facing the risk of collapse.

The Ottoman Empire has always had a relationship with the West. During the Ottoman Empire's "Golden Age", due to the favorable global power balance, the Ottomans did not consider the West significant and saw themselves as superior to it (Mardin, 1991). The weakening of the Ottoman Empire in the face of the West was caused by both internal and external factors. The end of the feudal era in Europe, the geographical discoveries and the development of science and technology strengthened the West. Through geographical discoveries, the West established an exploitative system across a vast geography. Following these discoveries, the West became economically stronger. In addition to these external developments outside the Ottoman Empire, internal factors also contributed to the weakening of the state. The changing trade routes due to the

³"Baykan Sezer, first and foremost, shaped his understanding of sociology by questioning why sociology emerged in Western Europe in the 19th century. Sezer identified the first reason as the need for the West to find answers to its internal problems and the second reason as the construction of sociology to legitimize the world dominance that the West had achieved" (Koyuncu & Bozkurt, 2019).

geographical discoveries in the West led to economic losses for the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the influx of precious metals from America to Europe negatively affected the economy. The deterioration of the timar system and military defeats against the West led to a decline in both the financial and military structure of the Ottoman Empire (Akyildiz, 2004).

In the face of the rising power of the West, the Ottoman Empire, which was gradually weakening, adopted a policy of Westernization to solve the emerging problems. The Westernization policy was not one created by the Ottoman Empire based on its own internal dynamics. Instead, the Ottoman Empire implemented Westernization by modeling itself after modern Western Europe. The primary aim of the Westernization policy was to save the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire saw Westernization as a tool to save the state. The most important element in this policy to save the state from collapse was to adopt the scientific, technical and technological advancements of the West. Some intellectuals within the Ottoman Empire argued that merely adopting the science and technology from the West would not be enough to save the state; they also believed that Western culture needed to be embraced. While there were different opinions on how much of the West's elements should be adopted, the basic thought of Ottoman intellectuals was still focused on saving the state (Aslan, 2009).

2. Westernization in the Ottoman State Structure

The Ottoman Empire was a state founded by Osman Gazi in 1299 and lasted for over 600 years (Kodaman, 2007). When we look at the state structure of the Ottoman Empire, we can see that it had a centralized system. The right to govern and sovereignty were held by the ruler. The sultan's orders were considered equivalent to law. However, the ruler did not govern arbitrarily, but rather in accordance with Islamic laws and traditions. In the Ottoman Empire, the ruler would consult with statesmen on important matters, but the final decision rested with the sultan.

The Ottoman Empire, which ruled from 1299 to 1918, was always governed by rulers from the Ottoman dynasty. Even in rare times when the dominance of the Ottoman dynasty was in question, absolute sovereignty remained in the hands of the Sultan. The central administrative system of the Ottoman Empire was designed in such a way as not to undermine the authority of the Sultan. Even in the selection of the Sultan's wives, care was taken to ensure that the central authority was not weakened.

When Osman Bey founded the state in 1299, it was based on the principles of Gaza (holy war) and futuwwa (chivalric code). From the time of its establishment, the primary aim of the Ottoman Empire was to conquer new lands and at the same time, spread Islam. Since military duties were dominant in the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, the ruling class was defined as "military" personnel.

The Ottoman Empire had a centralized and bureaucratic structure. The Sultan had the power to govern all classes and institutions of the state with absolute authority. The Sultan's organizing central authority, holding all powers in his hands, allowed him to shape and create all social classes and institutions as he wished, while also ensuring tight control over every area of the state and society. "In almost all of the Ottoman research conducted by both local and foreign historians, emphasis is placed on the weight of the sultan's authority in governance" (Guler, 2014).

The Ottoman Empire can be primarily examined through two structures. The first is the military class⁴ and the second is the “reaya” (Ottoman social class). These can also be referred to as the rulers and the ruled. At the top of the ruling class is the Sultan, who holds all authority (Dogan & Inankul, 2014). The military class consists of the rulers, while the “reaya” are the ruled. In the state and social structure of the Ottoman Empire, there was a specific hierarchical order. According to this hierarchy, the following ranking exists from the lowest to the highest level: “People”, “artisans”, “officials”, “soldiers” and “the palace”.

In the Ottoman Empire, the ruling class consisted of the Seyfiye (military class), Ilmiye (scholarly class) and Kalemîye (bureaucratic class). The Seyfiye class or the “holders of the sword”, was made up of two main groups: the Janissary Corps (Kapıkulu soldiers) and provincial soldiers, namely the Timar-based Sipahis. The Kapıkulu soldiers, who were located in the center and made up of men from the devshirme system (a recruitment system where Christian boys were taken and converted to Islam), were directly loyal to the Sultan. These soldiers received regular salaries every three months. The salary given to Kapıkulu soldiers by the Sultan was called ulufe (a regular salary paid to the elite troops). The Kapıkulu soldiers were divided into different branches, which included the Kapıkulu cavalry, the Janissary Corps and the Cebeci Corps (the bodyguard corps). The provincial soldiers made up a larger portion of the army. The structure of the provincial soldiers or Timar-based Sipahis (cavalrymen who were granted land in exchange for military service) was based on the timar system (a land tenure system used in the Ottoman military) (Cin & Akyilmaz, 1995).

The second important branch of the ruling class in the Ottoman Empire was the Ilmiye class. Since the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, the Ilmiye class has gained significant importance. The reason the Ilmiye class achieved a position of superiority as significant as the Seyfiye class is because the foundation of the Ottoman Empire was based on Sharia law. In the Sharia-based Ottoman state, the ulema (scholars) held many important positions. The Sheikh-ul-Islam was the head of the Ilmiye class. The second-ranking position in the Ilmiye class was the Kazasker. While the Sheikh-ul-Islam was the head of the judicial system, the judicial authority lay with the Kazasker. Members of the Ilmiye class received a good education in madrasas (Islamic schools). After completing their education, students either became müderris (professors) or kadı (judges). The general duties of the Ilmiye class were as follows: Tedris (the transmission of knowledge or the role of education and teaching), Kaza (the judicial role, meaning the power to issue rulings based on Islamic law) and Ifta (the role of issuing fatwas, meaning providing opinions on whether a particular action is in accordance with Sharia law) (Beyazit, 2009).

The third branch of the ruling class in the Ottoman state was the Kalemîye (civil bureaucracy) class. The Kalemîye class has existed since the reign of Orhan Gazi. Initially, there was a connection between the Kalemîye and Ilmiye (scholarly class) classes and as a result, officials such as the Defterdar (chief accountant) and Nişancı (officer in charge of state documents) were chosen from among the members of the Ilmiye class. In other words, the Ilmiye class became the main source supporting the Kalemîye class. For this reason, the Kalemîye class was unable to attain the same level of power as the Seyfiye (military class) and Ilmiye classes. The Katıps (scribes) in the Kalemîye class were divided into two groups: “Katıban-ı Ahkam-ı Divan” (scribes of the legal rulings of the court) and “Katıban-ı Hazine-i Amire” (scribes of the imperial

⁴The term “military class” is not only used for members of the army but also for the entire ruling class (Reyhan, 2012).

treasury). The first group, “Katiban-ı Ahkam-ı Divan”, was under the supervision of the Reis ül Küttab (chief scribe) and the Nişancı, while the second group, “Katiban-ı Hazine-i Amire”, was under the supervision of the Defterdar. The rise of the Kalemîye class came later, due to the power loss experienced by the Seyfiye and İlmiye classes and the shift in the power balance within the ruling class. Thanks to the reforms implemented by Sultan Mahmud II, the Kalemîye class evolved into a strong civil bureaucracy.

Initially, the Ottoman Empire viewed Westernization as a policy with defined boundaries, but over time, the scope of this political change expanded and its axis shifted. At first, Westernization was implemented within the Seyfiye (military) class. This is because the Ottoman Empire believed that it could only prevail against Europe if it strengthened itself militarily. Therefore, the Westernization policy was initially formulated within the Seyfiye class. For the Ottoman Empire, establishing a Western-style army was considered crucial in order to stand firm against the West. To establish such an army, there was a need for officers and institutions to train them. Additionally, reforms in education and factories to produce the necessary tools for the army’s training were also needed (Meric, 1983). The repeated defeats suffered by the Ottoman Empire against the West led the state to seriously consider how a Western-style army could be established. For this reason, the Ottoman Empire sent ambassadors to Europe to examine Western development. Initially, systematic information about the West was provided by foreign ministry officials. In 1720, Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi, an Ottoman foreign ministry official sent to Paris, closely observed developments in the West. He examined Western advancements in science, technology and military schools, as well as hospitals and observatories. He also admired and spoke highly of entertainment places in Paris, such as the opera, parks and theaters (Berkes, 2004). Using the information provided by foreign ministry officials, the Ottoman Empire began to reform its army. While the Ottoman Empire established a Western-style army, it did not disrupt the traditional army structure. The main reason for this was to maintain a balance by creating a division within the Seyfiye class. In other words, the newly formed Westernized class was intended to be balanced by the traditional class and the traditional class was also to be balanced by the Westernized class. However, this balance policy did not yield the expected results (Bilgi, 2016).

During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, Janissary garrisons were established in significant Ottoman cities due to the rebellion of Prince Bayezid. Over time, these garrisons bypassed central authority in their respective regions and seized control of local administration. By the late 16th century, the Ottoman Empire's need for musket-equipped infantry units led to the admission of individuals who were not part of the devshirme system into the Janissary corps, in violation of the law. Traditionally, soldiers in the Janissary corps were composed of individuals who did not engage in other professions and were not married. However, later on, people with other occupations were also admitted into the corps. Consequently, over time, the Janissary corps turned into a place frequented by individuals seeking only to collect salaries. Eventually, the Janissary units deteriorated further, with soldiers refusing to participate in battles or fleeing from them. Moreover, the corps ceased conducting drills and failed to adopt newly developed Western military techniques. Ultimately, the deeply corrupted Janissary Corps was violently disbanded by Mahmud II in 1826 (Bilgi, 2016).

From the perspective of the ilmiye class, the Westernization policy was the most negatively impactful for this group. Unlike the kalemîye and seyfiye classes, which had the potential to influence Westernization policies, the ilmiye class was more subjected to

and affected by Westernization rather than actively shaping it. Initially, the Westernization efforts pursued by the Ottoman Empire were supported by the ilmiye class as they were seen as necessary for the survival of the state. However, over time, these policies came to be perceived as a threat by the ilmiye class. The Westernization policy posed a challenge to the traditional structure of the three classes holding political power. Among these, the ilmiye class was the one that preserved its traditional structure the most. For this reason, it viewed Westernization as a threat to its existence. The ilmiye class, together with the traditional faction of the seyfiye class, showed some resistance to Westernization policies. Furthermore, the ilmiye class supported the rebellions led by the Janissaries against Westernization in the Ottoman Empire.

When examining the kalemiye class in terms of Westernization, it is observed that it did not experience the same level of conflict between traditional and Western groups as the seyfiye class. In other words, it appears to have adapted to Westernization policies with smoother transitions. Westernization in the kalemiye class was first implemented through the establishment of Translation Offices (Tercüme Odaları). These offices trained civil bureaucratic personnel who could communicate with the West and were proficient in foreign languages. Additionally, these offices were responsible for translating official, political and literary texts⁵.

As the seyfiye and ilmiye classes failed to meet the needs of the state, the effort to save the state through Westernization policies fell upon the kalemiye class (Bilgi, 2016). The kalemiye class managed the Ottoman Empire's domestic and foreign policies in a modern, Western manner. Its primary goal in doing so was to guide Westernization policies to ensure the survival of the Ottoman Empire.

From the late Ottoman period onward, developments such as the proclamation of the Tanzimat reforms brought about significant changes, including the cultivation of a new elite class, the transformation of the political process, the expansion of the state and the regulation of legislative activities. Members of the kalemiye class, due to their Western education, formed a bureaucratic class well-versed in Europe and European languages. Consequently, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the kalemiye class gained increasing importance within the state. However, dissenting factions also emerged from within the Western-educated kalemiye class. This led to divisions within the central authority and gave rise to conflicts. These divisions can be examined through the lens of the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks.

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⁵In the Ottoman Empire, translation work was carried out by Phanariot Greek Divan-ı Hümayun translators until 1821. After the Greek revolt in 1821, Yahya Naci Efendi began teaching to train translators, leading to the establishment of the Translation Office (Tercüme Odası) (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/tercume-odasi>).

3. Opposition Cadres in the Westernization Process of the Ottoman Empire: The Young Ottomans and the Young Turks

The Young Ottomans movement marks the beginning of Western-inspired liberty movements. The social changes of the 18th and 19th centuries and the Western institutions that spearheaded these changes laid the groundwork for this movement.

The educational reforms that began during the Tanzimat in the 1840s created a group of young people who were either educated in Europe or were able to receive an education in the Ottoman Empire according to European standards and with European teachers. Ibrahim Shinasi, the ideological inspirer and one of the founders of this society, spent a significant period of his life in Paris. He was one of the first representatives of the Ottoman Empire to be sent to Europe to receive an education. Ibrahim Shinasi, having studied the cultural and social life of France, returned to the Ottoman Empire and began to introduce his compatriots to European ideas through his literary works and newspaper articles. The newspaper "Tasfir-i Efkâr" published by Ibrahim Shinasi set itself the task of spreading knowledge and education and also served as a tool for propagating the ideas of the "New Ottomans" society among the population of the Ottoman Empire. It is worth noting that before the appearance of Ibrahim Shinasi, all ideas about reforms in the field of westernization of the empire came from statesmen and the government. It was thanks to Shinasi's activities that the group of intellectuals was formed, which later formed the core of the organization's leadership (Novichev, 1978).

Another prominent representative of the society was Namik Kemal, a famous writer and publicist. It was Namik Kemal who put forward the idea of the sovereignty of the people, that legislative power should be taken away from the government and the powers of the government should be in the hands of those whom it governs, i.e. in the hands of the people. Some of the society members either held high government positions when they joined the society or before its establishment (Keyazade Reshad Bey - governor, Menapirzade Nuri Bey - Turkish government commissioner, Mustafa Asim Pasha - assistant to the minister of police, Omer Naili Pasha - commander of the Istanbul garrison, Mehmed Bey - later minister of internal affairs). The society also included writers and journalists (Ibrahim Shinasi, Namik Kemal, Ziya Pasha, Ali Suavi). The social base of the "New Ottomans" was replenished mainly by the intelligentsia and the military. The largest financial support was provided by Mustafa Fazıl Pasha - brother of the ruler of Egypt. He held the posts of minister of education and finance and was chairman of the financial council of the Porte.

The Young Ottomans Society was established on August 10, 1867, by Mustafa Fazıl, Ziya Bey, Namik Kemal, Nuri, Suavi, Mehmed Bey, Reshad Bey and Rifat Bey. It was decided to relaunch the previously published Muhbir newspaper to disseminate the group's views to the public. Ali Suavi was appointed as the editor of Muhbir. However, the newspaper's strongly Islamic stance from its first publication surprised Mustafa Fazıl and caused tensions between Suavi and the group. On June 29, 1867, under the instructions of Fazıl Pasha, Namik Kemal began publishing the Hürriyet newspaper. However, this collaboration was also short-lived and soon after, Namik Kemal and Ziya Bey left the group. In September 1871, after the death of Ali Pasha, Mahmud Nedim Pasha succeeded him as the Grand Vizier. Following Mahmud Nedim Pasha's declaration of a general amnesty, most members of the group returned to Istanbul. After this event, Namik Kemal became the leader of the group (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/>).

Looking at the subsequent events, in 1876, Sultan Abdulaziz was deposed. Due to Sultan V. Murad's mental instability, the transfer of the empire to the heir apparent, Abdulhamid II, was under consideration (Uzun, 2005). However, the Bab-ı Âli⁶ (the Ottoman government) was concerned about Abdulhamid taking the throne. Indeed, when Abdulhamid ascended to the throne, he altered the text prepared by the Bab-ı Âli and mentioned the establishment of a constitutional commission. In 1876, Abdulhamid II declared the Constitutional Monarchy (Meşrutiyet). Under the influence of Mithat Pasha, Abdulhamid II allowed the formation of the Meclisi Mebusan (the Ottoman Parliament) and accepted the Kanuni Esasi (the Fundamental Law). However, following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Russo-Ottoman War, he justified the closure of the Meclisi Mebusan and the annulment of the Kanuni Esasi (Yedek, 2017).

In 1876, the Military Aid Society was established by Mithat Pasha, Ziya Bey and Namık Kemal to provide clothing assistance to soldiers in Bosnia. Along with the aid sent to the soldiers, a letter containing themes of gratitude, independence and political stability was also included. This caught the sultan's attention and on February 5, 1877, Mithat Pasha was dismissed from his position and sent abroad under Article 113 of the constitution (Ozguldur & Ozguldur, 1994). Namık Kemal was initially imprisoned and later exiled. The reason for this was the discovery of plans in the notes of a military student associated with Kemal, which involved deposing Abdulhamid II and replacing him with the Emir of Mecca. Ziya Bey was appointed as the governor of Syria (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/>). Ali Suavi, along with the immigrants from Rumelia, attempted to restore Sultan V. Murad to the throne by storming the Çırağan Palace on May 20, 1878. During the raid, Ali Suavi was killed (Guclu, 2013).

The suspension of the constitution by Abdulhamid II lasted for 33 years. However, the actions of the Young Ottomans inspired the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress movements.

The intellectuals who supported the constitution were called the Young Ottomans inside the Ottoman Empire and the Young Turks outside. The First and Second Young Turk movements were initiated by intellectuals who sought the establishment of the Meclisi Mebusan (the Ottoman Parliament) and the acceptance of the Kanuni Esasi (the Fundamental Law). As mentioned above, the Young Ottomans were referred to as the Young Turks in Europe. The First Young Turk movement was the struggle of the Young Ottomans for constitutionalism. The First Young Turk movement ended after the suspension of the constitution by Abdulhamid II. From this point, the Second Young Turk movement emerged, guided by the principles of the First Young Turk movement. The Second Young Turk movement can be considered a continuation of the Young Ottomans. However, the difference was that this group was more secretive and more organized. The goal of the Young Turks was to overthrow Abdulhamid's autocracy and declare the constitution. The Young Turks believed that this was the only way to save the empire. Ultimately, the Young Turk movement united under the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) and succeeded in declaring the Second Constitutional Monarchy. At this point, it would be more explanatory to discuss the founding purpose and actions of İttihat ve Terakki, which declared the Second Constitutional Monarchy.

In May 1889, Ibrahim Temo proposed to establish a secret organization to Ishak Sukuti, Çerkez Mehmet Reşit and Abdullah Cevdet. Temo, who had previously been a

⁶Bab-ı Âli - Since the late 18th century, this term has been used to refer to the Ottoman government, encompassing the Pasha's Gate and the Office of the Grand Vizier and later, after the establishment of the ministries, the general meaning of the Ottoman government (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/bab-i-ali>).

student at the Military Medical School, received a positive response from the others. Later, Giritli Şefik, Selanikli Nazım, Cevdet Osman, Şerafettin Magmumi, Mekkeli Sabri and Kerim Sebati also joined the organization. Temo organized the group in a cell structure. The inspiration for structuring the organization in a secret and cell-based manner came from the Carbonari Movement, which was founded in Italy in the 19th century (Ors, 2013).

The name of the society established by the Young Turks was the İttihad-ı Osmani Society. The İttihad-ı Osmani Society initially began to spread within the Military Medical School (Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Askeriye). Later, individuals from the War, Civil, Navy, Veterinary, Artillery and Engineering Schools also joined the movement. Among these classes, the military class was the quickest to take action. Subsequently, the movement began to gain supporters outside of the schools. Many significant figures from outside the schools also joined the society. Among them were Hacı Ahmet Efendi and Sheikh Naili Efendi. Hacı Ahmet Efendi worked as a state official in the Seraskerat office's financial department, while Sheikh Naili Efendi was a dervish. Since these individuals were important and active members of society, many intellectuals from the educated class also joined the society (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/>).

Looking at the subsequent events, in 1889, the leader of the Young Turk society in Paris, Ahmet Rıza Bey, founded the Terakki ve İttihat Cemiyeti (Progress and Union Society). He had been well-acquainted with Western culture from a young age. Due to his father's exile to Konya, he had the chance to see Anatolia. Later, Ahmet Rıza served as the Director of Education in Bursa. He attended an exhibition in Paris in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution, after which he began to live there. Ahmet Rıza adopted positivism, having taken lessons from Pierre Lafitte, a student of Auguste Comte. During his time in Paris, Ahmet Rıza sent several proposals related to reforms to Sultan Abdulhamid II (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/>).

Later, in 1895, Ahmet Rıza, Halil Ganem and some other individuals began publishing the “Mechveret” newspaper. “Mechveret” was published in Turkish, with Ahmet Rıza also contributing articles in French. In the 1895 article titled “Our Program” in Mechveret, the aims of the Young Turks were clearly stated. The article called for freedom for the Ottoman people regardless of race or religion. It also opposed any direct intervention by Western powers against the Ottoman Empire. One of the key topics in the article was the idea that Western science should be directly adopted and integrated by the state (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/>).

Looking at the actions of the Young Turks in Europe and Istanbul afterwards, it will be more explanatory. From February 4-9, 1902, Prince Sabahattin organized the “First Young Turk Congress” to unite the Young Turks. However, this congress, which did not achieve its goal, resulted in the Young Turks dividing rather than uniting. One group, under the leadership of Prince Sabahattin, established the “Teşebbüs-ü Şahsi ve Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti” (Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization), while the other group, led by Ahmet Rıza, formed the “Terakki ve İttihat Cemiyeti” (Progress and Union Society). Ahmet Rıza's group began publishing the Şura-yı Ümmet Gazetesi (Council of the Community Newspaper). The ideological foundation of this group was the positivism of Auguste Comte. Prince Sabahattin's group, on the other hand, began publishing Terakki Gazetesi (Progress Newspaper). The ideological basis of this group was rooted in the doctrines of Edmond Desmolin and Frederic Le Play's Science Sociale (Social Science) (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/>).

While the Young Turks were fighting as mentioned in Europe, different organizations emerged in Istanbul. In 1906, the Ottoman Union and Progress Society (Osmanlı İttihat ve İnkılâp Cemiyeti) was founded by Ethem Ruhi and Abdullah Cevdet. This society later merged with the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki). The goal of the society was to reorganize and regulate the revolutionary movement that had deviated from its ideals during the Young Turks' congress held in Paris in 1902 (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/>).

Another group was founded in 1906 in Damascus. This society was named the Homeland and Freedom Society (Vatan ve Hürriyet Cemiyeti). The society, which included Mustafa Kemal, began to grow rapidly. Its aim was the re-acceptance of the Kanuni Esasi and the declaration of the constitutional monarchy. Later, through Mustafa Kemal, this society joined the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) established in Thessaloniki (Uğurlu, 2009). This society also formed the cadres for the revolution that would take place in 1908.

In 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) took action and Sultan Abdulhamid II was forced to declare the constitutional monarchy. Niyazi Bey and Enver Bey led uprisings in the Balkans with their troops. With the declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy in 1908, the Kanuni Esasi was accepted and the Meclisi Mebusan (the Ottoman Parliament) was established. The end of Abdulhamid's autocracy and the declaration of the constitutional monarchy occurred as a result of the struggle of the Committee of Union and Progress.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the policy of Westernization in the Ottoman Empire was implemented by the state to address the issue of “How can the Ottoman Empire be saved?”. As part of the Westernization policy, reforms were made within the ruling classes of the state, namely the Seyfiye and Kalemkiye. There was no direct reform related to the İlmiye class, which was more influenced by Westernization. As a result of these reforms within the ruling classes, conflicts emerged between the traditionalists and those who underwent Western formation. The traditional wing of the Seyfiye class resisted Westernization, leading to many Janissary uprisings. As the İlmiye class and the Janissaries held onto their traditions and rejected Westernization, conflicts arose and as a result, the state weakened. The First Constitutional Period was declared as a result of Western reforms in an attempt to save the state. However, after a while, Abdulhamid II did not view it in the same way and suspended the constitution. The period of Abdulhamid II's autocracy continued until the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period. With the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period, the Kanuni Esasi was re-accepted and the parliament was opened again.

In the chain of events that began in the 18th century, the main goal of everyone involved was to save the Ottoman Empire. The Young Ottomans, the Young Turks and the Unionists believed that the Ottoman Empire could be saved through Westernization. However, even among those who believed that Westernization could save the Ottoman Empire, there were many divisions. When looking at the traditionalists, they believed that the Empire could only be saved by staying fully committed to its traditions. Of course, Westernization was necessary for the Ottoman Empire because adapting to the modern world, where nation-states were emerging, had become a necessity. However, both the supporters of Westernization and the traditionalists shared the same goal of

saving the Empire. Throughout this period, despite being opposed to each other, everyone had the common aim of preserving the state. It is understandable that the Ottoman Empire's Westernization policy went through such a difficult process, as a sudden change could not have been achieved in such a long-standing and powerful empire. Although the Westernization movements in the Ottoman Empire led to major events, they ultimately paved the way for significant steps toward adapting to the modern world. As a result, while the Ottoman's Westernization policy may not have been able to save the Empire, it led to the establishment of a modern state that would preserve the legacy of the Ottoman Empire.

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