

Source:

1 | Introduction

2 | Body 1: counterargument

3 | Body 2: Ottomans

Europeans used soft power to mislead the Ottoman empire into trading agreements that caused crippling inflation and corruption, a corrosive trend that lead ultimately to the Ottoman empire's downfall. The Capitulations of the mid sixteenth century were a series of trade agreements between the militarily dominant Ottoman empire and the various states of Europe designed to facilitate trade (Cleveland 50). Because the European nations were weaker than the Ottomans at the time, the Ottoman empire felt safe and philanthropic in the negotiation of the treaties. Not only did the Capitulations promise truce at war and zero additional import and export taxes, they also served as a sign of political trust. Even in early drafts of the treaties, the Ottomans grant the French consul jurisdiction over its nationals on empire soil. One draft from 1535 states that a French consul is to be maintained in the "proper authority" to "determine all causes, suits, an differences, both civil and criminal, which might arise between merchants and other subjects of the King" (Hurewitz 3). Although this is an early draft of the treaty, the loophole spawn of the Ottoman downfall is already apparent—the French see it as "proper" that they should have jurisdiction in another country. Why did the Ottomans give the French so much power? Such power is often granted by weaker, surrendering states, but in this case the privilege is granted primarily to the French. The Ottomans are still in their age of military domination—continuing to clean battles until the late sixteenth century. The drafting of this Capitulation came before the wave of Spanish silver, which was only discovered in 1545, a decade later. Ultimately, the Ottomans ratified this treaty to inspire confidence in the French and to encourage the weaker state to trade—a strategic move to control international commerce by a wealthy and powerful land empire. After all, the foreign bailiffs wouldn't dare abuse the treaty... not in the face of the mighty Ottoman empire. The strong military of the Ottoman empire campaigned against various states of Europe, and secured another Capitulation with each victory. Europe's internal international policy of Raison d'etat meant all of Europe was willing to backstab and gain control—a system of balance that discouraged long periods of altruistic trade (Kissinger 69). This conflict in Europe and easy trade with the Ottomans facilitated a boom in international commerce. The citizens of the Ottoman empire enjoyed the benefits of active foreign trade: they had tariff-less access to manufactured products from all accross Europe. The Ottoman machine ran smoothly, until a sudden influx of silver turned the system on its head and set a vicious cycle of inflation, weakening, and revolt in motion.

4 | Body 3: Ming

5 | Conclusion