THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OTTOMAN AND WESTERN EUROPEAN CITIES IN NEW AGE

The comparison between Ottoman cities and Western Europe cities can be handled by different aspects such as governance, law, charities, religion, security, and military. It can also diverge with the time period. Differences such as architectural city structure and daily life brought by culture cannot be ignored. In addition, the geographical locations of the cities left deep differences between the lives of the Ottoman Empire itself, and it will be an important item when comparing it with European cities. Many differences such as beliefs, diseases, diets can be seen and these can affect events and situations. These have also had an impact on the reasons for the deep divergences and similarities between the Ottomans and Europe. However, when we talk specifically about that period, it is possible to say that religion was the most fundamental reason for all these differences. When we compare non-Muslim cities, Muslim cities, and Western European cities ruled by Muslims, I have gathered these similarities and differences under several headings.

**GOVERNANCE AND LAW**

The governance and law system of the Ottoman cities should be considered together since, the Ottoman Sultans sent cities two executors one is for administration which is “bey, beylerbeyi” other is for judgement “kadı” (Ergenç, 1981). So, the administration and law considered together in Ottoman cities. A qadi in Ottoman Empire was a public official who was appointed by central administration and responsible for the implementation of Islamic religious and administrative justice. They used to serve as acivilian authority, local administrator and higher security director in subdistricts called “kaza” for a certain period of time. Qadis, who were supported by central administration, used to work for public welfare and coordinate all the services while doing so. (Bozatay, 2014) By looking at the definition kadı’s are responsible about both judgement and execution. On the other hand, in Western Europe the situation was different. Because of the feodality, all the judgement force belonged to the lords especially in medieval. The law system of Ottoman cities and Western Europe cities were both affected by religion. The curch was effective on European execution and law system. Likewise, In Ottoman the “şer’i hukuk” were valid under the influence of religion. Since, the Ottoman empire was spread over wide lands, central administration was very difficult. For this reason, governors became the main authorities in some lands. Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Pasha’s Egyptian revolt (1831-1833) can be a good example of the power of the governors in the regions they ruled. In summary, law and administration were handled as an inseparable whole both in European cities and in the Ottoman Empire. Local rulers held great power both in medieval Europe and in the Ottoman state in the new age. “The financial difficulties of towns and the need to get rich councillors to bail out city administration from their own pockets was one of the factors contributing to the further consolidation of civic oligarchy across Europe in the early modern period” (Clark, 2013). Peter Clark states that local governors and a small group of people around them gaining force by European perspective. However this power in Europe changed its focus with the new age. Politicians lost their relative position against central authority. It was still possible to see the administrative effects of religion both in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe. Although the lands in the Ottoman Empire had different administrative and “şer’i” divisions, and the control mechanisms were tried to be strong up to a point, city administrations were always challenging for an empire spread over such a wide lands.

**CHARITIES**

Charities were really important for Ottoman Cities. These foundations sometimes emerged as a result of statesmen and even the sultan's search for legitimacy. Sometimes there were seeds of social state understanding. In the Ottoman state, on the phenomenon of religion, foundations helped the poor, invested in mosques, built schools, and sought solutions to the problems of the society of the period, such as finding water and food and collecting garbage. However, the fact that these foundations were religiously based or emerged from the search for legitimacy generally meant that more ostentatious cities such as Jerusalem, Istanbul and Bursa took the lion's share. In rural cities, the poor could not benefit from an efficient foundation aid. To give an example, Eval Ginio classifies Thessaloniki as a balkan provincial city and refers to the following section from the notes of "evliya celebi" while talking about its possibilities. "Salonican sick were hospitalized in two small rooms adjacent to two neighborhood mosques, unlike their counterparts in Edirne, Bursa, and Istanbul who benefited from the services of magnificent hospitals." (Ginio)

These notes show us that investments in provincial cities are quite limited, moreover, since most of the investments of foundations established in the same article, Ginio, go to investors, religious leaders and institutions in Istanbul. He talks about the fact that the share of the poor of the city, who should be helped, is extremely inadequate. On the other hand, Baer talks about the efficiency of foundation activities in Jerusalem, the excess of investments, and the order in the functioning of foundation works. The gap between Thessaloniki and Jerusalem is actually an example of how unequally the foundation activities were distributed in Ottoman cities. The fact that charities do not have a standard even within the Ottoman Empire is a factor that complicates the comparison with Europe. It is possible to say that state institutions have taken the place of foundations in the new age Europe. The aid in the Ottoman Empire was made through institutions and unions. On the other hand, in the new age in Europe, instead of the aid, so it had a more systematic operation.

**RELIGION AND SOCIAL LIFE**

The place of religion in daily life in both Christian and Muslim societies in the new age is an indisputable fact. In fact, when we look at the similarities and differences in that period, it is possible to see the effects of religion in every field. While it is the phenomenon of religion that creates the similarities, it is the belief that creates the differences. The influence of religion in the judiciary and administration in both Ottoman society and Europe is undeniable. Considering the indirect effect of religion, it is seen that there is an important motivation in the establishment of charities.

In addition to its effects on dressing, communication and daily life, religion has a great impact on both societies in the aid received or donations made by people. While the Europeans were subordinate to the church, the Ottoman people were equally dependent on the mosques to the sheikh al-Islam.

**SECURITY**

“Nightwatchmen patrolled the mahalles, and janissary security forces or (after their establishment in the nineteenth century) the police maintained order in the various divisions of the city. Potential hotspots such as brothels were kept under surveillance, and information on potential troublemakers collected through various information networks. According to the Venetian ambassador Pietro Foscarini, in Istanbul in 1637, Murad IV was extremely well informed about what went on in his capital and, according to Foscarini’s successor Alvise Contarini, had spies everywhere.” (Boyar, 2010) As can be understood from this excerpt, the security in the Ottoman big cities was at the highest level, and the administrators knew all the events in the city and could keep them under control. However, the same was not the case when it came to the provinces. While talking about the example of Ginio Thessaloniki, he said that the lack of foundation activities in the city led the poor people to crime, and that these crimes could not be prevented, and that both the judiciary and the security forces remained silent. The situation was not different in Europe of the period, while the knights who provided security left their place to more systematic institutions, the crime rates in the cities were still high, and the central authority did not have enough security power to dominate the streets even in big cities. Even in the days when the army tried to maintain order in the cities, complete security could not be provided. In summary, it is possible to say that the Ottoman big cities are safer than their counterparts. But the same cannot be said for provincial cities.

**MILITARY**

The Ottoman soldiers were a source of pride for the inhabitants, who identified with them and were given a sense of security and superiority by this identification, as well as a sense of divine blessing. All those who, in December 1596, saw the fully armed regiments of the sailors and leaders of the gazis, the soldiers of the mucahidin regiment, the four thousand marines, the corsairs and the brave musketeers of Algiers, cried out, ‘God is great’. The regiment of Algiers fired off their guns and the great noise rose to the heavens, terrifying all who heard it. (Boyar, 2010) As can be understood from this quote, the Ottoman society had a great respect and gratitude for the military. The same was true for Europeans. Respecting a community that has defended its interests in so many wars was a must for any culture.

In summary, Ottoman prosperity differs between cities in Europe. Geography conditions were important factors in local governments. The role of kadi and governors in the administration was of greater importance in the Ottoman Empire due to its large lands, different nations, and inadequate transportation and communication networks of the period. The military and the sultanate had an important place in local governments both in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe. Towards the end of the new era, Europe was clearly more systematic than the Ottomans in social activities. Security was always a problem throughout this process. The influence of religion in law was great in both societies.

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