

**OTTOMAN IMPERIALISM IN YEMEN IN
THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY
COLONIAL CALIPHATE**

By

Yiğit Bayman

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Supervisor: Brett Wilson

Second Reader: Tolga Esmer

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Introduction

On 20 October 1911, Ottoman imperial representatives, Ahmad Izzet Paşa and Mahmud Nedim Bey, and rebellious leader Imam Yahya and his court met in the *Da'an* village, and signed the *Da'an* agreement. In this thesis, I discuss that the Ottoman government institutionalized the Caliphate authority as a colonial institution in Yemen in the context of the early twentieth century southern Red Sea that was the interimperial borderland.

In the upcoming chapters, I discuss the formation of the caliphate figure as a colonial institution. In my opinion, the *Da'an* agreement distorted the imperial Islam represented by the Sultan Caliphate in the Ottoman Yemeni territory. The post-colonial Ottoman historiography dismisses the particular formation of the imperial rule in the different locations in the imperial territory. I argue that the differentiation in Yemen was the reflection of the Ottoman imperial ambition in the context of the interimperial competition in the early twentieth century. In the second chapter, I argue that the Ottoman presence in Yemen was akin to the European colonial administrations that became the strategically important in the context of new imperialism.

The post-colonial Ottoman imperial historiography defines the Ottoman own imperial needs as the active subject in modernization process rather than the passive object of European social, political and economic developments and demands.¹ In other words, this historiographical school conceptualizes the Ottoman Empire's ideologies and institutions in the modernization process not only based on the contemporaneous rival imperial powers but also its superiority and subaltern notions in its own cultural and political heritage were the influential factors beyond the Ottoman reformations in the nineteenth century. The existing

¹ Usume Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *American Historical Review*, (June 2002): 768 – 796, Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*, (London: Tauris, 1999).

literature discusses the Ottoman state's Islamist centralization policies from the perspective that suggests the imperial center's imposition on the periphery that were out of the immediate control of the center.

However, the lack of colonial institutions and vocabularies, that indicated the dichotomy between the ruler and ruled in the sense of the contemporaneous British and French colonialism, is the considerable challenge to post-colonial Ottoman historiography. Özgür Türesay refers the colonial representation in the European parliaments to illustrate the absence of the formal colonial governance in the Ottoman imperial system.² He addresses the absence of the Indian notables in Westminster, and the unproportional representation of the colonial subjects in France.³ However, in the Ottoman Empire political representation was egalitarian; “all the subjects living under the Ottoman Empire were Ottoman citizens and enjoyed the same political rights”.⁴ Indeed, Ottoman bureaucrats were aware of the colonial discussion, but the colonial status discussion was a kind of taboo.⁵ Indeed, the imperial officers constantly evaded to mention a term that might imply colonial rule.⁶

Approach & Methodology - Source Justification

The source publications are *Sbeilü'r-Reşad*, *İçtihad*, and *İslâm Mecmû'ası*. The publications are reflective for Ottoman Imperial policies and contemporaneous intellectual discourse about the Yemen. *Sebilü'r-Reşad* began to be published after the 1908 Revolution under the name of the *Sırat-i Müstakîm*.⁷ The *Sebilü'r-Reşad* supported the constitution, and one of its founders, Ebül Ula Zeynelabidin, became a member of the parliament in the second

² Özgür Türesay, « L'Empire ottoman sous le prisme des études postcoloniales. À propos d'un tournant historiographique récent », *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 2013/2 (No 60-2), p.10.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference* (Brill, 2011).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Adem Efe, "Sebilürreşâd", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/sebilurresad> (12.11.2018).

constitutional period.⁸ Also, one of the prominent contributors was Kazım Musa who was the *Şeyhü'l-islâm* of the C.U.P. government.⁹ *İslâm Mecmû'ası* was published under the direct financial support of the C.U.P. government during of the First World War.¹⁰ The intellectual aim of the *İslâm Mecmû'ası* was to formalize the reconciliation of rationalized Islam and Turkish nationalism.¹¹ *İctihad* is a magazine that was published by Abdullah Cevdet between 1904 and 1932.¹² *İctihad* was the prominent publication of the anti-religious intellectual movement.¹³ Şükrü Hanioglu states that “the overarching thesis of the journal was that Islam could not keep up with modern advancements and therefore, it should be reconciled with science in order to be used as a means to modernize Ottoman Society”.¹⁴ *İctihad* was one of the most influential publications that reflect the intellectual interests in the Ottoman imperial center. The opinions, in *İctihad*, circulated among the “highly westernized, educated medical students and sheiks or members of ‘*ülemâ*’”.¹⁵ Also, the high ranking bureaucrats, for example Kılıç-zâde Hakkı¹⁶ and Celâl Nuri Bey¹⁷ contribute to the *İctihad*. In this vein, the ideas/discourse published in *İctihad* reflect the opinions of high-ranking officials and influential intellectuals in Istanbul.

I discuss the primary sources from the perspective of the Cambridge school of intellectual history that probes into the ideas’ political function in the historical context.¹⁸ It argues that “one could not even understand master thinkers in the canon unless one took into

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, Studies in Middle Eastern History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 163.

¹⁰ Tuba Çavdar Karatepe, "İslâm Mecmuası", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/islam-mecmuasi> (12.11.2018).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² M. Sukru Hanioglu, “Garbcilar: Their Attitudes toward Religion and Their Impact on the Official Ideology of the Turkish Republic,” *Studia Islamica*, no. 86 (1997): 133.

¹³ M. Sukru Hanioglu, “Garbcilar”, 140.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 141.

¹⁶ Member of *Divanı harp*, supreme court

¹⁷ Member of *Meclis-i Ayan*, one of the parliaments in the dual parliamentary system

¹⁸ Britannica Academic, s.v. "Quentin Skinner," accessed June 2, 2018, <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/Quentin-Skinner/600502>.

account everything that a given period had considered philosophy”.¹⁹ The school discusses the intellectual works at “the intersection point of linguistic fields, larger contexts, and particular individual intentions”.²⁰ The newspapers reflect the formation of the imperial political approach to Yemen. Therefore, the primary sources will lead me to conclude how the local conditions influence Ottoman Empire’s self-identity and its Islamist expression as well as the imperial policies in Yemen.

I employ Ann Laura Stoler’s imperial formation idea to integrate the nineteenth century imperialist discourse into the Ottoman context. There are three main arguments offered by Stoler. Firstly, she suggests that the imported imperial ruling tools were not directly imitated in the structure of the recipient empire. Indeed, the imported components were modified and rephrased in the recipient capital based on the recipient empire’s characteristics.²¹ Secondly, Stoler mentions that the flow of the imperial ruling tools was multi-dimensional and multi-directional.²² The contemporaneous empires did not borrow the imperial practices from another imperial center, but they borrowed the practices from another empire’s peripheries or the zone of influence.²³ Thirdly, she points out the imperial formations can be understood and compared by examining the remaining fragments of the imperial formations in the post-imperial territories.²⁴ I think that the formation of Ottoman imperial Islam as an imperialist tool can be discussed from Stoler’s imperial formation perspective. In the context of late Ottoman Yemen, Stoler’s imperial formation is useful to analyze the Ottoman imperial ruling tools borrowed from Europe and the imperial policies in Yemen inspired by the colonial policies of the contemporaneous competitor empires in the

¹⁹ Anthony Grafton Reviewed work(s):, “The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950-2000 and Beyond,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 1 (2006): 21.

²⁰ Ibid., 26.

²¹ Ann L. Stoler, ‘Considerations on Imperial Comparisons’, in *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*, ed. I. Gerasimov, J. Kusber, A. Semyonov (Leiden, Boston, 2009), 48.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 46.

²⁴ Ibid., 35.

region. Moreover, it is notable that I will focus on the state and society formation of the post-imperial states that emerged in the former Ottoman territories to discern likely blind points.

The imperial territories are determined by the legal territories. Lauren Benton states that “colonial powers found reasons to create semiautonomous spaces that were legally and politically differentiated from more closely controlled colonial territories. Together these patterns and practices produced political geographies that were uneven, disaggregated, and oddly shaped – and not at all consistent with the image produced by monochrome shading of imperial maps”.²⁵ Creation of the various legal territories in the same imperial system was the essential component of the imperial territorial expansion in the nineteenth century.²⁶ I discuss the Ottoman caliphate formation as an colonial institution based on the anomalous derived from the official entanglement of the Zaydi authority to the Ottoman Caliphate’s legal territory.

Frontier / borderland administration – frame work and historical context – differentiation of *Da’an* agreement from the previous experiences

It is known that the Ottoman Empire built up local alliances with communities for frontier governance. The case was seen in Lebanon, Palestine, Najd, Jordan, and Tripoli as well as Kurdish Eastern Anatolia. The cases other than Yemen were informal agreements between the local communities and imperial provincial governances. However, the authority delegation in Yemen institutionalizes this frontier administration. I argue that Abdulhamid II's relations with specific Sufi orders suggest that Abdulhamid II bypassed the state bureaucracy and made some of the Sufi orders his semi-private sphere of influences. The idea of the Caliphate’s empire wide sovereignty that I employ it as the Caliphate’s legal territory

²⁵ Lauren A. Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400 - 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), 2.

²⁶ Ibid., 4.

was formed in the reign of Abdulhamid II. I think that Abdulhamid II's personal patronage network to disseminate the idea of Caliphate's empire wide spiritual and political authority is illustrative the *Da'an* agreement's transformational influence on the Caliphate figure. The caliphate sovereignty represented by the Abdulhamid II was rigid. However, the agreement altered the rigid form of the Caliphate sovereignty, and the agreement distorted the Caliphate's normative empire wide legal territory in Yemen.

In the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire experienced the imperial sovereignty struggle against rivalry empires in its frontiers. Russian presence in the Caucasus as well as Iran's ideological penetration into the lower Iraq and Britain involvement to the Middle East politics forced Ottoman State to build more cooperative relations with the influential local figures.²⁷

The main characteristic of the informal support to the Sufi sheiks was that the sultan invited them to the capital. The imperial hospitality in the capital for the sheiks is one of the determiners about the sultan intention. Roger Allen mentions that the sultan hosted the prominent figures, who might be the opponent of the sultan's authority; because of that the sultan would be able to control them in the capital more efficiently.²⁸ Indeed, the sultan aimed to take advantage of their potential to manipulate the regional population, and the sultan recruited them for his service. The characteristic of the hosted sheiks is that they were able to provide distant connections and that they had a reputation to spread imperial Islamic thought.

The sheik's self- propagation reflects the importance of the ability to create influence on the distant Muslim societies. Ibrahim al-Muwahlihi mentions that Al-shaykh Al-Sayyid

²⁷ Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East*, 76.

²⁸ Ibrāhīm Muwaylihī and M. A. Allen Roger, *Spies, scandals, and sultans: Istanbul in the twilight of the Ottoman Empire : the first English translation of Egyptian Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi's Ma hanalik*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008, 14.

Fadl Pasha Al-Malibari Al-Makki, who was one of the sheiks hosted in the Capital, expressed the sultan's likely rule on India and that America would be converted to Islam.²⁹ The sheik showed the letters, sent to him from India, to support his claims' validity by emphasizing his network with India.³⁰ These attempts of the sheik attracted the al-Muwahlihi's attention, so the advertising his connection with India, and flattering the sultan by unrealistic assumption became the sheikh's characteristics. It can be interpreted that the long distance network was essential for the sheik to maintain his presence in the sultan's court.

The imperial struggle against Iran had Islamic ideological aspect, so the Ottoman Empire resisted against Iran's Shia propaganda in the Middle East³¹. In the meantime, Abdulhuda's Rifai order enjoyed state-sponsored expansion, and the order opened new lodges in the Syrian and Iraqi towns and cities.³² Shaikh Abdulhuda Al-Sayyadi was one of the Sheikhs hosted in the Capital by the sultan. The Rifai order's expansion became the counterattack against Iran's ideological expansion. This order directly disseminated the sultan's religious and political authority. Indeed, it allowed the sultan to reach the region via the Sufi leader directly, and intensify his sovereignty.

The sultan ordered Abdulhuda to write a book that emphasizes the legitimacy of the caliphate, and the books, addressing the Arab population of the empire, were dispensed in Istanbul, Beirut, and Cairo.³³ The book has three significant points. The first one is "defending the legitimacy of Sultan Abdulhamid II's assumption of the Caliphate and calling upon the Muslims to rally behind him and be submissive to him; the second point is "propagating the Rifa'i order and glorifying Ahmad al-Rifai, after whom the order was called; and the third point is "defending himself against attacks of his enemies and emphasizing his

²⁹ Ibid., 141.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East*, 76.

³² B. Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdulhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda Al-Sayyadi", *Middle Eastern Studies* no. 2 (1979): 131, 138.

³³ Ibid., 140.

sharifal lineage”.³⁴ This encouraged protagonist writing suggests that the Sufi orders became the semi-private office of the sultanate because the sultan dictated to the sheik to propagate the sultan’s legitimization via the Sufi network.

The hosted sheiks’ places in the capital became the central connection points between the palace and the regions. Sheikh Muhammad Zafir, the influential sheik from Tripoli, was another Sheikh hosted in Istanbul.³⁵ He was granted a lodge near the Yıldız Palace.³⁶ Sheikh Zafir’s Zawiya became the hub for the North African travelers.³⁷ Abdulhuda’s mansion in the Capital was also the meeting point for the visitors from Arab lands.³⁸ The Sheikhs’ places became the communication centers with their origin lands, and it shows the palace’s intention to take advantage of the Sheikh’s networks with their origin lands as the Sultan’s semi-private office to rule these regions. The hosted sheiks were transmitting the sultan’s opinions to their regions, as exemplified above.

Al-Muwaihili provides the detailed ten pages description of the relations among the sheiks, and the insulting each other was the intrinsic part of the relations among hosted sheiks. He expresses that the favored sheiks were slandering each other³⁹, so their approach to one another suggests that they did not see their presence as a crew. For instance, “about shayks Zafir, Al-Sayyid Abu Al-Huda says that his grandfather was a Salonika Jew who converted to Islam. Sultan Mahmud had him killed because of his heretical opinions”.⁴⁰ This situation refers to that the sheiks had their agendas, and this might reflect that the sultan avoided giving the group of hosted Sufi sheiks a formal appearance that could prevent the sultan to maintain that to bypass the imperial bureaucracy.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 139.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibrāhīm Muwaylihī and M. A. Allen Roger, *Spies, scandals, and sultans*, 144.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

The sultan appointed sheik al-Sayyid Ahmad As'ad al-Qaysarli al-Madani, another hosted sheik, for a diplomatic mission. Al-Muwaili states that "his majesty the sultan once sent him to see English ambassador on a political assignment".⁴¹ According to Al-Muwaili, the sheik was highly unskilled for that kind of mission, and he persuaded the sultan about his skills.⁴² At this point, it seems that the sultan bypassed *Hariciye*, the Ottoman foreign affairs, so the Sufi sheik gained new status different from both a member of the imperial bureaucracy and the leader of a Sufi order. Sultan assigned him as a private officer to talk the ambassador about a political issue.

In conclusion, Abdulhamid II was highly pragmatic in his approach to Sufi orders and their sheiks. The sultan supported the Sufi orders that might play a supportive role for the imperial intention to reach the long-distance Muslim population. On the other hand, Abdulhamid II informally supported certain sheiks. He hosted the Sufi leaders in the capital, and the sultan took advantage of the Sufi orders' connection with the periphery to rule these regions directly by himself instead of the following Ottoman state bureaucracy. Abdulhamid II's relation with the Sufi orders leads to the conclusion that state centralization and bureaucratization of the Sufi orders were immature. Indeed, the sultan's informal relations with the Sufi sheiks gave them a new undefined status, neither an imperial officer a member of the state bureaucracy nor a spiritual leader. They became the sultan's semi-private officers that might serve his political agenda.

⁴¹ Ibid., 139.

⁴² Ibid.

Chapter -1 Ottoman ‘New Imperialism’ in the Context of Red Sea

I assert that Ottoman presence in Yemen was akin to the European colonial intervention in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this chapter, I contextualize the Ottoman presence in Yemen into the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a new imperialism in the minds of the Istanbul based intellectuals. There are two prominent points that refer the undeveloped living conditions in the writings about Yemen. One of them was the difficult living conditions experienced by the imperial officers. Secondly, its undeveloped situation relatively to the European colonial settlements around the Ottoman Yemen, and the Ottoman government’s insufficient policies to improve the administrative and living conditions in the region. In the first section, I discuss the impression of imperial center in the late Ottoman mindset to illustrate the understanding of distance based on the dichotomy between the center and periphery. In the second section, I discuss the Ottoman integration in to the formation of the Red Sea as an interimperial borderland in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the third section, I argue that the writings about Yemen published in the Istanbul press in the early twentieth century presented the Ottoman administration in Yemen as a colonial territory

The Late Ottoman Way of Living as a Tool to Define the Subaltern Periphery, an Analysis of Ottoman Travellers’ Perceptions of Africa and the Arab Peripheries

The peripheries were destinations that needed to be reached. There were the two dimensions of the state expansion to Arab peninsula and Africa. Firstly, the state aimed to increase its influence on the subjects. The second dimension was the struggle to expand its zone of influence. Ottoman participation in Berlin Conference was the result of the Ottoman intention to expand its zone of influence beyond the official borders by competing with the

other imperial forces.⁴³ The Ottoman Empire declared the official rights on the hinterland of Libya territory.⁴⁴ Therefore, as an example, Hamidian regime built the relation with the Sanusi order that had a long-distance connection to inner Africa.⁴⁵ The official attempts to penetrate to the deep periphery caused Ottoman intellectual circles to produce works that offered an Ottoman analysis of the peripheries and their population.

Istanbulite society was aware of the state's activities in Africa. The semi-official newspaper, *İkdam*, published the articles about the presence of the Ottoman Empire in Africa.⁴⁶ The articles intended to make public opinion approve the empire's politics in Africa. The *İkdam* articles state that Ottoman superiority to the European powers derives from the common characteristics of Ottoman and Africa population in terms of common religion.⁴⁷ Furthermore, they appreciate that Ottoman Empire's more comprehensive intervention to continent brings civilization to the life of the indigenous societies.⁴⁸ According to Minawi, the Ottoman civilization discourse was different from the European mission to civilize the public, and it refers that Ottoman intervention helped the African population to catch the contemporary technological and economic developments rather than imposing cultural norms.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the first-hand information from the peripheries became popular in the intellectual circles. Cenab Şahabettin, who went to Hedjaz as a military doctor, published his letters that articulate his journey to the Hijaz as the serial in *Servet-i Fünun* magazine between 1896 and 1898.⁵⁰ There was a correlation between the state attempts to increase influence on the periphery and the publications about the regions.

⁴³ Mostafa Minawi. *The Ottoman scramble for Africa : empire and diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*. (California: Stanford University Press, 2016), 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık. "Ottoman travelers' perceptions of Africa in the late Ottoman Empire (1860-1922): a discussion of civilization, colonialism and race." *New Perspectives On Turkey* 46, (2012), 197.

Travel writings are another type of publication that reflects the Empire's intention to extend its reach into the peripheries. The intellectual curiosity for distant destinations increased, so the travelogues, which were different from the diplomatic monographs and religious journeys, got into the intellectual circles. The first published travelogue was *Sudan Seyahatnamesi*, written by Mehmed Mihri and published in 1910.⁵¹ The author emphasizes his work's difference from the previously published travelogues that are the translated travelogues written by the Europeans and the *Sefaretnames* written by the diplomats.⁵² Mehmed Mihri states that the European travelogues do not provide beneficial information for Ottomans, and the former diplomats' writing examines the regions from a narrow perspective.⁵³ This refers the geographically expanding intellectual content, and it proposes the new kind of writing about the peripheries that are unlike the old state officers' works and European approach. In the other words, Ottoman intellectuals attempted to produce their own peripheral observations, which they claimed were substantially different and superior to those of their predecessors.

The travelogues reflect the impression of the Ottoman Imperial zone of influence in the minds of the intellectuals. Ömer Lütfi, in *Ümitburnu Seyahatnamesi* that covers his journey to South Africa between 1862 and 1866, suggests that the Ottoman Empire should keep in touch with the Muslims living in South Africa.⁵⁴ On the other hand, they accuse the Ottoman administration for the peripheries' backwardness, as a result of the administration's negligence on the regions.⁵⁵ It suggests that Ömer Lütfi accepts the Muslim population in South Africa under the Ottoman caliphate zone of influence, and he implies that the South African populations are subaltern and needy for Istanbul's protection and support. This

⁵¹ Christoph Herzog, and R. Motika. "Orientalism alla turca: late 19th / early 20th century Ottoman voyages into the Muslim 'outback'." *Welt Des Islams* 40, no. ii (2000), 152.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Palabıyık. "Ottoman travelers' perceptions", 196.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 204.

statement is important for two reasons. The first one is the impression that the caliphate was able to manipulate distant African Muslim populations. Secondly, it hints the Ottoman officers' approach to local Muslims should be to manipulate, protect and divert them to the true Islam led by the sultan in Istanbul.

Istanbulite intellectuals' also developed a schematic hierarchy for understanding the ethnic groups. For instance, "Sadık el- Müeyyed classified the local inhabitants of Abyssinia under several categories. Although there is no clear indication, it can be inferred that he established a loose hierarchy among these local people in which Arabian- looking Abyssinians were at the top. They were followed by Sudanese-looking Abyssinians, Galla people, and the Hamitic tribes, respectively" and Mehmed Mihri divides the Egyptians into two groups Arabs and Fellahs.⁵⁶ The categorization suggests that Istanbulite travelers' intention to analyze, understand and define them, so the Ottoman intellectuals more explicitly concern the peripheral societies. The Ottoman evaluation of the local societies shows that the intellectuals perceive the indigenous population as the subordinate social organizations, because classification based on their Ottoman Istanbulite perspective suggests that Ottoman intellectuals ignore the local people's own social structure.

Istanbul was the significant component of the late Ottoman intellectuals' expressions about the proper way of living. Refik Halid, in *Gurbet Hikayeleri* (Exile Stories), that is the collection of the semi-autobiographical stories published in 1940, describes Istanbul as the location of joy, peace, and beauty. Although the time span that the book covers between 1922 and 1938 is the post-World War One period, it provides valuable hints about the Ottoman Istanbulite intellectuals' perception to the life and the people in the former Ottoman

⁵⁶ Ibid., 208.

periphery.⁵⁷ Refik Halid flatters Istanbul as the symbol of beauty and proper life. He was in exile in Beirut between 1922 and 1938 and attributes to all drawbacks of the exile to being away from Istanbul. Refik Halid narrates the stories based on the ‘we’, referring to those who can speak about Istanbul with him, and others, meaning the local Arabs, dichotomy.⁵⁸ For instance, one of the characters familiar with Istanbul is an old friend from law-school and the current governor, and the other one is a prostitute from Istanbul. Talking about Istanbul regardless of the affiliate’s background provides a sanctuary for Refik Halid. Therefore, the components of life deriving from the imperial capital were superior to the periphery.

Furthermore, the Istanbul sceneries and monuments were depicted on the houses and the public buildings in Damascus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵⁹ As Stefan Weber mentions, the Bosphorus was the most depicted scenery, and it was the symbol of Istanbul, like the “Golden Gate Bridge or the Skyline of Manhattan today”.⁶⁰ This trend intensified Istanbul’s imperial center status and its ability to manipulate life and culture in the periphery. Thus, the intellectuals precisely justified the way of living in the periphery in terms of similarity to imperial capital.

⁵⁷Hakan T. Karateke, "How distant is gurbet? Refik Halid's representation of Arabs in Gurbet Hikayeleri -- with a note on Ottoman and Turkish Orientalisms." *Turkish Historical Review* 4, no. 2 (June 2013): 154.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 161.

⁵⁹ Stefan Weber, “Images of Imagined World”, in *The empire in the city : Arab provincial capitals in the late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen,, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber, (Würzburg : Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 156.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 160.

The Formation of the Red Sea in the Late Nineteenth Century

In 1869, the opening of the Suez Canal renders the Yemeni region strategically significant location, the canal made the Red Sea an interimperial borderland. According to Minawi, “as the British and French empires expanded toward to the Ottoman frontiers, the frontiers became interimperial “borderlands”, zones of interaction, like frontiers, where lines blurred and power was contested”.⁶¹ The canal connected the two maritime networks, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and it reduced the distance of the India route between European ports and India.⁶² France and Italy were entangled with the Indian Ocean network, and the Mediterranean ports, Marseilles, Genoa, and Naples, directly connected to the Indian Ocean maritime network.⁶³ Before the construction of the canal, the goods coming from the Indian Ocean had been transported over land caravan routes between the Red Sea Ports to the Mediterranean coast.⁶⁴

The Suez Canal was the breaking point that made the Ottomans able to occupy the Yemeni Highlands.⁶⁵ The canal enabled the Ottomans to dispatch troops more quickly to the region.⁶⁶ Moreover, the opening of the Suez Canal rendered the region an interimperial competition zone, and the Ottoman military aggression in 1872 intended to prevent Italian and British influence deriving from the geopolitical advantages of the canal at the southern frontier of Ottoman Empire.⁶⁷ Kuehn mentions that:

⁶¹ Ibid., 14.

⁶² Colette Dubois, “The Red Sea Ports During Revolution in Transportation, 1800-1914,” in *Modernity and Culture From the Mediterranean the Indian Ocean* ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 59.

⁶³ Kenneth McPherson, “Port Cities as Nodal Points of Change: The Indian Ocean, 1890s – 1920s,” in *Modernity and Culture From the Mediterranean the Indian Ocean* ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 86.

⁶⁴ Dubois, “The Red Sea Ports During Revolution in Transportation, 1800-1914,” 59.

⁶⁵ John Baldry, “Al-Yaman and the Turkish Occupation 1849-1914,” *Arabica* 23, no.2 (Jun., 1976): 167.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 41, 64.

Ottoman expansion in Yemen took place as part of an imperial scramble for strategic positions and resources in the Red Sea region and the Horn of Africa; this scramble pitted Britain, France, semi-independent Egypt, Italy, and the Ottomans against each other in part of a broader global expansion of imperial ambitions. By the late 1880s, the newly-created province of Yemen had turned into the frontier of the Ottoman Empire, where the Ottomans came perhaps most directly into contact with various forms of European colonial rule.⁶⁸

On the other hand, in the Berlin conference, Ottoman Empire joined the Africa scramble as an equal member by signing the treaty of Berlin. The earlier Ottoman expeditions on the Yemeni coast were based on the alliances with the local figures.⁶⁹ In this vein, the Ottoman attempts to strengthen the control on the Yemeni territory were the Ottoman share of the new imperialism took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The ‘new imperialism’ had two main characteristics. These are the geographical expansion and the taking advantage of the technological development in the realm of communication and transportation.⁷⁰ The formation of the Red Sea as an interimperial borderland was the outcome of the new imperialism, and the Ottoman engagement with the interimperial contest in the region was the outcome of the same dynamics. In the Red Sea region, the crucial technical developments were the construction of the Suez Canal, and the improvements in the steamship technologies.

The Red Sea became a geographical concept in the second half of the nineteenth century because of the shifting in the maritime routes deriving from the construction of the

⁶⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁷⁰ Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford Univ.Press, 1981), 129-149.

Suez Canal and the improvements in the steamship technologies. In the Ottoman documents, *Bahr-ı Ahmer*, Red Sea, became the distinct geographical concept after the mid-nineteenth century.⁷¹ Before *Bahr-ı Ahmer*, the various names such as *Bahr- al Suveys*, *Bahr-al Jidde*, *Bahr-ıKulzum*, *Bahr-ı Mekke* for the north as well as *Bahr-ı Muha*, *Bahr-ı Yemen* and *Bahr-ı Habeş* had been used to refer the region.⁷² The difference between the earlier names and the Red Sea is that the earlier names address the particular region of the Red Sea.⁷³ However, the term of the Red Sea refers to whole region between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.⁷⁴ Indeed, the concept of *Bahr-ı Ahmer* was well entangled with the maritime networks in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.⁷⁵ According to Wick, the shift in the Ottoman nomenclature of the region was the reflection of the changes in the Ottoman mindset about the imperial ability to the control on the region.⁷⁶ The earlier names reflect the imperial entanglement with the various indigenous maritime routes, and the concept of the *Bahr-ı Ahmer* refers to “the absolute and homogenous space”.⁷⁷ The changing mindset suggests that the Ottoman expansion in the Yemeni territory in 1872 was a part of the formation of the Red Sea as an interimperial borderland. As I shall discuss in the third section, the late Ottoman Istanbul based intellectuals’ attitude to the Ottoman presence in the region implies that the Ottoman administration was perceived as an aggressive imperialist move that was akin to the European colonial intervention deriving from the ‘new imperialist’ phenomenon.

The gradual development of the steamship technology reformed the Red Sea maritime network. Colette Dubois clusters the steamship developments into the three phases, the first phase between 1800 and 1860, the second phase between 1860 and 1880.⁷⁸ Dubois defines

⁷¹ Alexis Wick, *The Red Sea in Search of Lost Space*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 85.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 127.

⁷⁸ Dubois, “The Red Sea Ports During Revolution in Transportation, 1800-1914,” 58-74.

the third phase as “European colonial innovations” starting from the early 1880s.⁷⁹ In the first phase the steam engines were used along with the conventional sailing; their range was limited; they had insufficient cargo capacity; and they were still fragile to the harsh weather conditions.⁸⁰ Thus, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the steamship’s effects on the Red Sea maritime network were limited.⁸¹ In second phase, one of the most important developments was the extended range that a steamship could cruise without refilling its coal storage.⁸² The extension of the range resulted in that the ports in the southern margin of the Red Sea became more important at the expense of the ports in the midway of the north-south axes of the Red Sea maritime network.⁸³ For example, in the earlier times, the steamships had needed to stop at the Jiddah port that was in middle of the Red Sea north-south axis, but the more developed steamships could cruise from the northern margin of the Red Sea to Aden depot.⁸⁴ In this vein, whereas Aden turned into more prosperous port, Jiddah dramatically lost its share in the Red Sea maritime network.⁸⁵ Equally important, Hodeida in the Yemeni territory and Masawa in African coast turned into the strategically important ports in southern margin of the Red Sea.⁸⁶ Moreover, the developments in the third phase stimulated the flourishing of new port cities in the Red Sea maritime network. Dubois mentions that “Steamships, which by 1880 exceeded 5000 tons, needed deep harbors, accessible day and night, far from dangerous coral reefs”.⁸⁷ European colonial forces began to more aggressive search for the harbors that were suitable for the steamship maritime traffic.⁸⁸ The Italians

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 64.

⁸³ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 65.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

modified the infrastructure of the Masawa port, and constructed a new port in Assab; Britain constructed the Port Sudan; and France built Djibouti.⁸⁹

The European colonial intervention did not only distort the maritime network of the Red Sea, but also the European investment on the port infrastructures created the flourishing urban life around the newly developed ports. Dubois mentions that “Freed of dependence on the seasonal winds, these ships now were dependent instead on the availability of expensive port infrastructure”.⁹⁰ The ports were equipped with the new warehouses and specific cargo handling technologies.⁹¹ Also, the great hotels, banks, modern business houses, educational, cultural and medical services as well as railroads, and telegraphs synchronously developed.⁹² Dubois describe these ports’ characteristics as “essentially transshipment or transit points for vessels on long – haul voyages”, and “centers of European political and military power; Aden, Massawa, and Djibouti, which were both centers of colonial administration and served a relatively impoverished hinterland. Port Said was almost a category of its own, as it serviced both its Egyptian hinterland and vessels passing through the Suez Canal to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean”.⁹³

How did Ottoman Intellectuals perceive the Ottoman presence in Yemen surrounded by the European Colonial administrations? – Locating the Yemen in the Ottoman intellectual mind.

In the context of the colonial expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the references to the European colonial administrations in the writings about the

⁸⁹ Ibid., 69.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 68.

⁹¹ Ibid., 69.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

Yemen suggest that the Ottoman presence in Yemen comparable with the European colonial settlements that were founded as a result of the formation of Red Sea. The authors employed references to the British administration in Aden and Italian administration in Masawa to illustrate the discrepancy between the milieu in the Ottoman Yemen and the milieu in Aden and Masawa. In the article *İslam Cemaatleri'nin Yaşayışı: Yemen'in Muhtasaran Ahvâl-i Coğrafi ve Tabi'iyyesi*, Islamic Communities' Way of Living: the Geographic and Natural Condition of Yemen in Brief, published in the *İslam Mecmuası*, Islam Magazine, in 1914, Konur Alp mentions that the difference of the urban development between the Yemen and colonies, Aden and Masawa, was huge.⁹⁴ According to him, the natural conditions in the coast of Yemen were much more beautiful available for life relatively to the coast of Africa.⁹⁵ He addresses high number of the ships that was visiting the ports, Port Sudan, Masawa, and Djibuti; the urban structures in the Africa coast, for example the ports, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, ice and water factories, barracks as well as the telegraph networks.⁹⁶ He complains about the absence of the urban components such as hotel, restaurant, and infrastructure to supply water and ice in the Ottoman Yemeni territories.⁹⁷ He describes polices applied by the Britain, Italy, and France just after the occupations around the Ottoman Yemen.⁹⁸ From Konur Alp's perspective, Britain, Italy, and France immediately surveyed the occupied

⁹⁴İslâm Cemaatlerinin Yaşayışı: Yemen'in Muhtasaran Ahvâl-i Coğrafi ve Tabi'iyyesi (Islamic Communities' Way of Living: the Geographic and Natural Condition of Yemen in Brief) by Konur Alp published in *İslam Mecmuası* in 1914 (1330)

⁹⁵ “Tabiaten Yemen sahili Afrika Sahiline nisbetle daha latif daha ziyade şeriyati hayatiyeye camidir. Lakin İbgiliz İtalyan, Fransız ellerinde bulunan bu sahilin Port Sudan, Masava, Cibuti limanlarında yevmi uğrayan vapurların adedine, rıhtımlarına, hastahanelerine, lokantalarına, otellerine, su ve buz fabrikalarına kışlarına her gün kuru erzak her her noktasındaki hadisye agah olabilmek için tesis edilen telsiz telgraf istasyonlarına, insanlardaki faaliyete ibret ve hayretle bakdıktan sonra tabiyatle yaşamaya daha müsaid olan bizim sahlimizde ne barınabilecek bir otel, ne karnınızı doyurabilecek bir lokanta, ne hararetinizi teskin edebilecek bie buz parçası bulabilirsiniz. Evet, İngilizler, İtalyanlar, Fransızlar bu sahili ele geçirir geçirmez derhal gezdiler, tetkik etdiler. Gördüklerini olduğu gibi yazdılar, anlatdılar esbab-ı terakki ve refahın nelerden ibaret olabileceğini hakikatiyle meydana koydular. Durup dinlenmeden çalışdılar, Birkaç sene içinde muradlarına erdiler, istedikleri ümran ve medeniyeti vucüda getirdiler. Bu zamana kadar sarf etdikleri para ve imkanların mükafatını mâ ziyade gördüler”

Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

territories, and analyzed the data.⁹⁹ Also, he emphasizes that the European colonial powers discussed the possible solution for the wealth and progress in their administration around Yemen.¹⁰⁰ Eventually, Konur Alp mentions that they gained the benefits of their investments, and he suggests that the Ottoman Empire needed to follow the European powers' practices in the East coast of Africa to build efficient administration in Yemen.¹⁰¹

Yemen'de Ömr-i Güzâr Olan Memurlar ve "Hadide", Officers who Spent their Life in Yemen and "Hadide", was written by Oğuz Arslan and published in *İctihad* on 12 May 1913.¹⁰² There are two prominent points in Oğuz Arslan's text. These are the insufficient service of the imperial officers who was on duty in Yemen. Secondly, Arslan emphasizes lack of the sufficient port infrastructure.¹⁰³ According to him, the imperial center needed to make particular arrangements for the time span and payment of the officers appointed to Yemen in order to provide efficient administration in the region.¹⁰⁴ The center needed to appoint small group of the more talented officers with higher payment instead of the high number of average officers with average amount of payment.¹⁰⁵ He argues that the untalented officers' ill treatment to the indigenous people might result in that the indigenous people might approach the rival colonial powers in the region for better administration.¹⁰⁶ He refers the formation of the Italian rule in Masawa to illustrate his argument, and he suggests that Egyptians lost the authority on the Masawa to Italians because of the poor administration

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² *Yemen'de Ömr-i Güzâr Olan Memurlar ve "Hadide"* (Officers who Spent their Life in Yemen and "Hadide") by Oğuz Arslan published in *İctihad* in 1913 (1329)

¹⁰³ "Zavallı memleket iskeleti sen, üç yüz elli beş seneden beri Osmanlı bayrağı altında yaşadığın halde, aburlarla, vapurlarla gelen askeri çıkaracak bir rıhtıma, beraye seyahat ve vazife hergün vurud eden binlerce yolcu, seyyah ve mamurini çıkaracak bir iskeleye ve bu yolcuları ikame edecek bir han veya bir otele, günlerce Günlerce ve bazen haftalarca ve aylarca temadi eden yolculukdan sonra sersem, yorgun ve hasta bir halde olarak birer birer arabaların sırtlarında çıkarılan askerleri, o bi çare vatan müdafilerini, saye himayesine alacak kışlaya, bir depoya bile malik değilsen !."

¹⁰⁴ Birî, her memuru iki seneden fazla Yemen'de tutmamak ... (1) Diğeride, mesela bin kuruş maaşla âley âlt'yn, Üç mamur gönderip üçünden istifade edilemeyeceğine ve bi elnetice ademi hoşnutiyeyi celbe vesilerle ihdar edilmiş olacağına üç bin [2] kuruşla aklı başında ,müntehib bir memur göndermek Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

deriving from the untalented officers.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Oğuz Arslan proposes that none of the officers work more than two years in Yemen, because the officers coming out of Yemen could not cope with the harsh weather and poor living conditions.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, he compares the arrangements made by the Italian and British administrations to provide their officers the proper living conditions.¹⁰⁹

In the articles, *Hindistan ve Yemen* and *Yemen için Bir Kelime*, written by Abdullah Cevdet and published in *İctihad* in 1911, discuss the Ottoman imperial administration under the similar category with the British rule in Aden.¹¹⁰ Abdullah Cevdet wrote *Hindistan ve Yemen* (India and Yemen) as preface for the book, *Yemen Tarihi, İktisadi, and İctimai*, (Historical, Economic and Social Yemen) written by the former health inspector of Yemen, Doktor İsmail İbrahim Bey, and published in 1911, and Abdullah Cevdet published the text in the *İctihad* on 7 November 1911.¹¹¹ Abdullah Cevdet addresses the Ottoman financial and human losses caused by unrest in Yemen.¹¹² Also, he mentions Britain's expenses and benefits in India, and he compares Ottoman loss and gain in Yemen with that of Britain in India.¹¹³ On the other hand, Abdullah Cevdet defines the India as the Yemen of England to illustrate that Ottoman Empire's financial and human losses were futile.¹¹⁴ Moreover, in *Yemen için Bir Kelime* (A Word for Yemen) published in *İctihad* on 15 June 1911, Abdullah Cevdet excoriates that the imperial center for appointing the untalented and undisciplined

¹⁰⁷“Aksi takdirde “Masavanın” dünkü [3] tarihini bu gün göz önünden dur tutmamak mecburiyetindeyiz zannediyorum !!!” Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ “Kendi ülkemizin tarafında bulunan bu ingiliz ve italyan idarelerindeki memleketlerde yaşayan mamureynin kafa ihtiyacat ve istirahatları nasıl tehvin ve temin edilmiş tarzı güzaranı hayatları tedkik olunmuş gözetilmişse , bizimkilerde o derecede unutulmuş , hatta temin-i istirahatleri uğrunda hiç bir şey düşünülmemiştir !” Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *Hindistan ve Yemen* (India and Yemen) by Abdullah Cevdet published in *İctihad* in 1911 (1327)

¹¹¹ *Yeni Kitaplar : Darwinizm, Tıbbiye Hayatı, Yemen, Şehbal, Erganon* (New Books: Darwinism, Life in the Medical School, Şehbal, Erganon) published in *İctihad* in 1911 (1327)

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ “İngiltere'nin bir (Yemen)i var ki (hindistan)dır. Hindistan'da 295, 613,000 nüfus var, bunlar 25000 ingilizin tahtı idaresindedir. İngiltere 1830 tarihinden 1852 tarihine kadar hindistan'dan 37 milyar 500 milyon frank ingiltereye çekmiştir. 1830 ile 1852 tarihlerinde ise bugünkü hindistan ingilizin bir selasi [üçte bir] meftuh idi. (Yemen) i huzur-u alem ve mülehazamıza takdim eden bu kitab için şu birkaç rakamın belagati feciyesi münasib ve kafi dibacdır (önsöz) itikatındayım.” Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

officers to Yemen.¹¹⁵ According to him, the British government sent the best officers to Aden, and he suggests that the Ottoman center needed to be inspired by the neighboring administration, British Aden.¹¹⁶ The references to the British Indian administration imply that in the Abdullah Cevdet's mind, the Ottoman presence in Yemen was similar to the British colonial rule in India.

Connection / Entanglement

Yemen's connections with the surrounding region were conclusive the late Ottoman intellectuals' perception of the Ottoman presence in the region. Yemen's particularity in the Ottoman imperial system stemmed from its entanglement with the European colonial administrations around the Ottoman Yemen. Yemen's entanglement with regional trade network is seen on the documents about the discussions about the currency used in the region. In 1906, the director of the Yemen Inspection Committee, Ferik Muhammed Ferid bin Said, sent a report to the capital.¹¹⁷ In the report, he refers that the currency used in the trade between eastern coast of Africa and Yemen for ages was the Riyal.¹¹⁸ Whereas the Riyal import to Yemen was forbidden, the Yemen's trade connection with surrounding region was intense and the maritime traffic was crowded.¹¹⁹ All trade operations employed the Riyal as currency, and the intensity of trade make the restrictions about usage of Riyal

¹¹⁵ Yemen İçin Bir Kelime (A Word for Yemen) by Abdullah Cevdet published in *İctihad* in 1911 (1327)

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ T. C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Yemen* (İstanbul, 2008), 71. This book is an collection of the Archival documents and the documents' transcription. The book was published by the Republic of Turkey Archive of Prime Ministry, and the documents in the book were selected from the collection of Turkish Prime Ministry Archive.

¹¹⁸ "Yemen Vilâyet-i şâhaneşîyle Afrika'nın sevâhil-i şarkîyesindeki her nev' ticaret asırlardan beri ahalinin bir alışıklık beliiyesiyle riyal denilen ve hemen cümleten Triyeste'de darb olunup bu havaliye dağıdılan bir nev' gümüş para ile icra olunmaktadır", Ibid., 72.

¹¹⁹ "Eğer ki meskûkat-I Osmaniye'nin Memâlik-I Osmaniyye'de tedavülü bi'l-cümle tebaa-i şehriyârînin merkez-i hilâfet-i uzmâya merbûtiyet-i maddiye ve maneviyesinin idâmesi maksadıyla riyalin bu havaliye duhûlü memnû ise de bu kıt'aya civar mevkiin ticareti öteden beri riyal üzere cereyân ettiği ve sevâhil-i Osmaniyye'nin pek vüs'atlı bulunmasıyla her an birçok merakîb-i sağıre-i bahriyenin âmed-şüdü tamamıyla bu memnû'iyeti muhafazaya imkân bırakmamaktadır", Ibid.

unsustainable.¹²⁰ The director recommends the imperial center to liberate the usage of Riyal with the particular tax policy to prevent the deficiency in the empire's tax revenue.¹²¹ Also, the director addresses that the British in Aden and Italians in Masawa experienced similar difficulties.¹²² The location of the Yemen in the minds of the intellectuals derived from the entanglement of the region with the surrounding region.

Yemen was the communication hub between the imperial center and the east African coast. The article, *Yemen ve Somali Ahvali* (the Situation of Somali and Yemen), published in 1911, expresses the developments in Yemen and African coast as a whole.¹²³ In *Sebilü'r-Reşad*, Eşref Edib published the telegram sent by the deputy of Yemen, Seyyid Ahmed el Kebsi. The telegraph addresses the two issues. Firstly, the deputy mentions the military campaign, organized by the allied forces of the Ottoman Army and Imam Yahya, against the Idris.¹²⁴ Secondly, Seyyid Ahmed refers to a letter sent him from Aden is about the uprising mobilized by a local sheikh in Somalia against the Italian forces.¹²⁵ It is stated that Italians collaborate with the Idrisi forces to damage the Ottoman authority in Yemen.¹²⁶ Indeed, the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² “Acizâne olarak yapılan tedkikât-I amîka neticesinde ise Aden’de İngilizler, Masua’da İtalyanlar birçok seneler aynı zarara ma’rûz kalarak hatta İtalyahılar Mevcud riyal kıymetini tağyir etmeksizin yalnız üzerine bir İtalya armasını darb ederek kendilerince mevki’-i tedavüle çıkarttıkları bir nev’ riyalin revâcını ahalinin alışıklık ve ticaretçe eski riyalin vâhid-i kıyası addolunması ve bir tarafdanda kaçağınönünü almaya kat’iyyen muvaffak olamaması sebepleriyle zaten huliyât sırasında dahil-i memâlikle giren riyalin nihayet mürûruna müsaade ve yalnız nisbet-i mahsusada bir resm almakla şu mesele-i iktisadiyeyi esasen halle muvaffak olabilmışlerdir. Fi’l-hakika hukuk-ı hükümrâni-i hazret-i Hilafet-penâh-ı a’zamîye zerre kadar münâfi görülen ahvâl uğrunda her nev’ fedakârlık ihtiyarı şerâit-i esâsiye icabından olmakla beraber ahalinin asırlardan beri alıştığı şu hâlin men’-i pek büyük masâıfa muhtac olub huliyât sırasında dahi Kabul olunmasında devletçe bir güne mahzur mutasavver olmadığı gibi tebaa-i şahanenin ve Hükûmet-i Seniyye’nin milyonlarla kuruş zararına ve bu zarar-ı maddiyle hâsıl olacak ve asayiş-i memlekete ta’alluk edecek ahvâle nihayet verilmek üzere bir tedbir-i sâib ittihâzı cümle-i vecîbe-i memlûkiyet ve ubûdiyetdendir”, Ibid., 73.

¹²³ Somali ve Yemen Ahvali (the Situation of Somali and Yemen) by Eşref Edib in Sırat-ı Müstakim [Sebilü'r-Reşad] in 1911 (1327).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

letter describes the uprising against the Italians in Djibouti and Somali as the response of the Islamic world to the Italian intervention to the Yemen.¹²⁷

Yemen ve Somali Ahvali points to the two aspects of the intellectual perception to Yemen in the imperial center. Firstly, the region of Yemen was connected with the east coast of Africa. Secondly, Yemen was the zone of the interimperial interactions. In this case, Ottoman Empire got interacted with Britain through Aden, because Aden was the British colony. Also, the Ottoman Empire interacted with Italian colonial forces in east Africa via Yemen. Therefore, the intimate interimperial interaction and relation with the European African colonies distinguish the Yemen from the rest of the empire. On the other hand, the metaphorical distance between the capital and Yemen is similar to that of Somali and Istanbul.

In the Ottoman press, Yemen was the distant region with which the government could not maintain communication. In 1910, *Sebîlü'r-Reşad* refers to an article published in a French newspaper, and the news mentions an uprising in Yemen against Ottoman administration.¹²⁸ Also, Eşref Edib quoted news pertaining to the Yemen news in the French newspaper published in an Ottoman newspaper.¹²⁹ The news in the Ottoman newspaper asks the claims about the situation in Yemen to the Ottoman Ministry of Interior Affairs.¹³⁰ The ministry was unable to express valid information about the current situation in Yemen, and the ministry officer neglects the claims about the social unrest.¹³¹ In the article, Eşref Edib criticized the government's inability to get valid information about the current situation in the Yemen.¹³² Therefore, the depiction of the Yemen in the Ottoman press is that Yemen was the region out of the imperial administrative network.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Yemen'de ve Irak'ta (in Yemen and Iraq) by Eşref Edib in Sırat-ı Müstakim [Sebîlü'r-Reşad] in 1910 (1326).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

Chapter-2 Ottoman Islamic Mindset in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century = Caliphal territory

In this chapter, I discuss the formation of the caliphate office in the Ottoman administration in Yemen. In the first section, I argue that the Ottoman caliphate's legal authority shaped the Ottoman core Islamic land, and the formation of the Ottoman Caliphate as an colonial instutiton in terms of the anomaly legal territories in Yemen in terms of the entanglement of regional Zaydi sovereignty to the Ottoman Caliphate with the *Da'an* agreement. In the second section, I assert that the Istanbul based intellectuals perceived the Ottoman caliphate authority in Yemen as a colonial administration akin to Italian and British colonies in the surrounding region of the Ottoman Yemen. In the third section, I trace the imperial fragments in the post-Great War former Ottoman territories, both Turkey and Yemen.

The late Ottoman imperial Islam was a part of the broader forms of the imperial state mechanism. Selim Deringil defines the Ottoman citizenry that stem from the attempts to create unified Ottoman subjecthoods the proto nationalism of the Ottoman, Turkish, and Islamic empires.¹³³ Deringil states that “the Ottoman statesmen of the late nineteenth century thus came to envisage a sort of ‘Imperial supranationalism’ in the form of ‘Ottomanism’ that gained Islamic characteristics during the reign of Abdulhamid II”.¹³⁴ According to Deringil, the secularized Ottoman imperial Islam was a component of establishment of the imperial tradition such as the coat of arms, *Arma-i Osmani*, the anthem and the sultan's public Friday prayer ceremony.¹³⁵ He mentions that “the Islamism of Abdulhamid II was in many ways a new creation; although the motifs and style of state ideology were Islamic, much of his policy

¹³³ Selim Deringil, *The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908, Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Jan., 1993), 4.

¹³⁴ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 46.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-12.

stemmed from secular considerations aimed at the secular ends of retrenchment and last-ditch defense.”¹³⁶ Although the formation of the imperial modernized Islam took place in pre-1908, the post-1908 intellectuals were educated in the imperial schools that taught based on the imperial modernized Islamic mindset. In this vein, I think that the post-1908 arguments about the Imperial Islam are instructive to understand the usage of Islam as the administrative tool in the modernization process. The empire wide education and justice were the two main state affairs that reflected the imperial Islamic mindset.

During the reign of Abdulhamid II, the sultan, bureaucrats and intellectuals recharged and redefined “basic Islamic institutions, namely the Sharia and caliphate, as the basis of the quest for a new imperial/national identity”.¹³⁷ The Hamidian imperial Islamic teaching an attempt to set an empire wide Islamic orthodoxy based on the Hanafi sect.¹³⁸ The imperial center’s the propagation of the Hanafi sect of Islam was an imperialist attempt. The imperial administration targeted the group of the Ottoman subjects who were Yezidis and Alevis to convert them to Hanafi sect of Islam. According to the Hamidian regime, the non – Hanefi groups of Muslims and the religions other than the *Ehl-i kitap* were rural ignorant people, and their beliefs were needed to be corrected (the term ‘correction of beliefs’ would become something of a watchword in the Hamidian regime.)”.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the belief correction was a way to defend the imperial sovereignty against the operation of the foreign missionaries in the Ottoman land. The American missionaries targeted the *Nusayris* and *Kızılbaşs* to convert.¹⁴⁰ The unorthodox communities agreed to be converted to seek better treatment, and the better treatment refers to accession to the better education, better health

¹³⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 48.

¹³⁹ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 40, 49.

¹⁴⁰ Zeynep Türkyılmaz, “Anxieties of conversion: missionaries, state and heterodox communities in the late Ottoman Empire” (Doctoral Dissertation, UCLA 2009), 148 – 262.

care and the connection to the worldwide network.¹⁴¹ Conscription was one of them, and the *Kızılbaş*s announce their conversion to the Protestantism to circumvent conscription.¹⁴² In this vein, the Ottoman caliphate represented the particular way of Islam, and the Islamic teachings that did not stem from the imperial teaching were not a part of the Ottoman core Islamic society. The conversion of the unorthodox subjects to the Hanafism became the expansion of the Ottoman Sultan Caliph's legal territory. The community leaders blamed their rival sheiks' blasphemy against the imperial sharia to attract the imperial officers' attention.¹⁴³ The status of the entanglement with the sharia changed the status of the subjects, and it forged the subordination to the Ottoman Sultan caliph's authority deriving from the Ottoman imperial sharia.

Furthermore, the *Medheb* issue determined the Ottoman Sultan Caliph's sovereignty rights. Between 1905 and 1912, the Ottoman forces occupied northwestern Persia inhabited by the Sunni Kurdish tribes.¹⁴⁴ The Hamidian administration began the occupation, and the C.U.P. government carried on based on the similar discourses.¹⁴⁵ The Ottoman administration pleaded the Shia suppression on the Sunni Kurdish tribes.¹⁴⁶ It is known that the Ottoman occupation was a countermove against the Russian presence in the region.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the Ottoman Sultan Caliph legitimized its expansionist move based on its sovereignty on the Sunni subjects.

Justice

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 225.

¹⁴² Ibid., 243.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 252.

¹⁴⁴ Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary ; 1843 - 1914* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013), 229-281.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 232.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

The legal aspect of the late nineteenth century Ottoman Islam was the *Mecelle* that was the ‘Ottomanization of Şeriat’.¹⁴⁸ The imperial attempts to standardize judicial matters were the demarcation of the Ottoman Caliph’s imperial authority. The origin of the Sharia was the notstandarized personal interpretation of the religious scholars.¹⁴⁹ Thus, it was the part of the attempt to create an empire wide unified legal system.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, *Mecelle* was translated and circulating under the title of “Ottoman civil law”.¹⁵¹ There were two important characteristics of the *Mecelle* that attribute the expansion of the imperial sovereignty. The Ottoman center intended to prevent the European intervention into the Ottoman subjects’ legal issues as a result of the insufficiency of the Ottoman justice system.¹⁵² Unlike the Islamic Sharia texts written in Arabic, the *Mecelle* was written in Ottoman Turkish.¹⁵³ It derived from the Hanafi Jurisprudence, but it was the outcome of the imperial center’s intention to extend its political boundaries on the Islamic jurisprudence in the imperial territory.

The Ottomanized Islam was a significant tool for the late imperialist policies, and the education policies were one of the main stages to perform imperial Islam. The imperial education, also, is a feasible research zone to comparatively study the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century imperial formation. First of all, the Ottoman empire-wide school project in the reign of Abdulhamid II was imported from the French school system.¹⁵⁴ However, the French school system was not directly imitated in the imperial territories. Benjamin Fortna points out that the Ottoman imperial administration adjusted the French

¹⁴⁸ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 50.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 53.

¹⁵¹ Samy Ayoub, “The *Mecelle*, Sharia, and the Ottoman State Fashioning and Refashioning of Islamic Law in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in *Law and Legality in the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey* ed. Kent F. Schull, M. Safa Saraçoğlu, and Robert Zens (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 132.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15.

school system in respect of Ottoman imperial administrative concerns regarding the Ottoman society on the ethnic and religious components.¹⁵⁵ The Ottoman modifications on the imported French school system suggest that the French system was filtered through the Ottoman capital. According to Fortna, the easiest way to Ottomanize the imported western style curriculum was to insert the moral lessons.¹⁵⁶ The moral lessons in the curriculum were the symbol of the imperial modernized Islam in the imperial education, so they were one of the most remarkable Ottoman modifications on the French school system. The moral lessons consisted of the moral stories from the prophet's biography, and the stories were selected by the commission that was led by the *şeyhülislam*.¹⁵⁷ *Şeyhülislam* was the highest religious authority in the imperial bureaucracy, so the imperial school became the circulator of the official modernized Islam as the official Ottoman imperial ideology. The purpose of the lessons, designed based on the imperial Islam, was to cultivate decent citizens. Thus, the moral lessons reflect the recipient capital's prudent processing the imported western modernity elements.

The Tribal School, *Aşiret Mektebi*, is a remarkable example for the formation of imperial ideology. *Aşiret Mektebi* case reveals that the Ottoman imperial center imported modern imperial ideas modified them and put the modified imperial ideas into action in the different forms in respect of the Empire's administrative concerns. *Aşiret Mektebi* was the imperial school opened in Istanbul in 1892, and the target student group of the school was the sons of the leading tribal notables in the imperial territory such as the Arab peninsula, the Kurdish region, and Libya.¹⁵⁸ The purpose of the school was described as:

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 207.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 214.

¹⁵⁸ Eugene L. Rogan, *Asiret Mektebi: Abdulhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), 86.

To enable the tribal people to partake in? the prosperity that emanates from knowledge and civilization, and to further augment their well-known natural inclination towards and love for the Great Islamic Caliphate, and The Sublime Ottoman Sultanate as well as to strength and confirm earnest loyalty to the state and religious duties incumbent on them by the *Şeriat* and Civil Laws.¹⁵⁹

In other words, Rogan mentions that turning the tribesmen into the functional Ottoman gentlemen that could be employed in the Imperial Military and Civil service in their homelands.¹⁶⁰ The curriculum taught in the Tribal School was same as the one that taught in the rest of the imperial schools.¹⁶¹ Some of the *Aşiret Mektebi* graduates continued their imperial education in the Imperial Military Academy and Imperial Civil Service Academy.¹⁶²

The *Aşiret Mektebi* case reflects the two layers recipient capital modifications on the imported modern imperial practices. Firstly, the imperial ideology, imperial Islam, was taught in the *Aşiret Mektebi*, so the marginal members of the Ottoman society were educated in respect to the standardized Islam that was the amalgamation of the borrowed positivist ideas and traditional Islamic teaching. Besides the ideological aspect, the *Aşiret Mektebi* was a part of the Ottomanized French school system, and *Aşiret Mektebi* gained an administrative function different from rest of the imperial schools. The Ottoman center intended to absorb the marginal social organizations into the central governance by educating them in the imported and modified school structure with the borrowed and modified curriculum in the Ottoman center. Therefore, from Stoler's imperial formation perspective, *Aşiret Mektebi* is an example of the multi-dimensional and multi-directional imperial modernization process.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 87.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 95.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 91.

¹⁶² Ibid., 95

Claim for universal spiritual sovereignty

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Ottoman Sultan Caliph claimed universal spiritual sovereignty. There are two kinds of pan Islamic teaching pertaining to the Ottoman Empire. These are the Ottoman Empire's state policy and the notion suggesting the unification around the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶³ The interimperial aspect of the Hamidian state pan-Islamism was inspired by the "Russian, French, and British interventions in the political affairs of Ottoman Christian subjects".¹⁶⁴ The purpose of Abdulhamid II's spiritual sovereignty over the world wide Muslims was to enhance the diplomatic cooperation with the rival empires.¹⁶⁵ The Hamidian pan-Islamist policies were peaceful towards the rival empires' sovereignty, and the Hamidian regime propagated the dual loyalty to the metropolitan empire and Caliph.¹⁶⁶ Aydın mentions that "Sultan Abdulhamid's promotion Ottoman spiritual sovereignty over the *ummah*, alongside British temporal sovereignty solidified the imagination of a geopolitical Muslim world in the age of high imperialism".¹⁶⁷ The figure of the Caliphate turned into an institution that connected the Ottoman imperial authority beyond the immediate circle of the Ottoman Sultan Caliph.

The Hamidian policies to reach the Muslim communities beyond the imperial borders made Istanbul, the Ottoman imperial capital, the spiritual and intellectual hub of the nascent worldwide Muslim community.¹⁶⁸ The impression of caliphate was, also, a political instrument for imperial expansion. After the empire had lost large parts of Balkan territories, the impression of caliphate originating in Istanbul, the Ottoman imperial center, became the spiritual and intellectual connection between the Muslim populations in the Balkans and the

¹⁶³ Adeeb Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in Practice the Rhetoric of Muslim Unity and its Uses," in *Late Ottoman Society the Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 203.

¹⁶⁴ Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England: Harvard University Press, 2017), 91.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 97.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 91.

imperial center. Modernized Islam became a tool for Istanbul to maintain the imperial influence on the Muslim populations in the former Ottoman Balkan territories. The *şeyhülislam* was confirmed as the guide and protector for the Bosnian Muslims after the Austria-Hungary occupation in 1908.¹⁶⁹ Also, Leyla Amzi - Erdogdular mentions that the Bosnian *ulema* became more influential figures during the Bosnian modernization process under the Austria-Hungary rule thanks to *şeyhülislam* confirmation.¹⁷⁰ As mentioned above, the *şeyhülislam* was the symbol of the Ottoman imperial religion. Indeed, in the case of the connection between the Bosnian Muslims and the Ottoman imperial center, his religious guidance role suggests that the Ottoman center continued to impose the Ottoman official religion: via the caliphate.

Furthermore, Committee of Union and Progress, or C.U.P¹⁷¹., the impression of caliphate discourse to impress the Muslim population living in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Albania in the 1910s. The C.U.P. administration sponsored the publication of the newspaper, *Balkan*, in Bulgaria, and it propagated the modernist Muslim education in respect to the Ottoman imperial modernized Islam ideology.¹⁷² Ayşe Yılmaz claims that Ottoman Empire maintained its influence in the life of the Muslim population and Bulgarian politics as the spiritual homeland of the Muslims living in Bulgaria.¹⁷³ The spiritual homeland status of the Ottoman imperial center in the mind of the Balkan Muslim population derived from the intellectual connection with the Ottoman imperial modernized Islam, because the imperial Islam provided the ideological weapon to Balkan Muslims. Yılmaz argues that education was the unity of national and religious community and source for the social progress, political

¹⁶⁹ Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular, "Alternative Muslim Modernities: Bosnian Intellectuals in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2017, 59(4), 933.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, İttihād ve Teraqqī Cem'iyeti) emerged as the dominant political organization in the Ottoman Empire when Sultan Abdülhamid II ('Abd al-Hamid II, r. 1293–1327/1876–1909) restored the constitution in July 1908.

¹⁷² Ayşe Feride Yılmaz, "The Ottoman *Balkan* Gazette as an Agent of Empire within the Bulgarian Nation State, 1910-1911" (master's thesis, Central European University, 2013), 3.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 4.

empowerment, and survival of the community.¹⁷⁴ The ideological weapon helped the Muslims to reconcile their identity and the post-Ottoman rulers' modernizing policies. Therefore, the Ottoman imperial modernized Islam became a tool for Ottoman Empire to intervene in the governance in the lost European territories and to compete with the rival empires and newly emerged nation states that took control of the former Ottoman territories.

Also, the Ottoman imperial modernized Islam made Istanbul an Islamic intellectual hub that allowed the Ottoman imperial center to impress the Muslim communities living beyond Ottoman borders in rival empires. The student network of the *Özbekler Tekkesi*, that was the Naqshbandi *tekke*, founded and operated by the Bukharan community in Istanbul, provides a remarkable example. The Bukharan elites sent their children to Istanbul for higher education rather than Persia.¹⁷⁵ Although the native language in Persia was similar to that of Bukhara, Bukharan elites preferred Istanbul for the sons' higher education.¹⁷⁶ According to Adeeb Khalid, this was because the Ottoman imperial center was offering them the modern western style education that was designed based on the imperial modernized Islam.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, the Ottoman center became the hub for the worldwide Muslim communication. The editors of the *Balkan* newspaper, supported by the Ottoman imperial administration, claimed that the newspaper was connecting the Balkan Muslim community to the rest of the world as far as India and New York.¹⁷⁸ Thus, the *Balkan* newspaper that was the mass media organization, getting formed based on the Ottoman imperial modernized Islam ideology, became the filter that channeled the knowledge flow among the worldwide Muslim communities. Istanbul also became the center of the Islamic world in the mind of the post-Ottoman Bosnian Muslim community, due to Ottoman imperial modernized Islam that "was

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 63.

¹⁷⁵ Adeeb Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in practice," 215.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ayşe Feride Yılmaz, "The Ottoman Balkan Gazette as an Agent of Empire within the Bulgarian Nation State, 1910-1911", 33.

one way to reconcile Muslim identity with ideas of modernity”.¹⁷⁹ Thus, the Ottoman imperial modernized Islam refers to Stoler’s idea that suggests the multi-directional aspect of the imperial formation. The western style modernization was processed in the Ottoman center, and the imperial center dispatched it to the rest of the world. In addition to the propagation of imperial Islamic teaching, the caliphate figure connects the turmoil experienced by the imperial center to the Muslim communities living out of the Caliphate’s authority. During the Balkan wars, the foreign Muslim aided to the Ottoman side.¹⁸⁰ The aid illustrates that the C.U.P. government took advantage of the spiritual interimperial communal ties forged in the Hamidian administration. In this vein, the C.U.P. employed the Caliphate office’s spiritual sovereignty. As I shall discuss below, the C.U.P.’s political mindset available to employ and endorse the Caliphate figure as an imperial institution in the administration of the Ottoman Yemeni territory. It is known that Committee of Union and Progress, C.U.P., that was the successor of the Hamidian regime, employed the Hamidian Ottomanism in the administration of the Ottoman Arabian peninsula.¹⁸¹ However, the major adjustment by the Young Turk on the Hamidian caliphate mindset was that the post – 1908 government employed the interimperial characteristic of Islamism for the aggressive purposes against the rival empires instead of the intention to maintain peaceful balance of power with the contemporaneous empires. They endorsed the combination of the caliphate’s authority and the Ottoman grand strategy, and it let the institutionalization of the caliphate’s interimperial aggressive character.¹⁸² There are two significant examples that illustrate the Young Turk adjustment on the Caliphate’s interimperial impression. Firstly, the pan – Turkist intellectuals that were migrated from the Russian territories and affiliated with the C.U.P. propagated that the Ottoman caliphate could mobilize the Muslims in the Russian territories

¹⁷⁹ Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular, “Alternative Muslim Modernities: Bosnian Intellectuals in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires,” 938.

¹⁸⁰ Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, 108.

¹⁸¹ Hasan Kayali, “Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918,”

¹⁸² Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, 112-115.

against the Russian imperial authorities without annoying the Britain.¹⁸³ Thus, in the intellectual circle affiliated with the C.U.P. the impression of the caliphate was flexible to be responsive against the mundane interimperial political confrontation. Aydın points out that “pan – Islamism, on this reading, was not in any sense a religious obligation or an internationalist value but rather a demand of *realpolitik*”.¹⁸⁴

Equally important, the alliance with Germany and Jihad declaration reflects the Young Turk adjustment of the universal caliphate impression in respect of their changing political agenda. Aydın describes transformation in the Ottoman policies as “the path from imperial cooperation to the imperial confrontation”.¹⁸⁵ On 14 November 1914, “Ürgüplü Hayri Bey, *şeyhülislam* of the Ottoman Empire, presented Sultan-Caliph Mehmed Resad V with the Sword of the Prophet to sanctify the war against Britain, France and Russia”, and it distinguished the central powers.¹⁸⁶ The *fetva* had two characteristics that made it unique. Firstly, it was *farz-ı ayan* that make the Jihad against the Entente power obligation to the all Muslim.¹⁸⁷ Also, the *fetva* did not specify the target groups; all subjects pertaining to the Entente powers, regardless of civilian or army, were the targets.¹⁸⁸

The British counter propaganda was based on the separation of the overlapping impression Ottoman Sultan and Caliph. The British propaganda disseminate that the secular Ottoman government under the control of “the infidel Germans, not the caliph”, and that “British would honor the institution of the Caliphate”.¹⁸⁹ In the context of the late Ottoman administration in Yemen, the institutionalization of the Ottoman Caliphate office as a colonial institution seems the proper context of the late Ottoman imperial ambitions. The

¹⁸³ Ibid., 104.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 115.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 108.

¹⁸⁶ Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2010), 123.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 124.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, 117.

caliphate office was the imperial institution that could express the Sultan's authority beyond the immediate imperial territory that was ruled by the imperial Islam represented by the Ottoman Caliph. Thus, the British counter propaganda intended to separate the impression of the Sultan Caliph. In the Young Turk administration, the Caliphate office appropriated at the different levels and different dimensions. The universal characteristic of the Ottoman pan – Islamic policy represented by the Caliph made possible to discuss the Ottoman administration in the Yemen under the category of the colonialism. The Ottoman administration in Yemen employed the office of the Caliphate as an imperial institution in the region. The authority of the caliphate was that the Ottoman imperial government could perform beyond the immediate circle of the imperial territory. Thus, the entanglement with the caliphate authority in the *Da'an* Agreement suggests that the Ottoman government distinguished the local administration of the Yemeni territory from the empire wide administrative structure.

***Da'an* Agreement and Anomalous about the Ottoman Caliphate territory**

In 1911, the Italian aggression to Tripoli spread to the south western Arab peninsula. Italians bombed the Ottoman ports, and the Italians granted arms and money to Idris.¹⁹⁰ The Ottoman administration decided to sign an agreement with Imam Yahya to get rid of the one of the threats. In 1911, the *Da'an* agreement granted the Zaydi Imam Yahya the legislative authority. According to agreement, “the imam exercised authority in so far as he nominated the judges who would deal with cases involving members of all sects from the area covered by the agreement according to Zaydi version of Sharia, as well as the presiding judge and members of a court of appeals that would be based in Sana'a”.¹⁹¹ The granted legislative authority to Imam Yahya suggests that the administration of Yemen departed from the immediate imperial Islamic circle represented by the Ottoman Caliphate authority.

¹⁹⁰ Baldry, “Al-Yaman and the Turkish Occupation 1849-1914”.

¹⁹¹ Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 241.

Although the agreement finalized in 1911, the reformation texts with similar contents had been prepared earlier. In 1907, in the wake of the uprising led by Imam Yahya between 1904 and 1907, the Ottoman administration was about to accept Imam Yahya's autonomy demands in the Yemeni highlands if only Imam Yahya would give up his title, "commander of all faithful".¹⁹² Indeed, the imperial center asked Imam Yahya to obey the Ottoman Caliph's spiritual sovereignty to utilize an agreement.¹⁹³ The negotiations kept continue when the regime changed in 1908.¹⁹⁴ Kuehn points out that "the autonomy plan that the grand vizier, Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, proposed in the spring of 1909 envisioned Imam Yahya as a Zaydi Ruler under Ottoman sovereignty".¹⁹⁵ Kuehn and Kayalı suggest that the C.U.P. leader rejected the autonomy plan due the C.U.P's ambition to take the region under the more direct control of the central government.¹⁹⁶ Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa's plan limited Imam Yahya's prospective sovereignty with Zaydi communities, and Imam Yahya rejected plan to seek larger sovereignty in the Yemeni highlands.¹⁹⁷ Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa's zaydi limited plan ostensibly contradicted the Imam Yahya's claim to be "commander of all faithful". In other words, the Ottoman Caliphate's spiritual sovereignty had been on the table between the imperial authorities and Imam Yahya before the *Da'an* agreement. Therefore, the *Da'an* agreement distorted the impression of the empire wide Sultan Caliph, and the agreement distinguished the Yemen from the Ottoman immediate legal territory represented the Ottoman Sultan Caliph

.The Tribal Confederation behind the Imam's Political Power

¹⁹² Ibid., 198, 231.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 235.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 236.

¹⁹⁶ Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 69. Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 237.

¹⁹⁷ Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 242.

The Imamate came from the prominent genealogy, but he did not have political and military power, and the proper Imam had to be a descendant of prophet Muhammad. Imamate's power came from the consolidation of the various tribes. The Ottoman Imperial administration accredited Imam Yahya's regional administrative authority, because Ottomans intended to manipulate the balance of power among the indigenous tribes in favor of Ottoman imperial presence in the region. The Imperial officers, Mustafa Asım and Osman Nuri in late 1870s as well as Mustafa Şevket in 1891, reported that *shayks*, *sayyids*, and *ulama* were the most influential figures on the indigenous population, and the tribal figures' support made the Imam's political moves possible.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, it is known that the alliances among the indigenous tribes were not sectarian. During the uprising between, 1891 and 1892 led by Al-Mansur who was the father of Imam Yahya, the imperial officers pointed out that the rebellions consisted of both Shafi and Zaydi tribes.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, the Ahmed Feyzi who was the governor general of Yemen reported that the rebellion coalition followed a precise political agenda rather than sectarian concerns.²⁰⁰ The political ambitions behind the tribal alliances in Yemen would pave the way for the agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Imam Yahya in 1911.

Al-Mansur died in 1904, and his son Imam Yahya succeeded his father in the same year.²⁰¹ Yahya's claim for Imamate was approved by the consensus of "delegations from a number of great sayyid houses and from the major tribal confederations, Hashid and Bakil".²⁰² In 1904, "Yahya took binding agreements (*qawa'id wa-dawabit*) from the shayks about the conduct of the jihad, stipulating that the weak be protected, looting be controlled,

¹⁹⁸ *shayks*, *sayyids*, and *ulama* were the most influential figures in the tribal fragments of the indigenous social structure. Ibid., 155.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 177.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Willis, *Unmaking North and South*. 115.

²⁰² Ibid.

and any artillery captured be surrendered to the public treasury”.²⁰³ Imam Yahya kept alive the uprising until the Hamidian administration’s negotiation attempts in 1907, and the negotiations failed, as I discuss above.²⁰⁴ As the result of the failure in negotiations, in 1910, Imam Yahya reorganized the military campaign against the Turks, and Sana’a was besieged again.²⁰⁵ In April 1911, imperial center dispatched enforced troops to Yemen, and the Ottoman forces saved the city.²⁰⁶ In the meantime, in 1911, the war between Italy and Ottoman Empire in Tripoli broke out, and the Ottoman and Italian rivalry had decisive influence on the Ottoman administration in Yemen. Italians spread the aggression against the Ottoman presence in Yemen. In the short run, on 2 October 1911, Italian navy raided the Ottoman port of Hodeida.²⁰⁷ In the long run, Italians granted considerable financial and military aid to Seyid Idris in Asir to make him fight against the Ottoman administration.²⁰⁸ Idris became able to offer more prosperous alliances than that of Imam Yahya.²⁰⁹ Thus, the improved position of Idris lured the various tribes that were the back bone of the Imam’s forces to depart from Imam Yahya’s alliance.²¹⁰ In the context of conflict between Imam Yahya and Ottoman administration, the imperial administration intended to take advantage of the Imam Yahya’s weak position, and Yahya had to deal with the Ottomans to survive in regional political struggle.²¹¹ The shift in the regional balance of power led to the *Da’an* agreement.²¹² As I discussed above, the *Mecelle* was the empire wide legislation. However, in the Ottoman Arab territories, the indigenous religious and political authority derived from the authority to interpret Sharia text. According to Messick, the standardization of the Sharia

²⁰³ Dresch, *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen*, 222.

²⁰⁴ Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 201.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. 239.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ John Baldry, “Anglo-Italian Rivalry in Yemen and ‘Asir 1900-1934,” *Die Welt Des Islams*, Vol. 17, issue 1/4 (1976 - 1977), 160.

²⁰⁸ Willis, *Unmaking North and South*, 117.

²⁰⁹ Baldry, “Al-Yaman and the Turkish Occupation 1849-1914,” 191. Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 240.

²¹⁰ Blumi, “Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire,” 68. Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 240.

²¹¹ Blumi, “Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire,” 63, 72.

²¹² Paul Dresch, “Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen,” (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 223.

changed the political order based on the textual authority in the region.²¹³ One aspect of the confrontation between the Ottoman sultan caliph and Yemeni Zaydi Imam was the conflict to determine the validity of Sharia interpretation. During the imamic uprising against the Ottoman rule in 1906, Imam Yahya demanded authority to appoint sharia court judges, sharia based state founding structures, and sharia punishment.²¹⁴ An imam was the commander of the faithful, and he was the master of both the pen and sword. The mastery of pen refers the Zaydi imams' authority to make sharia interpretation.²¹⁵ The Ottoman Sultan Caliph was the decision maker of the empire wide legitimate Sharia. Messick mentions that "this was not narrow reference to "legal" differences but a reference to political positions expressed in the sharia based discourse of the period".²¹⁶ In other words, the conflict was going on around legal territory of the Caliphate sovereignty determined by the Caliph legal authority deriving from the application of the *Mecelle*.

Furthermore, the formation of the empire wide educational campaign was the significant component of the formation of the imperial caliphate immediate legal territory. The moral lessons that reflected the imperial concern to impose certain Islamic teaching demarks the Caliphate's core Islamic circle. Put differently, the compromise from the propagation of the imperial Islamic teaching suggests that the imperial authority differentiate the region's administration from the imperial core lands. In the case of Yemen, Ottoman imperial center gave up the imposition of the imperial Hanafism to the unorthodox Muslim communities. The background of the teachers employed at the *Ruṣḍiye* in Ibb illustrates that the Ottoman imperial formation in Yemen created the anomalous region that is beyond the Caliphate's immediate legal territory. "The instructors employed in the *Ruṣḍiye* came from two different backgrounds; the Turkish teachers, known as mual'lim, and a Yemeni

²¹³ Messick, *The Calligraphic State*, 55.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 51.

²¹⁵ Messick, *The Calligraphic State*, 38.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 50.

instructor, known as *mudarris*. The Turkish teachers taught the empire wide curriculum, and the indigenous Yemeni instructor taught the local traditional religious sciences, known as ‘*ulum al – diniyya*’.²¹⁷ The local religious sect was taught in the imperial schools rather than the religious teaching patronized by the imperial center. In this vein, the Ottoman government compromised the imperial religious authority in the imperial schools in Yemen, and it was discrete the Ottoman administration in Yemen from the rest of the empire.

The Ottoman imperial center delegated the religious and political authority to the Zaydi Imamate. Nevertheless, the local administration entangled with the authority of the Ottoman imperial sultan caliph. First of all, at the discursive level, Imam Yahya accepted Ottoman sultan-caliph imperial sovereignty based on the Hanafi Sunni School.²¹⁸ Indeed, the imam gave up his spiritual sovereignty claim over the communities other than the Yemeni Zaydis. As the result of the *Da’an* agreement, Ottoman imperial administration compromised the two essential imperial authorities that were the judicial authority derived from the imperial sharia and the educational authority in terms of teaching imperial Hanafi sect. However, Imam Yahya had to perform his granted authority under the supervision of the Ottoman imperial caliphate authority. In the context of the curriculum, the local religious teaching was taught at the imperial schools that were the parts of the empire wide school project. The venue integrated the local religious teaching to the imperial system, and the local religious teachers were paid by the imperial administration. In other words, the local religious teaching granted by the *Da’an* agreement was patronized by the imperial administration.

The Yemeni judicial case was more complicated than that of the education. Firstly, the imam had to share the judicial authority with the imperial Hanafi legal authority. For instance, Kuehn addresses; “At the same time, cases among Hanafi Sunnis from outside the

²¹⁷ Ibid., 101.

²¹⁸ Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference* (Brill, 2011), 241.

area to which the agreement applied would fall under the responsibility of judges appointed by the central government. Moreover, mixed courts would be created for cases involving Zaydis and those members of other Muslim sects who did not hail from area covered by the agreement”.²¹⁹ Furthermore, some of the judicial decisions had to be approved by the imperial authorities before the application.²²⁰ The death penalty was one the decisions that needed the imperial approval.²²¹ Therefore, the imamate authority in Yemen granted by the *Da'an* agreement was entangled with the Ottoman imperial Caliphate's legal authority. Indeed, the Ottoman imperial administration in Yemen was the distorted and anomalous region of the Ottoman imperial Caliphate's legal territory.

Purpose of Ottoman Imperial Formation in Yemen

The Ottoman Empire compromised the Caliphate's empire wide claims for the two prospects. Firstly, the imam was in position relatively easy to manipulate as a result of the losing his supporters. Secondly, nevertheless, the Imam was able to consolidate the local tribes as a result of the Imamate's traditional role in the Yemeni local politics. In the context of Yemen, each of the tribes was controlling particular territory, so the ruling a tribe meant ruling the territory. In the Northern Yemen, the tribal families were mostly farmers, and the local sovereignty of the different tribes was territorial.²²² Dresch states that “the great tribal sheiks had alternately supported the Imam and exploited the possibility of playing off the Turks against him, and certain of them had been present at *Da'an* when the truce was signed: Nasir al – Ahmar, for instance, Hamid Shariyan of Dhu Husayn, and Jibran al – Gahsmi of Hamdan.”²²³

²¹⁹ Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 241.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Dresch, “Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen,” 3.

²²³ Ibid.

Reflection of the Anomalies in the Imperial Capital

In the minds of the intellectuals in the imperial center Yemen as not a part of the Ottoman core Islamic circle. In 1913, Konur Alp published an article, *Yemen ve Yemenliler* (Yemen and Yemenis), in the newspaper *İslâm Mecmuası*. Konur Alp blames the disdainful stereotypical ideas about Yemen. The consensus about the Yemeni population was that they were peoples living in the hot desert full of blood and a people without civilization, a people without civilization.²²⁴ ²²⁵ According to Konur Alp, the reason of the prejudices about Yemen and Yemeni people was the reluctance of the Ottomans to visit the region and the lack of the firsthand accounts written about the region.²²⁶ He announces that he would write his memoirs from the time his presence during three years. Indeed, he thinks that his presentation would introduce Yemen to the rest of the Islamic world.²²⁷ The distinction between the imperial center and Yemeni periphery become more visible. In the mind of the intellectual, Yemen was alien to the Islamic world in which the Ottoman Empire existed, so Yemen was different from the rest of the empire under the immediate authority of the Caliphate.

The agreement institutionalized the differences of the administration in the Yemen. Also, the agreement attributed the new meanings to the Ottoman caliphate office. Unlike the idea of the Ottoman imposition on the peripheries, the caliphate office was shaped by the local conditions. However, in the Istanbul based intellectuals criticize that the imperial government was persisting to integrate the problematic region into the empire's core structure. In 1911, Abdullah Cevdet published an article in *İctihad*, and he mentions that the British governor and officers in Aden were the proper example, and the Ottoman officers in

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Yemen ve Yemenliler (Yemen and Yemenis) by Konur Alp published in *İslam Mecmuası* in 1913 (1329).

Yemen need to catch the British standards in Aden to maintain Ottoman imperial reputation.²²⁸ In this vein, the intellectuals refer the British colonial administration to justify the Ottoman imperial presence in the Yemen. Therefore, the perception of the Yemen was not the intimate part of the empire. Indeed, the impression was that the Yemen was a colony of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, in order to give meaning to the Ottoman imperial presence in Yemen, it is suggested that the Ottomans should look at the British rule in India in *Hindistan ve Yemen* written by Abdullah Cevdet and published in *İctihad*.²²⁹ The former health inspector of Yemen, Doktor İsmail İbrahim Bey, published a book, *Yemen Tarihi, İktisadi, and İctimai*, in 1911.²³⁰ Abdullah Cevdet wrote a preface text for the book, and Cevdet published the text in the *İctihad* in the same year.²³¹ Abdullah Cevdet promotes the book, because he suggests that the sufficient information about the region provides efficient administration in the Yemen.²³² In the preface, Abdullah Cevdet addresses the Ottoman financial and human losses caused by the unrest in Yemen.²³³ Also, he mentions Britain's expenses and benefits in India, and he compares Ottoman loss and gain in Yemen and that of England in India.²³⁴ On the other hand, Abdullah Cevdet defines the India as the Yemen of England.²³⁵ In this vein, the impression of the connection between Yemen and Ottoman imperial center in the Ottoman intellectual circle was inspired by the connection between the European countries and their colonies.

The Center and Periphery Relation between Turkey and Yemen, in the Post Great War Period

²²⁸ Yemen İçin Bir Kelime (A Word for Yemen) by Abdullah Cevdet published in *İctihad* in 1911 (1327)

²²⁹ *Hindistan ve Yemen* (India and Yemen) by Abdullah Cevdet published in *İctihad* in 1911 (1327)

²³⁰ *Yeni Kitaplar : Darwinizm, Tıbbiye Hayatı, Yemen, Şehbal, Erganun* (New Books: Darwinism, Life in the Medical School, Şehbal, Erganun) published in *İctihad* in 1911 (1327)

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² *Hindistan ve Yemen* (India and Yemen) by Abdullah Cevdet published in *İctihad* in 1911 (1327)

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

I argue that in the post Great War period the center and periphery relations between the province of Yemen and Turkey continued around authority of Caliphate. Firstly, I summarize the historical context that allows conceptualizing continuation of the center and periphery relation between the province of Yemen and nascent Turkish republic. Secondly, I discuss the late imperial and early republican intellectuals' perception of Yemen in the post Great War period. Thirdly, I discuss the Yemeni responses to the early republic's decisions about the caliphate office. At the end, I conclude that the inherited impression of the caliphate from Ottoman Empire had authority to legitimate the rulers in the context of Yemen.

In the post war period, the province of Yemen was a part of the Ottoman state until the Treaty of Lausanne.²³⁶ Because of that Sevres treaty was not validated, Armistice of Mudros determined administration of the province. According to Mudros treaty, the legal status of the province and Ottoman officers would be same with that of the prewar period.²³⁷ Unlike the imperial peripheries such as Sudan, Egypt and Tripoli, Treaty of Lausanne does not define the status of Yemen. It is interpreted from the 27th article of the treaty.²³⁸ Thus, the historical context is available to conceptualize the impression of the caliphate office in the context of the relation between the early republic and former imperial territory.

In addition to legal issues, the center and periphery relation between the Yemen province and Anatolia was alive as a result of the imperial officers and soldiers remained in the province. About four hundred Ottoman soldiers, military and civil officers remained in Yemen.²³⁹ The Ottoman officers and their families lived in severe conditions, so the officers

²³⁶ Gülsüm Polat. "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Yemen ile İlişkiler (1911-1938)," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 33, no. 2 (2017): 124.

²³⁷ Ibid., 134.

²³⁸ "No power jurisdiction in political , legislative, or administrative matters shall be exercised outside the Turkish territory by the Turkish government or authorities, for any reason whatsoever, over the nationals of a territory placed under the sovereignty or protectorate of the powers of the other powers signatory of the present treaty, or over the nationals of a territory detached from Turkey." Ibid., 124.

²³⁹ Ibid., 133.

demanded financial aid from the government in Ankara.²⁴⁰ Due to war conditions in Anatolia, Ankara government was not able to help Ottoman subjects in Yemen.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, the bureaucratic relation between the Ottoman officers in Yemen and Ankara government continued after the Great War.

In 24 June 1922, Eşref Edip published an article, *Yemenlilerin Hilafet-i İslamiyyeye Sadakat ve Merbutiyyetleri* ('The Yemenis' loyalty and devotion to the Caliphate of Islam) in the newspaper, *Sırat-ı Müstakim [Sebilü'r-Reşad]*.²⁴² According to the article, in spite of the all catastrophic and destructive effects of the Great War, the Yemeni people maintain their loyalty to Ottoman caliphate.²⁴³ Also, the article describes Imam Yahya's efforts to promote the Ottoman caliphate's authority among the Muslim religious leaders in the region, during the war years.²⁴⁴ Moreover, it is known that the Ottoman officers granted the arms Yahya's forces instead of giving the Entente Powers, and the former ottoman officers trained the Imam Yahya's army in the post war period.²⁴⁵ The narration about Yemeni's loyalty to Ottoman caliphate, and absence of the betrayal stories suggest that outcome of the Great War was not absolute disengagement between Yemen and Turkey in the minds of the early republican intellectuals.

In the early republic, the discourses about Yemen suggest that the caliphate was the connecting point between the Yemeni population and post war Turkey. In 4 November 1923, the article by Hüseyin Cahit, in *Sırat-ı Müstakim [Sebilü'r-Reşad]*, blames the Ankara government for disinterest on Yemen, and he defines Yemen as the abandoned child.²⁴⁶ He

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 135.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² *Yemenlilerin Hilafet-i İslamiyyeye Sadakat ve Merbutiyyetleri* (the Yemenis' loyalty and devotion to the Caliphate of Islam) by Eşref Edip in *Sırat-ı Müstakim [Sebilü'r-Reşad]* in 1922 (1338)

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Polat, 132, 145.

²⁴⁶ *Yemen Ne Oldu?* (What is the situation of Yemen?) by Hüseyin Cahit in *Sırat-ı Müstakim [Sebilü'r-Reşad]* in 1923 (1339)

urges the republican government to approach Yemen in respect to common religion.²⁴⁷ In other words, Hüseyin Cahit asks the government to employ the caliphate authority, the transregional religious figure, in Yemen. Besides the pro caliphate discourses, the abolition supporters blamed office of the caliphate for the Turkish deaths in Yemen.²⁴⁸ The anti-caliphate statement suggests that the caliphate office was the symbol of the Ottoman authority in Yemen.

The Zaydi Imams were both religious and administrative leaders. The Imams' authority derived from their domination to interpret sacred texts that determine the sharia jurisprudence.²⁴⁹ In 1911, Ottoman imperial center recognized the Imam Yahya's administrative and religious authority based on the Zaydi version of the Sharia in the province of Yemen, and the imam accepted Ottoman sultan-caliph imperial sovereignty based on the Hanafi Sunni School.²⁵⁰ In other words, the imamate authority gained the legitimacy via the imperial caliphate sovereignty. In the post Great War period, the imam needed to maintain center and periphery relation with the nascent Turkish republic to take advantage of the caliphate authority. In this vein, Yemeni responses to the republican decisions about the caliphate office illustrate the continuation of the center periphery relations between the province of Yemen and Turkey around the caliphate authority.

In the territory of Yemen, there was not the definite zone of Imam Yahya's influence. In Yemen, the actors expanded their zone of influence by building alliances with the various indigenous tribes. For example, Yahya intensified his sovereignty in the northern Yemen by building up the alliances based on the clan, faith and family; Britain supported the agents

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ "O unvan Yemen'de on milyon Türk yemiştir. Bunu kaydedin." Polat, 131.

²⁴⁹ Messick. *The Calligraphic State Textual*, 50.

²⁵⁰ Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 241.

from the local actors that were the competitors of Yahya to prevent his expansion.²⁵¹ Thus, the disappearance of the Ottoman imperial counter balance in the region made crucial the approval of caliphate for Yahya, because a transnational actor would help him to promote his authority for the tribal alliances.

In the post war period, the Yemeni actors interconnected with the Turkish assembly couple of times. Although the Ottoman government and office of caliphate existed, in 1920s, the correspondences, for example financial and military aid demands, from Yemen addressed the Turkish parliament in Ankara.²⁵² Moreover, in May 1923, the Yemeni notables declared the loyalty to the Turkish assembly.²⁵³ Then, in June 1923, a Turkish newspaper, *Tevhid-i Efkar* (Assembly of Opinions), published news about the Yemeni people's will to send representative to the Turkish assembly.²⁵⁴ After the separation of the sultanate and caliphate in 1922, the Abdulmecid II, the last caliph, was elected by the Turkish assembly.²⁵⁵ Thus, the assembly turned into the source for the caliphate authority. The Yemeni actors' interest for the assembly suggests that they intended to get integrated into the formation of the caliphate authority in the context of the Turkish assembly.

Moreover, the disappearance of the legitimate caliphate authority generated important legitimacy questions for Imam Yahya. Firstly, the approving status could have handed down to an agent of the Yahya's arch enemy, Britain.²⁵⁶ Abolition of the caliphate triggered the claims for the caliphate office from the different locations of the Muslim world. For instance, one of the caliphate candidates was the Hijaz ruler Sharif Hussein who had been a client of

²⁵¹ Isa Blumi, *Destroying Yemen*, vol. 1 (University of California Press, 2018), 36-37.

²⁵² Mim Kemal Öke and Lütfullah Karaman, *Milli Mücadele Dönemin'de Yemen-Türkiye İlişkileri İmam Yahya-Mustafa Kemal Paşa Yazışmaları*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1997), 29.

²⁵³ Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, 30-10-0-0 / 260 - 750 – 35.

²⁵⁴ Polat, 130.

²⁵⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abdulmecid-II>

²⁵⁶ Blumi, 37.

Britain.²⁵⁷ Yahya's approach to the international caliphate congress that took place in Cairo in 1926 reflects his concern about the uncertain caliphate authority. Although he supported formation of the congress, he prohibited the circulation of the materials about the congress in the region under his control.²⁵⁸ His dubious approach to the congress suggests that he was afraid of that formation of the caliphate authority in the congress might have challenged his authority attributed to approval of the Ottoman caliphate. Also, it is known that Yahya offered refuge for the exiled caliphate Abdulmecid II.²⁵⁹ Imam Yahya devoted political struggle to caliphate authority deriving from the Ottoman heritage to enhance the legitimacy of his administration.

In the context of Yemen, impression of the caliphate distinguishes from the notion of imagined leader of the imagined global Muslim community. Approval of the caliphate is significant for the legitimization in the former imperial territory. The caliphate authority perpetuated the center and periphery relation between the province of Yemen and Republic of Turkey.

²⁵⁷ Mona Hassan, *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History* (Princeton Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 171.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 206.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 203.

Conclusion

In the late Ottoman Empire, Istanbul based intellectuals perceived the Ottoman imperial presence in Yemen in the same category with the Italian, British, and French colonial administrations in the Southern Red Sea. The European colonial administrations in the region were founded as result of the new imperialist expansion. In the age of new imperialism, there was strong correlation between the territorial expansion and technological developments. In the context of the Red Sea region, the crucial developments were the construction of Suez Canal and the improvements in the steamship technologies. Both Suez Canal and steamships distorted the Red Sea maritime network, and the shift in the maritime network triggered the need for the new ports that were available for the new conditions. The European colonial administration in the Southern Red Sea was founded as a response to the maritime needs. The British rule in Aden was founded in the first half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, its characteristic distorted in the context of new imperialism.

Ottoman Empire did not have colonial institutions or colonial vocabulary in the state documents. However, the writings in the Istanbul press attribute the colonial role to the Ottoman Caliphate. The *Da'an* Agreement institutionalized the colonial role of the Caliphate. The agreement created the anomalous legal territory entangled with the Caliphate's immediate imperial legal territory. Moreover, the prints of the Ottoman imperial formation based on the Caliphate authority are visible in the post Great War period.

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