

**AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT
AND THE PEOPLE:
Comparative Approach to Midhat Pasha's Reform Policies and
Usage of Newspapers in the Danube(1864-1868) and Baghdad(1869-1871)
Provinces**

By

Hatice Yardım

Submitted to
Central European University
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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Budapest, Hungary
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Chair, Examination Committee

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Abstract

This thesis explores the implementation of the Tanzimat reforms in the Danube Province (1864-1868) and the Baghdad Province (1869-1871) and the career trajectory of Midhat Pasha (1822-1884), a high-ranking Tanzimat official, through news coverage published in two provincial newspapers that were founded by Midhat Pasha during his governance of the Danube and Baghdad provinces. In doing so, it strives to assess how tailor-made programs of reform that represented Midhat Pasha's commitment to the supra-national ideology of Ottomanism – *Osmanlılık* – were put into practice in the Danube and Baghdad Provinces, respectively. By observing the actions of Midhat Pasha and by examining how he managed to consolidate his power in the center, Istanbul, this study aims to provide a new perspective on the connection between provincial administrations and factional groups in Istanbul during the Tanzimat era. The aim of this thesis regarding how the Tanzimat reforms were covered was to illustrate the differences and similarities in the language of the Tanzimat reforms as they were implemented in the two Ottoman provinces. Finally, this thesis highlights the significance of printed media for domestic and international politics in the Ottoman Empire of the 19th century and contends that it was owed to the cosmopolitan mindset of Midhat Pasha that the Tanzimat reforms could be successfully implemented in the Danube and Baghdad Provinces.

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This thesis was written during at a most crucial time of my life, during which I came to truly understand and appreciate the prices and values of freedom, hope, and love. I would like to express my gratefulness to all the people who stood by my side throughout, and to all the cities and songs who have shaped my journey. I would not have been able to make it through the challenging situations I endured and now be at the point where I have finished writing my thesis without the support and love of many people in my life. First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor, Tolga *hocam* who not only patiently guided me during my research and writing process, but also ensured that I had a university to come back to. There are not enough words to express my gratitude. Then, my thanks go to my second reader, Jan *hocam*, who helped me to extract a well-researched thesis from the chaotic and somewhat blurry mind of mine. His instruction and guidance shaped my questions and way of thinking.

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A couple of years ago, the name Midhat Pasha only meant “father of the first Ottoman constitution” to me. I had not thought about exploring his life, hopes, thoughts, and dreams then, but here I am now, tracing his footsteps from the Danube province over Baghdad to Istanbul illuminate a crucial period of Ottoman history. I had learned the names of every actor, all the decrees, journals and books in high school, but this research has blown life into them. Midhat Pasha and his unwavering faith in people and freedom has inspired me. During the past years, there were some moments in which I was lost for words to express my thoughts or accurately describe my feelings. At times like those, the songs of Sezen Aksu, Ahmet Kaya and Hüsnü Arkan came to my rescue. I am thankful to these marvelous artists for giving me a medium through which I could communicate when my own words seemed insufficient.

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And finally, my gratitude goes to *firuze*; I will always cherish your memory.

To the most free-spirited women I've ever
known. As I promised.

“yeryüzü aşkın yüzü oluncaya dek!”

(until the earth's surface will be the surface of love)

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Introduction

In 1876, Midhat Pasha wrote his thoughts about the Tanzimat reforms and constitutional regime clearly, by saying:

Turkey... ought to be governed by a constitutional regime. If it is desired that serious reforms be carried out, that a viable union be effected the different races, this fusion should spring the progressive development of the populations, to whatever nationality and whatever religion they may belong; it is the only remedy for our ills and the sole means we have of straddling with advantage against enemies at home and abroad.¹

In the winter 1876, the atmosphere in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul, was rife with protests. *Medrese* (religious school) students led the demonstrations, demanding that the sultan Abdülaziz and the grand vizier, Mahmud Nedim Pasha (1800-1881), take action in the Balkans, specifically in Bulgaria and Bosnia, to the effect that the Muslim minority would be protected against Christian rebellions. In late century of Ottoman politics, the uprising of these students replaced earlier Janissary uprisings in terms of expression of the public opinion.² At this time, the press as a reporting medium became a significant tool for steering public opinion and inciting uprisings. Hence, because newspapers were controlled by political groups, such as Ottoman bureaucrats, factional politics, and also opposition groups like the Young Ottomans, public opinion was subjected to a constant push and pull between different groups' agendas. Embroiled in factional politics, Midhat Pasha was rumored to have been the organizer of the uprising in 1876; however, contemporary accounts indicate that the uprising was the outcome of popular grievances.³ In this political atmosphere, tinged with tensions and allegations, a group of men of the Tanzimat, led by Midhat Pasha and Hüseyin Avni Pasha, were waiting for

¹ Midhat Pasha, *The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey.*, First Edition edition (C. Kegan Paul and Co., 1878).

² Florian Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire* : Florian Riedler, 47, accessed May 27, 2019, <https://www.book2look.com/book/Tog1xC9wcI>,

³ Florian Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire* : Florian Riedler, 42, accessed May 27, 2019, <https://www.book2look.com/book/Tog1xC9wcI>.

the right moment to take action against the current grand vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha and his followers. Because he had expanded the sultan's authority while simultaneously decreasing the power of the bureaucracy and the administration, the leadership of Mahmud Nedim Pasha led the empire into economic catastrophe, amplified by corruption and weak policies.⁴

Meanwhile, an anonymous memorandum was being circulated around the capital. The document was signed by a group called 'Muslim patriots' (*Müslüman Yurtseverler*), but given the document's context, Midhat Pasha was soon identified as the author. Addressing the European ambassadors, the memorandum was a call for support from the international community for the political vision of Midhat Pasha.⁵ Midhat Pasha was described as "as an able administrator in the Danube Province, and an enlightened and courageous head of the energetic and moderate party."⁶ A few days after the memorandum had been published, 'miserable madman' Sultan Abdülaziz deposed Mahmud Nedim Pasha and his cabinet.⁷ He then appointed Mütercim Mehmed Pasha as the new grand vizier along with Midhat Pasha and Hüseyin Pasha as ministers to the new cabinet.⁸ Yet, Sultan Abdülaziz to Mütercim Mehmed Pasha betrayed his true intentions, which were to eventually re-appoint Mahmud Nedim Pasha when the time was right. Indeed, his actions seem to have been motivated by self-interest, attempting to momentarily please – and appease - his subjects: "I appointed you because the people wanted you."⁹

Among the group of bureaucrats, counting to its members the likes of Mütercim Mehmed Pasha, Hüseyin Avni Pasha and Hayrullah, Midhat Pasha was known as an outspoken activist and much more popular than his dissident peers. In fact, the larger degree of popularity

⁴ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 318.

⁵ Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire*, 48.

⁶ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 320.

⁷ The Sultan Abdülaziz was called miserable madman in the memorandum and hold responsible from the economic disaster and breaking the shari'a law.

⁸ Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire*, 49.

⁹ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 327.

he enjoyed was the source of tension to his relationship with his aforementioned peers.¹⁰ However, despite these tensions, all the bureaucrats worked towards a common goal and against a shared nemesis. They collaborated despite their different visions for the Empire, trying to limit the sultan's authority over the bureaucracy and to permanently remove a mutual nemesis, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, from the political sphere. Hüseyin Avni Pasha was first exiled by Mahmud Nedim Pasha and later appointed to Thessalonica as governor. Even though Hüseyin Avni Pasha was involved in the discussion about constitutional monarchy, he did not have true faith in an Ottoman constitution and only supported the Tanzimat reforms in as far as they could strengthen the army. Although spatially removed, Hüseyin Avni Pasha's reputation as a great patriot among the army was sufficient to allow him to orchestrate a coup against Mahmud Nedim Pasha's government and the sultan himself. In contrast to the military background of Hüseyin Avni Pasha, Midhat Pasha was a well-established politician. He had cultivated a reputation for honesty and garnered recognition for his successful system of provincial administration. His ultimate goal, throughout his career, was the establishment of a constitutional government.¹¹

Sultan Abdülaziz nevertheless signaled his intention to re-appoint Mahmud Nedim Pasha as grand vizier after the people settled down. The possible return of Mahmud Nedim Pasha to power would have meant a second exile for Hüseyin Avni Pasha and Midhat Pasha. Therefore, Hüseyin Avni Pasha immediately plotted to stage a coup that would remove the sultan from the throne. The director of the military academy, Süleyman Pasha, who was a supporter of the constitutional regime, and Midhat Pasha consented to Hüseyin Avni Pasha's plan only if the potential successor of the throne, sultan Abdülaziz's nephew Murad, agreed to declare a constitutional government.¹² Unlike Hüseyin Pasha, Midhat Pasha believed that such

¹⁰ Davison, 328.

¹¹ Davison, 331-332.

¹² Süleyman, Hiss-i Inkilap, 23-24.

a drastic change in regime and military action should be based on popular demand.¹³ To prevent Midhat Pasha from organizing a demonstration, Hüseyin Avni Pasha advanced the time of the coup one day early than he planned with his peers. On May 29, 1876, the people of Istanbul awoke to the sound of guns. A *fetwa* of deposition was readied to justify the coup. Sultan Abdülaziz who, already having lost the popular support before he was overthrown, was accused of having a mental illness, of ignorance in political affairs, and of diversion of public revenues to pay for his private expenditures. The sultan and his household were sent to Topkapı Palace, and the new sultan, Murad (1840-1904), gave the oath of loyalty at Dolmabahçe Palace.¹⁴

The coup and its implications were life-defining moments for many people in the empire, but particularly for Midhat Pasha and his legacy. Yet, while it provided him the opportunity to realize his life-long dream, the regime change was also the beginning of his tragic end. Even though Sultan Murad expressed his support for a constitutional government and various population groups voiced their longing for a constitution via “their” newspapers, the immediate promulgation of a constitution was not a real expectation.¹⁵ Despite Midhat Pasha’s best efforts, the coalition that had overseen the coup fell apart when Hüseyin Avni Pasha withdrew his support for a constitution: “Our Sultan does not wish to form a national assembly. The knowledge and the training of our nation are not suitable for such a step. However, in order to eliminate the insecurity which prevails, he must bind the administration by strong laws, and must, for instance, reform financial matters. This is the desire of our Sultan.”¹⁶ Hüseyin Avni Pasha’s withdrawal of support constituted a formidable obstacle to the promulgation of a constitution. On June 15, 1876, Hüseyin Avni Pasha came to a tragic end

¹³ Uzunçarşılı, *Midhat ve Rüştü Paşalar*, 543., A.H. Midhat, *Life*, 83.

¹⁴ Davison, 336.

¹⁵ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 338.

¹⁶ Süleyman Paşa and Mediha Gezgin, *İnkılap hissi, yahut, Sultan Abdülaziz’in tahttan indirilmesi ile Beşinci Murad’ın tahta çıkarılması* (İstanbul: Berksoy Matbaası, 1953), 60–61.

at the hands of Çerkez Hasan (1850-1876), who had wanted to avenge Sultan Abdülaziz's deposition, and assassinated Hüseyin Avni Pasha during a gathering at Midhat Pasha's house.¹⁷ Further, the return of two exiled Young Ottomans, namely Namık Kemal and Ziya Bey, reinvigorated the idea of an Ottoman constitution.¹⁸ Unfortunately, the way by which he had come to power, coupled with the deaths of Abdülaziz and his grand vizier Hüseyin Avni, upset the sultan's mental health. Although Midhat Pasha continued to work on a draft for the constitution, being supported in this undertaking by the British ambassador Elliot and the *ulema* (religious scholars), the political atmosphere was, again, precipitated at the edge of chaos, and did not appear stable enough to declare a constitution – not even to the most ardent supporters of the latter.

Once the ministers had convinced that sultan Murad was unfit to rule due to his mental ailments, the name Abdülhamid was floated as a possible candidate for the throne. Abdülhamid himself held some private meeting with the British ambassador and the foremost bureaucrats of the time to plan his ascension to the throne. When Midhat Pasha spoke with Abdülhamid, he agreed to support the latter's sultanate in the council dependent on some conditions: the promulgation of the constitution without delay, involvement of the Sultan in governmental matters only upon the advice of responsible advisors, and consenting to the reappointment of the palace secretaries Sadullah, Ziya Bey, and Namık Kemal. Abdülhamid accepted Midhat Pasha's conditions.¹⁹ On August 31, 1876, sultan Murad abdicated and Abdülhamid ascended in his stead. Midhat duly presented the first draft of the constitution to the sultan. The draft included the following articles: the adaptation of the constitutional government, the retitling of

¹⁷ Çerkez Hasan was a soldier, and brother in law of the sultan Abdülaziz.

¹⁸ "Young Ottomans (*Yeni Osmanlılar*-New Ottomans): Opposition group that criticized the Tanzimat regime and agitated for political freedom and a constitutional system. The Young Ottomans were a by-product of the emerging press." Selcuk Aksin Somel, *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire* (Scarecrow Press, 2003), 328-329. For further information about Young Ottomans please see: Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse University Press, 2000).

¹⁹ Ali Haydar [from old catalog Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha; a Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder* (London, J. Murray, 1903), 97-98, <http://archive.org/details/lifemidhatpasha00mithgoog>.

grand vizier to prime minister, the established of schools to which all Ottoman subjects would be admitted, the sharp reduction in palace expenditures, and finally the prohibition of slave trade in the empire and the freeing of all palace slaves.²⁰

Despite his promises, Abdülhamid refused to give up his privileges as a sultan and did not shy away from conflict with Midhat Pasha. He significantly adjusted the draft that Midhat Pasha had presented to him. When the struggle with the Russian Empire intensified, Abdülhamid confirmed the constitution and appointed Midhat Pasha as grand vizier to serve as an intermediary in international diplomacy. On December 23, 1876, the constitution was formally promulgated.²¹ Despite the heavy rain, the people of Istanbul gathered around the palace. The decree of the sultan was read out to the crowd. It stipulated that the objectives of the constitution were securing the welfare of all Ottoman peoples, who should without distinction enjoy the blessings of liberty, justice, and equality, and the safeguarding of the government from arbitrary domination by one or more individuals.²² Abdurrahman Şeref (1853-1925), the last official historian of Ottoman history, emphasized the exaltation of Midhat Pasha by saying “Even forty years later, the vibrance in Midhat’s voice still rang in my ears.” It was a glorious moment for Midhat Pasha, indeed. In his conversation with a Greek patriarch, the patriarch said to him: “We consider you the resuscitator of the Ottoman Empire.” Young liberals and diverse social or population were chanting his name in the streets.²³

Midhat Pasha had invested his whole career into the outcomes of this moment. He was one of the men of Tanzimat. His life and career trajectories had been shaped by the institutions and the events of the Tanzimat. Yet, he was also one of the few bureaucrats of his time who were brave enough to actively try to steer the destiny of the Ottoman Empire into novel waters. He demanded reform in the way that the dynasty and government ruled the empire and its vast

²⁰ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 356.

²¹ Davison, 381.

²² Levant Herald, 26 December 1876.

²³ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 382–83.

people. Since the declaration of the Tanzimat Edict in 1839, Ottoman statesmen had fought for the “survival of the Empire.” Through administrative, economic, and social reforms, statesmen had aimed to keep the empire intact, united. Equality, justice, and rule of law emerged as the foundational basis of the reforms. However, not all the men of Tanzimat believed in the same vision and methods of reforms for the empire.

This study is an attempt to understand the approaches Ottoman bureaucrats’ took to the Tanzimat reforms and their colliding visions of the Tanzimat reforms, illustrated against the backdrop of the trajectory of Midhat Pasha’s life. For this purpose, the thesis will conduct a comparative analysis of two significant and distant provinces which Midhat Pasha has governed consecutively. The main sources of the thesis are the newspapers *Tuna* (Danube) and *Zevrâ* (Baghdad, Tigris and Freedom) which Midhat Pasha published in the provinces. The newspapers aimed to educate the local people and promote the Tanzimat reforms. The thesis will compare articles and editorial pieces written by Midhat Pasha and his lieutenants for these respective papers. It does so in order to elucidate the main issues that the newspapers covered and to illuminate Midhat Pasha’s understanding of how best to address different types of problems in Ottoman society across the empire.

The Tanzimat and its reforms meant various things for the following generations of statesmen and intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire as well as in its successor, the Republic of Turkey. The perceptions of the Tanzimat in different periods reflect the spirits of the time and portray relations between the state and its historiography. The legacy of the Tanzimat has sparked discussion since the days of the Young Ottomans. The subsequent regimes in the Ottoman Empire and later the governments in the Turkish Republic have brandished the Tanzimat mentality to justify their legislation and identity politics. For centuries, the Tanzimat reforms were perceived either as a “failure” or as “inconclusive modernization.” Indeed, initially, the historiography focused on the failure of the Tanzimat and possible reasons why it

had failed instead of trying to gain a thorough understanding of the essence of the reforms. The Tanzimat reforms were described as top-down, state-led movement which did not conceive of the reality of the time and its challenges. The official narrative of the Tanzimat posited that the men of the Tanzimat planned the reforms in Istanbul without taking into account local issues and priorities.²⁴ The Tanzimat reformers aimed to standardize and centralize the administration of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans to the Arab peripheries. They believed that the implementation of a unified education program, tax policy, administration unit, and military conscription would not only increase tax revenues, but also enhancing the security and prosperity of the provinces.²⁵ Recent scholarship, however, focuses on revealing the local differences during the implementation of reforms. Scholars rather focus on local administration, urban structure, tax reforms, architecture, literature, and land regulations for the Tanzimat Era rather than focusing on the period as a whole through broad lens.²⁶ Having access to archives and archival documents has enhanced the extent of literature and research in the field. Now scholars can zoom in on the reforms, their reception, and their effects in specific cities and regions such as Trabzon, Bosnia, Konya, and Damascus to such an extent that they can determine how individual actors ranging from governors to local political actors strove to reform their society. The thesis aims to showcase differences in the provincial administration between the Danube and Baghdad Provinces.

A comparative study of Midhat Pasha's governorship in the Danube and Baghdad provinces is important in terms of how it can reveal the individual agency of the reformers in

²⁴ Yonca Köksal, "TANZİMAT VE TARİH YAZIMI," 198–99. *Doğu Batı Düşünce Dergisi* Sayı: 52 - Osmanlılar.

²⁵ Maurus Reinkowski, *Düzenin Şeyleri, Tanzimat'ın Kelimeleri 19.Yüzyıl Osmanlı Reform Politikasının Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırması*, trans. Çiğdem Canan Dikmen (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2017), 13.

²⁶ Some of these works: Halil İnalcık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi (Karton Kapak)* (Kronik Kitap, 2018); Yonca Köksal, *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Provincial Perspectives from Ankara to Edirne*, 1 edition (London ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019); Göksun Akyürek, *Tanzimat Döneminde Mimarlık, Bilgi ve İktidar / Bilgiyi Yeniden İnşa Etmek* (Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 2012); Elizabeth Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 3 (1993): 457–75; İlhan Ekinci, *Tanzimat Devri Ordu Kazası Halk, Ayan ve Devlet* (Gece Kitaplığı, 2017).

disparate places and the transmission of knowledge and experiences in the realm, and how it can illustrate how the Tanzimat reforms were both imagined to pan out by the center and then unilaterally imposed on the periphery without considering specific local needs. Christine Philliou points out the importance of considering individuals' stories in her work:

We must broaden the field of analysis in order to understand not only who and what constituted the Ottoman state but also how the institutions, networks, and individual personalities that functioned within the state were in flux and being shaped by forces and ideas outside the formal state apparatus.”²⁷

The personality, perspective and life trajectory of Midhat Pasha is significant in the context of the political environment of the Tanzimat. In addition, as a pioneer who established provincial newspapers, Midhat Pasha effectively used the power of print media both to promote the reforms and to shape the Ottoman politics and society. Hence, my thesis focuses on the newspapers as sources through which it hopes to accomplish two things: First, it aims to establish the similarities and differences of the language of reforms in both provinces with respect to their population, geography, and domestic and international politics. Second, this thesis seeks to elucidate Midhat Pasha's perspective on the provinces and on Ottoman politics. In a time of (rising) nationalism, tackling the ideas and practices of a bureaucrat who shaped and molded a multi-national empire could shed light on how Ottoman officials, who came from diverse backgrounds, understood the challenges that threatened their world and how they understood they could make their society more resilient to such threats. For this purpose, a comparison of Midhat Pasha's governorships in the Danube and Baghdad provinces is essential, since these provinces had very different features in terms of population, geography, and political dynamics. Furthermore, because Midhat Pasha's tenures in both provinces coincided with a shift in political powers in the center stemming from factional politics and

²⁷ Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, First edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 5.

imperial intrigue. Hence, this thesis will also explore how factional struggle in the center made or broke the efficacy of a provincial governors and their ability to govern.

Midhat Pasha's governorship in the Danube Province has been explored in various academic studies.²⁸ Its significance as pilot region for further provincial reforms, and the fact that it served as jumping board for the career of Midhat Pasha in Ottoman bureaucracy, have driven scholarly attention toward the Danube Province. One of the seminal studies on the province during the governorship of Midhat Pasha was conducted by Milen Petrov. In his works, Petrov uses both Ottoman and Bulgarian language sources to conceive of the implementation of Tanzimat reforms in the province. He focuses not only on the Tanzimat reforms and bureaucracy, but also illustrates how the local people in the province adopted the language of Tanzimat law and negotiated their cases with Tanzimat bureaucrats.²⁹ Another extensive work on Midhat Pasha's implementation of reform in the Danube Province is Mehmet Çelik's PhD thesis "Tanzimat in the Balkans: Midhat Pasha's Governorship in the Danube Province." Çelik uses the archival sources, the yearbooks (*salnâme*) of the province, memoirs of Midhat Pasha, and the provincial newspaper *Tuna* for his analysis. His work focuses on the rise of Bulgarian nationalism in the region and investigates the way in which Midhat Pasha implemented the Tanzimat reforms in response to that.³⁰

The Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire have likewise been subject to many academic studies.³¹ However, Baghdad and Tanzimat rule in Baghdad have not received sufficient

²⁸ Maria N. Todorova, *Scaling the Balkans: Essays on Eastern European Entanglements* (Brill, 2018), <https://brill.com/view/title/16693>; Gözde Yazici, *Midhat Pasha(1822-1884)'s Policies vs. N. P. Ignatiev (1832-1908)'s Pan-Slav Mission*, CEU History Department Master Theses, 2009/23 (Budapest: Central European University, 2009); Pasha, *The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey.*; Bekir Koç, "Tuna Vilayeti Göçmenleri ve Midhat Paşa," n.d., 16.

²⁹ Milen V Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868" (UMI Dissertation Services, 2007); Milen V. Petrov, "Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864-1868," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 4 (2004): 730–59.

³⁰ Mehmet Çelik, "Tanzimat the Balkans : Midhat Pasha's Governorship in the Danube Province (Tuna Vilayeti), 1864-1868" (Thesis, Bilkent University, 2007), <http://repository.bilkent.edu.tr/handle/11693/14537>.

³¹ Some of these works: Jane Hathaway and Karl Barbir, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule: 1516-1800*, 1 edition (Routledge, 2014).; *Foundations of Modernity: Human Agency and the Imperial State (Routledge Studies in Modern History) 1st Edition by Blumi, Isa (2011) Hardcover (Routledge, 1707).*; Selim Deringil, ed.,

scholarly attention. While Midhat Pasha's role as governor of the Danube province and the writer of the Ottoman constitution has been studied extensively, his tenure in Baghdad as governor has been all but neglected in academic studies. Christoph Herzog is a historian of the Late Ottoman Empire who deals with Ottoman rule in the provinces. In his works, he addresses the questions of how Ottoman intellectuals and rulers perceived the provincial capitals such as Baghdad.³² Ebubekir Ceylan and Adem Korkmaz are historians whose studies focus on Midhat Pasha and the Tanzimat reforms in Baghdad. In his work, Ceylan discusses the modernization and centralization processes of the Baghdad Province in the Tanzimat Era. For this purpose, he focuses on the dynamics of Ottoman rule in the province and studies the reformation missions of the governors of the Tanzimat Era.³³ While Ceylan's work paints the general picture of Tanzimat in the province of Baghdad, Korkmaz specifically focuses on the period during which Midhat Pasha was governor of the province. He addresses the reforms of Tanzimat that Midhat Pasha implemented in the province through use of official documents and the provincial newspaper, *Zevrâ*.³⁴ The important work of historian Mine Ersoy has transcribed a hundred issues of the newspaper *Zevrâ*, and compiled the major issues discussed in it.³⁵

My thesis aims to contribute to the field in two ways. Firstly, by comparing the activities of a man of Tanzimat of the stature of Midhat Pasha in two different provinces, it is possible to reconstruct the thinking of the father of Ottoman constitution, which is important

The Ottoman Twilight in the Arab Lands: Turkish Memoirs and Testimonies of the Great War (Brighton, MA, USA: Academic Studies Press, 2019). Sabri Ateş, "Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands" Cambridge Core, October 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139522496>; Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Hala Mundhir Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745-1900* (SUNY Press, 1997).

³² Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, "Orientalism 'Alla Turca': Late 19th / Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim 'Outback,'" *Die Welt Des Islams* 40, no. 2 (2000): 139-95; Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber, eds., *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002).

³³ Ebubekir Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq: Political Reform, Modernization and Development in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East*, Library of Ottoman Studies 22 (London: Tauris, 2011).

³⁴ "Mithad Paşa'nın Bağdat Valiliği (1869-1872)," accessed May 28, 2019, <http://kaynakca.hacettepe.edu.tr/eser/983476/mithad-pasa-nin-bagdat-valiligi-1869-1872>.

³⁵ Mine Ersoy, "Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyonu ve Değerlendirilmesi" MA Thesis, Kilis 7 Aralık University, Kilis, 2014.

to gain a better understanding of his reasoning and motivations. Indeed, Midhat Pasha's experiences in the provinces sharpened his pertinacity for a constitutional government. In addition, as a protégé of Fuad Pasha, Midhat Pasha represents the progressive faction of the men of Tanzimat. Thus, comparing his attitudes and implementation of reforms in both the non-Muslim majority Danube Provinces and the Muslim majority Baghdad Province will shed light on the issue of subjecthood during the Tanzimat Era. Further, the newspapers used for this comparison can provide insights into the power print media had in the Tanzimat Era. As the political culture evolved, the character of politics changed, and newspapers became one of the essential means to convey messages to sympathizers and publish propaganda of opponents. Midhat Pasha and his protégé Ahmed Midhat Efendi used newspapers effectively in their communications with the local people in the Danube and Baghdad Provinces and in their struggle with political actors. For this reason, the newspapers *Tuna* and *Zevrâ* constitute tremendously valuable primary resources that can provide direct insight into and reveal the drivers, thoughts and actions of prominent figures of the Tanzimat Era.

Chapter I

The Story of The Tanzimat and Midhat Pasha

This chapter focuses on the Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876) that fundamentally changed the nature of the Ottoman state and its relations to its subjects. It serves as an introduction to the main actors of the Tanzimat and assesses what the top-down reforms meant to different political groups and local people. While the main protagonists of this thesis are Midhat Pasha and his cadre of intellectuals, reformers, and journalists, this chapter aims to paint a picture of the world around him. As one of the eminent actors of the era, Midhat Pasha had first-hand experiences and observations from different parts of the empire. His notions on developments of reforms and administrative changes provide insight into the changing political culture of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it is important to contextualize him in the grand picture of Ottoman bureaucracy in a time of crisis, reforms, and hope.

In 1876, Midhat Pasha explained the mission of the Tanzimat Era in an article addressed to European audiences:

To exorcise these dangers and with the object of restoring to the Empire its ancient splendour, the statesmen of Turkey, such as Rachid, Aaly (Ali), Fuad, and others, laboured in succession to endow the Empire with new institutions, and to destroy the abuses of the old regime. Their efforts did not remain barren; if they were not always crowned with complete success, the condition of Turkey, such as it was before the last war, compared with what it was thirty years earlier, discloses the happy change which had taken place in the state of the country; it was an astonishing transformation, so great that in any other country a century of effort would have appeared insufficient for its realization. But so great also was the rapidity of the progress made around us, that ere long these improvements were no longer sufficient.³⁶

³⁶ Pasha, *The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey*.

1.1 Men of Tanzimat Era

The Tanzimat Era is one of the keystone periods in Ottoman history. The significance of this era lies in the imperial center's attempts to save the empire from stagnation. Tanzimat legacies in the Turkish republic range from administrative reforms to Turkish literature that shaped state and society as we know it today. Ever since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, historians and politicians alike have looked to the Tanzimat era as the beginning of a secular identity, modernization, and westernization in the new Turkish state. Since the 1960s, numerous monographs and studies have been produced on the Ottomans' attempt to reform and westernize their empire. However, as Roderic Davison observed in his 1963 monograph, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1976*, "the state of the field is still in its infancy given how many Ottoman Turkish archival and narrative sources from the era written in different languages remain unexplored. Much still remains to be known simply of what happened and how and when, not to speak of why."³⁷

The Era was marked by a series of broad reforms that reconceptualized and fundamentally altered the administrative, social, economic and judicial structures of Ottoman governance and social organization. Ottoman reformers implemented new tax reforms, extended rights to non-Muslim subjects, established a more transparent regulation and scope for provincial administration, as well as promulgated educational and social reforms in order to ensure the "survival of the empire." Intrinsically, these broad reforms consisted of diverse practices and were received and understood differently in various parts of the empire due to the diversity of local populations, their respective traditions and religions, the local climate and economy, as well as the geo-political significance of their region. The most important agents for the transmission and implementation of the Tanzimat reforms across the empire were

³⁷ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*. xi.

provincial governors, pashas and their retinues. Individual governors determined the scope and implementation of the reforms in the empire, and undoubtedly, they were not acting on a consensus regarding what these reforms should be. In fact, there were competing visions among Ottoman bureaucrats regarding the nature of the reforms. While Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800-1858)³⁸ who proclaimed the *Gülhane-i Hatt-i Hümayun*³⁹ in 1839 and his cadre of early generation reformers like Fuad Pasha and Ali Pasha conceived the reforms as westernizing policies that emulated France and other European countries, Mahmud Nedim Pasha (1818-1883) and his group later defended the prerogative of the sultanate and sought to emulate more authoritarian reforms. These different visions conflicted regarding their approaches particularly to non-Muslim subjects, the economy, foreign policy, the extent of sultan's power as well as the autonomy of the provincial governors.

The Tanzimat Edict of 1856 was promulgated in the midst of international crisis. Hence, it had two major audiences: European powers and the non-Muslim subjects of the sultan. Contemporary observers and historians evaluated it as the attempt of Tanzimat statesmen to ensure both Europeans and non-Muslim subjects that there would be an equality among the Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire before the law. Religious affiliations of subjects would no longer impede them in legal and judicial cases. The Ottomans aimed to codify universal individual legal rights in order to sustain the loyalty of the sultan's subjects. Ussama Makdisi discusses the Ottoman bureaucrats' understanding of equality by arguing: "In Fuad Pasha's view, Ottoman citizens are compatriots but not because they were equal to him but because they were equal in the eyes of the sultan, and more important because they were equal in their submission to him."⁴⁰

³⁸ He was the Foreign Minister of the Empire at that time.

³⁹ The Rescript of Gülhane <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/gulhane.htm>

⁴⁰ Ussama Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 4 (2002): 606.

The edicts of 1839 and 1856 have some similarities, but also differences. The abolition of tax farming and bribery, and the equal liability of Muslims and non-Muslims to military service were among the promises that extended from the edict of 1839. Moreover, the death penalty for apostasy was abolished in the edict of 1856. The edict of 1856 also brought new reforms, such as the “strict observance of annual budgets, the establishment of banks, the codification of penal and commercial law and reform of the prison system, and the establishment of mixed courts to take care of a greater proportion of cases involving Muslims and non-Muslims.”⁴¹ The main emphasis of the edict of 1856 was equality. It was the introduction of Ottomanism, the view that all Ottoman subjects regardless of religion or creed were equal, into Ottoman politics. With this edict, the sultan pledged the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims in every aspect of politics and military services, economic affairs, and daily life. The edict went so far as to ban common, derogatory insults against non-Muslims such as *gâvur* (infidel) and *kafir* (heretic). Ironically, when Muslim subjects were asked what they understood from the edict of 1856, they replied “We are no longer allowed to call a ‘*gâvur*’ as ‘*gâvur*’”.⁴²

As noted earlier, men of the Tanzimat had competing visions for the reforms and what kind of form the central government should in Istanbul should take. As a protégée of Fuad Pasha, Midhat Pasha was an eminent supporter of Western models of governance and constitutional governments. He argued that limiting the power of the sultan with a constitution and founding a council that would arbitrate between the sultanate and its subjects was the only way that the Ottoman government could legitimate its rule of such diverse subjects. However, unlike Midhat Pasha, other officials like Fuad and Ali Pashas believed that rather than having a strong council for represent imperial subjects, it was essential to have a central and strong

⁴¹ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 55.

⁴² Halil İnalcık, and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, *Tanzimat Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, s.128, İstanbul, 2006.

bureaucracy.⁴³ Officials like the powerful Mahmud Nedim Pasha (1818-1883) insisted that the sultan should be the main source of political power. In his treatise to Sultan Abdülaziz upon his ascension in 1861, Mahmud Nedim Pasha advised that the sultan should dismiss progressive statesmen such as Fuad and Ali Pashas and base his acts more on his own will. Furthermore, he argued that the pillar of Ottoman society was the Muslim population; therefore, they should prioritize these subjects in core areas of the empire, such as Anatolia and the Middle East.⁴⁴ Thus, the competing visions with regard to how reforms should take place and what forms of governance the imperial center should take, resulted in vociferous philosophical divides among different factions that competed against each other for the sultan's favor and support.

1.2 The Indefatigable Man of Tanzimat: Midhat Pasha

Ahmed Şefik Midhat Pasha (1822-1884) was one of the eminent Ottoman bureaucrats of his time. He was the father of the 1876 constitution and an savvy provincial governor.⁴⁵ He was born in Istanbul and joined the *Divan-i Hümayun* (Imperial Council) when he was just twelve years old. His father was a judge in the Ministry of Endowments (*Evkaf Nezâreti*). Midhat Pasha came from a well-established family of Muslim scholars from Ruse (Bulgaria). Since it was a requirement of his father's profession, Midhat travelled around the empire and become familiar with the diversity of the empire.⁴⁶ He had a conventional education where by the age of ten he had learned the Quran by heart.⁴⁷ This would later have a bearing on his

⁴³ Ali Pasha's Political Testament, Roderic H. Davison, "The Question of Ali Pasa's Political Testament," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11, no. 2 (1980): 209–25.

⁴⁴ Gökhan Kaya, "An Initiative for Reconstituting the Monarchial Sovereignty Against the Bureaucratic Domination: Mahmud Nedim Pasha's Ideas on Ethics and the State Administration", OTAM Spell this out, 38, Fall 2015, 55-94.

⁴⁵ Davison, The Beginning of Published Biographies of Ottoman Statesmen: The Case of Midhat Pasha, *Türkische Wirtschafts und Sozialgeschichte von 1071 bis 1920*, Harrassowitz Verlag – Wiesbaden, 1995, 59.

⁴⁶ Adrian Brisku, *Political Reform in the Ottoman and Russian Empires: A Comparative Approach* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 147.

⁴⁷ "MİDHAT PAŞA - TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi," 7, accessed May 28, 2019, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/midhat-pasa>.

policies and relations with the *ulema* (Islamic clerics and scholars). For example, while he was re-reading a verse of Quran, he chose the term *islahhâne* (youth detention center) for the vocational schools for orphans. He built these schools in the Danube Province and later in the Baghdad Province.⁴⁸ In the verse, Muhammed was instructed to improve (*islahun*) the affairs of orphans. His personal religiosity helped him cultivate an image of a devout Muslim and provided him with the knowledge and talent to make the Tanzimat reforms palatable for Muslim traditionalists and conservatives, especially during his governorship in Baghdad (1869-1872).⁴⁹

In 1834, he joined the Office of Imperial Council as a protégé of the *Reisülküttab* Akif Pasha where he studied the *divanî hat* as well as the Arabic and Persian languages. Fuad and Ali Pashas, two of the most important mid-century reformers in the Ottoman empire, saw him as the rising star of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Fuad Pasha especially, entrusted him to carry out their vision of the Tanzimat reforms in the provinces; he even referred to Midhat Paşa as the “*eb-ü-l ahrar*,” or “the father of an independent people.”⁵⁰ He was first appointed as inspector (*müfettiş*) to Damascus (Syria) where he spent two years, and later in his career continued onto Konya (1845), and Kastamonu (1847) as a junior clerk (*divan kâtibi*) in Bekir Sami Pasha’s cadres. When he returned to Istanbul, he was appointed as a second clerk (*ikinci kâtib*) of Anatolia in *Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*.⁵¹ His time in the council shaped the pasha’s views on the provincial reforms. His allegiance with Mustafa Reshid and Fuad Pashas drew him into the power games of the Ottoman bureaucracy. In 1854, when Mehmed Emin Pasha took the power from Mustafa Reshid and his protégées Fuad and Ali Pashas, Midhat Pasha was sent to Bulgaria as an exile. After six months, when Mustafa Reshid was re-appointed as a

⁴⁸ II: 220, Milen Petrov, 6.

⁴⁹ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside,” 6–7.

⁵⁰ Taha Toros Arşivi, Dosyo no: 106, “Midhat Paşa ve gazeteler,” 9999, <http://earsiv.sehir.edu.tr:8080/xmlui/handle/11498/25261>.

⁵¹ “MİDHAT PAŞA - TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi,” 7.

grand vizier, Midhat Pasha was allowed to return to Istanbul.⁵² These exiles and recompenses based on political feuds among rival factions of the Tanzimat reformers would impact Midhat Pasha's career in profound ways.

In 1857, Midhat Pasha was sent to Silistre and Vidin (both in Bulgaria) in order to investigate corruption in provincial administration as well as suppress a related uprising in nearby Tırnova (Bulgaria). During this mission in the Balkan region, he became aware of the region's problems. He witnessed not only corruption in the Ottoman administration but also how Russian propaganda played on this ubiquitous malfeasance to attract the hearts and minds of local subjects to the Russian cause. One year later, he travelled to Europe and stayed in Paris, London, Brussel, and Vienna. During this trip he improved his French and observed the economic and political advancement of Western countries.⁵³ In 1861, Midhat Pasha was promoted to the highest rank of vizier (pasha), and he was duly entrusted with amending social strife and discontent in the troubled province of Niş (Serbia). His experiences in various parts of the empire made him an eligible candidate to be a governor in relatively tumultuous parts of the empire that were in urgent need of reform. Midhat Pasha's success in Niş, where he brought peace to the region and carried out the imperial reforms flawlessly, drew attention to him. He initiated large infrastructural projects that changed the face of urban geographies connecting different towns and cities with new roads and bridges. He managed to reach out to and provided security for non-Muslim groups whilst assuring Muslims living in the region that they would be protected against the irredentism of the people's of neighboring Serbia. Impressed by his rapid progress, Fuad and Ali Pashas summoned him back to Istanbul because they wanted to determine how they could implement some of the reforms he carried out in other parts of the empire. With the help of investigators' reports (*istintâk*) from various provinces, and going on

⁵² "MİDHAT PAŞA - TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi," 8.

⁵³ "MİDHAT PAŞA - TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi," 8.

their own experiences, Fuad Pasha, Midhat Pasha, as well as the famous Ottoman historian Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, drew up a new codification, the *Vilâyet Nizâmnamesi* (The Provincial Law) for the administration of provinces in 1860.⁵⁴

With the codification of The Provincial Law in 1860, a new province called the *Tuna* (The province of Danube, *Tuna Vilâyeti*) in the northern Bulgarian frontier along the Danube River as a testing ground for their new reforms. The function and significance of this province was highlighted in an official document stating: “The useful lessons learned through our experience there would be applied to other places [in the empire] in a very short order.”⁵⁵ Midhat Pasha’s appointment to the province was not a surprise, considering his previous tenure in Niş as well as the fact that he was one of the masterminds along with Fuad Pasha behind the *nizamnâme* (codification). There was a strong Bulgarian nationalist movement that developed in the province around this time. With the covert help of the Russian Empire, Bulgarian nationalists were preparing to make a bid for their independence. Bulgarian youth were sent to the Russian Empire for education, and some of the students came back with books, pamphlets and religious treatises published in Bulgarian language that called for rebellion against and independence from the Ottoman empire. The message in written texts was a call for Bulgarians to unite and free themselves of Ottoman rule. Since one of his first posts had been in nearby Serbia, Midhat Pasha was aware of the challenge he was about to confront. He emphasized the necessity of education and print media to soften the effect of Russian and Bulgarian nationalism’s propaganda in the province. Milen Petrov stresses that “Midhat Pasha’s reform policies cannot be evaluated as if they took place in a vacuum, outside the institutional structures of Ottoman policies or the social milieu of Danube provinces.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*; Çelik, “Tanzimat the Balkans”; Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside”; Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*; İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi (Karton Kapak)*.

⁵⁵ BOA. İ.MMHŞ. 1245 in Milen Petrov, 184.

⁵⁶ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside.”

After four successful years in the Danube Province, Midhat Pasha was summoned back to Istanbul where he was assigned as the head of the *Şûrâ-yı Devlet* (Council of State). While he was in the Danube Province, Fuad Pasha's death had shifted power dynamics in Istanbul. Ali Pasha was now the grand vizier and most powerful man in the hierarchy of Ottoman bureaucracy, but he had disagreements with Midhat Pasha on the matters of *Şûrâ-yı Devlet*.⁵⁷ Davison analyzes the appointment of Midhat Pasha to this position as an attempt of Ali Pasha to kill the popularity of Midhat Pasha with reform.⁵⁸ In his father's biography, Midhat Pasha's son, Ali Haydar, revealed the power struggle his father had with Ali Pasha. Apparently, Midhat Pasha realized that his usefulness was limited because his authority over financial matters of the state was constantly overruled by Ali Pasha. As he did several times in his career, Midhat Pasha insisted on tendering his resignation.⁵⁹ Instead of accepting it, Ali Pasha, once again, sent him to yet another problematic province so that he could implement Tanzimat reforms that were proven to help augment the central government's power.⁶⁰

The province of Baghdad posed a real challenge to the Ottoman statesmen. Local tribes, the harsh climate, and its distance from the center all made it harder for Midhat Pasha to implement the Tanzimat reforms. However, Midhat Pasha was determined to carry out the reforms in the province. He was familiar with the region due to his previous experience as an inspector in the Arab provinces. He observed that what local people sought was just rule and wealth. Hence, he chose security and agricultural reforms as a priority for his reform agenda. As in the Danube Province, he emphasized the value of education and built schools, roads, and bridges. His achievements in the province impressed one of the advisors of Shah Nasser al-Din, the Qajar ruler of neighboring Iran. Amin ul-Dulleh in his report to the Shah, stated:

⁵⁷ "MİDHAT PAŞA - TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi," 8.

⁵⁸ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 154-57.

⁵⁹ Midhat Pasha resigned while he was governorship of Baghdad and when he was the head of Sublime Porte.

⁶⁰ Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha; a Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder*, 47.

Seemingly, the governmental concepts and principles of governance which have been implemented during the mission of Midhat Pasha that has increased the income of the Ottoman Empire from Iraq to an amount equal to the entire tax collected in Iran as well as the reforms in the army, schools, shipbuilding, textiles, etc. all in have skipped the sublime vision of His Majesty who has only noted down the hoisting of a red flag at the top of the troops tents.⁶¹

The year 1871, however, marked another windfall period in Midhat Paşa's career. After Ali Pasha died that year, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, the eminent nemesis of Midhat Pasha and a conservative Tanzimat reformer, took control of the Sublime Porte as grand vizier. Doğan Gürpınar explains the process: "Mahmud Nedim endeavored to the incumbent bureaucratic caster and to pack the bureaucracy with an alternate group of officials."⁶² The feud between Mahmud Nedim Pasha and Midhat Pasha resulted in Midhat Pasha's resignation from his Baghdad governorship. Nedim Pasha strove to remove other progressive reformers like Midhat Pasha from their ranks and positions in the bureaucracy. When Midhat Pasha returned to Istanbul, he was surrounded by opponents of Mahmud Nedim Pasha. Despite Mahmud Nedim Pasha's attempt to send him back to provinces, after an audience with the sultan, Midhat Pasha was appointed as grand vizier, but he only remained in that position for three months (July 1872-October 1872) due to conflicts with the palace and the Russian ambassador Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev.⁶³ In 1873, he was sent off into a virtual exile as Governor of Salonica, but again, after only three months, Mahmud Nedim Pasha - thinking that he could control Midhat Pasha better if he were in Istanbul- summoned him back to the capital and appointed him as Minister of Justice. Shortly afterwards Midhat Pasha petitioned the sultan to accept his resignation within the same year.

⁶¹ Hassan Hazrati, Reflections of Midhat Pasha's Modernist Thoughts and Practices among Iranian Political Elites, *Academic Journal History and Idea*, Volume 2, Number 7, December 2015, 37-38.

⁶² D. Gürpınar, *Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860-1950* / D. Gürpınar / Palgrave Macmillan, 173, accessed May 29, 2019, <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9781137334206>.

⁶³ Yazici, *Midhat Pasha(1822-1884)'s Policies vs. N. P. Ignatiev (1832-1908)'s Pan-Slav Mission*, 62.

When the sultan asked for the reason of his resignation, Midhat Pasha's reply revealed his views on how his nemesis Nedim Pasha had corrupted the Ottoman administration. Midhat Pasha used his resignation to influence public opinion in the capital as well as gain public support for himself and the constitutional government. His letter to the palace was published in many of Istanbul's newspapers that were read by a public that was already discontent with the current state of affairs of the empire:

Your Excellency, -- My request is not based upon any personal motives. I have nothing but praise for all my colleagues, both high and low; but the motives which have forced me to this decision are, as I have already set out in my petition, the difficulties of the position in which we are placed, that is to say, our finances are in hopeless condition, the civil administration is utterly disorganized, and the state of the army is beyond description; all this compromised the security and credit of the country, and the non-Mussulman element loudly proclaims the intention that it long ago formed of placing itself under foreign protection. While the faults and mistakes made twenty years ago have prepared the way for the disasters which are now showing themselves in rapid succession, and which are sufficient to employ all our time, our foreign policy has also been misdirected, the feeling of the Powers have changed towards us, and they entertain hostile intentions towards our country to such a degree that the most friendly Power has lost all confidence in us. It is impossible for us not to deplore the unfortunate results in which this line of conduct cannot fail to produce for Turkey, and for the faithful servants of His Majesty. -- that of being unable to see the future clearly before them. In view of the attitude adopted by his Highness the Grand Vizier, which gives reason to hope that this state of affairs may be remedied, I feel compelled to devote my feeble efforts and support to those duties which are specifically incumbent on me in the existing crisis through which the Ministry is passing. But as I have explained in the petition which I have already sent in, I have passed the greater portion of my life in provincial service, and have never taken part in such delicate and complicated affairs, and am therefore compelled to ask you to have the goodness to intercede with His Majesty to accept my resignation.⁶⁴

Later on, when Midhat Pasha paid a visit to Sir Henry Elliot, the eminent English diplomat in Istanbul, Midhat Pasha elaborated on the endemic problems in the Ottoman administration and offered his extensive ideas about how to remedy these problems:

The Empire was being rapidly brought to destruction; corruption had reached a pitch that it had never before attained; the service of the State was starved, while untold millions were poured into the Palace, and the provinces were being ruined by the uncontrolled exertions of governors who purchased their appointments at the Palace, and nothing could save the country but a complete change of system. The only remedy that I could perceive, lay first, in securing a control over the sovereign by making the Ministers—and especially as regarded the finances—responsible to a national popular Assembly; and secondly in making this Assembly truly national, by doing away all distinctions of classes

⁶⁴ Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha; a Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder*, 68.

and religions, and by placing the Christians on a footing of entire equality with the Mussulmans; thirdly, by decentralization and by the establishment of provincial control over the governors.⁶⁵

Midhat Pasha has been singled out for his understanding of the sultan's power and representation of the people. As one of the writers of the *Kanun-i Esasi* (Ottoman Constitution)⁶⁶, Midhat Pasha understood the essential role of the people's participation in the administrative process. Unlike other men of Tanzimat, Midhat Pasha believed that not only the state, but also the society should be considered when reforming the empire. Although Midhat Pasha was a prominent force in imperial politics in Istanbul, he was probably alone in seeing a constitutional government as the only solution for a viable Ottoman state. Thus, perhaps because he did not have the support of his peers in the center, he focused his energies on improving the security, life and wealth of people in the provinces through concrete measures. He used newspapers to educate provincial subjects about the reform progress and augment their ability to understand and participate in politics. Midhat Pasha believed that it was only with peoples' support and conscientious participation in imperial politics in the form of a constitutional regime, that the Ottoman state could secure its future.

Midhat Pasha's appointments to the Danube, Baghdad, and Syrian provinces were not received as irrelevant events by the local population and different political actors both in the provinces and in the center. He founded local councils in the provinces whilst advocating the creation of a larger constitutional government to assure empire-wide participation of the people. In his view, this would ensure the people's trust in the empire and alleviate the threat of nationalism. Midhat Pasha believed in the idea of Ottomanism as viable check against break-away nationalisms. The idea of Ottomanism was a popular political ideology in the 1870s and 1880s that aimed to ensure the loyalty of all subjects to the Ottoman state and the fatherland

⁶⁵ Midhat, 80.

⁶⁶ The first Ottoman constitution was declared in the year of 1876.

(*vatan*). Ottoman citizenship was intended to replace religious, ethnic, and linguistic divisions among the empire's diverse subjects. This was the fundamental core of his governorships in the provinces and his effort to create a constitutional regime in the center. Throughout his career, Midhat Pasha did not only carry out imperial reforms in the provinces, he also had to contest local political actors and as well as political factions of the Ottoman bureaucracy in Istanbul that threatened the implementations of the Tanzimat reforms. The outspoken pasha, therefore, made a lot of enemies along the way. His life trajectory across the empire offers rich examples of how shifting dynamics in the center and provinces could trigger seething personal conflicts and vendettas among the bureaucrats. Hence, his diverse career trajectory in the empire will uncover different lenses into the Tanzimat period. Ironically, these rivals, propaganda in newspapers, and article 113 of the constitution, lead to Midhat Pasha's own tragic end.⁶⁷

Sultan Abdülaziz was found dead in his room in 1876. Four years after his death, sultan Abdülhamid who had been waiting patiently to bring Midhat Pasha down, decided to conduct an investigation into the death of the dethroned sultan. The key suspects portrayed as the masterminds of the so-called coup were: Midhat Pasha, Mahmud Celaledin, Nuri Pasha, Shaykh al-Islam Hayrullah Efendi and late Hüseyin Avni Pasha. Midhat Pasha was the governor of Izmir at that time. He was duly arrested and brought to Istanbul for show trial *Yıldız*. Tickets for the trial were sold to the public, whereas the government provided free tickets for senior officials, military officers, and diplomats. Those who were not fortunate enough to get a ticket followed the coverage of the trial in the newspapers, which described it as an unprecedented historic event.⁶⁸ The reign of sultan Abdülhamid was notorious for

⁶⁷ This article was added by Midhat Pasha himself as a compromise for the promulgation of the constitution. The article allowed the sultan to remove or exile dangerous people. The sultan Abdülhamid who felt threatened by the political views of Midhat Pasha did not abstain from using his right. 6/16/2019 1:46:00 AM 6/16/2019 1:46:00 AM

⁶⁸ Avi Rubin, *Ottoman Rule of Law and the Modern Political Trial: The Yıldız Case*, Reprint edition (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2018), 104.

censorship in printed media.⁶⁹ Thus, the editors and journalists were cautiously aware that there were lines which they should not cross while reporting the trial. The sultan was determined to turn the trial into a performance which underlined value of the rule of law for the loyal people but spread fear for dissidents. Though Midhat Pasha founded important newspapers in the provinces to legitimate progressive change and encourage the empire's diverse populations' larger participation in Ottoman political culture by providing them accurate information in newspapers. However, he saw how Abdülhamid and his team used newspapers for spreading disinformation and disenfranchising subjects.

The semi-official newspaper *Vakit* (Time) emphasized that “the moral effect of this trial will last forever” and elucidated the process of the trial by explaining the implementation of a new Code of Criminal Procedure: “All the interrogative measures were conducted in order to reveal the truth, and no other goals was present. Similarly, nothing was done outside the limits sets by the law.”⁷⁰ Another newspaper which aimed at justify the *Yıldız* Trial and praised the Hamidian justice was *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* (Interpreter of the Truth). The editor of the newspaper was Ahmed Midhat Efendi who was the former protégée of Midhat Pasha during the latters time in the Danube and Baghdad provinces. Midhat Pasha had appointed Ahmed Midhat Efendi as the editor of the provincial newspaper *Tuna* and *Zevrâ*.⁷¹ A twist of fate brought these two men to stand on the opposite sides of a historical moment. In *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, Ahmed Midhat Efendi took a hostile attitude towards Midhat Pasha. He claimed that “The public opinion held Midhat's plea for asylum a hideous conduct that violated the sovereignty of the Ottoman state.”⁷² The newspaper was also responding to claims from

⁶⁹ Erdağ Göknar and Kent F. Schull, “Yasak/Banned from Sultan Abdülhamid II to President Erdoğan: Reappropriating the Past and the Subjectivities of Censorship,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 5, no. 2 (2018): 9–12.

⁷⁰ Rubin, *Ottoman Rule of Law and the Modern Political Trial*, 109..

⁷¹ Rubin, 111.

⁷² Rubin, 110.

foreign newspapers about the trial. It argued that “There was no ground for the argument that Istanbul’s newspapers do not enjoy freedom of expression when covering the trial.”⁷³

Midhat Pasha knew about the accusations made by Ahmed Midhat Efendi. In fact, during the interrogation, Midhat Pasha rejected the accusation of Ahmed Midhat Efendi. He accused Midhat Pasha of corruption and pro-Greek activity adversely directed against the Ottoman state.⁷⁴ On July 8, 1881, The Court of Cassation confirmed the decision of the lower court and sentenced Midhat Pasha to death.⁷⁵ However, upon the intervention of the British ambassador, and realizing the incurrence of possible political damage when killing Midhat Pasha, Sultan Abdülhamid decided not to go through with the death penalty and instead sent Midhat Pasha to prison in Taif (in today’s Saudi Arabia). Avi Rubin gives the aim of the *Yıldız* Trial: “The court did not discuss the question of constitutionalism or any other theme of broad political significance; rather, it concentrated its efforts on eliminating threat through establishing Midhat’s criminal guilt.”⁷⁶ In 1884, at the age of 62, Sultan Abdülhamid ordered the murder of Midhat Pasha in his cell in Taif. It was announced that he died of a natural death.⁷⁷

Ismail Kemal Bey, one of the members of Midhat Pasha’s cadre, put his experience with the pasha into words: “Midhat Pasha was absolute genius for administration.” The pasha was both a representative but also a unique example of the Tanzimat Era. Kemal Karpaz asserted that “Midhat became the voice of a rising middle class, comprised of local elites and civil bureaucracy.”⁷⁸ He was unique in his understanding of people’s representation in the administration. In his article, “The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey” which was published

⁷³ Rubin, 111.

⁷⁴ Rubin, 112.

⁷⁵ Rubin, 141.

⁷⁶ Rubin, 142.

⁷⁷ Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha; a Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder*.

⁷⁸ Kemal H. Karpaz, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3, no. 3 (1972): 267–68.

in Europe in 1876, Midhat Pasha criticized some reformers for “carrying out reforms without a vivifying and regenerative principle, which would have cemented their people’s union.”⁷⁹ Newspapers are the most significant medium he used to build his career, but ironically, they were also behind for his downfall. In the end, Midhat Pasha failed in the game of political survival, and the Tanzimat reforms did not achieve their ultimate objective of preventing the Ottoman empire from collapsing. Nevertheless, the legacy of the era and of Midhat Pasha resonate in Turkey of today.

1.3 On Newspapers of the Tanzimat Era

The reforms of the Tanzimat era were initiated in a new political culture. In this new era of politics, leaders of the Tanzimat had to focus on conceiving, carrying out, and justifying the need for these reforms to different groups in Ottoman society as well as to European powers. Apart from the bland content of archival sources, the Tanzimat Era consist of a new kind of source that better reflects the spirit and angst of the time and imbues the political culture with a new type of élan –newspapers. Printed media flourished often by the initiative of the government during this period. Newspapers did not only deliver news to the public, but they were also used by the state to convey their political agendas and legitimate their reforms, often by spelling out what latter meant for individual subjects in different parts of the empire. In time, private newspapers led by Ottoman opposition intellectuals, such as the Young Ottomans invigorated Ottoman political life.⁸⁰ As Riedler points out, “in the 1870s a critical press had become a normal feature of political life in the capital, and authorities had their difficulties in keeping it under control.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Pasha, *The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey*.

⁸⁰ Ceride-i Havadis (William Churchill, 1840), Tecüman-ı Ahval (Agah Efendi, 1860), Tasvir-i Efkar (Namık Kemal-Şinasi, 1862, 1865), Muhbir (Ali Suavi, 1866), Hürriyet (Ziya Paşa-Namık Kemal, 1868), Basiret (Ali, 1869)

⁸¹ Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire*, 46.

During the Greek Revolution (1821-31) Ottoman bureaucrats witnessed the power of newspapers could have over their empire's sovereignty. The exclusive coverage of the revolution in international newspapers weakened the cause of the Ottoman Empire in international public opinion. Sultan Mahmud II and Ottoman bureaucrats were convinced that an official newspaper was crucial. This laid the foundation of the first Ottoman official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi* (Chronicle of Events) which was established in 1831.⁸² The newspaper was published weekly and also sent out to the provinces. The head of the paper was state chronicler *Vakaniüvis* Esat Efendi. The paper was published in several languages: Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, and Greek. Its aim was to reach the various groups in Ottoman society.⁸³ The first edition of the paper had eight pages and had subheadings such as “*Umur-ı Dahiliye*”, “*Mevad-ı Askeriye*”, “*Umur-ı Hariciyye*”, “*Fünun*”, “*Tevcihat-ı İlmiye*”, and “*Ticaret ve Esar*”.⁸⁴ However, despite initial ambitions, the newspaper was printed only fifteen to twenty times per year on average.⁸⁵ Still, the Ottoman press blossomed by the 1860s. The first unofficial newspaper *Tercüman-ı Ahval* was published in 1860, and the paper *Tasvir-i Efkar* was published in 1862. *Muhbir* was an outstanding newspaper critical of the sultanate and Ottoman government, and first published in 1866. Unlike the official newspaper, *Tercüman-ı Ahval*, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, and *Muhbir* played a significant role in fostering an independent, well-informed public opinion in Ottoman society. They provided a platform for the public and government-critical intellectuals to discuss different policies of the empire.

An avid writer in his own right, Midhat Pasha understood well how to influence the public, the foreign entities, as well as Istanbul political audiences with newspapers. His appreciation of the power of printed media influenced his governorships in the provinces and his political power in Istanbul during the Tanzimat Era. The pasha put together cadres of

⁸² Demir, “Osmanlı’da Basının Doğuşu ve Gazeteler”, 57-88.

⁸³ Demir, 63.

⁸⁴ Topuz, 100 Soruda Türk Basın Tarihi, 6.

⁸⁵ Demir, “Osmanlı’da Basının Doğuşu ve Gazeteler”, 62.

experts to establish the newspapers and used them as an instrument for carrying out his reforms in the provinces. When Fuad and Ali Pasha considered banning the circulation of the opposition newspaper *Hürriyet* (Freedom), it was Midhat Pasha who argued against the idea and their interfering with the free circulation of newspapers; as he said with regard to the *Hürriyet* case: “The government should take the critics and their scolding into consideration and correct their mistakes. If we follow this way, it would prevent further attacks against us in international newspapers or undermine their chastisement against us. This is the only solution I know.”⁸⁶ In addition to that, during the negotiations of the constitution with the Sultan Abdülhamid, Midhat Pasha convinced the sultan to legislate a code in order to ensure the freedom of press in the constitution.⁸⁷

When he arrived to the provinces, one of the first things he built and founded was a printing house and a newspaper. In the Danube Province, he ordered the publication of newspaper *Tuna* (Danube), and while he was in the Baghdad Province, he established the newspaper *Zevrâ* (The Tigris, Baghdad, Freedom). An important part of Tanzimat reforms aimed to create printing presses for every province.⁸⁸ Midhat Pasha was a pioneer for publishing the first provincial newspaper in the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹ Apart from the obvious educational mission of the papers, they are also regarded as personal diaries of Midhat Pasha’s time during his provincial governorships.⁹⁰ The *Tuna* and *Zevrâ* newspapers had similar structures and page numbers; they both had four pages. While two pages of the newspapers were in Ottoman Turkish, the other two pages were in local languages, such as Bulgarian or Arabic. Ahmed Midhat Efendi, a protégée of Midhat Pasha, was the editor of the newspapers

⁸⁶ Taha Toros Arşivi, Dosya No: 106-Midhat Paşa. Not: Gazetenin "Geçmişte", <http://earsiv.sehir.edu.tr:8080/xmlui/handle/11498/25261?show=full>

⁸⁷ Florian Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire: Conspiracies and Political Cultures* (Routledge, 1744), 47–52.

⁸⁸ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 212.

⁸⁹ Uygur Kocabaloğlu, *Tuna Vilayet Gazetesi*, Ankara Dergi, 143.

⁹⁰ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 218.

in the Danube Province as well as later in Baghdad Province. Their mindset and perspectives about the locals, together with views on the domestic struggle with local political actors, and competitions with international powers in the regions, were reflected in the newspapers through their choice of published stories. Therefore, exploring newspapers and considering what sort of news were published, how political feuds between the pashas were described, and how the words and language of Tanzimat were used, will all offer exclusive glimpses into the new political discourse of the Tanzimat era. Studying the life and work of Midhat Pasha and his network of reformers that he took with him to different sides of the empire, to conceive of and carry out reforms, offers a unique view into the political culture of the Tanzimat Era.

Chapter II

The Danube Province and The Newspaper *Tuna*

The following chapter will focus on Midhat Pasha's centralization and modernization efforts in the Danube Province. Because it was here that the Ottomans first conceived and successfully implemented wide-ranging reforms, the Danube Province played a significant role as precursor to the broadening of the Tanzimat reforms into other Ottoman provinces. The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of how Midhat Pasha successfully implemented the Tanzimat reforms in a province which had a non-Muslim majority through the perusal of the provincial newspaper, *Tuna*. Indeed, one of the main challenges Midhat Pasha experienced in the Danube Province were Christian missionary activities and the Pan Slavic propaganda of the Russian Empire as well as neighboring Serbia. Therefore, first, I will discuss how Midhat Pasha's decisions and actions can elucidate his style as provincial governor. Second, I will focus on close reading of the newspaper *Tuna* in order to reveal Midhat Pasha's mindset and his handpicked team regarding the needs of the local people and the province.



زهرتاك ب. يادگار: طرہ ولایت عثمانیہ سرحدت پاشا وارثانہ معیت

بر وقتہ شاعر: یکیش زمان اولوکه خیالی جهان دگر دیش ایدی: شیمدی: یکیش زمان اولوکه خیالی جیم اولوکه دنگ لازمدر. شو کوردیکتور نوحه واضح قانون اسمی، شیبید حریت مدمت پاشا مرموک طوئه والیکسند
الکازان ولایت ایل برار آلبردی، قومو طراقی در. نامق کال پک « طوئه کندن کیده و سه وطن کندن کیده » دیهرک بو ولایتک فیت و همیتی افاده ایلمش ایدی. اولوچا کوزدل ولایتک عاقبت فیجیمه و آیه سته ورم ایل و لایات باقی سته
التحاف ایله دیکی شو اولانده ادواح اسلامدن روس پاشک اگ زاده متاخر و معذب اولاجق مدمت پاشا مرمودر. چولکه طوئا باقیه سرایتین « استانبول » واپورینه پندریلرک خارج و طله. یورک و طیزورلکی ایون سطرده انعام
اولو تورکن: « کاهنک زمان نه بو سرائیری ونده شسرتانو افندی ریته کورده مرمه پیکم » دینه چک قدر و طنگ حوالپ فیجیمه سی کشف ایلمش واسباب استخلاصه کشیت یولنده فدای شرف و جان ایلمش اولان اورد.
مدمت پاشاک طوئه والیکسی ۱۲۸۱ تاریننده پاشا دیکی ایون بورسم الی سته ک بریلاکارور.

اللی سنه اول زرده ایدلش؟ شیمدی زرده یز؟

Figure 1: Midhat Pasha and His Entourage in Danube Province⁹¹

2.1 Tanzimat in the Provinces

Many Tanzimat reformers understood that the survival of the Ottoman Empire could no longer be sustained without embracing the changes in state and society. Their intensified effort to implement state-led reform and political change in the Empire was met with various challenges in the distant provinces as well as in the capital, Istanbul. Nonetheless, Fuad Pasha and Ali Pasha were determined to extend the scope of Tanzimat reforms to cover the provinces. By enacting the Provincial Law of 1864, Fuad Pasha and Ali Pasha aimed to re-organize administrative units in the provinces in a discerning and prudent manner. Before codifying the law, Fuad Pasha personally visited the province of Syria, and instructed Cevdet Pasha and other trusted inspectors to prepare reports on how the provinces were being administrated. At this time, Midhat Pasha was the governor of Nish.⁹²

⁹¹ Taha Toros Arşivi, Dosya No: 106- Midhat Pasha

⁹² Before his tenure in Nis, he served in Damascus and Aleppo in the year of 1850 and Silistsra, Vidin and Turnova in the years of 1855 and 1856 as an inspector.

His achievements of successfully implementing reforms in a short period of time attracted the attention of Istanbul, where leading political actors became interested in his administrative skills. Fuad Pasha and Ali Pasha recalled Midhat Pasha back to Istanbul in order to work together with him to prepare the Provincial Law. The law broadened the authority of governors, who henceforth could exercise power more freely over provincial matters. The administrative units of provinces were also re-organized as *vilayet* (province), *livâ* (brigade), *kazâ* (sub province/cantons), and *karye* (communes).⁹³ Each of these units had their own *idâre meclisi* (council of administration). There were, moreover, four elected members on the council, two Muslim and two non-Muslim members. The new privy council were headed by the respective provinces' governor. In addition to the new councils, which fulfilled mainly administrative functions, new courts were established to decide on judicial, criminal, and trade matters.⁹⁴

Fuad Pasha, Cevdet Pasha and Midhat Pasha were the engineers of the new Provincial Law. When *Meclis-i Vâlâ* (The Grand Council of State) passed the law, the new *nizâm-nâme* was declared in the official newspaper *Takvîm-i Vekâyî* (The Chronicle of Events). In his memorandum, Fuad Pasha emphasized the necessity of mounting a trial for the reforms in the provinces. He defined the Tanzimat reforms as “a form of administration corresponding altogether to the needs of the country, to the customs of the population, and to the demands of the concept of civilization, which presses upon the Empire from all directions.”⁹⁵ Heeding this conceptualization, the men of the Tanzimat prioritized a new form of local order and sent out inspectors to observe corruption and other administrative, social, and economic problems

⁹³ Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu “Bir Belge: Yerel Yönetim Metinleri (III) ve Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi” in *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler*, (Cilt 5, Sayı 2, Mart 1996), 69.

⁹⁴ M. Seyitdanlıoğlu, “Bir Belge: Yerel Yönetim Metinleri (III) ve Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi” in *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler*, (Cilt 5, Sayı 2, Mart 1996), 69-71.

⁹⁵ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, 157. Another writer of the law, Cevdet Pasha also highlighted the diversity of the empire in his reports. He argued that when lawmakers and bureaucrats were re-organizing the administration, they ought to remember that each region of the empire had varits own distinctive structure and features.

existing in the provinces. They introduced territorial regulations based on the individual needs of the different provinces, such as the Danube, Bosnia, and Konya provinces. This approach suggests that the Tanzimat reformers were of the opinion that the best way to extend the reforms successfully to the provinces was by considering and addressing diverse domestic challenges. The reforms pledged equality to all the subjects of the Empire and were aimed at centralizing the Empire by enforcing the loyalty of provincial actors and citizens. The reformers initiated the first model of reforms in the Balkans, where foreign powers meddled in the Empire's affairs and waves of nationalism threatened to shatter the unity and security of the Ottoman Empire.

In the era of centralization, Ottoman bureaucrats greatly improved the ways and methods of provincial administration. İlber Ortaylı points out that whereas the construction of roads and railways and the laying of foundations for empire-wide telegraphy and postal services served the aim of centralization, it also changed the composition of the administrative units of the Empire.⁹⁶ In addition to that, the urgent need for reforms on infrastructure constituted major points of focus the provincial administration had to address in respective individual municipalities.⁹⁷ The Provincial Law of 1864 likewise expanded the authority of provincial governors. The governor's households were comprised of officials such as *defterdar* (head of provincial treasury), *mektubçu* (chief secretary), *umur-u nafia memuru* (officer of public works), *ticaret ve ziraat memuru* (officer of trade and agriculture), and *müfettiş-i hükkam* (inspector of judge). In some provinces like the Danube and Bosnia provinces, the official for foreign affairs (*umûr-u hariciyye memuru*) was also part of the administrative unit. In addition to the High Councils, local councils were founded for each administrative unit. Central to the imperial interests in the respective provinces, the governor

⁹⁶ İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri (1840-1880)*, 3rd ed. (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2018), 29.

⁹⁷ Ortaylı, 31.

led the local councils. These councils issued decisions on administration, financial, trade, and agricultural matters for the province.⁹⁸

The authority of the governor and the local councils rested on the reiterated power of the center. Hence, it was vital for the governors to cultivating personal relations on the ground whilst network broadly to other political actors in the center if they wanted to consolidate their power in the provinces. Also noteworthy is that Tanzimat reforms reconstructed the authority of the governor and the army commander (*ser- 'asker*) as two separate entities. This division of authority between two positions was designed as a measure to provide checks on the abuse of power in the provinces. Indeed, while the two positions were designed to be egalitarian, the governor was reliant on the cooperation of the army commander in order to implement security measures.⁹⁹ The Sublime Porte exploited this dependence to exert control over the power of political figures in the provinces. For example, in Syria, when Midhat Pasha was in disagreement with Istanbul and the army commander regarding the implementation of reforms, the Sublime Porte increased the power and authority of the army commander to constraint Midhat Pasha's influence in the Syrian province.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, in the Baghdad province, the Sublime Porte bestowed more power on the governor Müşir Namık Pasha in order for him to be able to assert control over both of these two positions.¹⁰¹

The men of the Tanzimat counterintuitively founded local councils in order to implement the reforms efficiently. Local councils were not conceived to be a platform for the common, local people to be involved in the decision-making process. İlber Ortaylı argues that both the electoral system and the stipulation of a minimum income required of a council

⁹⁸ Ortaylı, 62–63.

⁹⁹ Ortaylı, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Midhat Pasha was the governor of Syria between 1878-1880. Najib E. Saliba, "The Achievements of Midhat Pasha as Governor of the Province of Syria, 1878-1880," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9, no. 3 (1978): 307–23.

¹⁰¹ Ahmet Nuri Sinaplı, *Devlete, Millete Beş Padişah Devrinde Kıymetli Hizmetlerde Bulunan Şeyhül Vüzera, Serasker Mehmed Namık Paşa* (Istanbul, A.N. Sinaplı, 1987), 132-135.

candidate rather suggest that participation in the local councils were reserved for a particular class of provincial society.¹⁰² Consequently, the provincial administration was made up of local political elites and appointed bureaucrats. Unlike other provincial governors, Midhat Pasha insisted that the local councils should enable the local people's participation in the political process. As a champion of constitutional government, he believed that the participation of local people in the politics and administration of the provinces, via the councils, was a significant venue through which they could be educated on the benefits and values Ottoman politics had for them. Midhat Pasha believed that by directly demonstrating how Ottoman administration benefitted local subjects through their participation and cooperation participated and with the councils, the central government could win the hearts and minds of its subjects throughout the entire realm. At the same time, as Engelhardt, the nineteenth century French historian, argues, the local councils served the purpose of preventing the intervention of international powers in Ottoman administrative politics since the council members were made up of both Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Therefore, the administrative councils served to legitimate the governors' decisions on the administrative and security matters based on local consensus while preemptively excluding the intervention of outside parties given that the needs of *all* local communities were represented by the councils.¹⁰³

2.2 A Testing Ground: Emergence of the Danube Province

In 1864, after the Tanzimat reformers in the center introduced the new “Vilayet Law” (province law), word spread to the city of Ruse that the “indefatigable man” Midhat Pasha was going to be the new governor of the local administrative unit.¹⁰⁴ Ruse was chosen as the center of the newly reorganized province which the government in Istanbul called the Danube

¹⁰² Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri (1840-1880)*, 97.

¹⁰³ Edouard-Philippe Engelhardt, *Tanzimat ve Türkiye*, trans. Ali Reşad, 2nd ed. (Kaknüs Yayınları, 2017), 98–100.

¹⁰⁴ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside,” 12.

Province, “*Tuna Vilayeti*”.¹⁰⁵ Midhat Pasha’s appointment to govern the province highlights Istanbul’s choosing it as a “testing ground” for the implementation of the administrative, military and economic reforms of the Tanzimat. When Midhat Pasha and his cosmopolitan cadre arrived in the region, they immediately set out to implement reforms committed to the supra-nationalist, Ottomanism ideal.

The establishment of the Danube Province in 1864 as a laboratory of wider Tanzimat reforms was noted in an official document: “The useful lessons learned through our experience there [Danube Province], would be applied to other places [in the empire] in a very short order.”¹⁰⁶ What kind of factors made the province an ideal testing ground for the reform movement? Certainly, the struggle and conflicts of the Ottoman Empire with its foreign competitors, the social and economic settings and geographic surroundings of the Danube province, as well as transformations in the domestic political processes made the province an ideal site to experiment with new policies that if successful could be applied to other parts of the empire. Agriculture and trade were the two major economic activities in the Danubian region. The province had fertile and flat lands which were ideal for agriculture. The Danube River was a key component not only to the province’s flourishing agriculture, but also – and importantly, to the trade coming to and from the region. The river emanates from a spring in the German Alps and forms into one of Europe’s largest rivers and passes through several important European cities before its estuary empties into the Danube. Given these advantageous conditions, the Danube province was densely populated.¹⁰⁷ In addition to the territorial and geographic advantages, in 1857, the Ottoman Empire had signed an agreement with the British Empire for the construction of an Istanbul-Edirne-Shumnu-Rusçuk railway line, directly connecting the Danube region to the center. Notably, because of its geopolitical

¹⁰⁵ Tuna Vilayeti was comprised of Ruse, Silistra, Vidin, and Nis.

¹⁰⁶ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside,” 184.

¹⁰⁷ Çelik, “Tanzimat the Balkans,” 27.

importance, which brought prosperity to the region, the Danube province also found itself in a “security quadrangle” where the Ottoman Empire had to defend its interests in the Eastern European region against its European rivals as well as former Ottoman territories like the Serbian state in the Balkans.¹⁰⁸ All of these factors played an important role in the establishment of the Danube Province with Ruse as its center.

The two main denominational groups in the province were the Orthodox Christian Bulgarians and Sunni Muslim Turks. In addition to these, the Danube province was home to Sunni Tatars and Circassians, Roma (Gypsies), Sephardic Jews, Orthodox Romanians and Greeks, as well as small groups of Gregorian Armenians.¹⁰⁹ In his article, “Past, Present, and Future of Turkey,” Midhat Pasha states that the population in the province was about two million. Christian Bulgarians constituted 60-80 percent of the population, forming a strong ethnic majority.¹¹⁰ Given this demography, the Bulgarian national movement shaped the politics of the region in the 1860s. While the Ottoman Empire was struggling with the Bulgarian national uprisings in the region, the Russian Empire, a stark adversary of the Ottoman Empire, was closely monitoring the conditions of Bulgarian Slavs and other Orthodox Christian groups in the region and other parts of the empire often manipulating international opinion against the Ottomans because of their treatment of non-Muslim Ottoman subjects. This brought about the intervention of the international powers in the region who sought to protect interests of the non-Muslim population. In 1860, Mehmed Emin Pasha (1813-1881) and his entourage stated that doctors and priests who travelled from the Russian Empire to the Danubian region encouraged the Bulgarian people to fight for their independence in their reports to the center.¹¹¹ The same reports, moreover, revealed that Mehmed Emin Pasha and

¹⁰⁸ Çelik, 30–31.

¹⁰⁹ Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside,” 66.

¹¹⁰ Pasha, *The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey.*, 3–4.

¹¹¹ Besim Bey, Cevdet Efendi, beylikçi Afif Bey, Pavlaki Efendi, Rum Fotyadi Efendi, Gavril Efendi, Artin Efendi were all members of this group. The inspection started in Varna and continued on in Shumnu, Hazergrad, Toryak, Rusçuk, Zıştovi, Vidin, Lom, Rahova, Çervun, Kutlofça, Berkofça, Şehirköy, Niş, Ürgüb,

Cevdet Pasha were aware of another issue in the region, namely the corruption of Ottoman officials in the administration. The corruption and negligence of Ottoman forces and military officials in the region increased unrest in the society. What is more, instead of working to suppress the unrest and prosecute the criminals, Ottoman officials reportedly accepted bribes from the criminals and bandits. Thus, importantly, Mehmed Emin Pasha's account highlights that the Muslim and non-Muslim officials generally looked out for their own interests in complete defiance of the law.¹¹²

Two other important issues in the region were migration and the issue of the Bulgarian Church. After the Crimean War, there had been a wave Tatar emigration from Crimea to the Danube region, but due to cultural differences that prevented them from assimilating to local society, therefore the settlement of these migrants became both an economic and security issue. As for the issue of religion specifically, Milen Petrov describes the situation as follows: "The Bulgarian Question was the question of obtaining autonomy not of the Bulgarian nation from Ottoman political rule, but of the Bulgarian church from the Greek-dominated ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul."¹¹³ A letter of Khristo Tâpchileshtov, a Bulgarian merchant in Istanbul, provides insight into the perspective of the Bulgarian independence movement:

Let's assume that the non-Muslims in the Turkish empire [sic] were granted political rights tomorrow. What good are those political rights going to be to us, when our spiritual-political head is a Rum [Greek]? Would he not usurp our new rights on behalf of his own people? And would not our enemies be strengthened as a result, so they can oppress and skin us even more thoroughly than they have done in the past?¹¹⁴

The evolution of the religious struggle into a national liberation movement took place within the younger segment of Bulgarian society. While the older generation of Bulgarians

Kuşunlu, Kosova, Borova, Priştine, Kaçanik, Üsküp, Köprülü, İzvor, Prilepe, Manastır, and Vodina. It ended in Selanik; Kadir Acar, *Osmanlı Dönemi'nde Bir İdâri Reform Denemesi: Tuna Vilayeti (1864-1867)*, (Dissertation, Gazi University, 2013), 34.

¹¹² Kadir Acar, 35-36.

¹¹³ Milen V Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868" (UMI Dissertation Services, 2007), 322.

¹¹⁴ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside." 332.

who participated in the church struggle prioritized the representation of Bulgarian community in the Ottoman system, the younger generation aimed to create a fully independent Bulgarian nation-state. At the same time, the Bulgarian community benefitted from the Ottoman Tanzimat reforms and the institution of local councils that allowed them to integrate their community into the Empire's political system. Midhat Pasha approached this issue by appeasing both sides, refraining from making public comments on the issue and instead holding private meetings with both sides to make sure of their loyalty.¹¹⁵

2.3 Midhat Pasha and *Tuna* in the Danube Province

Midhat Pasha's arrival in the province had a different meaning for each of the population groups, but especially for the Bulgarian one. The Bulgarian national movement was at its peak at the time. For the Bulgarians, Midhat Pasha's determination to ensure equal representation of the Muslim and non-Muslim population in the province was a great obstacle for the national struggle. During the Pasha's tenure in the Danube Province, the Bulgarian intellectual milieu praised him for his successful operations and characterized him "as an able but alien administrator."¹¹⁶ Apart from the Bulgarians, who, as I previously showed, felt ambivalent towards Midhat Pasha, there was another actor who was apprehensive about the Pasha's success in the Danube Province: the Russian Ambassador to Istanbul, Nikolai Pavlovic Ignatiev (1832-1908). This apprehensiveness stemmed from the Russian Empire's rivalry and competition for influence with the Ottoman Empire in the region. For Pan-Slavist ideologists with a Russian political background, such as Ignatiev, the Bulgarian region and population were indispensable for the successful creation of Pan-Slavism. Following Midhat Pasha's appointment to the Danube Province, the Russian Empire sent Nikolai Pavlovic Ignatiev to

¹¹⁵ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside." 337-338.

¹¹⁶ Maria N. Todorova, *Scaling the Balkans: Essays in National, Transnational and Conceptual History* (BRILL, 2018), 420-31.

Istanbul to assume the position of ambassador. The Russians' mission was to pressure the Sublime Porte into removing Midhat Pasha.¹¹⁷ At large, Ignatiev and Midhat Pasha took opposite positions in the Danube region's politics, determined by their respective Empire's interests. While Midhat Pasha implemented Ottomanism as an ideology and policy, Ignatiev encouraged the Bulgarians to pursue having an independent Church and – subsequently – country. Thus, two competing ideologies were playing out in shaping the future of the region.

From the beginning of his tenure in the region, Midhat Pasha was cautiously aware of the meddling of the Russian Empire in the Danube Province. The first thing he had constructed as governor was a new printing house to allow for the local production and publication of a newspaper as well as books for schools and religious institutions. This move was inspired by the desire to render the Russian Empire's shipments of books to the Bulgarian people and their sponsoring of education for the Bulgarian youth superfluous. Indeed, Midhat Pasha believed that by printing books and newspaper in the region, it was possible to sever the ties between the Bulgarian people and the Russian Empire. The newspaper that the Pasha founded as part of the Tanzimat reforms in the province was called *Tuna* (Danube). In addition to undercutting the Russian Empire's education efforts, by publishing the *Tuna* newspaper, Midhat Pasha intended to prevent Russian propaganda from spreading heedlessly into the province without the Ottomans refuting it, and to promote the reforms that he implemented in the province by highlighting their benefits and advantages. The success of both Midhat pasha and the *Tuna* newspaper in the Danube Province set an example for the rest of the provincial governors.¹¹⁸ The newspaper *Tuna* was published both in Turkish and Bulgarian, and sixteen other bilingual

¹¹⁷ Çelik, "Tanzimat the Balkans," 36.

¹¹⁸ In 1860s, fifteen other local newspapers were founded. For examples: Bosna in 1866, Firat in 1866, Suriye in 1866, Beyrut in 1867, Girid in 1867, Edirne in 1868, İşkodra in 1868, Konya in 1869, Selanik in 1869, Zevrâ in 1869, Prizren in 1871, Kastamonu in 1872.

newspapers were started in other provinces that featured Ottoman Turkish articles with its side-by-side translation into the local language.¹¹⁹

Midhat Pasha paid special attention to publishing religious books and materials for Bulgarian ceremonies. In doing so, he intended to attenuate the influence the Russian Empire exerted over the Bulgarians living in the Danube province.¹²⁰ In addition to its political purposes, the printing house functioned as a training facility for future intellectuals, both Turkish and Bulgarian employees, who worked at the printing house that published *Tuna*. Some notable figures were Dragon Tsankov, a Bulgarian journalist and the future leader of the liberal party in Bulgaria, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, a Turkish journalist and novelist, and Ivan Čorapčiev, the editor of a Bulgarian pages of *Tuna*. All these individuals were among those people who shaped the language and publishing policy of *Tuna*. In another measure aimed at promoting the Tanzimat reforms and attracting the favor of the local population for the Ottoman presence in the region, Midhat Pasha implemented rehabilitative prison reforms and employed twenty-five prison inmates as cleaners in the printing house. In the same vein, students from *islahhânes* and industry schools were also employed in the printing house. They were trained to learn the craft.¹²¹

The first issue of the newspaper was published on March 8, 1865. The first two pages were in Turkish, and the last two pages were in Bulgarian. The editor of the Turkish portion was Ismail Kemal, whom Midhat Paşa later replaced with Ahmed Midhat Efendi. Ivan Čorapčiev and Stoil Popov were responsible for the Bulgarian part of the newspaper. The first fifty-two issues of the paper cost 40 *kuruş*. In its first year, it was published once a week. According to the newspaper's records, it had 529 subscribers by the fifth edition. By the tenth

¹¹⁹ "TUNA VİLÂYET GAZETESİ (1865–1866) | Ankara Üniversitesi Açık Erişim Sistemi," 26, accessed June 3, 2019, <http://acikarsiv.ankara.edu.tr/browse/3251/>.

¹²⁰ Çelik, "Tanzimat the Balkans," 85.

¹²¹ Çelik, 85.

edition, the number of subscribers had increased to 1300.¹²² Within a year of its existence, the number of subscribers had reached 1500.¹²³ The newspaper published some details about the profile of their subscribers: In Istanbul, they had 800 subscribers, mostly consisting of ambassadors who were interested in the Bulgarian issue, editors of local and international newspapers, and literate Istanbulites who were interested in Ottoman affairs and used the provincial newspaper to stay informed. In addition to those in the center, the newspapers had subscribers in Vienna, Serbia, and in other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, such as Bosnia, Syria, Aleppo, and Erzurum.¹²⁴

The newspaper *Tuna* and the Danube Province were the pioneers of provincial reforms and newspaper publication, and because Midhat Pasha was successful in implementing the Tanzimat reforms in the province, the other provincial officials followed his method elsewhere, largely because the *Tuna* newspaper published articles on his approach to better governance in the province.¹²⁵ In fact, the *Tuna* newspapers reputation for its structure and contextualized reporting earned it recognition from other newspaper, one of which was an Egyptian newspaper which praised the *Tuna* via a letter that the editors printed in one addition of the paper.¹²⁶ Indeed, the *Tuna*'s publishing policy served as an example for the rest of the Ottoman Empire's provincial newspapers.

The *Tuna* newspaper consisted of four sections: *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye* (Special Matters), *Mevâdd-i 'Umûmiyye* (General Matters), *Havâddis-i Hâriciyye* (Foreign News), and *Îlânât* (Announcements). The language of the newspaper was simple and didactic. The stories that

¹²² Çelik, 86.

¹²³ “saye-î şevkât’vaye-î hazret-î şahanede Tuna Vilâyeti’nin teşekkülüyle beraber va’ ve ihdâs olunan Tuna gazetesi vilâyetçe mevkî-i fiil ve icraya konulan nizâmat ve talimat ve sâir bir tâkım kâvâid ve husûsatı nâfiâ ve mütenevviânın fihrist-i âhvalî ve dâhilen ve haricen suret-nûma’yı zuhur olunan vekâyî ve havadis-i euzgarın mir’atı hakâik iştimali olduğundan her tarafça mazhar-ı hüsn-i telakki kabul olarak bugünkü günde bin beşyüzden ziyade müsterîşi olduğu...” Tuna, issue numbers 10 and 47..

¹²⁴ Tuna, issue numbers 136 and 140., Koç Bekir, “Tuna Vilayeti Gazetesi ve içeriğine dair bazı bilgiler (Mart 1865-Mart 1868),” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 34, no. 57 (2015): 126, https://doi.org/10.1501/Tarar_00000000601.

¹²⁵ Tuna, issue number 79.

¹²⁶ Tuna, issue number 51.

were published were chosen based on how much they would appeal to the readers, and it appears that the more staggering stories were more often selected than less sensational ones.¹²⁷ Most of these stories were individual or collective criminal stories which the *Tuna* strategically published in order to showcase to the readers how the rule of law was operating in the Tanzimat Era. In issue number seventeen, the paper announced court cases of previous years and their natures. According to the paper, there were 85 cases on disturbing the peace, 16 cases on bribery, 43 cases on thefts, 8 cases on misconduct in offices, 29 cases on dissident to the government, 2 cases on attempted rape, 8 cases on connivance of killers, 20 cases on stealing official documents, 2 cases on carrying fake ID, 1 case on stealing a vital document, 7 cases on forgery, 547 cases on homicide, 373 cases on robbery, and 6 cases on abduction of girls.¹²⁸ Furthermore, the paper wrote about the deaths and the natures of these deaths, identifying such causes as suicide, strike of lightening and accident in various issues.¹²⁹

In the section *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye*, the *Tuna* delivered news about the novel structure of the province and about the reforms to the local people and officials. Notable here is that the reforms and regulations that Midhat Pasha sought to implement represented totally new concepts and ideas to the provincial officials. Midhat Pasha, having realized the importance of a strong bureaucracy in the provincial administration, made the education and training of officials and local people alike a priority.¹³⁰ In the first issue of *Tuna*, Midhat Pasha explained the significance of the newspaper and printing house:

In order to ensure the security, prosperity and felicity of a population and a country, the most important tasks are establishing good education institutions that extirpate ignorance. The appropriation and circulation of reasons and good education which are based on the principles of a public morality are the results of rules and publication. In our time, typography is the means of disseminating general information and a machine for knowledge production. Hence, in our new province, in addition to new rules, regulations and public works, a printing house is set to be founded in the center of

¹²⁷ Some of those stories: suicide of a grocery seller due to bankruptcy, a young man took his life because a girl who was in love with declined his proposal, a connoisseur beated his apprentice to death because the apprentice was drunk in the daylight. *Tuna*, issue numbers 63, and 131.

¹²⁸ *Tuna*, issue number 17.

¹²⁹ *Tuna*, issues numbers 28, 31, 32, 35.

¹³⁰ Bekir, "Tuna Vilayeti Gazetesi ve içeriğine dair bazı bilgiler (Mart 1865-Mart 1868)," 131.

the province. With the permission of our Sultan, the printing house will be a means for the education and prosperity of the people. The official announcement, literary works, and any books which have the approval of the government will be published both in Turkish and Bulgarian. The printing house will be located in Ruse.¹³¹

The busy itinerary of Midhat Pasha, whose responsibility it was to handle security issues, bandits, appointments and dismissals of officials, organizing the new administration, tax regulations, constructions of roads and railways, agriculture, and the usage of the river Danube, were the main topics covered in the section *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye*. The publication of Midhat Pasha's itinerary which detailed how and where he travelled around the province was directed at both the local people and provincial officials and intended to reassure the addresses that the governor was fulfilling his duties. Seeing the governor in action showed the people that the matters of their prosperity and security were well taken care of by the reformist Pasha. For example, in issue number nineteen, the paper announced to its readers the return of Midhat Pasha: "The excellency Midhat Pasha returned to the center of the province after his twenty hours trip. The pasha investigated constructions of the road routes from *Ruşuk* to *Lofça*, *Tirnovi* and *Shumnu*, and from *Plevne* to *Sofia*, and from *Şumnu* to *Varna*." In addition, the favourable way in which Midhat Pasha was received by the local population sent a message to officials in the provinces who were reluctant to adopt the new reforms and implement the law by considering the benefit of the people. In issue number two, the *Tuna* newspaper published an article that read "When Midhat Pasha visited the Köstence (Romania), he asked the district governors of Varna and Tolcu to join him in order to inspect the pavements of the district and

¹³¹ Bir halkın ve bir memleketin emniyet ve mamuriyeti ve saadet-i hali için ibtida en lazım ve vacip olan tedbir izale-i cehalet ve hüsn-i terbiyet kazıyyeleri olub bunun husulü dahi bir taraftan esbabının ta'mim ve tahsili ve hüsn-i terbiyesi için ahlak ve adat-ı hasenevi icab iden usul ve kavaidin te'sis ve neşri ile vücuda geldiğinden ve asrımızda fenn-i tabaat bu misillu teshilatın vasıta-ı müstekillesi ve umumen vukuf ve malumatın adeta bir makinesi olduğundan vilayet-i cedidenin te'sis buyurulan usul ve nizam-ı adidesinin asar-ı nafiasına ilaveten merkez-i vilayette bir matbaanın dahi vaz' ve ihdasıyla neşr-i ulum ve fününun teshil-i vesaili hususunda şayan-ı musade-i seniyye-i hazret-i padişahi dahi memleket ve ahalinin matlub ve mültezem-i ali olan saadet ve mamuriyeti levazımında olmasıyla derhal iktizası icra olunarak Türkçe ve Bulgarca lisanlarında matbuat-ı resmiyye ve edebiyeye mahsus olmak üzere nefsi Rusçuk'ta açılan matba-i vilayet mezhebçe ve devletçe muzır olmayan her dürlü kütüb ve risailin tab'ına me'zun olduğu gibi..." Tuna, issue number 1.

to assess the situation of the immigrants in the region.”¹³² In issue number twenty-one, the paper wrote that “On his way to Sofia, Midhat Pasha made a stop in Plevna (Bulgaria). After an inspection of the local schools, he ordered the district governor Naib Efendi to amend the situation in the *sıbyan* (define) schools, to employ more teachers, and to increase the number of students.”¹³³

The *Tuna* announced the appointments and dismissals of officials alongside the reasons for these administrative decisions. Corruption, the neglect of duties such as preparing accounts for the center of the province, the infraction of tax rules or simple lack of ability were commonly stated as the reasons for dismissal. In issue number thirty one, dismissal of Affan Bey who was the head of *Niğbolu* sub province was notified: “The head of *Niğbolu* sub province Affan Bey was replaced by Feyzi Efendi. Affan Bey neglected his duty to organize keep of accounts, broke the rule of tenders, and did not use his sources to arrest the killers of a Rum captain who was hiding in the sub province.” Furthermore, the paper announced the dismissal of Ahmed Şakir Efendi, the head of *Minkalya* sub province. The reasons of his dismissal were explained as, Ahmed Şakir Efendi’s cruel treatment of refugees and his misconduct against bandits.¹³⁴ In another issue, the newspaper wrote about an ongoing investigation against son and tax officer of Yunus Agha who was the head of *Radomir* sub province. The son and tax officer of the agha was accused of corruption. Hence, for the sake of investigation, Yunus Agha was dismissed from his position.¹³⁵ As his ultimate goal, Midhat Pasha was determined to assemble a group of bureaucrats who understood the importance of the new reforms and were both able and eager to implement them.¹³⁶

¹³² Tuna, issue number 2.

¹³³ Tuna, issue number 21.

¹³⁴ Tuna, issue number 31.

¹³⁵ Tuna, issue number 154.

¹³⁶ Bekir Koç, “Tuna Vilayeti Gazetesi ve içeriğine dair bazı bilgiler (Mart 1865-Mart 1868),” 133.

The newspaper explained the concepts of modernization and technology such as parliaments, telegraph, railroads, banks, and factories to the people of the province. The vital role of schools and education for the modernization of both country and society were highlighted in almost every issue of *Tuna*. The paper also noted the efforts of the printing house and the governor's contribution to the education system. Further, it announced the books that were published by the printing house in either Bulgarian and Turkish, or both. A Bulgarian calendar, a book called "The Law of Trade" translated to Bulgarian, the volume "The Criminal Law" in Turkish and Bulgarian, a Bulgarian translation of the Bible, and Bulgarian children's books written by Bulgarian teachers were all on the publication list.¹³⁷ Furthermore, in order to showcase the quality of the education and provide profiles of the students who attended these schools, the *Tuna* newspaper published the letters it received from the students.¹³⁸ Remarkably, some Istanbul-based newspapers also published these letters in order to publicize the success of Midhat Pasha's reforms in the Danube province.¹³⁹ As noted earlier, one of the paper's objectives was to prevent the spread of propaganda coming from the Russian Empire and to curb the Bulgarian's struggle for independence and their own nation-state. The paper was attentive to the issue and ensured that it published the official narrative of Midhat Pasha's administration. Reporting the news, *Tuna* newspaper claimed that the Bucharest-based Bulgarian bandits were responsible for the disorder in the Danube Province. It also alleged that it was the Russian Empire who instigated and sponsored them. Indeed, because the paper published the translated versions of letters that the Bulgarian people of the province sent to the printing house, I have found evidence in the pages of *Tuna* that the local Bulgarian population of the Danube Province suffered similarly under bandit attacks and were in favor of securing

¹³⁷ Koç, 130.

¹³⁸ Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside," 31.

¹³⁹ Occasionally, *Takvim-i Vekayi* quoted the news from the newspaper *Tuna*. They published the news about *sıbyan*(primary) schools, *ıslahhane*(youth detention center), and *sanayi* (industrial) schools in order to publicize Midhat Pasha's success in the province.

the protection of the Ottoman Empire against them: “We are living in peace and prosperity in the Danube Province. We have no objection whatsoever to being subjects of the Ottoman Empire.”¹⁴⁰

In the section *Mevâdd-i ‘Umûmiyye*, the newspaper published news pertaining to, or coming from, the rest of the Ottoman Empire. This news pertained mostly to official appointments in the government, the latest news from the councils in the center, reports of epidemic diseases, natural disasters, construction activities around the Empire, and news about the foundation of new institutions.¹⁴¹ In addition, the newspaper editors and staff paid special attention to publicizing activities transpiring elsewhere in the Empire. Since *Tuna* was a successful pilot project, other provincial newspapers followed its structure and sent their first editions to the offices of the *Tuna* for feedback. The editors of the *Tuna* were generally pleased with the growth and progress of other journalistic and press activities in the Ottoman Empire, and they introduced the papers to their readers and talked about their contents. They encouraged other communities around the Empire to publish newspapers and journals of their own.¹⁴² In return for the initial help by the *Tuna*, these new newspapers later functioned as news sources for the *Tuna*’s *Mevâdd-i ‘Umûmiyye* section. In addition to the news from around the Empire, *Tuna* also published fun facts, useful information and statistics that were thought to be informative or of interest for the local people. For example, some issues wrote about the number of schools and students in France; others detailed what sort of accessories the indigenous peoples of New Zealand wore; and others again addressed how best to treat certain illnesses, illustrated the development of pharmacies, or discussed lunar eclipses.¹⁴³ The *Tuna* newspaper also translated news from foreign newspapers such as *La Turquie*, *Le Courier d’Orient* and *Levant Herald* in pieces it published in this section. Furthermore, Istanbul-based newspapers

¹⁴⁰ *Tuna*, issue numbers 169, 178, 180, 181, 190 and 199.

¹⁴¹ *Tuna*, issue numbers 16, 22, 23, 42 and 53.

¹⁴² *Tuna*, issue numbers 53 and 80.

¹⁴³ *Tuna*, issue numbers 16, 20, 21, 22 and 65.

such as *Ruzname-i Ceride-i Havadis*, *Takvim-i Vekayi* and *Tercüman-ı Ahval* or provincial newspapers like *Ruzname-i Vekayi-i Mısriyye* also served as news sources for this section in *Tuna*.

The newspaper also aimed at explaining the involvement of foreign powers and international media in domestic matters such as in the case of Bulgaria. The disagreement between Midhat Pasha and the Russian Ambassador Ignatiev over the situation in Bulgaria informed the negative language and attitude used by the *Tuna* newspaper in addressing the Russian Empire. By following the policy of publishing individual stories to capture the attention of the readers, the newspaper published the accounts of people who migrated to the Russian Empire. These people were portrayed as poor villagers coaxed by the promises of “cunning Russian priests.”¹⁴⁴ The paper printed quotes of people who returned from the horrendous situation in Russian Empire and remorsefully asked for the pardon and mercy of the Sultan. People claimed to have been deceived by the Russian priests who promised them wealth and freedom only to be met with abuse and oppression once they actually made it to the Russian Empire. Despite their disloyalty, the government granted them permission to move back to their native villages in the Danube Province, thus advertising the justness and clemency of the sultan. The paper underlined the importance of the rule of law and stressed the merciful administration in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat Era. Compared to the Russian Empire, the Ottoman administration valued the rule of law and prioritized the needs of the people, ensuring their felicity and fortune.¹⁴⁵

In the section of *Havâddis-i Hâriciyye*, the newspaper reported on the political, military, and economic situations in world politics. The selection and publishing policy for this section were in line with Midhat Pasha’s political understanding. Since the Pasha believed in the

¹⁴⁴ *Tuna*, issue number 33, 34, and 42.

¹⁴⁵ *Tuna*, issue number 4.

vitality of the constitutional government for the Empire, in this section, the paper paid special attention to explaining to its audience how the parliament and the process of decision-making worked across Europe. Due to the proximity of the Danube province to other European empires, the editors of the paper paid close attention to the domestic and international politics of rival polities by following their local newspapers. The speeches and negotiations given by and conducted between European political actors in parliaments, ongoing discussions about capital punishment in the Italian parliament, and labor unrest in France were covered as important topics of interest to the people.¹⁴⁶ In issue number fifty-one, the *Tuna* paper wrote a piece on the House of Commons in British Empire. In the piece, the functions of the house and its official statue were explained. Furthermore, the paper accentuated the importance of the house for the public by emphasizing how it provided a voice for the common people to express their needs and desires.¹⁴⁷

In addition, the paper frequently published material on the American Civil War. The *Tuna* not only covered the current situation in the war, but also explained how this war was responsible for higher prices in the market and how it had shaped the gun industry. Furthermore, the newspaper commented on the individual actors of American politics, such as Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. Their biographies and respective roles in shaping the history of America were narrated at great length.¹⁴⁸ In issue number forty-seven, for example, *Tuna* analyzes the situation in Mexico. It reported that despite the general tendency to create republican regimes in the Americas, Mexico founded an empire. The paper argued that the foundation of an empire in Mexico was an insult and a cruelty to the people of the Americas.¹⁴⁹ Apart from political reports from Europe and America, the paper also presented information on inventions, press activities, or the populations size of cities. In England, for example, the

¹⁴⁶ *Tuna*, issue numbers 9, 20, 24, 48 and 51

¹⁴⁷ *Tuna*, issue number 51.

¹⁴⁸ *Tuna*, issue numbers 2,9,10,11,13,14 and 56.

¹⁴⁹ *Tuna*, issue number 47.

Tuna reported that there were 1281 newspapers and 554 journals in circulation¹⁵⁰ and that the British had a tradition of celebrating April Fool's Day on the first day of April.¹⁵¹ In his work, Ismail Selimoğlu determined that although the Bulgarian and Turkish versions of the paper were publishing the same news and stories in the sections of *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye* (Special Matters), *Mevâdd-i 'Umûmiyye* (General Matters), the news in the *Havâddis-i Hâriciyye* (Foreign News) section showed differences.¹⁵²

2.4 Conclusion

The newspaper *Tuna* was the first attempt of Midhat Pasha in terms of using the power of print media for promotion of his policies and cultivating his power in domestic and international political games. Most of the members of his entourage and the staff of the printing house learned the technology and journalism during their employment at *Tuna*. For this matter, in addition to its role in the contemporary society, *Tuna* was given the role of being the intellectual hub for the future generations of the Turkish and Bulgarian nations. The inclusive policy of Midhat Pasha is reflected in the publishing policy and in the diverse coverage of the paper. In addition to its role in promoting reforms, *Tuna* also became a core part of reformation policies. The students from *islahhane* schools and industry schools interned at the newspaper. While they were learning the crafts in a master-apprentice relationship, they could also become part of the modernization process and internalize the intellectual atmosphere of the printing house.

One possible way to interpret the *Tuna* is as a diary of Midhat Pasha's governorship in the province. In addition, it was a playground for the Ottoman intellectuals such as Ahmed

¹⁵⁰ *Tuna*, issue number 4.

¹⁵¹ *Tuna*, issue number 9.

¹⁵² Ismail Selimoğlu, "Osmanlı Yönetiminde *Tuna* Vilayeti 1864-1878", unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences (Ankara, 1995), 135.

Midhat Efendi to set their principles and publishing policies as journalists. The significant features of Midhat Pasha as a politician and his understanding of Tanzimat reforms could be traced through the reading of *Tuna*. He valued transparency in the administration, education of the people, communication between the people and the officials, legal equality, and access to state institutions for all Ottoman subjects. In the paper, the inclusive language and stories from all groups of the society aimed to overcome the bias of Turkish people against the Christian minorities as well as helping Christian people to integrate the state-system through the instruments of rule of law. The priorities of Midhat Pasha were ensuring loyalty of the people to the Ottoman government, and sustaining peace among the various groups of the society.

Chapter III

Midhat Pasha in the Baghdad Province and *Zevrâ*

This chapter focuses on Midhat Pasha's centralization and modernization efforts in the province of Baghdad. While Midhat Pasha's priority was to suppress nationalist movements in the province of Danube, in Baghdad, his main challenge was eliminating the arbitrary power of tribal leaders and modernizing Baghdad's society. The aim of this chapter is to explore Midhat Pasha's implementation of Tanzimat reforms in a province which was different than his previous posts in terms of demography, social and political structure, and geography. For this purpose, I will introduce the newspaper *Zevrâ* that Midhat Pasha established in Baghdad upon his appointment and analyze how Midhat Pasha and his entourage expressed their views in the publication. Furthermore, this analysis will reveal not only Midhat Pasha's struggle with provincial problems but also his conflict with the actors of the changing political climate in Istanbul. This conflict between Midhat Pasha and conservative faction of Tanzimat escalated to the point that Midhat Pasha resigned his duty as the governor of the Baghdad province and returned to Istanbul, where he was ultimately put on trial, sentenced, sent to prison and -in all likelihood- executed in his prison cell.



Figure 2: Midhat Pasha and His Entourage in Baghdad Province¹⁵³

3.1 Ottoman Iraq

Ahmed Midhat Efendi, the editor of the newspaper *Zevrâ* and Ottoman novelist and journalist, described Baghdad in his book *Menfâ* (A Place of Exile):

If the river Tigris brings the Baghdad-bound voyagers easily down to that place. As it does not so in the opposite direction, Baghdad, in my view, resembles the fisherman's net or the mouse trap, where it is easy to get in but hard to get out. This, my comparison is very apt to reality. Because there have been quite a lot of men who came to Baghdad on behalf of Ottoman affairs or by appointment to a provincial position there and have been unable to rescue themselves from there.¹⁵⁴

The relations between the Ottoman capital, its statesmen, and the Ottoman intellectuals with the Baghdad province look back on a long and complicated history, which

¹⁵³ Taha Toros Arşivi, Dosya No: 106- Midhat Pasha

¹⁵⁴ Christoph Herzog, "Nineteenth-Century Baghdad through the Ottoman Eyes," in *The Empire in The City, Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, Stefan Weber, Orient-Institut der DMG Beirut, 316.

was reflected by the language. In the Turkish language, the word for the region is *ırak* which means ‘a remote place’. Turkish likewise contains numerous proverbs that mention Baghdad and Iraq as a metaphor for distance and also of value: *Sevene Bağdat ırak değildir* (to the lover, Baghdad is not far off); *ana gibi yar, Bağdat gibi diyar olmaz* (there is no love like a mother’s, and no city like Baghdad); *yanlış hesap Bağdat’tan döner* (oppression ruins even Baghdad); and *gözden ırak olan, gönülden de ırak olur* (out of sight, out of mind) are some examples for the ambiguous sentiment that the region had in the minds of Ottomans.¹⁵⁵

Suleiman the Magnificent took control of Baghdad without encountering the army of the Safavid Shah Tahmasb I in 1534. During Ottoman rule, Iraq was a frontier region along geographical, tribal, religious, imperial and economic boundaries between two empires. Although it was under direct rule of Istanbul, Iraq was never integrated into the classical Ottoman administrative system as such Egypt and Yemen.¹⁵⁶ The Ottoman administration divided Iraq into three provinces: Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. Due to its remoteness and difficult conditions, Baghdad was known as a place of banishment. During the classical period, numerous Ottoman bureaucrats who were appointed to Baghdad excused themselves and handed in their resignations a short while later. Resignations were often on the grounds that they would never be able to adopt to the water and weather of Baghdad.¹⁵⁷ During the Tanzimat Era, however, the Sublime Porte sent favorable and talented governors to Iraq to reinstate central authority and implement modernizing reforms in the province.¹⁵⁸

Iraq was surrounded by mountains in the north and rivers in the central and lower parts of the region. As a result of this, the climate was quite diverse depending on one’s proximity

¹⁵⁵ Christoph Herzog, “Nineteenth-Century Baghdad through the Ottoman Eyes,” 313.

¹⁵⁶ A. A. Duri, “Baghdād,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, April 24, 2012, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/baghdad-COM_0084?s.num=0&s.rows=20&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=Baghdad.

¹⁵⁷ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 29.

¹⁵⁸ Gökhan Çetinsaya, *The Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908*, 1 edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2011).

to these prominent geographical features. While the northern parts of Iraq enjoyed frequent rainfall, the lower parts suffered from frequent droughts. In the words of Charles Issawi, “in perhaps no other country in the world is prosperity so directly dependent on an intricate system of irrigation.” The Tigris and Euphrates rivers were an essential part of agriculture in the region. However, the flood seasons of the rivers often did not coincide with cultivation season of crops.¹⁵⁹ Since agriculture was one of the main source of income for the region’s economy, the improvement of irrigation systems were significant for the wealth and security of the local people.

The population of Baghdad was comprised of urban, rural and nomadic populations. One historian on Ottoman Iraq, Ebubekir Ceylan, argues that the sources from the Ottoman Empire do not permit for making reliable estimate of the population: “the control of Ottoman administration was not strong enough to register the population in the region.”¹⁶⁰ Military conscription and taxation were the two main reasons why people evaded imperial census recorders and tax collectors. In 1875, the first modern statistical records of the population of Baghdad was recorded in the yearbook (*sâlnâme*) of Baghdad.¹⁶¹ Halil İnalcık’s work on nomadism in the Ottoman Empire demonstrated the decline in the percentage of nomadic people in Baghdad. While in 1590, the percentage of nomadic people to the population of Baghdad was 62%, it declined to 35% in the late 1860.¹⁶² The Ottoman policy to settle the nomads had panned out relatively well. Apart from the nomadic population, another significant feature of the population of Baghdad was its multi-religious and multi-ethnic character.

In Iraq, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Yezidîs, Shi’is, Bahais and many other religious-sects populated the region.¹⁶³ Large scale migration contributed to this colorful nature of the

¹⁵⁹ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 22–23.

¹⁶⁰ Ceylan, 30.

¹⁶¹ Ceylan, 30.

¹⁶² “Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration,” 51, accessed June 4, 2019, <http://kaynakca.hacettepe.edu.tr/eser/350339/centralization-and-decentralization-in-ottoman-administration>.

¹⁶³ Duri, “Baghdād.”

population. For instance, a considerable numbers of Jews, who escaped from the persecution of the Shi'a regime in Iran fled to Baghdad and settled there. As a result of these waves of immigrations, Baghdad had the largest Jewish population in the Arab east.¹⁶⁴ In 1869, the newspaper *Zevrâ*, published a report which estimated that there were 52,689 Muslims, 9,325 Jews, and 1,258 Christian male Ottoman citizens in the city while there were 2,126 Persian, 265 British, 14 Russians, 3 French and 3 Austrians males residing in Baghdad.¹⁶⁵ In addition to that, Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, and Armenians were the major ethnic groups in the province.¹⁶⁶ The ethnic and religious affiliations of the people structured the settlement of the regions. For example, the Arabs settled in central and southern Iraq primarily, whereas, the Kurds made mostly the mountainous regions of northeast Iraq home to themselves. These mountains functioned as a shelter for Kurdish tribes that staged frequent uprisings against Ottoman administration. Due to the location of sacred sites, northern Iraq had majority of Sunni population while Shi'a groups settled southern Iraq. Non-Muslim groups of the region were concentrated in urban centers.¹⁶⁷

3.2 Bringing the State Back In

Baghdad was one of the most challenging provinces for the Ottoman Empire to achieve central and modernized imperial control. In the region, tribes had consolidated their powers much to the detriment of imperial control. The rivalry over the region with Iran and Britain at that time, constant movements of nomads and migration from other side of the border, and

¹⁶⁴ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 34.

¹⁶⁵ “şehr-i mezkûr 18407 hâneyi ve teb’a-i ecnebiyyeden başka yalnız teb’a-i saltanat-ı seniyyeden olarak 63272 nüfûsî Yahûdî ve 1258 nüfûsî Hristiyan olduğu ve şehr-i mezkûrda mukîm teb’a-i ecnebiyye dahî 2411 nüfûs olub bundan 2126 nüfûsî İran ve 265 nüfûs İngiliz ve 14 nüfûsî Rusya ve 3 nüfûsî Fransa ve keza 3 nüfûsî Avusturya devleti teb’asından idüğü anlaşılmış ve saltanat-ı seniyye teb’ası yedlerine tezkere-i Osmaniyye virilmiştir.” Zevra, issue number 9 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 60.

¹⁶⁶ “BAĞDAT - TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi,” accessed June 6, 2019, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/bagdat#2-osmanli-donemi>.

¹⁶⁷ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 35.

unsettled pastoral and nomadic populations were the main problems that occupied Ottoman provincial governors and their administration. Another pressing problem in the region was the corruption of Ottoman officials. In the province, political and social affairs intertwined with the interest of the local notables. Christoph Herzog points out corruption as one of the salient obstacles to Ottoman governance there: reasons for the failure of Ottoman centralization and modernization process. He notes the situation:s

What were the most frequent acts of corruption reported in connection with upper level administrators in Baghdad? By far the most profitable and easy one seems to have been to charge and extra ‘gift’ for farming out the right to collect taxes. Another seems to have been to blackmail tribal sheikhs for large amounts in cash and kind (especially valuable horses). If the sheikh did not comply, the *vali* (governor) threatened to support a rival. This practice tended to be especially harmful as it easily led to tribal unrest with potentially disastrous economic consequences.¹⁶⁸

The Sublime Porte took gradual measures to restore its power in the province of Baghdad. They appointed experienced governors such as Mehmed Reshid Pasha (1852-1857), Mehmed Namık Pasha (1861-1868), and Midhat Pasha (1869-1871) with extensive powers to govern.¹⁶⁹ Initially, the pashas dealt with rebellious tribes and defending the Persian border to ensure the security and the peace in the region. Domestic banditry, murder, highway robbery, and plunder were also serious threats to the security of the region. To be sure, nomadic groups and tribes were responsible for some of these crimes.¹⁷⁰

Governors constructed new roads, fortresses, and bridges in order to improve security. In connection to the tribal structure of the province, the other challenging matters for the governors was introducing *kur'a-yı şer'iyye* (military recruitment) and the new provincial law. Military recruitment was not introduced to the province due to the protestations of mostly elderly people. The local people understood that if they agreed to sending their youth to the

¹⁶⁸ Christoph Herzog, Corruption and Limit of the State in the Ottoman Province of Baghdad during the Tanzimat, MIT-EJMES, Vol:3, Spring 2003, 40-41.

¹⁶⁹ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 16.

¹⁷⁰ Ceylan, 56.

imperial army, this would enhance the ability of the central government to interfere more efficiently in their everyday lives. The Ottoman Empire used the land and shifting border policies to re-enforce its authority.¹⁷¹ The New Provincial Law was part of this process. Gökhan Çetinsaya argues that Namık Pasha tried to implement the new Provincial Law in 1867. He united the villages, *nahiyes* and countries which had small populations.¹⁷²

Namık Pasha was first appointed to the province as the commander of 6th regiment. He had a military background, but he closely followed the administrative matters of the province. He wrote a report to Istanbul and claimed that the incompetency of the governor of Baghdad spread unrest among the local officers and people. After receiving this correspondence, the Sublime Porte appointed him as the governor of the province of Baghdad.¹⁷³ Namık Pasha focused on remedying the corruption and ill-management of the province by appointing graduates of *mülkiye* (civil administration) schools to important administrative positions in the province.¹⁷⁴ Namık Pasha also tried to manage tribes better by intervening in the election of tribal sheikhs.¹⁷⁵ He followed the carrot and stick policy for the tribes.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, during his governorship (1860-1868), the pasha ruled that each administrative district (*kazâ*) had to be run by an elected councils.¹⁷⁷ Midhat Pasha built on the foundations of many of the reforms that Namık Pasha had started himself. In the newspaper *Zevrâ*, Midhat Pasha did not neglect

¹⁷¹ Metin Heper, "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire: With Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century," *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 1, no. 1 (1980): 95.

¹⁷² Çetinsaya, *The Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908*, 9.

¹⁷³ "NÂMIK PAŞA - TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi," accessed June 2, 2019, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/namik-pasa>.

¹⁷⁴ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 123.

¹⁷⁵ "Devletlü Namık Pâşâ Hazretleri zamân-ı idârelerinde Mentifik idâresinde bulınân yerlerden ba'zı mahalleleri bi'l-ihraz civârında kâ'in Divaniyye ve Basra sancaklârına ilhâk olunmuş ve diğer taraftan asl Mentifik idâresinde kalan mahalleler mukâtâ'atı üç senede bir kere şeyhleri miyânında bi'l-müzâyede ihâle kılınarak bedelî üzerine vukû'-bulan zamdan dolayı refte refte vâridâtı tezâyüd itmiş olmasıyla bu icrââtın şu suretle iki derecede istifâde olunmuşdur." *Zevrâ*, issue number 11 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 73.

¹⁷⁶ Ahmet Nuri Sinaplı, *Devlete, Millete Beş Padişah Devrinde Kıymetli Hizmetlerde Bulunan Şeyhül Vüzera, Serasker Mehmed Namık Paşa* (Istanbul, A.N. Sinaplı, 1987).

¹⁷⁷ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 120.

to mention the names of Namık Pasha and Reshid Pasha when he continued what they started such as purchasing steamboats.¹⁷⁸

3.3 Midhat Pasha and *Zevrâ* in the Danube Province

In 1869, Ali Pasha appointed Midhat Pasha to Baghdad. Midhat Pasha's appointment to Baghdad highlights the Sublime Porte's strong intention to modernize the region and bring it closer to the administrative reach of the imperial capital. Midhat Pasha likened Baghdad to a box of jewels that was locked and inaccessible.¹⁷⁹ Competition between the center and the local elites defined the politics of the region for centuries. Hence, politicians of Tanzimat Era such as Mustafa Nuri Pasha, Mehmed Namık Pasha, and Midhat Pasha used all their powers to eliminate local elites and tribal leaders that threatened central control. To achieve this goal and have strong communication with the local people, Midhat Pasha made use of a local newspaper, *Zevrâ*.

In his biography, written by his son Ali Haydar using mainly the written documents which Midhat Pasha sent him from the prison, Midhat Pasha described the problems he had to confront in the province of Baghdad were quite different than those he faced in the province of Danube.

The question of recruiting was the most urgent, and called for immediate solution. The Arab tribes, turbulent and independent by nature, had always shown themselves refractory to enlistment, and were now in open revolt against its enforcement. One of the difficulties of the situation consisted in the fact that the military authority in the province was separated from the civil, and was in the hands of the commander of the 6th Army Corps, Samih Pasha, whereas the situation required all authority, military as well as civil, to be concentrated in the hands of a single strong authority. The next serious difficulty was connected with the levying taxes. This had always been a difficult operation among the

¹⁷⁸ "... şimdiye kadar buraya gelen vulât-ı 'izâm hazerâtının hepsi vezâ'if-i mevkûlelerini îfâya çalışmışlardır husûsuyla merhûm Reşid Pâşâ memleketin 'imâreti için bir mebd-i sahih bulub başlamış ve epeyce eser göstermiş isede ikmâlîne 'ömrî vefâ itmemiş sonra Namık Pâşâ hazretleri dahi bu mebd' ve mesleki sahih ve müstakîmde devam ile haylî icrâât-ı haseneye muvaffak olmuşdur şimdi bizim yapacağımız şeyler dahî yine bu tarik-i câdde üzerinde memleketin ve ahâlinin selâmet ve sa'âdet-i ahvâlîne vâsıl olacak ve en az zamân içinde âsâr-ı nâfi'asını gösterüb ahâliyi zengin ve ma'mur edecek vesâ'il ve esbaba tevessülünden 'ibâretidir." *Zevrâ*, issue numbers 1, and 11 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 18.

¹⁷⁹ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 199.

nomad tribes, of which the population in a great measure consisted, and was the cause of continual disputes and insurrections. Matters had, however, now reached a crisis, for a colonel at the head of a battalion of regulars sent to Divanie and Dogara to collect the tithes was surrounded by tribesmen to the number of then thousand men, and himself killed and his troops killed or dispersed.¹⁸⁰

Midhat Pasha used the newspaper *Zevrâ*, published between 1869-1917, as a means of communication between the administration and the local people.¹⁸¹ In this study, I will utilize the first fifty issues of the paper which covers the first year of Midhat Pasha and his entourage in the province. The editor of the newspaper was Ahmed Midhat Efendi. The newspaper was a bilingual publication, in Turkish and Arabic. Ahmed Midhat himself justified the bilingual print of the paper based on the fact that “since the people have difficulties understanding Turkish declarations...” Midhat Pasha and his cadre took the educational aspects of the newspapers very seriously. In the newspaper, reporting on climatic and geographic concerns were a priority; news connecting India to Europe were also emphasized. Editorial articles focused mostly on politics. They encouraged people to educate themselves about politics and the world around them. In fact, the newspaper constantly reminded people that if they could not catch up with the spirit of the time, they were destined to backwardness. The newspaper followed a question and answer format in order to explain important matters on politics, agriculture, health, and urban structure. It used a simple and an inclusive language. In the fourth edition of *Zevrâ*, it was stated that “newspapers are an intermediary between the government and the public...”¹⁸²

The newspaper sparked conversations among the people. In issue number nine, the editor, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, wrote an article entitled “Civilization and Nomadic life” (*Medeniyet*

¹⁸⁰ Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha; a Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder*, 48–49.

¹⁸¹ *Zevrâ*, issue number 14.

¹⁸² “Gazeteler bazı ahvalde, hükümetle ahali beyinde bir vasıta ve tercüman mesabesinde olduğu ...Türkçe beyannemenin halkça ahvalı kolay anlaşılacak için su’ûbet-güçlük- çekilmekte” *Zevrâ* 4 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 33.

ve Bedeviyyet). In the article, the editor explained that the Baghdad was once the center of civilization, the current descendants of civilized people preferred to live like as Bedouin. He argued that conforming to the rule of law and path of civilization was to only way to ensure the wealth of people.¹⁸³ After the publication of this issue, an anonymous reader sent a response letter to the paper. In the letter, the reader argued that “because of the previous cruel administration in the province [representing the central government], people fled from the circle of civilization.” and claimed that the difficulties of geography and the climate likewise forced them to live a nomadic life.¹⁸⁴ The newspaper published the letter and argued against it in another piece. The editor rebutted the arguments of the reader by saying: “Not only nomadic people but also civilized people settling in the urban areas live in the province. Hence it is possible to step into the civilized world, rather than staying in the darkness of nomadic life.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ “Çünkü efrâd-ı beşer min-haysu’l-mecmû’ sıfât-ı medeniyyetle mevsuf bir zâtın evlâdî olup şimdi tekessür ve intişâr etmiş olân medeniyyetin esâsı ise evlâddan evlâda intikal sûretiyle ta o zamandan gelme bir şey olduğu ve husûsî ile inşanlar ber-minval-i muharrer dağlarda ve ormanlarda tavattun ve ta’ayyüş etmekde iken bile yine medeniyyü’t-tab’ olarak hatta mu’ahheren bu sûretle ta’ayyüşün terakkiyât-ı beşere mâni’ olduğunu bi’t-takdîr dâire-i medeniyyetin tevsî’i için şehir ve kasabât ve kurâ teşkil ve cem’iyetle tavattun ve ta’ayyüş husûsuna ehemmiyet veren ve bâhusus ne hâricden ve nede dâhilden hukuk-ı Şâhsiyelerine ta’arruz olunamayub sâye-i ‘adalet ve şevketinde dâ’ima refâh veistirâhatla yaşamak için bir hükümdâr-ı kaviyyü’l-iktidârın cenâh-ı hıfz u himâyeti altına girmeye kendi silâh mukabelesiyle tedâfi’ ve tehâfize tercih iden inşanlar bâdi-i mülâhazada bedevî zann olınân evvel-i medenî oğlu medenîler olduğu halde şimdi anları bâdiye ve sahârîde ve diğer hem nev’ilerinin terakkiyâtından pek geri bir sûrette görmek hakikat-ı te’essüfî mûcib bir şeydir.” Zevrâ, issue number 9 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 62.

¹⁸⁴ “...sa ‘âdetine kâfil ve kâfi olân ‘adâlet ve şefkatin fikdânı dahî insânların bedeviyyet gibi terekkiyât-ı mâddiye ve ma’neviyyelerine mâni olân bir suret-i kerihîyi ihtiyâr itmelerini icbâr iden esbâbdan birisidir husûsıyla memalik-i şarkiyye halkı i ‘sâr-ı sâlifede tabi’ oldukları hükûmetden husûl-i sa’adetlerini te’min iden ‘adâlet ve şefkat yerine ‘âdetâ zulm ve te’addî görmüş oldukları cây-i inkâr değildir işte ol-vaktler sa’âdet-halin sâ’ir güne esbâb-ı husûlini arayub bulmak ümidiyle bir kere dâ’ire-i medeniyyetden çıkmış olan halk artık ile’l-ân sahrâ-yı bedeviyyetde kalmışlardır.” Zevrâ, issue number 10 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 68-69.

¹⁸⁵ “Şâhib-i varakanın ber-minvâl-i muharrer serd eylediği mevâdın eğerçi bedeviyyet husûsunda bir dereceye kadar medhâlî olduğu der-kâr isede bunların insânları bedeviyyet-i ihtiyâra icbâr iden esbâbdan ‘add itmeğe hakikat-hâl müsâ’ade göstermez şâhib-i varakanın fikdân-ı ‘adâletini göstermek istediği zamânlarda yine bedeviyyet mevcut olub ... Burası tarihçe ma’lum olur bir keyfiyyet olduğu cihetle oda şöyle dursun gelelim hâl-i hazırâ havâli-i Irakiyyenin bugünkü günde her tarafı bedevîler meskeni olmayub bunun bir parçasında medenîler dahî sakin ve mutavattındır...” Zevrâ, issue number 10 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 69.

The *Zevrâ* was using national and international newspapers such as *Indipandans Belj*, *Durbin*, *Levant Times*, *La Turki*, *Müferrahü'l kulûb*, *Basiret*, *Terakkî* for writing the news. The paper was reporting news from America to India based on the local, Istanbul and European newspapers. While reporting incidents, they interpreted and commented on them. However, the Ottoman Empire and the Ottomans were missing in the picture of world politics and the paper drew attention to this issue. For instance, in the editorial pieces and reports, which discussed European Politics and the Russian Empire's politics in Asia, there were no references to or comments about how these affairs in Europe, Russia and Asia had effect on the empire's international diplomacy or the empire's people who lived in the borderlands.¹⁸⁶ There is one possible explanation for this. The pasha and the editor of the paper were not eager for catching the attention of Ottoman censors that were policing what was being said about the empire in these insecure times. When the paper reported on Algerian Revolution in 1871, using *Basiret* (Foresight, Istanbul-based newspaper, published during 1870-1878) as a source, the center declared that publishing an article such as the Algerian piece could harm the Ottoman cause rather than assist it. The center cautioned them not to publish on such occasions.¹⁸⁷ The next step of the center would be banning the paper's circulation in the empire.

The paper consisted of three sections, *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye* (Special Matters), *Mevâdd-i 'Umûmiyye* (General Matters), *Havâddis-i Hâriciyye* (Foreign News). Initially, it was published once a week, on Tuesdays. However, after its fifty second issue (1869), it was published twice in a week on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The editor explained why the staff decided to publish the paper more frequently: "The paper has two missions: it announces the deeds were taking place in the province to the people and enlightens the path to civilization

¹⁸⁶ *Zevrâ*, issue number 11.

¹⁸⁷ "Arabistan: Bağdad'da tab olunan *Zevrâ* gazetesinin bir nüshasında *Basiret* gazetesinden naklen Cezayir İhtilaline dair bir fıkranın yayınlanması üzerine çabucak kaleme alınan bu tür makalelerin Osmanlı menfaatlerine hizmet yerine zarar vereceği gerekçesiyle neşrinden kaçınılmasının ihtarı." BOA., HR. SYS. 1909, 24.

and happiness to our people. However, one issue is inadequate to supply information to our people on general incidents, and politics mission is being neglected due to lack of space in one issue. Therefore, by publishing the paper twice a week, we will achieve our mission properly.”¹⁸⁸ While the price of the paper was seventy *kuruş* for a year, this new arrangement increased the price to a hundred *kuruş* for a year. The editor was transparent about how they spent the money for the printing house and distribution of the paper.¹⁸⁹ Unfortunately, the circulation figures for the paper is unknown. The paper had a subscription system and it was either for six months or a year. The paper notified its subscribers when their subscription was due for renewal. I would not here that , it is possible that people who lived in center of the city purchased the paper weekly from the printing house.

In the section of *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye* (Special Matters), the paper published news from Baghdad. Midhat Pasha’s itineraries and activities, discussion about the rule of law, the Tanzimat reforms, official decrees and orders, theoretical discussions of civilization versus nomadism, tribal politics, technological developments, and agriculture were the main stories. While in the other sections, sources were used mostly from the foreign press, in this section

¹⁸⁸ “Gazetemizin hacmi şu görülen vüs’atda olmağla veraber şimdiye kadar haftada yalnız bir def’a çıkmakta bulunduğu cihetle vazifesini hakkıyla ve layıkıyla i’faya muktedir olamadığı ma’lumdur. Çünkü gazetemizin birinci vazifesi vilayetin icra’atını halka i’lam ve tefhim ile beraber tark-i medeniyet ve saadetle halkımıza delalet etmek maddelerinden ibaret olub vaka-yı umumiyye ve politika ya’ni siyaset-i cariyeden ma’lumat vermek vazifeleri ikinci mertebede kaldığından ve gazetemizin cürmi ise bu vazifelerin cümlesini birlikde i’faya gay-i muktedir olmakdan-naşi evveli saniye ya’ni ehem-i mühime takdim ve tercih itmekte mecbur bulunduğumdan şimdiye kadar bu mecburiyet altında deva etmiştir. Lakin gelecek Haziran ayı ya’na ikinci senesi ibtidasından itibaren gazetemizin haftada iki def’a olarak tab ve neşri mukarrer olduğundan ve o zaman ikinci mertebede bulunan vazifelerimizin dahi i’fâsına daha vakt bulabileceğimizde inşaAllahu tâ’ali andan sonra hakkıyla i’fâ-yı vazifeye çalışacaktır.” Zevrâ, issue number 47 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 286.

¹⁸⁹ “Ken hazirandan sonra haftada iki defa çıkarılmağa başlandığı halde bedeli bir misli daha zam olunmak iktica eder ise de saye-i ihsan vaye-i cenab-ı padişâhîde vilayet matbaalarının tab ve neşr ettikleri gazeteler temettü maksadıyla tab olunmayıp belki mücerret halkımızın terakkiyatına bir hizmet olmak üzere neşr edilmekte bulunmasıyle bundan alınacak olan bedelâtın yalnız ücret-I tahririye ve tab ‘iyyesini tesviye idebilecek derecede olmak iktizâ ideceğine ve Bağdat gibi matbû ‘âtın muhtâc-ı İlâhi olan eşyâyı tedarik ve celb etmek husûsında bu’ut mesâfesinden dolayı mahal-i sâ’ireden ziyâde masraf ve külfet gösteren bir mahalde tab ‘ ve neşr olan gazete haftada iki de’a neşir olundığı takdîrde beher abonesi için gürûş bedel-i ahzi mesârif-i tahririye ve tab‘iyyesi ile kâğıt bâhâ ve sâ’iresine tekabül ideceği...” Zevrâ, issue number 47 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 286-287.

sources for news were local people and journalists themselves. In the first issue, the paper published the sultan's decree that announced the appointment of Midhat Pasha to Baghdad, reminded the pasha what was expected from him, and explained to the people of Baghdad and the province what his appointment would mean for them:

to deal with military and administrative affairs and people's matters as priority, increase the wealth and peace of settled people and tribes, improvement of agriculture, increase the amount of trade in the province and take the necessary measures for it, order the sixth regiment of the army in the province, amend the relationship between tribes and settled people, ensure the security and public order, punish the people upon the law who commit crimes against the law and sharia according to these laws; the courts, councils, and officers in the city should be working righteously and act according to the law, treating friendly to people who come to the province from Iran for the purpose of visiting, trade, and accommodation and be attentive to relations between the both states.¹⁹⁰

After the publication of the decree, the editor wrote a commentary on it. He said "The goal of our sultan is to provide and protect individual and social wealth, well-being fortune, and the happiness of every women and men in the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The first duty of state officers is to serve this goal." He argued in the later part of the piece, and in several other pieces in the paper's issues,

The administrative center knows the needs of people better than individuals themselves. And these reasons are varied for every time and every position, in fact, they are based on requirements of the time. If this rule and requirements of the time are not considered properly in the administration, there is no doubt that the main purpose of progress and salvation will not be possible and the society will stay backward compare to its contemporaries.¹⁹¹

The paper used persuasive, patriotic and didactic language. As previously discussed, local people of the province were reacted against conscription because false information on how the military recruitment worked were spreading around the province. Midhat Pasha used

¹⁹⁰ Zevrâ, issue number 1.

¹⁹¹ "Padişahımızın hedefi Müslim ve gayrimüslim tebaa içerisinde erkek ve kadın ne kadar ahali varsa tamamının bireysel ve toplumsal olarak refah, istirahat, servet ve saadetlerinin sağlanması ve korunmasıdır. Devlet memurlarının birinci borcu bu vazifeye hizmet etmektir. İnsanın ihtiyacının sebeplerini elbette idare merkezi fertlerden daha iyi bilir ve bu sebepler denen şey de her zaman ve her mevki için bir ayar da gitmeyip zamanın gereklerine göredir. İşin idaresinde bu esasa riayet edilmez ve zamanın şartları gözötilmezse asıl maksat olan ilerleme ve kurtuluş mümkün olmayıp toplumun emsallerinden geri kalacağında şüphe yoktur." Zevrâ, issue number 1 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 18-20.

the *Zevrâ* to explain the process and how *kur'a-yı şer'iyye* (military recruitment) worked. Initially, they explained in the paper that military conscription was not compulsory for every young citizen of the province. It was a lottery and not every name were picked for the conscription as the result of draw. Then, the paper also used the religious and patriotic language to highlighted the importance of military service.¹⁹² They used examples from European countries regarding the nationalism and patriotism of the youth in there and concluded the piece by emphasizing the Ottoman youth was sons of soldier ancestors.¹⁹³ As a reflection of its articles, the paper received and published a letter of a local leader, mukhtar of *Haydar Hâne* district, sent the paper on the topic of military recruitment. In the letter, the author adopted the patriotic language of the paper. It talked about how sacred it was to fight for the empire and wrote that “it would not be honorable for the youth of Baghdad to sit at home, while the rest of young people in around the empire were fighting for the empire.”¹⁹⁴ In the meantime, Midhat Pasha worked hard to modernize the process of enlistment.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² “Nefs-i Bağdad şehrinin kur'a-i şer'iyyesine bed'an olunarak birinci kısmı kemâlen hoşnudî ve memnûniyyetle çekilmiş ve kur'a-i şer'iyye usûl-i 'âdilesinin eser-i fi'liyyesini herkes görüb anlamış olduğundan aksâm-ı sâ'iresinin dahî mu'âyesesi olunmakda olduğu hâlde İslâmiyyet ve vatan ve memleket hâ'inî olân ve menfâ'at-i zâtîyesini halkın karışılığında arayan kimselerin tahrikât ve tesvîlâtına kapılan ba'zı hazele güyâ kur'a ile 'askere alınmak usulüne karşı durmağa cesâret itmek için geçen Pazar gîcesi Kanber Ali ve Şeyhkapısı ve Muhammed Fazıl mahalleri ahâlîsinden bir tâkım sebk-mağzanı toplatub tüfenk ve tabanca istimaliyle bir tâkım nümayişlere kalkışmışlar isede ... 'askerliğin ne olduğu ve hizmet-i 'askeriyyenin nüfus-ı mükellefe-i müselleme üzerine nasıl farz bulunduğunu ve bunun teksir ve tevfirî gayretinde olmayub Mazaallah 'aleyhinde ve hilâfında bulunmak İslamiyyet ve insâniyyet ve dîn ü devlet ve vatan ü memleket haklarında ne derece büyük bir hıyânet idüğünü tafsilatıyla izâha işbu gazetemizin nüshası mütehammil olmadığından o bahsî vakt-i ahare ta'lîk ideriz.” *Zevrâ*, issue number 12 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 78-84.

¹⁹³ *Zevra*, issue numbers 11 and 53.

¹⁹⁴ “Bir kere hakk-i el-insâf düşünür isek kur'a-i şer'iyye hakkında ağız açmağa utanmaklığımız lâzım gelür çünkü Anâdolu ve Rumili halkının bizden hiç bir farkı olmadığı hâlde anlar dahî evladını kur'aya idhâl idüb bâ-husûs anları virdikleri ‘ ‘ askeri beş altı yüz sâ 'at mesafeye sevk ediyorlar ve husûsıyla Anâdolu ve Rumili ‘ ‘ askerinin bulındıkları mevki'ler vatanımızın en mühim noktaları olub hemen hiçbir gün bir dakika düşman karşusundan eksik olmıyorlar mes'ele-i mâzîye ve ya'nî Rusya muharebesi hengamında gerek Kırırda ve gerek Tuna ve Erzurun havâlisinde şerbet-i şehâdet için kahramânlar ve dahâ sonraları Karadağda ve Giridde vatan ve milletimizi uğrında kânlarını fedâ iden dil-âverler heb Anâdolu ve Rumili uşağı olduğunu ra'nâ bilirüz biz ise anlar gibi şû milletin â'zâsından olduğumuz hâlde şimdiiye kadar vatan ve milletimiz uğurına kangı düşmana göğüs verdik ve içimizden kim vardır ki evlâdının düşman karşusunda câm-ı şehâdet içdiği haberini almaklar iftihar etmek şerefine nâ'il olmuştur işte birkere buralarını mütâla'a iderrde bulduğumuz mevki'î dahî nazar-ı te'emmülden uzâk tutmaz isek şu kur'a maddesi üzerine lâf söylemekden ve evlâdımızın ‘ ‘ askerilik gibi en şerefli bir hizmetle maskat-ı re'isimiz dâ'iresinde istihdam idilmesini çok görmekten hakikaten utânmaklığımız lâzım gelür.” *Zevrâ*, issue number 16 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 104.

¹⁹⁵ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 61.

When the paper announced a development or a reform in the province, they did not only report it, but also explained why it was important for the people's happiness and wealth, in order to legitimate the legislation fully, by ensuring that the subjects understood how these new regulations fully benefited them. In addition to that, the paper followed a principle of transparency regarding budget expenses. The names of the donors for a hospital building and schools¹⁹⁶, the price of ships¹⁹⁷ that were purchased for the province, the budget of *memleket sandıkları* (wealth funds)¹⁹⁸ were all published in the paper. They even explained why the pasha ordered the ships from Britain, not from other countries by comparing the offered prices and qualities of the ships. In the issue eleven, there was a piece on one of the powerful tribes of the province, the *Mentifık* tribe. The paper elaborated on the benefits of the rule of law for the people and how it ended the abuses of tribe leaders. In the article, the editor directly addressed the members of the *Mentifık* tribe.¹⁹⁹ In issues twenty-one and twenty-two, Midhat Pasha's campaign against bandits were covered at length. The pasha's letters from the military campaign were published to inform the people.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ “Bağdad vücûhundan meclis-i idâre-i vilâyet a’zâsından Cemil-zâde faziletli Muhammed Efendi Baghdad mekteb-i sanâyi’ için bin gurûş i’âne itmiş ve bu cihetle emsâlî olan hâmiyet-kârâne müsâbakat eylemiştir. Baghdad tüccârından ve Yahûdî milletinden Kerkûklî Hâce Yosef dahî mekteb-i mezkûr için ikiyüzelli gurûş i’âne vermiş ve bu cihetle effendi-i mûmâ-ileyhin şeref-i müsâbakatına iştirâk itmiştir.” Zevrâ issue numbers 12, 13 and 14 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 78-96.

¹⁹⁷ Zevrâ issue numbers 27 and 28.

¹⁹⁸ Zevrâ issue numbers 15 and 27.

¹⁹⁹ “Ey Mentifık Meşâyihî ve Ahalîsi, Siz cümle siz teb’a-i sâdika-i devlet-i ‘aliyyeden olub mukîm ve sâkin olduğunuz yerler dahî dünyanın en ziyâde ma’muriyete kâbil mahallelerinden olduğu halde devlet-i ‘aliyyenin memalik-i sâ’iresinde sâkin mutavattın tab’a ve ahâlîsinin nâ’il oldukları refâh ve râhât emniyyet ve ma’muriyetden mahrum kalmışsınız ve emniyyetiniz ve gayet zahmetli bir hâl ve idârede bulunuyorsunuz ve sizin hüsn-i hâl ve idarenizi hâsıl ve kâfil olan hükûmet her sene bey’-i min-yüzîd ile bir çok akçeler mukâbilinde satılıyor ve hükûmetî iltizama der-‘uhde iden zevât bedel-i iltizamı ödemek için devletin usûl ve kâ’idesine uymayan bir takım rûsûmât ve vâridât-ı gayr-i meşrû ‘a tahsiline mecbur oluyor devlet-i ‘aliyye-i İslâmiyyenin mâbihi’l istinâd ve ‘urvetü’l vuskâsı serî’ât-i mutahhara-i Ahmediyye olub her husûsun ahkâm-ı şer’iyyeye ve ana tatbîkan yapılmış olan kavânîn-i sultâniyyeye tatbîkî lâzım gelür iken sizin ‘aşîretinizde mesela: Ez-cümle kâtil ile verase-i maktulün murâfa ‘a-i şer’iyyesi icrâ olunmayub nekâl namıyla kâtilden bin şâmî ahz olunarak salıveriliyor. ... vilâyet usûlî üzere iktizâ iden şeyleri yapmağın birlikde me’mûrlar dahî gönderdik vilâyet usûlî Tanzîmat-ı Hayriyyenin mükemmilidir. Tanzîmat-ı Hayriyyenin dahî esâsî üç şeydir birisi emniyyet-i mâl ve ikincisi emniyyet-i cân ve üçüncüsü muhâfaza-i ‘ırz ve nâmûsdur.” Zevrâ, issue number 11 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 76.

²⁰⁰ “Devletlü Vâlî-i Pâşâ hazretlerinin Dağareye ‘azîmetlerinden Teşrîn-i Evvelin onına kadar olan vuku ‘âtı geçen nüshamızda yâzmışidik andan sonra alınân telgrâfnâmeler me’âline göre tafsîlî geçen gazetede beyân

The editors of *Zevrâ* spent a great deal of space in the paper to promote the importance of education. The fifteenth edition, for instance, was primarily focused on education and its importance. Midhat Pasha and his entourage conceived that ignorance and illiteracy of subjects in Baghdad was markedly worse than other parts of the empire. Before the governorship of Midhat Pasha, the modern schools were not established.²⁰¹ Midhat Pasha believed that through education local people could be modernized and developed. The only two provinces that had education councils were the Danube and the Baghdad provinces in 1872.²⁰² In the newspaper, the editor asked people to demand educational institutions and support from the central government.²⁰³ In the following issue, the paper received a letter from a reader. In the letter, the reader thanked the paper for raising such an important issue and urged the local people to participate in building schools and fund libraries in the province. The reader compared the backward situation in Baghdad with Istanbul based on what he read from Istanbul based papers. The administration of Midhat Pasha informed the people on agriculture, health issue, and urban structure by using the newspaper. The paper gave encyclopedic information on agriculture and sickness.²⁰⁴ They also underlined the connection between health issues and infrastructures.²⁰⁵

olınân muharebeden sonra eşkiyâ ne yepacaklarını şaşırarak muharebe-i mezkûre ahşâmı ya'nî sebt ve ertesi Pazar giceleri ordu tarafına gelip bazı nümayişlere cür'et etmek istemişler isede ‘ asker ateşe başlar başlamaz makhûren ric'at itmişlerdir...” Zevrâ, issue number 22 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 136.

²⁰¹ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 204. Ceylan, 204.

²⁰² Ceylan, 208.

²⁰³ “Zikr olınân fûnûn ber-minvâl-i muharrer tedenniyât-ı vâkı'adan-nâşî bu günki günde vatanın sâ'ir taraflarında dahî bir suret-i mükemmelede olmadığından bunlar için onların dahî ihtiyâcı der-kâr isede memleketimiz vaktiyle bunların mekteb ve meksebi mesâbesinde bulunmuş mebnî Bağdadın bu husûsda olân ihtiyâcı sâ'ir mahallerin lüzûmına miyâs tutulamayub Bağdad için cebr-i mâ-fât itmek ya'nî kemâ-fi's sâbık hem civarlarımızın mekteb-i ‘ulûm ve ma'rifeti olmak lüzum ve ehemmiyeti dahî bedîhîdir.” Zevrâ, issue number 15 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 98.

²⁰⁴ “... Zirâ'atın asl ehemmiyet virilecek ciheti şu evvelki sûret olub hattı ‘ilm-i servet-i ümem kitâblarında “tabî'atın ben-i beşeri beslediği memelerin birisi zirâ'atdır zirâ'ati girüde olân milletler bunu teksir ve tevfir itmece fevk-al-‘âde bir ehemmiyeti olmasından neş'et eylemiştir.” Zevrâ issue number 24 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 148.

²⁰⁵ “Bizim memleketimiz ve mesken me'âmız olân hânelerimiz dâr ve halkımız ise işbu memleket ve meskenizime nisbetle çok olduğundan emr-i celîl-i nezâfet ve tahârete cümleden ziyâde bizim dikkat ve i'tinâ eylemekliğimiz elzem ve husûsıyla sıhhat-ı ‘umûmiyyenin ihtilâle müste'id olduğu böyle bir zamânda buna her vaktiden ziyade dikkat itmek ehemm olduğına mebnî mezbele ve bulâşık kuyusu ve helâ ve ahûrlarda fişkî yığıntısı ve havlîlarda ve sokâklarda hayvânât lâşesi gibi müte'afûn ve ciyâdet-i havâyı ve bu cihetle sıhhat-ı ‘umûmiyye-

In the section of *Mevâdd-i 'Umûmiyye* (General Matters), the paper published news and incidents from the rest of the empire such appointments of pashas, visits of foreign leaders to the empire, words from newly-established newspapers in the empire. The flourishing of newspapers in the empire was presented as sign of progress and necessity for creating an educated society.²⁰⁶ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, the editor, believed that the newspapers had a similar mission to a teacher who explains difficult matters in simple ways.²⁰⁷ The essential role of newspapers was bringing people close to the path of civilization. In issue number twenty three, Midhat Pasha explained the role of the newspaper as true trainer.²⁰⁸ In one of the issues, the editor was cheerily announcing the publication of a new Armenian newspaper in the province. They encouraged people to read it. In doing so, they also questioned why Jewish people of the province did not publish a newspaper, even though they had a printing machine. The editor ended his article by expressing hope that Jews would follow the lead of the Armenians and publish a newspaper.²⁰⁹

i ihlale müste'id olan şeylerin tathîrine himmet alınması lazımdır.” Zevrâ, issue number 21 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 133.

²⁰⁶ “Evvel ve ahir söylendiği vechle gazete denilen şey tab' ve neşr olunduğu memleket ve halkının tarîk i terakkîde delîl ve rehberî olub bir memlekette evrâk-ı havâdis nekadar tekessür ide rise medenîyyeti dahî o nisbette terakkî ideceğinden matbû'âtı terakkî iden milletler sezâvâr-I tebrîk ve tes'id oldukları gibi o yolda hîdmet ve ebnâ-yı vatana hîdmet medenîyyet ve kemâl yolunda delâlet iden gayretmendânın hîdmetleri dahî her hâlde şâyân-ı şükrânîyyet ve mehamdet olmağla vatanımızda matbû'âtın gün be-gün terakkiyâtını gördükçe hem ebnâ-yı vatani tebrike hemde o yolda hismet idenlere îfâ-yı şükr ve muhammedete müsâra'at itmemeği vatanperverlik muktezâsına mugâyir görürüz.” Zevrâ, issue number 12 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 84. “Aydın vilayet-i celilesinde Aydın ismiyle bir gazete ziynet-bahş-ı destgah tab ve temsil olarak... şu âz müddet-i zarfında bu kadar terakki iderek şimdi her köşede gazeteler tab ve neşr olunmakda bulunduğu çeş-i memnuniyetle gören terakki cüyânı dahi tebrik eylemekliğimiz lazım gelir.” Zevrâ issue numbers 21, and 23 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 129-135; 141-145.

²⁰⁷ Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Menfa / Sürgün Hatıraları*, trans. Handan İnci (Arma Yayınları, 2002), 156.

²⁰⁸ “Gazetemizin ilk nüshasında münderic-i mukaddime de şu ‘asr halk için evrâk-ı havâdisin derece-i lüzum ve ehemmiyetinden bahs ve hikaye itdiğimiz sırada gazeteler kabilliyet-i insâniyyenin tevsi'yle insânın insân olması husûsında hemen vesîle-i mahz olan (tecrübenin) menba' ve bu vechle insânın ‘adetâ mürebbi-i hakikisidir...” Zevrâ, issue number 23 in Mine Ersoy, Zevrâ Gazetesi (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 142.

²⁰⁹ “(Dubirmişârm) ya'ni hâkiyyu'l-sıdk nâmı ve İbrani lisaniyle Bağdadda tab' ve neşrine müsâ'ade buyurulmuş idüğünü geçenlerde derç-i sahife-i beyân eylediğimiz gazete bu kere tab' ve neşr olunmağa başlamış ve birinci nüshası reşide-i nazar-ı mütâla'mız olmuştur... Lâkin bir millet ve cemâ'atın terakkiyâtı vesâ'ilinden birüsü dahî konşularından aldıkları misâl kendilerinin dahî menfa'at ve istifâdelerini müceb olacak bir sûretde ise o misâle der- 'akab imtisal ve vesâ'il-i lâzimesine tevessül itmek mâddesi olduğunu memleketimizde mutavattın ve terakkiyâta havâheşker olan Ermeniler dahî ra'nâ bildikleri ve hattı oldukça muntazam yerde matba'aları

Midhat Pasha and members of his cadre were still in contact with their previous post, the province of Danube. In fact, they conveyed news from the Danube province in order to set an example for the people of Baghdad and ensure them the success of the reforms of Midhat Pasha. In the issue number seventeen, the paper was analyzing the *islahhane* (juvenile detention center) and the *sanayi mektepleri* (school of industry) and its effects on the young population. The aim of these schools was to teach a profession to orphans and homeless children. As a result of this education, while the children earned their living, they would also contribute to the society. In the newspaper, they drew the profiles of students who stayed and studied in the center. Young people studied Turkish, Bulgarian, and French as well as craft such as dressmaking, shoemaking, or typography.²¹⁰ The outcome of the education and nurturing in the center provided hope for rest of the empire. Hence, the opening of these schools and centers around the empire was couched as a mission for every patriot. Midhat Pasha founded the schools in Baghdad too. Local people donated and funded the schools and students. In the beginning, the students were only orphans and homeless children, however, the quality of education attracted the attention of local families who sent their own children to school.²¹¹

In the section of *Havâddis-i Hâriciyye* (Foreign News), the paper published news from around the world. They mainly focused on the domestic affairs of European countries, the

bulunduğı hâlde ‘acaba ber-minvâl-i muharrer gazete tab’ ve ihrâcı husûsında Yahudilerden aldıkları misâle imtisalden sarf-ı nazar mı ideceklerdir...” Zevrâ, issue number 33 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 201.

²¹⁰ “Tuna vilâyetinde mukaddemâ güşâd olunmış olân ıslâhânelerde terbiye ve ta’lîm olunmakda bulınân şakirdânın behersene icrâ-i imtihânları usûli iktizasından olmağla ve bunlardan Rusçuk ıslâhânelerinin zamân-ı imtihânı hulûl itmiş bulunmağla vâlî-i vilâyet devletlü Akif Pâşâ hazretleri ve sâ’ir-i me’mûrîn-i vilâyet hâzır oldukları hâlde beş sınıf üzerine müretteb olân şakirdân tahsiliyle meşgul bulındıkları kırâ’at ve kitâbat ve kondüktörlük ve makinistlik ve teymûrcılık ve Türkçe ve Bulgarca ve Fransızca müretteblik ve kundıracılık ve terzilik san’atlarından lede’l-imtihân sanâyi’-i mezkûreden derece-i tahsil ve ma’lûmâtlarını ibrâz eylemiş ve içkerinden on yedi neferi tahsil-i tekmil iderek şehâdet-nâme ahzında olân istihkaklarını meydâna koymış olmağdan-nâşi cümlesinin dereceleri takdîr ve tahsînle berâber mezkûr on yedi nefer şakirdânın şehâdet-nâmeleri bi’l-i’tâ istedikleri mahallelerde icrâ-i san’at itmelerine ruhsat ve me’zûniyyet verilmiş olduğu Tuna gazetesinde resîde-i nazar-ı memnûniyyetimiz olmuştur.” Zevrâ, issue number 17, Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)’nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 109.

²¹¹ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 212.

Russian Empire, Iran and Asia. In this section, the paper used a wide range of international media as their sources. They translated news that they published from foreign newspapers. Since their previous post, in the province of Danube, Midhat Pasha and his cadre had understood the Russian Empire and its representatives to the Ottoman Empire with contempt given their inauspicious intentions toward the Ottoman Empire.²¹² Midhat Pasha aligned with the British Empire against the policies of the Russian Empire in the Asia. The newspaper published the discussion in the British parliament on the matter.²¹³ The pasha, moreover, had amicable relations with the British representatives. The paper therefore portrayed Russian governance as a particularly harsh one that does not hold respect for the rule of law. In one of the issues, the paper focused on the unjust rule of the Russian Empire towards its Jewish population and how it did not receive enough attention from the Europe.

Zevrâ, like its predecessor *Tuna* on the other side of the empire, published official letters and documents from the center regarding the return of subjects who moved to Greece, Serbia, Russian Empire and Iran. This was part of the propaganda war which Midhat Pasha took very seriously. He believed in telling the stories of regretful subjects of the Ottoman Empire and their returns were vital for portraying how merciful and just their administration was. The immigration to the Russian Empire was narrated as result of a deceitful act.²¹⁴

²¹² Yazıcı, *Midhat Pasha(1822-1884)'s Policies vs. N. P. Ignatiev (1832-1908)'s Pan-Slav Mission*; Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside."

²¹³ "Hiç kimse takdîr idemiyor ki Hind elden gider ise İngiltereye nekadâr zarar ve ziyân tereddüb ider bu zarar ve ziyân tereddüb ider bu zarar ve ve ziyân ta 'dâd ü ta'rifden hâric olub hulâsete anlâşılmak murâd olunur ise evvelâ İngilizlerin Hindistan kıt'asında mâlik oldukları bunca emlâk Ruslar ellerine geçerek İngilizlerin bu bâbda sarf itdikleri milyonların hebâ olacağı sâniyen devletin Hindistan kıt'ası vâridât-ı külliyesinin elden gideceği salisen bâzâr-ı masnû'âtımızın bize mesdûd olacağı..." *Zevrâ*, issue number 22, Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 140.

²¹⁴ "Yunan devleti teb'asından yigirmi üç fâmiyâ halkının emvâl ve hayvânâtıyla berâber Yanya vilayet-i celîlesi dâhilinde kâ'in Narideye gelüb Yunanistanda eşkiyâ tarafından gördükleri zulm ü ta'addîye artık takât getiremeyek saltanat-ı seniyyenin zir-i cenâh-ı 'adâlet ve merhametine dahâlet eylediklerini hükûmet-i seniyyeye dil-suzâne 'arz eylediklerinde müsted'iyât-ı vâkı'aları rehîn-i kabul olarak kendülerinin münâsib bir mahalde iskân idildikleri ve Tırhala Sancâğında Agrefe cihetine dahî Yunanlıların tâkım tâkım hicret iderek tâbi'iyet-i saltanat-ı seniyyeyi istid'â eylemekde bulundukları Yanya gazetesinde görülmüşdür." *Zevrâ*, issue number 9 in Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 64; "asâkir-i İraniyye katli-âma teşebbüs iderek rast geldikleri köyleri yakub yıkmağa ve ellerine geçen kadın ve erkek ve büyük ve küçük Avramanluyı öldürmeğe ve

Personal statements of cruelty when they moved to the Russian territories were covered vividly. Their return to the Ottoman Empire and how the empire welcomed them back safely provided a major story for the paper to underline rule of law, justice and merciful administration of the empire.

3.4 Conclusion

The newspaper *Zevrâ* played an enormous role in conducting and promoting reforms and in educating people of the Baghdad province during the tenure of Midhat Pasha as governor. The paper continued to be published for forty-eight years, but after Midhat Pasha left the province and Abdülhamid II's strict policies on restricting the press were implemented. The publishing policy of the paper changed. Unlike other men of the Tanzimat, Midhat Pasha fought for freedom of press in the empire.²¹⁵ The editor of the paper, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, considered journalism as a great mission to civilize the society. Therefore, pieces on the role of newspapers, and ethics of journalism had been discussed at length in *Zevrâ*.

The power of papers in the new Ottoman politics was used subtly. While reporting reforms in the province helped people adapt to changes and understand the essence of the times, it was also an outstanding political move to cultivate more power in the center for Midhat Pasha. In fact, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, the grand vizier, became nervous, when the papers of Istanbul published the success stories of Midhat Pasha's reforms in the province using the *Zevrâ* as their source. Nedim Pasha cut the budget of Midhat Pasha for the province and this led to events that eventually caused Midhat Pasha's resignation as governor of Baghdad.

ba'zılarının ellerini ve ayaklarını kesüb harekât-ı nâ-sezâ icra itmeğe başlamaları ahâlinin bir kat-daha tevahhüşünü mücbib olarak cümlesi devlet-i 'aliyyeye 'arz-ı dahâlet etmek için ekser rü'esâ ve ümerâsı berü tarafa geçmiş ve bir muhzır-ı 'umûmî ile beyân-ı hâl itmişler idi." *Zevrâ*, issue number 12, Mine Ersoy, *Zevrâ Gazetesi* (S. 1-100)'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, (Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2014), 80.

²¹⁵ He legislated a code for freedom of press in Kanun-i Esasi in 1876. Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire*.

Mahmud Nedim Pasha ordered the successor of Midhat Pasha to wipe out his achievements in the province of Baghdad.²¹⁶ Midhat Pasha returned to Istanbul. Following his return, Mahmud Nedim Pasha offered him a ministry position in order to monitor him closely. In the meantime, Midhat Pasha worked ambitiously to declare the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire. His deeds in the provinces and his usages of newspapers to prepare people for a constitutional regime could be perceived as milestones toward his ultimate goal. Finally, studying the paper revealed the story and importance of the Tanzimat for the people of province. The mindset of the Tanzimat reformers and the narrative style they used to convince the people could be traced through *Zevrâ*. Furthermore, Midhat Pasha's usage of the newspaper in the province shaped the political culture of the Ottoman Empire. It mobilized the society to join the modernization movement of the province such as donating money for the constructions of hospitals, libraries, and schools.

²¹⁶ Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, 179.

Conclusion

The Tanzimat Era was shaped by a number of determined people whose common goal was to ensure the survival of the Ottoman Empire . One of the many incredible men of the Tanzimat was Midhat Pasha. Studying Midhat Pasha's activities in the provinces and analyzing his usage of newspapers to influence public opinion in the direction of support for Ottomanism and a constitutional regime, which Midhat Pasha hoped would resuscitate the empire, provides a novel perspective on the political culture and reforms of the Tanzimat Era. As the protagonist of this thesis, Midhat Pasha represents the second generation of the men of Tanzimat who grew up watching Mustafa Reshid Pasha his colleagues and proteges desperately seeking the solution for the survival of the Ottoman Empire. Midhat Pasha was an indefatigable provincial governor who firmly believed that the constitutional government was the only solution to the problems that the Ottoman Empire encountered in the nineteenth-century. However, because of these views, he is neither an exceptional nor an average man of the Tanzimat.

His achievements in the Danube and Baghdad provinces increased his popularity among the intellectual and dissident milieu of Istanbul, and earned him the reputation of being the "founder of modern Iraq." His recognition by the people as a pioneer of provincial reforms and the modernization of society made him a constant target of different factional groups that were opposed to his views and goals. In Istanbul, Ali Pasha and Mustafa Reshid Pasha used the means of politics, including exile and promotion, to ruin Midhat Pasha's popularity. In international and provincial politics, the Russian Empire and its representatives, the leaders of Bulgarian national movements, and tribal leaders aimed to diminish the effects of Midhat Pasha's policies through various means, including several attempts to take his life. Nevertheless, Midhat Pasha assembled a formidable group of intellectuals, technocrats and officials that helped him to bring the Tanzimat reforms to the provinces he administrated as

governor. In addition to maintaining good relationships with officials from the center, Midhat Pasha also carefully cultivated relations with capable provincial officials and local subjects. Ultimately, had his career not come to an untimely end, one of his policies would have been the provision of easy access to all state institutions for all groups of society.

Administering the Danube and Baghdad provinces presented many challenges for Midhat Pasha. While he implemented similar approaches for providing security and economic success in both provinces, he followed different strategies regarding the domestic and international political struggles. This is reflected in the news and articles which the newspapers published. Initially, the newspaper *Tuna* and *Zevrâ* aimed to attract local readers. The editors described the functions of the papers as communication between the government and the people. As in the policies of the reforms, the language and articles of the newspapers demonstrate both similar and different features. Articles that praise the rule of law, equality and the reverberation of the reforms of everyday life are featured extensively in the both papers. The newspapers *Tuna* and *Zevrâ* also feature simple, patriotic, and didactic language. The editors were aware that people in the provinces were not exposed to Turkish as much as people in the inlands and Istanbul. Therefore, although they had translated versions in local languages, the editors and the papers encouraged people to read in Turkish due to its significance as the official language. Moreover, there is a slight difference in the amount of religious vocabulary in both papers. The editors and Midhat Pasha paid special attention to local differences while implementing and promoting the reforms. In this case, while religious features of the reforms had a more intense role in *Zevrâ*, in the newspaper *Tuna*, the editor opted for rather a secular language due to the presence of a Christian majority in the region.

Although the newspapers were official and conveyed the narrative of Midhat Pasha and his team, they presented more of a local perspective of the reforms. Therefore, a comparative study of the newspapers which were published in two distant provinces of the empire reveals

how top-down reforms of the Tanzimat shaped and were modified by regional difference and varying receptions of the reforms. As this thesis argues, Midhat Pasha shaped the Ottoman politics and society by using newspapers. One of the most significant features of the newspapers that they emphasized political accountability. While publishing his itineraries, court rules, and the reasons of appointments and dismissals of officials, Midhat Pasha held his administration and offices accountable through the newspapers. He also publicized his success of implementing the reforms in some of the most challenging provinces of the empire. This thesis provides a new perspective to the political culture of the Tanzimat Era and implementation of reforms throughout the empire by examining the trajectory of Midhat Pasha's career and the newspapers he used to achieve his successes. While discussing the subjects that the newspapers published in both sides of the Empire, the thesis illuminates the perspective of Midhat Pasha and his handpicked team on the people of provinces. The news they covered in the papers such as court decisions, military recruitments, local political actors, and security issues reveal the priorities of the pasha and his team regarding the modernization process of the provinces. In addition, newspapers as sources provide information about the emergence of print media and journalism in the Ottoman Empire.

Ahmed Midhat Efendi, the editor of *Tuna* and *Zevrâ* and later on the editor of *Tercümân-ı Ahvâl* (Interpreter of Conditions, Istanbul-based newspaper), built his career as journalist and novelist around the provincial newspapers. Hence, studying newspapers reveals the emerging of journalism and ethic of journalist in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, seeing how enthusiastic Midhat Pasha and Ahmed Midhat Efendi were for publication of newspapers around the empire signals how important the newspapers were in their policy to modernize the society. The newspapers had a mission to educate society. Midhat Pasha idealized them as a teacher who explains complicated things in understandable ways. He valued the freedom of press and encouraged various groups of society to publish their own local papers. In addition,

the press played an important role in his rising and fall in Ottoman bureaucracy. The newspapers become the mouthpiece of his reforms and his actions as governor/politician. For example, in 1867, *Tuna* underlined the rule of law in the Danube province against the allegations of St. Petersburg based newspaper *İbn-i Vatan* (Son of the Homeland).²¹⁷ *İbn-i Vatan* published a translated version of a letter called “A Letter from Ruschuk.” In this letter, the writer stated that a couple of people were hanged in the Danube Province and one of these people was the father of a Russian consulate’s staff in Ruschuk. Following this incident, a military conflict emerged between the forces of Midhat Pasha and the army of Panayot, a Bulgarian leader for the national struggle. The letter emphasized the cruel treatment of Midhat Pasha. The issue number a hundred-forty of *Tuna*, strongly rejected these claims. The editor protested the unreliable sources of the newspaper by stating: “...what can anyone say about the splendid resources of the newspaper which published in the center of an empire? Which of those fake news should we address to correct? Where is the alleged army of Sadık Pasha? Or have they mistaken the rabbits which settles in the mountains of the Balkans with an army? Were those hanged people not the bandits who pledged to fight until their death?” *Tuna* observed that “Unlike *Lehistan* (Poland), no one in the Ottoman Empire received a punishment without a fair trial let alone hanging.”

Whether in the Danube or Baghdad province, the newspapers Midhat Pasha published featured similar structures. They had four sections called *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye* (Special Matters), *Mevâdd-i ‘Umûmiyye* (General Matters), *Havâddis-i Hâriciyye* (Foreign News), and *İlânat* (Announcements). They both consisted of four pages, two pages in Ottoman Turkish and two pages in the local languages: Bulgarian and Arabic. Although the Danube Province was not the first Midhat Pasha experienced as governor, *Tuna* was his first experience publishing a provincial newspaper. He was aware that *Tuna* would set an example for the

²¹⁷ *Tuna*, issue number 140.

future of print media in the Ottoman Empire. Hence, Midhat Pasha paid special attention to employee competent people for the newspaper. His style of governance attracted a diverse group of people who were already expert or keen to learn the crafts. In the provinces, Midhat Pasha integrated the print houses into the societies and reform processes. In a response to the allegation of the newspaper *Le Courrier d'orient*, the editor of *Tuna* noted that the children who studied in *islahhâne* contributed to the publishing of the newspaper. In addition, the editor underlined that apart from literacy studies, the students were taught the art of typesetting in the print house.²¹⁸

In the *Mevâdd-i Husûsiyye* (Special Matters) sections, both newspapers focused on the local news from the respective provinces. The editors aimed to lay out a foundation in the minds of the locals about reform and modernization. However, *Tuna* and *Zevrâ* had different approaches in conveying their message. In *Tuna*, the newspaper paid special attention to regain the loyalty of the non-Muslims population. In *Zevrâ* however, the main concern of the administration was to “civilize” the society. Hence, the pieces were mostly about the necessity of modernization and its benefits for the wealth and prosperity of the people. In the section *Mevâdd-i ‘Umûmiyye* (General Matters), the papers published news from around the empire. The appointments of the officers, news from other provincial newspapers, and implementation of reforms.

Zevrâ published the examples of successful reforms that Midhat Pasha had implemented in the Danube province in order to encourage people to participate in the reform processes in the Baghdad province. Midhat Pasha and his team transferred their experiences

²¹⁸ The newspaper *Le Courrier d'orient* claimed that the illiterate people of the Danube province were forced to subscribe the newspaper. Furthermore, they argued that two Christian children in the province were taken to the *islahhâne* where they were not taken care of and become miserable. In the issue number 140, the *Tuna* protested the allegations and noted “Claiming that there is not four hundred people in the province who could read enough to subscribe the paper is outrages. It is maliciously claiming that people of Danube province is ignorant. In fact, those people are malevolent journalist who resides in Beyoğlu. They certainly are not happy with the improvement of the province and its people.” *Tuna*, issue number 140.

from the Danube province to Baghdad. Finally, the section of *Havâddis-i Hâriciyye* (Foreign News), in both papers, reflected the Midhat Pasha's interest in councils and parliaments. The newspapers explained how parliaments functioned in European empires. They translated and published the discussions which were taking place in the parliaments of Britain, France, and Italy, primarily. The main villain of this section for both papers was the Russian Empire. The competition between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire in the Balkans reflected on the newspapers as propaganda war. The rivalry between Midhat Pasha and the ambassador of the Russian Empire, Nikolay Ignatiev, in the Danube province shaped his policies as governor and publishing policy of the *Tuna* on the Russian Empire. In *Zevrâ*, the paper had the same publishing policy too. For example, while reporting news on Asia, the newspaper supported the policy of Britain in Asia and blamed the Russian Empire for managing cruel policies. Due to bandits who moved between the borders of the Ottoman Empire and the Iran, the *Zevrâ* extensively wrote about the border breaches of the bandits and how Iranian officers protected them.

The readerships of the newspapers could be tracked through the letters which the newspapers published. Although some of them are anonymous, the letters clarified that the newspapers were read and sparked conversations among the locals on matters such as education, civilization, and military recruitment. The discussions in the newspapers reflected the perspective of Midhat Pasha and his team, particularly the editor Ahmed Midhat Efendi. Hence, the newspapers could be interpreted as a reflection of their intellectual and political minds. Midhat Pasha's policies and usage of newspapers become an inspiration for his colleagues and sultan Abdülhamid II. Some of the leading reforms he initiated in the provinces such as newspapers, modern schools, youth detention centers and apprenticeship were instituted around the empire.

By comparing these two different provinces, the thesis expands on how we conceive the Tanzimat and its legacy. Furthermore, this thesis explores the impact of the changing political climate in Istanbul on the provincial administration through the career trajectory of Midhat Pasha. When Midhat Pasha was first appointed to the Danube province, he had endorsement and support of Fuad Pasha who was the most powerful bureaucrat in the center. Hence, in his first two years in the province, he received financial and bureaucratic support from the center. However, when Ali Pasha and later Mustafa Reshid Pasha took over control of the Sublime Porte, his autonomy in the provinces as governor was restricted. In fact, the nemeses of Midhat Pasha, Mustafa Reshid Pasha, tried to kill the popularity of Midhat Pasha and diminished the effects of his successful reforms. Therefore, while comparing the governorship of Midhat Pasha in two distant provinces of the empire, this thesis illuminates the relations between the Sublime Porte and provincial administration. Seeing the factional conflicts among the men of Tanzimat through the career trajectory of Midhat Pasha reveals a new standpoint to the Tanzimat groups rather than classifying them as progressives or reactionaries. The role of newspapers in this political culture is worth studying in depth. These newspapers are the first rough draft of history, so consequently close readings of provincial newspapers revealed different dynamics and individual agencies of the era.

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