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**GOVERNING FROM THE MARGINS:
THE EMERGENCE OF PROVINCIAL PRESS
IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1865-1871)**

Thesis submitted to the Department of Historical Studies,
Central European University Private University, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Historical Studies

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I, the undersigned, **Okan Kozanoglu**, candidate for the MA degree in Historical Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis titled “Governing from the Margins: The Emergence of Provincial Press in the Ottoman Empire (1865-1871)” is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright.

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Okan Kozanoglu

Abstract

This study examines the emergence of the provincial press in the Ottoman Empire in the 1860s, specifically the period between two provincial laws from 1864 and 1871. While recent literature on the nineteenth-century Ottoman press often focuses on the Hamidian period and major print hubs like Istanbul, Izmir, Thessaloniki, or Beirut, few studies explored the emergence of provincial newspapers and the impetus behind their appearance, often dismissing them as merely “official” media outlets. This study challenges such categorizations by highlighting the role of governors in establishing printing houses and introducing newspaper enterprises across the empire. It argues that the provincial governors in the 1860s instrumentalized the press as a means of self-fashioning to secure political legitimacy before the provincial people and to demonstrate their allegiance to the Sublime Porte. This study further argues that the primary motivation behind the use of these media outlets by provincial administrations stemmed from the central government’s rising reliance on provincial governors in the face of nationalist separatism. By combining the records of administrative correspondence and a selection of provincial newspapers from the 1860s, this study reveals that the provincial newspapers aligned their narratives with the political and moral virtues of Ottomanism while positioning the governors as the forerunners and guardians of the *Tanzimāt* reforms. Vilifying or discrediting specific groups, activities, and concepts also helped them craft their narratives around order and progress. This study also emphasizes that the rhetoric strategies in these newspapers contributed to the centralization process from a performative sense, which enriches a more nuanced understanding of centralization and local administration in the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire.

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

This thesis follows the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) transliteration system for Ottoman Turkish words and phrases. Except for the commonly known terms (e.g., sultan, grand vizier, pasha) and proper names that have widely accepted English spellings (e.g., Muhammad Ali, Mount Lebanon, Istanbul), this study uses macrons (̄) for long vowels (ā, ī, ū), dots below consonants (̣) for emphatic consonants (ḳ, ṣ, ṭ, ẓ, ḍ̣), modifier left and right half rings for *hamza* (ʾ) and *ayn* (ʿ), and other diacritics from the transliteration system. The only difference from the IJMES transliteration system lies in the letters “ح” and “غ,” transliterated as “ḥ” and “ğ” respectively. This study does not transliterate people’s names from Ottoman Turkish. It also follows the current place names for cities and regions unless the historical context necessitates using the Ottoman-era name for clarity and specificity (e.g., Salonica Province, Hüdavendigâr Province, Diyarbakır).

All transliterations and translations from the Ottoman Turkish are the author’s own. For sources in other languages, the author gratefully acknowledges the help from Muhammed Aslaner (Arabic), Anıl Atılğan (Bulgarian), Mehmet Coşkun (Bosnian-Serbo-Croatian), Tulya Su Güven (French), Eileen Morgana Brown and Moritz N. Wallenborn (German), and Alyona Podnebennaya (Russian) in reviewing the sources and offering translations.

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Introduction

“There is nothing in the world more ridiculous than the way provincial newspapers, with deliberate effort, endlessly praise and glorify governors.”

[*Hele vilāyet gazeteleriniñ bi'l-hāşşa ve bi'l-iltizām vālileri medh ü sitāyiş edişleri kadar 'ālemde gülünç şey olamaz.*]

Giritli Selim Sırrı Pasha²

During his tenure in Kastamonu Province in 1882, Giritli Sırrı Pasha wrote an article for the provincial newspaper of the province titled “*Hakk Söz Acıdır*” (Truth is Bitter). In his article, Sırrı Pasha criticizes the provincial newspapers for overtly praising the provincial governors and verbatim replicating the reports from the capital, arguing that the mission of the provincial newspapers went beyond mere praise or criticism of the officials. He believes that the mission of the provincial press was to explicitly present the deeds of the civil servants to public opinion, reinforcing the newspaper’s duty as a control mechanism over provincial governance. He supports this argument by claiming that newspapers operate within two grand principles: encouragement (*tergīb*) and deterrence (*terhīb*), asserting that provincial newspapers should uphold these principles for provincial officials since the local population would know its administrators better than outsiders. At the end of his article, Sırrı Pasha stresses that, in governance, no instrument is more effective than the newspaper in acknowledging virtue and condemning wrongdoing.³

Despite Sırrı Pasha’s outspoken criticism from the 1880s, scholars have often reduced the Ottoman provincial press to mere bulletin boards for the provincial administrations, oversimplifying them as state-driven projects and overlooking their variations, resemblances, and their administrative implications due to their “official” status. On the contrary, this study will challenge the idea that the Ottoman provincial press lacked agency, arguing that these

² Sırrı Paşa, “Hakk Söz Acıdır,” in *Mektûbât-ı Sırrı Paşa, Volume I* (Istanbul: Babıali Caddesi 38 Numarolu Matbaa, 1316 [1898]), 79.

³ Sırrı Pasha, “Hakk Söz Acıdır,” 80-82.

newspapers, which provincial actors, bilateral negotiations, and local contingencies shaped their conditions and contents, played an active and instrumental role in shaping provincial governance. This study will examine the involvement of local governments and the initial motivations behind the emergence of the provincial press by focusing on their formative period in the 1860s. It contends that while the provincial newspapers served as a catalyst for Ottomanist ideology on the central government's behalf, they also functioned as a self-legitimization tool for the provincial governors, revealing their dual role in the Ottoman centralization process. Ultimately, this study will reassess the "official" nature of the provincial press and reposition it within broader debates on Ottoman centralization and reform.

Historical Background: Province and Press in the Late Ottoman Empire

Both issues of preventing the empire's collapse by centralization process and needing to fabricate an official discourse for the empire seemed to have derived from what Ottoman statesmen referred to as the "Egyptian problem," the dilemmas created by Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman governor of Egypt.⁴ In the 1820s, Muhammad Ali started reform projects to reorganize the Egyptian administrative structures, conscript a modern army, and establish new economic and educational institutions.⁵ His reforms also included the establishment of the bilingual official gazette, *Veķāyi 'i Mıṣriyye* (Egyptian Affairs), comprised of provincial news like official decrees, appointments, and other administrative decrees, news from the Ottoman Empire, and foreign news, mainly to distribute to state employees.⁶ During the 1830s, following

⁴ Muhammad Ali of Egypt, or Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha (1769-1849), was an Ottoman governor of Albanian origin who rose to power in Egypt after the withdrawal of French troops. After becoming governor in 1805, he consolidated his power and ended the Mamluk rule in Egypt. During the earlier years of his reign, Muhammad Ali helped the Ottoman Empire to recapture the Arabian Peninsula but failed to suppress the Greek War of Independence. Around that time, he defied the Ottoman government and declared war two times, which resulted in the establishment of the Khedivate of Egypt. For more information, see Ehud R. Toledano, "Muhammad 'Ali Pasha," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, Volume VII* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 425.

⁵ F. Robert Hunter, "The Reconstitution of Government by Muhammad Ali," in *Egypt under the Khedives, 1805-1875* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), 15-17.

⁶ Ami Ayalon, "State Bulletins: Pronouncing the Official Truth," in *The Press in the Arab Middle East, A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 15; Kathryn Anne Schwartz, "Meaningful Mediums: A Material and

two wars that broke out between the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, the Sublime Porte acknowledged the autonomy, or *de facto* independence, of the Khedivate of Egypt from the Ottoman Empire and Muhammad Ali's family as his successors.⁷ Ottoman defeats against the Egyptian armies and Egypt's secession engendered a profound crisis in the imperial order, forcing the Sublime Porte to undertake several measures to protect its legitimacy.⁸

While Muhammad Ali was not the first governor to rebel against the Ottoman authority, his success in undermining Ottoman political authority was one of the driving forces behind Ottoman reform projects.⁹ The promulgation of the Imperial Edict of Gülhane (*Gülhāne Ḥatt-ı Hümāyūnu*) in 1839, which promised new regulations for the security of life for every citizen, reorganized systems of taxation and conscription, and reforms for the judicature, introduced the European concepts of reform using the Islamic rhetoric.¹⁰ The edict marked the beginning of a period of modernization for the empire's administrative, military, financial, judicial, and educational mechanisms. During this period, known as the *Tanzimāt*, the Sublime Porte started to promote a new ideology, Ottomanism, promising equality for its subjects regardless of their ethnicity and religion under the supra-identity of "Ottoman" within the empire's domain while framing this equality with the concepts of patriotism and nationhood.¹¹ The promulgation of the Reform Edict of 1856 (*İşlāhāt Fermānı*) after the Crimean War (1853-1856) further reinforced

Intellectual History of Manuscript and Print Production in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Cairo," (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2015), 162.

⁷ Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870, An Empire Besieged* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 406.

⁸ The term "Sublime Porte" is a synecdoche that denotes the central government of the Ottoman Empire that resided in Istanbul. This term will repeat in the following pages. I will use the term throughout this work to refer to the imperial administration.

⁹ In Ioannina, Ali Pasha of Tepelenë also rebelled against the centralization efforts of the Ottoman Empire, which gave rise to the Greek Revolution and their subsequent independence in 1822. For more information, see Stanford J. Shaw, and Ezel Kural Shaw, "Beginnings of Modern Reform: The Era of Mahmud II, 1808-1839," in *History of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 17-19.

¹⁰ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, "The Tanzimat Era," in *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72-73. For a detailed analysis of how European and Islamic elements constituted the multilayered nature of the Edict of Gülhane, see Edhem Eldem, "L'édit des *Tanzimat* (1839) : une relecture," *Turcica* 52 (2021): 201-307.

¹¹ Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlıcılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Volume I: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinil (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 88.

the idea of equality among Muslim and non-Muslim subjects alike, albeit the edict received strong opposition from the conservative Muslims of the empire. After 1856, the empire's reforms aimed to further institutionalize this equality vision by expanding bureaucratic structures, codifying legal frameworks, and strengthening provincial administration to ensure compliance with the central authority.

During these reform projects, the central government reduced the authority of governors and stripped the administrative authority of financial and military responsibilities to prevent separatism among other regions. Starting in the 1840s, the Sublime Porte recognized the need to reorganize the provincial administration and reformed it by establishing provincial councils (*meclis*), appointing tax collectors (*muhaşşıl*) from the center, and designating the army marshalls (*müşîr*) as governors.¹² During the 1850s, however, the central government realized the system was nonfunctional due to financial constraints, especially during the Crimean War (1853-1856), "unable to provide sufficient funds to finance the expanding activities of the central government and army."¹³ Around the same time, in particular provinces, the Sublime Porte replaced the military governors with governors trained in the civil service, hoping to solve the malfunctions of the administration.¹⁴ However, the problem was that subordinate officers around the governors were directly responsible to the central government, which impeded the speed of administrative duties.¹⁵ The problem was an evident obstacle, especially during the civil war and massacres in Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860, resulting in the subsequent

¹² Burak Hamza Eryiğit, and Cansu Kalafat, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde 1840-1858 Yılları Arasında Taşra Yönetimini Düzenleyen Nizamnameler Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," *Strategic Public Management Journal* 5, no. 10 (2019): 55-57.

¹³ Stanford J. Shaw, and Ezel Kural Shaw, "Era of Modern Reform: The Tanzimat, 1839-1876," in *History of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 87.

¹⁴ Shaw and Kural Shaw, "Era of Modern Reform: The Tanzimat, 1839-1876," 87.

¹⁵ Abdulhamit Kirmizi, "Taming the Governors: The Swinging Pendulum of Power over the Ottoman Provinces in the Nineteenth Century," *The International Journal of Regional and Local Studies* 6, no. 1 (2010): 6.

military intervention by the French army and the establishment of the Mount Lebanon Mutesarrifate in 1861.¹⁶

Administrative inefficiency in provinces led to the Sublime Porte conferring more power to the governors, increasing their authority in the reorganized administrative mechanisms of the empire. In 1858, Fuad Pasha, the head of the High Council of Reforms (*Meclis-i 'Âlî-i Tanzîmât*) at the time, drafted a new regulation in 1858 for the provincial governors and their subordinate authorities, which kept the existing administrative structures but provided provincial governors with greater responsibility in the provincial affairs in administrative, fiscal, and military matters.¹⁷ To create a flow of bureaucrats into the provincial administration, the Sublime Porte established the Imperial School of the Civil Service (*Mekteb-i Mülkiyye-i Şāhāne*) in 1859, whose graduates were given priority in appointing district governors and local financial directors.¹⁸ By the beginning of the 1860s, the Sublime Porte started to emphasize the representative role of the provincial governorship while gradually shifting their educational background. In 1864, following a series of inspections sent by Fuad Pasha, now the grand vizier, and Fuad Pasha's previous concerns and experiences in Egypt and Lebanon, the Sublime Porte drafted a new regulation to establish a pilot province by merging the provinces of Niš, Vidin, and Silistra, restructured the provincial administration in terms of its hierarchy, established new local councils for the provincial administration, and increased the powers of the provincial governor over the provincial matters.¹⁹

¹⁶ Leila Tarazi Fawaz's book on the civil war in 1860 talks about the conflict and the aftermath in detail. For detailed information, see Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

¹⁷ "Ordinance Regarding the Tasks of Great Provincial Governors and Gracious Mutesarrifs and District Governors and Directors [*Vülât-ı 'Azām ve Mutaşarrıfîn-i Kirām ve Kā'im-makāmlarıñ ve Müdirleriñ Vezâyifini Şāmil Ta'limâtıdır*]," BOA. C.DH. 46/2299, Safar 13, 1275 [September 22, 1858]; Shaw and Kural Shaw, "Era of Modern Reform," 88; Roderic H. Davison, "Provincial Government: Midhat Pasha and the Vilayet System of 1864 and 1867," in *Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 137.

¹⁸ Davison, "Provincial Government," 140; Selçuk Akşin Somel, "The Emergence of Government Primary Education (1838-1869)," in *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 52.

¹⁹ Davison, "Provincial Government," 151; Shaw and Kural Shaw, "Era of Modern Reform," 89.

The other issue that the Sublime Porte confronted was reestablishing political legitimacy through the production of a political discourse, which was communicated through the official gazette, *Takvīm-i Veķāyi* ‘ (Calendar of Events) in 1831. Muhammad Ali’s *Veķāyi* ‘-i Mıṣriyye became a source of inspiration for the gazette’s publication. In the preface (*mukāddime*) from its first issue, the newspaper states its mission to inform people about the causes, circumstances, and necessities behind the internal and external affairs of the sublime state to prevent any confusion or misinterpretations, which Özgür Türesay labels as the manufacture of “one official truth to promote.”²⁰ Other state-sponsored newspapers like *Cerīde-i Havādiṣ* (Journal of News) (1841) or *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* (The News Garden) (1858) also promoted the Ottoman official discourse.²¹ However, the problem was that until the Crimean War, non-official newspapers in languages other than Turkish dominated the Ottoman press landscape, with no apparent popularity among different communities.²² The publication of *Tercümān-ı Ahvāl* (Translator of Events) in 1860 and *Taṣvīr-i Efkār* (Herald of Ideas) in 1862 led to what Erol Baykal describes as a wave of popularity for private Turkish newspapers due to their engagement with public debates about sociopolitical issues.²³ However, even during these periods of popularization, press activities were mainly clustered around the port cities of Istanbul, Izmir, Salonica, and Beirut.

In the meantime, with the exponential increase in Turkish newspapers, the Sublime Porte faced the challenge of regulating the discourse, prompting the implementation of censorship measures. Even though the Imperial Printing Press (*Ṭabḥāne-i ‘Āmire*) tried to establish a monopoly over printing activities, the use of lithography by several illicit printers in

²⁰ Özgür Türesay, “The Political Language of *Takvīm-i vekayi*: The Discourse and Temporality of Ottoman ‘Reform’ (1831-1834),” trans. Naomi Cohen, *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 31 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.6874>.

²¹ Erol A. F. Baykal, “The Emergence and Growth of the Ottoman Press, 1831-1908,” in *The Ottoman Press (1908-1923)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 25; Sinan Çakar, “Tanzimat Devri’nde Reformist Bir Vali: Mehmed Râşid Paşa’nın Suriye Valiliği (1866-1871),” *Marmara Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8, no. 2 (2021): 214.

²² Hanoğlu, “The Tanzimat Era,” 94.

²³ Baykal, “The Emergence and Growth of the Ottoman Press, 1831-1908,” 13.

Istanbul contested the monopoly.²⁴ The consequence was the promulgation of the Printing Press Regulation (*Maṭba‘alar Nizāmnāmesi*) in 1857. This nine-article regulation stated the basic rules for opening a printing press and printing any material in the Ottoman Empire and the responsible authorities for obtaining permits, thereby implementing a fundamental sense of pre-publication censorship.²⁵ Following a memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Hāriciyye Nezāreti*) emphasizing the dire need for a press bureau to enforce a proper censorship mechanism, the Sublime Porte established the Press Bureau in 1859 under the same ministry.²⁶ In 1864, adapted from Napoleon III’s Press Law from 1852, the Sublime Porte enacted a Press Regulation (*Maṭbū‘āt Nizāmnāmesi*), restricting press activities by obligating Ottoman subjects and foreigners to obtain permits from the Ministry of Public Education (*Ma‘ārif-i ‘Umūmiyye Nezāreti*) or Foreign Affairs, while also subjecting periodicals to pre-circulation censorship by the Press Bureau and many penalties.²⁷ Three years later, in 1867, Grand Vizier Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha issued a decree, later bearing his name, allowing the government to suspend political newspapers and periodicals “acting against the principle of protecting the security and order of the state” without trial, effectively suppressing opposition journalism.²⁸

New laws emerged as censorship mechanisms developed and provincial governors accumulated more power over provincial affairs. The Regulation for the Danube Province (*Ṭuna Vilāyet Nizāmnāmesi*) in 1864 and the Provincial Law of 1867 (*Vilāyet Nizāmnāmesi*) decreed the establishment of provincial printing houses supervised by provincial chief secretaries, a strategy more likely to oversee and facilitate administrative paperwork for the

²⁴ Ayşe Tek Başaran, “The Ottoman Printing Enterprise: Legalization, Agency and Networks, 1831-1863,” (PhD Dissertation, Boğaziçi University, 2019), 106.

²⁵ BOA. İ.MVL. 367/16095, Jumada al-Akhir 2, 1273 [January 28, 1857].

²⁶ BOA. HR.TO. 429/37, Dhu al-Qadah 4, 1274 [June 16, 1858]; BOA. HR.TO. 472/11, Rajab 11, 1275 [February 14, 1859].

²⁷ BOA. A. } DVN.MKL. 5/9, Rajab 5, 1281 [December 4, 1864]; Ipek K. Yosmaoğlu, “Chasing the Printed Word: Press Censorship in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1913,” *The Turkish Studies Association Journal* 27, no. 1/2 (2003): 17-18.

²⁸ Baykal, “The Emergence and Growth of the Ottoman Press,” 37; Server R. İskit, *Türkiye’de Matbuat Rejimleri* (İstanbul: Ülkü Matbaası, 1939), 696.

provinces.²⁹ However, due to the ambiguity of the instructions about the use of the printing equipment being unclear in the legal text, there appears to have been a loophole for the provincial administrations about what purposes the printing equipment would serve. Their rising authority and responsibilities over the respective regions, combined with the concerns about separatism and the issue of centralization, show that these governors faced considerable challenges regarding their legitimacy before the Sublime Porte. I argue that to navigate these issues, the governors employed the printing press as a medium of self-fashioning, using the official discourse promoted by the central government to appease the concerns and suspicions while instrumentalizing this discourse for shaping provincial public opinion.

Research Inquiries and Hypotheses

The project illuminates the political, administrative, and discursive dimensions of the Ottoman provincial print culture in the 1860s through a series of interrelated areas of inquiry. The first investigative thread of the study concerns the provincial governors and their motivations behind establishing a provincial newspaper to understand their incentives and justifications within the imperial framework. The second area investigates the practical dimension of the provincial press outlets, namely how the governors provided technological capital, recruited printers, mobilized the labor force, and sustained themselves financially. Investigating these practical matters allows us to assess the provincial governors' involvement in the genesis of the provincial press. The third inquiry deals with the content of the provincial newspapers to understand the patterns and variations between these newspapers and their contextualization for the broader issues of the Ottoman provincial administrations. Through

²⁹ The ninth article goes, "The general administrative writing affairs of the province are entrusted to an officer appointed by the state with the title of provincial chief secretary. He will have a writing office under his command, and all the official correspondence and the preservation of the records and documents of the office will be carried out through this means. Additionally, there will be a printing press in the province, which will be under the supervision of the chief secretary." BOA. İ.MMS. 29/1245, Jumada al-Awwal 11, 1281 [October 12, 1864]; *Düstûr, Birinci Tertib, Cilt I* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1289 [1872]), 609.

these three areas of investigation, this study engages with existing debates about Ottoman centralization by claiming that the governors' intention to utilize the press was a performative effort to source legitimacy and assert agency within the evolving system of Ottoman imperial modernity.

This study hypothesizes that the governors were the primary actors in the emergence of the provincial press because of their involvement in the procedure of its establishment from the beginning. State archival documents suggest that rather than an arbitrary distribution of the printing presses based on effective laws, the governors were required to ask for equipment with the initial intention of facilitating administrative correspondence. Their petitions for publishing newspapers indicate that the governors rarely provided a reason for publishing a newspaper, often attributing their request to other provincial administrations publishing newspapers. These governors were involved in almost every step of the formation process of these newspaper enterprises, and the financial concerns appeared to have occupied a prominent place in the bilateral communications between the Sublime Porte and provincial administrations, albeit the provinces failed to generate income even to cover their expenses. An evaluation of the initial issues of these newspapers also reveals that these newspapers serve an ideologically charged purpose. The newspaper articles, which strongly relied on the dichotomies of "order/disorder" and "progress/backwardness," legitimized the governors of these provinces through a positive depiction of reform as a benevolent act of theirs while presenting their presence and trips as evidence for the progress of the reform. These newspapers constructed and narrated the provincial governors as the embodiment of the reform projects while denigrating specific groups, activities, and concepts to deepen the dichotomy against disorder and backwardness.

Existing Literature on the Ottoman Provincial Press

In terms of the provincial press in the Ottoman Empire, the existing scholarship extensively focuses on the Hamidian Era (1876-1908), whose source accessibility may have

provided the scholars better space for further inspections. Nevertheless, one can split these studies into two groups: studies that overview the emergence and impact of the Ottoman provincial press and case studies that focus on specific provinces to understand the implications of these press activities. Regarding the overviews, only two small studies fall under the category. The first one is an encyclopedia entry from 1985, written by Bülent Varlık, about the provincial newspapers as a precursor to the emergence of the local press. The entry provides introductory information about the emergence of provincial newspapers due to the new provincial regulations and their characteristics and contents.³⁰ The other is an article from 1995, co-authored by Uygur Kocabaşoğlu and Ali Birinci, about the provincial printing houses and newspapers during the 1890s and the 1900s, which they claimed to be *sui generis* compared to its European counterparts,³¹ periodizing each phase of provincial press and its eventual “corruption” by becoming official bulletins of the provincial governments. The article also mentions how these newspapers lacked an audience and had problems with distribution and subscription fees, providing a significant aspect of these institutions as economic enterprises.³²

In terms of the case studies, most of these works look at the first example of these newspapers, the *Tuna* newspaper of the Danube Province, as it was a successful model for others to follow. İsmail Eren’s article from 1965 provides essential information about the provincial printing house in the Danube Province and its publications, with the newspaper’s content shortly discussed in the article.³³ Another article by Uygur Kocabaşoğlu from 1991

³⁰ Bülent Varlık, “Yerel Basının Öncüsü: Vilâyet Gazeteleri,” in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi 1. Cilt*, edited by Murat Belge and Fahri Aral (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 99-102.

³¹ I contest their claim about the uniqueness of the Ottoman provincial press being a state-driven project, as the Russian Empire already had a similar state-driven project of official provincial newspapers since 1830. For more information, see Valery Fedorovich Blokhin, “‘Gubernskiye Vedomosti’ Nakanune Realizatsii Novoi Gosudarstvennoyi Modeli Upravleniya Pechatiyu (Seredina 60-h gg. XIX v.),” *Vestnik TGU* 8, 76 (2009): 325-329; Alison K. Smith, “Information and Efficiency: Russian Newspapers, ca. 1700-1850,” in *Information and Empire: Mechanisms of Communication in Russia*, ed. Simon Franklin and Katherine Bowers (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2017), 200-211.

³² Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, and Ali Birinci, “Osmanlı Vilâyet Gazete ve Matbaaları Üzerine Gözlemler,” *Kebikeç*, no. 2 (1995): 101-122.

³³ İsmail Eren, “Tuna Vilayet Matbaası ve Neşriyatı (1864-1877),” *Türk Kültürü* 3, no. 27 (1965): 311-318.

discusses the newspaper's publication, circulation, and contents, although the article relies heavily on Eren's article.³⁴ One recent study by Bekir Koç from 2015 evaluates the newspaper's contents between 1865 and 1868 to understand its aims for Turkish and Bulgarian-speaking audiences, offering insightful comments about the newspaper articles from the 1860s.³⁵ Apart from these articles, there is one master's thesis from Central European University by Hatice Yardım from 2019, which makes a reading of the newspapers to understand the implementation of reforms in Danube and Baghdad provinces from one governor, Midhat Pasha.³⁶ This thesis highlights regional peculiarities and commonalities between these newspapers, yet it does not integrate administrative paperwork and only evaluates the newspapers.

A comparable number of studies also examined the provincial newspapers from Bosnia and Erzurum provinces. For instance, Todor Kruševac's meticulous survey of Bosnian and Herzegovinian newspapers in the nineteenth century includes a chapter in which he talks about the operations of the provincial printing house and the provincial newspaper of Bosnia Province, providing valuable information regarding the editorial board and the newspaper's contents.³⁷ Salih Seyhan's article, which translates the first four issues of the newspaper *Bosna* in simplified Turkish, also helps scholars understand the content first-hand.³⁸ Concerning the provincial newspaper from Erzurum Province, Muammer Yaşar's book from 1971 offers a chronology of the newspaper until the mid-twentieth century, along with a concise context for the history of its publication.³⁹ More recently, Besim Yıldırım's article about the newspaper

³⁴ Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, "Tuna Vilayet Gazetesi," *OTAM Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma Ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, no. 2 (1991): 141-149.

³⁵ Bekir Koç, "Tuna Vilayeti Gazetesi ve İçeriğine Dair Bazı Bilgiler (Mart 1865-Mart 1868)," *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 34, no. 57 (2015): 121-158.

³⁶ Hatice Yardım, "An Intermediary Between the Government and the People: A Comparative Approach to Midhat Pasha's Reform Policies and the Usage of Newspapers in the Danube (1864-1868) and Baghdad (1869-1871) Provinces," (Master's thesis, Central European University, 2019).

³⁷ Todor Kruševac, "Bosna," in *Bosansko-Hercegovacki Listovi u XIX Veku*, (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978), 41-49.

³⁸ Salih Seyhan, "Bosna Vilayet Gazetesi Bosna'nın Kısa Tanıtımı ve İlk Dört Sayısının Sadeleştirilmiş Özeti," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 17, no. 2 (2013): 141-160.

³⁹ Muammer Yaşar, *Anadolu'da İlk Türk Gazetesi: Envâr-ı Şarkıyye*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1971).

Envār-ı Şarkıyye and its contents emphasized its role in the intellectual life of the province by reevaluating its contents and intentions for the provincial citizens.⁴⁰

Though small in quantity, there are some studies regarding other provincial newspapers from the period. One such study is Fatma Gökçen Atuk's article about the provincial newspaper of Salonica Province, which evaluates the establishment process of the newspaper, emphasizing its role in promoting reform projects and other socio-political changes.⁴¹ A conference paper by Murat Hanılçe explores the establishment, features, and impact of the provincial newspaper of Baghdad Province, *Zevrâ*, in promoting *Tanzimât* reforms.⁴² Nesim Yazıcı's conference paper on the official press activities in the Arabic-speaking lands of the empire includes one subtitle regarding the provincial newspaper in Syria Province, providing helpful information about the newspaper's contents and its success.⁴³ Mustafa Tayla's book on the history of the press in Bursa includes a chapter that discusses the establishment process and the contents of the provincial newspaper of Hüdavendigâr Province.⁴⁴ Hüseyin Albayrak's article about the provincial printing house and newspaper in Trabzon Province includes a history of the newspaper and a very short survey of its contents.⁴⁵ These and many other case studies, whose names I could not mention, provide an understanding of the media landscape of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire by presenting these cases as the first media outlets in their respective provinces.

⁴⁰ Besim Yıldırım, "Doğu'dan Yükselen Işık: *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* Vilayet Gazetesi," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlefl Dergisi* vol. 8, no. 1 (2021): 35-62.

⁴¹ Fatma Gökçen Atuk, "19. Yüzyıl'da Selanik'de Yayımlanan Bir Gazete: Selanik," *İletişim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi*, no. 48 (2019): 308-342.

⁴² Murat Hanılçe, "Orta Doğu'da Osmanlı Vilayet Gazetelerine Bir Örnek: *Zevrâ* Gazetesi," in *International Symposium on Turkish Press History: 19-21 October 2016, Volume 1*, edited by Merve Uğur, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 2018), 231-270.

⁴³ Nesimi Yazıcı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Araplarla Meskun Bölgelerindeki Resmi Vilayet Basını Konusunda Bir Değerlendirme," in *XI. Türk Tarih Kongresi, 05-09 Eylül 1990, Ankara, Volume V* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1994), 2053-2058.

⁴⁴ Mustafa Tayla, *Bursa Basını (1868-1983)*, (Bursa: Bursa Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Yayınları, 1997), 13-21.

⁴⁵ Hüseyin Albayrak, "Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesinde İlk Matbaa, İlk Gazete ve İlk Sâlnâme," *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, no. 4 (2005): 39-52.

As much as these studies provide a general description of the Ottoman provincial press in the nineteenth century, they have many shortcomings in capturing the origins and functions during its earlier stages, prompting many other research questions for the beginning of this study. Firstly, many of these studies overlook the period before the Hamidian Era, failing to encompass the earlier dynamics of the provincial press formation. Secondly, some misconstrue the emergence of the provincial newspapers as a top-down project imposed by the Sublime Porte with the Provincial Law of 1864. However, the legal text only mentions establishing printing houses in the provinces. At the same time, the word “provincial newspaper” did not appear until the Provincial Law of 1871, revealing a post hoc fallacy in the assumption of these studies. Another aspect of their shortcomings is their lack of engagement with the administrative paperwork from that time. These studies usually prefer scrutinizing newspapers without understanding their connections with other provincial newspapers or their socio-political context, detaching the newspapers from their historical background. These problems prevent a holistic understanding of these newspapers as an administrative tool, and these studies tend to ignore their implications for their period, ultimately disconnecting the provincial press from the discussions regarding Ottoman centralization.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study approaches the provincial media through two interrelated lenses. First, it reimagines the provincial press as a medium for reproducing a discourse of symbolic power. Inspired by Michel Foucault’s concept of “discourse” and Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “symbolic power,” this study treats the provincial newspapers not as mere official bulletins for news dissemination but as a dynamic sphere of influence reproducing the official ideology of Ottomanism. Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse, formed by the sociohistorical conditions of a given society, posits that discourse does not merely reflect the existing reality but actively constructs and interprets what society acknowledges as truthful and

legitimate.⁴⁶ Similarly, Bourdieu's idea of symbolic power, defined as a form of authority exercised through language, perpetuates social hierarchies and renders arbitrary power relations natural and legitimate. Bourdieu also contends, in this sense, that ideologies reflect both the class interests and the specific interests of those who produce them and their field of production.⁴⁷ The emphasis on language in both studies constitutes a helpful theoretical lens for understanding how the provincial newspapers were discursive sites reproducing and transmitting the official ideology by emphasizing the interests of the ideology's producers rather than the class interests they reflected.

This study's second and most crucial lens comes from Stephen Greenblatt's concept of "self-fashioning," as, referring to previous theoretical lenses, the underlying reasons behind the emergence of the Ottoman provincial press also frame the specific interests of those producing it, namely the governors. In his seminal study on sixteenth-century English writers, Greenblatt conceptualizes "self-fashioning," a process of identity formation in which one constructs a public persona according to a specific set of social norms and cultural codes. Greenblatt also suggests that self-fashioning involves submission to a particular authority and relates its achievement to something perceived as "alien." This self-fashioning, for his case but also the case for this study, "is always, but not exclusively, in language."⁴⁸ The idea of self-fashioning constitutes my main argument about the intentions behind the publications of provincial newspapers in the 1860s without having a legal liability imposed by the central government. I claim that, to navigate the Sublime Porte's reservations toward their offices at that time, the governors published these newspapers as a means of self-fashioning before the central government, emphasizing their allegiance to the sultanic authority while concurrently

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 45-46.

⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 169-170.

⁴⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction," in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 9.

legitimizing their rule before the provincial public opinion by framing it as an extension of the Sublime Porte's authority. The newspapers' use of provincial backwardness and disorder as an "alien" against their articulated aims of progress and order further proves the existence of a self-fashioning process in these newspapers.

Sources, Methodology, and Thesis Structure

This study primarily evaluates two distinct types of sources. The first type comprises administrative correspondence stored in the state archives in Turkey, including communication between various provincial governments and the respective institutions of the Sublime Porte, mainly the Ministry of Public Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Dāḥiliyye Nezāreti*), Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vālā-yı Ahkām-ı Adliyye*), and Correspondence Bureau of the Grand Vizier's Office (*Şadāret Mektübī Kālemi*). These documents encompass various aspects of establishing provincial printing houses, including petitions from governors requesting permission to publish newspapers, the appointment of typesetters from Istanbul, and detailed accounts of purchasing and transporting printing equipment from Istanbul to various provinces. Additionally, some documents provide information on the financial aspects of these transactions, such as the costs of the equipment, contractual agreements with private printing house owners, and financial statements of the provincial printing houses. Handwritten in Ottoman Turkish with Arabic script, these documents offer a comprehensive understanding of the role of provincial governors in the initial establishment and operation of printing houses, as well as their efforts to launch and maintain provincial newspapers.

The second type of source that this study evaluates is the provincial newspapers, which serve as the primary focus for this project. Although the number of provincial newspapers from 1865 to 1871 is limited, and not all are available in archives, either digitally or physically, there are ten accessible provincial newspapers: *Ṭuna* (Danube), *Bosna* (Bosnia), *Sūriyye* (Syria),

Trablusgarb (Tripolitania), *Fırāt* (Euphrates), *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* (Lights of the East), *Hüdāvendigār*, *Selānik* (Salonica), *Zevrā'* (Baghdad), and *Diyārbekir*. These newspapers, published primarily in Ottoman Turkish and bilingually in multiple languages such as Arabic, Armeno-Turkish, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Judeo-Spanish, offer a rich source of information on local administration, cultural life, and public opinion of the time. Selecting the initial issues, the first accessible ten to be exact, and articles of these newspapers and analyzing the content of these newspapers provide a fundamental understanding of how governors utilized these publications as tools for image-making and legitimization for their tenures and offices.

This study incorporates two additional sources into its framework. I investigate the provincial yearbooks (*sālnāme*), another publication by the provincial printing houses. These yearbooks aimed to relay annual data about provincial demographics, economy, and institutions to the central government and include yearly information about the employees working at provincial printing houses between 1865 and 1871. They also help further understand the extent of governors' involvement in the employment process for the printing houses. I also integrate some contemporary writings related to the project's scope. A few personal writings from Midhat Pasha, Josef Koetschet (the chief physician of Şerif Osman Pasha), and Stefan Salgiendzhiev (Bulgarian editor of *Selānik* newspaper) provide insights into the details about the tenures of the governors who established these printing houses or their other projects relevant to the printing houses and newspaper enterprises.

This project, a combination of the history of print culture, political history, and administrative history, does a close reading of archival documents and provincial newspapers to investigate and contextualize the emergence and role of the provincial press in the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. In terms of historiography, this study builds upon and extends two previous studies about the Ottoman press and its relationship with the late Ottoman power dynamics. The first one is Murat Şiviloğlu's monograph from 2018 about the emergence

of Ottoman public opinion during the first half of the nineteenth century, which examines the emergence of the bureaucratic public sphere and the rise of non-official newspaper publishing as key factors for the formation of Ottoman public opinion.⁴⁹ I will build upon this argument by claiming that the provincial bureaucrats were well aware of public opinion and utilized it through their tenures to legitimize their rule. The second study is Özgür Türesay's article about the political language used in the official gazette, *Takvīm-i Vekāyi*, which asserts that the official gazette aimed at the monopoly over truth and formation of public opinion.⁵⁰ The Bourdieusian approach toward the official gazette and the Foucauldian analysis of its narrative shaped my approach toward the provincial newspapers, which provide striking parallels with the official gazette.

The first chapter utilizes documentary and contextual analysis to examine the historical emergence of the provincial newspapers, with a specific focus on the governors. This part examines the administrative paperwork from the Turkish state archives, such as petitions from governors, records of appointments, and procurement accounts. Through these documents, I identify the degree of the provincial governments and governors' involvement in establishing printing houses and publishing newspapers by categorizing these steps analytically rather than providing a chronologically linear narrative. I depict the steps of publishing a newspaper and maintaining its finances by tracing its procedural flow from initial requests for printing equipment to logistical implementation, persuading the Sublime Porte to publish a newspaper, and managing subscriptions. Additionally, provincial yearbooks and newspaper articles provide insights into these printing houses' employment practices and operational aspects. Finally, through a close reading of the financial statements, this first section uncovers the intentions and the extent of governors' involvement in the genesis of the Ottoman provincial press.

⁴⁹ Murat R. Şiviloğlu, *The Emergence of Public Opinion, State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 252-253.

⁵⁰ Türesay, *The Political Language of Takvīm-i vekayi*."

The second chapter conducts a discourse and comparative analysis to decode the content of the provincial newspapers. This part explores the news reports about criminal activities, public works, inspection tours by the governors, and didactic articles. Through overarching themes like “order” and “progress,” I categorize the newspaper contents to understand their alignment with the Ottomanist rhetoric and the use of specific groups (e.g., Roma people, Arabs, Kurds), activities (e.g., banditry, homicide, vagrancy), or concepts (e.g., disorder, backwardness, nomadism) for promoting their reformist agenda. Again, I follow analytical categories instead of chronological narrative to picture the newspaper content through their overarching themes. Then, I turn to the depictions of governors in these newspapers to shed light on their positioning as reformist and progressive figures through the written word. Instead of looking through case by case, I adopt a holistic approach to emphasize their thematic resemblances among differentiating topics. By analyzing these similarities, I describe the image-making in these newspapers as a part of the Ottoman centralization process, labeling it as “performative centralization.”

This study attempts to reconstruct the political and discursive landscape of the Ottoman provincial press during its first appearance in the 1860s. Through theoretical concepts of discourse, symbolic power, and self-fashioning, I assess the provincial newspapers as tools for self-fashioning used by the governors to navigate their precarious positions within the imperial bureaucracy. It highlights how provincial administrations instrumentalized these media outlets to align themselves with the Sublime Porte’s rhetoric while asserting that they were competent administrators and extended the *Tanzimāt*’s reform projects to the provincial level. In doing so, it interprets the provincial press not as a vehicle for mere administrative practicality but as a site of performing allegiance and authority that staged and legitimized the imperial and provincial authorities. Through a close examination of the rhetorics of order and progress, I offer an elaborate insight into how provincial bureaucrats engaged in the construction of

political legitimacy by reproducing the new official discourse during the mid-nineteenth century.

Chapter I

Rule to Print: The Establishment of the Ottoman Provincial Press

While the Sublime Porte envisaged the establishment of printing houses under the provincial administrations as a tool to facilitate communications, the provincial administrations imagined a different use of printing technology. Without having any legal enforcement by the central government, seventeen provincial administrations started publishing newspapers in the period between the Regulation of the Danube Province (*Ṭuna Vilāyet Nizāmnāmesi*) in November 1864 and the Provincial Law (*Vilāyet Nizāmnāmesi*) in January 1871.⁵¹ Their surprisingly rapid spreading across the empire in such a short time might have been the reason behind the misattribution of its emergence to the central directive. Yet, its emergence demanded many requirements, such as technological investments, a steady workforce, and a financial balance. How the provincial administration fulfilled these necessities is traceable through communication between the Sublime Porte and provincial administrations, revealing the chief agents behind the genesis of this empire-wide project. The involvement of the provincial governments in the project, or as Darnton puts it, their relationship with the phases of the communication circuit, reveals the construction of a printing ecosystem around the governors and their administrations.⁵²

Therefore, this chapter focuses on the governors' role in establishing printing presses in provinces and publishing newspapers between 1865 and 1871. Ottoman official correspondence between provinces and the Sublime Porte uncovers much about the nature of establishing provincial press and newspapers and the motivations behind doing so. These documents, whether petitions for establishing a printing house or a newspaper, receipts for the equipment

⁵¹ “Vilāyet Nizāmnāmesi,” in *Düstūr, Birinci Tertīb, I* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1289 [1872]), 608-624; “İdāre-i ‘Umūmiyye-i Vilāyāt Nizāmnāmesi,” in *Düstūr, Birinci Tertīb, I* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1289 [1872]), 625-651. To see an extensive list of the provincial newspapers published between 1865 and 1871, see Appendix A.

⁵² Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books?,” *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 67.

sent to the provinces, or the financial statements of the provincial printing houses, also illuminated how the provincial press worked and made a profit, if any. With the correspondence in question, I reconstruct the first steps of this empire-wide initiative by systematically exploring the establishment and working process of these printing houses. By doing so, I evaluate the emergence of provincial newspapers across the empire from the provincial perspective not as a state-dictated reform, as many scholars claimed, but rather as a novel and negotiated reform between the central and provincial governments. The primary objective of this chapter is to emphasize that provincial governments were much more prominent in the first steps of the emergence of the Ottoman provincial press.

A Concise Chronology and Overview of the Ottoman Provincial Press

The Regulation of the Danube Province was the first legal text to mention establishing a printing house within the provinces. The ninth article of the regulation establishes the office of the provincial chief secretary (*vilāyet mektûbçusu*), responsible for carrying out official correspondence within and between the province and the capital. Along with a correspondence office, the article also necessitated the establishment of a printing house under the control of the provincial chief secretary.⁵³ This article did not change in the extended Provincial Law of 1867, in which chief secretaries remained the competent authority for press affairs. The pioneer of the provincial newspaper tradition was Midhat Pasha⁵⁴, who was also involved in the preparation of the regulation text for the Danube Province.⁵⁵ During his tenure in the Danube Province, he started the publication of the newspaper *Ṭuna* on March 8, 1865, in the provincial

⁵³ BOA. İ.MMS. 29/1245, Jumada al-Awwal 11, 1281 [October 12, 1864].

⁵⁴ Ahmed Şefik Midhat Pasha (1822-1884) was an Ottoman statesperson who worked as a provincial governor, minister, and grand vizier and authored the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire. He served as a governor in Niš, Danube, Baghdad, Salonica, Syria, and Aydın, as Minister of Justice, head of the Supreme Council, and twice as grand vizier. He was imprisoned for life in 1881 due to his supposed involvement in Abdülaziz's death and strangled to death in his cell by the soldiers three years later. Roderic H. Davison, "Midhat Pasha," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, Volume VI* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 1031-1035; Sinan Kuneralp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali (1839-1922)* (Istanbul: İsis, 1999), 58.

⁵⁵ Davison, "Provincial Government," 146.

printing house established in Ruse.⁵⁶ Even though provincial administrations had no obligation to publish newspapers, the other provinces started to follow the example of the Danube Province. Many provinces gradually established their printing houses, but this did not necessitate the advent of provincial newspapers in many places in the beginning. Indeed, many provincial newspapers published in the Ottoman Empire were usually published after the Provincial Law of 1871, the first legal text that included the presence of a provincial newspaper.⁵⁷

In 1866, three provincial newspapers appeared within six months: On May 16, the Syrian provincial government issued their newspaper *Sūriyye*, with its printing house based in Damascus.⁵⁸ Not two weeks later, on May 28, the Bosnian provincial administration started their newspaper titled *Bosna* in Sarajevo.⁵⁹ On September 20, the Tripolitania administration based in Tripoli issued their newspaper, *Ṭrablusğarb*.⁶⁰ In 1867, after the entry into force of the Provincial Law, there was a proliferation of publications across the empire: The provincial administrations in Aleppo, Erzurum, Crete (located in Chania), Mount Lebanon (located in Deir al-Qamar), and Edirne started their respective newspapers, *Fırāt*, *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*, *Girīd*, *Lübnān*, and *Edirne*.⁶¹ In 1869, the number of provincial newspapers suddenly doubled: The provinces of Hüdavendigâr, Salonica, Baghdad, Ioannina, Diyarbakir, Trabzon, Aydın, and Konya started publishing their respective newspapers under the same names. In the same year, Baghdad's provincial administration started the publication of *Zevrā*.⁶²

⁵⁶ Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, "Tuna Vilayet Gazetesi," 143.

⁵⁷ "İdāre-i 'Umūmiyye-i Vilāyāt Nizām-nāmesi," in *Düstūr, Birinci Tertīb, I* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1289 [1872]), 630.

⁵⁸ Yazıcı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Araplara Meskûn Bölgelerindeki Resmi Vilâyet Basını Konusunda Bir Değerlendirme," 2053.

⁵⁹ Seyhan, "Bosna Vilayet Gazetesi Bosna'nın Kısa Tanıtımı ve İlk Dört Sayısının Sadeleştirilmiş Özeti," 142.

⁶⁰ Yazıcı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Araplara Meskûn Bölgelerindeki Resmi Vilâyet Basını Konusunda Bir Değerlendirme," 2052.

⁶¹ Yazıcı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Araplara Meskûn Bölgelerindeki Resmi Vilâyet Basını Konusunda Bir Değerlendirme," 2052; Kocabaşoğlu and Birinci, "Osmanlı Vilâyet Gazete ve Matbaaları Üzerine Gözlemler," 111.

⁶² To see the map of the provincial newspapers published between 1865 and 1871, see Appendix B.

The Ottoman provincial press, in this context, refers to the local newspapers published by the provincial administration of the respective province. The provincial governments published these newspapers weekly, often appearing bilingually, with Ottoman Turkish⁶³ being the primary register. The other language(s) in which the newspapers appeared varied according to the demographics of the specific provinces. Nonetheless, the statistical majority of these languages were Arabic, Armeno-Turkish⁶⁴, and Greek (or, in some cases, Karamanli Turkish/*Karamanlidika*⁶⁵), while other languages like Bulgarian, Bosnian-Serbo-Croatian, and Judeo-Spanish appeared in particular regions. Although it would be much more convenient to label these newspapers as “official bulletins,” their establishment processes and reasons varied regionally, with their contents limited within the press regulations of the central government. This peculiarity, or “one of the *sui generis* practices of the Ottoman modernization,” as Uygur Kocabaşoğlu erroneously puts it, is what positions the emergence of the Ottoman “official” provincial press in the 1860s.⁶⁶ To understand its peculiarities, I will dissect the establishment process of these newspapers into discrete stages to critically discuss them.

Capital Investment: Procurement of Printing Equipment

Contrary to the widespread recognition of the provincial printing house in the Danube Province as the first within the empire, Crete Province had the first printing house in 1830 after Mahmud II granted the island’s rule to Muhammad Ali of Egypt.⁶⁷ Even though one might argue that its establishment cannot count as one under Ottoman rule, one piece of evidence in the Ottoman archive suggests that the provincial government used the same printing equipment

⁶³ Turkish language written in Perso-Arabic script.

⁶⁴ Turkish language written in Armenian script.

⁶⁵ Turkish language written in Greek script.

⁶⁶ Kocabaşoğlu and Birinci, “Osmanlı Vilâyet Gazete ve Matbaaları Üzerine Gözlemler,” 101.

⁶⁷ This was the printing house in Chania, established in October 1830, where the bilingual official newspaper of the Egyptian administration, *Veḳāyi ‘-i Girīdiyye* (Cretan Affairs), was published in 1831. Abu al-Futuh Radwan, *Tarikh Matba’at Bulaq, wa-lamhah fi tarikh al-tiba’ah fi buldan al-Sharq al-Awsat* (Cairo: Al-Matba’at al-Amiriyah, 1953), 368-369.

even after the Egyptian period. On November 12, 1864, two scribe officers from Crete submitted a petition regarding renewing the types used in the printing house. The petition reveals that the Turkish typefaces “have been used for thirty-five years for printing admonitions and announcements from the provincial government,” requesting their replacement with new and compatible ones.⁶⁸ From this piece of information, I can speculate that the provincial government had been using the printing equipment in Crete for administrative purposes before the promulgation of the provincial regulations necessitating the printing equipment.

Even without the example of Crete, the first provincial printing house established by an Ottoman governor traces back to 1856. On December 7, 1856, the Governor of Vidin, Mehmed Muammer Pasha,⁶⁹ petitioned the Sublime Porte regarding the translators’ inability to convey the announcements to Bulgarian- and Romanian-speaking communities. The petition elaborates on how they needed to devote a considerable effort to “correct the thoughts and purifying the beliefs of the populations” due to the region bordering Serbia and Wallachia. For this reason, the governor asked for printing equipment, either sent from Istanbul or bought from Vienna, and a teacher to teach the printing art and return to Istanbul.⁷⁰ The Sublime Porte answered this petition by asking for information about what the provincial government intended to print and the cost of establishing such an establishment.⁷¹ Even though the archival correspondence about the Vidin case was inconclusive, one can see that the central government leaned towards using the printing press for administrative purposes. There were also records of many printing

⁶⁸ İsmail Pasha, the Governor of Crete at the time, forwarded this petition to the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances, and the permission was granted in March 1865. BOA. İ.MVL. 526/23638, Shawwal 6, 1281 [March 4, 1865].

⁶⁹ Mehmed Muammer Pasha (1812-1875) was an Ottoman soldier and bureaucrat who worked as a military officer and provincial governor. After receiving his education at the Palace School (*Enderûn Mektebi*), he joined the new army and quickly rose to the ranks until the 1850s. He then served as governor in Vidin, Edirne, Aydın, Damascus, Hejaz, and Ankara and as a member of the Supreme Council. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî 4*, ed. Nuri Akbayan and Seyit Ali Kahraman (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1095; Kuneralp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 98.

⁷⁰ BOA. MVL. 304/24, Rabi al-Awwal 9, 1273 [December 7, 1856].

⁷¹ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 265/29, Jumada al- Awwal 6, 1273 [January 2, 1857].

equipment, particularly lithography presses, shipped to Benghazi, Skopje, and Bursa.⁷² One can also see a particularly intriguing document regarding the immediate shipment of a lithography press to Niš. Based on the document's date, the Governor of Niš, who asked for printing equipment, was none other than Midhat Pasha.⁷³

I will mark the beginning of the Ottoman provincial press with the printing house established by Midhat Pasha in Ruse, the capital of the Danube Province, as it was both the initiative of an Ottoman governor and the first printing press that published a newspaper. The first document regarding establishing a printing house in the Danube Province dates to October 20, 1864, nearly a week after the regulation's promulgation. This document mentions a petition from Midhat Pasha, the Governor of the Danube Province, asking for the quick delivery of a typography press, Turkish and Bulgarian types, and a typesetter to the provincial center, Ruse.⁷⁴ The equipment appeared to have reached its destination during the fall of 1864. On January 15, 1865, Midhat Pasha submitted a petition regarding the outdated and dilapidated condition of the typography press sent to the province. This petition also reveals the provincial printing house had already been working with two lithography presses whose purchase records do not appear in the official correspondence.⁷⁵ Therefore, one can infer that the printing house in the Danube Province had three presses, two lithography presses, and a typography press at the beginning of 1865. However, the typography press was an older and smaller model than expected, and an inquiry with Yusuf Efendi, typesetter, revealed the existence of eight to ten presses in the Imperial Printing House in Istanbul, ready to be shipped to the other provinces,

⁷² BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 129/25, Shaban 19, 1274 [April 4, 1858]; BOA. MVL. 963/77, Safar 11, 1280 [July 28, 1863]; BOA. İ.MVL. 499/22554, Rajab 8, 1280 [December 19, 1863].

⁷³ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 265/3, Dhu al-Hijjah 17, 1279 [June 5, 1863].

⁷⁴ BOA. A.} MKT.NZD. 563/7, Jumada al-Awwal 19, 1281 [October 20, 1864].

⁷⁵ I have two theories about how Midhat Pasha got his hands on these lithography presses. First, Midhat Pasha may have purchased these lithographic presses before for administrative purposes, which might have influenced the incorporation of the respective articles in the provincial regulations since Midhat Pasha was in the commission drafting the new provincial regulation. The second and strongest probability is that Midhat Pasha probably acquired these presses through the merger of Vidin and Niš Provinces, each of which already had their lithography presses. Davison, "Provincial Government," 146.

leading Midhat Pasha to ask for a new one.⁷⁶ In the following correspondence, the Press Directorate (*Maṭbū'āt Neẓāreti*) claimed that they did not send old equipment, blamed the typesetter for the press' breakdown, and decided to send a mechanical officer (*çarḥ me'mūru*) to Ruse to sort out the issue.⁷⁷

In the end, Midhat Pasha submitted another petition, stating that the equipment's dilapidated condition and its small platen proved inefficient for printing newspapers or such papers, and thus, the provincial government purchased a new printing press from Bucharest, along with some Bulgarian types in February 1865.⁷⁸ This purchase from Bucharest was not the only instance when a governor purchased printing equipment outside the Ottoman domain. In January 1865, Şerif Osman Pasha⁷⁹, the Governor of Bosnia, wrote a petition to the central government, asking for permission to purchase a lithography press from Vienna to address "the growing volume of administrative paperwork" (*keşret-i umūr-ı tahrīriyye*), and to prevent any delays in the dissemination of the urgent and significant matters issued by the provincial government.⁸⁰ The cost of the lithography press from Vienna was 7.500 piastres, which Mehmed Kani Pasha, the Minister of Finance, found expensive since the previously purchased lithography presses sent to Prizren, Benghazi, and Cyprus sanjaks cost 3.000 piastres each.⁸¹ However, due to its convenience in transportation, the urgency of the matters of the region, and the already finalized purchase of the press, the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vālā-yı Ahkām-ı 'Adliyye*) decreed the Imperial Treasury to cover the said expense for the

⁷⁶ BOA. A.} MKT.NZD. 575/35, Şaban 17, 1281 [January 15, 1865].

⁷⁷ BOA. A.} MKT.NZD. 575/89, Ramazan 10, 1281 [February 6, 1865].

⁷⁸ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 326/67, Şawwal 14, 1281 [March 12, 1865].

⁷⁹ Topal Şerif Osman Pasha (1804-1875) was an Ottoman soldier and bureaucrat who worked as a mutesarraf and provincial governor. Following his involvement in the Grand Admiral's surrender of an Ottoman fleet to Muhammad Ali of Egypt during the Egyptian-Ottoman War, he stayed in Egypt. He was later pardoned and dismissed from the Navy. He then served as a mutesarraf in Karesi, Biga, and Cyprus and as governor in Bosnia during his tenure. Kemal Beydilli, "Topal Osman Paşa," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi vol. 41* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2012), 246; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî 5*, ed. Nuri Akbayan and Seyit Ali Kahraman (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1591; Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricalî*, 116.

⁸⁰ "[...] cānib-i hükümetden neşr ü i'lân olunacak mevâdd-ı mühimme vü 'âcileniñ dücâr-ı te'hîrden hemîşe viķāyesine [...]" BOA. İ.MVL. 528/23701, Şaban 5, 1281 [January 3, 1865].

⁸¹ BOA. İ.MVL. 528/23701, Ramazan 5, 1281 [February 1, 1865].

Bosnia Province.⁸² A similar example was the Tripolitania Province, which, after the central government decided that it would be too expensive to ship printing equipment from Istanbul, purchased their equipment from Malta with the permission of the Sublime Porte.⁸³ As demonstrated by these examples, contrary to the previous historiography, the governors' involvement started even in the initial phases of establishing provincial printing houses.

Even though the governors were the primary agents in the purchasing process, the contribution of the Sublime Porte was of no disregard since the central government supported these provincial administrations by shipping the equipment they needed and, in most cases, covering their expenses. The provincial administration in Syria, whose governor was most likely Şirvanizade Mehmed Rüşdi Pasha⁸⁴, submitted a petition in July 1865 for printing equipment in perfect condition as was sent to the Danube Province.⁸⁵ This request roughly coincided with another petition sent by Müftizade Emin Muhlis Pasha,⁸⁶ the governor of Erzurum, in August 1865, asking for printing equipment and employees for the provincial printing house from the Imperial Printing House.⁸⁷ With another petition from Bosnia Province asking for a typography press and a typesetter, Sublime Porte placed a bulk order from London to meet the demands. The bulk order cost was 38.463 piastres, as mentioned later in another correspondence regarding the coverage of this expense by the Ministry of Finance.⁸⁸ Although there was no record of the equipment reaching Istanbul, the archival evidence suggests that it arrived during the winter of 1865, and the shipment to the provinces started approximately

⁸² BOA. İ.MVL. 528/23701, Shawwal 11, 1281 [March 9, 1865].

⁸³ BOA. İ.MVL. 583/26209, Rabi al-Akhir 26, 1284 [August 27, 1867].

⁸⁴ Şirvanizade Mehmed Rüşdi Pasha (1828-1874) was an Ottoman statesperson working as a provincial governor, minister, and grand vizier. He served as a member of the Supreme Council, governor in Damascus, Syria, Aleppo, and Hejaz, minister of Pious Foundations, Finance, Interior, and Public Works, and as grand vizier. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 5, 1406; Kuneralp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 101.

⁸⁵ BOA. A.) MKT.MHM. 337/10, Safar 14, 1282 [July 9, 1865].

⁸⁶ Müftizade Emin Muhlis Pasha (1811-1874) was an Ottoman statesperson working as a provincial governor. He served as a Supreme Council and Council of State member, district mayor, and governor in Damascus, Trabzon, and Erzurum. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 2, ed. Nuri Akbayar and Seyit Ali Kahraman (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 478; Kuneralp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 71.

⁸⁷ BOA. MVL. 1051/1, Rabi al-Akhir 2, 1282 [August 25, 1865].

⁸⁸ BOA. İ.MVL. 553/24849, Muharram 2, 1283 [May 17, 1866].

around that time. In one telegram sent to the Erzurum Province, the provincial administration was notified that the authorities loaded the equipment onto a ship bound for Trabzon at the end of December 1865.⁸⁹ Another set of dispatches between the Bosnia Province and the central government revealed that, despite the provincial administration's warnings for the swift shipment of the equipment via the Danube, the equipment reached the port in Brod only in March 1866 due to the river freezing during the winter.⁹⁰

This type of bulk ordering became a standard practice for establishing printing houses in provinces, particularly following the central government's decision in 1867 to extend the provisions of the Provincial Law throughout the empire. One correspondence quoting the Aleppo Province's petition for one typography and one lithography press refers to the fact that the government needed to purchase a lithography press from a foreign country since there was not one in the Imperial Printing House. Considering the provinces whose establishments the central government envisioned henceforth would also require printing equipment, the central government decreed the procurement of five typography presses and four lithography presses from London via Hagop Boyajian,⁹¹ sent by the Imperial Printing House.⁹² The correspondence also includes a copy of the invoice, stating each typography press amounted to 75 British pounds and each lithography press 42 British pounds.⁹³ The following bulk order appearing in the correspondence concerned the provinces of Archipelago (*Cezā'ir-i Baḥr-i Sefīd*), Sivas, and Diyarbakir in March 1868. One correspondence from the Supreme Council of Judicial

⁸⁹ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 886/74, Shaban 13, 1282 [January 1, 1866].

⁹⁰ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 345/95, Jumada al-Akhir 26, 1281 [October 17, 1865]; BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 893/6, Shawwal 17, 1282 [March 5, 1866].

⁹¹ Arshag Hagop Boyajian (1837-1914) was an Ottoman Armenian printer and one of the leaders of the Armenian Protestant community. He worked in the Imperial Printing House, and in 1876, the Sublime Porte contracted him for the second attempt to print money during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Teotig, *Baskı ve Harf: Ermeni Matbaacılık Tarihi*, trans. Sirvart Malhasyan and Arlet İncidüzen (Istanbul: Birzamanlar Yayıncılık, 2012), 126-127; Laurent Mignon, "Boyaciyan, Arşag Agop," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, (Brill, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24354.

⁹² "[...] bundan böyle teşekkülü mutaşavver olan vilâyetlere irsâl kılınmak üzere [...]" BOA. İ.MVL. 548/24612, Ramadan 23, 1282 [February 9, 1866].

⁹³ BOA. İ.MVL. 548/24612, Shawwal 24, 1282 [March 12, 1866].

Ordinances states that these three provinces required printing equipment due to increased paperwork after their reorganization. Hence, Sublime Porte commissioned Hagop Boyajian again to purchase five British-made presses (*beş 'aded İngiliz-kārī destgāh*) for 210 British pounds, two of which were to be stored as reserve to send out to the necessary places.⁹⁴

The correspondence concerning these bulk orders contains two significant pieces of information regarding the central government's perspective on distributing printing equipment. First, the central government perceived the establishment of printing presses in the provinces as a favorable project. In the latter bulk order, the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances reasons with the Ministry of Finance to accept the payment of the purchase by stating that “since printing activities would facilitate and expedite the official paperwork, having a lithography press in each provincial center would prove significantly beneficial” (*maṭbū'āt māddeşi umūr-ı taḥrīriyyeyi bir ḥāl-i intizāmda teshīl ü tesrī' ederek merkez-i vilāyetlerde birer 'aded litografya destgāhı bulundurulması muḥsinātı mūcib olacağından*).⁹⁵ Second, while the Sublime Porte was sympathetic towards the provincial printing houses, it was also cautious about the financial liability and the potential effects of buying the equipment on the Imperial Treasury. The document regarding the second bulk order mentions the reason for bulk ordering as “being cost-effective and in line with the goals of the Provincial Law” (*hem maşrafça ehveniyyeti mūceb ve hem de maṭlūba muvāfiq olacağına nāzaran*), hinting at the central government's pivotal role in providing the equipment while considering the financial aspect.

The first step in establishing a printing house in the provinces was to purchase the necessary equipment. However, the state did not arbitrarily distribute printing equipment to every province; instead, it was demand-driven: The governors needed to submit a petition to

⁹⁴ While the type of press machines was not mentioned in the documents, the document mentions the price of each machine costed 42 British pounds, which was the price of a lithography press in the previous bulk order from London. BOA. İ.MVL. 585/26231, Dhu al-Qadah 15, 1284 [March 9, 1868].

⁹⁵ BOA. İ.MVL. 585/26231, Dhu al-Qadah 15, 1284 [March 9, 1868].

the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances, which processed these applications and granted or rejected them based on their necessity. The success of this venture relied on the governors' willingness to request one and to oversee their progress. In numerous instances, the governors were the principal parties involved in asking for the equipment, monitoring its shipment, assessing its condition, and negotiating its price. The central government was the entity the provincial administrations had to compromise with, and the latter was actively involved. In response to the increasing number of petitions concerning these requests, the Sublime Porte started procuring bulk orders for printing equipment to meet anticipated demand. However, as with the equipment, individuals with the requisite knowledge and expertise were required to operate it.

Recruiting Typesetters/Lithographers and Contracting the Printers

Since printing technology was relatively novel in the Ottoman imperial bureaucracy and the Sublime Porte monopolized printing activities as late as 1858, only a few people specialized in printing techniques, most of whom worked in the Imperial Printing House. Hence, the central government sent out the typesetters (*mürettib*) or lithographers (*litoğrafya me'mūru*) along with the equipment to the provinces most of the time. The governors were the ones who mostly asked for these experts with the printing equipment from the center, thereby eliminating their problem of finding one. Their job definition was bound to the printing equipment, and correspondence usually mentioned these individuals only for financial purposes. However, as straightforward as it seems, the first typesetters or lithographers of these printing houses assumed an intermediary role in the establishment process of these printing houses in different ways.

Although there was no specific mention in official correspondence, the authorities expected these officers to assume expertise in the respective printing equipment. One can track

this expectation in the petition by Mehmed Tevfik Pasha⁹⁶, Governor of Kastamonu, who asked for an officer “acquainted with printing techniques” (*uṣūl-i ṭibā‘ata āṣinā*).⁹⁷ In November 1864, when two scribal officers from Crete Province requested new types to use in the provincial printing house, the Governor of Crete, İsmail Pasha, forwarded this petition to the Sublime Porte with his letter, in which he described these two scribes as “being knowledgeable with typesetting art” (*mürettiblik fenninde ma ‘lūmātları olması*).⁹⁸ Midhat Pasha used another similar phrasing by asking the Sublime Porte for someone well-versed in lithography art to be employed for lithography work (*litografya işlerinde kullanılmak üzere bu fenne āṣinā biri*).⁹⁹ Moreover, typesetters were also responsible for resolving any issues with the printing equipment. In the correspondence mentioned before, the issue of old printing equipment in the Danube Province also notes such a liability, stating that the problem was first consulted with the typesetter, Yusuf Efendi, to explain its reason.¹⁰⁰

These officers/printers also occupy an intermediary role in the establishment process of the provincial printing houses. First, although the responsibility of receiving the printing equipment rested with the provincial chamberlains (*kapı kethüdāsi*), one correspondence implies that the equipment’s shipment might have a different liable individual. The correspondence regarding the printing equipment for Erzurum Province shipped to Trabzon states that the typesetter was entrusted with the equipment while on the ship.¹⁰¹ Another document about the provincial printing house established in Crete states that the Sublime Porte did not have any Greek types, and Turkish types in the printing house were unusable. The

⁹⁶ Taşçızade Mehmed Tevfik Pasha (1815-1902) was an Ottoman bureaucrat working as a minister and provincial governor. During his career, he served as the Minister of Finance and governor in Hüdavendigar, Rumelia, Kastamonu, and Adana. Kunalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 105.

⁹⁷ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 394/53, Rajab 12, 1284 [November 9, 1867].

⁹⁸ BOA. İ.MVL. 526/23638, Shawwal 6, 1281 [March 4, 1865].

⁹⁹ BOA. İ.MVL. 530/23787, Shawwal 14, 1281 [March 12, 1865].

¹⁰⁰ “[...] *sebebi mürettibi Yusuf Efendi tarafından lede’l-su’âl* [...]” BOA. A.} MKT.NZD. 575/35, Shaban 17, 1281 [January 15, 1865].

¹⁰¹ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 886/74, Shaban 13, 1282 [January 1, 1866].

governor, Hüseyin Avni Pasha¹⁰², sent the Greek typesetter, Cani, to Istanbul to get the necessary types. In Istanbul, the typesetter reported on the kinds and number of typefaces required by Crete Province. After his report, the Imperial Printing House could not provide the types and decided to purchase these typefaces from Athens for 13.997,5 piastres, which Artin Araboğlu (d. 1890), a typefounder in the Imperial Printing House, verified and approved.¹⁰³ These expressions and responsibilities illustrate that these officers were not only skilled in printing techniques but also crucial intermediaries who needed to bridge logistical, technical, and administrative issues while establishing provincial printing houses.

On one side of the story, the usual practice was the central government sending the printers to these provinces for printing houses. On the other hand, there were two deviations from such implementation in the Syria and Bosnia provinces at around the same time. These deviations were the employment of private printers, not by the Sublime Porte, but by the provincial governments in these two provinces. Although there is little information about the Bosnian case, one petition signed by the governor elaborates on how this deviation occurred. According to the document, after ordering printing equipment from London, the provincial government looked for a way to publish a newspaper in the Bosnian language to reach out to the population. Their pursuit resulted in finding Ignjat Sopron, a printer of Austrian origin hailing from Zemun.¹⁰⁴ The provincial government signed a contract with Sopron to publish

¹⁰² Hüseyin Avni Pasha (1820-1876) was an Ottoman marshall and statesperson who worked as army commander, commander-in-chief (*Ser'asker*), provincial governor, minister, and grand vizier. After receiving his education at the Imperial Military Academy (*Mekteb-i Harbiyye-i Şāhāne*), he served in the military as a teacher and academy director and fought during the Crimean War. During the Cretan Revolt in 1866, Avni Pasha served as the governor of Crete. He assumed the Governorate of Aydın, Ministry of the Navy, Commander-in-Chief, and grand vizierate for once during his tenure. He was killed by a young army officer named Çerkez Hasan during a meeting following his involvement in Abdülaziz's deposition. Ercüment Kuran, "Husayn 'Awni Pasha," *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, Volume III* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 621; Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 79.

¹⁰³ BOA. İMTZ.GR. 11/322, Muharram 20, 1285 [May 11, 1868].

¹⁰⁴ Ignjat/Ignaz Karl Sopron was born in 1820 in Novi Sad, Serbia, to an ethnic German family. He received his initial training in the printing trade in Novi Sad, subsequently pursuing further studies in Budapest and Vienna. Prior to his summoning to Sarajevo, he established a printing house in Zemun in 1851 and published many books in Serbian, German, Bulgarian, and Greek, as well as a newspaper titled *Srpskij Narodnyj Věstnik* (Serbian National Herald). Christine Gruber and Eva Hüttel-Hubert, "Sop(p)ron Ignaz (Ignjat)," in *Österreichisches*

both the government's official newspaper and another non-official newspaper, the content of which would align with the provincial government's interests. Ultimately, the provincial government contracted Sopron at the beginning of 1866 to establish a printing house in Sarajevo and bring his typography press and other equipment from Zemun.¹⁰⁵

Despite the absence of a copy of the contract in the Ottoman archives, Todor Kruševac's comprehensive study on Sopron's printing activities in Bosnia mentions a report from the magazine titled *Vila* in April 1866. This report illuminates the contents of the agreement. The agreement outsourced Ignjat Sopron to run the provincial printing house for three years, with the provincial government pledging to refrain from contracting the job to anyone else during the period. He would provide the printing equipment for the printing house, with the moving expenses being his responsibility. Sopron would be responsible for managing the staff and obligated to train an apprentice in printing. In return, the government would employ a translator well-versed in Serbian and Turkish. In addition, Sopron was to receive income from the press and an annual subsidy of 1000 ducats.¹⁰⁶ This annual subsidy, according to the Ottoman petition, amounted to a monthly disbursement of 3.000 piastres, to which Şerif Osman Pasha referred as "a small amount of sacrifice (*bir miqdārcık fedākārlık*) for a solution to facilitate the provincial administration's foundations and eliminating any perplexity born of it."¹⁰⁷ One correspondence sent from the Sublime Porte to the Bosnia Province stated dissatisfaction with the contract since "it would be impermissible to handing the printing press over to a foreigner as it was never seen

Biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2005), 430; Todor Kruševac, *Bosansko-Hercegovacki Listovi u XIX Veku*, (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978), 29.

¹⁰⁵ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 887/55, Šaban 22, 1282 [January 10, 1866].

¹⁰⁶ [Report about Sopron's Printing Press in Sarajevo from *Narodne Novine*], *Vila* II, no. 15, April 10, 1866, quoted by Todor Kruševac, "Sopron u Bosni," *Prilozi za proučavanje historije Sarajeva*, no. 2 (1966): 164.

¹⁰⁷ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 887/55, Šaban 22, 1282 [January 10, 1866].

before.”¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the central government inevitably had to approve this plan due to its convenience.

The second example of such employment mostly revolved around the provincial government in Syria’s engagement with Khalil al-Khuri.¹⁰⁹ The earlier attempts to employ him usually took place through granting official status to his renowned newspaper, *Hadiqat al-Akhbar*, by printing it in Arabic and French. A series of correspondences at the end of 1865 and the beginning of 1866 elucidate his request to transform his newspaper into an official provincial gazette and coverage of its expenses by the provincial government.¹¹⁰ The Sublime Porte ultimately declined this proposal, stating the Imperial Treasury’s inability to bear the financial burden of staffing the newspaper, procuring new equipment, and maintaining the operational costs associated with this request, which was around 6.000 piastres according to Khalil al-Khuri.¹¹¹ Yet, it appears that the provincial government seemed to have reached a compromise: On March 7, 1866, the provincial government signed a six-article contract with Khalil al-Khuri, outsourcing the printing enterprise in Damascus to him while subsidizing his press in Beirut. Esad Muhlis Pasha,¹¹² the Governor of Syria, submitted a petition to the Sublime Porte, informing about the closure of the deal with Khalil al-Khuri and publishing the first issue of the bilingual provincial newspaper, *Sūriyye*.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ “[...] *maṭba‘a-i vilāyetiñ böyle ecnebī ma‘rifetiyle idāresi rehīn-i cevāz olamayacağı gibi ol şüretiñ sā‘ir vilāyetlerde daḥi emşāli mesbūk deḡil [...]*,” BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 350/6, Shawwal 18, 1282 [March 6, 1866].

¹⁰⁹ Khalil al-Khuri was born in 1836 in Choueifat, Mount Lebanon, to a Greek Orthodox family. He received his education in Beirut and learned Arabic, Turkish, and French. He was renowned for his poetry and earned a reputation among the *Nahda* (Arabic Renaissance) intelligentsia as a distinguished poet. In 1858, he set up a press named *The Syrian Press* and started publishing his newspaper, *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* (The News Garden) in Beirut. In 1860, after he was appointed the personal translator of the grand vizier Fuad Pasha, the newspaper started receiving subsidies and gained semi-official status. Fruma Zachs, “Pioneers of Syrian Patriotism and Identity: A Re-Evaluation of Khalil Al-Khuri’s Contribution,” in *The Origins of Syrian Nationhood: Histories, Pioneers and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 93-94.

¹¹⁰ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 883/46, Rajab 18, 1282 [December 7, 1865]; BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 350/82, Shawwal 25, 1282 [March 13, 1866]; BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 901/91, Dhu al-Hijjah 17, 1282 [May 3, 1866].

¹¹¹ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 902/68, Dhu al-Hijjah 22, 1282 [May 8, 1866].

¹¹² Esad Muhlis Pasha of Sakız (?-1876) was an Ottoman bureaucrat who worked as provincial governor. He served as Minister of Customs and governor in Syria, Trabzon, Edirne, and Aleppo. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî 4*, 1099; Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 71.

¹¹³ BOA. İ.MVL. 554/24887, Dhu al-Hijjah 17, 1282 [May 3, 1866].

Contrary to the copy of the contract with Sopron, the archive holds a copy of the contract between the Syrian provincial government and Khalil al-Khuri. According to the agreement, the provincial government contracted al-Khuri for a year to manage the printing house. The agreement discusses the conditions for covering repair costs, specifying that minor expenses up to 100 piastres will belong to Khalil al-Khuri. In contrast, the provincial government will cover significant repair costs exceeding that amount. The second article necessitated Khalil al-Khuri to cover all expenses regarding the maintenance of the printing house: He would assume responsibility for paying the salaries of Turkish and Arabic authors, typesetters, newspaper distributors, and other staff, along with covering the material costs, namely paper and ink. This article also states that al-Khuri would receive a monthly subsidy of 6.500 piastres. The third article specified the weekly print run for the provincial newspaper, amounting to a thousand copies. The fourth article enabled the printing house to publish other administrative paperwork and advertisements on the condition that the paper cost would belong to the government. The fifth article enabled the military and customs administration and other people like merchants to publish their paperwork or books by receiving a price quote from the chief secretary, whose printing expenses the provincial administration guarantees to cover. Finally, the last article put the provincial chief secretary overseeing the provincial newspaper, and the printing house would publish it only after the chief secretary sealed it.¹¹⁴

Ultimately, these agreements were temporary and ended in different ways. Despite having a three-year contract with lots of benefits, Ignjat Sopron sold his printing house to the provincial government, most likely due to the decision from the Sublime Porte.¹¹⁵ Khalil al-Khuri stepped down from the directorate of the printing house after completing his contract,

¹¹⁴ BOA. İ.MVL. 554/24887, Shawwal 19, 1282 [March 7, 1866].

¹¹⁵ Even though Kruševac stated the end of Sopron's printing activities for unknown reasons, I believe the Sublime Porte was dissatisfied with the subsidies Sopron received and his operations being unlicensed by the central government. There seems to be an ongoing line of correspondence between the central government and the Bosnian provincial administration at the end of 1866 regarding the termination of the contract with Sopron. Kruševac, "Sopron u Bosni," 167. BOA. MVL. 1066/22, Shaban 13, 1283 [December 21, 1866].

leaving the position to the provincial chief secretary.¹¹⁶ Even though the arrangements with Sopron and al-Khuri were temporary, the presence of private entrepreneurs in these two provinces proves the absence of a monolithic practice dictated by the Sublime Porte. The central government was inevitably dominant in dispatching the well-versed printers from the Imperial Printing House. Still, these two exceptional cases imply that the Sublime Porte imposed no centralized practice of printing houses across the empire in the first place. Indeed, Şerif Osman Pasha and Esad Muhlis Pasha negotiated with the central government to employ these printers to establish printing houses in Bosnia and Syria, thereby denoting the proactive role of the governors in this process. Their role in publishing newspapers became even more apparent in their efforts to persuade Sublime Porte to receive its support.

Methods of Persuasion in Supporting Provincial Printing Houses and Newspapers

The prevalent reason for asking for printing equipment, stated by the governors, was the growing amount of paperwork within the province and between the central government. Since this reason can be backed up by the legal framework, the ninth article of the Provincial Law, the governors often pointed out the volume of paperwork to ask for their printing equipment. Midhat Pasha, the pioneer in printing and newspaper enterprises in the provinces, invoked the same rationale for requesting printing equipment.¹¹⁷ Such reason appeared in the official correspondences regarding the Bosnia Province, citing the reason provided by the Bosnian administration as “the increase in administrative paperwork” (*keşret-i umûr-ı tahrîriyye*).¹¹⁸ Many provinces, including Syria, Kastamonu, Konya, Archipelago, Sivas, and Diyarbekir, cited the same rationale as their primary motivation for requesting printing equipment from the central government. For example, the bulk order made for the last three provinces noted that

¹¹⁶ YAZICI, “Osmanlı Devleti’nin Araplara Meskûn Bölgelerindeki Resmi Vilâyet Basını Konusunda Bir Değerlendirme,” 2054.

¹¹⁷ BOA. A.} MKT.NZD. 575/35, Şaban 17, 1281 [January 15, 1865].

¹¹⁸ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 323/36, Şaban 23, 1281 [January 21, 1865].

the reason for purchasing the printing equipment was “due to the administrative paperwork grown following the reorganization [of these provinces]” (*hasbe'l-teşkilât umūr-ı tahrîriyyesi tekeşşür eylediğinden*).¹¹⁹

In addition, other provincial administrations requested the provision of printing equipment for the publication of their newspapers, given the growing prevalence of newspaper publishing in many provinces. For example, in March 1866, the provincial administration in Tripolitania, whose governor was Mahmud Nedim Pasha¹²⁰, asked for “the printing equipment needed for a newspaper’s printing whose publishing was recently agreed upon” (*tertîbi karârlaşdırılan gazetenin tab‘u neşri zımnında taleb olunan maṭba‘a edevâtı*).¹²¹ Likewise, in April 1867, the Governor of Ioannina, Kayserili Ahmed Pasha¹²², petitioned the central government for a permit to establish a printing house “to print and publish a newspaper in the Greek language” (*Rûmiyyü'l-implâ olarak bir gazetenin tab‘u temsiline*).¹²³ Such use of this rationale also appeared in other provinces: In March 1868, when the Governor of Crete, Hüseyin Avni Pasha, asked for the printing equipment “for the newspaper scheduled for publication” (*ihrâcı muḳarrer olan gazete için*).¹²⁴ Similarly, the Governor of Salonica,

¹¹⁹ BOA. İ.MVL. 585/26321, Dhu al-Qadah 9, 1284 [March 3, 1868].

¹²⁰ Mahmud Nedim Pasha (1818-1883) was an Ottoman statesperson who worked as provincial governor, minister, and grand vizier. He served as governor in Damascus, Aydın, Tripolitania, Kastamonu, and Adana, Minister of Commerce and Interior, and grand vizier twice. His Russophile attitude during his tenure led the public to nickname him “Nedimoff.” Roderic H. Davison, “Mahmud Nedim Pasha,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, Volume VI* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 68-69; Kuneralp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 89.

¹²¹ The newspaper’s preliminary name in this document appeared to be *Fevaid-i Garbiyye* (The Benefits of the West), although this name was never in use. BOA. A.} MKT.NZD. 620/19, Dhu al-Qadah 9, 1282 [March 26, 1866].

¹²² Kayserili Ahmed Pasha (1806-1878) was an Ottoman admiral and bureaucrat working as fleet commander, provincial governor and minister. He was the admiral of the Black Sea Fleet during the Crimean War and became a marshal. He served as a governor in the Ottoman Archipelago, Sidon, Aydın, and Ioannina, Minister of Navy, and a member of the Supreme Council. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî I*, ed. Nuri Akbayan and Seyit Ali Kahraman (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 202; Kuneralp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 59.

¹²³ BOA. İ.DH. 554/38571, Rabi al-Akhir 7, 1282 [August 30, 1865].

¹²⁴ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 402/86, Dhu al-Qadah 27, 1284 [March 21, 1868].

Mehmed Akif Pasha¹²⁵, also asked for the printing equipment to publish a newspaper in the fall of 1867.¹²⁶

The governors rephrased these reasons in particular ways to convince the central government to ship the equipment. One of the most common phraseological methods to ask for the printing equipment was to underscore its urgency. For instance, numerous telegrams sent by Şerif Osman Pasha reiterated that the Bosnia Province urgently needed printing equipment and a typesetter, stating that the provincial affairs were falling due to the equipment's absence.¹²⁷ The reason for this urgency, according to Şerif Osman Pasha, appeared when he asked for a permit to purchase printing equipment from Vienna: He reasoned that since the existing number of scribes was not adequate to keep up with the correspondence, it would be more in line with the austerity measures to purchase a printing press.¹²⁸ The same rationale appeared in another petition submitted by Mehmed Tevfik Pasha regarding the ongoing reform process in Kastamonu Province. This petition mentions the increasing number of institutions in the provincial government and the inability of the scribes to keep up with the growing volume of correspondence and information via pen, therefore urgently asking for two lithography presses with tools and an officer specializing in printing.¹²⁹ Despite their emphasis on financial reasons, many of these enterprises could not live up to their promises, which I will elaborate on while discussing the economic management of these enterprises below in detail.

In certain provinces, certain governors justified their requests for printing equipment by stating that they were within the bounds of the legal framework. In the case of the Danube

¹²⁵ Kalkandelenli or Arnavud Mehmed Akif Pasha (1822-1893) was an Ottoman bureaucrat who worked as provincial governor and minister. He served as a mutesarraf in Skopje, governor in Bosnia, Salonica, Ioannina, Danube, Prizren, Edirne, Baghdad, Konya, the Ottoman Archipelago, Minister of Justice, and the head of Supreme Council. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani* 1, 228; Kuneralp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 90.

¹²⁶ BOA. MVL. 1027/41, Jumada al-Akhir 11, 1284 [October 10, 1867].

¹²⁷ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 344/18, Jumada al-Awwal 30, 1282 [October 21, 1865]; BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 893/6, Shawwal 17, 1282 [March 5, 1866]; BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 353/36, Dhu al-Qadah 24, 1282 [April 10, 1866].

¹²⁸ BOA. İ.MVL. 528/23701, Shaban 5, 1281 [January 3, 1865].

¹²⁹ BOA. MVL. 1055/2, Jumada al-Akhir 19, 1284 [October 18, 1867].

Province, Midhat Pasha introduced the printing house established and used in the provincial center “as per the Provincial Law” (*Vilāyet Nizāmnāmesi hükümünce merkez-i vilāyetde ihdās u ittihāz olunan matba‘a*).¹³⁰ Similarly, Esad Muhlis Pasha, the Governor of Syria, penned a petition to the Sublime Porte, explaining his rationale for establishing a printing press and publishing a newspaper “as per the supreme clauses of the Provincial Law” (*Vilāyet Nizāmnāmesi ahkām-ı münîfine tevfiķan*).¹³¹ Provincial Law was not the only legal text that the governors sought to utilize. In an exceptional case, Kayserili Ahmed Pasha asked for permission to establish a printing house in the Ioannina Province “as per the clauses of the Press Law” (*Maṭba‘a Nizāmnāmesi ahkāmına tevfiķan*), another recent regulation from 1857 to organize the pre- and post-publication censorship for the Ottoman press activities.¹³²

There were no concrete reasons for publishing these newspapers in many cases. Midhat Pasha stated that his reason for publishing *Tuna* was to correctly inform the Bulgarian people about provincial affairs, as the newspapers from various countries spread unreliable information, raising suspicions around the community.¹³³ The same rationale also appeared in the petition sent by Kayserili Ahmed Pasha from the Ioannina Province, noting that the newspapers coming from Athens were spreading misinformation about the provincial administration, emphasizing the need “to refute and nullify the nonsense” (*erācīfī tekzīb ü ibtāl*) they published and “to correct and reform the thoughts and minds of the people” (*efkār u ezhān-ı ahālīyi taṣhīh ü iṣlāh etmek*).¹³⁴ However, there was no apparent reason for publishing these newspapers elsewhere. Indeed, in one correspondence sent to the Erzurum Province, the central

¹³⁰ BOA. İ.DH. 535/37115, Shawwal 12, 1281 [March 10, 1865].

¹³¹ BOA. İ.MVL. 554/24887, Dhu al-Hijjah 17, 1282 [May 3, 1866].

¹³² BOA. İ.DH. 554/38571, Rabi al-Akhir 7, 1282 [August 30, 1865]. The Printing Press Regulation of 1857 necessitated that anyone wishing to print something in the provinces would need to apply to the provincial governments, and the provincial governments were tasked with conducting the correspondence with the Council of Public Education (*Meclis-i Ma‘ārif*) and the Sublime Porte. For further information, see Ali Birinci, “Osmanlı Devletinde Matbuat ve Neşriyat Yasakları Tarihine Medhal,” *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, no. 7 (May 1, 2006): 297.

¹³³ BOA. İ.DH. 535/37115, Shawwal 12, 1281 [March 10, 1865].

¹³⁴ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 380/72, Dhu al-Hijjah 26, 1283 [May 1, 1867].

government iterated that publishing newspapers in provinces was under no obligation (*vilāyetlerde gazete tab'ı bir gūne mecbūriyyet tahtında olmadığı*[...]).¹³⁵ Later, in some provinces like Trabzon and Salonica, the governors rationalized publishing newspapers by mentioning that every other provincial administration had their newspapers.¹³⁶

Since most governors lacked concrete rationale, they predominantly resorted to using specific persuasive techniques, or embellishments in some cases, that were rather intriguing, considering that the governors employed various forms of expression from imposing to enticing. One of the earlier techniques for imposing was to denote the approval of the newspaper's publication by the provincial administration. This word appears in many correspondences about the shipment of printing equipment to the provinces. For instance, the administration in the Danube Province noted eager anticipation for a newspaper's publication in the province by emphasizing its approval by the administrative bodies of the provincial administration.¹³⁷ While submitting their petition about the contract with Khalil al-Khuri, the Syrian provincial administration mentioned that it had decided to publish a bilingual newspaper, Turkish on one side and Arabic on the other, in the provincial printing house established in the Syria Province.¹³⁸ While mentioning their desire to publish a newspaper in Tripolitania, the Ministry of Public Education referred to the newspaper's publication as something "decided upon" (*mukarrer*).¹³⁹

The most common technique to impose these decisions on the central government was to dispatch these newspapers' first issues to Istanbul for approval. This technique was rather non-conventional because, according to the Press Law of 1864 (*Maṭbū'āt Nizāmnāmesi*), every

¹³⁵ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 355/13, Dhu al-Hijjah 20, 1282 [May 6, 1866].

¹³⁶ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 1093/90, Safar 20, 1286 [June 1, 1869]; BOA. ŞD. 2003/42, Muharram 16, 1288 [March 15, 1871].

¹³⁷ BOA. İ.DH. 535/37115, Shawwal 12, 1281 [March 10, 1865].

¹³⁸ BOA. İ.MVL. 554/24887, Dhu al-Hijjah 17, 1282 [May 3, 1866].

¹³⁹ BOA. A.} MKT.NZD. 620/19, Dhu al-Qadah 9, 1282 [March 26, 1866].

person wishing to publish a book or a newspaper needed to apply for a permit before starting their activities. However, beginning with Midhat Pasha, the governors did not hesitate to send the first issues of their provincial newspapers to the central government. The answer to this peculiarity lies in the first issues of these newspapers. All these first issues had a common strategy to convince the Sublime Porte: the preambles full of panegyrics and compliments directed towards the sultan and his reformist visions. For instance, the introduction article of the *Ṭuna* newspaper from the Danube Province highlighted the sultan's wisdom, authority, and commitment to justice, order, and enlightenment of the Ottoman Empire, portraying the newspaper as aligned with the sultan's goals of enlightenment and prosperity.¹⁴⁰ The *Bosna* newspaper of the Bosnia Province also used the same rhetoric: The newspaper opened with a panegyric article, with a lot of compliments for Sultan Abdülaziz and the emphasis on the Bosnian provincial newspaper associated with the reform projects of the sultan.¹⁴¹ I regard these and many more examples of such rhetorical uses of these articles, whose details I will discuss in the second chapter, as a method to persuade the central government to approve these publications.

Such uses of panegyric rhetoric also appeared in the petitions accompanying these first issues. The rhetoric used in these petitions reflected a way of devotion to the sultan and the central government. In almost every petition regarding the newspapers, the governors rhetorically owed their publications to the sultan by using the word shadow (*sāye*), described in many attributes, highlighting their reverence and loyalty to the sultan in many ways. For instance, the provincial administration in Erzurum stated that the arrival of their printing equipment and their publication of the newspaper *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* was only possible by the “gracious benevolence” of the sultan's shadow (*sāye-i iḥsān-vāye-i cenāb-ı mülūkāne*).¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ “[Preamble],” *Ṭuna*, no. 1, Shawwal 16, 1281 [March 15, 1865].

¹⁴¹ “[Preamble],” *Bosna*, no. 1, Muharram 13, 1283 [May 28, 1866].

¹⁴² BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 388/7, Rabi al-Awwal 15, 1284 [July 17, 1867].

Similarly, Mehmed Hurşid Pasha,¹⁴³ the Governor of Edirne, stated that they published the first issue of the newspaper *Edirne*, owing to the enlightening wisdom of the sultan's shadow (*sāye-i ma'ārif-vāye-i hazret-i pādīṣāhī*).¹⁴⁴ The receiver of these compliments was sometimes the grand vizierate: In March 1869, Ahmed İzzet Pasha,¹⁴⁵ the Governor of Hüdavendigar, petitioned the Sublime Porte, owing their eventual publication of the newspaper *Hüdāvendigār* to the exalted patronage of the grand vizier (*sāye-i 'aliyye-i ṣadāret-penāhīleri*).¹⁴⁶ The Governor of Aydın, Veliyeddin Rifat Pasha,¹⁴⁷ also owed the publication of the newspaper *Aydın* to both the sultan and the grand vizier.¹⁴⁸ Such words describing the sultan's wisdom, power, success, prosperity, or benevolence as an attribute to his shadow reflected a particular type of legitimacy needed for these publications. This specific rhetorical expression was one of the factors in convincing the Sublime Porte to approve these publications.

The governors were well aware of the financial anxieties surrounding the future of these novel newspaper enterprises. Hence, they also used their predictions regarding these newspapers as a method of enticement, stating that the potential budgetary surplus of these newspapers would eventually bear the expenses of the printing houses. For instance, Midhat Pasha anticipated that the newspaper fees, along with the printing costs of the books published in the printing house by the merchants, would eventually cover the ongoing expenses of the

¹⁴³ Mehmed Hurşid Pasha (1813-1882) was an Ottoman bureaucrat who worked as provincial governor and minister. He served as a mutesarraf in Jerusalem, a governor in Adana, Sidon, Edirne, Hejaz, Sivas, Aydın, and Ankara, Minister of Public Works, thrice as Minister of Justice, and as a member of the Senate (*Meclis-i A'yân*). Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 2, 680; Kunalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 96.

¹⁴⁴ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 393/74, Rajab 18, 1284 [November 1, 1867].

¹⁴⁵ Ahmed İzzet Pasha (1798-1876) was an Ottoman soldier and bureaucrat working as general and provincial governor. He served as a division commander in Ankara and Baghdad and as governor in Sidon, Adana, Bolu, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Ioannina, Tripolitania, Damascus, Trabzon, Hejaz, Konya, and Hüdavendigar. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 3, ed. Nuri Akbayar and Seyit Ali Kahraman (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 844. Kunalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 57.

¹⁴⁶ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 438/17, Dhu al-Qadah 11, 1285 [March 25, 1869].

¹⁴⁷ Veliyeddin Rifat Pasha (1821-1891) was an Ottoman bureaucrat and diplomat who worked as provincial governor and ambassador. He served as governor in Bosnia, Hüdavendigar, Crete, Edirne, Konya, Aydın, and twice as the Ambassador of Paris. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 5, 1662-1663; Kunalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 125.

¹⁴⁸ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 1100/26, Jumada al-Akhir 26, 1286 [October 3, 1869].

printing house.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, Kayserili Ahmed Pasha made the same comments about his newspaper enterprise in Ioannina, stating that “its revenue would increase and eventually cover the expenses” (*vāridātı tekeşşür ederek maşārifātını kırtaracağı*).¹⁵⁰ After the provincial printing house in Crete ended up having a budgetary deficit during the first year of publishing the newspaper *Girīd*, the governor, Hüseyin Avni Pasha, asked for a subsidy from the Imperial Treasury, stating that after the printing house made enough profit to cover the expenses, there would be no need for subsidizing.¹⁵¹ In short, the provincial administrations responded to these potential financial concerns raised by the Sublime Porte.

Nevertheless, as stated at the end of each administrative document, “the ultimate authority rested with those in command.” The central government based its decision for approval on the prominence of a province’s geopolitical position and the significance of its affairs. When the first correspondence about the typefaces in the provincial printing press in Crete requiring renewal reached the authorities, the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances approved covering the expenses of new typefaces because of “the significance of Crete’s location and its affairs” (*Girīd’in ehemmiyyet-i mevki’ ü maşlahatı*).¹⁵² Similarly, the Sublime Porte ratified the Bosnia Province’s purchase of printing equipment based on “the gravity of the region’s affairs” (*mevki’in ehemmiyyet-i masālihine göre*).¹⁵³ This preference caught the attention of the Governor of Salonica, Mehmed Akif Pasha, whose petition included a line where he emphasized that publishing a newspaper in Salonica was “substantial and indispensable” (*ehemm ü elzem*).¹⁵⁴ As inferred from these examples, the provincial administrations conducted detailed and rhetorically crafted negotiations to reason with the Sublime Porte to obtain approval for their newspaper projects. As many as seventeen of these

¹⁴⁹ BOA. İ.DH. 535/37115, Shawwal 12, 1281 [March 10, 1865].

¹⁵⁰ BOA. İ.DH. 554/38571, Rabi al-Akhir 7, 1282 [August 30, 1865].

¹⁵¹ BOA. İ.MTZ.GR. 12/355, Shaban 10, 1285 [November 26, 1868].

¹⁵² BOA. İ.MVL. 526/23638, Shaban 22, 1281 [January 20, 1865].

¹⁵³ BOA. İ.MVL. 528/23701, Shawwal 11, 1281 [March 9, 1865].

¹⁵⁴ BOA. MVL. 1027/41, Jumada al-Akhir 11, 1284 [October 10, 1867].

provincial administrations were authorized to publish their newspapers; however, the sole responsibility for maintaining these printing presses still rested with the governors.

The Labor Force of the Provincial Printing Houses

Even though the establishment process of the provincial press brought many difficulties, operating these enterprises and keeping the newspapers financially afloat proved much more challenging. On one side of the story, these printing houses needed to print not only administrative paperwork but also other official documents like newspapers and yearbooks, another governor-driven project, which received more attention from the Sublime Porte due to their inclusion of invaluable statistical information about the provinces. Some printing houses even started publishing books contracted by the locals, further increasing the workload of these printing houses. This workload, depending on its intensity, necessitated printing workers. Even if one were to disregard the workload, provincial printing houses required a steady workforce for the continuity of these enterprises. Provincial printing houses that published provincial newspapers had editors (*muḥarrir*), translators (*mütercim*), and proofreaders (*muṣaḥḥih*) working in the press. However, a quick assessment of the provincial yearbooks reveals that typesetters (*mürettib*), lithographers (*litografyacı* or *litografya ustası*), operators (*makinist*), and even distributors (*müvezzi*) appeared to be working in these printing houses, indicating the diverse range of personnel required to sustain these operations.

The operational maintenance of these printing houses required recruiting a labor force, which the Sublime Porte provided in the initial stage. As discussed above, head typesetters skilled enough to run the printing house usually came from Istanbul. However, these printing houses needed other typesetters or lithographers to continue operating long-term. Provincial yearbooks published by the provincial governments provide personnel lists of the provincial

printing houses, albeit only providing names and titles.¹⁵⁵ Two significant points caught my attention while evaluating these provincial printing houses' personnel lists from 1871. First, the printing houses that did not publish a newspaper at the time appeared not to have had crews for letterpress printing but for lithography printing, hinting at the work distribution between the two printing methods. While the provincial governments used lithography presses for administrative purposes, typography presses appeared mostly for newspaper publication. Most of the time, these presses that published a newspaper also included one accountant (*muḥāsib* or *kātib*) in their personnel, usually someone already working in a different position within the provincial administration. This information reinforces that the administration expected these printing houses to generate enough revenue to keep afloat. Second and most importantly, some of these printing houses appeared to have had particular typesetters or lithographers working as assistants (*mu'āvin* or *refik*) or apprentices (*yamaç* or *şākird*). These titles hint at a practical training process for fostering a master-apprentice relationship aiming at the long-term sustainability of these enterprises.

The answer to how these enterprises sustained their labor force flow lies in another provincial reform, which Midhat Pasha was the first to devise. One of Midhat Pasha's reform projects during his tenure in Niš and later Danube Province was the establishment of vocational orphanages (*işlāḥḥāne*), which provided vocational training to orphan and destitute children

¹⁵⁵ For further information on the personnel lists of these printing houses, see *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Adana]* (Adana: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Adana, 1287 [1871]), 39; *Sālnāme-i Vilāyet-i Bosna* (Sarajevo: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Bosna, 1288 [1871]), 32; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Cezā'ir-i Bahr-i Sefid]* (Biga: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Cezā'ir-i Bahr-i Sefid, 1288 [1871]), 28; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Diyārbekir]* (Diyārbekir: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Diyārbekir, 1288 [1871]), 42; *Sālnāme-i Vilāyet-i Edirne* (Edirne: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Edirne, 1288 [1871]), 33; *Sālnāme-i Vilāyet-i Erzurum* (Erzurum: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Erzurum, 1288 [1871]), 45; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Hüdāvendigār]* (Bursa: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Hüdāvendigār, 1288 [1871]), 47; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Kaşamonu]* (Kastamonu: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Kastamonu, 1288 [1871]), 48; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Konya]* (Konya: Konya Vilāyeti Matbaası, 1288 [1871]), 35; *Sālnāme-i Vilāyet-i Selānik* (Thessaloniki: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Selānik, 1287 [1871]), 32; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Sivas]* (Sivas: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Sivas, 1288 [1871]), 42; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Sūriyye]* (Damascus: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Sūriyye, 1288 [1871]), 53; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Trablusgarb]* (Tripoli: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Trablusgarb, 1288 [1871]), 40; *Sālnāme-i Vilāyet-i Trabzon* (Trabzon: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Trabzon, 1288 [1871]), 36; *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Tuna]* (Ruse: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Tuna, 1288 [1871]), 30; *Sālnāme-i Vilāyet-i Yanya* (Ioannina: Matbaa-i Vilāyet-i Yanya, 1288 [1871]), 38.

between the ages of thirteen and seventeen to work in industrial fields. After the success of the first vocational orphanages within the Danube Province, the central government extended the province's regulation for vocational orphanages in 1867, leading many provinces to establish their own vocational orphanages. These educational institutions, which subsequently became industrial schools, supplied a fresh labor force for Ottoman industry while reintegrating orphans and destitute children into Ottoman urban life through reorganizing local industries.¹⁵⁶ Since the governors established these vocational orphanages specifically to meet the industrial labor force of the relevant province, they provided training according to the lines of work available in the region. Especially in the vocational orphanage in Ruse, one of the offered vocational curricula was printing, specifically for typesetting and lithography, to train children as typesetters or lithographers for the provincial printing house. These children practiced in the printing house as part of their training, as Midhat Pasha wrote in his memoir.¹⁵⁷

The vocational orphanage in Ruse provides a very elucidating case for understanding how the provincial governments provided a steady labor force for their printing houses since the institution provided applied training in many fields, including typesetting.¹⁵⁸ Shortly after its establishment, in March 1866, the newspaper *Ṭuna* announced that due to shortness of staff in the printing press, the plans for the newspaper to appear twice a week halted for some time. The article continues to exclaim that the children trained in the vocational orphanages as typesetters henceforth started working in the printing press, apologizing for any typo appearing during the last three weeks.¹⁵⁹ Five months later, *Ṭuna* newspaper published an article stating that six Turkish children at the age of thirteen typeset the Turkish part of the newspaper's recent

¹⁵⁶ Nazan Maksudyan, "Orphans, Cities, and the State: Vocational Orphanages (*Islahhanes*) and Reform in the Late Ottoman Urban Space," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 3 (2011): 499.

¹⁵⁷ Midhat Paşa, *Midhat Paşa, Hayât-ı Siyâsiyyesi, Hîdemâtı, Menfâ Hayâtı. Birinci Kitâb: Tabşıra-i 'İbret*, ed. Ali Haydar Midhat (Istanbul: Hilal Matbaası, 1325 [1908/1909]), 33.

¹⁵⁸ Meral Bayrak Ferlibaş, "Bir Sosyal Sorumluluk Projesi: Tuna Vilayeti Islahhaneleri," *Belleten* 77, no. 279 (2013): 592.

¹⁵⁹ "Untitled," *Ṭuna*, no. 54, Dhu al-Qadah 2, 1282 [March 18, 1866].

issue, and four Bulgarian children at twelve and thirteen the Bulgarian part, congratulating them for completing their training in such short time by announcing their names.¹⁶⁰ By the beginning of 1867, all their typesetters who published the newspaper were the children from the vocational orphanage, as claimed in one article.¹⁶¹ In brief, the Danube Province had a sustainable gear for supplying typesetters to its newspaper by providing children with applied training in typesetting, thereby creating a regular flow of skilled laborers.

The Danube Province was aware of its success in providing typesetters, so much so that *Ṭuna* newspaper announced that they would send these trained typesetters to the presses in Istanbul or other provincial printing houses across the empire.¹⁶² The demand for trained typesetters from the Danube Province was key to the announcement's validity. For instance, the Governor of Aydın, İsmail Pasha, petitioned the Sublime Porte, requesting the recruitment of two children trained as Turkish typesetters in the vocational orphanage in Ruse. These young typesetters were to serve as teachers in their newly established vocational orphanage and, subsequently, as typesetters in their printing house.¹⁶³ In a later issue, *Ṭuna* newspaper published an article about the newspaper *Makedoniya*, a Bulgarian newspaper published in Istanbul, sending a telegraph to the printing house, asking for two Bulgarian typesetters trained in the vocational orphanage. The article explains that two typesetters accepted the job offer for a monthly salary of 300 piastres and departed from Ruse to Varna to board a mail boat to Istanbul.¹⁶⁴ One can say from these examples that the Danube Province not only supplied its printing house with typesetters but also sent these trained typesetters to other printing houses within the empire.

¹⁶⁰ "Untitled," *Ṭuna*, no. 97, Rabi al-Akhir 8, 1283 [August 19, 1866].

¹⁶¹ "Untitled," *Ṭuna*, no. 140, Ramadan 10, 1283 [January 16, 1867].

¹⁶² "Untitled," *Ṭuna*, no. 402, Jumada al-Awwal 17, 1286 [August 25, 1869].

¹⁶³ BOA. ŞD. 1375/43, Ramadan 21, 1285 [January 5, 1869].

¹⁶⁴ "Untitled," *Ṭuna*, no. 376, Safar 14, 1286 [May 26, 1869].

Training children to supply the provincial printing houses was not unique to the Danube Province, as other provincial governments established their vocational orphanages, through which they provided their printing houses with typesetters. Although there was no apparent record of the recruitment process, some provincial yearbooks provided lists of their crews that listed these trained children as “apprentices” (*şākirdān*). In 1871, the yearbook of the Hüdavendigâr Province listed four apprentice typesetters working in the provincial printing house, two of whom were from the vocational orphanage, while the yearbook of the Bosnia Province listed eight apprentices working as Turkish and Bosnian typesetters, all from the vocational orphanage.¹⁶⁵ In his memoir, Midhat Pasha also mentions that, during his tenure, he oversaw the establishment of the provincial printing house in the Baghdad Province, which shared the same building with the vocational orphanage in Baghdad, hinting at a possible supply connection between the two.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, vocational orphanages were not the only method to recruit children in these printing houses. In its tenth issue, *Selânik* newspaper announced that the newspaper administration would hire Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian, and Jewish children between the ages of thirteen and eighteen to train as typesetters and lithographers for the provincial printing house.¹⁶⁷ These examples depict how provincial governments across the empire relied on vocational orphanages or similar recruitment methods to ensure a constant supply of trained printers to their newspaper enterprises, ensuring their activities’ continuity.

State-Funded Project or Self-Sustained Enterprise?

The financial ramifications of these enterprises and the extent to which they achieved their potential financial objectives remain a salient question. On the one hand, these enterprises needed to generate sufficient revenue to sustain their operations. Therefore, newspaper subscriptions and advertising in the newspapers became highly substantial revenue items for

¹⁶⁵ *Sālnāme [Vilāyet-i Hüdāvendigār]*, 47; *Sālnāme-i Vilāyet-i Bosna*, 32.

¹⁶⁶ Midhat Paşa, *Tabşıra-i ‘İbret*, 92.

¹⁶⁷ “[Announcement],” *Selânik*, no. 10, Muharram 25, 1286 [May 7, 1869].

these printing houses. On the other hand, these printing houses also had regular expenditures such as personnel salaries, potential repair costs, and other print-related expenses (paper, ink, binding). It is reasonable to assume that this was why the governors attempted to outsource these printing houses to private contractors, eventually provoking the Sublime Porte's displeasure. While researchers often disregard the financial aspect of such printing houses, I should note that the provincial governments were aware of the economic concerns and were in constant contact with the central government regarding their future. Even though this was one of the least documented parts of this research, some documents reveal a series of financial instabilities in these printing houses across the empire and intricate persuasion processes for these enterprises' survival.

One of the primary sources of income for these printing houses was the subscription fees for the provincial newspapers. All provincial newspapers included an Impressum section detailing the publishing place, times, and subscription terms. Comparing these Impressums from the first issues of the provincial newspapers with the subscription fees of Istanbul newspapers from the 1860s reveals a subtle yet striking aspect of the prices.¹⁶⁸ The single-issue prices for the provincial newspapers, mostly around 40 to 60 *paras*, exceeded those published in Istanbul, around 20 to 40 *paras*. In contrast, the six-monthly and yearly subscription fees for provincial newspapers appeared to range mostly from 60 to 120 piastres, significantly lower than their counterparts' yearly fees in Istanbul, ranging from 150 to 300 piastres. These differences in the fees show that while newspapers from Istanbul might have addressed a more established reading public whose life daily newspapers became an essential part of, the provincial newspapers aimed to encourage long-term subscriptions with lower fees, probably

¹⁶⁸ For further information regarding the first subscription fees of ten provincial newspapers used in this study and the subscription fees for the newspapers published in Istanbul, see Appendix C & D.

to appeal to institutional and local audiences.¹⁶⁹ This pricing, I suppose, emphasizes the provincial press' priority to secure a consistent and stable readership base through long-term subscriptions, reflecting their focus on accessibility and engagement with local and institutional audiences.

There is some evidence for the subscription places, which also depicts a picture of the distribution networks for provincial newspapers. First and foremost, one can see that, in many cases, the provincial printing houses served as the main distribution centers to subscribe to the provincial newspapers within the provinces, as many newspapers included the information in their Impressum sections.¹⁷⁰ Many sets of evidence point to one specific location in Istanbul, Sarafim Efendi's coffeehouse (*Ḳırā'athāne-i 'Osmānī*), that functioned as the distribution hub for all provincial newspapers, hinting at a potential strategy by the provincial printing houses to target elite urban readers due to the place's popularity among Istanbul elites.¹⁷¹ In his article series about the coffeehouses in Istanbul, Ebuzziya Tevfik talks about Sarafim Efendi's coffeehouse, one of the most renowned coffeehouses established in 1857, as the center of distribution (*merkez-i tevzī'*) for the provincial newspapers like *Ṭuna*, *Bosna*, *Sūriyye*, *Firāt*, and *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*.¹⁷² Indeed, many newspapers provided this information. For example, *Hüdāvendigār*'s Impressum section specifies Sarafim Efendi's coffeehouse as "the center of all

¹⁶⁹ Murat R. Şiviloğlu, "The Emergence of a Reading Public after c. 1860," in *The Emergence of Public Opinion, State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 186.

¹⁷⁰ *Ṭuna*, no. 1, Shawwal 16, 1281 [March 15, 1865]; *Sūriyye*, no. 1, Muharram 1, 1283 [May 16, 1866]; *Bosna*, no. 1, Muharram 13, 1283 [May 28, 1866]; *Ṭrablusğarb*, no. 1, Jumada al-Awwal 10, 1283 [September 20, 1866]; *Firāt*, no. 1, Muharram 23, 1284 [May 27, 1867]; *Selānik*, no. 1, Dhu al-Qadah 21, 1285 [March 5, 1869]; *Zevrā*, no. 1, Rabi al-Awwal 5, 1286 [June 15, 1869].

¹⁷¹ Sarafim Efendi's coffeehouse is renowned for hosting many intellectuals, bureaucrats, and politicians as regulars, providing many periodicals and books to customers, and serving as a vital cultural hub for many intellectual and political debates. I speculate that Midhat Pasha and many other governors might have had a connection to this place since many of the regulars of this coffeehouse were bureaucrats and intellectuals, which might have affected the choice of this place as a distribution center. For more information about the Sarafim Efendi's coffeehouse, see A. Süheyl Ünver, "Yayın Hayatımızda Önemli Yeri Olan Sarafim Kırathanesi," *Belleten* 43, no. 170 (1979): 481-490; Kemalettin Kuzucu, "Sarafim Efendi ve Kırathanesi," in *Tarihte Türkler ve Ermeniler Cilt 5, Sosyo-Ekonomik Hayat*, ed. Mehmet Metin Hülagü et al. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), 231-38.

¹⁷² Ebuzziya Tevfik, "Ḳahvehāneler [Māba'd u Ḥitām]," *Mecmū'a-i Ebû'z-ziyâ*, no. 131 (1330 [1912]): 66.

provincial printing houses” (*‘umūm vilāyetler maṭba‘ası merkezi*).¹⁷³ Likewise, some provincial newspapers like *Fırāt*, *Selānik*, and *Diyārbekir* included advertisements where they give the address of Sarafim Efendi’s coffeehouse should anyone wish to subscribe to their newspapers.¹⁷⁴ In short, the provincial newspapers targeted provincial and urban readers with various backgrounds for profit-making, emphasizing a potential intent to monetize newspaper publishing.

Their other sources of income were publishing books in the printing house and giving advertisements in the relevant sections of the newspapers. In its first issue, the newspaper *Ṭuna* announced that they would accept merchants wishing to publish the books read in schools and places of worship, offering them ten percent discounts on print costs.¹⁷⁵ The fifth issue of the *Selānik* newspaper advertised a similar but much-detailed campaign for the printing house, offering fifteen to twenty percent discounts for books, pamphlets, notebooks, announcements, documents, and other papers.¹⁷⁶ The third issue of the *Fırāt* newspaper also published the latest decision regarding their acceptance of official and non-official requests for printing as long as the requests were for “any kind of books and pamphlets religiously and politically non-detrimental” (*mezhebece ve devletce muızır olmayan her türlü kütüb ü resā’il*).¹⁷⁷ I came across one example of an author who published his work through the provincial printing house in the Danube Province, which was newsworthy for the provincial newspaper. On January 5, 1868, the newspaper *Ṭuna* announced that Ivan Momchilov, former teacher in a Bulgarian school in Tarnavo district, commissioned the provincial printing house to print his Bulgarian grammar book.¹⁷⁸ On February 9, 1868, the newspaper advertised the book’s sale by the Bulgarian

¹⁷³ *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 1, Dhu al-Qadah 8, 1285 [February 20, 1869].

¹⁷⁴ “İ’lān,” *Fırāt*, no. 1, Muharram 23, 1284 [May 27, 1867]; “İ’lānāt,” *Selānik*, no. 5, Dhu al-Hijjah 19, 1285 [April 2, 1869].

¹⁷⁵ “İ’lānāt,” *Ṭuna*, no. 1, Shawwal 16, 1281 [March 15, 1865].

¹⁷⁶ “İ’lānāt,” *Selānik*, no. 5, Dhu al-Hijjah 19, 1285 [April 2, 1869].

¹⁷⁷ “İ’lān,” *Fırāt*, no. 3, Safar 7, 1284 [June 10, 1867].

¹⁷⁸ “İ’lānāt,” *Ṭuna*, no. 238, Ramadan 10, 1284 [January 5, 1868]. The book is titled *Gramatika za novobūlgarskiya ezik* (Grammar for the New Bulgarian Language), whose first page specifies the publisher as “the printing house

booksellers in Istanbul, Tarnovo, Sliven, and Hristo Danov's shop in Ruse.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, provincial newspapers provided options for placing ads in the newspapers. The first issue of the *Ṭuna* newspaper included an announcement stating that they were willing to put up advertisements if the ad owners paid the fees.¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately, even though advertisements appeared in almost every provincial newspaper, only the first issue of the *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* newspaper stated their fees in the Impressum section, three piastres per line.¹⁸¹

All the governors shared a common hope regarding the expenses of provincial newspapers, believing that their income would eventually cover the expenditure. The pioneer of the provincial newspapers, Midhat Pasha, had the same expectation about his enterprise. Even before publishing the provincial newspaper, Midhat Pasha estimated that the books published for the merchants and the newspaper subscription fees would generate enough revenue to cover the regular expenses.¹⁸² Governors from Syria, Bosnia, Crete, Ioannina, and Trabzon also pledged the same promises about generating enough income to cover the costs in the future.¹⁸³ It appears that the only successful example of creating a self-sufficient newspaper enterprise was the Danube Province: One article in the *Ṭuna* newspaper stated that they did not intend to profit but instead focused on covering the expenditures and making ends meet. However, the same article also specifies that the printing house did not make a loss.¹⁸⁴ The situation appeared to change after some time since some petitions from other provinces claimed that the provincial printing house in the Danube Province made a profit. For instance, one correspondence regarding the Erzurum Province's newspaper stated that the Danube Province's

of the Danube Province." Ivan Momchilov, *Gramatika za novobŭlgarskiya ezik* (Ruse: Printing House of the Danube Province, 1868).

¹⁷⁹ "İ lānāt," *Ṭuna*, no. 247, Shawwal 15, 1284 [February 9, 1868].

¹⁸⁰ "İ lānāt," *Ṭuna*, no. 1, Shawwal 16, 1281 [March 15, 1865].

¹⁸¹ *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*, no. 1, Rabi al-Awwal 15, 1284 [July 17, 1867].

¹⁸² BOA. İ.DH. 535/37115, Shawwal 12, 1281 [March 10, 1865].

¹⁸³ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 887/55, Shaban 22, 1282 [January 10, 1866]; BOA. İ.MVL. 554/24887, Dhu al-Hijjah 17, 1282 [May 3, 1866]; BOA. İ.DH. 554/38571, Jumada al-Awwal 21, 1283 [October 1, 1866]; BOA. İ.DH. 592/41177, Muharram 21, 1286 [May 3, 1869].

¹⁸⁴ "Mevādd-ı Huşūşıyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 47, Ramadan 14, 1282 [January 31, 1866].

printing house generated so much income that it covered its expenditures and allocated the excess funds to the vocational orphanage.¹⁸⁵ In another petition from the Syria Province, Mehmed Raşid Pasha¹⁸⁶, the Governor of Syria, emphasized the budgetary surplus of the Danube Province's printing house allocated to the vocational orphanage.¹⁸⁷

However, the statewide reality beyond the Danube Province was less than favorable. A year after its initial publication by Dawud Pasha,¹⁸⁸ the newspaper *Lübnān* of the Mount Lebanon District ceased publication for economic reasons, and the new district governor, Franco Pasha,¹⁸⁹ decided to support Khalil al-Khuri's *Hadiqat al-Akhbar*, which the governor found more convenient.¹⁹⁰ Some newspapers reported a budgetary deficit for their first years, asking for governmental subsidies. For instance, in March 1871, Mehmed Sabri Pasha,¹⁹¹ the Governor of Salonica, petitioned the Sublime Porte about the provincial newspaper's budgetary deficit of nearly 150.000 piastres, stating that they would cut back the expenses by ceasing publications in Bulgarian and Judeo-Spanish languages and tasking the provincial postal

¹⁸⁵ BOA. A.} MKT.MHM. 355/13, Dhu al-Hijjah 20, 1282 [May 6, 1866].

¹⁸⁶ Mehmed Raşid Pasha (1824-1876) was an Ottoman bureaucrat and diplomat working as provincial governor, ambassador, and minister. Due to his father's position in the court of Muhammad Ali of Egypt, he received his education in Europe and became a member of the Council of Egyptian Affairs (*Meclis-i Ahkām-i Mısrıyye*). He served as governor in Scutari, Vidin, Aydın, Syria, as Ambassador of Vienna and as Minister of Public Works and Foreign Affairs. He was killed by a young army officer named Çerkez Hasan during a meeting following his involvement in Abdülaziz's deposition. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 4, 1358; Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 100.

¹⁸⁷ BOA. MVL. 1062/59, Şaban 5, 1283 [December 13, 1866].

¹⁸⁸ Garabet Artin Davoudian or Dawud Pasha (1816-1873) was an Ottoman bureaucrat and diplomat who worked as provincial governor and minister. He was an Armenian Catholic who worked as an attaché in the Ottoman Embassy in Berlin and as consul general in Vienna. His later services in the Ministry of Interior caught the interest of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha. He served as the first Mutesarrif of Mount Lebanon and as Minister of Public Works. Kamal S. Salibi, "Dawud Pasha," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, Volume II* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 184-185; Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 70.

¹⁸⁹ Nasrallah Franco Coussa or Franco Pasha (1814-1873) was an Ottoman bureaucrat who worked as provincial governor. Coming from a Greek Catholic family of Syrian origin, he started his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After shortly directing the Galata Customs Office, he served as the second Mutesarrif of Mount Lebanon until his death during his tenure. Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 194-195; Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 113.

¹⁹⁰ Ami Ayalon, "State Bulletins: Pronouncing the Official Truth," in *The Press in the Arab Middle East, A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 24.

¹⁹¹ Mehmed Sabri Pasha (?-1879) was an Ottoman bureaucrat who worked as provincial governor. He served as a governor in Aydın, Danube, Salonica, and Tripolitania, a member of the Supreme Council, the Chief Commander of Police Forces (*Żabıyye Müşiri*), and Minister of Customs. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmanî* 5, 1412; Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali*, 102.

officers for deliveries.¹⁹² Contrarily, Stefan Salgiendzhiev, the Bulgarian editor of *Selānik*, contests the governor's claim by stating that the newspaper already had 10.000 subscribers, whose fees the authorities collected in cash.¹⁹³

The most detailed financial information came from the printing house of Crete Province, which offers a rare window into how the gubernatorial optimism diverges from the economic reality of these enterprises. In November 1868, Hüseyin Avni Pasha penned a petition asking for a governmental subsidy for the printing house and provided a detailed financial statement to list all the incomes and expenses of the first year. The list specifies three sources of income: fees from 400 subscriptions, 4000 single-issue purchases, and other printing contracts during the year, which amounted to 50.400 piastres. On the contrary, the expenses in the list are under six classifications: author salaries, translator salaries, typesetter salaries, salaries of other workers, paper costs, and other expenditures, amounting to 91.920 piastres. The financial statement concludes that the printing house had a budget deficit of over 41.000 piastres in the first year. In his petition, while asking for another 50.000 piastres to purchase new equipment, Hüseyin Avni Pasha guaranteed that they would not ask for subsidies in the future, claiming that the printing house would eventually generate higher income.¹⁹⁴

In short, one can easily see that provincial newspaper enterprises failed at being self-sustainable but instead became dependent on governmental subsidies. Even though the example of the Danube Province stood out as an outlier, these printing houses usually faced budgetary deficits due to their shortcomings in generating income, possibly due to them providing low-

¹⁹² BOA. ŞD. 2003/42, Dhu al-Hijjah 22, 1287 [March 15, 1871].

¹⁹³ In his memoir, Stefan Salgiendzhiev claims that the allegations regarding the newspaper's budget deficit were a setup by the Greek members of the provincial council to undermine Bulgarian representation in the administrative sphere, even accusing Sabri Pasha of bribery. This story reflects the nationalist tensions between Bulgarian and Greek populations in Thessaloniki, hinting at how these newspapers provided space for the underrepresented groups. For more information, see Stefan K. Salgiendzhiev, *Lichni dela i spomeni po vŭzrazhdaneto na solunskite i serski bŭlgari ili 12-godishna zhestoka neravna borba sŭ grŭtskata propaganda* (Plovdiv: Pechatnitsa "Trud" na P. Boyadzhiev, 1906), 25-26.

¹⁹⁴ BOA. İMTZ.GR. 12/355, Shaban 10, 1285 [November 26, 1868].

priced fees to compete in the market. However, the governors appeared to be more prominent in mitigating these budgetary deficits, often by devising new strategies or ceasing publication altogether. Therefore, their ability to convince the central government became more valuable for the survival of these enterprises. Most of the time, their emphasis on the future in which they claimed the newspapers' income would eventually cover its expenses (*vāridātu maşārifini kapatacak*) served as a persuasive method to secure continued support and subsidies from the Sublime Porte. This reliance on promises of future self-sufficiency underscores the ongoing financial fragility of these businesses. It also highlights the political acumen of the governors who had skillfully navigated the bureaucratic system to secure the funds necessary for the survival of provincial printing houses.

* * * * *

After illustrating a communications circuit for book production, Robert Darnton emphasizes the socioeconomic, political, and intellectual conditions affecting all stages of production.¹⁹⁵ I aimed to apply his circuit, which he claimed applies to any context with minor adjustments, to the context of provincial newspaper production in the Ottoman Empire with a significant emphasis: I underscored that provincial governments of the Ottoman Empire were the primary power nodes in the genesis of the provincial newspapers.¹⁹⁶ First, establishing the provincial printing houses did not necessitate publishing the provincial newspapers. Since the intent behind the relevant section of the Provincial Law necessitating the provincial printing houses was mainly regarding facilitating administrative paperwork, the publishing newspapers had a different negotiation basis than that of establishing printing houses. Second and more significantly, contrary to the widespread consensus in the existing literature, the Sublime Porte appeared to have no dominant role in establishing these printing houses and publishing

¹⁹⁵ Darnton, "What is the History of Books?," 74.

¹⁹⁶ For a revised version of Darnton's communications circuit integrated into the context of the Ottoman provincial press, see Appendix E.

newspapers. Instead, they assumed an auxiliary role in administrative correspondence with which the provincial governments negotiated the technical and financial support to ensure the continuity of these enterprises.

The administrative correspondence revealed that the governors requested the equipment from the capital, asked for skilled labor from the Imperial Printing House, tracked the shipment process of the printing presses, and even stepped in to purchase the equipment elsewhere. They were skillfully involved in negotiations with the central government to obtain permission to publish newspapers. The governors were also behind the maintenance and sustainability of these enterprises: They sought to facilitate a steady flow workforce by establishing vocational orphanages and recruiting and training children in the printing houses. These provincial presses were financially fragile enterprises for which the governors sought governmental subsidies to ensure survival. The governors, thereby, needed to actively negotiate with the Sublime Porte and clear the doubts about the benefits of these enterprises. However, based on the later statements by the governors and their attempts to alleviate the financial deficits, it becomes clear that these enterprises provide monetary benefit neither to the provincial governments nor the Sublime Porte. Therefore, the emergence and maintenance of these presses appeared to have a different benefit that related not only to the reform projects and initiatives emerging in the 1860s but also to the changing mentalities about periodicals, shifting from schooling the public for didactic purposes to providing daily news to the general public.¹⁹⁷ Their benefit, explained best by the Governor of Ioannina as “correcting public opinion and reforming the minds of the people” (*taṣḥīḥ-i efkār ve ıslāḥ-ı ezhān-ı ahālī*)¹⁹⁸, appeared to ground itself into the discourse behind the newspaper articles.

¹⁹⁷ Şiviloğlu, “The Emergence of a Reading Public after c. 1860,” 185.

¹⁹⁸ BOA. İ.DH. 554/38571, Jumada al-Awwal 21, 1283 [October 1, 1866].

Chapter II

Print to Rule: Self-Fashioning in the Ottoman Provincial Newspapers

In 1863, the Press Bureau (*Maṭbū'āt Ẹalemi*) issued a fourteen-article regulation outlining the topics for consideration while inspecting the newspapers. The regulation included an article which roughly defined the Sublime Porte's perspective on the newspapers: It stated that the "indebted duty" (*farīẓa-i ẓimmet*) of the newspapers published in the Ottoman Empire was to affirm and confirm the political ideas of the state rather than imposing theirs onto the state.¹⁹⁹ This statement appeared to have articulated the mentality behind newspaper censorship while shaping the discursive limits of the newspaper enterprises within which the provincial press also operated. The central government's ideological framework also bound the provincial newspapers, as administrative correspondence suggests that the Office for the Official Gazette (*Takvīm-i Vekāyi' Ẹalemi*) under the Ministry of Public Education was responsible for the inspection of these newspapers.²⁰⁰ However, since these were also the media outlets of the provincial administrations, the provincial press reflected the concerns of these local officials and the regional issues. Therefore, one can observe that the "official" nature of these newspapers, as long as they abided by these principles and the vocabulary of the ideological framework, allowed the provincial governments to craft their own narratives.

This chapter evaluates the actual subject material of this study, the newspapers, by uncovering recurring themes and narratives to understand the shared goal among the governors. Since evaluating all issues of the provincial newspapers between 1865 and 1871 is challenging due to the vast amount of material and the problem of their accessibility, this chapter deals with the initial editions of these newspapers to outline their early content and reveal their

¹⁹⁹ BOA. HR.TO. 473/4. Safar 27, 1280 [August 13, 1863].

²⁰⁰ BOA. A.} MKT.UM. 1007/17, Rajab 6, 1284 [November 3, 1867].

administrative functions. This chapter focuses on the established moral dichotomies in the narratives, common themes of order and progress for establishing these contrasts, and the prevalent phrases used in these articles to understand how provincial administrations and governors used the provincial press for self-fashioning.

I argue that Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning is very much applicable to the case of mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman provincial governors, as they relied on the alienation of specific groups, activities, or concepts to promote the ideological framework of the central government while personifying the idea of authority through themselves before the ordinary people, hence, legitimizing their rule to the provincial subjects of the empire while pledging their allegiance to the Sublime Porte. By dissecting these newspapers' initial contents and editorial choices, I illustrate that these newspapers crafted an image of the governors as the founders and protectors of a new social order within a new imperial framework. Through the self-fashioning of the governors, I claim that the content of these newspapers contributed to the Ottoman centralization process from a symbolic and performative sense.

Setting the Stage: Prefaces of Provincial Press

The first issues of provincial newspapers open with a preface, typically titled "introduction" (*mukaddime*), which states the newspaper's purposes and reveals the aforesaid imperial framework and its use. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these preambles had the practical function of convincing the central government to give permission to publish newspapers. They make extensive use of the Sublime Porte's epistemic, moral, and ideological frameworks, identified as Ottomanism. Codified through specific edicts like the Gülhane Edict (1839) and Reform Edict (1856), Ottomanism was the Sublime Porte's response to the separatist movements among the non-Muslim populations of the empire by introducing novel concepts from Enlightenment political thought, primarily through French sources, while preserving traditional rhetorics emphasizing the abidance to Islamic law and its "bestowment" by the

sultan.²⁰¹ Starting with the Imperial Edict of Gülhane in 1839, the Sublime Porte presented these political concepts, such as liberty, equality, and the rule of law, as part of the sultan's gracious rule and his new order, thereby positioning the sultan as a paternal figure, protector and watchful of the imperial subjects.²⁰² With the romanticized feelings of patriotism and allegiance to the empire, Ottomanism, at least in the mid-nineteenth century, was the culmination of the empire's restorationist reform program that sought to unify the subjects under a supranational identity, secular codes, and just institutions while retaining the boundaries of religious communities and installing greater surveillance over their activities.²⁰³

When evaluating these preambles, one can easily see this ideological framework's effects (or boundaries) in specific sections of their openings. The introductions usually begin with panegyric expressions for Sultan Abdülaziz (d. 1876) and his accession to the throne. In many examples, these expressions range from wishing for long life and prosperity to the sultan to analogizing his qualities to those of Alexander the Great, as was the case in *Bosna* and *Envâr-ı Şarkıyye* newspapers.²⁰⁴

Some introductions emphasize specific attributes of the sultan: the introduction of *Fırât* newspaper emphasizes the sultan's fairness, whereas the newspaper from Syria Province highlights the sultan's mercy.²⁰⁵ The preambles from the earlier newspapers emphasize Abdülaziz's accession to the throne as a significant moment for the empire's peace and prosperity. For instance, in the preamble, the *Tuna* newspaper of the Danube Province writes that the accession marked a new era (*tārīh-i cedīd*) for peace and prosperity.²⁰⁶ Similar

²⁰¹ Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913)," 89.

²⁰² Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913)," 93-94.

²⁰³ For a detailed analysis of the different formulations of Ottomanism along with its ties with the legal reforms, see Alexander Vezhenkov, "Formulating and Reformulating Ottomanism," in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans, Volume One: National Ideologies and Language Policies*, ed. Roumen Daskalov and Tchavdar Marinov (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 241-271.

²⁰⁴ "[Preamble]," *Bosna*, no. 1; "[Preamble]," *Envâr-ı Şarkıyye*, no. 1, Rabi al-Awwal 15, 1284 [July 17, 1867].

²⁰⁵ "[Preamble]," *Fırât*, no. 1, Muharram 23, 1284 [May 27, 1867]; "Muqaddime," *Sûriyye*, no. 1, Muharram 1, 1283 [May 16, 1866].

²⁰⁶ "[Preamble]," *Tuna*, no. 1.

descriptions appear in *Sūriyye* and *Diyārbekir* newspapers, where the preamble characterizes the accession as the beginning of the days of salvation for the empire and the nation.²⁰⁷

The preambles usually speak highly of the reforms as an endowment from the sultan to preserve the legitimate order of the empire, often depicting the sultan as the reformer. These texts praise the reforms of the central government and the sultan with embellished language, advising the readers to appreciate them. For instance, the conception of devotion appears in many preambles as a method to glorify the reform projects as if the sultan himself implemented them. *Ṭuna* newspaper's preface depicts the sultan as "devoted and directed" (*maṣrūf u ma 'tūf*) with great power towards protecting the order of the empire and its people.²⁰⁸ *Ṭrablusğarb* newspaper's preamble highlights the imperial subjects' prosperity and security (*refāh u āsāyiş*) and the empire's reconstruction and reformation (*i 'mār u ıslāh*).²⁰⁹ Another recurring notion for embellishing the reforms is the assumption of the sultan's intention as goodwill. In the newspaper *Bosna*, the preamble describes the progress of the reforms as "the result of the sultan's high efforts and his benevolent intentions."²¹⁰ Likewise, *Diyārbekir*'s preamble mentions the efforts in the pursuit of reform projects and the dissemination of sciences and arts across the empire, highlighting that these are "the proofs of the sultan's goodwill" and that conscientious, loyal subjects can neither deny these efforts nor neglect to feel grateful towards the sultan.²¹¹

The preambles stress the provincial reorganization as a point of departure for these embellishments since this emphasis also enables the governors to claim legitimacy for their provinces. Along with their immediate target audience being the provincial people, their usual strategy was to praise the new provincial administration, embellished as an imperial grace for

²⁰⁷ "Muḳaddime," *Sūriyye*, no. 1; "Muḳaddime," *Diyārbekir*, no. 1, Rabi al-Akhir 24, 1286 [July 22, 1869].

²⁰⁸ "[Preamble]," *Ṭuna*, no. 1.

²⁰⁹ "[Preamble]," *Ṭrablusğarb*, no. 1, Jumada al-Awwal 10, 1283 [September 20, 1866].

²¹⁰ "[Preamble]," *Bosna*, no. 1.

²¹¹ "Muḳaddime," *Diyārbekir*, no. 1.

protecting order or progress. For instance, the *Ṭuna* newspaper describes the establishment of the Danube Province as “one of the finest examples of progress and benefaction.”²¹² The *Bosna* newspaper also employs a similar rhetoric to describe the provincial reorganization, stating in the preamble that the establishment of these new provinces was “a superb principle for the protection of the homeland and state law.”²¹³ The *Firāt* newspaper’s preamble remarks that the sultan seeks to advance the state of prosperity across the empire by administering the means and capacities of several provinces from one center.²¹⁴ In short, the newspapers’ preambles use panegyrics extensively, laying the rhetorical groundwork for later articulations of legitimacy by glorifying the sultanic power and personifying the reform projects with Abdülaziz.

Some preambles elaborate on their reasons for publishing the newspapers, which often reveal the changing reform priorities of the provincial administrations. Some explain their newspaper publishing by the need to inform people about legal and administrative rules. The first provincial newspaper, *Ṭuna*, states in the preamble that the reason behind the publication is to notify every person in public (*efrād-ı nās*), without exception, about the provisions of laws and regulations of the government (*aḥkām-ı kânûn u niẓām*) and to oblige them with observance of and compliance (*ri’āyet u mütāba’at*) with the established order.²¹⁵ Similarly, The *Sūriyye* newspaper’s preamble elaborates on the reason by stating that the newspaper will be responsible for announcing the official and unofficial provincial news, national and foreign news, and discussions about education and literature.²¹⁶ The *Bosna* newspaper’s preamble states that the newspaper assumes a similar role, defined as “calling upon and warning the people in every type of issue.”²¹⁷ *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* also includes a broader expression to describe the exact role,

²¹² “[...] *terakkiyyât u muḥsinâtıñ cümle-i cemîlesinden biri* [...],” “[Preamble],” *Ṭuna*, no. 1.

²¹³ “[...] *muḥāfaẓa-i huḳûk-ı vaṭan u devlet için gâyet güzel bir esâs* [...],” “[Preamble],” *Bosna*, no. 1.

²¹⁴ “[...] *birkaç eyâletin vesâ’i u kâbiliyyetini merkez-i eḥaddan idâre ederek* [...],” “[Preamble],” *Firât*, no. 1.

²¹⁵ “[Preamble],” *Ṭuna*, no. 1.

²¹⁶ “[Muḳaddime],” *Sūriyye*, no. 1.

²¹⁷ “[...] *ahālîye her nev’ ḥuşûşda da ‘vetçi ve ihtârcı* [...],” “[Preamble],” *Bosna*, no. 1.

stating as “the dissemination of beneficial news and information.”²¹⁸ The preambles from *Selānik* and *Hüdāvendigār* newspapers acclaim a much simpler role of providing more practical information, such as commercial, agricultural, and industrial news.²¹⁹

There were also some newspapers whose preambles assumed the mission of enlightening the public, often reflecting a prejudiced perspective among provincial administrations for the provincial population. One of the most recurring themes in these preambles, also repeated in the newspaper contents, is an ambition to facilitate civilizational progress for the provincial people, often appearing with the words “education” (*ma‘ārif*) or “discipline” (*terbiye*). For instance, the preamble of *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* newspaper states that the newspaper is “in the humble and sincere service to the sciences and education.”²²⁰ *Fırāt* newspaper’s preamble also states their goal as “disciplining the thoughts and explaining the truth” (*terbiye-i efkār ve tefhīm-i mu‘arref*).²²¹ The concept of discipline also appears in *Ṭuna* newspaper, stating that the prosperity of people required “the elimination of ignorance and a proper disciplining” (*izāle-i cehālet ve hüsn-i terbiyet*).²²² *Bosna*’s preamble takes a more explicit stance on the civilizing mission, mentioning that people owe to the provincial administrations to acquire literacy voluntarily and to adopt the requisites of civilization, which the preamble states “a requirement of their patriotism” (*hamiyyetleri muktezāsı*).²²³

One last remark about these preambles is that, like the petitions from the previous chapter, they implicitly describe their source of legitimacy, the sultan, using the metaphor of shadow (*sāye* or *zıll*) to reinforce the conception that the provincial power derives its legitimacy from the sultanic authority. This traditional metaphor comes from the figurative meaning of the

²¹⁸ “[...] *ta ‘mīm-i havādis u ma ‘lūmāt-ı nāfi‘a* [...],” “[Preamble],” *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*, no. 1.

²¹⁹ “Ma‘zeret,” *Selānik*, no. 1, Dhu al-Qadah 21, 1285 [March 5, 1869]; “Muqaddime,” *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 1, Dhu al-Qadah 8, 1285 [February 20, 1869].

²²⁰ “[...] *fünūn u ma ‘āriḫe ‘ācizāne hüsn-i hıdmet* [...],” “[Preamble],” *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*, no. 1.

²²¹ “[Preamble],” *Fırāt*, no. 1.

²²² “[Preamble],” *Ṭuna*, no. 1.

²²³ *her nev ‘ levāzım-ı medeniyet iktibāsı* “[Preamble],” *Bosna*, no. 1.

word, which denotes protection and courtesy, and the religious meaning from a hadith, which claims that the Muslim ruler is the shadow of Allah on earth.²²⁴ While this expression was not a novel concept, it frequently appears in preambles while describing imperial reforms, provincial reorganization, or the sultan's permission to publish newspapers. For instance, in *Bosna*'s preamble, the sultan's shadow bestows success (*sāye-i tevfiḳāt-vāye-i cenāb-ı mülkdārī*) onto the operations and endeavors of the provincial administrations.²²⁵ *Diyārbekir* newspaper's preamble states that the provincial administration owes the newspaper's publication to the sultan's shadow that bestows goodness (*sāye-i meḥāsin-vāye-i ḥazret-i ṣāhāne*).²²⁶ Many newspapers use the same phrasing to describe the sultan's authority: In *Trablusgarb* newspaper, it bestows justice (*ma'ḍeret*); in *Selānik* newspaper, it is maturity (*kemālāt*), and in *Hüdāvendigār* newspaper, it grants public security (*āsāyiş*).²²⁷

The preambles, in short, play an essential part in understanding the imperial framework and the provincial strategies for the representation of authority. These articles link Sultan Abdülaziz's accession with the beginning of reform projects, thus temporalizing the reform with the present and detaching it from the past.²²⁸ In addition to this temporalization, these preambles portray a favorable representation of the reforms by lauding them through the sultan's presence, often morally aestheticizing the sultan to depict a symbolic power. Along with their rationale for the start of the publication, the preambles offer a lens for how the provincial administrations rearticulated the Ottomanist ideology for creating a localized discourse. In Greenblatt's sense, this means the "submission to an absolute power or authority"

²²⁴ İskender Pala, *Ansiklopedik Divan Şiiri Sözlüğü* (Istanbul: L&M Yayıncılık, 2002), 405, 506.

²²⁵ "[Preamble]," *Bosna*, no. 1.

²²⁶ "Muḳaddime," *Diyārbekir*, no. 1.

²²⁷ "[Preamble]," *Trablusgarb*, no. 1; "Ma'zeret," *Selānik*, no. 1; "Muḳaddime," *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 1.

²²⁸ The issue of temporalization starts with the Ottoman official gazette, *Taḳvīm-i Vekāyi*. For a more detailed analysis of this rhetoric, see Özgür Türesay, "The Political Language of *Taḳvīm-i Vekāyi*: The Discourse and Temporality of Ottoman 'Reform' (1831-1834)," trans. Naomi Cohen, *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 31 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.6874>.

for the start of self-fashioning.²²⁹ However, their rhetoric is usually intertwined with a didactic responsibility, claiming that the newspapers would rectify the opinions and enlighten people about the truth. Here lies the issue of the official truth, often disregarded as monotonous, which reveals the need to construct and articulate the truth to solidify the basis for provincial legitimacy within the confines of the imperial framework. This legitimacy was often embodied in the concepts of order and progress, reflecting the priorities of the imperial ideology.

Narrating Discipline: Order and Disorder

The 1860s marked a period of transformation in the Ottoman press, where the early didactic journals publishing articles about science and technology in a patronizing language were replaced by “learned articles and translations from foreign dailies.”²³⁰ I position the Ottoman provincial press as an in-between product of this transformation, providing weekly news from the provinces and many other sources while using a patronizing language. Indeed, rectifying the people’s minds about socio-political issues was one of the key aims of some provincial newspapers, as stated in the petitions from the governors.

For this reason, the initial ideas about discipline in these newspapers usually took the form of dichotomies, framing specific activities through moral dualism, one side of which forms the fundamental concepts of Ottomanist discourse. In Greenblatt's sense, the provincial newspapers often frame particular activities and groups as “other” to benefit from the dichotomies based on virtue ethics. Their approach to the concept of “order” is central to understanding the discourse with which these newspapers sought to indoctrinate people since

²²⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, “Introduction,” in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 9.

²³⁰ Murat R. Şiviloğlu, “The Emergence of a Reading Public after c. 1860,” in *The Emergence of Public Opinion, State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 185-186.

this term occupies a significant place in the nineteenth-century Ottoman bureaucratic vocabulary.²³¹

In the case of provincial newspapers, the articles treat the concept of order (*nizām* or *āsāyiş*) as a bureaucratic conduct for governance and an efficient tool for social disciplining. As a bureaucratic conduct, the provincial press implicitly used the concept to embody the administrative presence through specific news. One example was news reports about introducing newly established provinces and their borders, possibly to designate the territories of jurisdiction for the provincial people. For instance, the *Sūriyye* newspaper's first issue contains an article that reports the provincial reorganization of the provinces of Damascus and Sidon and the Jerusalem Mutesarrifate as the Syria Province, elaborating on the territorial reassignments of certain districts (*sancağ*).²³² Similar news also appears in the first issue of *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* newspaper, where an article introduces the provincial borders, administrative units, and the people, then informs the readers about the agricultural, industrial, and commercial life of the province.²³³ Even though short in examples, these articles reflect an administrative mentality where spatializing the jurisdiction constitutes the first step toward constructing the provincial authority.

Another discourse of power in the newspapers lies in the section that covers the news of appointments, often titled “appointments” (*tevcihāt*). This type of news contains appointment reports about civil servants, judiciary, military personnel, and teaching staff, and, although offering little information, provides some passages and emphases that are discursively compelling for understanding the order. For instance, the article introducing the Syria Province in the *Sūriyye* newspaper proceeds with the names of new district governors and subdistrict

²³¹ Maurus Reinkowski, “The State’s Security and the Subjects’ Prosperity: Notions of Order in Ottoman Bureaucratic Correspondence (19th Century),” in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 200.

²³² “Veķāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Sūriyye*, no. 1, Muharram 1, 1283 [May 16, 1866].

²³³ “[Introduction of Erzurum Province],” *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*, no. 1, Rabi al-Awwal 15, 1284 [July 17, 1867].

directors from “capable people of tested conduct.”²³⁴ One can also encounter similar news in the first issue of *Ṭuna* newspaper, which includes news about the establishment of new legal and provincial councils and the election of their members, stating that the elections are almost over.²³⁵ Some appointment reports also include information that indicates the appointed officials had arrived at their posts and assumed their duties, signaling that the provincial governments were constructing the image of an actively functioning administration. For instance, the fifth issue of *Ṭuna* newspaper reports the arrival of the judge of Ruse, Said Efendi, to his post and his assumption of the post.²³⁶ Another report from *Diyārbekir* newspaper mentions the arrival of Mahmud Hamdi Efendi, the head instructor of the new secondary school in Diyārbekir.²³⁷

The provincial newspapers also published news about the activities of military or police forces, further strengthening the embodiment of power. These reports usually range from the reorganization of the army troops to their movements or deployments in provincial areas to indicate the presence of law enforcement in these provinces, proving a connection with the issue of legitimacy. For instance, the second issue of *Zevrā*’ of the Baghdad Province includes an article reporting the reorganization of the old gendarmerie (*zabṭiyye*) troops, being in a disorderly and unregulated manner and indiscernible from the civilians by their appearance, by the dismissal of this troop of eight thousand soldiers and their replacement with a new gendarmerie regiment of six thousand soldiers, who had been assigned to many locations.²³⁸ Another news report from *Bosna*’s fourth issue mentions the growing military presence along the border due to the Austro-Prussian War (1866), noting that the Sublime Porte is deploying fifty to sixty thousand soldiers to protect the province, with a mention of forty thousand

²³⁴ “[...] mücerrebü’l-eṭvār ehliyyetli [...],” “Veḳāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Sūriyye*, no. 1.

²³⁵ “Mevādd-ı Huşūṣiyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 1, Shawwal 10, 1281 [March 15, 1865].

²³⁶ “Havādiṣ-i Dāhiliyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 5, Dhu al-Qadah 16, 1281 [April 12, 1865].

²³⁷ “Veḳāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 7, Jumada al-Akhir 10, 1286 [September 17, 1869].

²³⁸ “Mevādd-ı Huşūṣiyye,” *Zevrā*’, no. 2, Rabi al-Awwal 12, 1286 [June 22, 1869].

potential soldiers mobilized in case of emergency.²³⁹ The newspaper articles frequently situate the topic of military presence and activities with the issues of banditry and other criminal activities to create a moral contrast, an issue that I will get back to in due course.

Along with publishing appointment reports and military news, the provincial newspapers printed regulations and decrees concerning the provincial administrations or the Sublime Porte. Since one of the most immediately assumed responsibilities of such newspapers of an official nature was to announce these regulations, there is little to talk about their contribution to the embodiment of authority and order. For instance, the fourth issue of the *Sūriyye* newspaper announces the regulation for the establishment of city councils and the responsibilities of its members, implemented in Damascus in the first place.²⁴⁰ The newspapers appeared to cover not only the new laws and subsequent amendments but also earlier legislation, notifying the public about the current legal standards to guide them toward orderly and lawful conduct. *Zevrā* publishes a previous imperial decree for amending the inheritance rights from the land registry code, remarking the reason for the publication as properly informing the public about the actual provisions.²⁴¹ *Bosna* also publishes an announcement about the peeled-up or uprooted trees on the sides of the roads, warning that the provincial administration would fine or imprison those who do so.²⁴²

Perhaps the most precise articulation of this imagination for civic discipline appears in the second issue of *Ṭuna*, which includes an extensive list of admonitions (*tenbḥāt*) regulating public life in the Danube Province. This regulation provides an intriguing case for the understanding of order for the provincial governments, proving that the newspapers' conceptualization of order also included social life in urban space. The regulation consists of

²³⁹ “Mevādd-ı Huşuşiyye,” *Bosna*, no. 4, Safar 5, 1283 [June 19, 1866].

²⁴⁰ “Veķāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Sūriyye*, no. 4, Muharram 23, 1283 [June 7, 1866].

²⁴¹ “[...] herkesiñ ḥaķīkat-i māddeyi bilmesi lâzım geldiğine binā’en [...],” “Mevādd-ı Huşuşiyye,” *Zevrā*, no. 5, Rabi al-Akhir 3, 1286 [July 13, 1869].

²⁴² “İ lānāt,” *Bosna*, no. 3, Muharram 27, 1283 [11 June 1866].

many articles, including the ban on unlicensed firearm carrying, the detention of beggars physically capable of working, the prohibition of going out at night without a lamp, and the requirement that children over the age of five or six not be left idle. There are also articles regarding commercial life, such as the use of standardized units of measurement in markets, the prohibition of street vendors outside bazaars, and the imposition of sanitary practices in market areas. Some articles are concerned with public sanitation, such as the ban on wastewater disposal in marketplaces, the prohibition of slaughtering livestock in urban areas, and the requirement for the shop owners in the market areas to clean their shops every day. Some other articles include allowing licensed leisure spaces to stay open until midnight, requiring a permit for construction works, and requiring street-facing walls to be built from durable materials.²⁴³ When taken together, these provisions do not merely instruct or prohibit but also reflect a model of civic behavior for the provincial life that these administrations deem appropriate to their mentality.

While these reports attest to the methods of embodying the authority's existence, they nevertheless require the existence of, from Greenblatt's perspective, an "alien" to legitimize the existence of an authority. In the case of legitimizing the order, the provincial newspapers frequently utilized the theme of "disorder" to illustrate the need to establish order, therefore serving as a constitutive outside against which the provincial authorities assert their administrative, legal, and moral imperatives. This theme implicitly appears in the news reports covering various events about banditry, nomadic tribes, and other criminal activities. Especially in the provincial newspapers from the Balkans, banditry holds a vital space to configure the need for authority. The news typically describes the bandits (*eşkıyā'* or *haydūd*) from the Danube and Bosnia provinces as unruly and immoral people: *Ṭuna*'s sixth issue covers a news report about a group of six bandits (*altı nefer haydūd*) who came from Serbia and attacked one

²⁴³ "İ'lānnāme," *Ṭuna*, no. 2, Shawwal 24, 1281 [March 22, 1865].

of the settlements for Circassian refugees in Vidin, injuring a few of them and escaping. The report talks about the prior hardships that these refugees went through and the disturbed peace in their settlement to illustrate the immorality of these bandits.²⁴⁴ In *Bosna*'s second issue, a similar news report describes twenty-five bandits of unknown origins from Serbia who raided the village of Dobrun in Višegrad, killed one townsfolk named Ali Isić, and wounded his son, Ibrahim, before escaping.²⁴⁵

The coverage of banditry in these newspapers often involves their pursuit or apprehension by the authorities, signaling the existence of a functioning order in the province. Some articles report the incidents with background information about the bandits to hint at their long-lasting damage within the region and the contentment of the locals after their capture or death. For instance, *Bosna*'s first issue reports a telegraph from Banja Luka district, which explains the capture of Osman Amrinović, a bandit of Roma origin who had been committing acts of destruction (*iṣāl-i dest-i ḥasār*) for a few years, along with his accomplices.²⁴⁶ Another story from *Ṭuna* contains an article about two bandits named Lofçalı Salih and Mutioğlu, spotted in Lovech and tracked down by five soldiers, during which a firefight occurred. Though one soldier got injured in his chest during the conflict, the soldiers were able to apprehend the bandits in a wounded condition.²⁴⁷ Another report from *Bosna* also covers two stories about how the provincial administration captured Gajo Kezisić near the Montenegrin border and Mato Parsić around Bihać, who have been committing brigandage near the borderlands and whose deaths were congratulated by the locals.²⁴⁸ These news reports, thus, appeared to have constructed the banditry as an unlawful conduct that the provincial administrations would bring to an end to protect the local order.

²⁴⁴ "Mevādd-ı Hıṣūṣiyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 6, Dhu al-Qadah 23, 1281 [April 19, 1865].

²⁴⁵ "Mevādd-ı Hıṣūṣiyye," *Bosna*, no. 2, Muharram 20, 1283 [June 4, 1866].

²⁴⁶ "Mevādd-ı Hıṣūṣiyye," *Bosna*, no. 1, Muharram 13, 1283 [May 28, 1866].

²⁴⁷ "Mevādd-ı Hıṣūṣiyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 10, Dhu al-Hijjah 21, 1281 [May 17, 1865].

²⁴⁸ "Mevādd-ı Hıṣūṣiyye," *Bosna*, no. 15, Rabi al-Akhir 23, 1283 [September 3, 1866].

Similar stories included the other people's efforts in capturing the bandits, often with a commendatory recognition of their loyalty to the administration: *Ṭuna*'s seventh issue contains a report on the apprehension of a Moldovian bandit in Tulcea. This bandit, named Costache Balan, sought refuge in the Cocoş Monastery in Isaccea, where the priest of the monastery, Ilarion, struggled with the outlaw and hit him in the back of his head with an axe handle, leading to Costache's arrest. The article praises the priest's efforts as "worthy of gratitude" (*şāyān-ı teşekkür*).²⁴⁹ Another example of the fifth issue praised a corporal in the army named Mustafa of Skopje, who had been injured during his duty of capturing the bandits and murderers (*ḥaydūd ve kātīli tutmak*). The report states that he was retired due to disability, and the Sublime Porte decreed that he be put on a salary.²⁵⁰

Some reports also note the individuals complicit with bandits and underscore their inevitable punishment by the administration. *Bosna*'s fourth issue covers a news report about the pursuit of the bandits in the Novi Pazar district involving the villagers. The report elaborates on one villager sheltering the bandits in his house, about which the villagers somehow got the word and armed themselves to seize the outlaws. Due to the homeowners' alert, the bandits quickly escaped, and a firefight broke out between the armed villagers and the brigands, during which one bandit and one villager died. The report concludes with the ongoing search for the fugitives, with a note about the villagers sheltering the bandits arrested and interrogated.²⁵¹ In short, the issue of banditry and its suppression functioned as a mechanism of moral regulation for the provincial population by promoting exemplary behavior while cautioning against deviance from such conduct.

Such stories of banditry and its suppression by the local governments appear in the provincial newspapers from the empire's eastern provinces, often reflecting the empire's

²⁴⁹ "Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 7, Dhu al-Qadah 30, 1281 [April 26, 1865].

²⁵⁰ "Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 5, Dhu al-Qadah 16, 1281 [April 12, 1865].

²⁵¹ "Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye," *Bosna*, no. 4, Safar 5, 1283 [June 19, 1866].

measures against separatist movements or the imperial sedentarization policies for nomadic tribes. The newspaper articles usually mention these groups concerning their involvement in banditry or their opposition (*muḥālefe*) to the reforms and the provincial government. For instance, one news report from *Sūriyye* talks about the pursuit of Yusuf Karam, a Lebanese notable of Maronite origin who started a rebellion against the provincial government in Mount Lebanon, stating that he violates the public security and would either be obliged to surrender or fall into the government's hands, emphasizing the inevitability for his fate.²⁵² Reports from *Firāt* newspaper narrate the story of how the Reform Division (*Fırka-i İslāhiyye*) suppressed the unrest caused by the brigands around the mountainous regions of Upper Cilicia.²⁵³ Based on the region's near history with this specific military unit, these brigands appeared to be the remnants of the last feudal chiefs from the non-sedentary Afshar tribes, for whose rebellion against forced sedentarization the Sublime Porte dispatched the division a few years back.²⁵⁴ Based on these reports, it seems that the newspaper articles labeled any insubordination against the provincial administration, including national rebellions or resistance against reforms, as a form of banditry.

Most of the reports from these provinces about the bandits, however, involve the pursuit of the Arabic and Kurdish tribes or tribe leaders due to their insubordination against the provincial governments, depicting them as the antithesis of order and security. For instance, *Sūriyye* newspaper reports the existence of Bedouin tribes (*ṭavā'if-i 'urbān*) around Hauran,

²⁵² "Cebel-i Lübnān," *Sūriyye*, no. 2, Muharram 9, 1283 [May 24, 1866]. For more information about Yusuf Karam (1823-1889), see Axel Havemann, "Yūsuf Karam," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, Volume XI* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 358-359.

²⁵³ "Veḳāyī'-i Vilāyet-i Haleb," *Firāt*, no. 4, Safar 14, 1284 [June 16, 1867]; "Veḳāyī'-i Vilāyet-i Haleb," *Firāt*, no. 8, Rabi al-Akhir 13, 1284 [July 14, 1867]; "Veḳāyī'-i Vilāyet-i Haleb," *Firāt*, no. 9, Rabi al-Akhir 20, 1284 [July 21, 1867].

²⁵⁴ For more information about the integration of the Afshar tribes in Cilicia and the government's campaign against ruling Kozanoğlu family (with whom I happen to share my surname, albeit, alas, not any other privileges), see Andrew G. Gould, "Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, no. 4 (1976): 485-506; Yonca Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006): 483-485.

where one report suggests the region's deserts as the main factor which favors the tribes for their perpetual molestations (*her bār sarkındılık*) as the region's landscape as a desert favoring the conditions for misconduct.²⁵⁵ Some reports notify the public about the construction of an outpost in the region, and the army troops patrolling the area and chasing the insurgent Bedouins (*'urbān-ı bāğiyye*) to "stabilize the order and prosperity" of the region.²⁵⁶ The other group that consistently made it into the news reports from *Zevrā*' newspaper was the Hamawand tribe, a Kurdish tribe around northern Iraq and southeastern Anatolia, which rebelled against the Ottoman administration many times.²⁵⁷ News reports from Baghdad indicate that the provincial administration channels its efforts into tracking the tribe members roaming as groups (*fırka*) led by certain chiefs, some of whom the army troops have even managed to kill or capture their accomplices, whom the administration executed.²⁵⁸ In short, the banditry appears to have constituted a significant subject for the provincial newspapers to legitimize the need for an authority in the respective regions.

Other criminal activities, such as homicide, burglary, and sexual assault, also occupy a substantial space in the newspapers to demonstrate the need for order. These reports usually inform the public of the crime cases, either solved or under investigation, pointing out the existence of such misconduct while emphasizing the administration's efforts in law enforcement. For instance, in its earlier issues, *Ṭuna* reported many murder cases whose suspects the police forces apprehended and interrogated before their trial or whose verdicts the

²⁵⁵ In this context, Bedouin refers to the pastorally nomadic Arabic tribes living in desert regions of Levant and Mesopotamia. "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sūriyye*, no. 2, Muharram 9, 1283 [May 24, 1866].

²⁵⁶ "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sūriyye*, no. 2; "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sūriyye*, no. 6, Safar 8, 1283 [June 21, 1866]; "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sūriyye*, no. 7, Safar 15, 1283 [June 28, 1866]; "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sūriyye*, no. 9, Safar 29, 1283 [July 12, 1866].

²⁵⁷ Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 75.

²⁵⁸ "Hemāvendler," *Zevrā*, no. 6, Rabi al-Akhir 10, 1286 [July 20, 1869]; "Mevādd-ı Hūşūşıyye," *Zevrā*, no. 7, Rabi al-Akhir 17, 1286 [July 27, 1869].

court had finalized.²⁵⁹ Similarly, the eighth issue of *Sūriyye* publishes a copy of the judgment book from the Council of Trials (*Meclis-i De'āvi*) in the Damascus district of the Syria Province, which includes five burglary cases, each sentenced to three months' imprisonment.²⁶⁰ Similar stories appear in *Firāt*, which reports the verdicts about three larceny cases from the Kozan district.²⁶¹ *Hüdāvendigār*'s ninth issue also reports a similar judgment book that includes two sexual assault reports, indicating the verdict was to imprison perpetrators for three years.²⁶² These news reports, while narrating the crimes, also provide information about their trial process and the verdicts on the criminals, constructing a sense of security through the presence of criminal activity.

Particularly in the Balkan provinces of the empire, the Roma people (*Ḳıbtī*) make a frequent appearance in these criminal activity reports as perpetrators, thereby contributing to the construction of authority by becoming a reference for binary opposition. Especially during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Roma people were also subject to sedentarization policies due to their nomadic lifestyle and the attribution of their supposed involvement in plundering and other criminal activities.²⁶³ Their most apparent appearance in the news reports frequently aligns with their criminality: *Tuna* reports a story about some mysterious ox deaths in Leskovac and their meats missing from the carcasses, revealed to be a wrongdoing by some Roma people. Upon further investigation, some confessed that the Roma people living in Serbia taught them a method to kill oxen by feeding them with arsenic, through which they acquire meat. The newspaper reasons their actions with them having no livelihood due to their irregular

²⁵⁹ “Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye,” *Tuna*, no. 4, Dhu al-Qadah 9, 1281 [April 5, 1865]; “Havādiş-i Dāhiliyye,” *Tuna*, no. 5, Dhu al-Qadah 16, 1281 [April 12, 1865]; “Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye,” *Tuna*, no. 8, Dhu al-Hijjah 7, 1281 [May 3, 1865]; “Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye,” *Tuna*, no. 10, Dhu al-Hijjah 21, 1281 [May 17, 1865].

²⁶⁰ “Veķāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Sūriyye*, no. 8, Safar 22, 1283 [July 5, 1866].

²⁶¹ “Meclis-i Temyiz-i Vilāyet’de hūkmolunmuş ve elviye-i sā’ireden gelip tedķik kılınmış olan mevādd-ı cezā’iyye jurnalidir,” *Firāt*, no. 10, Rabi al-Awwal 27, 1284 [July 28, 1867].

²⁶² “Meclis-i Cināyāt-i Vilāyet’de hūkmolunan mücrimīniñ jurnalidir,” *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 9, Dhu al-Hijjah 6, 1285 [March 20, 1869].

²⁶³ Elena Marushiakova, and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire: A Contribution to the History of the Balkans*, trans. Olga Apostolova (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), 57-58.

wandering (*derbeder şurada burada gezip hiçbir yerde dikiş tutduramayan*).²⁶⁴ Another story from *Ṭuna* recounts the murder of an eight-year-old boy named Kadri in Razgrad by another Roma named Salih, who claimed the child picked flowers from his place and cursed at him when asked to stop, provoking him to murder him brutally. The article displays their remorse about the event and the simplicity of its reasoning.²⁶⁵

To sum up, Ottoman provincial newspapers engage with the concept of order in the articles, primarily by emphasizing the ongoing brigandage and other criminal activities that constitute the need to establish authority over the respective regions. In an administrative sense, the newspapers contribute to the public understanding of order through publishing regulations, official announcements, and news of appointments. Brigandage (*şekāvet*), in the context of the provincial press, does not necessarily connote banditry in the Balkans but any unlawful groups or tribes that acted against the provincial administration's order within the imperial borders. Whereas these groups were predominantly Serbian or Bulgarian in the Balkan provinces, in the eastern provinces, the target became the nomadic tribes or tribal chiefs, commonly Bedouin and Kurdish. Coupled with reports of other criminal activities, the newspaper reports solidify the perception that the provincial administrations protect the public order and security of the region by fighting against these illegal activities and their perpetrators. However, order only constitutes one side of the equation: on the other side lies “progress,” another concept for constructing legitimacy.

Imagining Civilization: Progress and Backwardness

Ussama Makdisi's article on Ottoman orientalism talks about the shift in imperial discursive practices that “placed the empire on par with other ‘civilized’ states,” mentioning

²⁶⁴ “Mevādd-ı Huşūsiyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 6, Dhu al-Qadah 23, 1281 [April 19, 1865].

²⁶⁵ “Mevādd-ı Huşūsiyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 8. To see another example where the Roma people used as a criminal subject, see “Mevādd-ı Huşūsiyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 2, Shawwal 24, 1281 [March 22, 1865].

that the new discourse reconfigured a contrast between pre-modern within the empire and the modern in the capital, therefore creating a temporal gap between Istanbul and the rest of the empire and leading to the emergence of a discursive contrast between backwardness and modernity.²⁶⁶ This contrast is evident in the provincial press in the 1860s, as the concept of progress (*terakki*) comes across many times to constitute the floor for the provincial administrations to claim legitimacy.

This concept is very relevant for the provincial administrations, as they attempted to assume a “civilizing” role for the “backward” provincial societies of the empire to implement the reform projects.²⁶⁷ Therefore, for the provincial press, the themes related to progress constituted a substantial space for legitimacy. For that reason, provincial newspapers concentrated their efforts on achieving civilizational progress by announcing the public works (*āṣār-ı nāfi‘a*) made by the provincial governments and publishing didactic articles about science (*‘ilm*) and education (*ma‘ārif*) or progress and civilization (*medeniyyet*).

Especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of progress, as Abdulhamit Kırmızı stated, was entangled with the notion of prosperity (*nāfi‘a*).²⁶⁸ While the word carried many meanings, it gradually came to denote “public works” in the Ottoman bureaucratic language.²⁶⁹ Since the mentality of the Ottoman reformers cultivated a spatial contrast between Istanbul as the civilized urban capital city and the rest of the empire as a backward, rustic countryside, uplifting the living conditions and urbanization in these provinces, provincial centers in particular, occupied an eminent place in the reform programs

²⁶⁶ Ussama Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 779-780.

²⁶⁷ Reinkowski, “The State’s Security and the Subjects’ Prosperity,” 212.

²⁶⁸ Abdulhamit Kırmızı, “Going Round the Province for Progress and Prosperity: Inspection Tours and Reports by Late Ottoman Governors,” *Studies in Travel Writing* 16, no. 4 (2012): 393.

²⁶⁹ Darina Martykánová, “Science and Technology in the Ottoman Language of Power (1790s-1910s),” *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 31 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.6937>.

of the governors from that time.²⁷⁰ For that matter, the provincial newspapers extensively cover the updates about the construction and repair works and their progress to increase the visibility of these projects while speaking highly of these endeavors. Therefore, the reports concerning public works reveal the organic relationship between reform and centralization and the construction of a civil superiority for the provincial administrations against the public, thereby contributing to their legitimacy-building process.

Perhaps one of the most extensively covered public works in the provincial newspapers seems to bring road (*tarīk*) and railway (*demiryolu*) construction into focus. The road construction in the news reports usually refers to new works in the Balkan provinces and maintenance in the eastern provinces. For instance, *Ṭuna*, *Bosna*, and *Selānik* newspapers include many news reports about the construction work (*emr-i tesviye*) of paved highways within Danube, Bosnia, and Salonica provinces, as well as informing the public about the endpoints of these roads and their openings.²⁷¹ Meanwhile, newspapers like *Firāt*, *Diyārbekir*, and *Zevrā* describe the dilapidated condition of the existing routes and the repair works for improving them in Aleppo, Diyarbekir, and Baghdad provinces.²⁷² For instance, one report from *Diyārbekir* depicts the ill-conditioned road between Diyarbekir and Siverek, mentioning that the Governor of Diyarbekir observed the road's condition last year. The previous governor of Baghdad, Mehmed Namık Pasha (d. 1892), used the same route to go to Istanbul in the wintertime and experienced the road's poor condition firsthand, which led to the start of

²⁷⁰ Marc Aymes, "Introduction: Questioning the province," in *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Adrian Morfee (New York: Routledge, 2014), 4.

²⁷¹ "Ḥavādiṣ-i Dāhiliyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 5; "Mevādd-ı Ḥuṣūṣiyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 6; "Mevādd-ı Ḥuṣūṣiyye," *Ṭuna*, no. 10; "Mevādd-ı Ḥuṣūṣiyye," *Bosna*, no. 7, Safar 26, 1283 [July 9, 1866]; "Mevādd-ı Ḥuṣūṣiyye," *Bosna*, no. 12, Rabi al-Akhir 2, 1283 [August 13, 1866]; "Vuḳū'āt-ı Vilāyet," *Selānik*, no. 2, Dhu al-Qadah 28, 1285 [March 12, 1869]; "Vuḳū'āt-ı Vilāyet," *Selānik*, no. 3, Dhu al-Hijjah 6, 1285 [March 20, 1869];

²⁷² "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet-i Haleb," *Firāt*, no. 7, Rabi al-Awwal 6, 1284 [July 8, 1867]; "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet-i Haleb," *Firāt*, no. 8, Rabi al-Awwal 13, 1284 [July 15, 1867]; "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Diyārbekir*, no. 4, Jumada al-Awwal 16, 1286 [August 24, 1869]; "Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Diyārbekir*, no. 10, Rajab 1, 1286 [October 7, 1869]; "Mevādd-ı Ḥuṣūṣiyye," *Zevrā*, no. 9, Jumada al-Awwal 2, 1286 [August 10, 1869].

maintenance works.²⁷³ While railway construction does not constitute much space in the news reports about the public works, the *Ṭuna* newspaper gives sufficient coverage to the project between Ruse and Varna, informing the public about the progress and the expected runs after completion.²⁷⁴

The issue of establishing communication lines constitutes an essential space in the provincial newspapers since it also reflects the administrative concerns about accessibility to the countryside. Therefore, the news reports from the 1860s cover how the provincial administrations established telegraph lines within the provinces to facilitate communications. *Ṭuna* covers a project to install a telegraph line between Targovishte and Razgrad, where, as the newspaper hints, commercial life necessitates an effective line of communication.²⁷⁵ Another report from *Sūriyye* newspaper mentions that, since the administration fears that telegraph lines close to the sea might get damaged during the winter, the provincial administrations of Syria and Aleppo decided to establish a land-based telegraph line between Aleppo and Damascus.²⁷⁶ There are also reports from Salonica Province, where the people of Giannitsa expressed their desire to have a telegraph office in the city, stating that the town's notables would cover the expenses for the construction, for which Emin Ağa, one of the town's notables, donated one of his lands and some money to the administration. The reports suggest the construction started in the city, and the workers set up the telegraph poles.²⁷⁷ Through these examples, one can observe that the provincial newspapers extensively cover public works about transportation and communication, two essential foundations of provincial accessibility, conveying an image of progress to the readers.

²⁷³ “Vekāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 3, Jumada al-Awwal 9, 1286 [August 17, 1869].

²⁷⁴ “Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 9, Dhu al-Hijjah 14, 1281 [10 May 1865].

²⁷⁵ “Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 9.

²⁷⁶ “Vekāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Sūriyye*, no. 4.

²⁷⁷ “Vuḳū’āt-ı Vilāyet,” *Selānik*, no. 5, Dhu al-Hijjah 19, 1285 [April 2, 1869]; “Vuḳū’āt-ı Vilāyet,” *Selānik*, no. 9, Muharram 18, 1286 [April 30, 1869].

Another public work the provincial newspapers frequently published was the foundation of new secondary schools (*mekteb-i rüşdiyye*) across the provinces since educational reform is closely related to the “civilization” mentality of the late Ottoman reformers.²⁷⁸ The coverage of the schools was mainly about the construction process and the opening ceremonies, frequently with implications for providing scientific and cultural knowledge to the children (*taḥṣīl-i ‘ulūm u ma‘ārif*). *Selānik* newspaper reports establishing a two-story secondary school in Drama, with donations from a notable, whose teachers had arrived in the city. The report justifies the school’s establishment with the children’s destitution from their education.²⁷⁹ *Diyārbekir* newspaper, similarly, announces how the provincial administration, with the monetary assistance of state officials and other “patriotic people” (*aṣḥāb-ı ḥamiyyet*), completed the construction of a new secondary school in Diyarbakir, stressing that the central government appointed teachers to this school and paying tributes to the Sublime Porte.²⁸⁰ In another report from the same newspaper about the opening of a school in Siird, the report announces that the provincial administration started the construction of other secondary schools in the rest of the province.²⁸¹ *Ḥüdāvendigār* also reports the opening of a new school in Bursa, the provincial capital, per the citizens’ request, stating that the school started classes with thirty-two students.²⁸² These reports hint at the provincial government’s expectations about the ideal provincial citizens, actively demanding educational institutions and financially contributing to these endeavors.

Some papers promote the establishment of vocational orphanages in the provinces, emphasizing their corrective aim for the children and denigrating begging (*dilencilik*). As I addressed in the previous chapter, these orphanages recruited orphans and destitute children to supply the empire with an industrial workforce by providing vocational training. Midhat

²⁷⁸ Somel, “The Emergence of Government Primary Education (1838-1869),” 54.

²⁷⁹ “Vukū‘āt-ı Vilāyet,” *Selānik*, no. 3.

²⁸⁰ “Vekāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 1, Rabi al-Akhir 24, 1286 [July 22, 1869].

²⁸¹ “Vekāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 3, Jumada al-Awwal 9, 1286 [August 17, 1869].

²⁸² “Mevādd-ı Ḥuṣūṣiyye,” *Ḥüdāvendigār*, no. 3, Dhu al-Qadah 15, 1285 [February 27, 1869].

Pasha's Danube Province was the proud pioneer of these orphanages: *Ṭuna* announces the opening of the third vocational orphanage in Constanta for the recruitment of orphaned Circassian refugee children in Dobruja and Constanta while addressing the construction of the vocational orphanage in Ruse, stating that these orphanages for “aiding, managing, and upbringing” (*infāk u idāre vü terbiye*) of the Muslim, Christian, and refugee orphans and destitute children.²⁸³ Likewise, *Diyārbekir* newspaper also announces the establishment of a new vocational orphanage in Diyarbekir, mentioning that the orphanage recruited nearly sixty children (and increasing) who had been panhandling in the province, and they are receiving vocational training in textile manufacturing for five months.²⁸⁴ Another report from *Diyārbekir* newspaper announced the opening of new orphanages in Erzurum and Trabzon provinces, based on their provincial newspapers, *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* and *Ṭrabzon*.²⁸⁵

Selānik newspaper's report about the donations for constructing a vocational orphanage in Istanbul constitutes the best example of elaborating on the administrative mentality behind these institutions. The article elaborates on how destitute children, left in the streets in hunger and nakedness, became accustomed to begging and burglary (*su'āl ü sirkat*) from a very young age. The article claims that the same method has saved young girls from drifting here and there and falling into prostitution (*envā'-i fuḥṣiyyāt*) at a young age.²⁸⁶ As the article suggests, male children learned scientific knowledge, many languages and professions, and “human etiquette” and grew into manhood.²⁸⁷ While mentioning the new orphanages opened in Bosnia and Hüdavendigâr provinces, the article calls out the citizens in a poignant and patriotic fashion:

²⁸³ “Mevādd-ı Huṣūṣiyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 4.

²⁸⁴ “Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 1.

²⁸⁵ “Veḳāyi'-i Vilāyet,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 3.

²⁸⁶ In the mid-nineteenth century, beggary, once recognized as an occupation in the early modern period, caught the attention of administrations, and even though it did not constitute a crime until 1890, the authorities perceived the issue as disorderly conduct for their imagination of urban life. For more information, see Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 86-87.

²⁸⁷ “Vuḳū'āt-ı Vilāyet,” *Selānik*, no. 7, Muharram 4, 1286 [April 16, 1869].

Citizens, let us not consent to the orphan and destitute children of our province to spend their lives with vagrancy and mischief before reaching adulthood, for striving for their upbringing is a requirement of humanity and, specifically, an indebted duty. Let us, for now, build a vocational orphanage together and help to discipline our homeland's orphans and desperate children by bringing them together and appointing instructors [for them]. Let us teach them all the valuable professions of the world, with their scientific principles and practical applications, and enable their work. Because their training in the sciences and artisanship will contribute to the progress of civilization, and civilizational progress will ensure our felicity and salvation.²⁸⁸

In this context, the emphasis on civilizational progress through the education of children was a clear marker of the mentality of the state officials for the provincial subjects: Their purpose was to correct their lives and manners via implementing public works and enlisting the public's support for the reforms. In that sense, provincial newspapers characterized children's begging and vagrancy as a moral wrongdoing and instead promoted education and vocational training as an inseparable part of that civilizational mission.

Such didactic elements were more common in the provincial press, as some newspapers raised their opinions about learning Turkish as a citizenship requirement. Although Johann Strauss notes that the Ottoman press, specifically the provincial papers, substantially contributed to the dissemination of legislative texts to the non-Turkish-speaking population of the empire, one cannot disregard the desire of some provincial administrations to spread Turkish as the empire's official language.²⁸⁹ *Bosna* newspaper, for instance, features an article about the language exams in a Bulgarian school in the Danube Province, in which the issue of an official language comes to the fore. The article claims that the government is responsible for spreading the official language, as linguistic unification of the communities of diverse languages (*elsine-*

²⁸⁸ “*Vağandaşlar biz de vilâyetimiz dâ’iresinde bulunan bî-kes eytâm u fûkarâ çocuklarınıñ serserî gezüp haylâzlıkla sinn-i kemâle erişmelerine râzî olmayalım. Zîrâ bunlarınñ emr-i terbiyesine gayret etmek muhteżâ-yı insâniyyet ve ‘ale’l-ḥuşûş farîza-i zimmetdendir. Geliñiz vilâyetimizde şimdilik bi’l-ittifâk bir ıslâḥhâne yapıdırup vatandaşınıñ bî-kes ve bî-çâre kalmış olan çocuklarını bi’l-idḥâl mu’allimler ta’yîniyle emr-i terbiyelerine himmet edelim. ‘Âlemde ne kadar şanâyi’-i mu’tebere var ise kavâ’id-i ‘ilmiyye vü ‘ameliyyesini öğretidirüp meydâna çıkaralım. Çünkü bunlarınñ taḥşîl-i ‘ulûm u şanâyi’ eylemesi memleketimizde âṣâr-i medeniyyetiñ irtikâsına sebep olur. Medeniyyetiñ ilerülemesi ise yine bizim sa’âdet ü selâmetimizi te’mîn eder.*” “*Vukû’ât-ı Vilâyet,*” *Selânik*, no. 7.

²⁸⁹ Johann Strauss, “A Constitution for a Multilingual Empire: Translations of the Kanun-i Esasi and Other Official Texts into Minority Languages,” in *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy*, ed. Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif (Würzburg: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2016), 25-26.

i muhtelif) is essential to the full flourishing of craftsmanship, education, and public order. To justify this, the article elaborates on how Mahmud of Ghazni supposedly unified Arabic, Persian, and Hindu languages to create the Urdu language, the Ghaznavid Empire's official language.²⁹⁰ Another article from *Zevrā* announces the publication of all declarations and announcements in Arabic along with Turkish since, even though the official language is Turkish, the administration wanted the public to understand these publications. The article also advises the citizens to learn Turkish since they deem it essential as the official language of the sovereign government.²⁹¹

The provincial press did not hesitate to explicitly take a didactic stance in these articles since there are some articles on the issues of progress and civilization. There are four precious examples of this kind, and one can immediately notice the priority of concerns in these articles, depending on their audience. The first two article series from Salonica and Hüdavendigâr provinces promote progress by contrasting Europe and the Ottoman Empire with their economic developments. *Selānik* includes a three-article series titled “*Ekincilik*” (Agriculture), which presents agriculture as a path to acquire wealth while protesting fatalism and indolence against hard work and learning. The articles elaborate on European economic development and urge the citizens to grow raw cotton in the empty fields to compel the European market to purchase cotton from their country. The last article concludes by praising the new provincial reorganization and reforms in Salonica Province, emphasizing its contribution to progress.²⁹² *Hüdāvendigār* newspaper also features a four-article series titled “*İlerülemek*” (Progress), whose first article sets up a temporality of progress for the Europeans and introduces the European modernization as a model for Ottoman modernization while restating that the

²⁹⁰ “Mevādd-ı ‘Umūmiyye,” *Bosna*, no. 2, Muharram 20, 1283 [June 4, 1866].

²⁹¹ “Mevādd-ı Huşūsiyye,” *Zevrā*, no. 4, Rabi al-Awwal 26, 1286 [July 6, 1869].

²⁹² “Ekincilik,” *Selānik*, no. 3, Dhu al-Hijjah 6, 1285 [March 20, 1869]; “Bundan evvelki nüshamızda muharrer ekincilik bendiniñ bendindendir,” *Selānik*, no. 4, Dhu al-Hijjah 12, 1285 [March 26, 1869]; “Bundan evvelki nüshamızda muharrer ekincilik bendindendir,” *Selānik*, no. 5, Dhu al-Hijjah 19, 1285 [April 2, 1869].

European societies were once more culturally backward than the Ottoman society. The articles touch upon many issues like education, industrialization, and agricultural production, commending the provincial reforms and encouraging people to support these progressive ideas instead of turning a deaf ear to them.²⁹³

The other two examples from Diyarbekir and Baghdad provinces reflect the shifting administrative perceptions of the public since these examples portray Bedouins and Kurds as an antithesis of progress and civilizational development. *Zevrā'* includes an article titled “*Medeniyet - Bedeviyet*” (Urbanity and Nomadicity), whose title also denotes urbanity as a broad conception of civilization, reinforcing the idea of nomadism’s spatial and developmental backwardness. The article contends that, contrary to some claims about the original lifestyle of humanity being non-sedentary, humanity has been a settled life from the beginning, and some societies went astray to adopt a nomadic life.

The article proceeds with how humanity, even when they lived in the mountains and forests, was inclined to stay in one place but eventually started to urbanize due to such a lifestyle “hindering human progress” (*terakkiyât-ı beşere mâni*), comparing nomadic people with the animals and emphasizing that even animals would not adopt nomadic life for their survival. Then, the article concludes with the current state of Bedouins and the provincial administration’s efforts to sedentarize Bedouin tribes by accustoming them to urban life, stating that they are familiar with agriculture, shepherding, and trade to a limited degree.²⁹⁴

The other example from *Diyārbekir* newspaper is an article on the benefits of knowledge and harms of ignorance, which begins with panegyrics for the sultan who adorns his subjects

²⁹³ “İlerülemek,” *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 3, Dhu al-Qadah 15, 1285 [February 27, 1869]; “(4) numerolu gazetimizde yazılan ilerülemek bendiniñ māba’dı,” *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 5, Dhu al-Qadah 22, 1285 [March 6, 1869]; “(5) numerolu gazetimizde yazılan ilerülemek bendiniñ māba’dı,” *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 6, Dhu al-Qadah 26, 1285 [March 10, 1869].

²⁹⁴ “Medeniyet - Bedeviyet,” *Zevrā'*, no. 9, Jumada al-Awwal 2, 1286 [August 10, 1869].

with knowledge by appointing instructors and sending books to the schools. The article makes an analogy of knowledge as the tongue and manners as clothes, saying that people lacking these two things would be like mute and naked people wandering the streets. The article then highlights the provincial reforms in education by mentioning the schools opened in the Diyarbakir Province and elaborates on the supposed deficiency in education by Kurds and Bedouins living in the province, claiming that they are neither interested in knowledge and learning, nor do they have a proper livelihood and social conduct. To support this claim, the article gave two examples from each case, stating that their “savage temperaments” (*aḥvāl-i vaḥṣiyāne*) and the need to reform these people originate from their ignorance. It then declares that the provincial government has made one of its utmost missions to eliminate such savagery while accustoming them to human conditions by establishing primary schools (*ṣıbyān mektebi*) for the children to educate them to the point that they would be able to “distinguish between good and bad.”²⁹⁵

Taking everything from above into account, progress strikes as an instrumentalized idea, like order, to legitimize the provincial administrations across the empire through the visibility of public works and denunciation of activities associated with backwardness. Constructing paved highways, rail tracks, or telegraph poles created a sense of accessibility to the remote countryside of the provinces. Illiterate people or those who do not understand Turkish become the antithesis of education and knowledge; beggars or vagrant children contradict the hardworking pupils. Provincial newspapers promoted urbanization against the nomadic tribes, as *Tanzimāt*’s provincial reorganization envisaged a rural landscape based on a sedentary lifestyle for taxation and conscription purposes.²⁹⁶ They also promoted civilizational progress

²⁹⁵ “Fevā’id-i ‘İlm ve Maḥarrat-ı Cehl,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 7, Jumada al-Akhir 10, 1286 [September 17, 1869].

²⁹⁶ Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation,” 477-478; Nora Elizabeth Barakat, “Making ‘Tribes’ in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 53, no. 3 (2021): 484. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743821000763>.

by framing European societies as an aspirational goal for provincial development. While promoting sedentarism and civilizational ideas among the public, they denigrate those who did not fit into the Ottomanist “mold,” namely the Bedouins and Kurds, by associating their lifestyle with savagery and barbarity and claiming their need for “correction.” While these concepts are beneficial categories to understand how these newspapers constructed the provincial authority, it would not be enough to understand the essence without looking at the embodiment of authority through the governors.

Depicting Authority: The Governors and Image-Making in Provincial News

Order and progress were two intangible concepts from the Ottomanist ideology, which the provincial press embodied by creating moral binary oppositions. Yet, the embodiment of these concepts still required the presence of an authority figure, namely the provincial governors. Although their presence and activities do not seem central to the news reports, the provincial press represents the governors, fundamentally all governorships across the Ottoman Empire, as the founders and protectors of the new order and ardent supporters of civilizational progress.

Their representation, therefore, depicted the governorate as the face and pioneer of the reform projects via the news coverage about their participation in reform projects. These newspapers also attributed ubiquitous qualities to their presence through the news about inspection tours to construct authoritative and all-seeing personas. The provincial press usually omitted their names from the reports to mystify their presence and contribute to the authoritative persona, emphasizing the significance of administrative positions rather than civil servants. Combining these elements reveals the authority-building process for the governors as omnipresent and omnipotent figures who work in favor of the provincial subjects under the shadow of the sultanic authority.

The provincial press depicted the governors as the faces of reform, emphasizing their involvement in the reform-making process. The news reports cover their pioneering in some reform projects to highlight their role as reform foremen. From the first issue, *Diyārbekir* underlines that they express their gratitude to İsmail Pasha, who sacrificed his comfort and peace to accomplish provincial reforms, for the newspaper's publication.²⁹⁷ Likewise, *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* also represents the newspaper as a work of the Governor of Erzurum's praised success (*eşer-i muvaffakiyyet-i memdūha-i cenāb-ı vilāyet-penāhī*).²⁹⁸ This praise for initiating reforms is not limited to newspaper publications, as there are other reports about how the governors issued orders for specific public works. A report from *Bosna* newspaper mentions the petition from the district governor of Novi Pazar about the need for repair work on a bridge, stating that the governor ordered the swift maintenance of the said bridge via telegraph.²⁹⁹ Another report from *Fırāt* newspaper elaborates on the peaceful restoration of order and the provincial organization around the Zeytun region in Maraş district, per the order and instructions from the Governor of Aleppo, emphasizing his involvement as the decision-maker.³⁰⁰

The newspapers also depicted the governors as having supervisory responsibility over the reforms. According to these reports, their presence in these supervisions often varied from conducting inspections to initiating the projects personally. *Tuna* reports the road construction between Ruse, Shumen, and Varna, stating that the weather conditions and the public's preoccupation with their businesses left the building unfinished.³⁰¹ According to the report, construction will resume when the weather improves in spring, and people working in road

²⁹⁷ "Muḳaddime," *Diyārbekir*, no. 1.

²⁹⁸ "Veḳāyī'-i Ḥuşūşıyye," *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*, no. 1, Rabi al-Awwal 15, 1284 [July 17, 1867].

²⁹⁹ "Mevādd-ı Ḥuşūşıyye," *Bosna*, no. 12.

³⁰⁰ "Veḳāyī'-i Vilāyet-i Haleb," *Fırāt*, no. 3, Safar 7, 1284 [June 9, 1867].

³⁰¹ The Ottoman Empire enacted a regulation on road construction in 1862, which conditioned the involuntary servitude of all property holder males between the ages of eighteen and sixty to work in road construction. For more information about the regulation, see Yakup Akkuş, and Kadir Yıldırım, "Dünyada ve Osmanlı'da Zorunlu Çalıştırma: 'Amele-i Mükellefe' Uygulaması ve Tarihsel Gelişimi," *Çalışma ve Toplum* 2, no. 53 (2017): 521-522.

construction will have free time. The report states that the governor of the Danube Province, Midhat Pasha, will personally visit these places along with some engineers to ensure the construction's continuation and oversee the new road.³⁰² Another news report from *Bosna* newspaper reports that the district governor of Travnik visited a road construction site in Livno, witnessing the progress and learning its projected completion date in six weeks. The report concludes that the district governor reported his findings to the Governor of Bosnia after returning to Travnik.³⁰³ In one case, the governor was involved in the beginning of construction: *Fırāt* reports that Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, the Governor of Aleppo, personally struck the first pickaxe as a good luck charm for road construction in Aleppo city.³⁰⁴

In many cases, the governors were the inaugurators of these reforms, appearing in the opening ceremonies. Their visibility was momentous in introducing the governors as the faces of the reform in the news reports. For instance, one report from *Sūriyye* newspaper talks about the construction of one of two police stations in Damascus city having ended, and the governor joined the opening ceremony with his entourage of civil and military servants.³⁰⁵ *Envār-ı Şarkıyye* also reports the opening ceremony of a secondary school building in Erzurum, whose construction started earlier but finished thanks to the current governor, Mehmed Reşid Pasha, who “turned his beneficent gaze” (*‘atf-ı naẓar-ı himmet*) towards this project. The report then explains the ceremony, stating that the governor attended along with many civil and military servants and many local notables, and he delivered “a brief and beneficial speech” (*müfīd ü muhtaşar bir nuṭk-ı resmî*) to congratulate the opening.³⁰⁶ Such examples, although few, prove that the provincial newspapers contributed to their reformist persona by depicting them almost as ceremonial figures.

³⁰² “Mevādd-ı Huşūşıyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 1.

³⁰³ “Mevādd-ı Huşūşıyye,” *Bosna*, no. 12.

³⁰⁴ “Dokuzuncu nüşamızdaki ẓarīk bendiniñ baḳıyyesidir,” *Fırāt*, no. 10, Rabi al-Awwal 27, 1284 [July 28, 1867].

³⁰⁵ “Veḳāyī’-i Vilāyet,” *Sūriyye*, no. 1.

³⁰⁶ “Veḳāyī’-i Huşūşıyye,” *Envār-ı Şarkıyye*, no. 1.

The governor's ceremonial presence is also apparent in the reports about the annual celebrations for Abdülaziz's accession (*cülüs-ı hümāyūn*).³⁰⁷ Such reports included the governors as a symbolic part of these ceremonies without mentioning anything else. In *Sûriyye* newspaper, news reports describe the celebrations for the royal accession anniversary in Damascus and Beirut, briefly stating that the governor also joined these celebrations.³⁰⁸ Some reports elaborate on the governor's ceremonial role in these celebrations: Another report from *Zevrâ* mentions that the local notables, civil and military servants, and consuls of other countries went to the governor, "performed the official congratulations and celebrations with him" (*resm-i tebrîk ü tes'îdi icrâ etdikleri*). In the evening, the governor also threw a banquet for the guests to honor the celebrations.³⁰⁹ The governors organized similar banquets outside public holidays, proving their centrality in ceremonial practices. For instance, *Bosna* recounts that the Governor of Bosnia organized a banquet for civil servants, military commanders, consuls, and their families in a garden outside the castle.³¹⁰ Another report from the same newspaper also states that the governor threw a banquet for the students and teachers from the secondary school in Sarajevo in a picnic area outside the city.³¹¹ In short, the provincial newspapers constructed the governors as performatively merciful and bestower figures through such ceremonial appearances.

While these ceremonial and symbolic depictions of the governors are worthy of attention, the most frequent way of covering the governors in the provincial press is the reports about inspection tours, which relate to how these newspapers build the image of governors as

³⁰⁷ Several months after Abdülaziz's succession, the Sublime Porte announced the accession day as a public holiday, leading to its widespread celebration across the empire. Darin Stephanov argues that the provincial populations extended the celebrations and blessings to even the bottom-most representative of the Ottoman rule, emphasizing the success in cultural penetration and indoctrination of these populations. For more information, see Darin Stephanov, *Ruler Visibility and Popular Belonging in the Ottoman Empire, 1808-1908* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 103-105.

³⁰⁸ "Veķāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sûriyye*, no. 7; "Veķāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sûriyye*, no. 8.

³⁰⁹ "Mevâdd-ı Hûşûşîyye," *Zevrâ*, no. 3, Rabi al-Awwal 19, 1286 [June 29, 1869].

³¹⁰ "Mevâdd-ı Hûşûşîyye," *Bosna*, no. 12.

³¹¹ "Mevâdd-ı Hûşûşîyye," *Bosna*, no. 7.

ubiquitous administrators. As mentioned in the previous part, the provincial administrations hoped to achieve provincial accessibility through specific public works like road and telegraph line constructions. This accessibility also enabled the governors to travel (usually described with the words *‘azîmet* or *muvâşalat*) to many places to supervise reform projects or inspect districts in their provinces, as evident from many news reports. For instance, *Ṭuna* reports the governor of the Danube Province traveling to Constanta to “personally attend to some crucial affairs” (*ba’zı maşāliḥ-i mühimmeyi bi’z-zāt tesviye etmek*), and his return a week later.³¹² Another report from *Fırāt* newspaper informs that the Governor of Aleppo, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, went to Hama to discuss some significant issues with the Governor of Syria and the Commander of the Fifth Army.³¹³ The delays in their trips are also a noteworthy topic for the news reports: *Sūriyye* reports that the Governor of Syria traveled to Muzayrib to oversee the supplying process for the hajj caravans, yet on the day of his return, there were heavy rains until the next morning, which delayed his return by one day.³¹⁴

Most news reports on these inspections feature decisions, changes, or even dismissals afterward. Including the aftermath of these trips constructs a sense that the governors’ visits had consequences, depending on what they might discover during their travels. For instance, *Ṭuna* covers the Governor of Danube’s trip from Ruse to Shumen and his return, stating that he witnessed some shortcomings of the road due to last winter’s weather conditions, after which the newspaper assures the readers that the responsible authorities will take care of the maintenance work.³¹⁵ Another report from *Diyārbekir* recounts the governor’s trip to Mardin one year ago, stating that following his influential attempts and encouragements (*teşebbüsāt u teşvîkāt-ı mü’essireleri*), the town administration had repaired the road.³¹⁶ There is one case

³¹² “Mevādd-ı Huşūşıyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 2; “Mevādd-ı Huşūşıyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 3, Dhu al-Qadah 1, 1281 [28 March 1865].

³¹³ “Vekāyi’-i Vilāyet-i Haleb,” *Fırāt*, no. 1, Muharram 23, 1284 [May 27, 1867].

³¹⁴ “Vekāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Sūriyye*, no. 1.

³¹⁵ “Mevādd-ı Huşūşıyye,” *Ṭuna*, no. 7.

³¹⁶ “Vekāyi’-i Vilāyet,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 4.

where the governor traveled to investigate allegations: *Zevrā*’ mentions that the Governor of Baghdad made a trip to Karbala to oversee the rumors surrounding the district governor’s misconduct in administration, particularly bribery (*irtikāb*). After verifying that İsmail Pasha, the district governor, and some members of his entourage were indeed involved in corruption, the governor dismissed İsmail Pasha from his position and handed him over to the judiciary. During his trip, the governor also ordered the establishment of another neighborhood in Karbala after witnessing the spatial insufficiency of the city’s size for its inhabitants.³¹⁷

One striking and extensive report about a governor’s trip comes from *Bosna* newspaper, when the governor, Şerif Osman Pasha, traveled to Herzegovina district for forty days in the late spring of 1866. After arriving in Sarajevo with his entourage, which consisted of the provincial chief secretary, the provincial accounting manager, and the gendarmerie commander, *Bosna* newspaper reports his return from his trip, underlining that the next issue will cover the details of the governor’s trip, which entailed numerous benefits and goodness (*müstelzim-i envā ‘-i fevā’id ü hasenāt*).³¹⁸ Although the following two issues were missing from the archive, the third includes the last part of the report. The report’s last part contains the governor’s visit to many towns and villages, military installations, and the port of Klek to inspect many public works while ordering changes and maintenance works around many towns. Since he was also visiting with his entourage, the inspection, according to the report, dealt with the financial aspects of these public works. The report concludes that the trip had a favorable impression on the Herzegovinian community, highlighting that even though no one had visited the region before, this was the second time the governor visited Herzegovina.³¹⁹ In short, these reports about the inspection tours by the governors not only construct an administrative omnipresence

³¹⁷ “Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye,” *Zevrā*’, no. 2.

³¹⁸ “Mevādd-ı Huşūşiyye,” *Bosna*, no. 4.

³¹⁹ “Vālī-i müşārün-ileyh hāzretleriniñ geçen hafta yazılan seyāhatleri baķiyyesidir,” *Bosna*, no. 7, Safar 26, 1283 [July 9, 1866].

but also attribute importance to the gubernatorial actions, thereby locating them as the central hub for provincial reform and centralization, which received the benevolence of the public.

Lastly, other mentions of the governors in the provincial newspapers are equally essential for understanding the kind of language the news reports use to elevate the governors discursively to achieve the reader's reverence rather than obedience, which proves the existence of self-fashioning. Their methods usually involve praising the governors in their work, often anonymizing the people, but sometimes by providing their names. For instance, in almost every mention, many news reports mention them as "honorable governor pasha" (*devletlü vālī paşa*) or "provincial governor" (*vālī-i vilāyet*).³²⁰ Some examples contradict such wording: *Diyārbekir* reports some public works from Baghdad and the public's contentment with these works and the Governor of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha. The report then recounts the previous governors of Baghdad Province and their reform projects, emphasizing Midhat Pasha's reform projects during his earlier tenure in the Danube Province and stating that the people of Baghdad Province will also have "the opportunity to benefit" from these public works.³²¹ *Selānik*'s article about agriculture ends with the praises for the newly-appointed governor, Mehmed Sabri Pasha, describing him as "one of the rarest and glorious governors of the time" (*nādirü'l- 'aşr bir vālī-i 'ālī-şān*), and ensuring the readers that they will all be content and grateful for the provincial reorganization that the new governor will implement.³²²

The praises in the provincial newspapers describe the governors' reforms as of "benevolence" (*himmet*), personifying these reforms through the governor's supposed goodwill to enlist the support of the provincial subjects instead of dictating these projects to them. One

³²⁰ For more examples where the governors were anonymized, see "Veķāyi'-i Vilāyet," *Sūriyye*, no. 8; "Veķāyi'-i Vilāyet-i Haleb," *Fırāt*, no. 2, Muharram 30, 1284 [June 3, 1867]; "Vuķū'āt-ı Vilāyet," *Selānik*, no. 1, Dhu al-Qadah 21, 1285 [March 5, 1869]; "Mevādd-ı Huşūşıyye," *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 6, Dhu al-Qadah 26, 1285 [March 10, 1869]; "Veķāyi'-i 'Umūmiyye," *Diyārbekir*, no. 3, Jumada al-Awwal 9, 1286 [August 17, 1869].

³²¹ "Veķāyi'-i 'Umūmiyye," *Diyārbekir*, no. 2, Jumada al-Awwal 2, 1286 [September 6, 1869].

³²² "Bundan evvelki nüshamızda muharrer ekincilik bendindendir," *Selānik*, no. 5.

of the articles from the series on progress in *Hüdāvendigār* newspaper, while mentioning the need to open a vocational orphanage, emphasizes that “the exalted provincial governor has bestowed his benevolence [onto the project]” (*zāt-ı vālā-yı vilāyet-penāhī bezl-i himmet buyurmağdadır*).³²³ Likewise, *Diyārbekir* reports the establishment of vocational orphanages in Erzurum and Trabzon provinces from their respective provincial newspapers, referring to the governors of both provinces as “described with high benevolence” (*‘ulüvv-i himmetle muttaşif*).³²⁴ *Selānik*’s report about Şerif Osman Pasha’s temporary dismissal from Bosnia Province and his return states that the people of the province owe its current wealth and prosperity to the governor’s “successive benevolences and efforts” (*himemāt u ikdāmāt-ı mütevāliyyesi*).³²⁵ However, the concept of benevolence also appears in the central government’s language, as the imperial decree about Midhat Pasha’s appointment as the Governor of the Baghdad Province, which *Zevrā* publishes on the first issue, includes a part where the decree orders him to “exert effort and benevolence” (*bezl-i cehd ü himmet*) in his official tasks.³²⁶

In short, the provincial press constructs a multi-faceted image of the governors using performative rhetoric in the news reports, proving Greenblatt’s argument about self-fashioning through language in this case. According to these reports, the governors were the founders and protectors of the new order brought by the *Tanzimāt* process, often portrayed as surveillant administrators who fostered and followed the progress of public works and the overall administration of the province. The reports attribute omnipresence to the governors, which,

³²³ “(4) numarolu gazetemizde yazılan ilerülemek bendiniñ māba’dı,” *Hüdāvendigār*, no. 5.

³²⁴ “Vekāyi’-i ‘Umūmiyye,” *Diyārbekir*, no. 3, Jumada al-Awwal 9, 1286 [August 17, 1869].

³²⁵ “Vuķū’āt-ı ‘Umūmiyye,” *Selānik*, no. 2, Dhu al-Qadah 28, 1285 [March 12, 1869]. In November 1868, the Sublime Porte, following a series of allegations surrounding Şerif Osman Pasha’s involvement in military affairs and some land acquisitions in Bosnia, which were illegal for the governors, appointed him as the Governor of the Danube Province, thereby effectively sending him away. However, his networks and the delay in his travel to Ruse due to winter conditions helped him to stay in Bosnia, eventually leading to his reinstatement to his prior office some months later. For more information about his dismissal, see Josef Koetschet, *Osman Pascha, der letzte grosse Wesier Bosniens, und seine Nachfolger*, ed. Georg Grassl (Sarajevo: Daniel A. Kajon, 1909), 25-27.

³²⁶ “Şüretü’l-fermāni’l-‘ālī,” *Zevrā*, no. 1, Rabi al-Awwal 5, 1286 [June 15, 1869].

depending on the situation, can facilitate the speed of reform or the dismissal of officers in the lower administrative units. This omnipresence also allowed the newspapers to depict the governor personas as caring and merciful figures who work for the good of the people by using the concept of benevolence to describe their reform-making, which demands deference from the readers rather than relying solely on deterrence out of fear. This gubernatorial benevolence aligns with the moral and political virtues of the Sublime Porte, contributing to the legitimacy-building in these reports.³²⁷ Lastly, these newspapers praised the governors' meticulous efforts for local development while anonymizing their offices, effectively creating a nameless authority.

Performing Power: The Provincial Press and Ottoman Centralization

It becomes apparent from the examples above that the “self” of the governors fashioned in the provincial press aligned with the moral and political virtues of the Ottomanist ideology. The concepts of order, progress, and civilization were helpful in the alienation of anything that the provincial administrations deemed “deviant” from their imagined administration. The official discourse’s campaign of bringing justice through reform and achieving the security and prosperity of the people was a common theme in almost all official propaganda.³²⁸ Their self-making, therefore, might seem like a reflection of the ideological concerns of the central government. Yet, these were adopted categories from the bureaucratic language of the Sublime Porte, adapted into the local contexts to serve the purpose of sourcing legitimacy. The key commonality of the adaptations by these newspapers was their use of the governor persona as an idealized administrator who implemented the sultan’s will with grace and benevolence. Thereby, the “self” of the governors presented in these news reports almost absorbed the aura

³²⁷ Reinkowski, “The State’s Security and the Subjects’ Prosperity,” 201.

³²⁸ Alexander Vezenkov, “Formulating and Reformulating Ottomanism,” 248-249.

of reformist sultanic authority but always acknowledged the supremacy of the sultanate, which, in Greenblatt's terms, corresponds to submission to a higher authority.³²⁹

The use of the image of "governors" in these newspapers resulted from the changing concerns and priorities about the provincial administrations. As mentioned before, the inherent fear of provincial separatism caused by Muhammad Ali of Egypt's campaigns in the 1830s led to the Sublime Porte's pursuit of a strict policy in the provincial administrations involving the separation of powers until the 1860s. However, especially after the promulgation of the Reform Edict in 1856, the central government, especially Fuad Pasha, exerted influence on the provincial administrations and elevated their status by redefining the mission statements for the governors with a regulation in 1858.³³⁰ This change in policy-making stemmed from growing concerns about nationalist separatism, which eventually replaced the Sublime Porte's mistrust of provincial administrations in the hopes of keeping the empire together. The anxiety of separatism became evident in Grand Vizier Fuad Pasha's resignation letter in 1863. In the letter, he addressed the European ideas about independence spreading throughout the Balkan provinces of the empire through the Serbian and Montenegrin instigations for the Bulgarian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian people, the Greek threat posed to the border provinces, and the separatist movements in Wallachia and Moldavia. These activities, which Fuad Pasha defined as "sedition" (*fesād*), were also backed up by the European countries, which, combined with the financial distress and administrative turmoil, posed serious problems for the empire's future.³³¹

I contend that this concern of national separatism was the main factor behind the provincial governors' mounting significance in the imperial bureaucracy in the 1860s. Yet, their

³²⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction," 9.

³³⁰ "Ordinance Regarding the Tasks of Great Provincial Governors and Gracious Mutesarrifs and District Governors and Directors [*Vülât-ı 'Aẓām ve Mutaşarrıfîn-i Kirâm ve Kâ'im-makâmların ve Müdürleriñ Vezâyifini Şâmil Ta'lîmâtıdır*]," BOA. C.DH. 46/2299, Safar 13, 1275 [September 22, 1858].

³³¹ Ali Fuad, *Ricâl-i Mühimme-i Siyâsiyye* (Istanbul: Yeni Matbaa, 1928), 163-164.

sudden elevation created an information gap between their factual responsibilities and their recognition by the provincial subjects. Therefore, the newspapers were primarily to fill this gap for the public. This practicality was notably evident in a news report from *Zevrâ*,³³² which states that since the provincial newspaper publishes all laws and regulations introduced by the local government, people should act according to these published rules, effectively introducing the *ignorantia juris non excusat* principle.³³² These newspapers, however, served more than practical objectives: As a propaganda tool, newspapers became prominent for forging Ottoman public opinion since the first publication of the official gazette in 1831. Therefore, their practicality and effectiveness as a state instrument were already in test by the 1860s. This period also marked the beginning of the private Turkish-language press, the expansion of public opinion through daily newspapers, and the ever-expanding censorship mechanisms in the capital.³³³ Especially with the infamous decree by Âli Pasha in 1867, the Ottoman censorship on political matters grew more, and the Sublime Porte shut down many newspaper enterprises, while the provincial newspapers resumed their operations without encountering any apparent problems with their inspection mechanisms, other than their financial instability.³³⁴ Since the number of provincial newspapers also grew after 1867, I conclude that the provincial newspapers from the 1860s enjoyed their status as an official media outlet, for they operated within the confines of the ideological framework.

To explain the beneficiary position of the Ottoman provincial press while their use of the imperial framework to promote the gubernatorial figures across the empire without needing

³³² “İ‘lân-ı Resmî,” *Zevrâ*, no. 5, Rabi al-Akhir 3, 1286 [July 13, 1869]. In law, the principle of *ignorantia juris non excusat* (ignorance of the law excuses not) refers to the liability of every person for violating the law regardless of their awareness of the legal system. “Ignorantia juris non excusat,” in *Black’s Law Dictionary, Seventh Edition*, ed. Bryan A. Garner (Minnesota: West Group, 1999), 749.

³³³ Şiviloğlu argues that the emergence of private newspapers and the expansion of the public sphere as an active discussant of political matters had a symbiotic relationship, which freed the newspaper enterprises from royal patronage and the emergence of a new Ottoman intelligentsia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Şiviloğlu, “Conclusion,” in *The Emergence of Public Opinion, State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 252-253.

³³⁴ Baykal, “The Emergence and Growth of the Ottoman Press,” 37.

the center's legal enforcement, I propose the concept of "performative centralization" to describe how the provincial press bilaterally benefited the Sublime Porte and the provincial administrations.³³⁵ One can identify the first three steps of the centralization process to understand this concept: After the Reform Edict of 1856, per the promises of the Sublime Porte, there was a codification process for the imperial penal, land, and commercial codes, mostly derived from their French counterparts.³³⁶ This codification process, extended until the promulgation of the nationality law in 1869, contained the Provincial Law of 1867, which laid the foundations for the centralization process. Establishing the administrative, judicial, financial, and military mechanisms across the new local administrations and the provincial bureaucratization after the new provincial law constitutes the executive process of centralization. Meanwhile, the law enforcement (military troops, police forces, and new gendarmerie) worked as a control mechanism for executing these reforms, constituting the implementation process of centralization. In my opinion, the Ottoman provincial governors engendered a fourth step in the Ottoman centralization process, involving symbolic representation of the centralization, regardless of its achievement, through the establishment and the instrumentalization of the provincial press.

This fourth step of the process, performative centralization, enveloped the previous steps of centralization through the rhetorical alignment of the provincial press with the imperial ideological framework while providing a discursive space for the governors to fashion themselves as benevolent and formidable embodiments of reform. The symbolic representation of authority was hardly a novel concept: The official gazette's earlier issues also featured similar representations of Mahmud II, symbolically fashioning the sultan's authority at the center.³³⁷

³³⁵ For more information about my formulation on the multi-layered process of Ottoman centralization, see Appendix F.

³³⁶ Davison, "Reform and Conspiracy, 1856-1861: Âli, Fuad, and Kıbrıslı Mehmed," in *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 97-99.

³³⁷ Özgür Türesay, "The Political Language of *Takvîm-i vekayi*."

Selim Deringil's extensive study on the imperial ideology's legitimization process also reveals how Abdülhamid II created many symbolic representations of his authority without any public appearance.³³⁸ As for the Ottoman governors, the provincial press employed a representative practice that combined the visibility of local power and rhetorical alignment with the Ottomanist discourse to resolve the provincial legitimacy problem while replicating the imperial representations of authority on a provincial scale. Since these newspapers were the unexpected offspring of the centralization process born out of its executive stage, their relationship with provincial authorities was synonymous with the practiced ones in Istanbul. The only difference between the two lies in that, while the provincial newspapers emphasized their allegiance to the sultanic authority, they also replaced the symbol of authority with the gubernatorial figures.

In short, the Ottoman provincial press served more than announcing new legislation or being a forerunner of the local presses that boomed after 1908. Its instrumentalization allowed the provincial governments across the empire to source legitimacy through Ottomanist rhetoric while contributing to the *Tanzimāt* reforms' primary goal to extend the infrastructural power by representing a reality in which the provincial governments had achieved this objective.³³⁹ Their use of Ottomanist narratives also allowed these provincial governments to depict the governors as the representatives of the sultanic authority while employing similar discursive strategies and attributes to describe the provincial administrations. Since the Sublime Porte began empowering the provincial authorities in the face of separatist threats, the provincial governments enjoyed their newfound prominence in the imperial bureaucracy during the implementation process of provincial centralization. Ultimately, their instrumentalization of

³³⁸ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 18.

³³⁹ Reinkowski, "The State's Security and the Subjects' Prosperity," 212. Infrastructural power defines the state's ability to implement policies and penetrate civil society. Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results," *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 25, no. 2 (1984): 189.

media outlets allowed the Sublime Porte to enjoy the symbolic representation of its authority and the provincial administrations to claim legitimacy in their areas of jurisdiction.

Conclusion: Whose Provincial Newspapers?

Despite the initial enthusiasm surrounding the Ottoman provincial press, many of these enterprises eventually lost their administrative prominence and even died out in some places: In 1877, the Russian army supposedly hit the printing house of the Danube Province with a cannon shell during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.³⁴⁰ In 1878, after the Austrian army took control of Bosnia, *Bosna*'s publication life ended as the Austrian government took control of the printing house.³⁴¹ The rest of them, especially during the Hamidian period, continued their activities under heavy surveillance and financial instabilities.³⁴² During the 1880s, even governors like Sırrı Pasha noted that these newspapers became tools for the provincial administrations to praise and glorify the governors unduly.³⁴³ Financial concerns became more apparent during this decade; as provincial chief secretary of Aydın Province, Hayri Efendi, wrote in his report, the printing house of Aydın Province had been struggling to make ends meet, emphasizing the need to reform the printing house via a separate regulation.³⁴⁴ The issues about the skilled labor force, distribution networks, readership, and subscription fee collection decelerated their operations.

Based on their aftermath during the Hamidian period, the answer to the question of whom these newspapers belonged becomes evident. The provincial governors, not requiring any central directive, initiated the publications of these newspapers and oversaw their establishment process. They were involved in almost every step of these enterprises: They were the ones acquiring printing equipment through the Sublime Porte, persuading the central government to publish a newspaper, contracting printers or bringing specialists from Istanbul,

³⁴⁰ Kocabaşoğlu, "Tuna Vilayet Gazetesi," 143.

³⁴¹ Kruševac, "Bosna," 42.

³⁴² Kocabaşoğlu and Birinci, "Osmanlı Vilâyet Gazete ve Matbaaları Üzerine Gözlemler," 107.

³⁴³ Sırrı Paşa, "Hakk Söz Acıdır," 79.

³⁴⁴ For more information about this report and the subsequent developments in Aydın Province, see Erkan Serçe, "Aydın Vilayeti Matbaası," *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (1992): 307-327.

recruiting children from vocational orphanages to sustain their workforces, and financially maintaining their operations. Even when these enterprises were financially insufficient to cover their operational costs, the governors stepped in to ask for subsidies from the imperial treasury, claiming that they aimed at generating incomes from these enterprises, which did not happen in many cases. Their efforts to receive financial support prove that these newspapers resulted from an unspoken yet unanimous gubernatorial desire beyond monetary benefits.

The editorial contents of the provincial newspapers across the empire reveal a striking picture: These newspapers reflected the rhetorical strategies of the Ottomanist ideology yet conceptualized the image of governorship as forerunners, servants, and guardians of the *Tanzimāt* reforms on a provincial scale. The provincial newspapers relied on the alienation of specific groups (e.g., Roma, Arabs, Kurds), activities (e.g., banditry, children's begging, indolence, nomadism), or concepts (e.g., disorder, backwardness, injustice) to promote the concepts of order, justice, progress, and civilization for the readers to construct the public opinion in line with the Sublime Porte's discourse. Their contextual alignment with the new imperial virtues benefited these newspapers to enjoy their official status. While aligning their contents with the conceptual language of the imperial bureaucracy, they also presented the governors as the faces of reform, who were all-seeing and all-knowing figures present in many locations of the provinces via their inspections. They depicted these governors as benevolent and just administrators with whom the provincial should comply with utmost respect. Although they always emphasized the majesty of sultanic authority, the newspaper contents also attributed sultanic qualities, such as benevolence and glory, to the governors to highlight their authority over their provinces.

My contribution to the field is two-folded: First, my argument disagrees with prevalent readings of Ottoman centralization as a unilateral imperial project, claiming that the provincial press emerged as a series of concessions between the provincial and central governments. While

the central government was the one who codified the necessity for the provincial governments to possess printing equipment, it was the provincial administrations that demanded importing the equipment and publishing newspapers with their equipment. Second, I disagree with the idea of centralization as a purely administrative practice, claiming that it was a multi-layered process not just involving administrative practices but also encapsulating performative practices. These newspapers provided spaces for the provincial governments to experiment with their discursive strategies and attest to their diligence and righteousness before the Sublime Porte. Ultimately, my objective was to prove that these newspapers were not mere bulletin boards for the provincial administrations, and instead, they served more ideological purposes.

However, I neither claim that this study is a complete analysis of the Ottoman provincial press in the 1860s nor envision that I could have done more in this work. For instance, I did not touch upon the national and foreign news, which, as far as I can tell from my research, are also relevant to establishing moral and civilizational binaries for the readers. While I limited my research to the earliest issues of these newspapers, later issues can illustrate some signals of changes early on in this period. Scholars should consider these newspapers as a noteworthy source, not just to understand the provincial settings but also to correlate them with the central government's discourse and its virtues. Since my research is limited to the editions in Ottoman Turkish, a cross-lingual analysis of these newspapers can contribute to understanding the interlingual exchange of official knowledge and terminology and reveal, if any, editorial preferences and exclusions from these versions. Lastly and sadly, there is very little evidence regarding the readership and the reception of these newspapers, which prevented me from doing a bottom-up analysis of these newspapers. Yet, some newspapers included reader letters and petitions, which can also enrich our understanding of how the provincial people interacted with these newspapers. However, I can only remind my readers that this is a humble contribution to the field and can bear mistakes. As the saying goes: "To err is human, to forgive divine."

Appendices

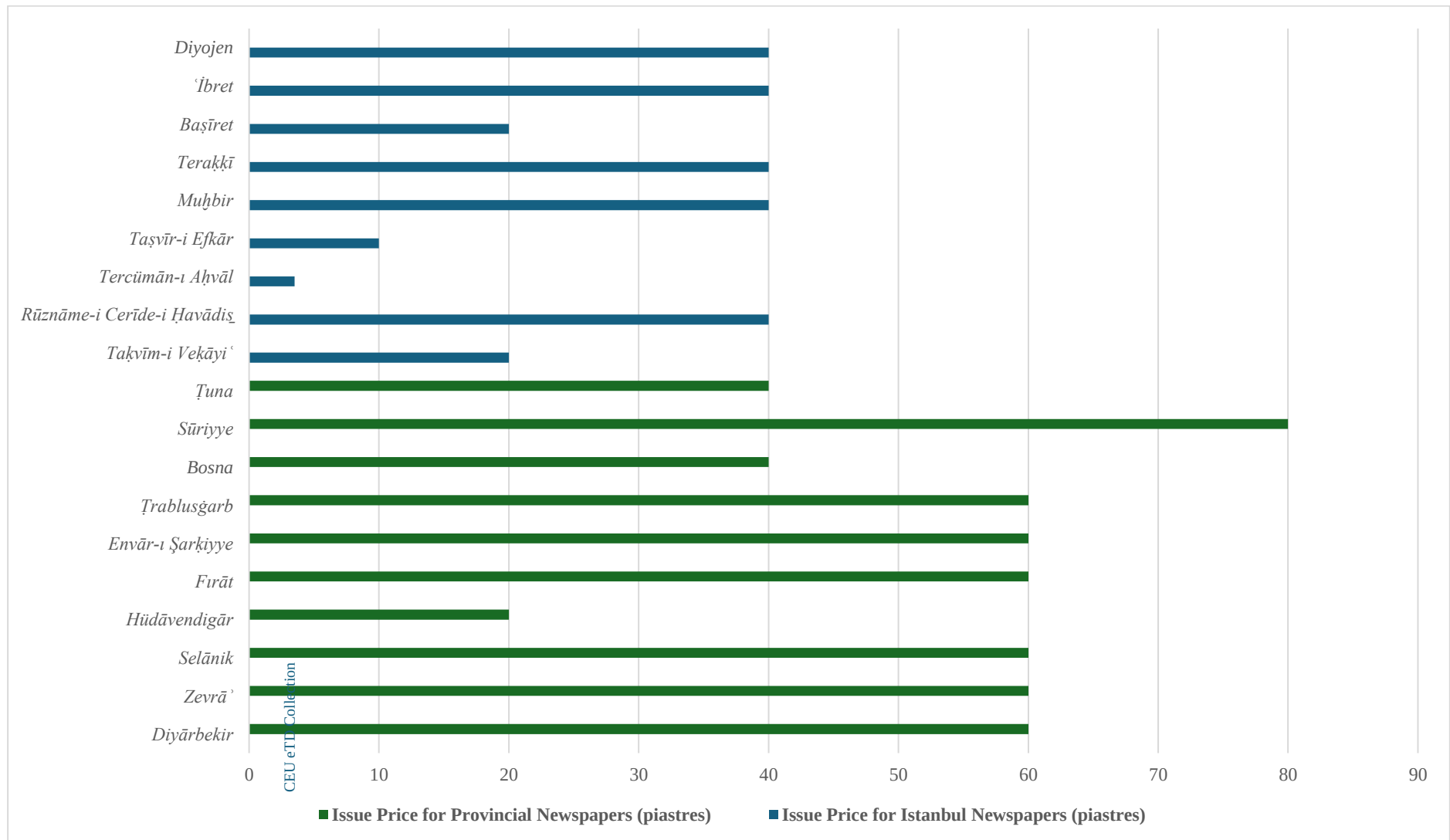
Appendix A: List of Ottoman Provincial Newspapers (1865-1871)

Province Name	Printing House Location	Newspaper Name	Year of First Issue	Languages
Danube	Ruse	<i>Ṭuna</i> (طونه) <i>Dunav</i> (Дунав)	1865	Ottoman Turkish Bulgarian
Syria	Damascus	<i>Sūriyye</i> (سوريه)	1866	Ottoman Turkish Arabic
Bosnia	Sarajevo	<i>Bosna</i> (بوسنه) <i>Bosna</i> (Босна)	1866	Ottoman Turkish Bosnian
Tripolitania	Tripoli	<i>Trablusgarb</i> (طرابلس غرب)	1866	Ottoman Turkish Arabic
Aleppo	Aleppo	<i>Fırāt</i> (فرات)	1867	Ottoman Turkish Arabic
Erzurum	Erzurum	<i>Envār-ı Şarkîyye</i> (انوار شرقيه) <i>Envār-ı Şarkîyye</i> (Էնվարի Շարկիյէ)	1867	Ottoman Turkish Armeno-Turkish
Crete	Chania	<i>Girīd</i> (گريد) <i>Kriti</i> (Κρήτη)	1867	Ottoman Turkish Greek
Mount Lebanon	Deir al-Qamar	<i>Lūbnān</i> (لبنان)	1867	Arabic French
Edirne	Edirne	<i>Edirne</i> (درنه) <i>Adrianoúpolis</i> (Αδριανούπολις) <i>Edirne</i> (Едирне)	1867	Ottoman Turkish Greek Bulgarian
Hüdavendigâr	Bursa	<i>Hüdāvendigār</i> (خداوندگار) <i>Hüdāvendigār</i> (Խիւսաւդէնդիկար)	1869	Ottoman Turkish Armeno-Turkish
Salonica	Salonica	<i>Selānik</i> (سلانك) <i>Thessaloniki</i> (Θεσσαλονίκη) <i>Solun</i> (Солун) <i>Salonik</i> (סלוניק)	1869	Ottoman Turkish Greek Bulgarian Judeo-Spanish
Baghdad	Baghdad	<i>Zevrāʾ</i> (زوراء)	1869	Ottoman Turkish Arabic
Ioannina	Ioannina	<i>Yanya</i> (يانيه) <i>Ioánnina</i> (Ιωάννινα) (?)	1869	Ottoman Turkish Greek
Diyarbakir	Diyarbakir	<i>Diyārbekir</i> (دياربكر) <i>Diyārbekir</i> (Տիարբէկը)	1869	Ottoman Turkish Armeno-Turkish
Aydın	Izmir	<i>Aydın</i> (أيدين)	1869	Ottoman Turkish
Trabzon	Trabzon	<i>Trabzon</i> (طربزون) <i>Trabzon</i> (Τραπεζούντα) (?)	1869	Ottoman Turkish Greek/Karamanlidika (?)
Konya	Konya	<i>Konya</i> (قونيه) <i>Konya</i> (Κόνια) (?)	1869	Ottoman Turkish Karamanlidika (?)

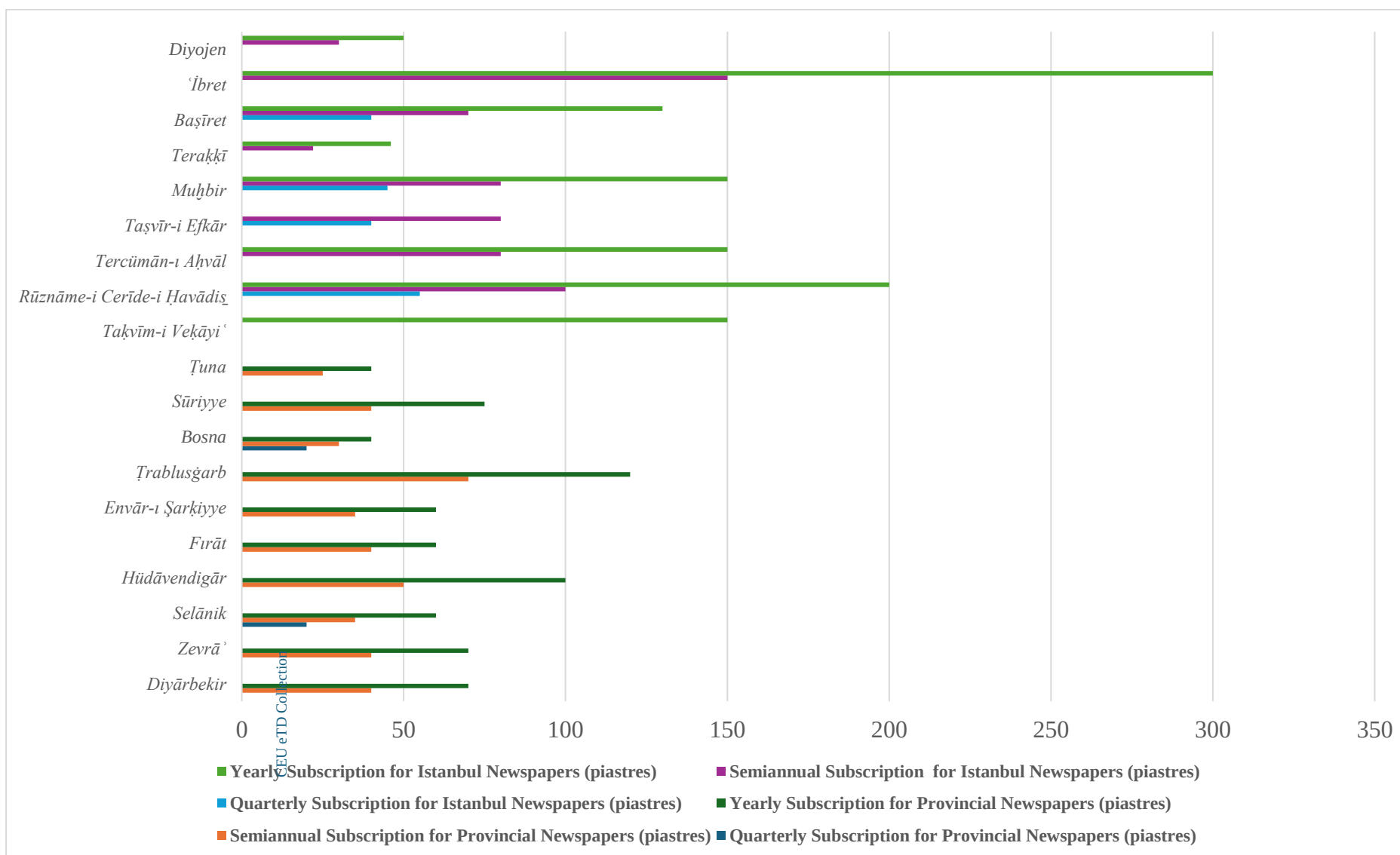
Appendix B: The Map of the Ottoman Provincial Press in 1871 (drawn by the author)



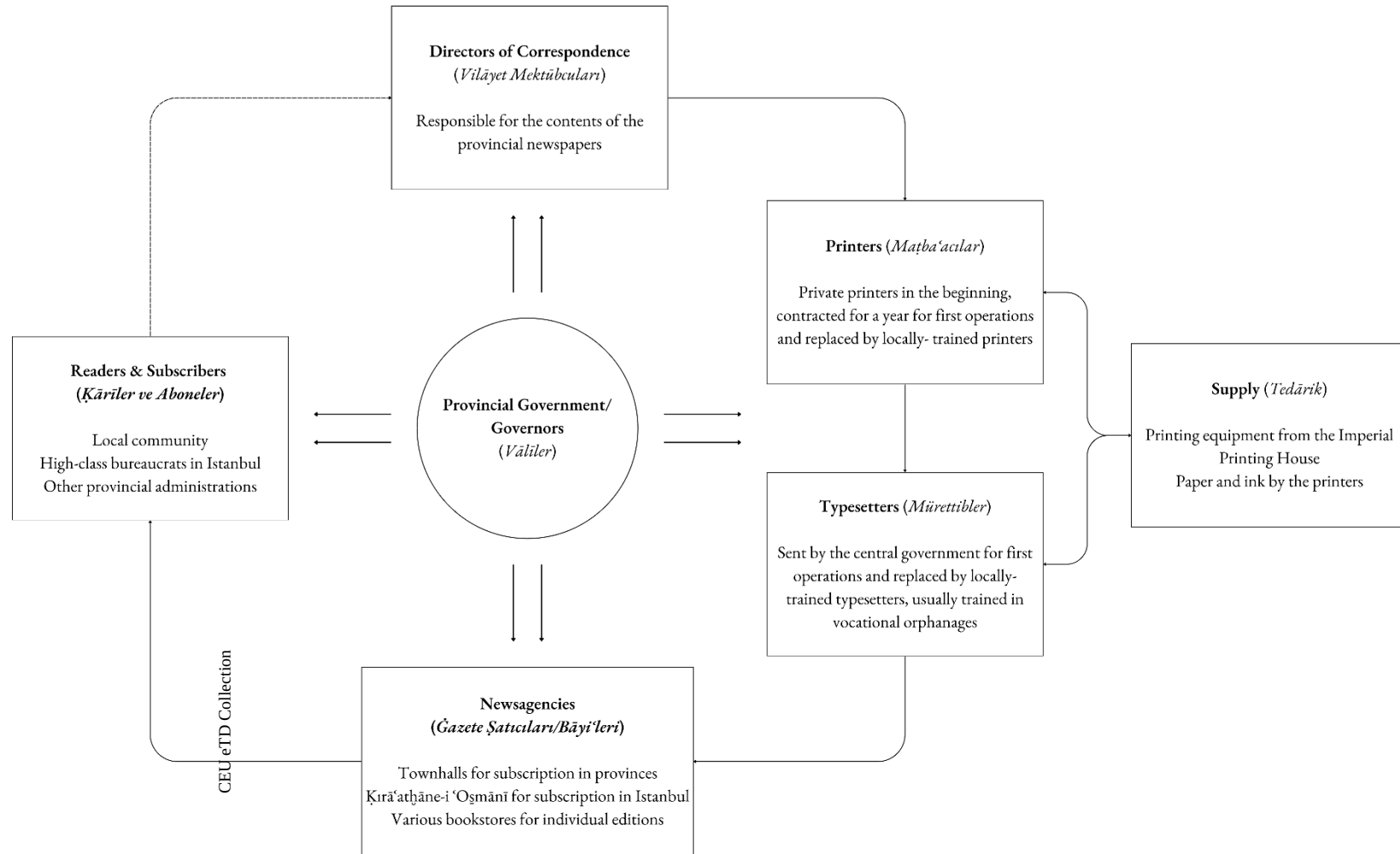
Appendix C: Issue Prices for Istanbul and Provincial Newspapers (1860s)



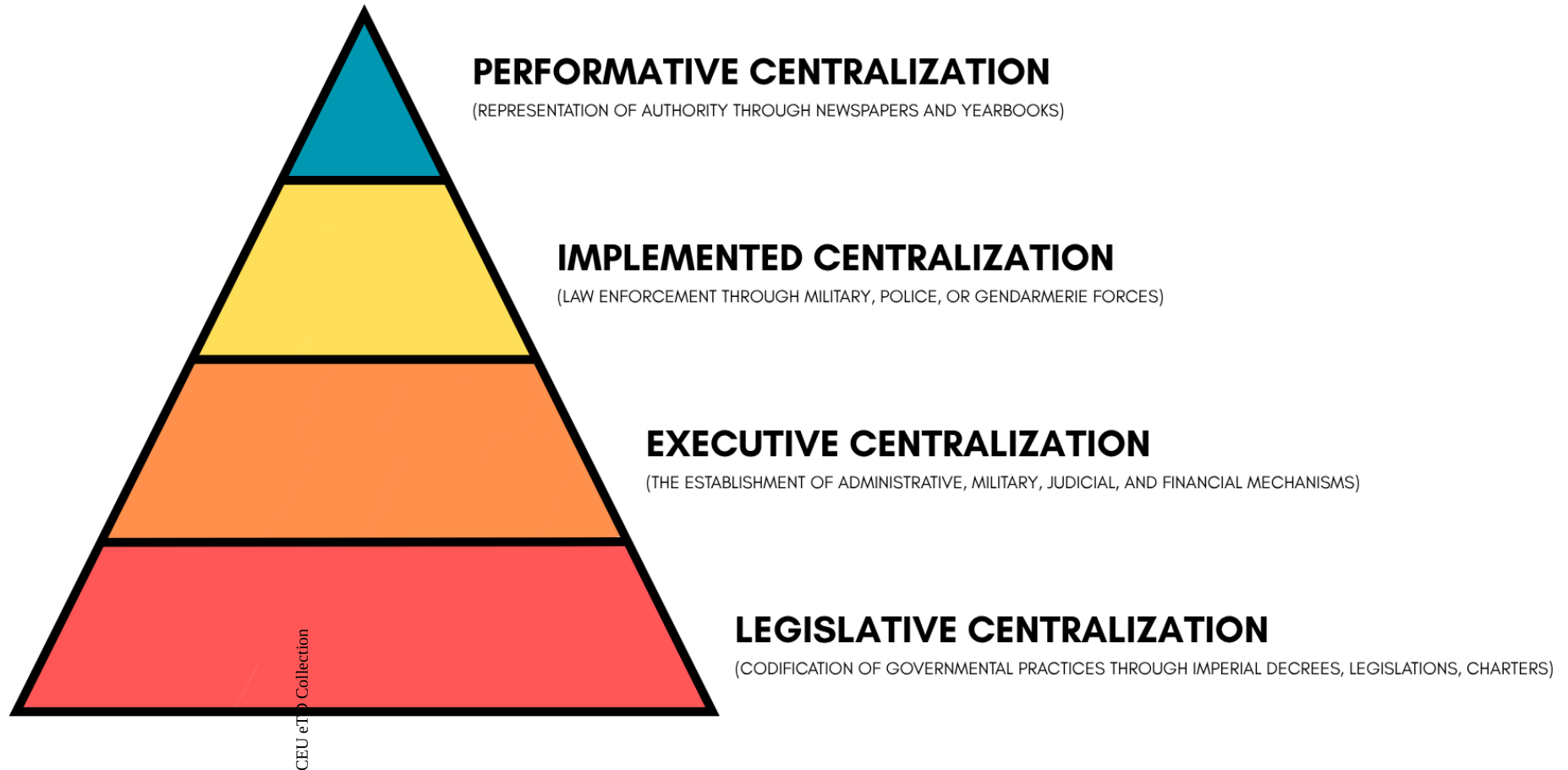
Appendix D: Subscription Fees for Istanbul and Provincial Newspapers (1860s)



Appendix E: Communication Circuit of the Ottoman Provincial Printing Enterprise (drawn by the author)



Appendix F: Ottoman Centralization Phases in the 1860s (drawn by the author)



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A.} DVN.MKL	5/9.
A.} MKT.MHM	129/25; 256/3; 323/36; 326/67; 337/10; 344/18; 345/95; 350/6; 350/82; 353/36; 355/13; 380/72; 388/7; 393/74; 394/53; 402/86; 438/17.
A.} MKT.NZD	563/7; 575/35; 575/89; 620/19.
A.} MKT.UM	265/29; 883/46; 886/74; 887/55; 893/6; 901/91; 902/68; 1007/17; 1093/90; 1100/26.
C.DH	46/2299.
HR.TO.	429/37; 472/11; 473/4.
İ.DH	535/37115; 554/38571; 592/41177.
İ.MMS	29/1245.
İ.MTZ.GR	11/322; 12/355.
İ.MVL	367/16095; 499/22554; 526/23638; 528/23701; 530/23787; 548/24612; 553/24849; 554/24887; 583/26209; 585/26321.
MVL	304/24; 963/77; 1027/41; 1051/1; 1055/2; 1062/59; 1066/22.
ŞD	1375/43; 2003/42; 2085/7.

Newspapers:

<i>Bosna</i>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15.
<i>Diyārbekir</i>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
<i>Envār-ı Şarkıyye</i>	1.
<i>Fırāt</i>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
<i>Hüdāvendigār</i>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
<i>Selānik</i>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
<i>Sūriyye</i>	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
<i>Ṭrablusğarb</i>	1.

Ṭuna 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 47, 54, 97, 140, 238, 247, 376, 402.

Zevrā 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

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