

## The comparison of the westernization process in ottoman and Russian empires

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### Abstract

The point of origin in the comparison of the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire were not as different from each other unlike the similarities. Both empires has chosen to shape with their own internal dynamics and enclosed social life over the years. In addition, they have taken samples the West as their model for modernization. These Empires have been described as “other” by Western because of “Islam” in Ottoman Empire and “Orthodoxy” in Russian Empire. Similar social patterns, political unrest and modernization moves has been the starting point of the study. The study referred to in the title of “comparison” did not include the concept of the just determination of similarity. Although both empires have many similarities, there were many striking differences each other. The most obvious differences in etymologic, Ottoman bureaucracy designate modernization as “Westernization”, other side Russian administrators named modernization as “Europeanism”. Another notable element was observed in various economic lives. The transition to capitalism in the Ottoman Empire directed by external forces on the other hand, Russia gave direction to this transformation of its own volition. The purpose of study is to show the similarities and differences in the Ottoman and Russian modernization with using the comparative historical sociological method.

Keywords: ottoman empire, russian empire, modernization, westernization, political life

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## 1. Introduction

Ottoman Empire couldn't start the process of modernization with their own desire in history. While modernization was formed with the effect of social dynamic in the west, Ottoman Empire tried to form the modernization bureaucratic elite not with internal dynamic. This circumstance had confirmed that Ivanov's prediction which internal and external impacts would cause different modernization process in transition from traditional society to modern society (Ivanov, 2007). In similar way, Russian's manner on modernization was not formed immediately like many other societies. Before modernization, the Russia had experienced a transformation stage formed by administrative elite, after period of social, economical, religious and administrative changes. It was emphasized that Russian's effort for modernization was wrong because of thinking simplification only taking less developed country's features (Ortaylı, 2009). "Unexpectedness Revolutions" which Trimberger overemphasized were expression including modernization process of "Russian Tsarist Regime" and "Ottoman Monarchy" (Trimberger, 2003). In Russian tsarist period, westernization was governed by upper stage and their strict bureaucracy. Next periods with "October Revolution in 1905", this basis of classification changed with the basis of communism which Moore used in modernization transitional stage (Moore, 2003). Like other societies, Russian and Ottoman modernization experiences had many different Dynamics. These different Dynamics provided to drawing their own modernization way. The most important factor of forming different modernization process was society's own tradition, culture and folklore emerged in history. At this point, to make Ottoman and Russian modernization meaningful, how were their political, economical and social structures were seen important in this study.

## 2. The Similarities of Modernization in Ottoman and Russian Empires

Traditional social structure of Russian and Ottoman Empire had greatly similarities. Social structure was formed in a different way from Europe soil order. In the content of soil order, debates of feudalism often became a current issue in two countries. But neither peasants had demesne status nor their right of giving plantation was hidden showed us that Russian and Ottoman Empire were not feudal (Karpát, 1973; Lewis, 2010).

The form of political organization was shaped by former minor principedoms choosing a dispersed and independent life from each other. Before they founded a unitary state, they have struggled against the other principalities (Ortaylı, 2008). Afterwards this situation affected the Ottoman and Russian political life (Acar, 2009). Many issues were dominated from forming political stuff to centre-periphery pattern in this context.

Also in that period, field of military (Thana) had considerately similarity with one another like Austrian. While there was "janissary" in Ottoman, there was "streltsi" in Russia Empire. These troops were formed taking "non-Muslim" or "non-Christian" small children from new conquered locations. Then the children were joined the army grown by state's official ideology (Itzkowitz, 2008; Ortaylı, 2008). These soldiers were stronger in the coming years and they directly affect choices of emperor. On the other hand, these troops were at place where both empires started to modernization reforms (Kurat, 2010).

"Interregnum" in Ottoman Empire and "Difficulties Period" in Russian Empire were also other similarity. "Interregnum" was described a period that political association was disruption after battle of Ankara and emptiness seat of Ottoman Empire. We could say there was an Ottoman Empire which was formed by fights for the throne and revolts in this process. Ottoman Empire was on the rise again after Celebi Mehmet defeated his brothers (Shaw, 1994). "Difficulties Period" was described a period that Russian Empire was formed by revolts and interferences and political suitability related to social and economical issues lasting 10 years. This ended with power grab of "Romanov" parents (Acar,

2009). "Fake Dimitry" and "Fake Mustafa" issues took attention because of their similarities. In Russian political history, Romanov dynastic seized power with public's support as well as governance emptiness for a while after "Rurik" family fell from power. Later, a rumor spread with provocation of dissident groves. According to this rumor, Dimitry who was the last person of Rurik family was still alive and the throne was his right. This event understood "Dimitry's Fake" was written "Fake Dimitry" in history (Riasanovsky, 2000). After interregnum, a person who asserted himself son of Yildirim Beyazit had right for throne after Celebi Mehmet gathered Ottoman again. But it was understood that his saying were not true."Fake Mustafa" event occurred like this (Shaw, 1994).

We would talk about legally in Ottoman. There were "consultancy" and "council" which were shaped by upper society. These councils were in view especially with Fatih Sultan Mehmet but they also were before. They were active as consulting body. They gave advices but the final word was Emperor's word (Mardin, 2009). Also, Russian Empire had similar organizational structures. These councils called "vece" were formed by upper society, too. A period Novgorod city, vece's valve was so high that it was said this city was governed with republic (Moss, 2005).

Ottoman Empire was a community which had accepted Islamism since its foundation. Especially, these choices as part of "Gaza" provided to declare was against Christian Western. Existence of Muslim Ottoman always bothered to Western. Similar fate was valid for Russian Empire determining Orthodoxy of government official religion in 12. century. In Catholic Europe face, new "other" became in religion context. Europe tried to keep out Russian Empire pretending this subject (Kurat, 2010).

Also, both empires had similarity in publication life. In Ottoman Empire, permission which Jews and Armenian could use press was accepted by Sultan Fatih late of 15. century. The first press was used in Ottoman at this date (Aksin, 2000a). In Russian Empire, the first press was used at beginning of 16. century in period of "Terrible Ivan" (Acar, 2009).

Two empires had difficulty to determine emperor at times. The Ottoman Empire could follow the rules for this issue. Determine the crown prince by Sultan, condescension of advisory council, accession the elder child were general rule. Brother killer was generally applied to determine new emperor (Aydın, 2012). Russian Emperor applied more complicated way. Everybody of dynasty had right in power. Tsar, Tsar's brother, Tsar's uncle, Tsar Nephew, Tsar Grandchild and anyone related to dynasty with blood had a right in power. This event often caused inconsistent short time emperor in Russian history (Vernadsky, 1969).

In two modernizations, centralism was tried to become stronger. Laws were accepted for strengthening of central administration. And they had particularly achieved. Also, they had similarity in naming reforms. The structure called "new order" after reform was named "Nizam-I Cedid" in Ottoman (Zurcher, 2008) and "Noviy Stroy" in Russian Empire (Ortaylı, 2009). Ottoman and Russian modernization was similarly reflected on religious field. II. Mahmut tried to push religious official into the background both administrative and educational field. And he was successful. The public named him as "Gavur Sultan" because he wanted to found secular governance (Lewis, 2010). I. Petro lighting the fuse of modernization was known "Antichristian Tsar" because he took religious institutions and clergymen in political corporation's hand and changed the monopoly of education (Acar, 2008).

Also they had similarity in social structure's reaction to modernization process. The public who tried to have traditions revolts with same religious leader's support. We came across many revolts in their history. This conflict between the supporter of tradition and the supporter of modernization lasted until both empires' revolution (Milner-Gulland, Dejevskiy, 1993; Zurcher, 2008). And preferring suddenness revolution of executive elite increased this conflict.

While Ottoman administrators used "Westernization", Russian bureaucracy called "Europeanization" for modernization. Although the naming were different, but their aim was similar. Both empires took "West/Europe" as an example. Though they generally took "Europe" as an example Vienna thought the best example was starting point for this Empires (Mardin, 2009; Zurcher: 2008). It was emphasized that II. Mahmut's and I. Petro's similar view to modernization (Lewis, 2010). For

example, wearing uniforms made west style trousers and jacket in troops, being more careful of government workers about their hair and beard (Kurat, 2010).

### 3. The Differences of Modernization in Ottoman and Russian Empires

There were important differences between in Ottoman and Russian Empire in the context of social order. Ottoman Empire promised that the people who lived in conquered would go on their life regardless of their religion and ethnic differences as long as paying their taxes. This system was called “nation system” (Gencer, 2008). Russia did not come across this issue before it established the empire. But after its soils spread, it applied a policy for “Russianise” especially to community which had different ethnics and religions in Central Asia (Kurat, 2010).

Russian modernization started nearly a century before Ottoman modernization. The most important difference of two modernizations was this one. Russia modernization started formally vacated Russian troops “streltsi” by I. Petro in 1698 (Kurat, 2010). And in Ottoman, there were many reforms until II. Mahmut. In 1826, the starting point of modernization was vacating of “janissaries” because it was thought that they were the biggest issue for modernization (Eryilmaz, 2006).

Reasons of Ottoman and Russian Empire were different to modernization. Ottoman Empire wanted to become modern for getting better new situation after losing of soil and military defeat against the West (Toker, Tekin, 2009). But Russia wanted to become modern for different reason. This reason was that the desire accepting itself to Europe with military successes (Toynbee, 1953). While Ottoman Empire struggles with the issue “how we could become a modern society using less Western”, Russia Empire struggled with the issue “how we could become more westernized”.

In the context of economy, Ottoman modernization did not make so many differences on peasant’s situation. The big difference effecting the public in a negative way was graduated tax. But this situation was more serious extent in Russia. “Manor System” was applied for military spending and landed gentry expanded. Peasants were no longer free as before. Slave’s number increased with being demesne in soils which they had made productions (Parmele, 2011; Vernadsky, 1969; d’Encausse, 2003).

Two empires did not have a chance to apply liberalism because they had few capital owners or traders who could be a state executive (Faroghi, 2000). On the other hand, Ottoman Empire did not take important steps for industry while Russia took Great steps for it. And Russia entered into integration process with capitalism (Kurat, 2010).

Ottoman and Russian modernization was similarly reflected on religious field. II. Mahmut tried to push religious official into the background both administrative and educational field. And he was successful. The public named him as “Gavur Sultan” because he wanted to found secular governance (Lewis, 2010). I. Petro lighting the fuse of modernization was known “Antichristian Tsar” because he took religious institutions and clergymen in political corporation’s hand and changed the monopoly of education (Acar, 2008).

Ottoman educated people got greatly behind of Russian colleagues in the context of criticism about modernizations or supported by state. So, their role was important this situation (Mardin, 2009). Russian educated people could clearly criticize mistakes of government modernization efforts although many censors and prohibitions were applied (Pipes, 1995).

Before I. Petro became a Tsar, he had gone to different capital cities in Europe and worked different jobs hiding his real identity. So, these events expand his horizon to a large extent. Then, he increased the Russian modernization’s quality by sending the students to West for education. In Ottoman, this event was very different. Ottoman Sultans could set a foot on Europe for peace at 19. midcentury. On the other hand, this number fell considerably behind the Russia. In civil life, emergence of newspapers was important to being sources which gave information to public. The first printed

newspaper in 1702/03 was big step for modernization (Kurat, 2010). In Ottoman, the first newspaper was printed in 1831 like starting of modernization after a century (Lewis, 2010).

Aristocrat's positions were other differences in two empires. Landed proprietors in Ottoman Empire claimed some rights with decreasing central power. Their social positions empowered by important concessionality about collecting taxes (Aksin, 2000b). On the contrary, a different case was seen in Russia-Aristocrats lost high favor with announces of "extent sheet" (Acar, 2008).

The subject of province administration's regulation became a current issue under the leadership of Mithat Pasa in 1864. Russia tried to tackle with rearrangement of local government in 1775 (Kurat, 2010). Russia turned towards solutions about local government before nearly a century from Ottoman. While the period which foundation system gave place to local government in Ottoman (Ortaylı, 2007), the Russia put into force a new version of foundation system. Making negative or positive inferences of modernization process appeared possible looking statistical data of educational reforms. While literacy rate was %40 in Russia, 1914, this rate was %5-10 in Ottoman.

#### 4. Conclusion

The important formal similarities between Ottoman and Russian Empires are seen. Emphasizing subjects of administrator, preferring regimes, using arguments were similar to each other's. On the other hand, steps of Ottoman modernization were emphasized behind nearly a century from Russia like the subjects – broadcast life, thama and local government -. Additionally, we have said the process of Russian modernization progressed more active than Ottoman in the content of indicators determinative aspects of modernization. Especially, economical valves which are basic driving power of modernization were applied underdevelopment in terms of economic because it included the modernization process depending on the west. The Ottoman Empire couldn't save itself being outskirts of Europe. Accepted commercial grants and economic dependence made permanent the Ottoman underdevelopment. Therefore, while Ottoman tried to maintain modernization, it couldn't get economic freedom in no way. Modernization is process in the west with their internal dynamic, but, in almost all non-western society, modernization is project by bureaucratic elites.

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