

SNAPSHOT PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE:

THE *SERVET-I FÜNUN* EXAMPLE



ERKİN CEMHAN PEHLİVAN

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

2025

SNAPSHOT PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION
IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE:
THE SERVET-I FÜNUN EXAMPLE

Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
History

by
Erkin Cemhan Pehlivan

Boğaziçi University

2025

Snapshot Photography and Photographic Representation in the Ottoman Empire:

The Servet-i Fünun Example

The thesis of Erkin Cemhan Pehlivan

has been approved by:

Assoc. Prof. Abdullah Ahmet Ersoy
(Thesis Advisor)

Prof. Paolo Girardelli

Assist. Prof. Özge Baykan Calafato
(External Member)

April 2025

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Erkin Cemhan Pehlivan, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

Signature.....

Date

ABSTRACT

Snapshot Photography and Photographic Representation in the Ottoman Empire:

The *Servet-i Fünun* Example

This thesis explores the class character of photographic representation in the Ottoman Empire between 1896 and 1901, focusing on the illustrated journal *Servet-i Fünun* as a primary source. During this period—which can be described as the journal’s “golden age”—photography emerged as a powerful visual medium embedded within broader processes of modernization, governance, and class formation. Rather than a neutral documentary form, photography in *Servet-i Fünun* functioned as a tool of bourgeois visual pedagogy, shaping how readers perceived themselves, society, and the Empire. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci, and Jonathan Crary, the thesis situates photography within the visual technologies of modern statecraft and cultural production. It examines how *Servet-i Fünun*—through its photographic contests, editorial policies, and aesthetic norms—trained a literate, urban readership to internalize bourgeois values of order, legibility, and modernity. These practices filtered participation through technical requirements and financial access, effectively restricting visual representation to privileged social classes. Across three chapters, the study analyzes photography’s role in the late Ottoman Empire, the journal’s role in building a bourgeois visual sphere, and the use of snapshots as tools of symbolic power and cultural distinction. Ultimately, the thesis argues that photography in this context did not merely reflect Ottoman modernity, it actively produced it through class-specific regimes of vision.

ÖZET

Enstantane Fotoğrafları ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Fotografik Temsil: *Servet-i Fünun* Örneği

Bu tez, 1896 ile 1901 yılları arasında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda fotografik temsilin sınıfsal karakterini incelemekte ve birincil kaynak olarak resimli dergi *Servet-i Fünun*'u merkeze almaktadır. Bu dönem, derginin “altın çağı” olarak tanımlanabilir; bu süreçte fotoğraf, modernleşme, yönetim ve sınıf oluşumu gibi daha geniş toplumsal dönüşüm süreçlerine içkin güçlü bir görsel araç olarak öne çıkmıştır. *Servet-i Fünun*'daki fotoğraflar, tarafsız bir belge üretimi olmanın ötesinde, burjuva görsel pedagojisinin bir aracı olarak işlev görmüş; okuyucuların kendilerini, toplumu ve imparatorluğu algılama biçimlerini şekillendirmiştir. Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci ve Jonathan Crary'nin kuramsal çerçevelerinden yararlanan tez, fotoğrafı modern devlet aklının ve kültürel üretimin görsel teknolojileri bağlamında konumlandırmaktadır. *Servet-i Fünun*, düzenlediği fotoğraf yarışmaları, editoryal tercihleri ve estetik normları aracılığıyla okuryazar ve kentli bir okuyucu kitlesini; düzen ve modernlik gibi burjuva değerlerini içselleştirmeye yönlendirmiştir. Bu görsel normlar, teknik yeterlilik ve maddi imkânlar gibi eşiklerle sınırlanmış; temsil alanını ayrıcalıklı sınıflarla sınırlandırmıştır. Üç bölümden oluşan çalışma; fotoğrafın geç Osmanlı dönemindeki rolünü, *Servet-i Fünun*'un burjuva bir görsel alan inşasındaki işlevini ve fotoğrafların sembolik güç ve kültürel ayrımcılık araçları olarak kullanımını analiz etmektedir. Sonuç olarak tez, bu dönemdeki fotoğrafçılığın Osmanlı modernliğini yalnızca yansıtmadığını; aksine onu, sınıfa özgü bir görme rejimi aracılığıyla aktif biçimde ürettiğini öne sürmektedir.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I humbly dedicate this work to the working classes, who create all things horrible and precious.

First and foremost, I want to express my appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to my thesis advisor Assoc. Prof. Ahmet Ersoy. He was not only a thesis advisor, but a mentor and a great role model as an academic. His extreme patience was hugely needed, and he never hesitated to offer it. I want to extend my gratitude towards Assoc. Prof. Gamze Toksoy, Assist. Prof. Cihangir Gündoğdu and Mustafa Akay, as their initial guidance towards visual history helped me develop and refine my field of interest. I want to thank Asst. Prof. Yaşar Tolga Cora, who helped me greatly during my application process. I also want to express my thanks and gratitude to my dear committee members; Prof. Paolo Girardelli and Assist. Prof. Özge Baykan Calafato, whose wise guidance and warm friendship made the writing process much easier.

I have to extend my gratitude to my dear friends Aybars Elmacioğlu, Sergen Akarsu and Sena Beşli, whose emotional support made these -could have been- tough years much bearable. I am also deeply thankful to my fellow classmate Ege Gutay, whose guidance and insights have been a constant source of solidarity and motivation. I also have to express my appreciation to dear Deniz Zeybek, who, throughout my formative years, has been a great and constant source of inspiration through her brilliance and compassion. My dear parents, Cihan and Ganime Pehlivan, whose emotional and financial support truly made this work possible, I express my endless gratitude. Last, but not least, I thank my dear dog İnek, who has been a constant source of joy and happiness throughout this journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: PHOTOGRAPHY AS MODERN TECHNOLOGY DURING THE HAMIDIAN ERA	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 The Public sphere and the visual imagination.....	9
2.3 Surveillance and the scientific gaze	16
2.4 Modernity, urbanization, and consumerism in the Hamidian era	25
2.5 Conclusion	31
CHAPTER 3: SERVET-I FÜNUN AND THE ILLUSTRATED JOURNALS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE	33
3.1 Introduction	33
3.2 <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> as a prominent illustrated journal	35
3.4 <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> as a signifier of social class	48
3.5 Conclusion	54
CHAPTER 4: TEACHING THE EYE: SNAPSHOTS AND BOURGEOIS VISUALITY OF SERVET-I FÜNUN.....	56
4.1 Introduction	56
4.2 Limitations of existing literature	57
4.3 Snapshots of Servet-i Fünun and the “photography complex”	62
4.4 Snapshots as visual pedagogical apparatus	67
4.5 Conclusion	89
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	91
REFERENCES.....	96

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Inauguration of a military depot in Zanzor, Tripoli (Photograph). <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 359, 1898	15
Figure 2. A celebration in Tripoli (Photograph). <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 361, 1898.....	20
Figure 3. Nicolas Andriomenos. Ayşe Hatun, ca. 1890–1894. Haseki Women’s Hospital album formerly part of Abdülhamid II’s Yıldız Palace collection. <i>İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi</i> (Istanbul University Library of Rare Books)	22
Figure 4. Voyage to Baghdad: natives of Hammar. <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 332, 1897.....	27
Figure 5. Street view of the Grand Rue: Undated postcard, courtesy of Pera Museum.....	29
Figure 6. Snapshot Photography: Costumes of desert dwellers, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 470 (1900), 21.....	72
Figure 7. Snapshot Photography: In front of the Pyramids, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 470 (1900), 21.....	73
Figure 8. Snapshot: A caravan in the desert. <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 470 (1900), 25.	74
Figure 9. Our Snapshots: A shepherd in San Stefano, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 367 (1898), 37.	75
Figure 10. Our Snapshots: Farmers of San Stefano, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 340 (1897), 25.	76
Figure 11. Our Snapshots: Chestnut merchant, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 281 (1896), 332	77
Figure 12. The Dog Rock of Prinkipo, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 336 (1897), 381.....	78
Figure 13. Our Snapshots: Swing set, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 515 (1901), 321.	79
Figure 14. Snapshots: Pier of Üsküdar, <i>Servet-i Fünun</i> 266 (1896), 88.	80

Figure 15. Pier of Mudanya, Servet-i Fünun 291 (1896), 177.....	81
Figure 16. Snapshot photography: Newly constructed chain well in Fatih, Servet-i Fünun 549 (1901), 321.....	82
Figure 17. Snapshot photography: A boat at the Maltepe wharf, Servet-i Fünun 431 (1899), 233.....	83
Figure 18. Snapshot scenery: The Kabataş shore and cargo boat, Servet-i Fünun 260 (1896), 404.....	84
Figure 19. Snapshot photography: Harvest season; Threshing state, Servet-i Fünun 549 (1901), 41.....	85
Figure 20. Snapshots: A galley; ploughing; police station of Karaköy; a street singer, Servet-i Fünun 260 (1896), 401.....	86
Figure 21. Göksu; Çam haven; a Knife sharpener, Servet-i Fünun 272 (1896), 177.....	87

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Between 1896 and 1901, the Ottoman Empire witnessed a remarkable convergence of technological modernization, media proliferation, and visual experimentation. This brief but transformative period—which might be referred to as the “golden age” of the illustrated journal *Servet-i Fünun*—marked a high point in Ottoman print culture, visual literacy, and photographic dissemination. During these years, photography emerged not merely as a mode of documentation or entertainment, but as a critical tool in articulating a new visual regime—one that was shaped by and for the emerging Ottoman bourgeoisie. This thesis contends that the photographic practices of the late Hamidian era were neither neutral nor universally representative; rather, they were deeply embedded in classed processes of visual production, circulation, and interpretation. In short, this study investigates the class character of photographic representation in the Ottoman Empire, focusing on the years 1896 to 1901, when *Servet-i Fünun* reached the apex of its cultural, technological, and ideological influence.

Far from being a passive medium, photography in the late 19th-century Ottoman context functioned as a social instrument—a mode of perception that encoded bourgeois values, norms, and aesthetics into seemingly objective visual forms. Following the insights of Pierre Bourdieu, photography should be seen as a field structured by symbolic violence and cultural capital: its apparent neutrality conceals a dense network of exclusions and distinctions that reproduce existing social hierarchies.¹ This dynamic is particularly visible in *Servet-i Fünun*, where

¹ Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

photographic content—especially reader-submitted snapshots, ethnographic representations, and visual portrayals of urban and imperial life—operated as pedagogical tools for instructing a middle-class audience in the proper aesthetics and ideological contours of Ottoman modernity.

The Hamidian era (1876–1908), and especially the narrow timeframe of 1896–1901, offers a historically rich and theoretically productive terrain to explore these dynamics. Politically, the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II was marked by authoritarian centralization, censorship, and bureaucratic expansion. Yet paradoxically, it was also an era of unprecedented infrastructural growth, educational reform, and media innovation. Historians such as Selim Deringil and Zeynep Çelik have highlighted the Hamidian regime’s complex relationship to modernity—often oscillating between repression and reform, Islamic traditionalism and techno-scientific rationality.² Within this ambivalent context, the illustrated journal became a vital apparatus for managing public perception, cultivating civic identity, and visualizing imperial coherence. Among these journals, *Servet-i Fünun*—founded by Ahmed İhsan (Tokgöz) in 1891—distinguished itself through its adoption of cutting-edge zincographic technologies, its commitment to high-quality visuals, and its strategic alignment with a literate, urban readership. Between 1896 and 1901, the journal not only increased its print run and visual sophistication but also inaugurated photographic contests and columns that turned its pages into a visual arena of class-based representation.

Theoretically, this study builds upon a range of critical perspectives in visual studies, media history, and political theory. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s conception of disciplinary power, the thesis explores how photographic technologies

² Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*.

were employed by the Ottoman state and its media allies to render subjects visible, measurable, and governable.³ James C. Scott's notion of "seeing like a state" further underscores how visual regimes produce legibility not as a byproduct, but as a central aim of modern governance.⁴ At the same time, Jonathan Crary's work that aims to provide an alternative theoretical framework in order to study history of visual culture provides the critical vocabulary to interrogate the perceptual shifts wrought by new optical technologies, including photography.⁵ Crary's argument that the modern observer is shaped by historically contingent modes of vision—governed by scientific discourses, physiological experimentation, and media apparatuses—resonates strongly with the Ottoman case, where photographic practices simultaneously constructed and disciplined new forms of seeing.

While much of the existing literature on Ottoman photography has focused on studio portraits, diplomatic albums, or the visual productions of the state, this thesis shifts attention to more participatory and mass-mediated practices, particularly those mediated by *Servet-i Fünun*. The journal's photographic contests and reader-submitted snapshots, often published under captions such as *Enstantanelerimiz* ("Our Snapshots"), created a participatory visual culture that was nonetheless tightly regulated by aesthetic, technical, and ideological filters. These practices reveal what James Hevia calls a "photography complex"—a system involving cameras, chemicals, human actors, and institutional processes that together construct a regime of representation serving particular power structures.⁶ In the Ottoman case, this complex did not merely serve imperial diplomacy or surveillance; it also functioned

³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

⁴ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

⁵ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*.

⁶ Hevia, "The Photography Complex", 79-120.

as a means of internal class differentiation, training readers to see the empire and themselves through bourgeois eyes.

The focus on the years 1896 to 1901 is not arbitrary. This half-decade represents a crystallization point in the Ottoman visual economy. Technologically, photographic reproduction methods—especially zincography and autotypy—had matured enough to allow for high-quality mass publication of images. Institutionally, *Servet-i Fünun* had secured sufficient financial and political backing, including government subsidies and tax exemptions, to become the most expensive and prestigious illustrated journal in the empire. Culturally, a new generation of literate, urban, Turkish-speaking bourgeois subjects had emerged—many of whom were graduates of modern schools such as *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* (School of Civil Administration)—and formed the core audience of the journal. These convergences enabled *Servet-i Fünun* to function not merely as a media outlet but as a visual pedagogical apparatus—one that taught its readers how to perceive the world, how to frame their surroundings, and ultimately, how to see themselves as participants in a modern, stratified Ottoman society.

This thesis unfolds in three interlocking chapters. Chapter One situates photography within the broader apparatus of modern governance during the Hamidian era. It explores how photography operated as both a technology of surveillance and a symbolic tool for imperial self-representation. From educational reforms to medical imaging and infrastructural mapping, photography became an integral element of what Foucault would call the biopolitical management of life—a way of producing knowledge about populations in order to render them legible and governable.

Chapter Two narrows the focus to *Servet-i Fünun*, examining its editorial strategies, technological innovations, and dissemination networks. This chapter highlights the journal's dual role as both a consumer product and a cultural project. It interrogates how the journal's visual choices, print technologies, and pricing structures created a visual economy tailored to the emerging bourgeoisie. The material and symbolic cost of participation—through either reading or contributing images—ensured that photographic representation was class-specific, excluding lower-income groups from both production and recognition.

Chapter Three turns to the photographic contests of *Servet-i Fünun*, offering a close analysis of reader-submitted snapshots. It argues that these contests were not merely opportunities for aesthetic engagement, but structured rituals of visual discipline. Employing Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony and Bourdieu's concept of distinction, the chapter shows how photographic selection processes validated bourgeois norms of taste, order, and compositional propriety. The aesthetic values promoted by the journal—symmetry, sharp focus, civility, exoticism rendered picturesque—operated as mechanisms of symbolic violence that trained readers to internalize a particular vision of modernity. By portraying the Ottoman Empire as orderly, picturesque, and hierarchically integrated, these images offered not only representations but aspirations, shaping the habitus of a modern Ottoman subjectivity.

In emphasizing the class character of photographic representation during this critical period, this study aims to move beyond accounts that treat photography as either a neutral documentary tool or a passive reflection of modernization. Instead, it understands photography as an active participant in the construction of modern social imaginaries, embedded in the political economy of print capitalism and structured by

the cultural logics of distinction, legibility, and discipline. The Ottoman experience of photographic modernity, as mediated through *Servet-i Fünun*, thus provides a powerful case study in how visual technologies articulate not only power, but class; not only perception, but pedagogy; not only representation, but regulation.

In a broader historiographical sense, this thesis seeks to intervene in three ongoing scholarly conversations. First, it contributes to Ottoman media history by foregrounding the visual rather than textual dimensions of print culture. Second, it adds to global histories of photography by decentering Eurocentric narratives and exploring the semi-peripheral adaptations of visual modernity. Third, it engages with critical theories of vision, class, and representation to show how visual regimes are socially constructed and ideologically freighted. By anchoring this inquiry in the specific context of the Hamidian Era and the journal *Servet-i Fünun*, the study reveals how photographic representation—far from being merely illustrative—was constitutive of Ottoman bourgeois modernity. Between 1896 and 1901, the snapshot became not just a picture of the empire, but a picture of class.

CHAPTER 2

PHOTOGRAPHY AS MODERN TECHNOLOGY DURING THE HAMIDIAN ERA

2.1 Introduction

On 31 August 1876, Abdülhamid II ascended the throne of the Ottoman Empire amid political turbulence and ideological contestation. Known as the "Year of the Three Sultans," 1876 marked a pivotal moment in late Ottoman history. Abdülhamid's initial promises to uphold constitutional governance were quickly eclipsed by the autocratic turn that followed the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78.⁷ Conventional historiography long depicted this era as a hiatus in the Empire's modernization, characterized by censorship, repression, and a retreat from reformist agendas. However, more recent scholarship has revealed the paradoxical interplay between authoritarianism and modernization, suggesting that the Hamidian era was not a rupture but a distinctive phase in the *longue durée* of Ottoman modernity.⁸

This chapter examines photography as a privileged technology through which this contradictory modernity manifested itself. The proliferation of photographic images during the Hamidian period was not merely a function of technological availability; it was deeply enmeshed within the Empire's shifting visual regimes, epistemologies of power, and the transformation of public life. By integrating Jonathan Crary's theory of visibility and perception with Murat Şiviloğlu's analysis of the emergence of public opinion in the Ottoman Empire, this chapter argues that photography in the Hamidian era was at once a tool of imperial control, a medium of

⁷ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, 111-120.

⁸ Nadir Özbek, "Modernite, Tarih ve İdeoloji", 71-90.

public pedagogical formation, and a site of emergent civic identity. The Ottoman period of history largely aligned with Western European transformations of the 19th century which spread throughout the globe, especially regarding photography. The combination of tripod-free camera operation and decreasing photography costs during the late century in the Ottoman Empire demonstrated the natural connection between photography and modernity. This research investigates how photography operated as a tool for power and knowledge during the late 19th-century Ottoman Empire. The research investigates how photographic practices contributed to three interconnected domains of modern governance which included the emerging public sphere through new media and literacy systems and the institutional control mechanisms that used medical imaging and imperial archives and bureaucratic documentation and the visual logic of urban modernity and consumer culture that shaped urban imaginaries and commodified subjectivities.

The analysis proceeds in three parts: the transformation of the public sphere, the role of photography in surveillance and scientific visualization, and the intertwining of photography with urban modernity and consumer culture. By interrogating the visual and discursive formations surrounding photography in the Hamidian era, this chapter aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Ottoman modernity—one that does not merely align technological advancement with political liberation but instead explores the historically contingent ways in which modern technologies served bourgeois modernity's projects of order, legibility, and control.

2.2 The Public sphere and the visual imagination

The modern public sphere has traditionally been recognized as a fundamental part of modernization because it appears with liberal political structures and the rational-critical discourse of bourgeois civil society.⁹ The public sphere exists in historical context rather than as a fixed standard because it emerges through political processes which either support authoritarianism or democratic participation. During the late Ottoman period the Hamidian era (1876–1909) creates an excellent opportunity to analyze the connections between autocratic power and media along with public sphere formation through institutional and visual and technological networks.¹⁰

Prior to reforms of the nineteenth century, Ottoman society was a highly segregated one, both horizontally and vertically. With distinct social hierarchy on the lines of ruling *Askeri* and ruled *Reaya* categories; and division on confessional lines with societal rules and norms highly favoring Muslims compared to non-Muslim population.¹¹ The grand projects of *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* and various supplementing laws and regulations not only attempted to eradicate these *ancién* markers of difference, but through legal equalization of Ottoman subjects, laid the groundwork for the emergence of an *Ottoman* public.¹² The gradual erasure of the previous markers, especially in urban centers closely related to limited implementation of educational reforms prior to Hamidian Era, created a reading population somewhat uniform in their methods interaction with the public matters.¹³

⁹ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

¹⁰ To give a few examples for more detailed studies: Kırılı, “Coffee Houses”, 75-97; Ergin, “Bathing Business in Istanbul”, 142-169; Hamadeh, “Mean Streets”, 249-277; Riedler, “Public People Temporary Labor”, 233-254.

¹¹ Tezcan, “Ethnicity, Race, Religion and Social Class”, 159-70.

¹² Şiviloğlu, *The Emergence of Public Opinion*, 18-19.

¹³ Şiviloğlu, *The Emergence of Public Opinion*, 174.

Abdülhamid II's autocratic rule focused on controlling public life through strategic design. The creation of a contemporary Ottoman public space emerged through simultaneous growth of state-managed educational and media systems alongside the development of new visual and printed media which built shared national identity. Public education emerged as the core institution that developed during this period and Abdülhamid II expanded its scope after the beginning of his rule. The 1869 *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* (Regulation of Public Education) established the legal framework which created a secular educational system with centralized control and hierarchical structure. The educational regulation existed before Abdülhamid's rule, but his governance period marked its actual institutional growth and expansion.¹⁴ The educational infrastructure grew quickly under Hamidian rule through quantitative expansion of educational facilities along with qualitative modifications of its instructional content.

The educational policies of the Hamidian state extended beyond basic enlightenment principles. Education served as an essential tool for state programs that created loyal subjects who would join the growing bureaucracy and adopt Ottoman-Islamic unity narratives. Coinciding with the ideology of the Hamidian Era, the curricula were revised to create a population in line with the demands of the sovereignty of the Empire.¹⁵ In addition to the rising influence of Islam in the curricula, as the Empire lost sizeable non-Muslim majority territories in the Hamidian era and the Muslim majority in the Empire grew in proportion to the highest in the history of the Empire because of the migrations of huge Muslim populations from the lost territories; other changes were implemented in the

¹⁴ Somel, *Osmanlı'da Eğitimin Modernleşmesi*.

¹⁵ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 107-111.

classroom such as new maps, imperial insignias and narratives focusing on a sense of belonging and loyalty to the state and the Sultan.¹⁶

An obvious result of the expanding public education system was the increase in literacy rates throughout the Empire. The literacy rates went from around %1 in 1800 to 5-10% at the beginning of the 20th century, with significant variations depending on region, such as Syria and Mount Lebanon having higher rates related to the missionary activities.¹⁷ Although dwarfed by the literacy rates of the contemporary states that the Ottoman Empire was “competing” against, this increase created an expanded market for printed media. Various journals and newspapers started to emerge during the Hamidian era. Nevertheless, this plurality did not translate into a free and diverse press environment; on the contrary, the Hamidian Regime used the expanded field of the modern press to enhance loyalty to the state and oppress dissent. The new media that was commissioned and funded by the state, coupled with an extensive system of censorship, created a press entirely in the service of the regime, as a result, journalists focused mainly on non-political issues.¹⁸ The advancements in printing technology and widening use of photography brought upon a new medium, the illustrated journals.¹⁹ Although illustrated journals emerged in the 1860s with woodcut illustrations, coinciding with the use of photography by Abdülhamid II himself, these illustrated journals became a medium for the Ottoman public to interact with the wider Ottoman geography and the rest of the world through photography 1880s onwards. This interaction coincided with the Hamidian

¹⁶ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 107-111.

¹⁷ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 107.

¹⁸ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, 125-126.

¹⁹ Ahmet A Ersoy, "Ottomans and The Kodak Galaxy", 330-357.

effort to further consolidate his rule, helping to form a shared identity under Ottoman domains and his personal image.

The widespread availability of illustrated journals came to be as a result of almost a century-long process called photomechanical revolution. The gradual improvement of press technology was especially important regarding the transfer of photographic image to paper, and its fast and cheap reproduction. Earlier versions of technology possessed properties unfit to this end. The direct-positive processes, namely the daguerreotype and the ambrotype, while producing vivid and sharp images, were only able to produce a single unique image. The negative-to-positive paper process was able to produce multiple copies of an original image, but this process resulted in images not as detailed or vivid as direct positives. Development of the wet-plate negative in mid-century allowed the rapid increase of photographic prints on paper but the process was cumbersome as sunlight and cumbersome chemical processes were necessary for each individual copy, and the resulting product had to be manually trimmed and mounted on paper. In addition to all these, copies produced using this method tended to fade. In the context of disseminating images through printed media, development of a technology to transfer images to paper suitable for the pre-existing manufacturing methods and established industry standards was also an issue. Methods such as engraving, etching and lithography were available for images created by other means such as paintings and illustrations and were in use in the industry for items such as postcards and posters and these methods were adopted for photography. Nevertheless, until the *photomechanical revolution* that happened later in the century, photography lacked a reliable means of

dissemination; as the aforementioned technologies either necessitated craftsmanship-level skilled labor and time or resulted in low quality images.²⁰

One of the technologies that provided photography to be disseminated fast and cheap was zincography. Even though it can be considered within the wider category of planographic printing together with its close relative lithography; this process of projecting images to a chemically sensitive metal plate and then etching by hand, effectively combined qualities of being reproducible in mass quantities without losing detail and providing vivid images. Primarily used for the reproduction of images that necessitate high quality printing such as works of art and maps -and increasingly in the later parts of the century, color printing-, zincography also came to be used especially in high quality and prestigious illustrated journals.

The publication of *Servet-i Fünun* emerges as a defining example within this framework. The journal established by Ahmet İhsan (Tokgöz) in 1891 grew into a multifaceted illustrated magazine which integrated scientific content with literary pieces as well as travel descriptions and photographic illustrations. *Servet-i Fünun* differentiated itself from other contemporary journals through its wide-ranging content and its advanced formal structure and technological capabilities. The adoption of zincographic printing techniques by the 27th issue made *Servet-i Fünun* one of the first Ottoman publications that could produce photographs with high accuracy thus connecting written storytelling to visual entertainment.²¹ Technological advancement served as more than an aesthetic improvement since it transformed the fundamental role of the journal in politics and knowledge production. *Servet-i Fünun* achieved two purposes through its photographic images by educating its readers and

²⁰ For a wider discussion of this story of evolving printing technologies and its relationship with the visual culture of 19th century, see: Wright, *The Photographic History Collection*.

²¹ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

establishing connections between them as the publication created an image-based space that allowed Ottomans to experience and recognize their world. Different images within the publication created a unified visual representation that demonstrated both the extensive geographical extent and internal multicultural diversity of the Empire.

This envisioned imperial public existed beyond words and concepts since it encompassed both visuality and emotional responses. Through photography the illustrated media along with *Servet-i Fünun* established a fresh method of perception which corresponded with the changing visual systems of the 19th century. According to Jonathan Crary's work we can situate this particular medium in the overall evolution from classical camera obscura vision toward modern visual perception that incorporates embodied physiology and temporal subjectivity and disciplinary regulation.²² The Ottoman reader-viewer who encountered photographic images in a serialized format lost their status as an abstract autonomous spectator because new material and institutional conditions reshaped their visual perception. Illustrated journal pages functioned as more than visual displays because they both arranged and directed viewer perception to create a spectatorship framework that aligned with the Hamidian state's disciplinary systems.

²² Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*.



Figure 1. Inauguration of a military depot in Zanzor, Tripoli (Photograph). *Servet-i Fünun* 359, 1898

The staging of imperial events and national celebrations by *Servet-i Fünun* demonstrates this phenomenon clearly. The journal presented the Sultan as a benefactor and unifier through its coverage of public works inaugurations while portraying provinces as developing and loyal regions and the public as a unified grateful body. These representations operated as both ideological frameworks and infrastructural systems which needed printing presses and image reproduction technologies and telegraphy and image collection and captioning and bureaucratic coordination with local authorities and photographers. The visual domain functioned as a production site that served both political and industrial purposes. The visual program of the journal functioned within an extensive visual system which supported

state legitimization efforts. Through photography the regime gained access to a reproducible mobile and legible image of modernity which differed from textual proclamations and ceremonial spectacles. Through photography the Empire could display reform and order and progress and imperial benevolence in images that went beyond linguistic differences across the Empire. The photographic image served as a unifying representational code for audiences who were divided by ethnic differences and linguistic and geographical boundaries. The visibility created by this system reached only those who matched imperial standards while it either ignored or controlled or punished entities that failed to meet these standards.²³

The public sphere under Hamidian rule existed through visual management of public imagination which print-capitalist networks and modern visual technologies made possible. The transformation of public life received its central support from illustrated journals including *Servet-i Fünun*. The journals functioned as mediators between state authority and subject populations and between central locations and peripheral areas and between present conditions and projected future visions to establish a distinctive Ottoman visual modernity which combined disciplinary control with aspirational goals and imperial dominance with personal connections.

2.3 Surveillance and the scientific gaze

If the 19th century was, as Michel Foucault argues, the epoch of the disciplinary society, then photography was among the century's most powerful instruments for

²³ Özbek. "Philanthropic Activity", 63. In his article, Özbek argues that the dichotomic approach to the state-society relations in the context of the public sphere; whether it is the East-West, Modern-Premodern or Democratic-Authoritarian; would make it hard to understand the situation during the Hamidian regime. He defines public sphere as a "realm in which power is manifested in symbolic and discursive forms, as when the ruling elite pursues hegemony through the mediation of public performances..." and suggests that this methodological context it is not contradictory to argue for an autocratic regime and a dynamic public sphere coexisting, on the contrary, he argues that a dynamic public sphere was in fact a key element of the autocratic rule of the Abdülhamid II.

rendering populations visible, knowable, and governable.²⁴ In the Ottoman context, the Hamidian era marks an inflection point at which photography—initially a novelty of the elite—became integrated into the bureaucratic apparatus of state control and scientific rationality. Photography’s capacity to document, archive, and objectify converged with the state’s project of managing life, space, and subjectivity. This section explores the role of photography in the articulation of a distinctly Ottoman visual regime of surveillance, framed by the modern state’s biopolitical imperative to produce and organize knowledge about its subjects.

One needs to consider this narrative of 19th century Europe and the Ottoman Empire to grasp photography as a concept outside of the technological deterministic tradition. The prevalent understanding of technological determinism, which suggests that emerging recent technologies are the results of technical studies and experiments and argues that society changes with the possibilities brought by these technologies, is insufficient to explain photography and the new sphere of representation this technology constructed during the nineteenth century. The reason for this is that technologies emerge, and especially take hold, according to the needs and demands brought by social relations. Innovation becomes prevalent only when it is selected for investment for production and consciously developed for a specific social use. Therefore, it appears insufficient to state the fact that photography as a technology emerged in 1839, but it becomes necessary to evaluate the conditions that shaped and allowed photography to become an integral part of modern society.

In his work suggesting a new method for Art History, Jonathan Crary draws attention to the reflective relationship between scientific and philosophical discourse and practices of visual representation. Writing at the end of the 20th century, Crary is

²⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

extremely critical of the dominant paradigms of Art History and Visual Culture Studies regarding the History of Representation, namely *the Impressionist Break* and *the Realist continuum*. Crary points out the contradictory binarism of these paradigms and argues that this narrative leaves us with the notion of a linear development of the realist tradition from Renaissance to Photography and eventually Cinema in which artists of visionary and experimental attempted to overturn this classical mode of representation.²⁵ In order to overcome these two contradictory narratives about the way of seeing in the 19th century, Crary argues for a systemic shift that took place in the 1820s. Both arguments make it possible to think about the economic and social shift experienced in the modernization process together with the transformation in the visual regime and suggest a more holistic view of the process of construction for the *observer*, who is both the subject and object of this rupture. While *observer* undoubtedly refers to the seeing subject, it also describes the person who sees within a predetermined set of possibilities. In other words, the new dominant observer was formed in a single, intertwined, and dialectical process that cannot be understood by reducing it to just one of the discursive, social, technological, and theoretical relations. The break in the field of vision that occurred at the beginning of the 19th century both indicates the transformation between the exchange value, use value and fetish value of objects, and enables us to think about the eye and gaze returned to the body of the subject who becomes the object of research.

19th century developments followed the physiological model proposed in the previous period. The optical experiments proposed that the afterimage, which was previously considered belonging to the realm of the “spectral”, now constituted an

²⁵ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 4.

irreducible component of human vision. The implications of this new objectivity generated several discursive elements. First, the afterimage allowed the conception of sensory perception without any necessary link to an external referent. The subsequent modulations of this concept posed theoretical and empirical demonstration of an optical experience that was produced by and within the subject. Second, this new objectivity introduced temporality as an inescapable component of observation. This new model of vision enabled the operations of cognition to become measurable thus predictable and controllable. Through the experiments regarding the operations of optical cognition, several optical devices were invented, replacing *Camera Obscura* as the discursive device for the observer.²⁶ A defining feature of these optical devices of the early 19th century was their undisguised nature concerning their operations. While they claimed to provide access to “the real,” they made no claim that the real was anything other than a mechanical reproduction. Crary argues that their undisguised nature provided insufficiently “phantasmagoric” for servicing the necessities of the newly forming modernity, thus they became obsolete as more useful photography became the dominant model with its claim of the viability of the free subject of *Camera Obscura*.²⁷ In the 19th century, the subject turned into a wandering observer of modernity who had to adapt to all economic and social transformation. As a result, there is now a need for proof that the “human eye” perceives differently than the “non-human eye”: photography.²⁸ In this century, vision became individualized, autonomous, and democratized. This break in vision also caused the *Camera Obscura*, which was previously presented as a one-to-one representation of reality, to fall out of favor.

²⁶Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 97-98.

²⁷Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 132-136.

²⁸Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 47-155.



Figure 2. A celebration in Tripoli (Photograph). *Servet-i Fünun* 361, 1898.

The Hamidian photography project was one of the most ambitious archival endeavors commissioned by a modern state regarding visual material. Closely related to the Sultan's autocratic rule, and part of the larger surveillance efforts of the period, photographic collection grew exponentially throughout the era. In addition to the personal fascination of the Sultan with the medium, Ottoman bureaucracy quickly grasped the potential and function of photography coinciding with the ethos of the Hamidian regime. While started as specifically commissioned albums created by famous photographers of the period, the project gradually became almost independent. Yıldız archives started to overflow with visual material, especially photography, as numerous state officials who often were not specifically tasked with producing photographic material, started to include them in official

correspondence.²⁹ Producing photography became a bureaucratic tradition; but moreover, with the inclusion of images created by individuals who were not in state's employ, together with (in)famous *journals*, the Hamidian photographic project was a striking example of ambitious efforts of control and surveillance of the state, and the participation of the *modern observer* in this process. This archive was more than a collection; it was a mechanism of state vision, one which transformed the Sultan into what James C. Scott might term a "seeing eye" of high modernism—a sovereign who does not merely observe but governs through visibility.³⁰ Whether depicting schools, hospitals, bridges, minority communities, or imperial ceremonies, the photographs compiled at Yıldız constituted a cartography of imperial space and social order. They allowed the regime to imagine itself not as distant from the provinces but present within them—an ocular presence where physical reach was limited.

One of the most striking nodes within this archival formation is the photographic album produced at Haseki Women's Hospital, an institution restructured in 1868 as part of broader Tanzimat-era health reforms. Created between 1890 and 1894 by photographer Nicolas Andriomenos under the direction of gynecologist Ahmed Nurettin, the album is emblematic of the convergence between modern medical science and photographic technology.³¹ It consists of studio-style portraits of female patients, presented alongside excised tumors or anatomical anomalies preserved in jars. Each image is carefully captioned with clinical details: diagnosis, treatment, outcomes. What emerges is not simply a record of medical

²⁹ Ersoy and Türker, "'The Hamidian Visual Archive (1876-1908): A User's Manual", 320-321; Hyde Nolan, "The Gift of the Abdülhamid II Albums"; Carney, *Imperial Self-Portrait*.

³⁰ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

³¹ Gürsel, "A Picture of Health", 36-67.

intervention but a visual regime in which the body—particularly the female body—is reduced to pathology, indexed through its deviation from a normative physical ideal.

The photographs from Haseki operate simultaneously on multiple epistemic registers. They participate in what Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have termed mechanical objectivity: the ideal of unmediated, machine-produced representation that underpins the authority of scientific images in the modern era.³² The visual neutrality of the photographic lens, paired with the formal logic of clinical documentation, confers upon these images a sense of unimpeachable truth. Yet, as John Tagg reminds us, photographs are never merely transparent windows onto reality; they are inscriptions of power, constructed within institutional frameworks, and mobilized to serve specific social ends.³³



Figure 3. Nicolas Andriomenos. Ayşe Hatun, ca. 1890–1894. Haseki Women’s Hospital album formerly part of Abdülhamid II’s Yıldız Palace collection. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi* (Istanbul University Library of Rare Books)

³² Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*.

³³ Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*.

In the case of the Haseki album, the power inscribed is that of the scientific gaze, one that not only observes but classifies, isolates, and disciplines. The female subjects are anonymized and decontextualized, their personhood eclipsed by the medical significance of their conditions. Their poses—often staged to reveal surgical scars, tumors, or skeletal deformities—are not expressions of agency but evidence of objectification. These women are rendered as specimens, bodies made legible and manageable by modern medical science and its visual technologies. Their visibility is not a means of empowerment but a condition of their subjection. Moreover, the fact that this album was submitted to the Sultan himself situates it within the logic of centralized surveillance. These were not private medical records but visual instruments of state knowledge—objects meant to circulate within bureaucratic and sovereign circuits. In this regard, the Haseki album exemplifies what Foucault describes as the emergence of clinical gaze, where the body is dissected by vision, and the hospital becomes a site of state interest, regulation, and scientific extraction.³⁴

The intertwining of visual knowledge, state control, and bureaucratic rationality was by no means confined to the medical sphere. Across a wide range of modern institutions, photography emerged as a crucial instrument for documenting, regulating, and legitimizing state activity. In educational contexts, photographs were used to record school facilities, student bodies, and instructional environments; in military campaigns, they served to map terrain, classify local populations, and visually archive strategic operations; and in railway projects, they captured engineering achievements and symbolized infrastructural progress. Over time, the inclusion of photographs in official reports and administrative records evolved from

³⁴ Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*.

a novel practice into a bureaucratic norm—an expected element of state-generated knowledge. This hybrid documentary form, fusing the textual authority of bureaucratic discourse with the evidentiary weight of visual imagery, was not a mere aesthetic embellishment. Rather, it was a strategic mechanism for securing epistemic legitimacy: a visual rhetoric of governance that substantiated claims to progress, rational planning, and reform. Photography, in this context, functioned as both a representational and operational technology—making the modern state visible to itself and to its publics through a regime of calibrated, reproducible, and ostensibly objective images.³⁵

Crucially, the Ottoman case complicates dominant narratives of linear, secular modernity by demonstrating how Islamic sovereignty, bureaucratic centralization, and technological innovation could converge in novel and contextually specific configurations. The reign of Abdülhamid II, often reduced in historiography to autocracy or personal eccentricity, must instead be read as a period of calculated visual governance. His well-documented engagement with photography, which frequently interpreted as a private fascination, was in fact a politically strategic investment in the visual infrastructure of the state. The vast photographic archive produced under his rule operated simultaneously as a record of imperial presence and as a prospective vision: both an archive of the existing order and a blueprint for its transformation. Photography served as a medium through which the Ottoman state could render its territories, populations, and institutions visible, knowable, and administratively actionable. Importantly, this adoption of photography cannot be dismissed as mere mimicry of Western modernity. Rather, it constituted a localized and ideologically inflected project of visual governmentality, in which technologies

³⁵Sekula, “The Body and the Archive.”, 3–64.

of representation were mobilized to consolidate sovereignty, rationalize administration, and project a reformed imperial imaginary.³⁶

Photography in the Hamidian era was not merely a mirror held up to the world; it was a constitutive force in the production of modern imperial subjectivity and state rationality. Far from being a passive record, the photograph operated as a tool of governance—an instrument through which the late Ottoman state sought to make its domain visible, intelligible, and thus governable. Whether capturing the medicalized body, the panoramic expanse of the empire, or the meticulously ordered spaces of bureaucratic modernity, the camera enabled what might be called epistemic capture: a regime of visual control that transformed the real into data, the visible into the governable. This visibility was not an end in itself; it was a precondition for intervention, regulation, and administrative action. The scientific gaze of the modern Ottoman state—crystallized in official albums, illustrated journals, and bureaucratic reports—did not exist in opposition to politics. Rather, it was one of its most enduring and sophisticated expressions: a visual logic of rule in which aesthetics, science, and sovereignty converged.

2.4 Modernity, urbanization, and consumerism in the Hamidian era

The Hamidian era partially coincided with the global consolidation of modernity, particularly in Europe. Technological advancements, rapid urban population growth, and the expansion of urban space transformed the daily experience of time, space, and the senses. These changes also shaped the emergence and circulation of photography in the Ottoman Empire. The era was marked not only by political

³⁶ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*.

centralization but also by sensory and epistemic transformations—shifts that rendered vision a dominant mode of perceiving and organizing modern life.³⁷

As Marshall Berman argues, modernity often entails the coexistence of new and old social forms, producing a world in which individuals must make sense of disorientation, instability, and possibility.³⁸ This condition, likened to living in “two worlds at once,” generated visions and values that sought to empower subjects amid transformative conditions. Berman loosely groups these efforts under the term “modernism”: a cultural and intellectual project aimed at making individuals the agents as well as the objects of modern change.

A primary metaphor of this nascent modernity is speed. The introduction of the steam locomotive in the early 19th century revolutionized the perception of distance and time.³⁹ Mass transportation enabled large numbers of people to traverse vast geographies in radically reduced timeframes. In the Ottoman Empire, the inauguration of the Tünel line in 1875, connecting Galata and Pera, signaled a key moment in this transformation.⁴⁰ Simultaneously, disconnected railways in Western Anatolia—originally constructed for resource extraction to ports like Izmir—began to consolidate with the founding of the Chemins de Fer Ottomans d'Anatolie (CFOA) in 1888. Among the most significant infrastructural projects were the Baghdad Railway, which aimed to link Konya to Baghdad, and the Hejaz Railway, funded largely through public contributions, which sought to connect Damascus to Medina for the facilitation of Muslim pilgrimage.⁴¹

³⁷ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*.

³⁸ Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*.

³⁹ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*.

⁴⁰ Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul*.

⁴¹ Özyüksel, *The Hejaz Railway and the Ottoman Empire*.

These developments reshaped urban geography, turning cities into hubs of circulation and encounter. Importantly, they also altered the conditions of perception. As Walter Benjamin, drawn from Georg Simmel, observed, modern transportation created the unprecedented situation of extended visual contact among strangers in silence.⁴² The result was a sensory shift: sight began to dominate hearing in urban life. Individuals were now required to navigate crowded, fast-paced environments with heightened visual attentiveness, producing what Benjamin described as the modern subject's "difficulty of orientation" in the metropolitan maelstrom.



Figure 4. Voyage to Baghdad: Natives of Hammar. *Servet-i Fünun* 332, 1897.

Photography intersected with these transformations in multiple ways. One notable example was the rise of illustrated travel accounts in Ottoman journals. As

⁴² Benjamin, "The Storyteller".

photographic equipment became increasingly portable, Ottoman reporters traveled across the empire by train and steamship, documenting their journeys through serialized narratives accompanied by photographic images. These included both state-commissioned expeditions—such as Sadık al-Mueyyed's mission to Libya to engage with the Senussi movement—and independently authored reports like Mehmet Tevfik's journey to Baghdad for *Servet-i Fünun*.⁴³ The proliferation of Kodak cameras and improvements in printing technology facilitated a wave of reader-submitted travelogues, complete with snapshots of landscapes, cities, and peoples. Speed enabled the production and distribution of these visual texts, from the journalists' movement through imperial space to the rapid weekly reproduction of high-quality images via European presses.

The infrastructural developments of the Hamidian period thus did more than facilitate material movement; they enabled the visual codification of empire. As newspapers adopted new printing techniques and telegraphic communication expanded, photography became central to what Benjamin described as the age of "information" rather than "storytelling."⁴⁴ Information, unlike storytelling, demands instant verification and self-contained legibility. However, Benjamin laments that such information, though seemingly transparent, often remains unassimilable to lived experience. In this sense, the modern illustrated journal presented a fragmented visuality: images and texts that could circulate rapidly but resist integration into traditional modes of meaning.

Urban reconstruction in 19th-century Europe aimed to obscure production relations and recast the city as a site of consumption and display. Haussmann's Paris

⁴³ Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary*.

⁴⁴ Benjamin, "The Storyteller."

was emblematic of this shift, and similar processes unfolded in Istanbul, particularly in the neighborhood of Pera.⁴⁵ Following the Treaty of Balta Liman (1838), the Ottoman economy became increasingly integrated into global capitalist markets. This integration accelerated after the establishment of the Public Debt Administration in 1881, prompting an influx of unskilled labor into urban centers like Istanbul.⁴⁶ Pera, despite its proximity to working-class quarters, developed as a showcase of European diplomacy and commerce, increasingly inaccessible to the laboring poor.



Figure 5. Street View of the Grand Rue: Undated postcard, courtesy of Pera Museum.

The Great Fire of 1870 catalyzed Pera's transformation. What had previously been a hybrid space shaped by religious and diplomatic functions was reimagined as a theater of consumption. Cleared plots were recombined to accommodate the

⁴⁵Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*.

⁴⁶Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*.

monumental architecture of capitalism: arcades, department stores, luxury hotels, and passages. Classical revivalism dominated, often mixed with emergent Art Nouveau motifs. Textile shops, cafes, restaurants, and nightclubs flourished alongside establishments selling photographic equipment and imported luxury goods. The Grand Rue de Pera became a space of visual spectacle, aligning urban architecture with consumer desire.⁴⁷

Photography was central to this transformation, not only as a means of documentation but as a commodity in itself. As goods acquired exchange value in the capitalist system, photography assumed both economic and symbolic functions.⁴⁸ Portrait photography democratized visual representation, enabling members of the bourgeoisie and middle classes to reproduce their image for circulation and commemoration. By the 1850s, the widespread availability of photographic portraits had already begun to displace painted likenesses. This shift reflects photography's integration into a broader visual economy: a regime in which images circulated as signs of identity, status, and aspiration.

The emergence of photography at this historical juncture is thus no coincidence. It corresponds precisely with the fetishization of images and the abstraction of experience in capitalist modernity. Photography became a tool not only of representation but of epistemic capture, part of a visual logic that sought to render the social world legible, classifiable, and governable. In the Ottoman context, this logic did not simply replicate European models. Rather, it was refracted through the specificities of Islamic sovereignty, imperial reform, and bureaucratic centralization. The visual economy of the Hamidian state, articulated through albums, illustrated

⁴⁷ Eldem, *Pera Beyoğlu Galata*.

⁴⁸ Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*.

journals, and urban architecture, constituted a unique and ideologically saturated mode of modern governance.

To conclude, it can be argued that the convergence of modernity, urbanization, and consumer culture in the Hamidian era created fertile ground for the proliferation of photography. As both a practice and a medium, photography was deeply enmeshed in the changing modes of seeing, moving, and consuming that defined the late Ottoman experience of modernity. It functioned not merely as a mirror of the world, but as an active agent in shaping the imperial subject and visualizing the state.

2.5 Conclusion

Photography in the Hamidian era functioned as a dynamic node through which multiple dimensions of modernity intersected: technological innovation, bureaucratic rationality, imperial imagination, and consumer spectacle. More than a tool of documentation, photography became an epistemic and political instrument—central to the operations of state vision and public engagement. Through the visual consolidation of imperial space, the framing of the medicalized body, and the aestheticization of consumer life, the late Ottoman state articulated a uniquely situated visual modernity.

This chapter has shown that photography not only enabled the Ottoman Empire to participate in global regimes of modern representation but did so in a manner attuned to its own ideological and institutional priorities. The photographic image, reproduced in official albums, illustrated journals, and urban scenes, served to stabilize the imperial imaginary amid political fragmentation, religious pluralism, and spatial heterogeneity. In this visual economy, images rendered imperial order

both plausible and palpable, creating a public pedagogy grounded in aesthetic legibility, administrative coherence, and sovereign authority.

As the Ottoman case demonstrates, the history of photography cannot be subsumed under narratives of Western modernity alone. Instead, it demands attention to the ways local configurations of power, religion, and reform shaped visual technologies and their meanings. The Hamidian era thus stands as a key moment in the entangled history of image, empire, and modernity—a moment in which photography did not merely reflect social transformations but actively constituted them.



CHAPTER 3

SERVET-I FÜNUN AND THE ILLUSTRATED JOURNALS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

3.1 Introduction

The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a transformative period in the Ottoman Empire, characterized by rapid modernization, technological advancements, and the rise of a vibrant print culture. Among the many illustrated journals that emerged during this era, *Servet-i Fünun* (Wealth of Sciences) stood out as a prominent publication that not only reflected the changing social and cultural landscape of the empire but also actively shaped it. Founded in 1891 by Ahmed İhsan Tokgöz, *Servet-i Fünun* became a leading platform for the dissemination of knowledge, art, and literature, blending visual and textual content in a way that appealed to a growing middle-class audience. This chapter explores the multifaceted role of *Servet-i Fünun* as a cultural and social signifier, focusing on its editorial vision, its audience, and its impact on Ottoman society.

The chapter is structured into three subsections, each delving into different aspects of *Servet-i Fünun* and its significance. The first subsection provides a general overview of the journal, situating it within the competitive landscape of the Ottoman illustrated press and highlighting its rivals. The subsection further examines the quality and consistency of the journal, analyzing its content, and the technological innovations that set it apart from other publications. In addition to these, the subchapter focuses on the journal's audience and dissemination network, exploring how *Servet-i Fünun* reached readers across the empire and beyond, and how it fostered a sense of community among its subscribers.

The second subsection shifts the focus to Ahmed İhsan, the entrepreneurial force behind *Servet-i Fünun*. It delves into his role as a publisher, his business acumen, and his relationships with the government, which were crucial for the journal's survival and success. This chapter also explores Ahmed İhsan's personal interests and how they influenced the journal's content, from his passion for photography to his enthusiasm for modern technologies like the railway and the bicycle.

The third subsection examines *Servet-i Fünun* as a signifier of social class, analyzing how the journal catered to the tastes and aspirations of the emerging Ottoman bourgeoisie. It explores the journal's audience, their participation in its content through letters and photographs, and the ideological underpinnings of the journal, which reflected the values and concerns of its readership. Through this analysis, the article aims to shed light on how *Servet-i Fünun* not only documented but also actively participated in the social and cultural transformations of the late Ottoman Empire.

Drawing on primary sources such as the journal itself, as well as secondary literature on Ottoman print culture and media history, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of *Servet-i Fünun* and its enduring legacy. By examining the journal's content, its audience, and the entrepreneurial vision of its founder, the chapter highlights the ways in which *Servet-i Fünun* served as a mirror to the complexities of Ottoman modernity, capturing the tensions between tradition and progress, local and global, and the individual and the collective.

3.2 *Servet-i Fünun* as a prominent illustrated journal

3.2.1 General overview and journal's rivals

Servet-i Fünun, founded in 1891 by Ahmed İhsan quickly established itself as one of the most prominent illustrated journals in the late Ottoman Empire. During its early years (1891–1908), the journal became a pioneer in combining high-quality visual content with literary and scientific articles, setting a new standard for illustrated publishing in the Ottoman world. This period coincided with the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), a time marked by strict censorship and political control, but also by significant advancements in print technology and the rise of a literate middle class.⁴⁹

Servet-i Fünun faced competition from several other illustrated journals, like *Ma'ârif* (Knowledge; September 1891), *Resimli Gazete* (Illustrated Newspaper; March 1891), and *Hazîne-yi Fünûn* (Treasure of Science; August 1892), *Ma'lumat* (Information; 1894) as well as older journals such as *Müşavver Cihân* (Illustrated World; April 1890). These journals not only adopted the format of illustrated weeklies but also shared similar content. Under the strict and authoritarian press regulations of the Hamidian era, which suppressed any overt political commentary or criticism, editors filled their pages with seemingly harmless material.⁵⁰ This included scientific discoveries, travel accounts, and illustrations of inventions, animals, diverse cultures, and cityscapes, whether of Istanbul or of cities in Europe and North America.⁵¹ Despite the seemingly superficial content of these post-political illustrated weeklies, they achieved two significant impacts. First, they fostered an unprecedented global awareness by featuring reports and images from

⁴⁹ Ersoy, "History as You Go", 243-244.

⁵⁰ Şiviloğlu, *The Emergence of Public Opinion*, 222–225.

⁵¹ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 88.

distant locations such as Korea, South Africa, and Canada. Second, they promoted a purely secular perspective of the world. *Servet-i Fünun* was the primary source of popular scientific knowledge that disseminated amongst Turkish speaking Ottoman subjects and its insistence on interpreting natural phenomena also encouraged a tendency to understand the world in ways that deliberately excluded religion, or any notion of divine intervention was a crucial aspect of aforementioned secular perspective.⁵²

In addition to these, the most notable rival of the journal was *Ma'lumat* (Information), which was closely aligned with the palace and often engaged in cultural and literary disputes with *Servet-i Fünun*. Catering to the demands of a similar bourgeois audience obsessed with technological advancements and idea of progress, two journals competed fiercely. While *Ma'lumat* was more conservative and pro-palace, *Servet-i Fünun* positioned itself as a progressive and innovative publication, often pushing the boundaries of what was acceptable under the Hamidian regime.⁵³ The journal's ability to combine high-quality illustrations with cutting-edge literary content set it apart from its rivals, making it a leading voice in the Ottoman media landscape.

3.2.2 Quality and consistency of the journal

One of the key factors that distinguished *Servet-i Fünun* from its competitors was its commitment to maintaining high standards of quality in both its visual and textual content. It stepped in front of its various competitors through quantity and quality of illustrations and its extensive coverage of global events.⁵⁴ The journal was known for

⁵² Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 89.

⁵³ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

⁵⁴ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 90.

its glossy, imported paper, impeccable graphic layout, and meticulously produced images.⁵⁵ Ahmed İhsan, the founder, was deeply invested in keeping the journal's print quality up to date with the highest international standards. He made significant technomaterial investments, including the adoption of advanced photo-relief technologies like zincography and autotypy, which allowed for the fast, cheap, and accurate transfer of visual material onto the printed page.⁵⁶

Initially, due to a lack of infrastructure regarding printing original high quality visual material in Istanbul, *Servet-i Fünun* increasingly depended on material created in Europe or its former settler colonies, particularly USA and Australia. Overwhelming amounts of visual material published by the journal in its early years were of panoramas of European cities, nature panoramas or landscapes, portraits of European intellectuals or illustrations of latest European fashion. These limitations coincided with the journal's overall purpose of introducing the latest news from the progressive West. Right from the start, the weekly's primary feature and main attraction were its visual connections to the civilized world and its use of illustrations in general. The intention was to produce a stunningly extensive representation of the world. This approach, however, was not exclusive to İhsan; his English counterpart, George Newnes (1851-1910), also followed the same path. He once tried to put a picture on every page of *The Strand Magazine* (London: 1891-1916) and provided readers with a vast amount of both visual and textual information, as if they were standing before a 'cornucopia' of information and images.⁵⁷ Even though the sheer number of foreign images was part of the reason behind the journal's early success,

⁵⁵ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

⁵⁶ Ersoy, "History as you go," 243.

⁵⁷ Tattersdill, *Science, Fiction, and the Fin-De-Siècle Periodical Press*, 6.

Ahmed İhsan grew frustrated by dependence on externally created visuals.⁵⁸ Being a photography enthusiast, İhsan aimed to print photography of Ottoman environment by Ottoman subjects. His coinciding trip to Europe in 1891 marked the start of a new period for the journal.

The trip enabled him to bring state-of-the-art printing equipment and materials to Istanbul, while also providing a solution to the challenge of printing photographs. İhsan secured contracts with the Viennese company C. Angerer & Göschl, the originator of the revolutionary Vienna etching method, which he enthusiastically praised as being "technologically ahead of all other factories in European capitals."⁵⁹ This company specialized in producing autotypes—printing blocks made from photographs—for all of İhsan's images. As a result, every photograph featured in the journal had to travel across the Balkans twice before publication. This transnational process was a point of pride for İhsan, who frequently emphasized the journal's sophisticated and international pedigree by providing a caption stating, "printed in Vienna."⁶⁰ This technological achievement brought extensive costs to the journal but also means to solve this predicament. After encountering a high-quality reproduction of an Abdullah Freres photograph published in the 27th issue of the *Servet-i Fünun*, which was the first zincographic plate prepared for the journal in Vienna, Abdulhamid II, a photography enthusiast himself, granted Ahmed İhsan's publishing house tax exemption for necessary materials as well as a hefty monthly subsidy through Ministry of Education.⁶¹ The financial help from the government was a crucial resource for the journal regarding

⁵⁸ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 92.

⁵⁹ "Yediküle," *Servet-i Fünun* 66 (Hazîrân 1308/June 1892), 220.

⁶⁰ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 94.

⁶¹ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

its consistent quality, and except from a brief period in which the journal's sales peaked in 1898 with 2500 copies.⁶² Ahmed İhsan relied on the help in order to make the journal profitable, even affordable.⁶³ Even with the financial help from the government, *Servet-i Fünun* remained the most expensive journal in the Ottoman Empire, as its price of 100 Para by far exceeded the price its rivals such as *Ma'ârif* (20 Para) or *Resimli Gazete* and *Müşavver Cihân* (40 Para). Only in 1894 was *Ma'lûmât* able to demand a similar price of 100 Para.⁶⁴

The illustrations in *Servet-i Fünun* were not merely decorative but a cornerstone of its identity and success, as the journal regularly featured photographs, engravings, and reproductions of European artworks, all carefully chosen and reproduced with exceptional precision. This visual richness was further enhanced by a significant amount of original photographic content, often sent in by readers or correspondents who traveled across the empire with their cameras, embodying Ahmed İhsan's vision of the journal as a showcase for modern media technologies. Complementing this innovative approach was the journal's remarkable consistency; despite enduring challenges like censorship and political pressure, *Servet-i Fünun* maintained an almost uninterrupted publication schedule from 1891 to 1908. This reliability not only fostered loyal readership but also cemented its reputation as a trusted source of both entertainment and information. Together, its pioneering use of visual content and steadfast commitment to regular publication were instrumental in establishing *Servet-i Fünun* as a groundbreaking and influential publication of its era.

⁶⁵ An obvious side effect of both this material and contextual superiority was the high

⁶² İhsân, *Sâlnâme-yi Servet-i Fünûn: 5nci Sene*, (Istanbul: Aḥmed İhsân ve Şûrekâsı, 1898), 18.

⁶³ İhsan Tokgöz and Kabacalı, *Matbuat Hatıralarım*.

⁶⁴ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 90.

⁶⁵ Ersoy, "History as you go," 243.

price. Even with the Hamidian regime's granting a tax exemption regarding the imported print materials, state-of-the-art materials and subscriptions to various news agencies and journals from Britain, France, Germany, USA and sometimes even Russia; rumped up the costs. *Servet-i Fünun* remained the most expensive periodical on the Ottoman market for years.⁶⁶

3.2.3 Dissemination network

Servet-i Fünun catered primarily to a middle-class, urban, and Turkish-speaking audience. Its readers were typically educated, progressive, and interested in both the arts and sciences. The journal's content reflected the tastes and interests of this demographic, offering a mix of literary essays, scientific articles, travel narratives, and visual content that appealed to a broad spectrum of readers.⁶⁷

The journal's dissemination network was extensive, reaching not only Istanbul but also the provinces of the Ottoman Empire., with 2500 copies in circulation during the zenith of the journal in 1898.⁶⁸ By the late 1890s, *Servet-i Fünun* had a significant subscriber base in the provinces, with over half of its circulation going to readers outside the capital. The journal's distribution network was supported by a system of agents and subscribers who facilitated its circulation across the empire. Provincial administrators, teachers, and local intellectuals were among its most loyal readers, as the journal provided them with a window into the wider world. In addition to its domestic distribution, *Servet-i Fünun* also reached an international audience through its participation in global events such as the 1893

⁶⁶ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 90.

⁶⁷ Ersoy, "History as you go," 243-245.

⁶⁸ İhsân, *Sâlnâme-yi Servet-i Fünûn: 5nci Sene*, 18.

Chicago World's Fair, where it won a medal for its print quality. This international recognition further enhanced the journal's reputation and expanded its reach.⁶⁹

The dissemination network of *Servet-i Fünun* was a complex and multifaceted system that relied on transnational supply chains, government support, and reader engagement. By leveraging these networks, the journal was able to establish itself as a leading publication in the Ottoman Empire and a participant in the global print economy. Its ability to navigate the challenges of late Ottoman print culture and build a loyal and engaged readership underscores the importance of dissemination networks in the success of periodicals. Through its innovative content and sophisticated distribution strategies, *Servet-i Fünun* not only shaped the Ottoman media landscape but also connected its readers to the wider world.

3.2.4 Conclusion

Between 1891 and 1908, *Servet-i Fünun* emerged as a cultural and literary force in the Ottoman Empire, setting new standards for illustrated journalism. Its commitment to quality, consistency, and innovation set it apart from its rivals, while its extensive dissemination network and engaged readership ensured its lasting impact. As a pioneer in the field of illustrated publishing, *Servet-i Fünun* played a crucial role in the development of modern media in the Ottoman Empire, leaving a legacy that extended well into the Republican era. The journal not only reflected the intellectual and artistic life of its time but also helped shape it, making it one of the most important cultural artifacts of the late Ottoman period.

⁶⁹ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*.

3.3 Ahmed İhsan as an Entrepreneur and Bourgeois Enthusiast

Ahmed İhsan (Tokgöz) (1868-1942) was a pioneering figure in Ottoman journalism and publishing, whose entrepreneurial spirit and passion for modernity left a lasting impact on the Ottoman mediascape. His career up to 1908 reflects the rise of a bourgeois class deeply engaged with technology, literature, and the global print culture. This subchapter explores Ahmed İhsan's entrepreneurial endeavors through three key aspects: his publishing house, his dealings with the government, and his personal gusto and interests, all within the context of the late Ottoman Empire up to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908.

3.3.1 Ahmed İhsan's publishing house and his deals with the government

Ahmed İhsan's entrepreneurial journey began in earnest in 1890 when he acquired the '*Alem*' printing press in Istanbul, renaming it "'Alem Press Ahmed İhsan and Associates," marking the start of his lifelong engagement with the printing and publishing industry. His most significant achievement was the founding of *Servet-i Fünun* (The Wealth of Sciences) in 1891, which became the Ottoman Empire's most prominent illustrated weekly.⁷⁰ The journal was not only a literary platform but also a technological marvel, as İhsan was deeply invested in advanced printing techniques like zincography and autotypy. The journal was no less a technological miracle than a literary forum: İhsan was keenly interested in zincography and autotypy, advanced printing techniques of his time. Knowing the technological backwardness of domestic technology, he travelled to Europe, and visited Vienna and Paris in particular, to learn about the latest printing technologies and to establish contacts with European suppliers of high-quality paper and equipment. This made *Servet-i*

⁷⁰ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

Fünun consistent with the quality of printing of leading European journals of its time, such as *L'Illustration* and the *Illustrated London News*. In the early twentieth century, his publishing house was equipped with the latest technology, including steam powered rotary presses, elevators, and speaking tubes; and generous ateliers for zincography and lithography, a large archive and multilingual typesetting, allowing for articles to be written in Ottoman Turkish, French, Greek, Armenian and Ladino.⁷¹

İhsan's success was closely tied to his ability to navigate the complex political landscape of the late Ottoman Empire, particularly during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). He had a relationship with the government that was collaborative, negotiatory, and, on occasion, confrontational, reflecting the delicate balance between the press and the palace. A key factor in his success was securing government subsidies and official commissions. In addition to previously discussed tax exemptions and monthly subsidy, the sultan also supported the hiring of French engraver Arthur Napier, who taught at the Royal School of Fine Arts and worked for *Servet-i Fünun*.⁷² Ahmed İhsan's family connections and his network of high-level government officials also played a critical role in securing lucrative official commissions. It can be argued that a major factor determining Ahmet İhsan's connectedness, as well as his intellectual upbringing, was him being a *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* (School of Civil Administration) alumnus. In the years to come, a modern school based in Istanbul that functioned as the breeding ground of the majority of government functionaries of the Ottoman Empire, *Mülkiye*; and other similar institutions shaped the intellectual, cultural, and political environment of the

⁷¹ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

⁷² Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 95; Ersoy, *tbp*.

Ottoman capital. He owed the success of his printing house and the consistent publishing life of *Servet-i Fünun* to his *Mülkiye* connections; almost all of İhsan's close friends, colleagues, collaborators, and government contacts were graduates of that school.⁷³ His press was often contracted to print official documents, including identification registries and passports, which provided a steady income.⁷⁴ In addition, his connections within the government enabled him to avoid the arbitrary censorship regulations of the Hamidian era. For instance, when *Servet-i Fünun* was shut down for two years, starting in 1901, for an article that was deemed subversive, Ahmed İhsan's connections within the palace allowed him to avoid exile and relaunch the publication.

However, İhsan's relationship with the government was not without challenges. He constantly negotiated the fine line between maintaining editorial independence and avoiding censorship. His memoirs reveal instances where he made concessions, such as publishing photographs and articles that were in line with the discourse of the palace regarding the West. Palace officials compelled *Servet-i Fünun* to cover crimes occurring in the West. As a result, the journal often highlighted the supposedly widespread vices and moral decay of Western society—particularly focusing on the behavior of young women, alcoholism, extreme poverty, and lawlessness. The palace also provided İhsan with printing blocks of somewhat ambiguous pictures. When illustrated and combined with certain captions they could have been presented as clear proofs of the moral and spiritual deterioration of Europe, which was otherwise a civilised and developed continent.⁷⁵ However, despite these compromises İhsan was able to preserve a certain degree of his own

⁷³ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 83.

⁷⁴ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

⁷⁵ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 94-95.

freedom, so that *Servet-i Fünun* could continue to be considered a significant and popular illustrated journal. The success of his publishing house and the esteem of intellectual circles of the Empire can be attributed in no small part to his ability to innovate, to play politics, and to build strategic alliances.

3.3.2 His gusto and interests

Ahmed İhsan's entrepreneurial spirit was driven by a deep passion for literature, science, and technology. His interests were wide ranged, and he was always eager to explore new ideas and innovations. This enthusiasm was evident in the content of *Servet-i Fünun*, which covered a diverse array of topics, from scientific discoveries and technological advancements to literary and cultural developments.

Ahmed İhsan, in his self-celebrating autobiography, offers himself as a champion of civilization, who, if wanted, would have become much more successful economically as a rank-and-file officer of the higher echelons of the Ottoman bureaucracy. He pitches Süleyman Sudi, an economist and his father's close friend, as an early influence in contrast to his father. Rather than being a traditional bureaucrat like his father, Süleyman Sudi was a progressivist, whose house in Damascus contained many French illustrated journals which shaped İhsan's early interests.⁷⁶ Another important influence on Ahmed İhsan was his French tutor, Agah Efendi. A young Ottoman and a close companion of famous Namık Kemal, Agah Efendi too was a progressivist. He was the one who introduced Jules Verne to Ahmed İhsan, an important milestone as Verne did not only shaped young İhsan's tastes but also provided him with recognition as an accomplished translator.⁷⁷ He translated several

⁷⁶ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 82.

⁷⁷ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 83.

novels by Jules Verne into Turkish, including *Around the World in Eighty Days* (*Seksen Günde Devr-i Âlem*)⁷⁸ and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (*Deñiz Altında 20000 Fersah Seyâhat*)⁷⁹, which were immensely popular among Ottoman readers. His translations helped introduce Ottoman audiences to the world of science fiction and adventure literature, which was a relatively new genre in the Ottoman literary scene. Ahmed İhsan provided himself with massive financial gain through his Verne translations, most notably his translation of *Île Mystérieuse* as *Gizli Ada* in Ottoman Turkish in 1889.⁸⁰

Ahmed İhsan's frustration with his inability to print locally produced visual materials and his fascination with the European progressiveness culminated in his 1891 European trip. Functioned both as a business trip and a pilgrimage, he had the opportunity to get first-hand experience in latest printing technologies as well as an excuse to observe the Western way of life, travelling through Western and Central Europe.⁸¹ In addition to gaining essential technical expertise, he took the opportunity to author and publish *What I Have Seen in Europe* (*Avrupa'da Ne Gördüm*), the first illustrated travelogue in Ottoman Turkish.⁸² A testament to his deep fascination with Europe as well as a guidebook for future Ottoman travelers, the travelogue proved to be both a commercial success and a source of cultural capital. Ahmed İhsan frequently used his travelogue as a reference point in the future in order to reinforce his status as a prominent authority regarding the western world, which he saw with his own eyes.⁸³

⁷⁸ Jules Verne, (1306/1889). *Seksen Günde Devr-i Âlem*. (trans. Ahmet İhsan). İstanbul: Cemal Efendi Matbaası.

⁷⁹ Ahmed İhsan, *Deñiz Altında 20000 Fersah Seyâhat* (İstanbul: Şirket-i Mürettibîye Matba'ası, 1307 (1888/9)).

⁸⁰ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 86.

⁸¹ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 93.

⁸² Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

⁸³ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 93-94.

Ahmed İhsan's gusto for life was also evident in his personal interests. Recognizing the power of images in capturing readers' attention, he was an avid collector of photographs and illustrations, which he used to enhance the visual appeal of *Servet-i Fünun*. İhsan's commitment to photography extended beyond technical advancements; he actively encouraged readers and correspondents to submit photographs, particularly those capturing local scenes, which he referred to as "national images." This emphasis on photography not only elevated the journal's aesthetic appeal but also positioned *Servet-i Fünun* as a pioneer in the Ottoman mediascape, showcasing İhsan's belief in the transformative potential of image-based media. His enthusiasm for photography was further reflected in the journal's consistent coverage of advancements in print and reproduction technologies, solidifying its reputation as a leader in illustrated publishing.⁸⁴

3.3.3 Conclusion

By 1908, Ahmed İhsan had established himself as a leading entrepreneur in the Ottoman publishing industry. His publishing house was a center of innovation and modernity, while his dealings with the government reflected the complex interplay between the press and political power in a rapidly changing society. Above all, his gusto and wide-ranging interests made him a dynamic figure who was always eager to explore new ideas and push the boundaries of what was possible in the world of print media. Through his work, Ahmed İhsan not only shaped the Ottoman mediascape but also laid the groundwork for the modern Turkish press. His achievements up to 1908 set the stage for his continued influence in the years

⁸⁴ Ahmet Ersoy, "Autobiography of a Print Venture."

following the Young Turk Revolution, as he adapted to the new political realities of the Ottoman Empire and, later, the Turkish Republic.

3.4 *Servet-i Fünun* as a signifier of social class

Servet-i Fünun was not only a journal, but it was also a piece of cultural evidence of the period it has been produced. In its text and image version, it was involved in the creation of a modern Ottoman bourgeoisie, especially among the Turkish speaking urban elite. This subchapter is intended to analyze how *Servet-i Fünun* was a signifier of social class, looking at the audience, the participatory nature of the content, and the ideological underpinnings that reinforced class distinctions.

3.4.1 Audience

To be universal in its appeal, *Servet-i Fünun* was intended for the educated elite as well as for the emerging middle class. Its readers included mid- to high-level government officials, teachers, professionals, intellectuals, students, merchants and, occasionally women, to indicate the journal's bold claim to be a universal publication breaking through the barriers of the social hierarchy. The interesting coverage of science, technology, literature, travel, and fashion made the journal's content highly consumable for the target audience.⁸⁵ Ahmed İhsan, the creator of the journal, had a vision of a journal that would educate people about modern civilization and progress. His target audience was the younger generation of Ottoman Turks who wanted to know more about the developments in science, technology and culture. Some of these readers were products of the modern schools of the empire, including the Mülkiye (School of Civil Administration), which provided secular and technical

⁸⁵ Şiviloğlu, *The Emergence of Public Opinion*, 174-221.

education. This generated a new generation of educated elites who were French speakers and had an appreciation of European thought structures, therefore making them the perfect readers of *Servet-i Fünun*.⁸⁶

The journal was read not only in Istanbul but also in the provinces where it was available through subscribers and agents. Provincial administrators, teachers and local intellectuals were its regular readers as it provided them with a glimpse of the world beyond, with news and pictures from Europe, America and other parts of the Ottoman Empire. This provincial readership was important for the journal's success; it helped to establish *Servet-i Fünun* as a national journal with a national distribution.

87

One of the most significant features of *Servet-i Fünun*'s readership was the presence of women. Although the Ottoman press of the late 19th century was for the most part targeted to men, *Servet-i Fünun* was aimed at female readership.⁸⁸ Fashion, health and domestic life were among the topics of regular coverage of the journal. It also presented illustrations of the latest Parisian modes and garments, which were of great interest to female readers, including professional modistes who wished to create similar outfits. The journal's female readership was not only concerned with fashion, however. *Servet-i Fünun* also had articles for women's intellectual and educational interests, including pieces on modern medicine and childcare. Such pieces, sometimes by people of note such as Besim Ömer, the gynecologist, embodied the journal's vision on women's education and

⁸⁶ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 83-85.

⁸⁷ Ersoy, "Ottomans and The Kodak Galaxy, 330-357.

⁸⁸ For a more detailed discussion on female participation in late Ottoman media environment, see: Frierson, "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In; Frierson, "Unimagined Communities.

empowerment. Through targeting the concerns of female readers, *Servet-i Fünun* helped to bring women into the public sphere.⁸⁹

3.4.2 Participation

One of the most characteristic features of *Servet-i Fünun* was the ability to create a reader's community. Where many fellow contemporaries of *Servet-i Fünun* did not, the journal engaged its readers; not merely as recipients of the material it presented, but as contributors to it. This subchapter looks at how the readers of the journal participated in it through letters, photographs, competitions, and debates. Thus, the analysis of these interactions helps to understand the nature of the relationship between the journal and its readers, as well as other cultural and intellectual processes in late Ottoman society.⁹⁰

A form of readers' interaction with *Servet-i Fünun* was through letters to the editor. Ahmed İhsan, the head and the owner of the journal, published readers' letters, thus opening the venue for discussion. These letters were usually an appreciation of the journal, an appeal to present particular topics, or questions on scientific and technological issues. In the pages of the journal, İhsan continued the dialogue with these letters, thus creating a personal and close relationship with the readers, as if they were part of the journal. For instance, a modiste (dressmaker) sent a letter to the journal and appreciated the fashion illustrations but asked for more explanations of the designs so that she could create them. İhsan was very enthusiastic, saying that he was happy to have found 'virtuous Islamic ladies' among the readers of the journal

⁸⁹ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 81-119.

⁹⁰ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 97-99.

and that he would try to give more details of the items to be drawn or described in future issues.⁹¹

The readers of *Servet-i Fünun* were encouraged to submit their own photographs, which were usually taken with pocket Kodak cameras that were marketed to the modern, bourgeois individual as essential.⁹² These photographs of landscapes, historical sites, and daily life that were printed with text gave the readers of the journal the impression that they were in it together. Aside from letters and photos, *Servet-i Fünun* also accepted more substantial contributions from its readers. These included articles, essays, and even short stories that appeared with the journal's regular contents. Some of these articles were written by readers from provinces who gave accounts of what was taking place in various parts of the empire. Many of such articles were illustrated with photographs of the local points of interest, industries, and customs, so that the readers could gain a composite view of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, contributors from Bursa, Izmir and Damascus sent in photographs and descriptions of their cities and areas, which appeared with their letters.⁹³ This reader participation practice not only supported the journal's position as a carrier of the collective memory but also provided the readers with the opportunity to consider themselves as participants in the cultural and intellectual life of the empire.⁹⁴

Servet-i Fünun was also a place to discuss ideas, and readers were expected to join in the discussion and debates. The journal often carried articles on sensitive subjects including the role of science and technology, the issue of European

⁹¹ Mûdîst Terzî Refîka, "Mektûb," *Servet-i Fünûn* 31 (Teşrîn-i Evvel 1307/October 1891), 45; Aḥmed İḥsân, "Cevâb," *Servet-i Fünûn* 31 (Teşrîn-i Evvel 1307/October 1891), 45.

⁹² Ersoy, "Ottomans and The Kodak Galaxy,".

⁹³ Ersoy, "History as you go".

⁹⁴ Ersoy, "Ottomans and The Kodak Galaxy," 330-357.

civilization, and the future of the Ottoman Empire. Readers were encouraged to comment on these articles through letters to the editor or by submitting their own articles. This was especially the case with regard to the “machine age” as an issue that stirred up *Servet-i Fünun* readers.⁹⁵ The journal discussed the possibilities of automatic machines to change the nature of human existence in an article that summarized a piece from *Le Figaro* and asked its readers to consider the consequences of technological advancement.⁹⁶

3.4.3 Ideology

Servet-i Fünun was more than just an illustrated weekly; it embodied a specific ideological vision that guided its content and editorial direction. This section examines the basic ideological principles that *Servet-i Fünun* made central to its vision, and the focus is on modernity, progress, and the dissemination of scientific knowledge. It reveals how *Servet-i Fünun* tried to position itself as a champion of civilization and a bridge between the Ottoman Empire and the wider world by analyzing the journal’s editorial choices, thematic focus, and engagement with global trends.

One of the key ideological themes of *Servet-i Fünun* was the idea of the Ottoman Empire as a modern, civilized state. This theme was expressed through the journal’s extensive coverage of technological advancements, such as the expansion of the railway network, and its emphasis on the empire’s historical and cultural heritage.⁹⁷ In this way, *Servet-i Fünun* presented the empire as both modern and

⁹⁵ Maḥmūd Şâdîk, “Muşâḥabe-yi Fennîye: Makînalar Devri,” *Servet-i Fünûn* 117 (Mayıs 1311/June 1893), 202.

⁹⁶ Kolland, 104-106.

⁹⁷ Ersoy, “History as you go,” 243-245.

traditional, associated with a glorious past, and thus persuaded its readers that they were part of a privileged class that was capable of understanding and further enriching this dual heritage..⁹⁸

Despite undergoing significant changes over the years, *Servet-i Fünûn* maintained a distinctive identity from its very first issues. At the heart of *Servet-i Fünûn*'s ideology there was a firm conviction of the power of science and technology as a revitalizing force. This belief was reflected in the journal's extensive coverage of scientific discoveries, technological innovations, and industrial advancements, both within the Ottoman Empire and abroad. Ahmed İhsan, remained steadfast in his mission to use the publication as a platform to disseminate the ideals of civilization and progress.⁹⁹ His editorial vision was committed to secularism and rationalism. Secular reasons excluded religious or supernatural explanations from the coverage of the journal's scientific topics. The journal's exclusion of religious or supernatural explanations from its coverage of scientific topics was in line with the journal's commitment to rational explanations, which it believed could be used to understand and shape the world."¹⁰⁰ During that time, articles on electrification, telegraphy and other technological marvels were illustrated with vivid drawings that brought life to the imagination of the readers. These achievements were not only praised for their useful applications, but also as symbolic indicators of the journal's appreciation for the new century's progress. In this respect, by advocating a rational and scientific outlook on life, *Servet-i Fünûn* went so far as to oppose many conventional notions and invite its readers to challenge conventional wisdom and customs.

⁹⁸ Ersoy, "Ottomans and The Kodak Galaxy," 330-357.

⁹⁹ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 20.

¹⁰⁰ Hâşim Nâhîd, "Ahmed İhsân - Servet-i Fünûn," *Servet-i Fünûn* 1249 (Nisân 1331/May 1915), 6.

Servet-i Fünun's ideology was overwhelmingly Eurocentric in its vision of civilization. The term *medeniyet* (civilization) was used by the journal quite frequently to refer to the accomplishments of Europe and North America, which the journal held up as examples for the Ottoman Empire to follow. This vision was continued in the journal's coverage of European cities, industries, and cultural practices, which were usually portrayed as the highest point of human evolution. The journal's travelogues which were written by Ahmed İhsan, and other contributors played a key role in this Eurocentric vision's promotion. These accounts, which described the orderliness, efficiency, and technological sophistication of European societies, and which the author related from Paris, Vienna, and London. *Servet-i Fünun* presented these cities as paragons of civilization, and by extension encouraged its readers to view Europe as a source of inspiration and a benchmark for progress, through its articles. The journal also consistently provided its readers with a uniquely Eurocentric perspective on global affairs, surpassing other Ottoman-Turkish periodicals in this regard over the years.¹⁰¹ The narrative of the journal was grounded in a belief in a linear progression of history, with Western Europe serving as the constant benchmark, celebrated as the latest embodiment of universal advancement.¹⁰²

3.5 Conclusion

In its dual function as both a mirror and a motor of change, *Servet-i Fünun* not only chronicled the aspirations of a burgeoning Ottoman bourgeoisie but actively participated in constructing a modern, secular, and progressive social imaginary. Its

¹⁰¹ Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 20.

¹⁰² Kolland, *The Making and Universalization of New Time*, 20.

readership—comprising educated urban elites, provincial intellectuals, and even fashion-conscious women—reflected the evolving class dynamics of the late Ottoman Empire. Through participatory formats such as letters, photographic submissions, and reader-contributed articles, the journal fostered a dialogical relationship between the center and the periphery, the press and its public, thereby cultivating an imagined community of modern Ottomans connected through shared discourses of science, civility, and spectacle.

Crucially, *Servet-i Fünun*'s ideological project rested on a firm belief in rationalism, secular progress, and a Eurocentric vision of civilization. Its consistent valorization of Western scientific and technological achievements positioned the journal as a cultural mediator between the Ottoman Empire and the global modernity it sought to emulate. While the journal adopted a progressive stance, this was not without contradictions—its endorsement of Western norms often reproduced hierarchies and excluded alternative, non-European visions of modernity. Nevertheless, *Servet-i Fünun* played a foundational role in shaping a public culture that embraced modern values while negotiating the unique historical conditions of the late Ottoman world.

As such, *Servet-i Fünun* was more than a periodical—it was a pedagogical apparatus and a class signifier, cultivating both aesthetic taste and political subjectivity among its readers. By engaging its audience not merely as consumers but as contributors to a collective visual and textual culture, the journal helped forge a modern Ottoman middle class attuned to the rhythms of technological innovation, print capitalism, and global awareness.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHING THE EYE: SNAPSHOTS AND BOURGEOIS VISUALITY OF *SERVET-I FÜNUN*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the role of *Servet-i Fünun* as a visual pedagogical apparatus at the intersection of photography, modernity, and class formation in the late Ottoman Empire. While the existing literature on Ottoman photography has focused predominantly on state-sponsored image production, studio portraiture, or ethnographic documentation by foreign photographers, far less attention has been given to the participatory, amateur, and mass-mediated dimensions of photographic practice. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining *Servet-i Fünun*'s photographic contests and reader-submitted snapshots as a key site in the cultural production of Ottoman modernity.

The main argument of this chapter is the claim that *Servet-i Fünun*'s photographic practices served not only to reflect Ottoman social hierarchies but to actively shape them. The images presented rural laborers, urban vendors, landscapes, infrastructure, military installations, and exoticized provincial "types" as orderly, picturesque, and legible. They reconciled tradition and progress, combining ethnographic curiosity with civic pride, and naturalized the coexistence of old and new as part of the empire's visual grammar. In doing so, the journal's snapshots both aestheticized social difference and trained readers to perceive the empire as an integrated, hierarchical, and aspirationally modern polity.

The chapter proceeds in three parts. The first and second subsections offer a theoretical and historical framework, situating *Servet-i Fünun*'s photographic

projects within broader debates on photography, cultural hegemony, and visual pedagogy. The third subsection turns to a close analysis of a series of snapshots published between 1896 and 1901, including images of rural labor, maritime trade, urban life, infrastructure, nature, and ethnographic subjects from the Arab provinces. These images, taken together, illuminate the complex ways in which *Servet-i Fünun* produced a visual archive of Ottoman modernity — one that was at once inclusive in its range of subjects and deeply exclusionary in its representational logic. By analyzing these images as active agents of urban middle class performative modernity, the chapter seeks to demonstrate that photography in *Servet-i Fünun* was not a neutral medium but a powerful tool of instruction, distinction, and class formation. In short, the photographic pages of the journal did not merely document bourgeois modernity — they helped to make it imaginable, desirable, and reproducible in the everyday visual life of its readers.

4.2 Limitations of existing literature

The study of photography in the Ottoman Empire has often been dominated by analyses of state-sponsored and studio-produced images, largely overlooking the critical distinction between being photographed and engaging in photography as a creative practice. While images from official archives and commercial studios have been thoroughly examined, the practices of amateur photographers and the socio-economic structures that enabled or restricted participation in visual culture remain insufficiently explored. As Nancy Micklewright¹⁰³ and Ahmet Ersoy¹⁰⁴ have demonstrated, while scholars have extensively analyzed photographs produced

¹⁰³ Micklewright, “Alternative Histories of Photography in the Ottoman Middle East,” 75-92.

¹⁰⁴ Ersoy, “Ottomans and the Kodak Galaxy, 330-357.

through professional channels, they have largely overlooked the critical difference between Ottoman subjects who merely appeared before the camera and those who actively engaged with photographic technology. This analytical gap stems from what Zeynep Çelik¹⁰⁵ identifies as the "archive bias" in Ottoman visual studies, where institutional collections privilege state-sponsored and commercial studio work over personal photographic practices. This narrow focus not only results in a very limited number of photographs as research subjects but also limits our ability to better evaluate how the Ottoman public interacted with this novel mode of representation.¹⁰⁶ Understanding these dynamics allows us to appreciate the complexity of Ottoman visual modernity and the uneven distribution of photographic agency.

One of the most prominent examples of official photographic production in the Hamidian era is the set of gift albums commissioned by Sultan Abdülhamid II and sent to major world powers, most notably the United States and Great Britain. Compiled primarily between 1893 and 1906, these albums—often referred to as the Abdülhamid II Albums—comprised thousands of photographs showcasing the Ottoman Empire's infrastructure, educational and medical institutions, military installations, and ethnographic diversity.¹⁰⁷ These albums, containing images of schools, factories, military institutions, and infrastructure, were diplomatic tools intended to counter European perceptions of Ottoman decline. Thoroughly examined

¹⁰⁵ Çelik, *About Antiquities*, 6.

¹⁰⁶ Hanoosh, "From the Photographic to the Visual," 20.

¹⁰⁷ Far from being mere artistic endeavors, these albums were produced as diplomatic instruments meant to demonstrate the Empire's modernizing ambitions, bureaucratic reach, and territorial control. Two of the most significant surviving sets are preserved today in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., which holds 51 volumes and nearly 1,800 images, and the British Museum in London, which houses a comparable though less comprehensive collection. See: Library of Congress, *Photograph Albums of Sultan Abdul-Hamid II*, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/abdul-hamid-ii-collection/about-this-collection/>; British Museum, *Abdulhamid II Album Collection*, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection> (accessed May 2025).

by Muhammad Isa Waley¹⁰⁸ and Erin Hyde Nolan¹⁰⁹, these archives exemplify photography as an instrument of state power where subjects participated solely as documented bodies. As Edhem Eldem¹¹⁰ notes in *Camera Ottomana*, these images transformed Ottoman citizens into "specimens of modernization" without granting them any agency in the representational process. However, as Nolan notes, most studies focus on the final product rather than the conditions of production—such as the photographers' identities, compensation, or bureaucratic oversight. The images demonstrate technical skill and intentional composition because they functioned as diplomatic tools. The research provides detailed analysis of political content in the albums, but it does not explore the operational elements of their creation including photographer work environment and payment structures and bureaucratic production procedures.¹¹¹

Wendy Shaw¹¹² and Michelle Woodward¹¹³ extend this analysis by looking at how elite patronage affected professional photography outside the imperial court. Wendy Shaw offers a theoretical intervention with her concept of "innocent modernism," arguing that Ottoman photographers adopted Western techniques without necessarily internalizing their ideological frameworks. This perspective challenges Eurocentric narratives of photography's diffusion, suggesting instead a selective appropriation. However, while also attributing an orientalizing sense of "innocence" to the Ottomans, her assumption is that the Ottoman domain was visually a blank slate when it encountered modernity, which is historically gravely

¹⁰⁸ Waley, "Images of the Ottoman Empire, 111-127.

¹⁰⁹ Hyde Nolan, "The Gift of the Abdülhamid II Albums: The Consequences of Photographic Circulation".

¹¹⁰ Eldem, "Powerful Images", 106-153.

¹¹¹ Low, *Picturing the Ottoman Empire*.

¹¹² Shaw, "Ottoman Photography of the Late Nineteenth Century, 80-93.

¹¹³ Woodward, "Between Orientalist Clichés and Images of Modernization, 363-374.

erroneous, dismissing decades of work on Ottoman early modernity. Similarly, Michelle Woodward examines how elite patronage shaped photographic outputs beyond the palace, highlighting the interplay between Ottoman self-representation and European Orientalist expectations. Despite these contributions, the field lacks detailed studies on the photographers themselves, their training, professional networks, and degree of creative autonomy. These insights suggest that professional photographers operated within a complex cultural landscape, balancing state directives with commercial demands. These works demonstrate the adaptability of professional photographers but leave room for further investigation of their socioeconomic status and professional networks.

The commercial studios of Istanbul, particularly Abdullah Frères, Sébah & Joaillier, and James Robertson's atelier, have been extensively cataloged by Bahattin Öztuncay¹¹⁴ and Engin Özendes.¹¹⁵ These works provide invaluable documentation of technical practices, from backdrops to posing conventions, yet often prioritize aesthetics over socio-economic analysis. While studio portraits gave subjects some control over self-presentation through costume choices and poses as Stephen Sheehi shows in *The Arab Imago*¹¹⁶, the actual mechanical process remained firmly in the hands of professionals like the Abdullah Frères or Sébah & Joaillier. Michelle Woodward's analysis reveals how this dynamic shifted in provincial studios, where amateur photographers like the Armenian practitioners in Van studied by Armen Marsoobian¹¹⁷ often blurred the line between subject and operator within their communities.

¹¹⁴ Öztuncay, *The Photographers of Constantinople*; Bahattin Öztuncay, *James Robertson*.

¹¹⁵ Özendes, *From Sébah & Joaillier to Foto Sabah*.

¹¹⁶ Sheehi, *The Arab Imago*.

¹¹⁷ Marsoobian, *Dildilian brothers*.

Beyond portraiture, professional photographers played a crucial role in public health, archaeology, and urban documentation. Zeynep Devrim Gürsel¹¹⁸ analyzes medical photography as a tool of state-led modernization, demonstrating how images were used to promote public hygiene. Her work bridges visual studies and history of science. Similarly, Nancy Micklewright¹¹⁹ analyzes architectural and archaeological photography, often commissioned by state or foreign institutions. Collectively, these works highlight photography's dual function as both a record and an instrument of power.

The production of ethnographic "type" photographs has been extensively critiqued within colonial contexts, but Ottoman-specific analyses are fewer. Mary Roberts¹²⁰ examines how European photographers like Guillaume Berggren crafted exoticized depictions of Ottoman subjects for commercial and scientific markets. Christopher Pinney¹²¹ situates these practices within broader imperial visual economies, yet his focus remains on European actors. Crucially, the responses of Ottoman photographers to these paradigms are rarely examined. Additionally, the gendered dimensions of ethnographic photography—such as the representation of Muslim women—warrant further scrutiny, particularly in light of Sarah Graham-Brown's research on photography and gender in the Middle East.¹²²

This evaluation of literature about Ottoman photography emphasizes the importance of studying more widespread venues of participation in the field of photographic representation. While the existing literature sufficiently showcases the ideological and epistemological underpinnings of Ottoman photography, the

¹¹⁸ Gürsel, "A Picture of Health", 36-67.

¹¹⁹ Micklewright, "Alternative Histories of Photography in the Ottoman Middle East".

¹²⁰ Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders*.

¹²¹ Pinney, "What's Photography Got to Do with It", 33-52.

¹²² Graham-Brown, *Images of Women*.

proliferation of these practices of representation through participation of anonymous and amateur level photographers, and the dissemination of images created by those individuals, remain understudied. This analytical gap means historians have underestimated how photography could serve as a tool for cultural hegemony and execution of symbolic power among Ottoman subjects. Recognizing photographic practice—not just production by professionals but also amateur involvement—can reveal broader patterns of visual culture.

4.3 Snapshots of *Servet-i Fünun* and the “photography complex”

During the late 19th and early 20th as photography emerged as a transformative medium of representation, its development in the Ottoman Empire followed a pattern that both mirrored and diverged from its use in Western imperial contexts. James Hevia's notion of the "photography complex" describes how colonial powers used photography to assert dominance, staging images to reinforce civilizational hierarchies.¹²³ Hevia presents the "photography complex" as an interconnected system of human and non-human entities including cameras and chemicals and photographers and archives and media which worked together to create images that supported imperial power. The research builds upon Hevia's theoretical work by studying the photography complex throughout the Boxer War and its enduring effects on historical documentation. In the Ottoman context, a parallel can be drawn with the photographic contests of *Servet-i Fünun* magazine. These contests, framed as artistic competitions, functioned as mechanisms of class distinction. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony¹²⁴ and Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of

¹²³ Hevia, "The Photography Complex", 79-120.

¹²⁴ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.

symbolic violence¹²⁵ and cultural capital.¹²⁶ These contests reveal how photography became a tool of bourgeois cultural dominance. The seemingly neutral standards of visual quality were, in fact, ideological tools that trained both producers and viewers in a particular social and aesthetic worldview.

Through its complex structure the photography complex operated as an advanced system which exercised visual control. The fundamental relationship between technology and ideology operated through cameras and photographic processes to function as colonial control instruments. The invention of portable cameras combined with faster exposure times allowed military campaigns to be documented quickly while mass reproduction techniques enabled these images to reach a global audience through newspapers, books and propaganda materials. Western military and civilian photographers did not merely document events; they staged them to reinforce racial and civilizational hierarchies. The military procession through Beijing's Forbidden City served as both an imperial display of power and a spectacle to humiliate the Qing court while validating Western intervention through the "civilizing mission" narrative. The photographs from this event were stored in archives before being distributed worldwide to establish Western superiority as an accepted truth in public understanding. Similarly, images of executions—often posed for maximum dramatic effect—were circulated in illustrated newspapers (Leslie's Weekly, *La Vie Illustrée*) with captions that framed Chinese subjects as barbaric and deserving of punishment. This visual-textual apparatus ensured that viewers interpreted these images within an imperial logic, reinforcing consent for colonial violence. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, the imposition of dominant

¹²⁵ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

¹²⁶ Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital" 241-58.

cultural norms in a way that makes them seem inevitable, is crucial. The Western photographic archive did not just depict Chinese “backwardness”; it produced it as a self-evident truth, obscuring the role of imperialism in creating the very conditions it claimed to document.

Hevia examines imperial photography, but a comparable process occurred in the Ottoman Empire through *Servet-i Fünun*’s snapshot contests which controlled photographic practices to maintain bourgeois cultural standards. Gramsci’s concept of cultural hegemony, the process by which dominant groups secure consent through cultural and ideological means in conjunction with coercion, helps explain how snapshot contests served both coercive and persuasive functions.¹²⁷ These contests operated as discreet exclusionary tools which determined both the participants of visual culture and the acceptable forms of representation. In the Ottoman context, photography operated less as a tool of direct colonial control and more as a means of class distinction, reinforcing bourgeois hegemony through the regulation of aesthetic norms. Pierre Bourdieu’s work on cultural capital—the forms of knowledge, taste, and competence that confer social status—helps explain how *Servet-i Fünun*’s photographic contests functioned as exclusionary mechanisms.¹²⁸ The practice of amateur photography in the Ottoman Empire required economic standing as its fundamental requirement. The expenses needed to practice photography including imported European cameras and chemical solutions and plates and mailing submissions from the provinces exceeded what working class people and most middle-class individuals could afford. The *Servet-i Fünun* contests restricted participation through entry fees and submission requirements which benefited urban

¹²⁷ Forgacs, *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*.

¹²⁸ Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital", 241-58.

elite members who had access to European suppliers and technical education. The economic capital system created a self-perpetuating cycle that limited visual culture participation to specific groups thus making photography a tool for reinforcing the newly forming social order through which the capital started to dominate.

The technical knowledge system of *Servet-i Fünun* created additional barriers to entry which restricted participation further. The contest rules required exact documentation of exposure times and lens specifications and chemical processes and demanded identical duplicate prints which tested both skill and equipment reliability.¹²⁹ The technical standards presented as neutral quality measures operated as cultural arbitraries according to Pierre Bourdieu because they revealed class distinctions through mastery of objective technical skills.¹³⁰ The journal reinforced Western-derived aesthetic norms through its emphasis on aspects such as sharp focus and balanced composition and "proper" subject matter which deepened this symbolic violence. Through its evaluation of images *Servet-i Fünun* trained its readers to recognize bourgeois visuality as the sole acceptable method of representation.

The judging committees of *Servet-i Fünun* maintained these exclusions through their composition. The selection process at the publisher Ahmed İhsan's hands along with his professional artist allies who followed European education and tastes resulted in the preference of images that met Eurocentric artistic standards.¹³¹ These standards were not neutral but reflected bourgeois tastes, reinforced by judges who were themselves products of Europeanized education and artistic training. These "organic intellectuals," as Gramsci would term them, shaped public perception by

¹²⁹ Ahmed İhsan, "Fotoğraf Müsabakası", *Servet-i Fünun*, 269 (1896), 130-131.

¹³⁰ Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*.

¹³¹ Hovhannes (Onnig) Dirador, who owned a shop selling photography equipment in Bahçekapı, acted as a sponsor to photography competitions organized by the journal, while being a regular member of the competition jury: Ahmed İhsan, "Fotoğraf Müsabakası", *Servet-i Fünun*, 269 (1896), 130-131.

legitimizing specific visual styles.¹³² The visual language promoted by *Servet-i Fünun* became the accepted representation of modernity, effectively framing bourgeois aesthetics as universal. The selection committee of the journal actively molded public tastes by awarding specific photographic styles which resulted in the visual language of the bourgeoisie becoming the standard definition of modernity.¹³³

The impact of this visual culture extended beyond those who actively participated. The widespread circulation of these photographs served as visual instruction for the middle classes, shaping their perceptions and aspirations. The mass-distributed photographs of *Servet-i Fünun* served as visual instruction for middle-class people to develop representational practices. This aligns with Bourdieu's idea of habitus, where repeated exposure to certain norms internalizes them as natural.¹³⁴ *Servet-i Fünun* thus trained its audience to see the world through bourgeois eyes, even if they could not afford to partake in photographic practice themselves. This phenomenon underscored photography's ideological function: it molded not just what the masses saw, but how they saw. The journal's most striking achievement was its ability to frame these bourgeois aesthetics as universal standards. By presenting bourgeois visual norms as the natural evolution of artistic progress, *Servet-i Fünun* obscured their class-specific origins, completing what Mark Fisher identified as capitalism's "greatest trick": the erasure of its own contingency. Bourgeois culture presents itself as the culture of the world. Its attitude towards the rest of society is not only of exclusion, but of coercion to participate in various forms of control and exploitation. Representation functions as the builder of this realism;

¹³² Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.

¹³³ Ahmed Ihsan, "Fotoğraf Müsabakası", *Servet-i Fünun*, 269 (1896), 130-131.

¹³⁴ Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

mystifying the mode of production, presenting the values of bourgeoisie as values of humanity, and the way of life as the only possible one.¹³⁵

In conclusion, the photographic practices of the Ottoman Empire reveal a deeply entrenched system of visual hegemony. While the medium held democratic potential, the institutional framework surrounding its production and dissemination ensured that photography reinforced, rather than challenged, existing social hierarchies. By presenting class-based aesthetics as objective standards, *Servet-i Fünun* and similar institutions obscured the socio-economic roots of visual culture, perpetuating a capitalist logic that rendered its own exclusions invisible. This system did not merely exclude the working classes from participating; it trained them to see the world through bourgeois eyes, ensuring that even those who could not afford cameras would internalize the visual logic of their social superiors.

4.4 Snapshots as visual pedagogical apparatus

This subchapter explores how *Servet-i Fünun* operated as a visual pedagogical apparatus through its snapshot contests and the ongoing publication of related photographs. Building on archival material and visual analysis, this study argues that *Servet-i Fünun*'s photographic practices were not merely illustrative but instructional. The journal's call for technically exacting photographic submissions—complete with metadata on equipment, materials, and process—effectively structured photographic practice as a form of disciplinary knowledge. Moreover, by selecting and publishing photographs that conformed to specific aesthetic and technical norms, *Servet-i Fünun* implemented what may be described as a "visual pedagogy" for the modern Ottoman audience. Through this, the journal offered its readers not only

¹³⁵ Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*.

exemplars of photographic competence but also models of proper perception, self-fashioning, and social aspiration. It explores the ways in which the journal's photographic content helped codify bourgeois norms of taste and visibility, while simultaneously marginalizing alternative modes of seeing rooted in non-Western, rural, or working-class visual traditions. After this, the subsection turns to a close reading of several snapshots published in *Servet-i Fünun* between 1896 and 1901, evaluating them through the conceptual framework developed in the preceding pages. These images—submitted by readers and curated by the editorial staff—serve as visual evidence through which we can trace the operation of the journal's pedagogical implementation. Through this evaluative perspective, the subchapter will emphasize the argument that photography functioned not only as a mirror of bourgeois modernity, but as one of its most powerful instructional tools.

The use of photography in *Servet-i Fünun* was not incidental but systematic, reflecting a broader historical moment when new image-making technologies were being integrated into modern regimes of knowledge and visibility. Photography's claims to objectivity and realism made it uniquely suited to the pedagogical ambitions of the late Ottoman bourgeoisie, who sought to cultivate a rational, ordered, and visibly modern self-image.¹³⁶ In this context, *Servet-i Fünun* did not merely reproduce photographs for decorative or illustrative purposes; rather, it deployed them as instruments of instruction—teaching its readers how to look, how to compose, and ultimately, how to see the world through the aesthetic and ideological lens of Western modernity.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Sekula, “The Body and the Archive”, 3–64.

¹³⁷ Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*.

The 1896 snapshot contest, announced by publisher and photography enthusiast Ahmet İhsan, serves as an extremely useful example of this pedagogical logic. Far from a casual call for reader engagement, the contest introduced a rigorous submission process that functioned as a mechanism of both inclusion and exclusion. Participants were required to submit snapshots ranging in size from 8x8 to 18x13 centimeters, in two identical prints, and printed on albumen or magnesium citrate paper. They were further asked to submit photographic plates, along with detailed metadata documenting the camera model, lens objective, photographic plate type, developer used, and the exact time and location of the shot.¹³⁸ This level of technical precision created a bureaucratic threshold that implicitly favored educated, urban, and financially secure individuals who had access to photographic equipment and training.¹³⁹ The contest thus became a gatekeeping device, ensuring that only a select subset of the journal's readership—those already embedded within, or aspiring to join, the ranks of the bourgeoisie—could meaningfully participate.

Crucially, *Servet-i Fünun* did not restrict its engagement with photography to the contest alone. Beyond announcing winners, the journal regularly published photographs submitted by readers in various issues. These visual selections operated as a kind of informal curriculum, modeling for the readership what constituted a “proper” photograph and, by extension, a proper way of seeing. The visual pedagogy advanced by *Servet-i Fünun* was thus both aesthetic and moral. Photographs depicting leisure scenes, carefully composed scenes of modernity, urban vistas, or idealized nature reflected the tastes and aspirations of the emerging bourgeoisie.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Ahmed İhsan, “Musavver Servet-i Fünun Gazetesi’nin Fotoğraf Müsabakası”, *Servet-i Fünun*, 265 (1896), 66.

¹³⁹ Tucker, *Nature Exposed*.

¹⁴⁰ Behdad, *Camera Orientalis*.

By selecting and valorizing these kinds of images, the journal instructed its readers in how to perceive and represent themselves and their environments in ways that conformed to modern ideals of order, refinement, and self-discipline.

What emerges from *Servet-i Fünun*'s photographic initiatives is a self-reinforcing cycle of cultural capital accumulation. The more a reader engaged with the journal—whether by studying the images, submitting photographs, or emulating the visual forms it promoted—the more they internalized and reproduced the visual codes associated with bourgeois modernity. This process generated symbolic capital in the form of aesthetic sophistication and cultural legitimacy, allowing individuals to visually signal their inclusion within a modern, urban, and literate public. In this sense, *Servet-i Fünun* functioned analogously to what Pierre Bourdieu describes as a field of cultural production: a space in which aesthetic preferences and cultural forms are both produced and regulated through mechanisms of distinction.¹⁴¹ Photography became a medium through which distinctions between classes, as well as between “modern” and “traditional” visual sensibilities, could be articulated and reinforced.

However, this pedagogical model was not universally inclusive. The visual curriculum propagated by *Servet-i Fünun* also marginalized alternative ways of seeing and representing the world. Non-Western visual traditions and modes of expression associated with the lower classes found little to no representation within the journal's pages.¹⁴² By institutionalizing a narrow set of visual norms—realism, symmetry, clarity, bourgeois respectability—the journal implicitly excluded other forms of visual knowledge and undermined the legitimacy of competing cultural imaginaries. In effect, *Servet-i Fünun* promoted a form of visual normativity that

¹⁴¹ Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

¹⁴² Edwards, *The Camera as Historian*.

aligned with Eurocentric standards and the logic of Ottoman modernization.¹⁴³ Its photographic contests and publications trained readers not only in how to operate a camera or frame a shot, but in how to perceive the world according to the cultural hierarchies of the day.

The photographic practices of *Servet-i Fünun* reveal the deep entanglement between visual media, cultural pedagogy, and class formation in the late Ottoman period. Far from being a neutral or apolitical medium, photography in the pages of this journal was mobilized as a tool of social instruction and aesthetic discipline. Through its contests, publications, and editorial choices, *Servet-i Fünun* not only reflected bourgeois values but actively taught its readers how to embody and perform them visually. In doing so, the journal helped to shape a new kind of modern subject—one who was literate not only in text but in images; capable not only of reading but of seeing in culturally sanctioned ways. This visual pedagogy, while empowering for some, simultaneously marginalized other modes of visual expression, contributing to the uneven cultural terrain of Ottoman modernity.

To fully appreciate *Servet-i Fünun*'s role as a visual pedagogical apparatus, we turn now to a selection of fourteen published snapshots from the journal's "Nos Instantanés" section. These images—submitted by readers and selected for publication—embody the journal's visual logic, revealing the ways in which amateur photography served as both aesthetic documentation and ideological instruction. The images, which ranges from rural and urban scenes to landscapes and maritime views, demonstrate how the journal assembled a visual archive of Ottoman life, offering its readers a curated and instructive panorama of modernity, order, and taste.

¹⁴³ Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City*.



Figure 6. Snapshot photography: Costumes of desert dwellers, *Servet-i Fünun* 470 (1900), 21.

This group portrait features four men posed in traditional attire, likely Bedouins, standing upright and gazing directly at the camera. Their clothing and headgear are carefully composed and clearly the intended focus of the photograph. The accompanying caption signals the image's ethnographic purpose: it does not name the individuals but instead identifies them by type — “desert dwellers” — and highlights their “costumes.” This image offers one of the clearest examples of *Servet-i Fünun*'s participation in late Ottoman ethnographic visibility. Like similar European projects of the 19th century, the photo constructs the rural or tribal Arab subject as an object of cultural curiosity rather than an agent. Their identities are flattened into their appearance; their posture, clothing, and bodily differences are emphasized over context or voice. They are neither laborers nor citizens, but figures to be catalogued. This typological framing serves a dual function: it allows the urban viewer to visually master difference while also constructing the empire as a space of diversity ordered under a single aesthetic regime. The caption's neutral tone belies the political operation at work: it produces a spectacle of imperial inclusivity that is, in fact, built

on symbolic marginalization. These subjects are made visible not to be known, but to be kept at a safe cultural and political distance.



Figure 7. Snapshot photography: In front of the Pyramids, *Servet-i Fünun* 470 (1900), 21.

This photograph depicts a group of Ottoman men in formal attire, mounted on camels, with Egyptian locals (likely guides or camel handlers) standing beside them. In the background, the pyramids of Giza loom hazily in the distance. The compositional contrast is striking: the Ottoman figures are elevated, centered, and well-dressed; the local guides stand lower, slightly to the side, in more traditional clothing. This image functions on multiple levels. At one level, it is a travel photograph — evidence of elite Ottoman mobility and cosmopolitanism, visually aligning its subjects with European practices of Orientalist tourism. At another level, however, it subtly restages imperial hierarchies within the Ottoman realm itself. The photograph asserts Ottoman modernity by positioning its bourgeois male subjects as both masters of modern travel and appropriators of iconic “Eastern” heritage. Egypt, here, is not represented as a co-equal part of the Ottoman world but as a backdrop for bourgeois self-fashioning — exotic, distant, yet conquerable through the camera lens. Pedagogically, this image trains the viewer to see travel and photography as tools of

cultural capital — to admire the pose of mastery and recognize the performance of civility. It also implicitly teaches a politics of spatial distinction: Istanbul’s educated elites are shown not only as spectators of the ancient world, but as visual sovereigns within an empire that increasingly viewed its Arab provinces through a prism of difference, hierarchy, and picturesque ethnography.



Figure 8. Snapshot: A caravan in the desert. *Servet-i Fünun* 470 (1900), 25.

This image offers a panoramic view of a caravan encamped on the vast open plain. The human figures and their camels appear almost miniaturized against the barren landscape, their forms scattered in loose clusters across the frame. The photograph’s grainy quality and long-range perspective enhance the impression of distance, both spatial and social. For the bourgeois viewer, this image likely conjured romantic associations of Ottoman peripheries, tribal mobility, and exotic otherness. Yet beneath this picturesque surface lies a disciplining gaze: the caravan, a symbol of premodern mobility, is captured and immobilized within the photographic frame, made an object of urban spectatorship. The caravan’s place in the imperial economy

— as traders, transporters, or pastoralists — is flattened into a visual trope. This snapshot teaches the reader to appreciate the periphery as timeless and picturesque, rather than as a complex social world caught up in modernization, marginalization, or transformation.



Figure 9. Our snapshots: A shepherd in San Stefano, *Servet-i Fünun* 367 (1898), 37.

This image, on the other hand, presents a shepherd standing with his flock in the open fields of *Ayastefonos*. The figure of the shepherd, likely anonymous to the photographer and audience, occupies the center of the composition, flanked by sheep grazing in the surrounding grass. The horizontal expanse of the landscape, coupled with the quiet posture of the shepherd, conveys calm, stability, and a harmony between human and nature. This photograph instructs the viewer in a pastoral mode of seeing: rural life becomes an emblem of continuity, simplicity, and moral purity. The shepherd is not depicted as a laborer facing economic precarity, but as a stable figure in a timeless rural order. This aestheticization of rural labor, which masks class dynamics and historical change, fits neatly into the pedagogical mission of *Servet-i*

Fünun: to teach urban readers to consume the countryside as aesthetic resource rather than site of contestation or reform. The photograph teaches readers to see rural life as an aesthetic resource, a symbol of stability and tradition that could be safely admired from a distance. It also affirms class hierarchies: the rural poor become a kind of living ornament for the urban viewer's consumption.



Figure 10. Our snapshots: Farmers of San Stefano, *Servet-i Fünun* 340 (1897), 25.

This panoramic photograph presents a group of field laborers—men and women—paused in the middle of their agricultural work. The composition is strikingly organized: the figures are aligned horizontally across the frame, mimicking the structure of a tableau vivant. Despite the candid nature implied by the term “instantané,” the image is meticulously composed. The laborers are not shown in motion but in a moment of rest or posed action, their tools visible, their clothing distinct, their bodies made legible. While ostensibly documentary, this photograph operates as a pedagogical object. It invites the viewer to gaze upon rural labor not with immediacy or empathy, but with a kind of ethnographic distance. The cultivated land in the background and the workers in the foreground reinforce a vision of productivity, order, and premodern authenticity that could be safely admired by the urban middle-class reader without implicating them in the labor itself. In this way,

the photograph stabilizes rural life as a picturesque backdrop to modern progress, a romanticized supplement to urban modernity rather than an active part of it.

Moreover, its inclusion under the "Nos Instantanés" label (Our Snapshots) frames the rural worker within the possessive gaze of the urban bourgeois viewer. The image becomes a visual asset, something to be owned, categorized, and consumed within the framework of emerging photographic modernity. The caption in both Ottoman Turkish and French further suggests the journal's aspirational cosmopolitanism, aligning itself with Western publishing norms while simultaneously mediating local life to a modern audience.



Figure 11. Our snapshots: Chestnut merchant, *Servet-i Fünun* 281 (1896), 332

In contrast, the second photograph depicts a solitary chestnut seller, standing beside a large woven basket, accompanied by a small dog. The man's traditional clothing and informal posture contrast with the staged orderliness of the San Stefano image. Yet, like the former, this image too is pedagogical with its intent. It participates in a typological logic, presenting the street vendor not as an individual but as a visual type—a stock figure of urban life. This form of typification mirrors

19th-century European visual practices, particularly in ethnographic photography and commercial portraiture, where occupational and ethnic types were systematically catalogued for bourgeois consumption. The image functions as a visual taxonomy of the Ottoman social fabric, where figures like the chestnut seller are recorded not for their humanity but for their role within a stratified, picturesque urban economy. The staging of the image—clear lighting, isolated subject, neutral background—demonstrates the journal's emphasis on photographic legibility. The vendor is neither romanticized nor vilified, but rendered knowable, visible, and containable. Such images taught readers how to see street life: not as chaotic or threatening, but as part of an ordered mosaic of modern urban existence. Here again, the caption in dual script reiterates the pedagogical frame, simultaneously domesticating and distancing the subject for the educated reader.



Figure 12. Our snapshots: The Dog Rock of Prinkipo, *Servet-i Fünun* 336 (1897), 381.

This striking landscape captures a significant rock formation in Büyükada, one of the Princes' Islands, with two seated figures gazing contemplatively at the sea. The composition draws heavily on the aesthetics of the European Romantic landscape tradition: the solitary figures dwarfed by a dramatic natural formation, the interplay of rugged rock, placid water, and sweeping horizon. This image invites the reader into a particular kind of bourgeois visual experience — one of leisure, introspection, and cultivated appreciation of nature. Nature here is not a site of survival or labor, but a place of moral and aesthetic refinement. By circulating such images, *Servet-i Fünun* promoted a modern, middle-class mode of subjectivity, in which nature was something to be visited, admired, and aestheticized — and in which the viewer, like the seated figures, learned to take their place within a visual field of refinement and taste.



Figure 13. Our snapshots: Swing set, *Servet-i Fünun* 515 (1901), 321.

This vibrant urban scene depicts a fairground filled with swings, bustling crowds, and merchants' stalls. Children play, adults mingle, and the whole square hums with activity. Despite the movement, the photograph maintains compositional clarity: the swings are neatly arranged, the crowd distributed evenly across the frame, and the urban architecture in the background anchors the scene. The snapshot models an ideal of modern urban sociability. It portrays the public square as a space of controlled vitality, where tradition (the fairground, the swings) meets modernity (the urban backdrop, the photographic gaze). The editorial decision to include such scenes helped *Servet-i Fünun* teach its readers to embrace urban life as a spectacle of diversity and motion, while also appreciating the moral order that undergirded it. The city is not a place of disorder or danger, but of managed excitement and civilized leisure.



Figure 14. Snapshots: Pier of Üsküdar, *Servet-i Fünun* 266 (1896), 88.

This image shows a steamboat docked at Üsküdar, with passengers embarking or disembarking. The pier and boat are crisply framed, and the steam

funnel and flags signal technological and national progress. The ferry terminal, as a node of circulation, represents the connective tissue of a modernizing empire. The pedagogical function here is one of technological pride. The image teaches readers to associate Ottoman identity with mobility, infrastructure, and progress. It also places Ottoman modernity within an international visual vocabulary: the steamboat, the pier, the orderly movement of passengers all echo European images of urban modernization. This visual instruction reassured readers of the Empire's alignment with global currents of development and commerce.



Figure 15. Pier of Mudanya, *Servet-i Fünun* 291 (1896), 177.

Like the Üsküdar image, this snapshot focuses on a ferry terminal, but its composition emphasizes the pier's linear extension into the sea, drawing the viewer's eye into the horizon. Passengers and workers populate the length of the pier, their small figures dwarfed by the vastness of the sea and the industrial infrastructure. This image instructs the viewer to appreciate the scale and reach of Ottoman infrastructure, presenting the ferry pier as a symbol of national connectedness and

progress. It renders mobility — both physical and social — as a marker of modernity, inviting viewers to see themselves as participants in an empire moving confidently into the future.



Figure 16. Snapshot photography: Newly constructed chain well in Fatih, *Servet-i Fünun* 549 (1901), 321.

This photograph documents the recently rebuilt Chain Well in Fatih, a historic Istanbul neighborhood. The well's iron structure rises between leafless trees, surrounded by local buildings and pedestrians. The juxtaposition of old and new — Ottoman architecture and modern engineering — encapsulates the tension and promise of modernization. For *Servet-i Fünun*'s readers, this image would have embodied civic progress and technological advancement. It invited viewers to take pride in public works as emblems of national renewal, while signaling that modernization need not erase historical identity. The image functions pedagogically

by linking technological change to cultural continuity, suggesting that the Ottoman city could become modern without losing its soul.



Figure 17. Snapshot photography: A Boat at the Maltepe Wharf, *Servet-i Fünun* 431 (1899), 233.

This tranquil maritime scene shows a small rowboat on still water, with figures seated or standing aboard. The composition focuses on reflection — of a boat and figures on the water — creating a visual harmony between human activity and natural setting. This image conveys a bourgeois ideal of maritime leisure, presenting the sea not as a site of labor or commerce but as a space of repose and aesthetic pleasure. It teaches the viewer to see nature as a space for personal retreat and cultivation, reinforcing class-specific relationships to time, space, and the environment. For urban readers, the rowboat on calm waters embodied a fantasy of escape and tranquility within a modernizing world.



Figure 18. Snapshot scenery: The Kabataş Shore and cargo boat, *Servet-i Fünun* 260 (1896), 404.

Similar to the previous snapshot, this single maritime image shows a large sailboat on the Bosphorus, with the urban skyline of Kabataş behind it. The contrast between the traditional wooden vessel and the recognizable Istanbul cityscape encapsulates the encounter between old and new, tradition and progress. For bourgeois readers, the image offers a layered gaze: nostalgia for Ottoman maritime heritage and satisfaction in the urban transformation of Istanbul. It teaches viewers to reconcile attachment to the past with investment in modernization, naturalizing the coexistence of seemingly contradictory temporalities.



Figure 19. Snapshot photography: Harvest season; Threshing state, *Servet-i Fünun* 549 (1901), 41.

This panel of four rural scenes appears almost out of a textbook. Focuses on harvest time: farmers threshing grain, using oxen in the fields, setting up tents, and engaging in agricultural work. The multiplicity of images builds a detailed visual narrative of rural labor, showing not just individuals but processes, tools, and landscapes. Yet the didactic message is one of harmony and productivity, not hardship. The sequence of images celebrates the bounty and cyclical rhythms of the countryside, inviting urban readers to appreciate rural life as foundational to the imperial economy. This visual ethnography naturalizes social and economic hierarchies, presenting the rural poor as picturesque participants in a stable, seasonal order.

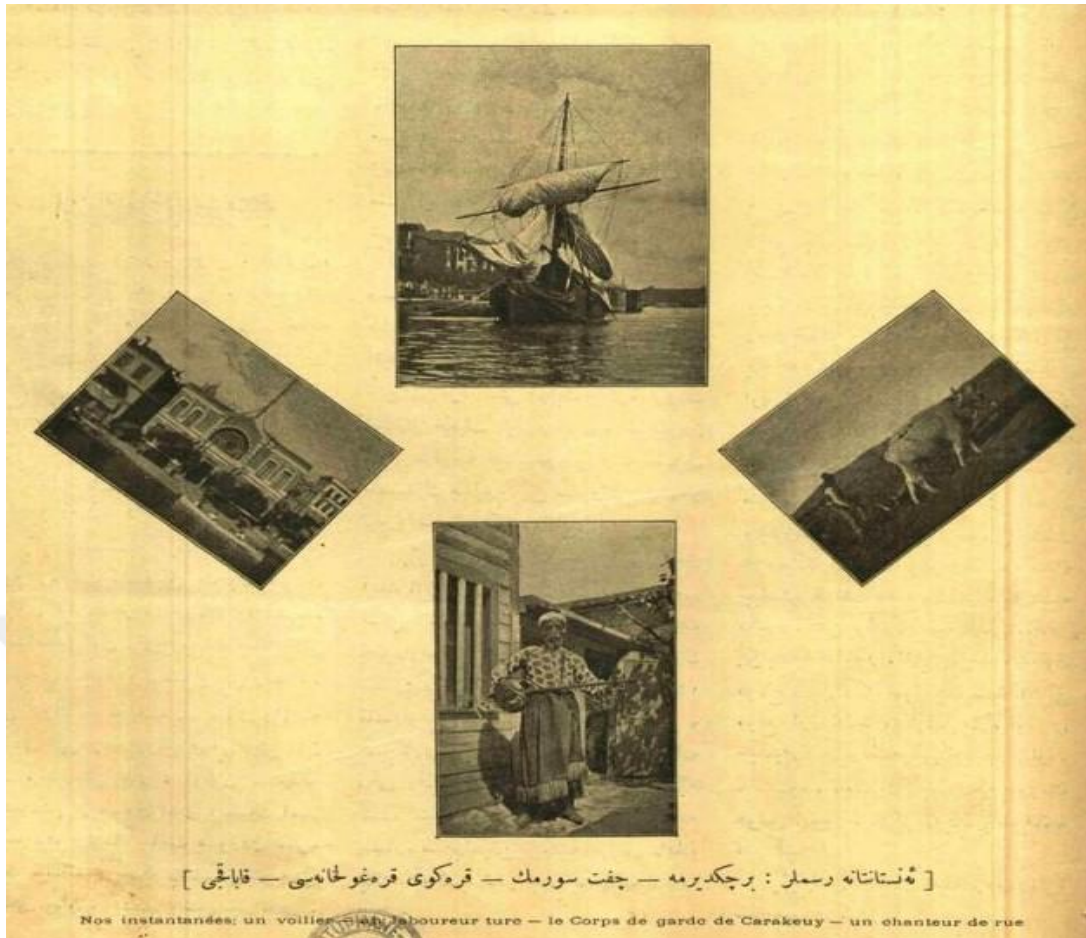


Figure 20. Snapshots: A galley; ploughing; police station of Karaköy; a street singer, *Servet-i Fünun* 260 (1896), 401.

This composite page brings together four distinct images: a Turkish sailboat in a harbor, the Karaköy military barracks, a rural double-yoke plowing scene, and a street singer. The collage format itself is significant — it creates an assemblage of empire, linking the maritime, military, rural, and urban domains into a unified visual field. Each image offers a discrete typology: The sailboat embodies Ottoman maritime tradition, movement, and commerce; the Karaköy barracks signal urban modernization and the presence of state authority; the plowing scene frames rural labor as timeless, orderly, and industrious; and the street singer typifies urban folk culture, a romanticized figure of vernacular life. Together, this arrangement teaches the reader to see the empire as a harmonious, multifaceted whole — a place where

tradition and modernity, labor and leisure, military and everyday life coexist within an ordered framework.



Figure 21. Göksu; Çam haven; a knife sharpener, *Servet-i Fünun* 272 (1896), 177.

This three-image collage juxtaposes: A serene riverside view of Göksu, a fisherman at Çam Haven, and a close-up of a knife sharpener at work. The first two images draw on the romantic traditions of landscape photography, portraying nature as tranquil and contemplative, an escape from urban life. The third shifts abruptly to labor, focusing on a working-class figure engaged in manual craft. This juxtaposition constructs a layered visual pedagogy: nature as leisure, labor as ethnographic interest. The knife sharpener becomes a social type to be appreciated aesthetically,

rather than as a subject of class analysis. Collectively, the collage teaches the viewer to compartmentalize space and social difference into harmonious, consumable fragments.

The photographic practices of *Servet-i Fünun* reveal the profound entanglement between visual culture, social pedagogy, and class formation in the late Ottoman Empire. Far from being incidental or decorative, the journal's photographic selections functioned as a structured visual curriculum, shaping how readers understood their world and their place within it. Through the publication of snapshots drawn from both urban and rural settings, from scenes of labor and leisure, nature and infrastructure, *Servet-i Fünun* crafted an image of the empire that was at once harmonious, hierarchical, and aspirational.

The subsection has shown how the journal's visual pedagogy operated on several intertwined levels. First, it established aesthetic norms, teaching readers to value technical mastery, compositional order, and clarity — a training in the visual language of photographic modernity. Second, it instructed readers in the social hierarchies of Ottoman life, presenting rural laborers, urban vendors, military figures, and landscapes as stable, consumable types within a cohesive imperial order. Third, it reconciled tradition and progress, offering images that celebrated technological and infrastructural modernization while simultaneously aestheticizing the pastoral, the folkloric, and the vernacular. Through these operations, *Servet-i Fünun* did more than reflect bourgeois modernity; it actively produced and circulated the visual codes through which that modernity was learned, embodied, and reproduced. The snapshots published in its pages helped cultivate a new kind of Ottoman subject — one who was literate not only in text but in images, capable of navigating a world increasingly structured by visual media, and equipped with the aesthetic sensibility to read,

categorize, and evaluate the social world through the lens of classed and modernizing ideals.

4.5 Conclusion

The photographic practices of *Servet-i Fünun* reveal the profound entanglement of visual culture, social pedagogy, and class formation in the late Ottoman Empire. Far from serving as mere illustration or ornament, the snapshots published in its pages functioned as potent tools of cultural instruction. They taught readers not only how to look but also how to recognize, internalize, and reproduce the visual codes of bourgeois modernity. By framing amateur photography as a site of technical mastery, aesthetic judgment, and social aspiration, *Servet-i Fünun* transformed photography from a mechanical process into a cultural practice saturated with meaning and authority.

At the center of this visual pedagogy was a set of exclusions and hierarchies. The technical and economic barriers to participation in the snapshot contests effectively limited the field to urban, educated, and financially secure individuals. The selection and publication process, governed by an editorial team steeped in Europeanized artistic tastes, further reinforced a narrow aesthetic canon — one that privileged sharpness, symmetry, compositional balance, and the portrayal of “appropriate” subjects. As a result, *Servet-i Fünun*’s photographic archive offers not a transparent record of Ottoman life, but a curated vision shaped by the cultural and social imperatives of its time.

The analysis of the individual snapshots underscores how the journal’s visual pedagogy operated across multiple domains: it aestheticized rural labor as timeless and harmonious; transformed street vendors and artisans into picturesque urban

types; presented infrastructural projects as emblems of national progress; and framed provincial, especially Arab, subjects through an ethnographic lens that both incorporated and marginalized them within the imperial imaginary. This visual archive reconciled tradition and modernity, diversity and hierarchy, local specificity and imperial cohesion — teaching readers to see the empire as a harmonious, ordered, and modernizing whole. Importantly, the pedagogical effects of this visual culture extended beyond those who owned cameras or submitted images. By distributing photographs widely through its pages, *Servet-i Fünun* trained even non-participating readers in the habits of bourgeois visuality — shaping how they saw themselves, their society, and their empire. In doing so, the journal helped to naturalize the values, exclusions, and hierarchies of a rapidly transforming social order, making bourgeois modernity appear not as one option among many, but as the self-evident horizon of progress.

To summarize, this chapter has argued that the snapshots of *Servet-i Fünun* offer more than visual documentation; they constitute a historical archive of cultural instruction, class distinction, and imperial ideology. By treating these images as active agents in the production of modern Ottoman subjectivity, we gain new insight into the mechanisms through which photography shaped, disciplined, and reproduced social life. This case study, while grounded in the Ottoman context, also contributes to broader conversations about photography's role in the making of modern visual cultures — as both a democratizing medium and a powerful instrument of symbolic power.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The final years of the 19th century marked a critical juncture in the Ottoman Empire's transformation into a modern imperial state. Between 1896 and 1901, the Ottoman visual landscape underwent a dramatic reconfiguration, coinciding with a period which might be called the “golden age” of *Servet-i Fünun*, the most technologically advanced and widely read illustrated journal of its time. It is within this temporal and media-specific framework that this study has developed its central thesis: the class character of photographic representation in the Ottoman Empire. Far from being a neutral documentary medium, photography in this period functioned as a key instrument in constructing and naturalizing bourgeois visual norms, shaping the aesthetic, perceptual, and ideological contours of Ottoman modernity. This class-inflected visual regime was cultivated, stabilized, and disseminated most prominently through the pages of *Servet-i Fünun* between 1896 and 1901—a period in which the journal reached the apex of its technological and cultural influence.

The three chapters that precede this conclusion collectively offer a comprehensive theoretical and historical foundation for understanding the production, circulation, and pedagogical deployment of photographic images in late Hamidian society. Chapter One situates photography within the larger apparatus of modern governance in the Hamidian era, emphasizing how photography served as both a tool of bureaucratic surveillance and a symbolic register of state rationality. Drawing on Michel Foucault's theory of disciplinary power¹⁴⁴ and James C. Scott's

¹⁴⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

analysis of high-modernist visibility,¹⁴⁵ the chapter explores how photographic representation allowed the state to construct a legible and governable population—whether through educational archives, medical documentation, or the visual mapping of imperial infrastructure. In this context, photography emerges not as an incidental practice but as an epistemic instrument of sovereign power. Yet this visual regime was not monolithic. As Jonathan Crary argues, modern vision itself was undergoing a transformation, shifting from classical camera obscura models toward embodied, temporal, and regulated modes of seeing.¹⁴⁶ In the Ottoman context, this meant that the camera not only served state control but also actively shaped new forms of subjectivity—an effect intensified through its embedding in pedagogical and media institutions.

Chapter Two brings this macro-analysis into sharper focus through the case of *Servet-i Fünun*, founded by Ahmed İhsan (Tokgöz) in 1891 and reaching its cultural and technological maturity between 1896 and 1901. It is during this period that the journal's print run expanded, its visual and textual content diversified, and its photographic reproduction technologies reached unprecedented levels of quality and consistency. This was no accident. Ahmed İhsan, a product of elite bureaucratic schooling and a Francophile intellectual, deliberately fashioned the journal as an aspirational platform for the emerging Ottoman bourgeoisie. His business acumen, government connections, and enthusiasm for new technologies allowed him to import state-of-the-art zincographic presses from Vienna and enter into contracts with premier European photo-engraving firms. At the height of its success, *Servet-i Fünun* was both the most expensive and most prestigious journal in the Ottoman

¹⁴⁵ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

¹⁴⁶ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*.

market, with a per-issue cost that far exceeded its rivals. This economic barrier to access was not merely an effect of production cost but a mechanism of class distinction. The journal's pricing, content, and production technologies formed a tightly knit visual economy that simultaneously reflected and constituted the tastes of an urban, literate, and technologically attuned bourgeoisie.

Chapter Three provides the analytical framework through which this bourgeois visual regime can be most clearly understood. Here, the focus turns to the photographic contests organized by *Servet-i Fünun* between 1896 and 1901, which invited readers to submit snapshots adhering to rigorous aesthetic and technical standards. These contests were not democratic spaces of visual expression but carefully curated pedagogical mechanisms. Drawing on James Hevia's concept of the "photography complex,"¹⁴⁷ the chapter situates these competitions within a broader global pattern in which photography became a system of ideological regulation involving human agents, machines, chemicals, and institutions. In the Ottoman case, however, this complex did not serve an imperial project of overseas colonization but instead mediated internal class distinctions within the Empire itself. By invoking Antonio Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony¹⁴⁸ and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence and cultural capital,¹⁴⁸ the chapter shows how photographic submission rules, image selection criteria, and aesthetic standards functioned as exclusionary filters—ones that legitimized bourgeois visual values while marginalizing alternative modes of seeing.

The reader-submitted photographs that passed through these filters, published in sections like *Enstantanelerimiz* (Our Snapshots), did not merely document

¹⁴⁷ Hevia, "The Photography Complex", 79-120.

¹⁴⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

Ottoman life; they presented a curated vision of empire that was harmonious, picturesque, and implicitly hierarchical. Images of shepherds, rural laborers, provincial types, and desert caravans were framed not as subjects of modernity but as its aestheticized backdrop. The modern viewer, trained through serial exposure to these photographs, was invited to consume these scenes from a position of visual mastery. This dynamic reproduced the cultural asymmetries that defined late Ottoman society. As Mark Fisher has noted, the genius of capitalist realism lies in its ability to naturalize its own contingency, presenting historically specific norms as universal and inevitable.¹⁴⁹ Through its visual pedagogy, *Servet-i Fünun* performed precisely this operation, aestheticizing the values, norms, and tastes of the bourgeoisie as if they were the natural expression of modernity itself.

Crucially, the temporal scope of this thesis—1896 to 1901—was not chosen arbitrarily. These years mark the height of *Servet-i Fünun*'s influence, the period in which its photographic practices were most active and its aesthetic norms most solidified. It was during this “golden age” that the journal functioned not simply as a media outlet but as a visual academy for the urban middle class. The submission requirements were exacting; twin albumen prints, detailed metadata, accurate exposure records, and precise measurements of equipment. These technical demands, framed as objective standards, in fact reproduced social inequalities by filtering out all but the most privileged participants. The photographs selected for publication thus reflected a highly mediated view of empire—one defined not by inclusivity but by exclusivity, not by plurality but by the codification of a single dominant visual grammar.

¹⁴⁹ Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*.

This class-inflected visual regime was further reinforced through the journal's editorial logic and reader engagement. As a key node in the Hamidian public sphere, *Servet-i Fünun* operated as a mediator between state ideology, bourgeois aesthetics, and popular perception. Its visual and textual content served not only to inform but to instruct, not only to depict but to discipline. As such, the journal became a central agent in the field of cultural production, a space in which symbolic hierarchies are generated, contested, and institutionalized through aesthetic form.¹⁵⁰ Within this field, photography functioned as a particularly potent technology because of its apparent neutrality and realism. The Hamidian era's photographic archive, particularly that produced and disseminated by *Servet-i Fünun*, must therefore be read not only for what it shows but for what it excludes, not only for what it depicts but for how it frames, categorizes, and disciplines the act of seeing itself.

In conclusion, the class character of photographic representation in the Ottoman Empire was neither incidental nor merely symptomatic—it was foundational. Between 1896 and 1901, the intersection of visual technology, print capitalism, and state power gave rise to a new visual regime, one that encoded bourgeois norms into the very grammar of photographic visibility. *Servet-i Fünun* was at the center of this transformation, serving not merely as a journal but as a pedagogical institution, a visual economy, and a cultural battlefield. By understanding photography in this period as a social and ideological practice, shaped by economic barriers, aesthetic doctrines, and editorial curations, we gain a clearer view of how modernity itself was made visible, desirable, and legitimate to its Ottoman subjects. In this visual history of modernity, class was not a background variable, it was the structuring principle.

¹⁵⁰ Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed İhsân. (1889). *Deñiz altında 20000 fersah seyâhat*. İstanbul: Şirket-i Mürettibîye Matba'ası.
- Ahmed İhsân. (1891). Cevâb. *Servet-i Fünûn*, (31), 45.
- Ahmed İhsân. (1896). Fotoğraf müsabakası. *Servet-i Fünun*, (269), 130–131.
- Ahmed İhsân. (1896). Musavver Servet-i Fünun gazetesinin fotoğraf müsabakası. *Servet-i Fünun*, (265), 66.
- Ahmed İhsân. (1898). *Sâlnâme-yi Servet-i Fünûn: 5nci sene*. İstanbul: Ahmed İhsân ve Şürekâsı.
- Behdad, A. (2016). *Camera orientalis: Reflections on photography of the Middle East*. University of Chicago Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1968). The storyteller: Reflections on the works of Nikolai Leskov (H. Zohn, Trans.). In H. Arendt (Ed.), *Illuminations* (pp. 83–109). Schocken Books.
- Berman, M. (1982). *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity*. Simon & Schuster.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power* (J. B. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature* (R. Johnson, Ed.). Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2010). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (2010). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.). Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (R. Nice, Trans.). Sage Publications.
- Buck-Morss, S. (1989). *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. MIT Press.
- Çelik, Z. (1986). *The remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman city in the nineteenth century*. University of California Press.

- Çelik, Z. (1992). *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at nineteenth-century world's fairs*. University of California Press.
- Çelik, Z. (2008). *Empire, architecture, and the city: French-Ottoman encounters, 1830–1914*. University of Washington Press.
- Çelik, Z. (2016). *About antiquities: Politics of archaeology in the Ottoman Empire*. University of Texas Press.
- Çelik, Z., & Eldem, E. (Eds.). (2015). *Camera Ottomana: Photography and modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840–1914*. Koç University Press.
- Crary, J. (1990). *Techniques of the observer: On vision and modernity in the nineteenth century*. MIT Press.
- Daston, L., Galison, P. (2007). *Objectivity*. Zone Books.
- Deringil, S. (1998). *The well-protected domains: Ideology and the legitimation of power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909*. I.B. Tauris.
- Edwards, E. (2012). *The camera as historian: Amateur photographers and historical imagination, 1885–1918*. Duke University Press.
- Eldem, E. (2006). Ottoman Galata and Pera between myth and reality. In U. Tischler (Ed.), *From *milieu de mémoire* to *lieu de mémoire*: The cultural memory of Istanbul in the 20th century* (pp. 17–116). Martin Meidenbauer.
- Ergin, N. (2012). Bathing business in Istanbul: The role of hamams (bathhouses) in shaping Ottoman public culture. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 71(1), 50–77.
- Ersoy, A. A. (2015). *Architecture and the late Ottoman historical imaginary: Reconfiguring the architectural past in a modernizing empire*. Ashgate Publishing.
- Ersoy, A. A. (2016). Ottomans and the Kodak Galaxy: Archiving everyday life and historical space in Ottoman illustrated journals. *History of Photography*, 40(3), 330–357.
- Ersoy, A. A. (2021). History as you go: Mobility, photography, and the visibility of the past in late Ottoman print space. In M. Potter (Ed.), *Representing the past in the art of the long nineteenth century: Historicism, postmodernism, and internationalism* (pp. 240–262). Routledge.
- Ersoy, A. A. (2025). Autobiography of a print venture: A short history of Ahmed İhsan and associates. *Art in Translation*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2024.2419756>
- Ersoy, A. A., & Türker, D. (2023). The Hamidian visual archive, 1878–1909: A user's manual. In R. Goshgarian, I. Khuri-Makdisi, & A. Yayıcıoğlu (Eds.), *Crafting history: Essays on the Ottoman world and beyond in honor of Cemal Kafadar* (pp. 319–344). Academic Studies Press.

- Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?* Zero Books.
- Foucault, M. (1973). *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Vintage Books.
- Frierson, E. B. (1995). Unimagined communities: Educational reform and civic identity among late-Ottoman women. *Critical Matrix*, 9(2), 57–92.
- Frierson, E. B. (2004). Mirrors out, mirrors in: Domestication and rejection of the foreign in late-Ottoman women's magazines (1875–1908). In D. Kandiyoti & A. Saktanber (Eds.), *Framing the modern in the Islamic world: Muslim societies and the West* (pp. 208–227). I.B. Tauris.
- Gavin, C. E. S. (1989). *Imperial self-portrait: The Ottoman Empire as revealed in the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II's photographic albums*. Harvard University, Center for Middle Eastern Studies.
- Gavin, C. E. S. (Ed.). (1989). *Imperial self-portrait: The Ottoman Empire as revealed in the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II's photographic albums presented as gifts to the Library of Congress (1893) and the British Museum (1894): A pictorial selection with catalogue, concordance, indices, and brief essays*. Harvard University Press.
- Graham-Brown, S. (1988). *Images of women: The portrayal of women in the photography of the Middle East*. Columbia University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell-Smith, Eds. & Trans.). International Publishers.
- Gramsci, A. (2000). *The Antonio Gramsci reader: Selected writings 1916–1935* (D. Forgacs, Ed.). New York University Press.
- Gürsel, Z. D. (2018). A picture of health: The search for a genre to visualize care in late Ottoman Istanbul. *Grey Room*, 72, 36–67.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (T. Burger & F. Lawrence, Trans.). MIT Press.
- Hamadeh, S. (2008). Mean streets: Urban order and moral order in early 18th-century Istanbul. *Muqarnas*, 25, 249–277.
- Hanioğlu, Ş. (2008). *A brief history of the late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton University Press.
- Hannoosh, M. (2016). Practices of photography: Circulation and mobility in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean. *History of Photography*, 40(1), 3–27.
- Harvey, D. (2003). *Paris, capital of modernity*. Routledge.

- Hâşim Nâhîd. (1915). Ahmed İhsân – Servet-i Fünûn. *Servet-i Fünûn*, (1249), 6.
- Hevia, J. L. (2009). The photography complex: Exposing Boxer-Era China (1900–1901), making civilization. In R. C. Morris (Ed.), *Photographies East: The camera and its histories in East and Southeast Asia* (pp. 79–119). Duke University Press.
- Hyde Nolan, E. (2019). The gift of the Abdülhamid II albums: The consequences of photographic circulation. *Trans-Asia Photography Review*, 9(2).
- Kırlı, C. (2005). Coffeehouses: Public opinion in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. In A. Ş. Göçek (Ed.), *Political cartoons in the Middle East* (pp. 75–97). Princeton University Press.
- Kolland, D. (2021). *The making and universalization of new time: A history of the late Ottoman-Turkish magazine Servet-i Fünûn (1891–1914)* [Doctoral dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin].
- Maḥmûd Şâdiḳ. (1893). Muşâḥabe-yi fennîye: Makîlalar devri. *Servet-i Fünûn*, (117), 202.
- Marsoobian, A. T. (2017). *Reimagining a lost Armenian home: The Dildilian photography collection*. I.B. Tauris.
- Micklewright, N. (2013). Alternative histories of photography in the Ottoman Middle East. In A. Behdad & L. Gartlan (Eds.), *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation* (pp. 75–92). Los Angeles.
- Môdîst Terzî Refîka. (1891). Mektûb. *Servet-i Fünûn*, (31), 45.
- Nolan, E. H. (2019). The gift of the Abdülhamid II albums: The consequences of photographic circulation. *Trans-Asia Photography Review*, 9(2).
- Özbek, N. (2005). Philanthropic activity, Ottoman patriotism, and the Hamidian regime, 1876–1909. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37(1), 59–81.
- Özbek, N. (2006). Modernite, tarih ve ideoloji. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 107, 153–167.
- Özendes, E. (1999). *From Sébah & Joaillier to Foto Sabah: Orientalism in photography*. Istanbul.
- Öztuncay, B. (1992). *James Robertson: Pioneer of photography in the Ottoman Empire*. Istanbul.
- Öztuncay, B. (2003). *The photographers of Constantinople: Pioneers, studios, and artists from nineteenth-century Istanbul*. Istanbul.
- Öztuncay, B. (2005). *Hatıra-i uhuvvet: Portre fotoğraflarının cazibesi*. Istanbul.
- Özyüksel, M. (2014). *The Hejaz Railway and the Ottoman Empire: Modernity, industrialisation and Ottoman decline*. I.B. Tauris.

- Pinney, C. (2013). What's photography got to do with it. In A. Behdad & L. Gartlan (Eds.), *Photography's orientalism: New essays on colonial representation* (pp. 33–52). Los Angeles.
- Quataert, D. (2005). *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Riedler, F. (2008). Public people and temporary labor: The bostanji of Ottoman Istanbul in the late nineteenth century. *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 8, 233–254.
- Roberts, M. (2007). *Intimate outsiders: The harem in Ottoman and Orientalist art and travel literature*. Duke University Press.
- Schivelbusch, W. (1986). *The railway journey: The industrialization of time and space in the 19th century*. University of California Press.
- Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press.
- Sekula, A. (1986). The body and the archive. *October*, 39, 3–64.
- Shaw, W. M. K. (2009). Ottoman photography of the late nineteenth century: An innocent modernism? *History of Photography*, 33(1), 80–93.
- Sheehi, S. (2016). *The Arab imago: A social history of portrait photography, 1860–1910*. Princeton University Press.
- Şiviloğlu, M. (2018). *The emergence of public opinion in the Ottoman Empire*. Cambridge University Press.
- Somel, S. A. (1996). *Osmanlı'da eğitimin modernleşmesi: 1839–1908* (2nd ed.). İletişim Yayınları.
- Tagg, J. (1988). *The burden of representation: Essays on photographs and histories*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Tattersdill, W. (2016). *Science, fiction, and the fin-de-siècle periodical press*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tezcan, B. (2010). Ethnicity, race, religion and social class: Ottoman markers of difference. In M. Talai & G. Marè (Eds.), *Conceptualising cultural hybridity: A transdisciplinary approach* (pp. 49–62). Springer.
- Tokgöz, İ., Kabacalı, A. (2012). *Matbuat hatıralarım*.
- Tucker, J. (2005). *Nature exposed: Photography as eyewitness in Victorian science*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Verne, J. (1889). *Seksen günde devr-i âlem* (A. İhsân, Trans.). İstanbul: Cemal Efendi Matbaası.

- Waley, M. I. (1991). Images of the Ottoman Empire: The photograph albums presented by Sultan Abdülhamid II. *The Electronic British Library Journal*, 1991, 111–127. <http://www.bl.uk/eblj/1991articles/article9.html>
- Woodward, M. (2003). Between Orientalist clichés and images of modernization: Photographic practice in the late Ottoman era. *History of Photography*, 27(4), 363–374.
- Yedikûle. (1892). *Servet-i Fünûn*, (66), 220.

