

**NEGOTIATION THROUGH A “TANZIMAT” INSTITUTION: THE CASE OF
BOSNIAN GENERAL COUNCIL IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

by

MUSTAFA EMRE GUNAYDI

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Mustafa Emre Günaydı

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by the final
examining committee have been made.

Committee Members:

Assoc. Prof. Yonca Köksal

Asst. Prof. Can Nacar

Prof. Cengiz Kırılı

Date:

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the consolidation of the Bosnian General Council after the promulgation of the Provincial Regulation in 1867. It focuses on relations between the council representatives and different segments of the state mechanism—local state officials and the Council of State or *Conseil d'État* (*Şura-yı Devlet*)—in the form of requests, offers and responses negotiating the resolution of socio-economic, educational, security-related, and infrastructural problems. The study considers the relevance to council functioning of socio-spatial contexts and historical temporalities—including a comparison of the Bosnian council with those of Crete, Sivas, and Trabzon—and looks at the functioning of the council in terms of its role as a modernizing institution of governance.

Set in the context of the adaptation of the region and (newly created) province of Bosnia to the Tanzimat reforms, the general council was established with the aim of promoting development in the territory. The provincial councils are generally overlooked in the literature because of their lack of executive powers, yet the council in Bosnia is here found to have been a significant administrative organ that functioned quite well, both in terms on the program of imperial administration and in tackling immediate problems. Although some deeper, structural issues were avoided, the strategic location of this province effectively gave the council representatives considerable leverage with the center. This becomes evident in the comparative case study with the differences between the four provinces considered; indeed, various dependent variables shaped the agendas and fortunes of these councils.

Regarding the pressing issue of civic and infrastructural development in the struggling empire, this research also claims that the council in Bosnia acted as a state-supported institution for the replacement of the deficient *waqfs* and *Ayans*, which had been losing ground during the nineteenth century as a result of the empire-wide financial reforms aimed at fiscal centralization. Inspection of the specific cases adjudged by the Bosnian council reveals that it promoted a donation-based economy for local development by dividing the burden of projects among many rather than a few. This enabled the central government to undermine the local powerholders, making the Ottoman central government a major actor in Bosnia's development through its controlling mechanism. Finally, therefore, this study presents a challenge to the standard assumption that the provincial general councils were ineffective and unimportant institutions.

Keywords: Bosnia, the Tanzimat, provincial general councils, Ottoman central administration, infrastructural development, negotiation.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, 1867’de ilan edilen Vilayet Nizamnamesinin sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan Bosna Meclis-i Umumisini konu almaktadır. Bunun sonucu olarak tezin ana odak noktası hem meclis üyeleri ve hem de meclis üyelerinin yerel ve merkezi hükümet organlarıyla kurmuş olduğu ilişkilerdir. Bosna Vilayet Meclisi toplantılarında meclis üyeleri tarafından talep edilen sosyoekonomik, eğitim, güvenlik, ve altyapısal yatırımlar ve bunları elde etmek adına yerel ve merkezi devlet otoriteleriyle girilen pazarlıklar mercek altına alınmaktadır. Pazarlık süreçlerine bakışı sadece Bosna Meclis-i Umumi ile kısıtlı tutmayarak, bu çalışmada ayrıca farklı bölgelerin ve tarihsel süreçlerin Meclis-i Umumilerin işleyişi üzerindeki rolünü ortaya çıkarmak üzere Girit, Sivas ve Trabzon Meclis-i Umumileri de Bosna Meclis-i Umumisiyle detaylıca karşılaştırılmaktadır.

Vilayet Umum Meclisleri üzerine var olan literatür oldukça dardır. Bunun en önemli sebeplerinden biri, bu meclislerin herhangi bir yasama veya yürütme yetkisine sahip olmamasıdır. Ancak, Bosna Meclis-i Umumi örneğinden görülebileceği üzere bu meclisler sanıldığı kadar işlevsiz yerel organlar değildir. Bilakis, meclis üyeleri ile yerel ve merkezi hükümet organları arasında dönen pazarlıklar, üyelerin devlet otoritelerini ikna etmek için başvurduğu bölge-spesifik kozlar ve merkezin Bosna Meclis-i Umumisinde tartışılan konulara gösterdiği ilgi bu organların farz edilenin aksine Tanzimat sonrası yerel idari şekillenmede önemli bir yerleri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle meclis temsilcilerinin devlet otoritelerini ikna etmek amacıyla başvurmuş olduğu kozlar ve bölgesel ayrıcalıklar, bu çalışmada karşılaştırılan farklı eyaletlerdeki Meclis-i Umumilerin işleyiş ve pazarlık süreçleri üzerinden açıkça ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Özellikle Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun 19.yy’da içinde olduğu mali bunalım ve Tanzimat’tan sonra devletin artan sosyal sorumluluk rollerini göz önüne aldığımızda, bu çalışma Vilayet Meclis-i Umumilerinin altyapı yatırımlarında rolleri giderek azalan vakıflara ve yerel ayanlara alternatif oluşturduğunu da sorgulamaktadır. Bu amaçla Bosna Meclis-i Umumisinde talep edilen iki proje altına alınarak, bunların hayata geçirilmesinde insanlardan toplanan ‘bağışların’ detaylıca analizi yapılmaktadır. Merkezi hükümetin kontrolü altında gerçekleşen bu süreç, merkezi hükümetin yerel kalkınmadaki rolünü artırmış ve devleti Bosna’nın yerel kalkınmasının önemli aktörlerinden biri haline getirmiştir. En nihayetinde, bu çalışma, Vilayet Meclis-i Umumilerinin sanıldığı gibi etkisiz ve pasif organlar olduğu argümanına karşı çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bosna, Tanzimat, Vilayet Meclis-i Umumileri, Osmanlı merkezi hükümeti, altyapısal yatırım, pazarlık.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any award or any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. It is affirmed by the candidate that, to the best of his knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Mustafa Emre Günaydı



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To the memory of my grandfather
Ömer Yıldırım

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 The General Provincial Councils in the Ottoman Empire

This study concerns the Bosnian General Council, which was one of the products of the Tanzimat process. The Ottoman Provincial General Councils (*Meclis-i Umum-i Vilayet*) were first consolidated in Danube (Tuna) Province with the 1864 Provincial Regulation (*Vilayet Nizamname*), after which they became common throughout the provinces with the provincial regulation in 1867. The function of these councils was ostensibly simple; district representatives were decided upon and gathered once a year under the leadership of the province's governor-general to discuss matters of local concern, as raised by the representatives through petition. These ranged widely in subject matter, from security, trade, and transportation to agriculture, health, and education. The representatives and the governor-general discussed the critical problems and needs of their provinces and then sent a report petitioning the central government higher court (*Şura-yı Devlet*) in Istanbul if appropriate (e.g. where matters could not be dealt with locally, from the provincial capital).

However, unlike the provincial administrative councils, which were also established through the Tanzimat's provincial regulations, these institutions did not carry any executive authority. Provincial general councils did not have a budget; thus, for example, they could not initiate a construction project or budget for the repair of roads without the approval of either the local administrative council or the central government. Probably because of this, the provincial

general councils have tended to be either unnoticed or ignored by Tanzimat historians,¹ even though the local administrative councils have aroused interest among Ottoman historians for a decade.² Contrary to the general view in the Tanzimat literature, this research argues that they were actually immensely significant organs of state governance. The provincial general councils performed a major role in the Ottoman Tanzimat, it is argued here, in bringing together the central government, provincial state officials,³ and representatives from districts in order to hear the voices of various groups and meet the needs of ordinary people in shaping the local territories.

Promoting, among other things, civic and infrastructural development, the provincial general councils also acted like information channels for the central government. They provided valuable data about the current socioeconomic, security-related, and infrastructural problems on the ground, as it were. Until the Tanzimat reforms, the only way to collect such information had been dependent on the relationship between the central government and local powerholders, the people of wealth, generally landed, the “notables” as they were dubbed (*ayans*). Another option was to appoint an inspector to the region, but these inspectors still had to rely on the abilities and

¹ For limited studies, see: Yonca Köksal, *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Provincial Perspectives from Ankara to Edirne*, 1st edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2019); Safa Saracoglu, *Nineteenth-Century Local Governance in Ottoman Bulgaria: Politics in Provincial Councils* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018); Anna Vakali, “Tanzimat in the Province: Nationalist Sedition (Fesat), Banditry (Eşkiya) and Local Councils in the Ottoman Southern Balkans (1840s to 1860s)” (PhD Thesis, University of Basel, 2017); John Bragg, *Ottoman Notables and Participatory Politics: Tanzimat Reform in Tokat, 1839–876*, 1st edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2014).

² Yonca Köksal, “Local Demands and State Policies: General Councils (Meclis-i Umumi) in the Edirne and Ankara Provinces (1867–1872),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 470–85. This study was one of the first to regard the local general councils as Tanzimat organs worthy of study. İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840–1878* (Ankara: TTK, 2000). Ortaylı makes a superficial analysis of the provincial general councils just in two pages and assumes these organs as functionless. Milen V. Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868” (Ph.D., Princeton University, 2006). Even though Petrov only gave a small part of his study over to the Tuna general council, his analysis and limited research played an important role on the shaping of the present study.

³ In most cases, not only the governor-general but also the other state officials, such as provincial treasurers and scribes, attended the meetings.

inclinations of region-wide influential *ayans* to collect and present information. Indeed, the imperial relations of the center with the peripheries were always open to manipulation through the insertion of particular group and personal interests.

Therefore, the provincial general councils offered an alternative to the established local relations of power, one that threatened the monopoly of a few *ayans* on local information by dividing these responsibilities and conferring them to many, the local representatives. These included *ayans*, but were not limited to them, incorporating also smaller landlords, merchants, and artisans, both urbanites and villagers, Muslim and non-Muslim.⁴ This multi-agent structure of the general councils, in which the various groups involved had both overlapping and conflicting interests, were ideal areas to negotiate on the future development of provinces. With that in mind, the present study seeks also to consider the changing patterns of negotiation in the context of a certain democratization—from the negotiations of a few to many—through analysis of the general council in Bosnia as case study.

In fact, the provincial general councils can be adjudged as the most participatory organs of the empire until the consolidation of the first Assembly, established in 1877 following the regulation of the first Constitution. In addition to the range of representatives—beyond just the *ayans*, that is—this participation is indicated simply by the number of representatives, which, as a proportion of the population, was generally double and more that of the other, contemporary local organs, the provincial and district administrative councils.

⁴ Actually, we have only the seals of the representatives directly indicating their position, which thus has to be largely inferred from the content of the demands in the councils; Chapter 2 provides a more detailed analysis and discussion on this matter.

The administrative councils included four representatives with the many state appointees (the governor of province or district, judge, accounting manager, correspondence officer, mufti and Muslim and non-Muslim religious leaders).⁵ In the provincial general councils, although it might vary, there were only the governor-general (or his deputy), and sometimes a scribe who were appointed by the state, the other members comprising the representatives, “elected” from each district of the province.⁶ Thus, in contrast to the “top heavy” local administrative councils and other state-dominated local institutions, in which just a few local *ayans* pursued their interests, the provincial general councils quite pluralist and markedly less hierarchical. It was this, much broader compositional structure incorporating the perspectives of the locals that enabled extensive information to be brought to the council meetings, and which, in turn, facilitated the Tanzimat modernization through a more efficient governance.

1.2. The case of Bosnia

For this study, the Bosnian General Council has been selected as the main unit of analysis for various reasons. First, Bosnia was a unique region in Ottoman history. It was located on the border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, one of the main rivals of the Ottomans for centuries, and thus crucially positioned as a site of the conflict of empires. During the time period focused on here, moreover—broadly, the second half of the nineteenth century—the region became a particularly contested area between the Ottoman and the Russian and Austro-Hungarian and British Empires. While the Austro-Hungarians and the Russians gazed at Bosnia with expansionary aims, the British undertook the role of protecting the Christian population there.

⁵ Düstur (Dersaadet: Matbaa-ı Amire, 1863), 641–44.

⁶ Chapter 2 has information about the election process.

This contestation made Bosnia a sensitive region in which the government not only had to act with special care but also provided the local people with significant leverage that they could employ with the Ottoman central government to have their demands heard and met. This was even more the case given the geographical proximity of Bosnia to the capital and the historical importance of the broader region, Rumelia, the Balkan peninsular or European part of the Ottoman (and previously Byzantine) Empire. Although mountainous and a borderland, that is, Bosnia was too near to Istanbul to be considered genuinely “peripheral,” a state of affairs underlined by the history, since Rumelia, containing Bosnia, had been an original political division (*eyalet*) of the empire. In other words, Bosnia was a geo-culturally significant province in the Ottoman Empire—which can make it highly interesting to analyze the sensitive political process and scrutinize the functioning of administrative reforms there in the wake of the 1864 Provincial Regulation.

Second, the ethnic and religious diversity of the region made Bosnia a dynamic region during the consolidation of the reforms. When we look from the perspective of the 21st century, in which nation-state formation is a norm, it can be hard to imagine a province populated by Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims of greatly varying descent, from the European north to the middle of Asia, and more.⁷ Indeed, Bosnia is still a region of people from many and diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. During the nineteenth century, Bosnia under the authority of the Ottomans and its particular dynamics and in the midst of Europe and the general decay of the old land empires was surrounded by different nationalisms. Serbs, Slavs and Montenegrins were all organizing and agitating for independence, to say nothing of Bulgarians and Romanians (to the south, of course, Greece had violently departed the empire in 1832). Therefore, the demands of the

⁷ Zafer Gölen, *Tanzîmât Döneminde Bosna Hersek: Siyasî, İdarî, Sosyal ve Ekonomik Durum* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2010), 26.

different ethno-religious groups coming together under the roof of the Bosnian General Council take on a specific significance, and their attempts to negotiate and compromise with the central state authorities and vice versa can be especially revealing. This atmosphere is quite promising for an observation of the reflexes of the Ottoman central government to a sensitive political situation in the province, along with the employment of local strategies to take the advantage of this situation.

Bosnia was also an interesting region in the Ottoman imperial formation because of its relative autonomy from the center. Over the centuries, until the period of the Tanzimat, the region had been governed by a mix of cavalry corps officers, or cavalymen (*sipahis*), and local militia heads (*kapetans*), along with the *ayans*.⁸ There were no big tax-farmers in Bosnia, referring to the large-scale fiefdom holders under the *timar* system of state patronage. Nevertheless, Nagata's study of the revenues of Bosnian Muslim notables—so, in this case, the *sipahis*, *kapetans*, and *ayans* generalized as a (Muslim) category—demonstrates that there was a group of local powerholders who held significant wealth and controlled the region.⁹

Bosnia was one of the regions where there was a harsh resistance against the policies of Mahmud II. After the abolishment of the janissary institution, a coalition of janissaries and *ayans* resisted the policies of Mahmud II by refusing to be a part of the newly consolidated army and administrative system.¹⁰ The central state attempted to suppress the revolt in 1832 of Hüseyin Kapudan, the most powerful *ayan* in the Bosnian region, by sponsoring another powerful *ayan*,

⁸ Yuzo Nagata, *Materials on the Bosnian Notables* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1979), 9.

⁹ Ibid, 81–86.

¹⁰ Emine Ak, “Tanzimat’ın Bosna Hersek’te Uygulanması ve Neticeleri (1839-1875)” (PhD Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2010), 18–19.

Istolçeli Ali Pasha, to suppress the revolt, who was then made the district governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Hersek.¹¹ After that, Istolçeli Ali Pasha continued to act as a mediator between the region and the center, but later he fell into disfavor, the government holding him responsible for a rebellion in 1850, and he was killed in Istanbul.¹²

Essentially, there was a powerful bloc of Muslim *ayans* aiming to protect their traditional rights of power, which were threatened by the new reforms. The materialization of the Tanzimat reforms in Bosnia began only during the 1850s, under the vice-governorship of Ömer Pasha.¹³ Therefore, the consolidation of the Bosnian general council after the 1867 provincial regulation was the expression of a relatively recent reform process in the region. Clearly, Bosnia was a sensitive region for the state in terms of implementing the reform plans. Therefore, the special care of the Ottoman government, the short reform experience of Bosnian locals, and the position of Bosnia in the 19th century as well as in the empire more generally make the Tanzimat implementation in this region a good case to study.

1.3. Theories of the Tanzimat and state formation

Peter Crooks and Timothy Parsons discuss how “the attempt to rule directly, to override local power-structures, was destabilizing and created tensions that pushed the course of political development in one of two directions: either towards the absorption of subject peoples and territories into an enlarged core, or alternatively towards fragmentation and colonial independence.”¹⁴ Indeed, the modernizing thrust of the Tanzimat was also an attempt to rule

¹¹ Fatma Sel Turhan, “Rebelling for The Old Order: Ottoman Bosnia, 1826-1836” (PhD Thesis, Bogazici University, 2009), 340.

¹² Ibid, 342.

¹³ Ak, “Tanzimat’ın Bosna Hersek’te Uygulanması ve Neticeleri (1839-1875),” 64–65.

¹⁴ Peter Crooks and Timothy H. Parsons, eds., *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History: From Late Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*, 1 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 19.

directly, to extend, deepen and more formally direct the power of the state from Istanbul and the “Porte,” referring to the heart of governmental administration. Most studies of the Tanzimat period have also focused on this aspect of the story with a state-centered approach.¹⁵

However, it has been less well observed that while the central government was trying to create a stronger and enlarged core, it was always pragmatic in the sense that it never closed the gates for the alternative forms of institutional consolidations if there seemed to be no other way in which it could effectively determine the direction of development. The reason behind this was that the Ottoman Empire had a complex socio-political base in which identification with nation was either lacking or relatively minor until the very end. This enabled the imperial state to create multiple networks of negotiation with a variety of agents and institutions.¹⁶ Thus, even if there was only one version of the Tanzimat reforms and regulations at the center, these were always and continually reproduced at the outer centers of the empire through negotiations at the local level. The relationship between hegemonic theory and regional reality was far from fixed and determined.

Nevertheless, the expanding concept of generality and administrative unity did become an important leveler in the center-periphery relations across the empire through the historical-transformative processes and the reforms that gained intensity in the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century.¹⁷ In other words, the sultan’s distributive power that negotiated with the different particularities turned to the notion of a state based on uniformity. The empire was trying

¹⁵ Yonca Köksal, “Tanzimat ve Tarih Yazımı,” *Doğu Batı* 51 (2009): 198.

¹⁶ Şevket Pamuk, “Institutional Change and the Longevity of the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1800,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35, no. 2 (October 1, 2004): 228; Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, Reprint edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 11.

¹⁷ Huri Islamoglu, “Ottoman and Chinese Modernities Compared: State Transformations and Constitutions of Property in Qing and Ottoman Empires in the 18th and the 19th Centuries,” in *Ottoman History As World History* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2007), 149.”

to adopt a new art of governing, even if its consequences were strictly dependent on the variety and sum of socio-spatial contexts. This change in governance involved both a qualitative and quantitative extension of the actors and the field in which the negotiations took place. Thus, even the sharp break from tradition did not constitute a rupture in the sense that the central government continued to negotiate with the local powerholders and sometimes acted as a mediator between different claimants or a second actor on the table by referring to the general procedures and laws as they had been deployed and enforced before. This was a center-led but not unidirectional process in which the state created a new base of hegemony by manipulating its peripheries. The effects of this transformation in the various parts of imperial domains were contingent.¹⁸ Therefore, the negotiation process was not a zero-sum game.

Sometimes, states forced their demands and obtained what they wanted or local powerholders pushed the center to fulfill its demands, and sometimes both compromised on points that serves the interests of both sides. And the results of all this were highly dependent on the world-historical processes, regional politics and leverages in which both sides had forcing the other side to compromise. For instance, Ankara province did not show the same success regarding the adaptation of the Tanzimat as many other provinces, yet the implementation of the Tanzimat reforms and the negotiation between the various local claimants and the central government there were brought to a successful conclusion regarding the province's economic and social prosperity.¹⁹

The progress of the reforms can itself also be seen in terms of a synthesis from oppositional conflict. The Nish (1841) and Vidin (1850) rebellions, for example, which were direct outcomes

¹⁸ Ibid, 148.

¹⁹ Yonca Köksal, "Imperial Center and Local Groups: Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne and Ankara," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 27 (2002): 107–38.

of the Tanzimat, evolved into an ongoing struggle between the central government and local actors.²⁰ The principal plan of the central government was to solve this problem through negotiations rather than suppressions, even though it would inevitably alter the relations of power in Ottoman Bulgaria.²¹ Again, such a perspective is context-specific. A comparative analysis of the Tanzimat reforms in peripheral and troublesome Lebanon and Northern Albania demonstrates that both the methods and the discourse of the reforms were different in the two cases. While the central government tried to implement reforms harshly in Lebanon, it was more flexible in northern Albania.²² Ottoman Bosnia during the Tanzimat was also not removed from this consideration. The history of rebellion in combination contributed to the present negotiating capacity of the local actors—including state officials—as specifying the context of the reforms in the region. Thus, the reforms in Ottoman Bosnia took their own path, which was somewhat different from what the central government had imagined.

1.4. Ideas of negotiation and pragmatism in the Ottoman context

Before getting into the detailed analysis, I should define the meaning here of the terms “negotiation” and “pragmatism.” These terms have become very popular in the Ottoman historiography seeking to develop an alternative narrative to the stories of the rise of the West. Karen Barkey’s *Ottoman Bandits and Bureaucrats* is one such study, conceptualizing negotiation as an analytical perspective for (the remaking of) the history of the Ottoman Empire. According

²⁰ Mark Pinson, “Ottoman Bulgaria in the First Tanzimat Period -the Revolts in Nish (1841) and Vidin (1850),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 11, no. 2 (May 1, 1975): 103–46.

²¹ Halil Inalcik, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1992), 52, 111–12.

²² Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert* (*Things of order. A comparative study of Ottoman politics of reforms during the 19th century*), pp. 267, 277–78. In Vakali, “Tanzimat in the Province,” 19.

to Barkey's analysis, the Ottomans used its imperial negotiating power to maintain its authority and extract resources from the provinces. Thus, during the seventeenth century, the empire tried to incorporate banditry and local elites into its institutions through bargaining.

Emerging as a result of the increasing need for musketeers in the Ottoman wars of the 1600s, bandits were conscripted during wartime and paid in cash, payments that were ceased when the wars ended. Then, having lost their income and privileged status, these ex-soldiers fell into banditry when they returned to their homelands, generally under the local leaders. This created huge disorder, especially in the Anatolian part of the empire, with disturbances and rebellions known collectively as the Celali Revolts. Barkey indicates that the Ottoman state bargained with the Celali groups, the rebel or outlaw gangs, in order to regain order and consolidate its position. Thus, it *pragmatically* incorporated the renegades into state institutions.²³

Şevket Pamuk also developed an institutional concept of pragmatism in the direction of Barkey's theory of power and the Ottoman flexibility. According to his formula, "the Ottoman's negotiating capacity and pragmatism enabled the central government to absorb [and merge] into various social groups." Thus, the basic claim was that "the flexibility of Ottoman institutions in terms of adapting to epochal processes, new forms of social formations, and its ability to negotiate with the different social forces until the second half of 19th century was one of the necessary causes that helped the empire's longevity."²⁴

Barkey and Pamuk's analyses of the negotiating capacity and pragmatism of the Ottoman Empire was highly innovative, but they both lacked a sufficient empirical analysis of the Ottoman institutions. Murat Dağlı has consequently criticized this perspective:

²³ Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, 2.

²⁴ Pamuk, "Institutional Change and the Longevity of the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1800," 228.

[T]he usual line of argument has been that the Ottomans (the ruling elite) did not really care about any religious, moral, or legal principles and were prone to use whatever best served their interests. However, this line of argument was too unsophisticated and even derogatory, since it implied that the Ottomans were simply political opportunists.”²⁵

Barkey claims that the Ottomans negotiated with the bandits and successfully incorporated them into the central government. Where did these negotiations occur? Who negotiated with whom and/or through what institutions? Can we trace this negotiation process; did it actually happen? Pamuk also demonstrates negotiation and pragmatism as a unique feature of Ottoman institutions through abstract generalization. Aiming to avoid the trap of attributing to the Ottomans (mere) political opportunism, therefore, I will use the terms “negotiation” and “pragmatism” as significant components of empirically grounded analysis. Material offers were made and considered and accepted or rejected or revised in the Bosnian Provincial General Council and then, when deemed appropriate, the petitions were forwarded to the center, in Istanbul, for similar consideration. By historicizing the process of negotiation, this thesis aims to show the limits of negotiations and pragmatism among the central government, local state officials, and representatives through analysis of the general council in Bosnia and its activities.

Theories of state-formation also help us to understand the logic of the Tanzimat institutions and the functioning of Ottoman local councils. It has been common in the theory-building of various disciplines, including history, to assume to design the state as a singular entity independent from the society.²⁶ As a counter this, Migdal, Kohli, and Shue offered a manifesto in “*State Power*

²⁵ Murat Dağlı, “The Limits of Ottoman Pragmatism,” *History and Theory* 52, no. 2 (2013): 195.

²⁶ See: Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,” *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie / Europäisches Archiv Für Soziologie* 25, no. 2 (1984): 185–213; Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Retrospect and Prospect The 2007 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture,”

and Social Forces,” that contradicted the exclusive focus on the state at the center as a transformative power; rather, they claimed that the struggles between state and society result in the reshaping of both.²⁷ Joel Migdal further claimed that states consist of *image* and *practices*. The *image* idealizes a state that is dominant and acts as a single body. It refers to a common way of doing things as a “sole logic.” *Practices*, on the other hand, refer to the multiplicity in the performance of state and society.²⁸ Thus, creating rules and their maintenance through violent means is an *image*—while the actualization of rules and maintaining violence includes negotiation, which results in different *practices*.

Cengiz Kırılı’s work, *Yolsuzluğun İcadı: 1840 Ceza Kanunu, İktidar ve Bürokrasi*, successfully demonstrates the conflict between image and practices in the Ottoman context.²⁹ According to his analysis, while the criminal code published shortly after the Tanzimat as a part of the general reform process symbolizes the single body of the state and its dominion over persons and their interests, the actualization was quite the opposite. In fact, it became a medium for high state bureaucrats to eliminate their opponents. Although the code was based on standard norms and imagined a state of law, it was very plastic in the sense that its implications were person-specific, and the application of its articles open to flexibility. On the one hand, the Criminal Code

Scandinavian Political Studies 31, no. 2 (May 1, 2008): 109–24; Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D.990-1990*, Reprint (Cambridge, MA: Studies in Social Discontinuity, 1993).

²⁷ Joel Samuel Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, eds., *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8.

²⁸ Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*, Later Printing Used edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 16–19.

²⁹ Cengiz Kırılı, *Yolsuzluğun İcadı: 1840 Ceza Kanunu, İktidar, ve Bürokrasi* (İstanbul: Verita, 2015).

described an “image” of justice which was valid for everyone, but on the other hand, its application to actual cases resulted in actions that were outside of the standardized state image.³⁰

This study also aims to see the materialization of the Tanzimat reforms as images, specifically through the Bosnian General Council. Thus, it will seek to understand the extent to which the image (Tanzimat reforms, new practices and methods) overlapped with actual practice in this imperial region. As noted (above), the varying capacities of the actors as shaped by the unique socio-spatial power relations and historical temporalities led to the emergence of different practices in various parts of the empire. This study investigates the historical temporalities and social-spatial relations of power in order to understand the functioning of Bosnia’s general council, including by reference to three similar cases for comparison.³¹

Huri İslamoğlu has offered another, innovative perspective through which to read the history of the “modernization” process of the Ottoman Empire. One of her major contributions was to coin the term “power field” in the Ottoman context. The emergent institutions during the process of modern transformations need to be evaluated, she argued, as power fields in which the different actors competed with each other to fulfill their various interests. The success of the state in achieving its objectives was contingent on its ability to mediate and reconcile different interests in these power fields. Another related theoretical contribution from Islamoglu was the attention she paid to the socio-spatial relations of power. The various specificities of any one region

³⁰ Ibid, 52–86.

³¹ Crete, Sivas, and Trabzon (in Chapter 4).

importantly affected the results of the negotiation process in that region in terms of the recasting or interpretation of the laws introduced by the state.³²

These arguments made by Islamoglu on the Ottoman modernization have been immensely important for my study. I also analyze the Bosnian local council as a power field in which the various actors—local representatives, regional officials, and the central government—mobilized their resources. And I also consider Bosnia as a special region because of its location on the border of the empire, taking this spatial context as highly determinant of the social relations of power in establishing the leverages of the various actors and thence their capacities to create different practices. This thesis pays special attention to the position of Bosnia regarding its unique location in the empire and the relative advantages consequently enjoyed by the different local and provincial claimants in their petitioning of the center.

1.5. Scholarship on the Tanzimat's local councils in the Ottoman Empire

The literature on the Ottoman local administration aftermath of the Tanzimat is not large. Nevertheless, two distinct camps in this small body of work can be identified. While the first offers a more statist perspective in its analysis of these councils, the second scrutinizes the ways how local agents used the new institutions vis-à-vis the state. The first camp essentially takes a “negative” view, referring to the developments in local participation in the second half of the nineteenth century as unsuccessful steps, basically as a mere homage to pluralism that the Ottoman government paid for the sake of the centralization. Advocates of this position have also argued that

³² Huri İslamoğlu, “Politics of Administering Property: Law and Statistics in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” in *Constituting Modernity: Private Property in the East and West*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu, The Islamic Mediterranean 5 (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 281.

the provincial regulations of 1864 and 1867 reflected the appetite of the Ottoman bureaucrats for the centralization, but did not significant change the structure of the empire in reality.³³ The problem here is that these studies only focused on the governmental regulations, without attempting, that is, to study the details of the realization of the provincial regulations at the regional and local level.

For instance, İlber Ortaylı in his detailed study about the consolidation of local councils in the empire indicated that although these councils were important in terms of pioneering the consolidation of modern municipalities and provincial special administrations, they remained weak as self-governance organs. They were only naïve attempts of the Ottoman Empire that showed its desire to modernize the governmental structure.³⁴

İlhan Tekeli also sees the transformation of local administration in the second half of the 19th century as primitive. Firstly, he says that these local councils were consolidated as a result of top-down reforms. Therefore, they could not incorporate society into these institutions. Secondly, there was a fiscal deficit in the empire and the budgets of the local administrative organs were highly limited. Thirdly, there was no bourgeoisie in the correct sense, and the local administrative organs that were not supported by the bourgeoisie could not develop. It is thus that Tekeli takes the 1930 Municipality Law as his starting point.³⁵

³³ İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840-1878* (Sevinç Matbaası, 1974); Musa Çadırcı, “Osmanlı Döneminde Yerel Meclisler,” *TODAİE* 2, no. 5 (1993): 3–12; Mustafa Gençoğlu, “1864 ve 1871 Vilâyet Nizamnamelerine Göre Osmanlı Taşra İdaresinde Yeniden Yapılanma,” *Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (2011): 29–50.

³⁴ Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840–1878*, 70.

³⁵ İlhan Tekeli, *Belediyeçilik yazıları: (1976-1991)* (IULA-EMME, 1992), 8–10.

Mehmet Seyitdanlioğlu and Musa Çadırcı are also among the few people to have written on the local councils in the Ottoman Empire.³⁶ They also assumed the statist perspective of Ortaylı and continued to view all the local government institutions as a part of the increasing state centralization that starts with the Ottoman modernity. Again, the basis of their arguments was the provincial laws of the Ottoman Empire rather than the actual process in the localities. Thus, they could only offer a very narrow perspective on the functioning of the local councils in the empire.

The second camp has challenged the arguments of the first. The researchers taking this line of argument are separated from the first camp in their usage of the case study method employing well-designed theoretical frameworks. They have also paid attention to the negotiating power of the local powerholders and their ability to benefit from the “modern” institutions introduced by the center.

Safa Saraçoğlu’s study on the Vidin administrative council offers a perspective which is quite parallel with the aims of this paper. He perceives the administrative councils as a ‘judicial-administrative’ sphere “where local agents utilized the institutional framework of politics of administration.”³⁷ However, the real contribution made by Saraçoğlu is his fresh theoretical framework. He implies an agency-based analysis, which is a rising trend in the historiographic studies of the local administrative organs during the Tanzimat. Saraçoğlu discusses local councils as dynamic places in which local agents used the judiciary and administrative framework of the institution to fulfill their various particular interests.³⁸

³⁶ Mehmet Seyitdanlioğlu, “Yerel Yönetim Metinleri VI:1871 Vilayet Nizamnamesi ve Getirdikleri,” *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler* 5, no. 5 (n.d.): 75–82; Çadırcı, “Osmanlı Döneminde Yerel Meclisler.”

³⁷ Saraçoğlu, “Some Aspects of Ottoman Governmentality at the Local Level, 224.” See also; Saracoglu, *Nineteenth-Century Local Governance in Ottoman Bulgaria*.

³⁸ Saracoglu, *Nineteenth-Century Local Governance in Ottoman Bulgaria*, 4.

Yonca Köksal's article on the general local councils in Edirne and Ankara provinces also attempts to bring an ignored branch of the local council reforms to the forefront.³⁹ Köksal similarly perceives these councils as intermediary institutions in which the local claimants negotiated with the center over the various issues.⁴⁰ Differently from Saraçoğlu, however, she demonstrates using the examples of the Ankara and Edirne general councils that the place where the negotiations occurred was highly significant for an understanding of not only who the winners and losers were but also why they succeeded or failed. The comparative tool affords an opportunity to see the differences between the regions in terms of the functioning of these councils and the ability of the council agents to manipulate the legal framework of the institutions. The present research on the Bosnian general council will offer some results that can be compared with Köksal's study.

Jun Akiba's study, "The Local Councils as the Origin of the Parliamentary System in the Ottoman Empire," focuses on the history of *participatory public administration* in the Ottoman Empire (from the Tanzimat to 1876 Constitution).⁴¹ Akiba includes a detailed analysis evaluating these local administrative organs, presented in chronological order. He also clearly addresses the issue of how these organs were hierarchically consolidated in the light of provincial regulations. Both the process of election in these councils and their scope of authority are considered.

Some other revisionist scholars have also focused on the municipal reforms of the post-Tanzimat period, which have long been neglected in the Ottoman historiography. Nora Lafi's study

³⁹ Köksal, "Local Demands and State Policies," 472-473.

⁴⁰ She presents a detailed description of the matters discussed in the councils of Ankara and Edirne. Ibid, 475.

⁴¹ Jun Akiba, "The Local Councils as The Origin of the Parliamentary System in the Ottoman Empire," in *Development of Parliamentarism in the Modern Islamic World*, ed. Tsugitaka Sato (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 2009), 176-205.

of the Ottoman Salonica municipal council is one such.⁴² She takes a critical stance in respect of the top-down logic of the modernist perspective and instead offers powerful insights into negotiations between the local notables, the provincial administrators, and the central government bureaucrats. Tetsuya Sahara's comparative study between Meiji Japan and Turkey is another significant study in this sphere. He tries to understand the similarities and differences between the municipal system of the Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire and municipal laws in Meiji, Japan.⁴³

It remains the case, however, there are still only a very few works in this area that oppose analysis in terms of the top-down logic of modernization and its teleological understanding of the modern transformation. This paper will thus contribute to the revisionist literature that brings the process of negotiation to the forefront. The aim is to show how the process of modernization in Bosnia was contingent on the unique socio-spatial relations of power between the local notables, provincial administrators, and the central government bureaucrats.

1.6. Sources & Structure

The core part of this study is based on the Bosnian general council registers available in the Presidential Ottoman Archive (*Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi*, BOA). As indicated, these councils started to emerge after the provincial regulation of 1864 and continued until the end of the empire. Since Bosnia was controlled by the Austria-Hungarian Empire after 1878, we do not

⁴² Nora Lafı, "The Municipality of Salonica between Old Regime, the Ottoman Reforms and the Transition from Empire to Nation State: Questions and Research Perspectives" (Thessaloniki 1912-2012, Municipality of Thessaloniki, 2013), 74–89.

⁴³ Tetsuya Sahara, "Municipal Reforms in Japan and Turkey: The Belediye System of the Tanzimat and Municipal Laws in Meiji Japan," in *The Rising Sun and the Turkish Crescent: New Perspectives on the History of Japanese Turkish Relations*, ed. Selçuk Esenbel and Inaba Chiharu (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2003).

have information on the aftermath of the council in the province from the Turkish side. Therefore, the documents that we can find in the Ottoman State Archives are limited to this date.

The records of the general councils held between 1867 and 1872 are available on a regular basis, held mainly in the Testaments and also Official Correspondence (*İrade* and *Mektubi Kalemi*) collections of the BOA archive. This thesis thus focuses on the records entered on these dates as the parameters of study. There are also various, dispersed documents on the functioning of the Bosnian general local council between 1872 and 1878, but they are in a summary form rather than the records of council meetings. In order to undertake a systematic and comparative analysis, I did not make them a component of my analysis and rarely benefited from them.

The Secretariat Documents Registry (*Muhimme Kalemi Evrakı*) collection in BOA was quite fruitful in terms of tracing the follow-on from council meetings. Some of the demands recorded in the council meeting registers were also traceable in this collection. These records provided crucial information about whether the demands really were carried into effect. Since the representatives clearly defined the places and the thing that they wanted, the demands could easily be matched with the activities reflected in the records of this collection. In addition to these two main BOA collections, some documents from the Health (Internal Medicine, *Dahiliye*) and Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*) collections, also in the BOA, were used.

There are also many reports of British consuls in the Ottoman lands about the administrative reforms of the Ottoman Empire and Bosnia in the second half of the nineteenth century. They, too, have provided important source material for this study, with significant information on the local politics and the Ottoman state's presence in the region. Bosnia's sensitive situation regarding its location on the border and tendency to ethnoreligious rebellions made the

region significant for British consuls. This source has provided a considerable number of reports related to the political situation in Bosnia during the Tanzimat.

The sources of this study are state products in the sense that even the demands of the representatives of the provincial general councils were recorded under the authority of the provincial governor-general. British consular reports also had a huge potential to misjudge imperial and regional politics given the competing interests. The information recorded, therefore, might be incorrect. However, the variety of sources employed here has enabled triangulation, in general if not always in specifics. Broadly speaking, this study has been able to confirm the findings with a check for reliability of information through comparison.

Another limitation has been the absence of sources on the local representatives' experiences in the councils and the districts which were nominated for. The Ottoman sources on Bosnia are quite unfruitful in this sphere. However, both the non-Ottoman sources – archival materials from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires – and sources kept in local languages carry a huge potential to overcome this. The language barrier prevented this researcher from benefiting from these types of sources, but there is a valuable way forward here for future studies.

In terms of structure, this study is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter aims to give an idea about the introduction of the reforms in Bosnia during the Tanzimat and its echo at the local level. The long-running governmental problems in Bosnia, the existence of local Muslim powerholders and corvée system (through which landlords extract taxation through labor), and the Tanzimat reforms' interaction with these problems comprise the larger body of the chapter. The second chapter makes a detailed analysis of the functioning of the Bosnian General Council and its content. The third chapter first compares the general council in Bosnia comparison with those in Crete, Trabzon, and Sivas, investigating the extent to which these institutions served as

significant governance structures at the local level. The chapter then goes on to focus on the donation-based economy that emerged around these institutions and examines their role as an alternative to Ottoman waqf institutions and charity works of *ayans*.



Chapter II

The Tanzimat and its Aftermath in Ottoman Bosnia (1839–1869)

2.1 Introduction

For centuries, due to its geographical position and relative autonomy from the center, Bosnia was an important region in the Ottoman imperial formation. However, it was not very different from the other peripheral regions of the empire in the sense that *sipahis*, *janissaries*, and *ayans* were the *de facto* rulers there until the period of the Tanzimat.⁴⁴ Although the region did not witness such famous tax-farmers as Tepedelenli Ali of Yanina or Pazvandoglu of Vidin, Yuzo Nagata's study on the revenues of Bosnian Muslim notables (*ashab-ı alaka*) demonstrates that the coalition of janissaries, *ulamas*, and Muslim landlords held large wealth and generally controlled the region until the center's attempt to reshape the local relations of power at the peripheries.⁴⁵ The economic reregulation process and administrative reorganization, which started with the reign of Selim III and entered a radical phase in the first half of the nineteenth century, resulted in the consolidation of new institutions and emerging actors across the empire through the exclusion of some beneficiaries of the old structural formation.⁴⁶ In different parts of the empire, this produced a group of displeased agents who had lost or were threatened with the loss of their socio-economic positions. Bosnia was among the regions that witnessed strong reactions against the intended reforms.

⁴⁴ Yuzo Nagata, *Materials on the Bosnian Notables* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1979), 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 81–86.

⁴⁶ Ariel Salzmänn, "An Ancien Régime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics & Society* 21, no. 4 (December 1, 1993): 410–11.

After the abolishment of the janissary institution, a coalition of janissaries, *kapedans*,⁴⁷ and *ayans* resisted the policies of Mahmud II by refusing to join and participate in the newly consolidated army and administrative system. In 1831, this coalition nominated their leader, Huseyin Kapudan, as the governor-general of the region and refused to recognize anyone else's authority.⁴⁸ The central government's response was to suppress the revolt by through another local powerholder, Istolçeli Ali Pasha. In return for his assistance, this *ayan* was rewarded with the governorship of Hersek.⁴⁹ However, he also continued to act as a mediator between the region and the center rather than simply operating as a local agent of the central government. Indeed, he was later to fall into disfavor, whereupon the government accused him of being responsible for the rebellion in 1850 and he was killed in Istanbul in the following year.⁵⁰

The declaration of the Tanzimat edict in 1839 initiated a process of increased division of labor, especially in the administration of the empire. The edict was aimed at accelerating the process of standardization and specialization in state affairs. Especially the introduction of ministries and administrative councils in the Ottoman government practices, which began with Mahmud II, gained momentum with the Tanzimat. The consolidation of reform councils, such as the council of Fiscal Affairs in 1840, the council of Educational Affairs in 1845, and other councils

⁴⁷ *Kapedanship* was a specific system to Ottoman Bosnia. It was initiated by the Ottomans, after the conquest of Bosnia, to protect the European border. At the beginning, the *kapedans* were the military leaders who protected the riversides on the border. With the second half of the 16th century, they undertook the duty of controlling the castles on the Bosnian border and protection. During the eighteenth century, they transformed into landlords through the renting of state lands and undertaking the duty of tax collection in addition to their military duties. They became powerful actors of the region in terms of shaping the local politics and performing an intermediary role between the center and their region. see: Branislav Djurdjev, *Bosna-Hersek* (Ankara: TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 1992).

⁴⁸ Fatma Sel Turhan, *The Ottoman Empire and the Bosnian Uprising: Janissaries, Modernisation and Rebellion in the Nineteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 109.

⁴⁹ Fatma Sel Turhan, "Rebelling for the Old Order: Ottoman Bosnia, 1826-1836" (PhD Thesis, Bogazici University, 2009), 340.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 342.

related to agriculture, security, and education all flourished.⁵¹ With the consolidation of *muhasıllık* councils, which were unique institutions of the Tanzimat reforms, the central government planned to break the hegemony of local powerholders by organizing the tax collection system around state-appointed agents. However, the ideals of the Tanzimat reforms on paper were not necessarily realized on the ground. While, the Tanzimat projected a new economic and administrative formation for the empire, it also created a vacuum in which the central state, provincial governors, and local people competed to become beneficiaries of the newly consolidated institutions.

This struggle was not only apparent in Bosnia but also occurred in other parts of the empire. Musa Çadircı, for example, reveals that a group of notables who benefited from the *yurtluk-ocaklık* land revenues mobilized against the reform implementations in Van, Erzurum, Diyarbakır, and Çıldır.⁵² In the Balkans, Halil İncılık's analysis of the regions of Nish and Vidin regarding the Tanzimat implementation concludes that the real causes of peasant mobilization against the reforms derived mainly from the relations between the Muslim *ayans* who controlled the state lands and the non-Muslim, predominantly Christian peasants there. The rhetoric of the day had been adopted by the non-Muslim peasants to the extent that they started to mobilize against taxation irregularities and traditional types of service obligations specifically by referring to the promises of the Tanzimat.⁵³ Safa Saracoglu has also analyzed the process of negotiation between different segments of society and state agents through the newly emerging administrative councils that were the products of the Tanzimat in Vidin district. These institutions created new spaces for

⁵¹ Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, "Divan-ı Hümayun'dan Meclis-i Mebusan'a Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yasama," in *Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 262.

⁵² Musa Çadircı, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Karşılaşılan Güçlükler," in *Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 140.

⁵³ Halil İncılık, "Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu," in *Tanzimat - Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, ed. Halil İncılık and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2014), 128–29.

Vidin society, mainly local notables, to mobilize in the state cadres and further their interests.⁵⁴

John Bragg has similarly mapped the web of interests among the state, provincial, and commercial elites in the case of Tokat (1856–1876), delving into the court records to depict the provincial history of the region during the Tanzimat.⁵⁵

All these cases as presented indicate how the different interest groups used the rhetoric of the Tanzimat and the newly emerging ideologies to legitimate their claims in the wider context of imperial authority. They also reveal how the state's interests and its reform politics sometimes overlapped or intertwined with the local powerholders. In Bosnia also, we will see the competition as structured by an ethno-religious framework and the conflict between the central government, provincial officials, local notables, and ordinary subjects all seeking to take advantage of the institutions promised by the Tanzimat.

It should be noted that the conflict between the central government and various interest groups was not a war that resulted in a simple victory for the center. For instance, the attempt to collect tax revenues through state agents after the Tanzimat declaration ended in failure. After two years of inefficient tax collection, local notables regained their position, their reinstatement (replacement of the state's tax collection agents) leading to a gradual return to tax-farming in the provinces.⁵⁶ Also, the state did not have a sufficiently developed bureaucratic capacity to keep the local notables away from administrative positions. Particularly in the lands where the authority of the center was weak, the central government continued to recognize these local leaders. Hanioglu

⁵⁴ M. Safa Saraçoğlu, "Some Aspects of Ottoman Governmentality at the Local Level: The Judicio-Administrative Sphere of the Vidin County in the 1860s and 1870s," *Ab Imperio* 2008, no. 2 (2008): 224.

⁵⁵ John Bragg, *Ottoman Notables and Participatory Politics: Tanzimat Reform in Tokat, 1839–1876*, 1st edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 4.

⁵⁶ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 88.

mentions that “(during the nineteenth century) the central government used local leaders by adopting them to Ottoman bureaucracy and furnishing [them] with allowances.”⁵⁷ However, when the state had an opportunity to suppress local powerholders, it did work to undermine their power.

Geography played a key role affecting the decision of the center to negotiate with local power groups or suppress them. Yonca Koksals study of the Ottoman central government resettlement policies for nomadic tribes offers a good perspective of the importance of geography even in the second half of the nineteenth century. For the sedentarization policies during the Tanzimat, Koksals argues that the geographically scattered areas were far from the threat of military intervention because their physical inaccessibility made them financially expensive for the government to control directly. In these areas, the state would make agreements with the tribes to absorb them into the state mechanism. Those tribes on territories that were close to urban centers and natural resources, on the other hand, were quite vulnerable to direct state intervention and the sedentarization policies.⁵⁸ Geography was an important variable determining the policies of various local power configurations and also the central government regarding the implementation of desired reforms.

2.2. The Tanzimat in Bosnia: Socio-economic background

Located on the border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which for centuries was one of the main rivals of the Ottomans, Bosnia was situated in the middle of a conflict between two rival powers. It was to become an area particularly contested by the Ottoman government, British, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires in the latter part of the 1800s. While the Austro-

⁵⁷ Ibid, 87.

⁵⁸ Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and mediation: Centralization and sedentarization of tribes in the Ottoman Empire,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42 (2006): 473–475.

Hungarians and the Russians gazed at Bosnia for their expansionary aims, the British undertook the role of protecting the Christian population there. This contestation made Bosnia a sensitive region in which the government had to act with special care. Moreover, a powerful bloc in Bosnia consolidated around Muslim landlords aiming to protect their traditional rights. The Tanzimat reforms started to materialize there only under the vice-governorship of Ömer Pasha, during the 1850s.⁵⁹ Therefore, even the consolidation of Bosnian general councils after the Provincial regulation in 1867 was a product of a rather short reform process in the region.

In Bosnia, there was a unique division of labor which was unlike most parts of the Ottoman Empire. Generally in Bosnia, a group of *reaya* mainly consolidated by non-Muslims peasants occupied the tenant status in Muslim landlords' farms (*çiftlik*) and were obliged to fulfill corvée labor.⁶⁰ Although there were also Muslim peasants, they generally worked on their own lands and only had to pay their taxes to the state. Unlike the Muslim *reaya* (and a small group of landless Muslim *reaya*), the non-Muslim peasants worked on lands that were not theirs, lived in miserable conditions, and paid an important amount of their surplus to their landlords.⁶¹ This was different from the traditional farm-household (*çift-hane*) system, in which peasants had the usufruct right of the land and paid their tithe (*öşür*) to state agents. The most common arrangement for sharecropping between the Bosnian *reaya* and their landlords was that of the *üçleme* system, in which peasants typically gave one-third of their agricultural surplus to their landlords and provided corvée labor.⁶² The report of British consul Zohrab supports this, mentioning that peasants in

⁵⁹ Ak, "Tanzimat'ın Bosna Hersek'te Uygulanması ve Neticeleri (1839-1875)," 64–65.

⁶⁰ Tevfik Güran and Ahmet Uzun, "Bosna-Hersek'te Toprak Rejimi: Eshâb-ı Alâka ve Çiftçiler Arasındaki İlişkiler (1840-1875)," *Belleten* LXX, no. 259 (2006): 870–871.

⁶¹ "Correspondence with H.M. Embassy at Constantinople on Financial or Administrative Reforms in Turkey, 1855–61," *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol. LXVII: 599 and Vol. 67 Paper No. 2884 (January 1, 1861): 56.

⁶² Güran and Uzun, 873, 877.

Hersek gave nearly a third of their harvest to the landlord.⁶³ However, the ratio also varied according to the district. While it was up as high as a half in some parts of Bosnia, it could be as little as an eighth or ninth in other districts.⁶⁴

The Bosnian economy during the Tanzimat was still a primarily agrarian one, exporting agricultural products, animals, timber, wool, and iron and copper ore in return for colonial products such as coffee and sugar and manufactured textiles, earthenware, hardware, paper, and cordage.⁶⁵ Bosnia was known for its stockbreeding, a business that fed European markets through Trieste. Since most parts of Bosnia are hilly and mountainous, stockbreeding was unrivaled, in contrast to Bulgaria, which was more orientated to arable lands.⁶⁶ The Izvornik, Banaluka, and Bihke districts produced swine, oxen, and horses, while Yeni Pazar, Hersek, and Saray specialized in sheep.⁶⁷ There were also a few manufacturing areas. The production of barrels, guns and rifles, and sword-blades was strong in the Saray, Travnik, and Banaluka districts. These cities also included large numbers of tanneries and a considerable portion of Bosnia's tobacco production, which was exported to Austria and Serbia.⁶⁸ Hersek also was an important region for crop production; it exported tobacco, timber, and iron to central Europe.⁶⁹

Since Bosnia was located on the imperial border with Austro-Hungary, the latter was a major route for its import and export businesses. The port of Trieste and the River Sava were the

⁶³ "Correspondence with H.M. Embassy at Constantinople on Financial or Administrative Reforms in Turkey, 1855-61," 55.

⁶⁴ Güran and Uzun, 877.

⁶⁵ "Abstract of Reports of Trade of Various Countries Received by Board of Trade from H.M. Ministers and Consuls, 1855-57," *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers* Volume Page: LV.197 Volume: 55 Paper Number: 2435 (January 1, 1858): 455-58.

⁶⁶ M. R. Palairot, *The Balkan Economies c. 1800-1914: Evolution without Development*, Cambridge Studies in Modern Economic History 6 (Cambridge, UK.: New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 139.

⁶⁷ "Abstract of Reports of Trade of Various Countries Received by Board of Trade from H.M. Ministers and Consuls, 1855-57," Vol. LV: 97, Paper No. 2435 (January 1, 1858): 222.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 460-62

⁶⁹ Palairot, *The Balkan Economies c. 1800-1914*, 139.

key regions in Bosnia's trade. This border-based relationship also facilitated the flow of Austrian capital to the Ottoman Empire, through the Bosnian-based trading companies and agents, making Vienna, the Austrian capital, a primary actor in the Bosnian export industry. Through Trieste, Bosnia exported copper, iron ore, and wool to supply the cloth manufactories in central Austria. An Austrian company operated its small steamers in the export of oak, timber, black cattle, horses, and swine from Ihlivne to Belgrade. Many Austrian companies made concession agreements with the Ottoman central government to act in the Bosnian timber sector, while Bosnia imported fine quality flour from Austria to supply the demands of the wealthier classes. Bosnians generally purchased Austrian manufactured goods because of their cheapness compared to British equivalents and because Bosnian merchants were encouraged to import from Austria through the established capital relationships. The Bosnian traders were able to purchase goods for the domestic market through the help of long-term credit facilities, which their dealers in Trieste guaranteed for the functioning of the trading business. Even the coffee produced in French colonies came into Bosnia for distribution from Marseilles through Trieste.⁷⁰

Wool was also an important article of trade in Bosnia. Yeni Pazar, Prepol, and Yeni Varoş produced wool of the best quality in the region, with Saray, Taşlıca, and Köprez operating as the other places of wool production (Hersek also produced wool, but of a lower quality). Plum production was also key for the region, where this fruit was consumed in great quantities, used both as food and for distilling to make spirits. The plums were grown not only for domestic consumption but also as an important article for export products.⁷¹ Regarding cereal production,

⁷⁰ "Abstract of Reports of Trade of Various Countries Received by Board of Trade from H.M. Ministers and Consuls, 1858-59," *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers* Volume Page: XXX.373 Volume: 30 Paper Number: 2579 (January 1, 1859): 455-63.

⁷¹ "Abstract of Reports of Trade of Various Countries Received by Board of Trade from H.M. Ministers and Consuls, 1855-57," 222.

maize was the most important product. It fed the peasantry, and the durability of this cereal in humid conditions, which injured other types of cereals, made its production especially profitable.⁷² Nevertheless, cereals and grains were widely produced in the region.

Situated near to the western front of the Ottoman Empire, the Banaluka, Brečka, and Ćhlivne districts were the main trade nodes connecting Bosnia to central Europe and the Adriatic markets. While the former two connected to the Austro-Hungarian Empire through the Sava River, the latter node connected the region to the Dalmatia and the Adriatic Sea. As Table 2.1 (below) demonstrates, the larger body of Bosnia's imports and exports by sterling value occurred through these trade nodes according to the British consular reports in 1858. Especially Banaluka and Brečka districts which were near to the Sava river constituted more than half of the Bosnia's trade transactions.

Table 2.1 Trade in Bosnia, 1858 (GBP, excluding Hersek)

Trade Nodes	Imports	Exports
Ćhlivne	43,746	55,310
Banaluka	125,604	151,080
Brečka	168,108	177,664
Serbia	25,000	25,000
Rumelia	54,000	47,000
Minor centers on Bosnia's western border	15,000	15,000
Total	431,458	471,054

Source: "Abstract of Reports of Trade of Various Countries Received by Board of Trade from H.M. Ministers and Consuls, 1858-59," 1855-57, 458.

The variety of products passing through the trading nodes demonstrates the popularity of goods in Bosnia, showing the emphasis in Bosnia on exporting agricultural products, animals, and

⁷² "Abstract of Reports of Trade of Various Countries Received by Board of Trade from H.M. Ministers and Consuls, 1858-59," 459.

raw materials and on importing colonial goods and manufactured items. This variety relates more generally also to the imperial core-periphery relationship. Table 2.2 (below) indicates this relationship through the types of products imported and exported via the three main trading districts in the region.

Table 2.2. Trade in Banaluka, Ihlivne, and Brečka, 1858 (GBP)

Banaluka			
Imports	Value	Exports	Value
Planks and staves	30,000	Coffee	21,320
Dried plums	37,000	Rice	7,230
Gall nuts	3,650	Sugar	7,510
Black cattle	20,000	Hardware	9,015
Pigs	8,000	Earthenware	1,123
Sheep	4,530	Cotton fabrics	27,326
Horses	6,500	Cotton twist	18,200
Hides	7,600	Woolen fabrics	17,340
Sheep skins	2,000	Flour	500
Wool	3,500	Ardent spirits	5,300
Tallow	3,320	Glass	1,220
Wheat	1,230	Paper, cordage, etc.	9,520
Maize	1,800	Total	125,604
Barley	2,250		
Furs	2,200		
Iron	10,000		
Wax, tar, farm produce, and etc.	7,500		
Total	151,080		

Ihlivne				Brečka			
Imports	Value	Exports	Value	Imports	Value	Exports	Value
Wheat	6,750	Coffee	7,400	Timber	23,200	Coffee	28,565
Barley	2,200	Sugar	2,154	Prunes	45,400	Sugar	12,732
Yellow wax	2,000	Rice	2,660	Oxen	32,850	Rice	12,911
Oxen	10,080	Cotton cloth	9,760	Pigs	11,800	Cotton manufacturing	39,600
Sheep	12,400	Cotton yarn	7,400	Horses	7,130	Cotton twist	23,500
Hides	3,000	Woolen cloth	6,700	Sheep	5,325	Woolen cloth	13,300
Planks	9,340	Prepared skins	1,000	Hides	8,732	Hardware	17,500
Furs, dried fruits, tar, etc.	9,540	Glass and hardware	3,740	Gall nuts	3,620	Ardent spirits, paper, glass, etc.	20,000
		Paper, soap, etc.	2,932	Furs	11,535	Total	168,10
Total	55,310		43,746	Iron	17,500		
				Wheat	853		
				Maize	2,300		
				Barley	1,535		
				Farm produce	6,684		
				Total	177,664		

Source: "Abstract of Reports of Trade of Various Countries Received by Board of Trade from H.M. Ministers and Consuls, 1858-59," 1855-57, 456-58.

Although Bosnia exemplified the core-periphery relationship, however, it was also a special region in the sense that it was located on the Western border of the empire, and the space itself was highly determinant on the socio-economic relations of power in Bosnia, determining the leverages of the various actors and their capacities to create different practices. Ottoman Bosnia's inhabitants always used their close relationship with the Austro-Hungarian Empire and central Europe when negotiating with the Ottoman capital.

2.3. The Tanzimat in Bosnia: political background

The central government's relation with the region was shaped around the economic-based religious class conflict after the Tanzimat. This was the most urgent problem in the state's reform plans for Bosnia. However, the central authority did not have a clear agenda for how to control

these socio-economically oriented clashes, mainly between non-Muslim *reaya* and their Muslim landlords. On the one side, there was a growing nationalist sentiment in Europe which could affect the Bosnian Non-Muslim population. Bosnia was also attracting more attention from the European powers, with the British and Austro-Hungarian Empires keeping a close watch on the situation there and pressuring the Ottoman government to reform the region.

On the other side, Bosnian Muslim landlords had long been the de facto rulers of Bosnia and were still the main intermediary power through which the central authority exercised its power (by means of local networks). Furthermore, the landlords in themselves constituted an important part of the Bosnian Muslim population in the region, where their existence was essential to legitimate governmental authority. This complicated structure in Bosnia pushed the central authority to placate and pacify, seeking to diffuse the conflict between non-Muslim *reaya* and Muslim landlords rather than solve the problem. The Ottoman central government neither directly ameliorated the socio-economic relations of power by taking side with the non-Muslim *reaya* in the region nor legitimated the authority of non-Muslim landlords and their suppression on the non-Muslim *reaya*. Thus, the reform process in Bosnia was more about constructing the state as the sole authority and finding compromise among the clashing groups than about resolving the deeper divide in favor of either of the two sides.

The Ottoman central government in the Bosnian region was passive until 1850 in the sense that it exerted its authority there through the local notables and acted only to suppress the most extreme insurrections against the state.⁷³ Prior to that, during the 1840s, conditions had been worsening. According to the report made by Vamık Efendi, employed to inspect the region,

⁷³ Edin Hajdarpasic, “Whose Bosnia?: National Movements, Imperial Reforms, and the Political Re-Ordering of the Late Ottoman Balkans, 1840–1875” (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 2008), 117,

Muslim landlords treated the *reaya* as their servants. The landlords nearly paid nothing as taxes to the state, offloading these onto the non-Muslim *reayas*.⁷⁴ However, the central government waited until an insurrection erupted in 1849 to intervene. Thus, it was only a decade after the Tanzimat's 1839 declaration that the Ottoman government made its first radical attempt to change the structural relations of power as, with the aim of strengthening the central authority, Ömer Pasha was charged by Istanbul to suppress the revolt in Bosnia led by Tuzlalı Mahmud Pasha and Mahmud Pasha Fidahic.

The two pashas had gathered an army around the Bosnian border to repel the reform attempts of Tahir Pasha, governor-general of the region, which aimed to abolish corvée and reform the tax collection.⁷⁵ Ömer Pasha struggled to suppress the revolt, after which he sent the heads of the chief families away, abolished the corvée, and conscripted nearly two thousand Bosnians into the regular army. Most of Ömer Pasha's reforms did not go any further in terms of changing the structural patterns in the region permanently; enrollment to the army was abandoned, and the reforms were not stay adhered to.⁷⁶ However, these did constitute significant attempts and formed the basis for further reforms.

British Consul Mr. Zohrab reported that non-Muslim subjects welcomed the operation of Ömer Pasha and aided his actions against the rebels. The petition of an important Christian figure from Bosnia in 1850, Friar Ivan Franjo Jukic, demonstrates how the non-Muslim population became hopeful about impending reforms in Bosnia. He praised the sultan and asked for a range of improvements in the region, namely, the recognition of non-Muslim Bosnians as citizens rather

⁷⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), I.MM. 1938, Ek 4, 1265/1847–48 quoted from Güran and Uzun, “Bosna-Hersek'te Toprak Rejimi,” 883.

⁷⁵ Ak, “Tanzimat'ın Bosna Hersek'te Uygulanması ve Neticeleri (1839–1875),” 58.

⁷⁶ “Correspondence with H.M. Embassy at Constantinople on Financial or Administrative Reforms in Turkey, 1855–61,” 54.

than ‘*reaya*’, being equal to Turks under law, equal numbers of representatives in councils, freedom of religious service, freedom from restrictions in building and repairing churches, and use of the Bosnian language along with Turkish for formal announcements.⁷⁷

Indeed, some of these demands were to materialize in the process, but Ömer Pasha’s reforms were a disappointment overall. The Muslim *reayas* were faced with new, heavy taxes, state employee corruption emanated from the capital, and only a slight improvement was realized in their social position vis-à-vis the landlords.⁷⁸ In fact, the action of Ömer Pasha was not intended to implement a long-term reform process aimed at solving the conflict between non-Muslim peasants and Muslim landlords. Rather, it aimed to ameliorate, making a minor improvement in the conditions of corvée labor and banning some traditional privileges.

After suppressing the revolt, Ömer Pasha entered the Saray district and made it the governor-general’s place of residence. Then, gathering the Bosnian local notables, he announced Sultan Abdülmecid’s order to implement the Tanzimat in Bosnia.⁷⁹ The central government had obliged each province (*eyalet*) to gather a provincial council in line with the published provincial council’s regulations in 1849. The regulation described the consolidation of councils, the authority of governors-general, policing issues, the extent of provincial treasurers, district governors, and scribes’ duties.⁸⁰ However, the central government did not publish any specific guidance about the

⁷⁷ Jukic, “Zelje i molbe kristjanah u Bosni i Hercegovini, koje ponizno prikazuju njegovom carskom velicanstvu sretnovladajucem sultanu Abdul-Medzidu,” in *Zemljopis i Poviestnica Bosne* (Zagreb: Berzotisak narodne tiskarnice, 1851), 155–164. quoted from Hajdarpasic, “Whose Bosnia?,” 201.

⁷⁸ “Correspondence with H.M. Embassy at Constantinople on Financial or Administrative Reforms in Turkey, 1855–61,” 54.

⁷⁹ Ak, “Tanzimat’ın Bosna Hersek’te Uygulanması ve Neticeleri (1839–1875),” 61.

⁸⁰ Özgür Yılmaz, “Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Taşra İdare Meclisleri (1840–1871),” *History Studies International Journal of History* 6 (n.d.): 266.

work items of the council or reference for the leader of these councils. When a significant problem arose, the council was to notify the center and act upon the directives sent down.⁸¹

Although there was no guidance for the consolidation of newly Tanzimat councils in 1849, the central government sent letters of instructions to the governor-general of provinces that gave details of the work items of these councils and expected results from the establishment of these administrative organs.⁸² Such a letter was sent from Istanbul to Ömer Pasha and the governor-general for Bosnia, Tahir Pasha. This letter was consolidated from six articles identifying the problems in Bosnia and offering solutions for them.⁸³ After the suppression of the revolt, the letter requested the immediate instigation of Tanzimat reforms in the province. Thus, the consolidation of a provincial city council (*meclis-i kebir*) as a part of the Tanzimat reforms was the most urgent duty awaiting *Müşir* Ömer Pasha and Governor-General Tahir Pasha. The letter demonstrates that the central government was well aware of the problems in Bosnia, but it was less clear about what to do to solve them beyond establishing the mechanisms of governance being introduced across the empire.

The first acts of these two pashas for the consolidation of a provincial council in Bosnia was to help the existing engineer in Ömer Pasha's army redetermine the administrative units in the province. The central government also ordered to map the region according to these units, but it complained about the decentralized structure of the state bureaucrats. The judge (*kadı*) resided in Saray district, while the governor-general was in Travnik. Since the distance between these two

⁸¹ Ayla Efe, "Tanzimat'ın Eyalet Reformları 1840-64: Silistre Örneği," *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 6, no. 22 (2009): 99–100.

⁸² Hüseyin Muşmal, "Tanzimat Reformlarının Uygulanması Hakkında Konya Valisi Selim Paşa'ya Verilen Talimat-ı Seniyye," *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 19 (2008): 106–16.

⁸³ There is no specific information about the date of this document. However, it is certain that it was written after the provincial regulation in 1849 and before the leaving of Ömer Pasha's from Bosnia. BOA. DVN, 31/29.

cities was around eighteen to twenty hours, the central government instructed the governor-general and members of the council to find a suitable place for the center of the province. The governor-general, judge, and provincial treasurer would reside in this center.⁸⁴

The letter from Istanbul also placed a special emphasis on the Hersek district, stating that this was a part of Bosnia province and should fall within the scope of Tanzimat reforms implemented in the region. İstolçeli Ali Pasha, who had helped the government during the rebellion of Huseyin Kapudan and was awarded with the governorship of Hersek, was still a powerful figure in the district, which concerned the central government. This pasha had consolidated a huge power in the region and accumulated great wealth during his years in power. İstolçeli Ali Pasha also used some questionable methods and challenged the central state's centralization policies and reform attempts in Hersek.⁸⁵ Therefore, the central authority approached the immediate implementation of the Tanzimat reforms in Hersek with caution. It recommended the governor-general of Bosnia and *Müşir* Ömer Pasha be careful in respect of İstolçeli Ali Pasha because of his local connections in the region,⁸⁶ and it left decisions for the implementation of the Tanzimat reforms in the fragile atmosphere of the region to the consultation between these two pashas. However, Ali Pasha's support for the Bosnian rebellion in 1850 caused a rupture in relations with Istanbul. He was imprisoned by Ömer Pasha and died on the road, reportedly as the result of a soldier's stray bullet.⁸⁷

Two points in the letter were declared as essential in order to implement the Tanzimat reforms properly in Bosnia: first, securing law and order and the safety of life and property, and

⁸⁴ BOA. DVN, 31/29.

⁸⁵ Turhan, *The Ottoman Empire and the Bosnian Uprising*, 181.

⁸⁶ “*Ali paşa yerli hükümünde olmak münasebetiyle bu babda reviiyet mendan davranılmak üzere...*” BOA. DVN, 31/29.

⁸⁷ İstolçeli Ali Pasha was born in Bosnia and became the governor of İstolçe after his father's death. His family was one of the influential powerbrokers in the region during the first half of the nineteenth century. Mustafa L. Bilge, “Rıdvangeboviç, Ali Paşa (1783–1851),” *TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi* 35 (2008): 50–51.

second, dealing with the antagonistic relationship between local landlords (*ashab-ı alaka*) and peasants (*erbab-ı ziraat*). The former was applicable to every part of the empire per the Tanzimat reforms in order to provide the basic rights of citizenship. The latter, however, was unique to Bosnia and some other regions in Rumelia. In this respect, the letter was clearly acknowledging the problematic division of Muslims as the landowners and powerbrokers in the region and Christians as peasants working on their landlords' farms as sharecroppers, which had fueled the insurrection. The central government fudged its solution to this problem, however.

The Ottoman government determined two possible solutions: implementing the Tanzimat reforms strictly by abolishing the traditional structure and relations of power completely or else creating a unique formation for Bosnia through negotiations with the Muslim landlords. In order to determine the issue, the prevention of the conflict between Muslim landlords and Christian peasants was the first priority for Governor-General Tahir Pasha and *Müşir* Ömer Pasha. In addition to this matter, the letter also highlighted the importance of integrating Bosnia to the imperial conscription system. However, the implementing of such a reform was left to the ultimate report of the two pashas about its applicability to the region.⁸⁸

The established provincial council (*meclis-i umum-ı vilayet*) consisted of state officials (governor-general, judge, provincial treasurer, and Muslim and non-Muslim religious leaders, etc.), four members representing the Muslim population, and one for each non-Muslim community. These councils had a large scope of authority, ranging from economic, administrative, and judicial to taxation and conscription matters.⁸⁹ These powers remained in force until the publication of a provincial law in 1864, and the councils became the backbone of the local

⁸⁸ BOA. DVN, 31/29.

⁸⁹ Musa Çadırcı, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Eyalet ve Sancaklarda Meclislerin Oluşturulması (1840–1864)," in *Tanzimat Sürecinde Türkiye: Ülke Yönetimi* (Ankara: İmge Kitapevi, 2007), 276.

administration under the supervision of the governor-general and the intermediaries of governance between the locals and central authority.⁹⁰

In Bosnia, a petition sent from Governor-General Mehmed Hayrettin Pasha in 1851 to the *Meclis-i Vala* offers significant information about the structure of the provincial council in the region. In this petition, the governor-general informs the central government about the appointment of Mehmed and Derviş Beg as the tax collectors of Bihke and Maden districts, respectively. The matter raised concerned an increase in their salaries with respect to their membership in the Bosnian provincial council, which the governor-general was aware was in conflict with the regulations given to the provincial councils. If the members of these councils were local inhabitants of the region, they could not receive salaries for their involvement in the council.

The governor-general argued that Derviş Beg and Mehmet Pasha were normally residents of Bihke and Maden, but, since they had to stay in Saray, they were financially impoverished.⁹¹ The governor-general also complained about the lack of any suitable candidates for this position. His proposal was to double their salaries until placing them in official state position, such as district governor. The central government approved this demand by highlighting the importance of the continuation of the Tanzimat reforms in the region and ordering that the expenses for this be met from the districts' budgets.⁹²

A year later, Governor-General Mehmed Hayreddin Pasha consulted with Istanbul again for a matter related to the provincial council. He noted that Uzun Abdullah Efendi and the Bihke

⁹⁰ İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840–1878* (Ankara: TTK, 2000), 43.

⁹¹ According to the petition, there were disturbances in the Bihke and Maden regions, which was why Derviş Beg and Mehmed Pasha were staying in Saray. BOA. I.MVL, 215/7121.

⁹² Derviş Beg's salary, which was 1000 *kuruş*, would be 2000, and Mehmed Pasha's 2000 go to 4000. Ibid.

and Maden tax collectors (*mütesellims*), Derviş Beg and Mehmed Pasha, who were among the Muslim members of the council, were in the capital and hence unable to attend council meetings. Mehmed Ağa was the only member of the council in Saray. Again, therefore, Mehmed Hayreddin Pasha justified his proposal by highlighting the absence of any other suitable men in Saray district for the council position.

Since the absence of the three members decreased the number of participants in the council, the governor-general offered Salih Efendi's name for membership. The governor-general presented Salih Efendi as the most suitable man for this position because of his knowledge of the region, familiarity with the local language, and lack of local notable origin or connection.⁹³ The central government recommended the governor-general await the arrival of Kamil Pasha, who was the inspector of Rumelia and also responsible for the Bosnian region. After his arrival, the ultimate decision would be given.⁹⁴

This correspondence between the governor-general of Bosnia and the central government offers significant hints about the structure of the Bosnian provincial council. When the governor-general was mentioning the members of the council, he mentioned the presence there of a tax collector (*kocabaşı*).⁹⁵ Probably, the *kocabaşı* represented the Christian subjects of Bosnia, as the representative of non-Muslims. In addition to considerations of social position and religion/ethnicity, the governor-general selected members on the basis of their official connections with the central government. Derviş Beg and Mehmed Pasha both filled the position of state-appointed tax collector. There is no clue about the background of Mehmed Ağa, another member

⁹³ BOA. I.MVL, 252/9306, 1.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 1.

of the council, but even Salih Efendi who was suggested for the membership was a *müderriş*.⁹⁶ The governor-general demonstrated Salih Efendi as a proper candidate due to his lack of a local notable origin or connection with the local power groups. Therefore, functioning as a state agent was the condition for membership of the provincial council in Bosnia. The central authorities probably saw the presence of state agents in the councils and keeping the local notables out as the most convenient and effective way of applying the Tanzimat reforms quickly in the region.

This information in these petitions give clues about another aspect of this subject. Although it was an inconvenience in the provincial regulations that the central government had to approve the salary payment for a local inhabitant's membership of the provincial council, which ordinarily was not permitted, the irregular salary increase demands of Bosnian council members were met. This inference is that this was to avoid interruption to the Tanzimat reforms in the region. Thus, paying for the membership could be a way of keeping local state agents loyal to the central government. Since there was a powerful opposition bloc of Muslim local notables, the local state agents were crucial in terms of providing a flow of information and promoting the existence of the state's authority in the region.

Indicative of the type of problems that could emerge, Halil İnalçık mentions the dominant position of local notables during the disorder of Vidin in 1850. There, the notables controlled the provincial council and were able to exert considerable pressure on the governor-general of the region.⁹⁷ The situation was exactly the opposite in Bosnia. The local notables were intentionally kept outside of the council. Indeed, there was no dilemma there between the centralization and local participation, as Ortaylı has claimed generally regarding the provincial councils.⁹⁸ The

⁹⁶ BOA. I.MVL, 252/9306.

⁹⁷ İnalçık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi*, 76.

⁹⁸ Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840–1878*, 45.

Bosnian provincial council was not a place where local notables could mobilize to resist the central state's policies.

Ömer Pasha's administrative reforms created a permanent state mechanism in Bosnia, but the combination of his efforts and the newly consolidated institutions did not ameliorate the oppositional relationship between the Muslim landlords and their tenants. Such a thing could not be expected from the provincial local council either, which was unlikely to solve the problem without establishing a proper place for negotiations between the conflicting groups. Thus, for example, violent incidents involving Bosnian armed groups and the state were on the increase in the Karadag borderland in 1857.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the central government, underlining its appreciation of the conflict between the Muslim landlords and their non-Muslim tenants in Bosnia as one of its more critical problems, made an important attempt to find a solution in 1858–59.¹⁰⁰

Two Muslim landlords, two tenants, and two independent peasants from each district (*sancak*) were called to the center as representatives.¹⁰¹ The tenants put their complaints on the table and the landlords defended themselves against the accusations. After a series of negotiations, the central government published a new regulation in 1859, the *Safer Nizamnamesi*, aiming to redefine the responsibilities of each side. As Tevfik Güran and Ahmet Uzun argue, this regulation effectively aimed to put into practice the older regulations, which had not been able to be implemented in the region. Basically, the *Safer Nizamnamesi* declared the abolishment of unpaid labor and limited the responsibilities of the tenants to their landlords.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Gölen, *Tanzîmât Döneminde Bosna Hersek*, 108.

¹⁰⁰ A group of tenants in Travnik made a harsh resistance against their landlords by refusing to pay rents at the ratio of one-third. This resurrection continued ten months in the region. Ak claims that this alarmed the government to find a solution to this ongoing conflict in Bosnia. See, Ak, "Tanzimat'ın Bosna Hersek'te Uygulanması ve Neticeleri (1839–1875)," 121.

¹⁰¹ Güran and Uzun, "Bosna-Hersek'te Toprak Rejimi," 885.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 891.

Interestingly, this special regulation for Bosnia was contrary to the ongoing imperial bureaucratization and standardization. Thus, while the central government was publishing many regulations establishing norms of governance across the empire, such as the Tanzimat and the Ottoman Land Code, it was also, at least in the case of Bosnia, continuing negotiation when confronted by the practical lack of applicability of the intended reforms.

The introduction of Ottoman Land code in 1858 was a result of the aim of the Ottoman central administration to change the existing relations of power by replacing them with a new form that was based on a different ideological framework. The central government anticipated that the privatization of lands would both increase land taxes and abolish the complex taxation relationships among landlords, peasants, and the state. This move certainly reflected the state's intention through its bureaucratic apparatuses to reconstruct the local with a new type of hegemonic power.¹⁰³ However, it was not necessarily successful since the new practices were challenged by the state's image, in various parts of the empire as well as in Bosnia.

In 1863, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha was entrusted with the task of journeying to Bosnia to make an inspection of the situation there. The main considerations for this were the need to incorporate the province into the imperial conscription system, ease the tensions among the two conflicting classes, and oversee the reform process there.¹⁰⁴ The notes Ahmed Cevdet Pasha made of his observations during his journey provide significant information about the implementation of the Tanzimat reforms in Bosnia. When he arrived in Hersek district, the pasha was shocked by the abeyance of the Safer Regulation, which abolished the corvée. Although this regulation had been

¹⁰³ Huri İslamoğlu, ed., *Constituting Modernity: Private Property in the East and West* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 309.

¹⁰⁴ Osmanlı Arsivi Daire Başkanlığı, *Bosna-Hersek ile İlgili Arşiv Belgeleri (1516–1919)* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1992), 14.

made and distributed five years previously, the pasha's investigations found that a group of local notables had not wanted to introduce it and instead kept it in a repository to avoid having a declaration.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the Ottoman government had formally abolished the corvée system, and yet, five years later, the pasha recorded its continuation in some parts of Bosnia.

Among the grievances noted by the pasha on his travels were those of four non-Muslim community leaders from Şuma district who complained about the landlords' demanding milk, eggs, or sheep from their tenants and renting pastures to the Austro-Hungarian citizens, creating miserable conditions for the tenants' animals. The pasha also witnessed many accusations regarding the distribution of the tax burden and corruption during tax collection.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, it was not only Ahmed Cevdet Pasha who witnessed the corruption accusations since the British consul Mr. Holmes reported that everyone was aware of the corrupt businesses of officials.

Actually, it appears that there was no-one willing to testify as a witness when it came to the formal investigation of such claims. The accusers who complained about the defects in the system to the British consul denied their claims according to the state authorities. The consul assumed that they were most likely afraid of appearing in front of the officials and making themselves known.¹⁰⁷ We cannot assume that the reports of these British and Ottoman figures were totally free from prejudice against any one group (see below), but it was nevertheless quite apparent that the Tanzimat reforms were failing in Bosnia and that this situation was intertwined with the conflicting power relations there.

¹⁰⁵ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir* 21–39 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), 6.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ "Reports by H.M. Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey, Respecting Condition of Christian Subjects of Porte, 1868-75," *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers*, Vol. XCII: 617, and Vol. 92, Paper No. C.1739 (January 1, 1877): 47.

Ahmed Cevdet Pasha also made a report to Istanbul on 21 June 1864 to notify the center about the current situation in Hersek district. The pasha's notes on Hersek indicate that there was a much worse atmosphere in Bosnia than reflected in his memoirs since, in the former, he stated that Hersek was in a desperate situation regarding the conflict between Muslim landlords and their tenants. The Muslim landlords were not in possession of any title deeds, yet they were managing the lands which belonged to the state. Not only that, but they would expel the *reaya* using these lands whenever they wanted. Another interesting point in the report mentioned the enclosure movement of Muslim landlords. The landlords were enclosing the pastures around their farms and renting them to *reaya* for a fee. Belonging to the state, these should have been maintained as common land, that is, open to the people to use without charge.¹⁰⁸

Although the sharing of the tenants' harvests was prevalent in Bosnia, with a third or half of their crop going to the landlords, still the *reaya* were obliged to pay even their landlords' taxes to the state. According to the pasha, this was placing the *reaya* of Hersek in an awkward position. However, he stated that it was not only the Muslim landlords who violated the regulations; some of the tenants were aiming to appropriate the landlords' farms. Having been tenants on the lands for generations, they felt like the real owners.¹⁰⁹ This was also unacceptable for the Pasha. The ownership of most estates and properties by the Muslims in the region was beneficial and needed to be preserved. The framework of the existing regulations on lands should not be violated. Indeed, disregard of these regulations might cause disorder among the non-Muslim people. Manifestly, the pasha did not have a problem with the unequal distribution of lands among the Muslims and non-

¹⁰⁸ BOA. A.MKT.UM, 779/21.

¹⁰⁹ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Maruzat*, trans. Yusuf Halaçoğlu (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1980), 65.

Muslims, but it was rather the excessive exploitation of non-Muslim peasants by their Muslim landlords that worried him.¹¹⁰

The pasha also called attention to the religious conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of the region. The central government had decided to reward the Latin community in Bosnia for their support during the disorders in the Karadag borderland with the building of a church in the Mostar district. The pasha mentioned that although this project gained an important reputation for the state in Europe, Bosnian Muslims were strongly protesting against the construction of the church. It was suggested to the Latins that the church could be constructed in a different place, but the pasha was unable to strike an agreement between the two groups. In another case, the pasha reported on the construction of a non-Muslim school in Trebin that was plundered by a group of Muslims. Muslim fanaticism had already appeared in British consul Mr. Holmes' reports. That Ahmed Cevdet Pasha also came to focus on this point demonstrates the sharpness of the ethno-religious conflict in the region.¹¹¹

The incapacities and corruption of the state officials and *kocabaşıs* was another point underlined by the pasha. The *kocabaşıs* were inequitably collecting extra duties from people for the construction of churches and schools, while most of the district (*kaza*) officials (*mudirs*) in the region were useless, doing nothing except for nepotistic ends and costing the state's treasury great expense in the process. The pasha suggested to Istanbul that some of these local administrations (*mudirliks*) could be merged with one other to decrease the numbers and their costs to the treasury. However, the main problem caused by the ineffectiveness and corruption of the state officials, according to the pasha, concerned the transportation payments made to those who helped the state

¹¹⁰ BOA. A.MKT.UM, 779/21.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

to carry provisions to the borders or collected tithes to the main centers. Apparently, these monies were sent out by the treasury but failed to arrive at the carriers. Thus, most people would escape rather than pay the tithes, even leaving their animals behind. Sometimes, also, in order to avoid the transportation duties, people would pay double to carriers willing to do the job.¹¹²

The pasha concluded the report by stating the two obvious reasons for bad conditions in Hersek, which were the appointment of unqualified men as state officials and the provocations against non-Muslims in the region. However, the latter originated in large measure from the former. While the state officials in the district had enough power and authority to mitigate the provocations, if not to completely wipe them out, they were doing nothing to ameliorate them. Thus, the essential reform was suggested of installing better qualified people to the state cadres in the region.¹¹³

The central government took the report of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha seriously. A year later, in the summer of 1865, Bosna was incorporated into the newly administrative reforms of the empire. Saray, Yenipazar, and Hersek, which had been separate administrative districts, were consolidated as a single territory under the name of Bosnia province (*vilayet*). Saray district, which now included the districts of Travnik, Hersek, Bihke, İzvornik, and Banaluka, was made the provincial capital. The central government also decided on the continuation of Osman Şerif Pasha's governorship.¹¹⁴ In a sense, this was a promotion for Osman Şerif Pasha. The merging of the Saray, Hersek, and Yenipazar districts as Bosnia province both increased the limits of the pasha's administrative authority and his reputation in the region. His salary was raised from 50,000 to

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 339/20.

60,000 *kuruş*.¹¹⁵ He became the highest-ranking official in the region, responsible for the instigation of new provincial reforms and overseeing of the ongoing reform process generally.

2.4. The province of Bosnia under Governor-General Osman Şerif Pasha

Despite the unsolved problems among the different strata of Bosnian people as well as with the central state, the governorship of Osman Şerif Pasha between 1861 and 1869 saw a period of relative peace and prosperity for the province. The basis for future reforms provided by Ömer Pasha's military operations was developed during this time. Marcus Koller indicates this governor-generalship as successful, insofar as it provided financial prosperity, saw the construction of roads and railways and schools, and endeavored to secure peaceful relations among the different ethno-religious groups.¹¹⁶ Osman Şerif Pasha's administration also paid attention to the public health issue and pioneered the construction of hospitals and sanitation systems. During this period, Bosnia made a substantial progress in the spheres of security of life and property rights which were the main promises of the Tanzimat.¹¹⁷

Edin Hajdarpasic presented the pasha as the protector of the non-Muslims, but one who visited both Orthodox and Catholic churches, donated funds for these institutions, and enabled the construction of churches and non-Muslim schools.¹¹⁸ Ahmet Cevdet Pasha was rather more circumspect, referring to Osman Şerif Pasha as “the lesser evil” (*ehven-i mevcud*). However, he also gave the governor-general credit for his success in implementing road development

¹¹⁵ BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 332/71.

¹¹⁶ Marcus Koller, “Bir Miladın Şahidi: Bosna-Hersek'te İsviçreli Bir Doktor Josef Koetschet (1830–1898),” trans. Faruk Yashçimen, *Kebikeç* 31 (2011): 155.

¹¹⁷ Palaiet, *The Balkan Economies c. 1800-1914*, 139.

¹¹⁸ Hajdarpasic, “Whose Bosnia?” 213–14.

regulations strictly.¹¹⁹ British consular William Richard Holmes offered some approval in the report he prepared in 1861 about the conditions of Christians in Bosnia, at least to the extent of asserting that the roads in Bosnia were the best in the Ottoman provinces.¹²⁰ However, British consular Holmes also offered an alternative perspective. He referred to the appointment of the pasha as surprising for the Bosnians, but not for the Muslim Bosnians who welcomed it. According to the consular, the pasha's ten months experience justified the hopes of this group, and not for good reasons.

Appointed to the Bosnian consulate in January 1860, having previously served in Diyarbekir (Diyarbakir), Holmes described the pasha as an old and infirm man who was unable to implement reforms and prevent injustice. Governor-General Osman Şerif Pasha was depicted by Holmes as under the influence of his relatives and the regions' powerful notables. He sent away the incumbent sub-district *mudirs* and replaced them with his relatives, who were incompetent. The pasha also forgave the local notables who had rebelled and been expelled by Ömer Pasha in the 1850s, giving them permission to return.¹²¹ Indeed, this report presented the pasha as an incompetent and conservative statesman.

Given that his report was focused on the conditions of Christians in Bosnia, we may surmise that British Consular Holmes took a certain perspective that informed a somewhat one-sided view of Osman Şerif Pasha. Certainly, ten months appears not enough to judge the pasha's acts in Bosnia this firmly. In fact, when he reported again in 1873 to the British parliament, Holmes informed it that "The revival of Moslem intolerance, which has been noticed here, is admitted to

¹¹⁹ Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir* 21–39, 21.

¹²⁰ "Reports Relative to British Consular Establishments, 1858–71 Part III. (Ottoman Dominions)," *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol. LX: 579 and Vol. 60, Paper No. C.530 (January 1, 1872): 23.

¹²¹ "Correspondence with H.M. Embassy at Constantinople on Financial or Administrative Reforms in Turkey, 1855–61," 54.

date from a certain time after the recall of Osman Şerif Pasha who governed Bosnia for nine years, and who, if not a perfect ruler, at all events did more for the province than any of his predecessors are remembered to have done, and by his conciliatory and amiable disposition modified, to a great extent, the hostile tendencies of the Moslem and Christian population.”¹²²

This more nuanced judgement suggests that the consul changed his ideas about the pasha through comparison with the province’s subsequent governors. According to the consul, Safvet Pasha, who stayed at Bosnia around eighteenth months, was not only corrupt and incompetent, but allowed the Muslim fanaticism to be revealed again in Bosnia during his governorship. Asım Pasha, who replaced Safvet Pasha, was also depicted as an incapable and weak administrator by the consul.¹²³ Thus, it was only during Osman Şerif Pasha’s governorship that there was a stable and relatively successful administration. His successors did not stay in their post for more than two years, even.¹²⁴

Osman Şerif Pasha came to the fore in the province especially after obtaining the governorship, but, although he seems to have been far from as weak and passive as Holmes initially portrayed him, neither did his authority go undisputed. There are important clues that indicate a difficult relationship between the pasha and both other high-level state officials and powerful figures of the region. One person Osman Şerif Pasha had a major disagreement with was Abdi Pasha, head of the Bosnian regiment. This conflict arose from the control of financial expenses.

Initially, Abdi Pasha requested the sending of a provincial accountant or assignment of a qualified one to the region. The main reason for this demand was to increase the efficiency in

¹²² “Reports by H.M. Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey, Respecting Condition of Christian Subjects of Porte, 1868-75,” 98.

¹²³ Ibid, 98-99.

¹²⁴ Gölen, *Tanzîmât Döneminde Bosna Hersek*, 381–84.

supplying the regiment. According to Abdi Pasha, having to gain permission from the center for every purchase was slowing down the supplies and undermining the condition of the regiment. Therefore, he wanted the administration of financial businesses to be performed in Hersek and thus the allocation of personnel to do this. Governor-General Osman Şerif Pasha strictly opposed this, however, responding that it was unnecessary and pointless. He stated that there was no problem regarding the financial administration of military-related expenses and that sending the accountant of the province would be a bad idea since there were so many things to be done in the center. In reference to the appointment of a personal, the pasha saw the demand as unnecessary and expensive, even if it was approved.¹²⁵

After the consolidation of Hersek, Yenipazar, and Saray under the Bosnian province, Osman Şerif Pasha had requested the transfer of the financial administration of Hersek to the central province in order to tackle the huge budgetary problems originating in the province's dispersed financial structure. He advocated that this change would bring important savings to the treasury. Indeed, upon supervision by the central province, Yenipazar's regular expenses were greatly decreased.¹²⁶ Although there was a strong resistance to the implementation from the Hersek district, the pasha attempted to assert his power, doubting that the disastrous results of the old financial administration could be rectified were it to be kept in place and just an accountant be appointed there.¹²⁷

The central government worried about the dispute between the two important office-holders in the region more than about the problem itself. Both pashas were warned to act in uniformity, in other words, to come to an agreement together. Since Bosnia was a critical region

¹²⁵ BOA. MVL, 1066/11.

¹²⁶ Pasha claimed that *iki yük kese* was saved through the financial supervision of the center.

¹²⁷ BOA. MVL, 1066/11.

located on the imperial border, the central government wanted to be sure that its high state officials did not challenge each other, even if they did not get along well. The decision of the center was to instruct that extra care be taken in the business of Hersek's regiments in order so as not to disrupt military transportation and supplies, and it recommended to both pashas that they make more effort together to overcome these types of problems.¹²⁸ Thus, Abdi Pasha failed to secure his demand, but the central government did not reject it by supporting one side against the other. The main strategy from Istanbul was to act as a mediator between the two officials without supporting one over the other.

Osman Şerif Pasha also fell into disagreement with the brigadier (*mirliva*) Edib Pasha, who was the district governor of Hersek. The governor-general accused the district governor of financial irregularities regarding construction in the Douge region and improper use of the labor of animal owners for transportation purposes. Osman Şerif Pasha claimed that Edib Pasha was sequestering labor and animals from different territories, but his right of demand extended only to the people of Hersek. Many of the animals that came perished during what was a forty- or fifty-hour journey. According to Osman Şerif Pasha, people were complaining about this injustice and had sent a letter to the central province about the issue. This was a serious problem, but the other, of financial irregularities in the Hersek district budget, was the more serious.

Osman Şerif Pasha tried to send a fiscal director of the district (*mal müdürü*) for the regulation of Hersek's financial issues. This was rejected by the district governor, however, who referred to it as unnecessary. When the bills sent by Hersek were rejected by the financial administration of the central province, the governor-general sent the accountant of the center there

¹²⁸ Ibid.

entrusted with the duty of gathering a commission to check the financial irregularities. The commission found the rejections of the bills proper according to the instructions. Some of the bills ultimately went unpaid, since they did not have the seal of the district council or a military officer.¹²⁹

District Governor Edip Pasha did not accept any of these accusations, but he could not remove or escape the pressure and eventually resigned his office. He justified this decision by claiming that it was no longer possible to work under the governor-general. Furthermore, Edip Pasha's resignation letter to Istanbul included some important accusations against Osman Şerif Pasha. It charged Münib Pasha and the accountant of the province with influencing the governor-general negatively in regard to himself and claimed that the governor-general wished to replace Munib Efendi at the district governorship of Hersek.¹³⁰ The governor-general's conflicts with the military commanders and officers in Hersek may be variously interpreted, but it is clear that Osman Şerif Pasha paid a special interest in gaining and maintaining control over this region (and also that he was far from the ineffective and passive placeholder as originally assessed by the British consul).¹³¹

It was not only the governor-general who was challenged by the different powerholders both among the state officials and local notables in Bosnia. An anonymous letter sent directly to the central government in 1868 clearly demonstrates that there was a group of discontented people able and willing to take on the imperial authority.¹³² Consisting of seven main articles and separately targeting the actions of the pasha, this letter complained about the patronage relations

¹²⁹ BOA. MVL, 1066/17.

¹³⁰ BOA. MVL. 1066/26.

¹³¹ It was not Munib, but Mahmud Pasha who replaced Edip Pasha. *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bosna* (Bosna: Matbaa-i Vilayet-i Bosna, 1285), 44.

¹³² BOA. MVL. 553/59 and MVL 1066/99.

around the governor-general and the corruptness of these webs of interest. The rhetoric of the letter was high in the sense that it implicitly also criticized the acts of the central government.¹³³ The letter further stated that Bosnia was in a bad situation because of the loss of the important Bosnian men over a period of some forty years, which can be understood as a subtle criticism of the state's centralization policies in Bosnia since the period of Mahmud II. As mentioned (above), local powerholders in Bosnia had indeed been either killed or deported for forty years. Thus, the letter constituted a reaction against a man who came from the outside sent by the central government.

Concerning the patronage network around Osman Şerif Pasha, the letter accused the governor-general of appointing Mustafa Efendi, previously a kitchen servant, as the district governor of Travnik, just because of his physical beauty (*güzelliği hasebiyle*). Charging the pasha with an interest in male bodies was an extremely strong claim, and there was more. Mustafa Efendi's sealer was supposed to be an addict and his treasurer to have risen through the military ranks even though he was not yet an adult. The petition-writers also named Rauf Pasha, the district governor of İzvornik and son of Osman Şerif Pasha. They asserted that Rauf Pasha was corrupt, that he did no work without a bribe, that he often failed to pay contractors in reasonable time, and that when he failed to pay such monies he would seize the cash in village treasuries (*köy sandıkları*), which peasants had saved cooperatively for agricultural investments.

In 1867, British consular Holmes reported that "I could, point out half a dozen men, who a few years ago were Osman Pasha's common domestic servants, who are now caimakams and mudirs in different parts of the province, and who will perhaps eventually become Governors-

¹³³ The letter accused the government of not taking care of the problems in Bosnia, which was located on the border. By referring to the loss of Belgrade, they asked the central government whether their intention was also to lose Bosnia. (*Yazık değil mi bu kadar nüfusu bu gibi birinin eline bırakmak bir tarafımız gece ve diğer taraf hristiyan ve daha bir taraf karadağ değil midir? Yoksa devlet-i aliyenin muradı Sirbistan'a Belgrad'ı verdiği gibi Bosna kıtasını dahi bu üç hısımdan birine vermek midir ki perişan halimizi sual etmiyor*). BOA. MVL. 553/59 and BOA. MVL 1066/99.

Generals of vilayets.”¹³⁴ Manifestly, the overlap of common theme between the anonymous letter and Consular Holmes’ report reveals common claims in respect of the emerging patronage relations around Osman Şerif Pasha.¹³⁵

Another charge concerned unjust tax collection. Osman Şerif Pasha promised to construct a workhouse and raised a 10-*kuruş* tax from each Bosnian subject for this purpose. However, the pasha neither finished the construction nor attempted to do but spent the money on the provincial messenger (*vilayet mektubçusu*) and sealer and the treasurer, giving them 1500- and 1000-*kuruş* payments, respectively. The letter also accused the pasha of unnecessarily repaving the sidewalks in towns. The pasha, it was claimed, was employing prisoners for this work and then pocketing the money. The letter stated that most of the newspaper reports in which the pasha had declared roads construction to be completed were untrue, the reports produced, in fact, by Naşid Pasha, the district governor of Maraş, together with the district governor of Saray in Bosnia.

Osman Şerif Pasha was also alleged to be gambling in the government office, which was forbidden according to the regulations. The pasha had reportedly organized a lottery; he put a carriage into it for the prize and gained a total of 180 Hungarian gold pieces, mostly from Jews and non-Christians. Although the governor-general himself took twenty lottery tickets, the anonymous writers asserted that he obtained these for free.¹³⁶

In response to the allegations contained in the letter, the central government requested a defense from Osman Şerif Pasha.¹³⁷ The pasha declared all the accusations to be nasty and

¹³⁴ “Reports from H.M. Ambassador and Consuls Relating to Condition of Christians in Turkey, 1867,” *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers* Vol. LXXV: 601, 693, Paper Nos. 3854, 3944 (July 2, 1867): 6.

¹³⁵ BOA. MVL. 553/59 and BOA. MVL 1066/99. (December 1, 1867).

¹³⁶ BOA. MVL. 553/59 and MVL 1066/99. No information is given about the winner of the lottery.

¹³⁷ BOA. MVL. 553/59.

unfounded claims and gave his response to each.¹³⁸ He used his seven years of service in Bosnia as testament to the accuracy of his explanations and noted that the inspectors who had come to Bosnia during his period in office had been eyewitnesses for the good functioning of the administration in the province. Interestingly, the accusation about which the pasha expressed most resentment referred to certain reforms in Bosnia, indicating that they had not been carried out and rebuffed as an outright lie. The importance of the modernizing push of the imperial administration was thus clearly recognized. Regardless of the truth of the matter, of whether the governor-general was really considering this important or just feigning to do so, the fact that he reserved his strongest response for this matter of state does reveal its standing as the most significant element among the various crimes and misdemeanors alleged, beyond, that is, the more personal and parochial types of petty abuse and local corruption.

The central government stated that they did not have any problems with the provincial administration of the pasha, and, since there was no information about the complainers, the letter could not prejudice their judgement of him.¹³⁹ However, a report sent to Istanbul a year later does demonstrate that the central government was following matters in Bosnia closely. This report noted that rumors about both positive and negative acts in the province had increased greatly in recent years, even though the administration of Osman Şerif Pasha had performed well regarding the implementation of necessary reforms during his eight-years in office. The letter recommended Ömer Fevzi Pasha, then governor-general of İşkodra, replace Osman Şerif. The main reason given for this change was a desire to combine military and executive administration under the authority

¹³⁸ In the petition sent by the pasha to the central government on December 3, 1867, he commented on his response to the central government; however, I have not as yet been able to locate it in the Ottoman State Archives.

¹³⁹ BOA. MVL, 1066/99.

of a single leader in Bosnia, and Ömer Fevzi Pasha was already both a provincial governor and army general.¹⁴⁰

The letter had been sent anonymously, but its rhetoric gives us some clues about the likely writers voicing complaint. First, it referred to a forty-year history of Bosnia. Thus, the petitioners were either from the Bosnian locality or at least people who knew about events in the province over the previous four decades. Second, the main theme of the accusations concerned the employment of provincial administrative patronage, the filling of positions with the pasha's friends (or dependents) and relatives. In this respect, Cengiz Kırılı indicates that the normative standards that came with the penal code in 1840 after the declaration of the Tanzimat did not often overlap with the local realities, using the case of Akif Pasha, governor-general of Izmit, which illustrates the selectivity of the penal code.

Although Akif Pasha was accused of corruption and administrative irregularities, this was not particular to him, according to Kırılı. Many of the governors-general in the Ottoman domains could be accused of collecting taxes for their travels and suchlike. Thus, the articles in the penal code pertaining to corruption tended to be more used in the machinations of political conflict among elites (more than the other articles).¹⁴¹ There were no references in the penal code regarding corruption in Bosnia, but the anonymous letter was directly aimed at the patronage relations of Osman Pasha and the domination of the administrative positions by his subjects, so this was clearly the target. Indeed, as noted, the main reaction by the pasha was to the changes related to the reformation process in Bosnia and aiming at the overall administration of the governor-general.

¹⁴⁰ BOA. I.MMS, 36/1501.

¹⁴¹ Kırılı, *Yolsuzluğun İcadı*, 95.

Third, the letter did not address only Osman Şerif and his dependents, but also the central government itself. Even if the letter was anonymous, people of any standing could probably not take the risk of criticizing the central government directly, particularly state officials. Lastly, it was emphasized in one of the accusations that the governor-general collected money from Jewish and Christians for the lottery. Operating through the slur of immorality cast on ethno-religious groups—those who would act so badly—this strongly suggests that the letter was prepared by a Muslim or group of Muslims. Taking all these clues into consideration, it becomes fairly obvious that the letter was sent by local Muslim powerholders threatened by the loss of their authority in the province. The centralization policies of the state undermined the interests of this group and the privileges they had enjoyed since the reign of Mahmud II. In short, power was shifting to the reforming provincial state authorities and away from the key actors of the Ottoman *ancient regime*.

This assessment does not mean that all the contents of the letter were false, of course; one should expect some truth in the details, presumably, but be quite wary of the substance, which, if motivated by self-interest, would likely be quite biased and deliberately misrepresentative of the real situation. Indeed, indicative of the central authority's faith in Osman Pasha, after he had been replaced by Ömer Fevzi Pasha as governor-general, the central government reinstated him. However, he was called back to the capital in May after nine-months, upon which Safvet Pasha was appointed governor-general of Bosnia.

In mentions by the British consular Mr. Holmes of Governor-General Safvet Pasha, the successor to Osman Şerif Pasha was judged as incompetent and his administration in Bosnia as serving the purposes of Muslim fanatics. Safvet Pasha held his post for eighteenth months. Asım Pasha became the next governor-general of Bosnia, and he also had a short-lived career in the province. After the departure of Osman Pasha, in fact, no governor-general appointed to Bosnia

was able to hold the position and maintain a consistency of administration, which passed into other hands with short-time gaps.¹⁴² The successive governor-generals neither had enough time to undertake the huge reforms necessary in the region nor showed enough care over the administrative reconsolidation. In fact, it was military concerns that became the main priority, both for the central government authorities and the local state actors.

Although there is not a well-developed literature on Tanzimat Bosnia, we can gain some important insights about the atmosphere of the region during the 1870s from Mehmet Demiryürek's article based on a petition in 1875 for the grand vizier handed in by "Bosnian people." The petition consisted of sections regarding different topics of grievances. One was the lack of any support for the production of primary export goods (animals, cereals, and plums), which was leaving farmers vulnerable to agriculture failures and outbreaks of animal disease. People also complained that the collaboration of state officers with the tax farmers was keeping the prices of farming contracts high, since it led them to collect taxes arbitrarily for profit.¹⁴³

Actually, the tax-farming system was a major problem that continued throughout the empire, not only in Bosnia, until the collapse. Regarding political and regional variables, the central government implemented three formulas interchangeably: contracting lands to the tax-farmers, collecting taxes via appointed state officials, and making the subject of the taxes responsible for the collection process.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the *iltizam* system continued to be prevalent in other imperial contexts, this was not unique to Bosnia, even if its structure did change to an extent

¹⁴² "Reports by H.M. Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey, Respecting Condition of Christian Subjects of Porte, 1868-75," 60–61.

¹⁴³ Mehmet Demiryürek, "Bosna Halkının İstirhamatı (1875)," *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, no. 57 (2007): 159.

¹⁴⁴ Nadir Ozbek, *Imparatorlugin Bedeli: Osmanlı'da Vergi Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet* (İstanbul: Bogazici Universitesi Yayınevi, 2015), 50–86.

that prevented the emergence of large tax-farming regions and politically and economically powerful tax-farming agents.

Interestingly, the petitioners also complained about the functioning of the Bosnian municipality. Although this institution had an annual revenue of more than one hundred thousand *kuruş*, it was far from serving its fundamental duties. The bridges in Saray district were in a desperate state of repair, and the streets were dirty and chaotic. In addition to this, the municipality was accused of doing corrupt business, and there were also complaints about the election process to the administrative and judicial councils in Bosnia. The process of elections and the appointment of state bureaucrats was both corrupt and, in some cases, illegal. Even if people who had merit achieved such posts, they were either prevented from doing their business or forced to resign. The petitioners requested that the encroachment to the people's right to stand for election be stopped and applied to Istanbul to provide this as guaranteed by law.¹⁴⁵ Comparing these complaints with the report of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha prepared eleven years previously, it seems that chronic problems of the region were still unresolved. Indeed, there was to be no radical change in this respect until the Ottoman loss of control over the province, in 1878.

2.5. Conclusion

Bosnia's encounter with the Tanzimat reforms may be described in terms of delay. It was only after the radical military and administrative interventions of Ömer Pasha in 1850 that the elements of the Tanzimat were introduced into the existing institutional relations. After this date, however, Bosnia became one of the important targets of the central government's reform attempts.

¹⁴⁵ Demiryürek, "Bosna Halkının İstirhamatı (1875)," 162–65.

The state-appointed inspectors analyzed the region and reported on the reasons for the conflict between landlords and tenants. Nevertheless, although Tanzimat Bosnia witnessed the emergence of new institutions, state-appointed actors, and special regulations, this only created a relatively superficial change. It was enough to disturb the old order, but it did not have sufficiently deep or wide structural roots. Thus, the problem between the Bosnian landlords and their tenants was eased but never solved. The administrative institutions indicated by the Tanzimat were unable to create a platform on which the Bosnian landlords, peasants, commercial classes, and provincial state officials together with the central government could build to compromise over the range of conflicting issues in the province.

The lack of horizontal negotiations among the different strata of the Bosnian populace pushed each interest group to have espionage-type relations with the central government aimed against other groups. Thus, Bosnia during the Tanzimat became a region that emphasized vertical relations of power rather than the horizontal. However, this does not entail that the central government had absolute authority and power in the province. On the contrary, the loose connections of each group with the center provided the latter with rather poor and manipulated information. The radical yet non-structural reform attempts and ever-changing governmental officials show that the central government acted reactively, responding in the light of received personal information from the region, rather than proactively creating a permanent control mechanism.

The introduction of the Provincial Law in 1864 and selection of Bosnia as the first pilot region after Danube province for this led to the emergence of a council that could bring the different layers of Bosnian society together. The consolidation of the Bosnian Provincial General Council was unique in the Tanzimat period regarding its composition that featured not only the

central government and local state officials but also representatives of both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of Bosnia. Unlike the provincial judicial-administrative councils, which consisted just of local state officials and a few local notables, the Bosnian Provincial General Council was peopled by communal representatives. This space thus becomes highly useful for a view of the ongoing negotiations between the different power groups intent on and engaged in reshaping the province and reforming the new *vilayet*. Each side used different strategies and rhetoric to persuade other sides and compromise as best served their perceived interests. In the next chapter, therefore, I will closely analyze the functioning of this institution and the negotiation process.

Chapter III

The Functioning of the Bosnian General Council, 1867–1872

3.1. Introduction

Especially after the Tanzimat edict, the Ottoman central government pushed for a new administrative formation in the provinces, aiming to redesign local administration at both provincial and district levels. One of the first products of the intended reforms at the local administrative sphere was the *muhassıllık* councils. The central government sent many officials to the provinces after the introduction of the Tanzimat and ordered them to organize these councils, which were to consist of local representatives, to execute mainly tax and other administrative matters. The aim was to integrate the territories into the tax distribution system through bypassing the local notables.

Unfortunately, because of the dramatic decrease in the state's tax revenues, the lifespan of these councils was curtailed. Although they continued to exist, they lost their functionary role after tax collectors were no longer sent from the center.¹⁴⁶ After two years of an inefficient collection of taxes, local notables regained their role in this regard, replacing the state tax collectors which thus led to the gradual reinstatement of tax farming in the provinces. Despite failing in themselves, however, the councils did at least reflect the central government's desire to establish itself as the sole legitimate mechanism for state affairs by excluding the claims of tax farmers and creating mechanisms to collect information directly from its localities.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the fledgling experience of the Tanzimat in the sphere of local governance paved the way to the consolidation of a more

¹⁴⁶ Jun Akiba, "The Local Councils as The Origin of the Parliamentary System in the Ottoman Empire," in *Development of Parliamentarism in the Modern Islamic World*, ed. Tsugitaka Sato (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 2009), 179.

¹⁴⁷ Huri Islamoglu, ed., *Constituting Modernity: Private Property in the East and West* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 26–27.

structured administrative framework through the Provincial Regulation of 1864 known as the “Tuna Vilayet Nizamnamesi.”¹⁴⁸

The successful trial of a new system in Tuna province encouraged the government to implement it as an empire-wide provincial administrative reform, and in 1867, the provincial reform was expanded across the empire, with some extensions and special provincial regulations.¹⁴⁹ Bosnia was the second province in which new provincial regulation was carried into effect. Through this regulation and its important revisions in 1867 and 1871, the central government attempted to adapt local administrative units into the whole hierarchy of imperial bureaucracy.

3.2. The new system of provincial councils

According to the 1864 edict, local councils were designed as an important part of the provincial bureaucracy. These administrative units were consolidated both in the provinces and their districts. The members of the provincial administrative councils were the governor of the province or district, judge, accounting manager, correspondence officer, mufti, Muslim and non-Muslims’ religious leaders, and four elected members. The elected members were to include both Muslims and non-Muslims, according to the demographic situation of the province.¹⁵⁰ The provincial regulation required the nomination of the local representatives by a special commission

¹⁴⁸ *Teskil-i Vilayet Nizamnamesi*, lit.: Statute for Formation of Province.

¹⁴⁹ For example, the state published a separate provincial regulation for Bosnia province, which was the same as the general provincial regulation except the added last three articles. Ortaylı argues that the multicultural structure of Bosnia, the disorderly attitude of Muslim landlords in the region, and the intervention of European powers was the apparent reason of this separate regulation. See: Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840–1878*, 54.

¹⁵⁰ If the administrative region was consisted of only Muslims or non-Muslims, all of four representatives could belong to either. But if either of them was even minority, the latter represented with the two council members. *Düstur* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1863), 641–44.

consisting of a judge, Muslim and non-Muslim religious leaders of the region, an accountant manager, and a correspondence officer.¹⁵¹ After the process of nomination, the names of candidates who received the most votes in their districts were sent to the sub-governor (*kaymakam*). The sub-governor chose two people from the lists according to his evaluation and sent it to the province for the approval of the governor of the province. The governor of the province had the right to finalize the elections of these two candidates or disapprove their candidacy.¹⁵² Those who elected to the Bosnian provincial administrative council would receive a monthly salary of five hundred *kuruş* salary per month, which was quite low when compared to that of the governor-general, who took sixty thousand.¹⁵³

Prospective candidates needed to be acknowledged as subject to Ottoman citizenship under the age of thirty, literate, and paying taxes to the value of five hundred *kuruş* yearly. Although there was no obligation to have a certain amount of property to be a representative in the council, the tax requirement was considerable and thus operated as a barrier for some layers of society. Candidates had to come up before the electors, who literally voted with their feet. If they wanted a candidate as their representative, they went to the one side, if not, they went to the other. Thus, the election process operated by open-ballot system.¹⁵⁴

These regulations were predicated on the new provincial formation in which the main unit of administration was the vilayet, followed, in descending order, by subdistricts, towns, and villages as the lower level administrative units. Governors of provinces, district governors, and county and village managers were at the top of the hierarchies and held executive powers. The

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 622–623.

¹⁵² Saraçoğlu, “Some Aspects of Ottoman Governmentality at the Local Level,” 2008, 242–43.

¹⁵³ BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 332/71.

¹⁵⁴ Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840-1878*, 36.

administrative local councils in these units supported the functioning of the local bureaucracy and the executive power of the governor. At the lower level, local general councils, which did not have any executive or legislative powers, transmitted the inhabitants' local requests and made suggestions.¹⁵⁵

The literature on the Ottoman provincial general councils is quite narrow. These councils were generally either ignored or perceived as just a small step on the unsuccessful path of the Ottoman government undertaken toward modernization. It is also argued that the provincial regulations of 1864 and 1871 reflected the appetite of the Ottoman bureaucrats for centralization, but that they largely left the structure of the empire unchanged.¹⁵⁶ For instance, İlber Ortaylı, in his detailed study of the consolidation of local councils after the Tanzimat has indicated that although these councils were pioneered the consolidation of modern municipalities and provincial special administrations, they remained weak as self-governance organs; they only functioned as bodies requesting and suggesting institutions, with their efforts tending to be no more than exercises paperwork. According to Ortaylı, people were also reluctant to do anything for their provinces, since, rather, they expected things *from* the state.¹⁵⁷ However, this chapter claims that these councils did more than just paperwork. The Bosnian case, at least, demonstrates that people took a significant interest in the functioning of the councils and participated in the exchange of information through them.

Yonca Köksal's article on the Provincial General Councils in Edirne and Ankara provinces is among a few studies to have deeply analyzed the functioning of these local organs. Unlike most

¹⁵⁵ Düstur, 625-651.

¹⁵⁶ See, Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840-1878*; Çadırcı, "Osmanlı Döneminde Yerel Meclisler"; Gençoğlu, "1864 ve 1871 Vilâyet Nizamnamelerine Göre Osmanlı Taşra İdaresinde Yeniden Yapılanma"; Seyitdanlıoğlu, "Yerel Yönetim Metinleri VI:1871 Vilayet Nizamnamesi ve Getirdikleri."

¹⁵⁷ Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840-1878*, 70.

of the literature on the subject, Köksal describes the councils as intermediary institutions in which the local claimants negotiated with the center over the various issues of concern to them.¹⁵⁸ It is this revisionist perspective that is maintained in the present chapter. The Bosnian local general council was fully integrated into the bureaucratic sphere of the province, and it played a leading role during the adaption of Bosnia to the reforms by fueling information exchange between the center and periphery, the localities.

Milen Petrov has also made a brief analysis on the functioning of the Danube Provincial General Council. By analyzing the memoranda of meetings held between 1866 and 1868, he shows that both the provincial government of the Danube and the delegates of the council took this body seriously. The key role of Danube's provincial general council during the provincial reformation was to check locally generated petitions and their compatibility with the financial and social realities.¹⁵⁹ In a sense, provincial general councils acted as a filter, to only transmit those requests that were feasible and served the interests of both the local and the central government.

According to the 1864 and 1867 regulations, the local general councils were institutions comprising elected local representatives from each district in the province. They met the provincial center under the leadership of vice-governor once a year to discuss the problems in the districts and provinces. Each county (*kaza*) selected four representatives and sent them to their center town (*liva*). The demands of each representative were discussed under the leadership of a city-governor to consolidate a proper list. Among these who came from *kazas*, three persons were selected to

¹⁵⁸ Köksal offers the detailed description of the matters which was discussed in the councils of Ankara and Edirne. Yonca Köksal, "Local Demands and State Policies: General Councils (Meclis-i Umumi) in the Edirne and Ankara Provinces (1867–1872)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 470–85.

¹⁵⁹ Milen V. Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868" (Ph.D., Princeton University, 2006), 171.

represent the *liva* and sent to the vilayet together with the list of petitions.¹⁶⁰ These requests reached the center through the county governor, who selected from a huge potential that list of such petitions that, obviously, could also be manipulated by him.

When these representatives reached the center, many topics were discussed over an extended period, ranging from trade, taxation, and agricultural requests to education, transportation, and healthcare matters.¹⁶¹ The meetings of the provincial general council could not continue for longer than forty days, while public attendance was strictly restricted. The governor of the province was responsible for determining the exact date and season for the meeting, according to the local conditions.¹⁶² The representatives were paid around 700 to 1,000 *kuruş* for transport expenses, depending on the distance they had to travel to the provincial center.¹⁶³ Unlike the provincial administrative councils, these did not enjoy any executive power to implement policies. Representatives under the leadership of governor of a province or a state official appointed by him expressed their opinions and brought their knowledge to the council about their local areas. There was no voting process or any function to take decisions as a result of the discussions. The requests discussed were recorded and the governor of province sent the petitions directly to the center.

Convening at Saraybosna (Sarajevo) in the now center district of Bosnia, so effectively the capital city of the *vilayet*, the Bosnian Provincial General Council was highly active after its establishment in 1867. Both the central government and Osman Şerif Pasha, the governor-general,

¹⁶⁰ Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan sonra mahalli idareler, 1840-1878*, 89.

¹⁶¹ Köksal, "Local Demands and State Policies," 473.

¹⁶² *Düstur*, 639-641.

¹⁶³ This information refers the financial support for transportation expenses for Tuna province's representatives in 1867. Although there could be differences between Bosnia and Tuna, it is important to give us an idea about the amount of money that was taken for the transportation expenses. BOA. MVL, 1073/105.

attached great importance to the consolidation of the council system in Bosna. After negotiations between the central government and the governor-general, they agreed on a speech to be made before the representatives. The rhetoric of the speech invoked the Tanzimat ideal. Kırılı claims that the nineteenth-century transformation of the Ottoman Empire, especially after the Tanzimat, fundamentally changed the idea of keeping the public away from politics, and that thenceforth people as citizens started to appear as legitimate actors in the state's administration. Individuals were transformed from loyal subjects to political actors.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, this was the vision shared in the opening address to the Bosnian general council.

Governor-General Osman Şerif Pasha's speech set out by sanctifying the acts of the sultan regarding the construction and opening of new schools, cartways, border police stations, passages for immigrants, and water-ditches for agriculture in the province. However, this was not expressed just in terms of the benevolence of the sultan. Rather, it was reflected as the duty of the sultan to support the development of this region that had raised many so significant state bureaucrats in the past and carried a significant potential to do it in the future. In other words, the notion of governance as service was being introduced.

The expectations of the sultan from this council, meanwhile, were clearly expressed in the text. The contribution of representatives would be to the development of economic, industrial, agricultural, and educational spheres through their knowledge and by discussing all matters related to the development of the province and articulating them freely without any hesitation.¹⁶⁵ Parallel to acknowledgement of the duties of governance, therefore, was that of its responsibilities. This

¹⁶⁴ Cengiz Kırılı, "Surveillance and Constituting the Public in the Ottoman Empire," in *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Seteney Shami (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2010), 298.

¹⁶⁵ BOA. MVL, 1065/110 (June 17, 1866).

revealed the central state's quest to legitimize its authority in the region, by not acting against the people and instead employing using a rhetoric that emphasized the role of the state in acting for the people.

3.3. Meetings of the Bosnian General Council

Gathering for the first time on 8 January 1867, the Bosnian general council consisted of twenty-two delegates under the leadership of the governor-general, Osman Şerif Pasha. All seven districts of Bosnia sent their delegates to attend the Bosnian General Council: four from Saraybosna and three each from Travnik, Banaluka, Yenipazar, Bihke, Hersek, and Izvornik. Since these reports did not give the names but only the seals of the delegates, we cannot make detailed conclusions about the backgrounds of the representatives. The Bosnian yearbooks (*salname*) recorded the names of many Ottoman bureaucrats and representatives in various institutions, but not the Bosnian general council's members. We do know that 13 of the delegates were Muslims and nine non-Muslims. Saraybosna, the provincial center, was represented by three Muslims and one non-Muslim, while the distribution was two Muslims to one non-Muslim in the districts of Travnik, Banaluka, Hersek, and Yenipazar and two non-Muslims with one Muslim in Bihke and Izvornik.¹⁶⁶

The male population information, which was provided by the *salname* of the Bosnia province in 1864 and '65 (1270 and 1271), shows that there was no clear connection between the ratio of Muslims to non-Muslims in the districts and distribution of representatives regarding this. For instance, there was 29,902 Muslim male population recorded in Banaluka against 59,372 non-

¹⁶⁶ BOA. I. MMS, 35/1421 (April 22, 1867).

Muslims, suggesting a one-to-two Muslim-to-non-Muslim split whereas Banaluka was one of the districts represented in the meetings by two Muslim delegates. In Saraybosna, where three from four representatives were Muslims, the population officially numbered 35,188 Muslims as against 28,049 non-Muslims. Only in Bihke and Travnik where the non-Muslim population was equal to or above the Muslim population did non-Muslims supersede their Muslim neighbors in terms of the number of representatives.¹⁶⁷

The total number of delegates in Bosnian council demonstrates that there was broad participation from each district when compared to Edirne and Ankara. The provincial general councils in Edirne and Ankara, which were held in the same year, included sixteen and twelve delegates respectively.¹⁶⁸ The number of delegates in the Bosnian local general council had risen from 22 to 24 delegates by the second year (1868).¹⁶⁹ This reveals that Bosnian society adopted the provincial regulation rapidly and welcomed the consolidation of a provincial general council. The provincial state administration also responded to this by increasing its attention to and participation in council meetings. Both the governor of the province and the judge were represented at the second meeting (according to the provincial regulation, the provincial governor could manage the meeting either by himself or appointing a state officer as deputy).

As Figure 1 shows, most of the petitions came from Bihke in the first council, followed by Hersek and Travnik. Hersek replaced Bihke in the second council meetings, but these two remained the most demanding districts of the province at the second council. It is interesting that the center district of Saraybosna was among the districts from which the fewest requests came. One may surmise that this was because the people of Saraybosna did not choose to use this facility,

¹⁶⁷ Gölen, *Tanzîmât Döneminde Bosna Hersek*, 374.

¹⁶⁸ Köksal, "Local Demands and State Policies," 473–74.

¹⁶⁹ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/1421 (15 December, 1868).

perhaps because they were able to forward their requests and complaints directly to the governor. Probably people in Saraybosna appealed to the provincial administrative council less during these years due to their proximity to the central government office of Bosnia.

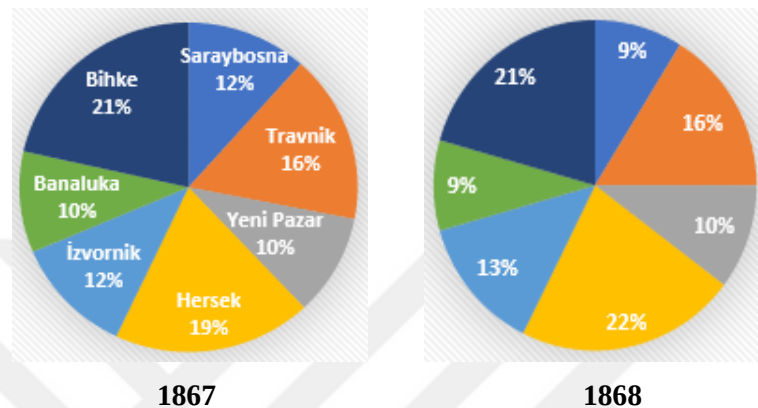


Figure 1. The first two Bosnian general council meetings: distribution of petitions by district.

Sources: BOA.İ. MMS, 35/1421; BOA, İ. ŞD, 13/613.

Regarding the petition totals, we do not know whether there was a quota for each district according to its number of inhabitants. However, the male population numbers for each district in the 1870 and 1871 *salnames* implies that there was no direct relationship between district population and the distribution of the requests. For instance, Izvornik, with a male population of 124,181, was the most populous district in the province, but the requests of its representatives relatively low when compared, say, to Bihke, which had only 84,801 male residents.¹⁷⁰

The petitions Bosnians brought to the council meetings ranged in subject from agriculture, irrigation, and transportation to security, education, and taxation. Table 3.1 presents a more detailed summary of these requests. At a total of 138, the number of local petitions in the first two councils was the same for the first two meetings. With the content of each article in the first meeting generally including two or three requests, however, there was an increase in the number

¹⁷⁰ Gölen, *Tanzîmât Döneminde Bosna Hersek*, 374.

of articles at the second council. For instance, Hersek's representatives were asking for the construction of a police station, an ammunition store, and a store house in the *kaza* of Kuryanik at the first meeting.¹⁷¹ Possibly the petitions that came from the *kazas* to their center towns were merged there before being sent on to the provincial center. In this way, the requests of *kaza* representatives were conveyed to the center in reduced form but without a large-scale elimination.

Table 3.1. Bosnian General Council's petitions, by subject (1867–1874)

Petitions	1867	1868	1869	1874
Mining	5	0		
Husbandry	1	1		1
Road and Bridge Construction	34	18		
Agriculture	17	10		
Forestry	2	2		
Building factories/organizing investment commissions	3	3		1
Education	8	16		
Telegraph lines	3	2		
Construction/repair of police stations/barracks	16	7		
Water supply	2	4		
Appointment of civil servants	5	12	1	
Taxation	7	2	2	1
Irrigation	3	1		
Construction of storehouses	2	4	1	
Construction/repair of public buildings	9	26	15	1
Construction of ammunition stores	2	0	1	
Construction/repair of fortresses and watching towers	2	4		
Draining swamps	1	1		
Machinery/equipment	2	2		
Preventing banditry	1	0		1
Water transport	1	2		3
Trade	9	16	2	
Posting services	1	0		
Windmill construction	1	0		1
Custom affairs	0	1	1	
Preventing floods	0	2		
Urban planning/administrative regulations	1	2		1
Dispatching ammunition	0	3		

¹⁷¹ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

Utilizing waste agricultural lands	0	2		1
Total	138	138	23	12

Sources: BOA. İ.MMS, 35/1421; BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

3.4. Petitioning in practice requests, offers, and negotiated decisions

The majority of the petitions presented at the Bosnian general council meetings were related to transport. The requests involved both large-scale projects, such as the construction of bridges, and small ones, like the repair of existent routes. The representatives mainly requested gunpowder, skilled workers, building sand, lime or cash to meet the expenses of builders and dealers. In return, they offered mainly physical labor, timber, and stone. However, the content of this negotiations between the state agents and Bosnian representatives varied according to the types of requests.

An example of the kind of concern and considerations for negotiation regarding transport was the undulating road between Travnik and Yayçe. Bosnian representatives complained that this road caused major problems during both the winter and summer seasons. While the regular users of this road were troubled by the slipperiness of the road during winter, their animals were exhausted by the effort required in the summer and sweated excessively. To level the road in order to deal with this this problem, they offered physical labor in return for wheel barrows, iron axes, crowbars, and other necessary equipment from the state.¹⁷² Regarding another matter, however, financial compensation was requested. At the first council, the representatives requested a general repair of roads and bridges and requested five or six packs of gold pieces for doing this work. The provincial administrative council wrote down a note on this article that approved the request and

¹⁷² BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

passed it on to the central government. The center responded by notifying the provincial authority that it would make the necessary arrangements to send the gold.¹⁷³

Generally, the representatives gave an idea about the expected costs of requested projects and offered their detailed knowledge about what was desired. For instance, one of the articles in the first meeting included a petition for the construction of a highway that included specification of the dimensions.¹⁷⁴ For the construction of a bridge in Karalar (*Karye*), meanwhile, people offered their physical labor and timbers in return for the carpenter's wage and construction tools to a value that would be equivalent to four thousand *kuruş*.¹⁷⁵ The provincial authority requested a detailed report for this project from the local government. This clearly demonstrates that the Bosnian representatives took their involvement seriously.

Most of the requests for the construction of bridges were relatively big-budget projects. Especially at the second meeting, the great majority of petitions related to transportation concerned this topic. There was also a dramatic decrease in the number of transportation petitions between the first and second councils (at 34 and 18, respectively). In the first meeting, there was an article on the agenda requesting the construction of an entire bridge. The response of the provincial administrative council was to send an inspector to the location to ascertain the expense of such a project. Upon this request, there was no response from the central government.¹⁷⁶ However, this did not mean that the process was ended. After a year, this project carried into effect with the huge material support from people in Banaluka (see below for a detailed analysis of this case).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

¹⁷⁴ As 10 *arşın* wide and 2.5 *arşın* high. Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

¹⁷⁶ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

¹⁷⁷ BOA. İ. DH, 586/40793.

The security issue was also among the concerns of the representatives. They wanted the construction of police stations and barracks complete with the necessary police and military forces. The reasons given for constructing police stations were twofold: the protection of their animals and other materials against the robbery and banditry, and the prevention of border conflicts with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The latter was a particularly interesting issue. In the first meeting of the council, a request from Bihke stated that they needed a police station because Austrian-Hungarian citizens were crossing the border to steal timber. The provincial government agreed to this request, but they did not send the request to the center and we do not have any idea about whether the request was carried into effect or not.¹⁷⁸ In the following year, a petition, again from Bihke, reported conflict between citizens of the two empires and asked for the construction of a police station to prevent such disputes. The provincial government requested detailed expense records of such a project.¹⁷⁹

There was also a special case regarding the construction of a police station in which the representatives of Hersek complained about the people of the sub-district of Storina because of their unwillingness to give something to the Muslim notables beyond their tithe and other taxes. Without appealing to the government for a specific issue, the representatives blamed this community and subtly criticized the central government in claiming that the community perceived itself as forgiven and privileged.¹⁸⁰ This pushed it to foment trouble in the region, was the claim, with a warning that if the state did not take any action, the situation might spread to other regions. Finally, they asked for the construction of a police station and dispatch of the necessary police forces to keep this community under control.

¹⁷⁸ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

¹⁷⁹ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

¹⁸⁰ “Kendülerini bu babda taraflı devletten afv olunmuş bildüklerinden.”

Although this was a highly significant issue, the provincial government only notified them that police stations were under construction, but this project was delayed as a result of the intervention of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹⁸¹ This case demonstrates that the council was not only a site of negotiation between the state and Bosnian society but also for—within, among—the society itself. Although we only hear the voice of the notables in this particular request because of the silence of the defendant, it offers us valuable insight into the ongoing struggles, the fears, and tensions among the various groups in Bosnia at the time.

Similarly, demands about the construction of barracks in the Bosnia region revealed this to be more a social than security problem. I will scrutinize the two petitions from the first two councils to illustrate this. In the first council, a petition from Yeni Pazar situated the worsening situation in the town center. People of the district complained about the ‘obligatory’ (*zaruri*) renting out of their houses by the state to provide accommodation for its soldiers. They indicated that this situation had continued for 23 years, and, especially during the winter, it was upsetting the inhabitants.¹⁸² With the aim of convincing the state of the need for barracks, they discussed that the present situation also led to significant toll on the treasury because of the rental payments. The people of Yeni Pazar thus made a generous offer to the state of five hundred packs of *akçe* (silver coins), and the necessary number of workers for the construction. If the construction of a barrack went beyond of this amount, the state treasury would meet the excess cost. The provincial administration welcomed this offer and employed an engineer who was sent to the location.¹⁸³

In the second meeting of the council, the inhabitants of Vişegrad came with a similar topic. The Ottoman soldiers were permanently stationed in this district, and their accommodation

¹⁸¹ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421, 8.

¹⁸² “*Duçar-ı hicret ve sefalet olmakta.*”

¹⁸³ Ibid.

problem was creating a significant threat to the welfare of the soldiers and residents alike. To rescue both the soldiers and the inhabitants from this situation, they requested the construction of a barrack. In return, they promised to give the necessary amount of timber and stone along with their labor, and they further offered to undertake the duty of lime transportation for the construction. Again, the provincial government welcomed the proposal and notified the local government about the approval of the construction.¹⁸⁴

These two cases are important both in terms of revealing the process of negotiation between the various claimants, and the willingness of the actors to use the council to fulfill their petitions and meet their interests. In these two cases, the state avoided a high expense for the construction of the necessary barracks while the people disposed of the soldiers and regained their houses. This was the bargaining channel provided by the Bosnian general council functioning as intended, facilitating the resolution of local issues to the satisfaction of all in a smooth and timely manner as befitting a modern governance. Here, moreover, it resolved what had clearly been a longtime bothersome and festering issue for the local people in respect of the state so served to ameliorate relations between the two.

Agricultural production was another issue on the agenda of Bosnian people. The main petitions in this category were requests for support; the people wanted help from the provincial government to bring seeds from neighboring regions. The seeds most in demand were mulberry, tobacco, grape, dried greengage (*işleva*),¹⁸⁵ linen, and cannabis. This process did not occur in a

¹⁸⁴ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613, 11.

¹⁸⁵ The fruit was in high demand because of its suitability in prune form for storing and trading, and Bosnians requested ovens to produce *işleva*. As is also understood from the requests, this product had a significant commercial value for the region and was mainly marketed across the border, in the Austro-Hungary Empire. BOA. İ. MMS, 35; BOA. İ. ŞD, 13.

standardized way in which people petitioned and the state accepted or rejected. Rather, negotiation was the key factor, even for bringing in seeds from neighboring regions.

By way of an example of this negotiation, we can cite the case of the people of Koyniçe, a sub-district of Hersek who requested 50 *kıyye*¹⁸⁶ of corn seed and high-quality cotton seed from Selanik (Salonica/Thessaloniki). The provincial administration acceded to the bringing of the corn seed, but they shared their doubts about whether cotton was suitable for the region. The administration suggested that if the people of Koyniçe were to meet the expense of bringing the cotton seed, they could organize its transportation and would inform the local administration in Koyniçe about the matter.¹⁸⁷ A similar request from Vişegrad—for grain and tobacco seeds—was also opened for negotiation by the provincial administration. Again, the administration promised to carry out this request on condition that the Muslim notables (of Vişegrad) covered the transportation costs.¹⁸⁸

Agricultural petitions also reveal the ongoing struggle between the Muslim landlords and their tenants (*müstecir*). There were two complaints about matters related to agricultural production by the notables. These complaints were categorized under the category of Bosnia general rather than a specific district of Ottoman Bosnia. One complaint of the notables was that the tenants who were not satisfied with the meadows for pasture used their (the notables') *çiftlik*s to feed their animals. This, it was claimed, had a devastating effect on agricultural production. To justify their position, they gave Austro-Hungarian Empire and other European countries as examples, claiming that such practice was absolutely prohibited in those places. They also blamed the tenants for being animal breeders but acting like farmers by planting a small amount of grain.

¹⁸⁶ A traditional weigh unit.

¹⁸⁷ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

According to the Muslim notables, both the method of *üçleme* and collection of agricultural tithes were interrupted due to these activities.

The proposed solution to this problem was two-phased. First, the notables requested the exile of those engaged in husbandry to the Balkans; second, they asked for the control of agricultural lands in *çiftliks* through the help of the councils of elders (*ihtiyar meclisleri*). Those who were available for agricultural production were to be protected through a contract between the notables and their tenants, but if those who stayed on their lands continued to feed their animals on agricultural lands, they should be no longer permitted to farm. Since Article 8 of the edict on Bosnian *çiftliks* promulgated in 1859 (*Çiftlikat Nizamnamesi*) prohibited Muslim landlords from expelling their tenants from agricultural lands, those who violated the contract should be dismissed by the government. The response of the provincial government to this was clear: they found the discussion proper and promised to take care of it.¹⁸⁹

Another complaint of the Muslim landlords against their tenants was that when the tenants who lived together with their brothers decided to divide their households, they would assume to use the ground of their landlords, that is, without first gaining permission. Apparently, this caused an impoverishment of the tenants and devastated the agricultural production (presumably due to the household division, causing a supposed lack of sharing). More pertinently to the petition, one might suspect, the use of the land without even informing the landlords constituted an injustice, a violation of their rights as landlords. Thus, those who did this needed to be expelled from the *çiftliks*. The ones who stayed on their lands could use their lands on the condition that they were able to continue their agricultural production. If not, the landlords would notify the government of

¹⁸⁹ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613, 4.

their decision to expel even these by replacing them with the new tenants. They wanted the government to enforce this. The decision of the latter was similar to the first case, above. They replicated their answers by referring to the discussion as a legitimate concern and promised to make the necessary arrangements.¹⁹⁰

The construction or repair of public buildings was a common request in 1867, 1868, and at the general council meetings during the 1870s (comprising 51 from 311 requests in four councils). This included the construction/repair of government offices, mosques, churches, clock towers, public baths, and fountains. The method was the same both for the requesters and the suppliers: bargaining.

People of Akshisar, a sub-district of Travnik, petitioned for the construction of a government office. They offered to cover two-thirds of the total estimated costs (26,000 out of 39,000 *kuruş*). This request was welcomed by the provincial administration and sent to the center for a final decision. The central government agreed to pay 12,000 *kuruş* to carry this project into effect and informed the finance ministry.¹⁹¹ The people of Banaluka were not so lucky. At the second gathering of the council in 1868, they petitioned for the construction of a government office. The local people would supply the necessary amount of timbers, physical labor, and 20,000 *kuruş*, and they requested an extra 15,000 *kuruş* from the state to complete the project. However, the provincial administration did not approve this project, claiming that the planned location for the construction was unsuitable.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613, 4–5.

¹⁹¹ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

¹⁹² BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

Bosnian representatives also used their unique geographical position as a leverage to obtain their requests. For instance, a request about constructing a government office in Berçka was justified by the representatives through its closeness to Europe. They warned the government about the regular visits of European people and underlined the detrimental effect of the lack of a government office in the eyes of these European agents. People in Berçka offered timber, sand, bricks and to cover the labor costs in return for 40,000 *kuruş* to construct this building. The provincial administration offered to cover 15,000 of the total expense and ordered the construction to go ahead. People in Bihke used a similar strategy to gain their intended result. Their explanation of the need for the construction of a government office in Bihke was its closeness to the Austro-Hungarian border. They claimed that Austro-Hungarian state officials often visited this district and did not have any problem like this (the lack of a suitable office). In this case, the representatives directly requested the construction of a state office, without, that is, offering anything themselves. The provincial government informed the representatives about the existence already of maps and expense records for this project but did not give a clear answer about its fate.¹⁹³ However, the people sent a petition about the importance of this project to the state in 1870, whereupon the central government did decide on the construction of a government office in Bihke.¹⁹⁴

Religion was not a bar to local petitioning of the center and favorable state response. Non-Muslim citizens of the empire also requested help from the Ottoman government—in their case specifically, for the construction of churches. In Istolça, the Orthodox Christian population had financial troubles in respect of completing the construction of a church in their region. They asked for government assistance in the matter. In response, the provincial administration estimated the

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ BOA. İ. DH, 620/43112.

necessary amount of money to complete this church, as 20,000 *kuruş*, and informed the central government. The central government considered the request as appropriate and ordered the sending of this money, informing the finance ministry.¹⁹⁵

Bosnian people did not only request things that would have a direct effect on their daily lives, such as mosques, churches, and government offices. For instance, people of Maden in Bihke wanted the repair of the clock tower in the town center. They promised to provide the stone and other necessary materials for its construction, in return for which the government would meet the equipment costs (*mesmar bahası*) and daily wages of the constructors. The provincial administration requested the expense records of such a project before taking any action. The attention of these people to the clock tower in their small town also demonstrates that Bosnians were not against the modernization; on the contrary, they supported it with their material provisioning and physical effort.¹⁹⁶

Bosnians were also concerned about the education activities in their region and handed in a variety of education-related petitions on the table during the Bosnian general council meetings. There was a significant difference in the educational requests between the first and the second years' meetings, with petitions doubling in the second year as compared to the first. While the requests were mostly about the construction of religious schools, such as madrasas and Catholic and also Jewish primary schools (*sıbyan mektebi*), there were a number of requests for the modern

¹⁹⁵ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

¹⁹⁶ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613. Clock towers were becoming expressions of the Ottoman central state's dominance in the provinces. See, Mehmet Bengü Uluengin, "Secularizing Anatolia Tick by Tick: Clock Towers in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 1 (2010): 17–36; Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (2003): 320.

schools of the Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire (*rüşdiyes*). In fact, as many as a half of the requests in these meetings concerned the construction of *rüşdiyes*.

The content of these requests also varied. For instance, people of Travnik wanted to change the starting date of the *rüşdiye* from June to August since many students worked in the fields in June. The provincial administration signaled the center government as the decision-maker for such a change, but the records do not show a response from the center.¹⁹⁷ Teachers' salaries was another issue. Since paying for teachers was a burden for Bosnians, they wanted help from the government. To compensate the salaries of Catholic school teachers, Bosnian Catholics of the Ottomans appealed to the state. The provincial administration of Bosnia determined the necessary amount as 3,000 to 5,000 *kuruş* per teacher over and beyond the amount required to maintain and run a school. The central government ordered 4,000 *kuruş* to be allocated, to cover both the teacher's salary and school upkeep.¹⁹⁸

On this subject, there were also two interesting requests from Banaluka. People of Gradiška complained about the lack of books at the eight schools in their districts. They requested the sending of 500 fascicles (*cüz*) of *elif* and *ilm*, 300 fascicles of *tebarek*, and 100 booklets of *tecvid* and *ilmihal* for the Muslims, along with 300 Bosnian language booklets for the non-Muslim inhabitants. Another petition from Banaluka also requested the supply to the local area of *tecvid* and *ilmihal* booklets and *elifba* fascicles. The provincial administration in Saraybosna promised to meet these requests through the assistance of the city's printing house.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

One significant aspect of the Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire was the expanding bureaucracy and the idea of civil officialdom.²⁰⁰ The principal aim was to transfer the administrative affairs in the local areas from *kadis*, *ulamas*, and *ayans* to the official governors, who were attached to the central government.²⁰¹ Through the new council system, however, the state also started to deal with individuals as taxpayers petitioning for security, justice, and infrastructural and other investments. Bosnians welcomed this shift of power by petitioning for more state officials to cover administrative and educational affairs, but they also offered more than tax payments to get what they wanted and upped their requests accordingly.

An example of this occurred when people of Gradaçaç and Maglay promised to undertake the construction of a *rüşdiye* in return for the appointment of a teacher by the central government; in addition, they requested the appointment of passport²⁰² and customs officers, *müderris* for madrasas, and lieutenants for the nearby police stations.²⁰³ Along with appointments from the center, that is, Bosnians also requested the promotion of local officials. Similarly, people of Bihke proposed the appointment of primary school director (*müdür*) Süleyman Efendi to the madrasa of Bihke. This requisition did not fit with the plans of the provincial administration, however, which appointed the *mufti* for this job instead.²⁰⁴ Bosnians also requested the promotion of madrasa to a more advanced institution and for a “*Hadaik-i Maarif*,” with the appointment of Abdurrahman Efendi. The aim, that is, was to turn the madrasa into a modern format in which the graduates of *rüşdiyes* could take such an education helping them in their careers, and the people were asking

²⁰⁰ See, Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989).

²⁰¹ Halil İnalçık, “Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hattı Hümayunu,” in *Tanzimat: Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 117.

²⁰² BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

²⁰³ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

²⁰⁴ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

both for the promotion of a school to a higher level and proposing a title for the teacher's position in this new institution.

While the representatives brought seven petitions to the council about taxation in 1867, this decreased to two in the next year. In 1867, the content of taxation-related requests varied from the abolishment of the *resm-i mururiye* tax and annulment of existing tax debts to providing justice in the collection of taxes and regulating the tax collection time.²⁰⁵ In the following years' meetings, there were two petitions concerning taxation, concerning the abolition of *bac rüsumu* (an urban tax) in Trebin and of a pasture tax in Hersek.²⁰⁶

One taxation issue demonstrates that the provincial council did not only function for requests according to local needs but also to inform on tax arrears. People of the Durneyak sub-district in Taşlıca who refused to pay tax were reported to the state authorities via this council by the local representatives. On the other hand, representatives petitioned for a reward to the people in Gaçka who had rebelled against Ottoman authority once but were obeying it now. Because of the poverty of these people and the drought of the previous year, the local administration had not been able to take its share of the grain that had been grown from the seed given to these people. Now, they were asking for the remittance of this from the state.²⁰⁷

This may be regarded as a reflection of the Ottoman mentality to forget. This act of oblivion, as it were, was to guarantee the rights of the rebels as Ottoman subjects after the amnesty.²⁰⁸ These two cases also reveal that although this council opened a space for many actors

²⁰⁵ People complained about the collection of taxes before the harvest of cereals, which forced the sale of harvest produce for cheaper prices. BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

²⁰⁶ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

²⁰⁷ BOA. İ. MMS, 35/1421.

²⁰⁸ Maurus Reinkowski, "'Let Bygones Be Bygones'. An Ottoman Order to Forget," *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 93 (2003): 201–6.

in Bosnia, it also ignored an important part of them. It was depended on the socio-spatial relations of power. A network which consisted of the representatives, the provincial administration, and the state conveyed the request of people in Gačka to the council by opening a channel; people in Taşlıca, in contrast, were kept away from this network, even at the beginning, and became others to the system.

Trade-related requests were also popular in the 1867 and '68 councils, with 25 such articles in the council records (increasing from nine to 16). Nearly half of all these requests were about the establishment of markets and fairs in the various parts of the province. The petitions varied from calls on the state to regulate the selling of grain and fruits before the harvest season and to prevent blacksmiths from sell the iron in their stocks when the prices were high to requests for the banning of the import of ethyl alcohol (*ispirto*), and *arık* from Austria-Hungary because of their devastating effects on people's health.²⁰⁹ The representatives also requested the informing and encouraging of people in respect of drying their greengage crops since this product carried a significant source of revenue for traders regarding its import to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.²¹⁰

The content of the Bosnian general council meetings was not limited to the above-mentioned topics. Regarding the geographical locus of the province, for example, petitions on the development of water transport via boat were made. Bosnians also requested the transportation of water to inhabited areas through mountains, with canals and the irrigation of agricultural fields for a developed water supply. Bosnians were also aware of the technological developments in the nineteenth century and requested these new facilities to increase the living standards in their

²⁰⁹ Especially the latter was interesting because while people demanded the banning of these alcohols, they wanted to keep the *işleva arkı* (a special type of *rakı* made by greengage). It seems that economic concerns were at the behind of this request rather than public health. BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

²¹⁰ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613; İ. MMS, 35/1421.

regions. One of the requests in this respect was the construction of telegraph lines, although the number of petitions was relatively low in Bosnia (just five requests for telegraph lines were made, as compared to 10 at the Edirne general council). The representatives also asked for the delivery of machinery for agriculture and mining, such as cotton-pickers and stonebreakers. Besides, Bosnians suggested to the construction of a woolen-cloth (*aba*) factory to meet the request of Ottoman soldiers in Bosnia, along with wood and carpet factories, considering the potential of the Bosnian region for the production of these items.²¹¹

Bosnia's unique geographical position in the empire also brought region-based petitions to the council meetings. The construction and repair of watch towers and fortresses and ammunition stores and the prevention of banditry and dispatch of ammunition to barracks and fortresses were among the topics that were brought to the meetings.²¹² In addition, the resources of Bosnia in the mining, husbandry, and forestry sectors found a significant place in the agendas of the representatives. They requested equipment and organizing commissions for mining and forestry, along with improvement of husbandry, especially regarding the breeding of horses that were indigenous to Bosnia. Bosnian representatives also requested that precautions be taken against flooding and for help to drain swamps and the utilization of waste agricultural lands.

Bosnian council meetings also witnessed interesting requests regarding the social life in Bosnia. For instance, people of Travnik complained about the unpleasant smell originating from the two tanneries in the city center. The petitioners claimed that the stinking water coming from

²¹¹ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613; İ. MMS, 35/1421.

²¹² People in Hersek who were responsible from the carrying of ammunition to the barracks demanded 25 *kuruş* for this until a transporting contract was put into effect. In addition, they requested an appropriate officer, the carrying of ammunition directly to its destination without overwhelming people's animals and giving the control to people and forbidding the officers from intervening to determine the stopping places. The provincial administration ordered the organization of a transport regiment (*alay nakliyesi*) to meet the demands of the people until everything was arranged. BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613, 10.

these tanneries had also negative impacts on their health.²¹³ The provincial administration welcomed this request because of its compatibility with the Municipality Law and sent an order to the local government of Travnik to take action. Another interesting application was to prevent wolves from attacking herds. The suggestion for this was to make every fifty households responsible for killing one wolf a year with the obligation of bringing the killed wolves' ears to the government office in their district by way of proof. The provincial government also found this request proper and promised to make the necessary arrangements.²¹⁴

These cases show that people also used the Bosnian general councils for their daily concerns. Even though this was not the expectation of the state according to the regulation on the consolidation of provincial general councils, Bosnians did not hesitate to bring all types of matters that damaged the flow of life in Bosnia to the attention of the central government.

3.5. Conclusion

Whenever an institution is established, it creates a platform in which different interest groups may be mobilized to further their own interests. The initiator of such institutions, the Ottoman state in this case, constitutes only one of the various, probably competing interest groups. Thus, the district representatives of the Bosnian general council voluntarily attended the meetings and negotiated over the cases to make profitable agreements. The provincial administration took this issue seriously and evaluated all the requests. When it felt able to respond to the petitions as reasonable requests, it either gave the order and informed the *kaymakams* so that they would perform the necessary actions or else it sent them to the central government for a final decision.

²¹³ Listed under the category of “urban planning” in Table 3.1.

²¹⁴ BOA. İ. ŞD, 13/613.

The central government responded to the requests that arrived either by forwarding them on to the related ministries or directly giving the order. Thus, the Bosnian general council created a web of relations among the representatives, provincial administration, and the state in which these three negotiated on the significant issues for the region.

The Bosnian general council meetings clearly demonstrated that the representatives used different rhetorical strategies to convince the authorities and did not hesitate to benefit from their leverage. Sometimes the representatives were able to use the unique geographical location of Bosnia to convince the authorities, and sometimes they brought more general concerns, such as public health, educational backwardness and religious obligations to the forefront. Since Bosnia was a border region, the Bosnian representatives also often made reference to this situation, especially when requesting security-related investments. In the complaints of the Muslim landlords about their tenants, they used the 1859 Farming Regulation as a leverage against the state to suppress their tenants. Thus, the tightness of the binary distinctions assumed between Ottoman state and its oppressed society and between the modernizing centralization and functionless local administrative councils are considerably loosened. On the contrary, an in-depth analysis of the functioning of the Bosnian general councils reveals a dynamic process of various actor-based strategies.

An important aspect of this in the actual work of the Bosnian general councils was its negotiative character. Negotiation was an embedded, integral part of these council meetings. Although there was no stated obligation in the provincial regulations or the opening speech of the Bosnian general council, people did not expect just to receive investments from the state; rather, they offered their material and physical aid to complete the projects they considered necessary, advantageous, and worthwhile. A give-and-take approach to negotiations, coming to the table with

both requests and offers or suggestions for how the requests could be realized and objectives achieved, was a common way for people to go about convincing the state to carry intended projects into effect. The state, for its part, encouraged people to do this, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the locally supported projects were responded to positively and approved by both the provincial and central state authorities. Sometimes, the state negotiated on the requested financial aid and promised to give only half or a quarter of it. All these negotiation processes were dependent on the context of the petition—on the region, the content of the request, the urgency of the intended investment, the rhetorical skills of the representatives and the profitability of a deal between people and the state.

The Bosnian general council also bore witness to the class and community-based conflicts in Ottoman Bosnia. It is obvious that Bosnian Muslim landlords were dominant in terms of determining the topics that entered the meeting agendas. Most obviously, there were the direct assertions and accusation made by the landlords against their tenants, while the latter were quite silent. Probably, this was not because of their unwillingness to carry their problems to the meetings but rather because of the predominance of Muslim landlords in the local bureaucracy. In the ongoing struggle with their Muslim landlords, the voices of the tenants were kept silent in the council meetings.

The community-based stratification among the regions also prevented some Bosnian subjects from fully participating in these council meetings. Those regions detected as disobedient because of refusals to pay tax or attempted armed resistance were kept out of the process. This was not limited to denying them access, but they were also informed on to the state. Those places that had revolted before and now accepted the authority of the Ottomans, on the other hand, did find

themselves a place in the new arrangement. Thus, the council operated as a reward and punishment mechanism.

In the next chapter, I will demonstrate that the negotiations between the state and Bosnian representatives were not discontinued without conclusion after the dispersal of representatives following the ending of a council meeting. The Bosnian general council did not only carry out administrative duties but also put the agreed projects into effect as co-produced projects supported by the two sides. Both sides took the discussed improvements seriously and did what they had promised in the council reports. In an important sense, the local development of Bosnia and its adaptation to the Tanzimat was neither a state-driven process nor at the disposal of the local. It was a combined process constructed through the cooperation of many actors, both local and provincial, state and public. Through the specific case studies discussed in the council meetings, I will show that the Bosnian local general council comprised a significant component of Bosnia's adaptation to the Tanzimat.

Chapter IV

Beyond Paperwork: Activities of the General Councils and their Role in the Developing State

4.1. Introduction

Contrary to the idea that the provincial general councils were merely pen-pushing institutions engaged in paperwork, it can be argued both that they played a crucial role in the development of the Ottoman state through the transformation of regional service provisioning. For this we need to consider the deeper role of the general councils in the context of the changing nineteenth century, a consideration that is developed later in this chapter. First, however, in order to make such an argument, and particularly in relation to the Bosnian general council, the activities of the provincial councils generally should first be contextualized by comparison, by looking at the regional differences as well as similarities. Indeed, Bosnia's general council was not just one of many but also a special case.

Aiming to investigate this, the first part of this chapter compares the functioning of the general councils in Crete, Sivas, and Trabzon with that of the Bosnian to demonstrate how these councils both differed from and overlapped regarding their functioning and capacity to shape their administrative regions. This comparison also offers a view on the extent to which the requests of these consuls' representatives were accepted and materialized, since the central government's relations with its peripheries were not all the same. Also noted here are the alterations in the rhetoric used by the representatives of these councils to convince Istanbul about the worthiness of their intended projects.

There are several reasons for selecting these particular provinces—Crete, Sivas, and Trabzon—over others. The most important, determining reason is that these are the only provinces for which I have been able to locate full council reports in the Prime Ministry Ottoman State Archives in order to make a meaningful, systematic comparison. Most of the provinces’ general councils had either no records in the archive or only two or three pages giving just a summary of the councils’ meetings. The employment of such disconnected information would be quite problematic and might actually serve to weaken the comparative analysis. Hence, the exclusive concentration here on the Crete, Sivas, and Trabzon cases for the comparison with Bosnia.

Another reason for using these provinces is that they can give valuable information about the practice of the councils in different parts of the empire. For instance, all these provinces exhibited an ethnoreligious plurality, which enables us to see the changing patterns of relations at both local and central government levels. In Crete, non-Muslims constituted the major part of the population, accounting for 73% of the people on the island in 1881, as opposed to the Muslims’ 26%.²¹⁵ Trabzon and Sivas included Armenian and Greek Christian as well as Muslim subjects. According to the Ottoman provincial yearbooks of Sivas province in 1893, Muslims accounted for some 80% of the provincial population.²¹⁶ The situation was similar in Trabzon. In 1868, the Muslim male population was 18,938 and the number of non-Muslims around 10,000, including Armenians and Greeks (Rums).²¹⁷ These heterogeneous structures of these provinces provides the opportunity to understand how geography mattered in determining the mobilization of different ethnoreligious communities on the local general councils. To put it differently, we will consider

²¹⁵ Pinar Senisik, *The Transformation of Ottoman Crete: Revolts, Politics and Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 65.

²¹⁶ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Sivas* (Sivas: Matbaa-i Vilayet-i Sivas, 1321), 236–39.

²¹⁷ Özgür Yılmaz, “Tanzimat Döneminde Trabzon” (PhD Thesis, Karadeniz Technical University, 2012), 47.

the extent to which some ethnoreligious communities were excluded or else enabled to use the mobilization channels around this institution.

These provinces also offer a socio-economic variety that allows for analysis of how the different socioeconomic conditions of the province shaped the requests of the representatives in the councils. Trabzon was a strategic harbor and commercial city of the Ottoman Empire that connected the Black Sea to the interior lands, such as Erzurum and Van. Crete was also still an important trading post for the Levant trade, but what makes it more significant was its geostrategic position in the conflict among the Ottoman Empire and the Greek Kingdom. This may enable us to comprehend both the positive and negative contributions of this conflict to the representatives during the negotiations in the council meetings.

Differently from the other cases, Sivas is the only province without a sea connection and carries the lowest commercial significance. Nearly one-fifth of the population there was Armenian, and there was a small Rum community.²¹⁸ Thus, it was a region predominantly populated by Muslims (around 80%). The main part of the Sivas' population was engaged in agriculture and the commercial capacity of Sivas was the lowest of the provinces used for the comparison. Sivas is a significant case here for those very reasons, precisely because it had the least external factors could affect the negotiating capacity of the representatives via the council. This enriches the quality of our comparison by providing a different historical context.

I will compare the first-year meetings of these provinces with the functioning of the Bosnian general council. Unfortunately, there are no annual records of these meetings except for

²¹⁸ Hanife Şen and Galip Eken, "Tanzimat Dönemi Cizye Defterlerine Göre Sivas Şehrinde Ermeni Nüfusun Mesleki Yapılanması," *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 17, no. 2 (November 29, 2016): 50.

Bosnia. Only the report of Bosnia General Council is available for more than a year. Therefore, I use just the first meeting reports of the Crete, Sivas, Trabzon, and general councils.

4.2. The case of Crete

First held in 1869, under the leadership of the governor-general Ömer Fevzi Pasha, Crete General Council operated quite differently to that of Bosnia. It did not have a meeting structure at which the representatives brought various requests from their districts, discussed them under the leadership of the governor-general assisted by a state official, and sent the agreed requests to the center. Moreover, seventy-six representatives, who came from both the districts and sub-districts attended the meeting as opposed to the 22 and 24 of the first two Bosnian meetings.²¹⁹ This is the highest number by far among the provincial general councils that I have analyzed. Further, the meeting records were kept both in Greek and Ottoman-Turkish, as provided for in the special regulation for the Crete Province in 1868.²²⁰ Although nearly half of the Bosnian subjects spoke Bosnian, the consolidation of meetings with the two languages (Bosnian and Ottoman Turkish) was not even on the agenda. There was no special provincial regulation that provided the province with this unique opportunity, and instead, the empire-wide Provincial Regulation in 1867 held as valid for the Bosnian province.

Yet, these were generally structural and procedural differences that did not necessarily affect the final functioning of the councils. The main divergence of the Cretan from the Bosnian general council, therefore, concerned content. Although the representatives in Bosnia brought petitions to the council on matters ranging from agriculture, education, and health, to security,

²¹⁹ I was unable to ascertain the ratio of Muslim to non-Muslim representatives because we do not have the representatives' names, but only their seals, and 20 out of 76 representatives even did not seal the report. BOA. I.MTZ.GR, 12/385. (May 9, 1869).

²²⁰ *Düstur*, 684.

trade, and the construction of roads and bridges, there was an only single article on the agenda of the Crete General Council. This was on education. The reason for this dearth in Crete was not an unwillingness on the part of the representatives to discuss various matters in the council, but rather the censorship implemented by the governor-general, Ömer Fevzi Pasha.

Although the representatives brought their requests to the council, the pasha rejected their consideration in the council, claiming that the discussion of such matters was outside the authority of the representatives. Thus, the agenda topic of the first meeting was imposed by the governor-general rather than at the request of the representatives. In fact, the representatives handed in their petitions as in Bosnia, and as in Bosnia, these concerned a wide variety of subjects, with eighteen articles covering matters agricultural, commercial, and construction. However, the governor-general sent the report of these requests directly to the center with the interpretations of the local administrative councils on each request.²²¹ In contrast, the main report that was sent to Istanbul detailing the proceedings of the first meeting of the Crete General Council was only related to the single topic of education.²²²

The Cretan revolution in 1866 loomed large in the memories of both the Ottoman state authorities and the representatives of the Crete General Council. It had caused great material and moral damage, devastating the island's economy and rupturing social relations. To ease the effects of the rebellion and adapt especially the island's anxious non-Muslim population to the state, the central government published a special provincial regulation, redesigned the administration of the island, and granted half of the *öşür* revenue of the island for the two years after 1867 to the Crete

²²¹ BOA. I.MTZ.GR, 12/385.

²²² BOA. I. ŞD, 15/655 (April 24, 1869).

General Council to spend for the agricultural, industrial, and commercial development of the province (through the Crete Provincial Regulation).²²³

The representatives were evidently willing to discuss on how to use this money for the development of the island. This is apparent from the governor-general's reference in his reports to Istanbul about the first meeting of the general council on the representatives' suggestion to leave education alone for now and concentrate instead on spending the granted revenue on agricultural and commercial investments. In fact, the governor-general was right to be worried about the agenda of the council given that most of the requests proposed by the contenders were not carried into effect. They mainly demanded the easing of taxes, development of transportation, a free election process to the councils, the establishment of a loan bank, the redesign of the judicial system, use of the Greek language for legal transactions, extension of personal liberty, permission to trade freely, and an amnesty for the rebels.²²⁴ However, most of these issues were still locked in a continuing debate among the state and the non-Muslim subjects of the island.

It appears that the governor-general did not want to make the general council a negotiation place for the fulfillment of these ongoing requests. In fact, the representatives were prepared to repeat them during the council meetings. The 18 petitions handed in to the governor-general by the representatives mainly contained the same requests that were on the agenda of the rebels. They wanted a decrease in the *resm-i kantariye* tax, reregulation of the one-tenth *öşür*, and abandonment of the collection of taxes from unpickled vegetables, as the law recommended; they requested an increase in the number of judicial and crime councils from just the one each; and they renewed

²²³ Düstur, 652. Afterwards, in 1870, after a year of the first council meeting, the central government changed its mind and cancelled the granting of these amounts of money. BOA. DH.MKT, 1311/20.

²²⁴ Leonidas Kallivretakis, *A Century of Revolutions: The Cretan Question between European and Near Eastern Politics* (Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 18.

their requests not to reject petitions written in Greek, for the construction of a loan bank, and for equal justice for non-Muslims.

The latter request, for ethnoreligious justice was especially interesting because the 36 non-Muslim representatives of the Cretan General Council claimed that although the central government had published a general amnesty for the rebels, the state officials and the court continued to imprison the non-Muslims accusing them of banditry. In contrast, the authorities ignored the violations of the Muslims against the non-Muslims as the acts of the army and hesitated to bring these criminals to court.²²⁵ Along with these requests, both Muslims and non-Muslims complained about the devastating financial effects of the rebellion and requested a decrease in interest rates and delayed payments. However, none of these requests were to become a matter for discussion during the council meeting and were instead, as indicated, sent directly to Istanbul by the governor-general.

Governor-General Ömer Fevzi Pasha started the meeting with announcement of the agenda of education in Crete. The aim was to reinforce all the schools, mainly primary schools and *rüşdiyes*, on the island and built new ones if necessary. Another topic was to construct a major school in Hanya, the provincial center, to instruct teachers for the island's schools.²²⁶ The representatives of Muslims and non-Muslims presented their detailed report separately for the amelioration of Muslim and non-Muslim schools in all districts of Crete. According to the report of the Muslim representatives, the amount of money for such an operation would cost 774,000 *kuruş* as an initial investment and 162,000 annually as maintenance cost for Muslim schools and

²²⁵ BOA. I.MTZ.GR, 12/385.

²²⁶ BOA. DH.MKT, 1311/9. The central government chose the estate that was allocated to the Russian consul in Crete for this school; it had 16 rooms, a bath, small vineyards, orchards, and farms.

696,000 *kuruş* for the immediate payment followed by 15,000 *kuruş* maintenance for the non-Muslim schools.²²⁷

However, the governor-general reported to the central government the existence of a significant problem regarding the realization of this plan: the representatives were unwilling to give even a *kuruş* toward the costs involved. The governor-general had asked them to donate some funds from their own revenues for this project and a fair amount from the charitable foundation (*waqf*) revenues of Muslims and monastery revenues of non-Muslims. The representatives claimed that they were the victims of the recent rebellion that had devastated their economic situation, so they could not afford such a donation. They declared the *waqfs* and monasteries also to be in the same situation. Thus, it was that they proposed leaving the education reforms to the following year and using half of the *öşr* revenue granted by the state for the development of agriculture and commerce instead. Educational development was the duty of the central government and it was that which was responsible for all necessary investments.

This answer did not satisfy the governor-general. In his report, when he characterized the issue as the representatives' reluctance to make any donations, he wrote that the Muslim representatives were unwilling to pay anything because they had never donated money for educational development and found donating money for education ridiculous. Unlike the Muslims, non-Muslims already had schools; they did not hesitate to spend money for the construction of schools, and they met the expenses. Thus, the reason for keeping away from this matter now was clear for the governor-general.

²²⁷ BOA. I. ŞD, 15/655.

In fact, his understanding was that the non-Muslims thought that if they allowed the government to intervene in education, they would not be able to bring teachers from the Greek Kingdom and raise their children according to Greek tradition. The governor-general portrayed the bringing of teachers from the Greek mainland as the real danger. For him, these teachers were bringing all the undesirable books with them and raising children as Greek nationalists and troublemakers. That was the reason for the non-Muslim unwillingness to donate anything for the development of Ottoman education on the island.²²⁸

It was for this reason that the governor-general paid special importance to the construction of a school for teachers at the center of the island. The school would be secular in the sense that both Muslim and non-Muslim students from the island could get training in the spheres of language (*lisan*) and science (*finun*). Until benefiting from the teachers instructed in the school, the plan was to create a commission in the body of the school to give the teachers certificates of competence. Anyone without this certificate should be prohibited from serving as a teacher. The governor-general also proposed the publication of all teaching materials in the provincial press, with materials from abroad to be burned. He wanted the government to meet the expenses of the teachers' salaries and students' expenditures.

The governor-general believed that when the teachers started to be instructed in the school, Cretan people's willingness for education would increase and they would come to willingly donate money for education matters. The essential benefit of constructing this school would be to raise teachers who were familiar with the state ideology, prevent the flow of dangerous ideologies to the island and familiarize non-Muslim students with the Turkish language. In this way, the tensions

²²⁸ BOA. I. ŞD, 15/655.

between the Muslims and non-Muslim subjects on the island would ease and the latter would be incorporated to the empire.²²⁹

The central government read the governor-general's report carefully and approved the construction of a school at the provincial center to raise teachers. The school would consist of 200 students, Muslims and non-Muslims. The central authorities also shared the concerns of the governor-general to constitute a commission for the certification of teachers and to use only the provincial printing house for the publication of teaching materials. The students could be both from the island or abroad. The course contents and quality would be dependent on the standards of the teachers and state officials involved in the project. Ultimately, approval was given for the sending of 2,000 *kuruş* for the construction expenses and 600,000 for the maintenance of the school from the central treasury.

However, the central government regarded the reformation of all schools on the island to be as important as the construction of a large school for instructing teachers and state officials. Indeed, it was believed in Istanbul that the main source of disturbance came from the schools. Without reforming them, the other plan would be futile. Therefore, it ordered the establishment of a fund to be supported by the state bank, the revenues of *waqfs* and wealthy individuals of the island. The central treasury guaranteed the necessary monies for this fund, as necessary. The process would be executed together with the people by taking their opinions on the spending of the capital.²³⁰

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ BOA. I. ŞD, 15/655.

4.3. The case of Sivas

Sivas General Council was held in 1869 with the participation of ten representatives from the districts. Three of these were the representatives of the Armenians, and one represented the Rums, with the remaining six representing the Muslim communities. As in the case of the other general councils—including Crete and Trabzon as well as Bosnia and also Edirne—both the governor-general and his assistant supervised the meetings. It appears that the attendance at the meeting in Sivas of representatives was rather low in number, but they brought with them a large volume of requests to the council, numbering some 74 articles in total.

These articles and the summary of the governor-general, Ahmed Arif, were quite enough to clearly demonstrate the main problems of Sivas. The top priority in the region was given to water, with a fifth (15) of the petitions on water-related issues (Table 4.1). The governor-general had 21 of the total number articles sent to the center for further action and nine of these, so a little under half, were related to water problems. Most of the districts in Sivas had scarcity of water both for daily use and agricultural production.

There were a variety of water-related petitions. One concerned the construction of water channels to the necessary districts. Irrigation was a chronic problem in the region, and the representatives expressed this more than once in their requests. Furthermore, the poor management of rivers was causing flooding in certain regions, which ruined the farms and transportation networks, such as bridges and roads. The representatives also asked for help to overcome these difficulties through the construction of different routes to the rivers or building of walls to protect from flooding.

Another problem was the distribution of water resources among the villages and farms. While some villages were able even to overuse water sources due to their geographical advantage,

this caused a scarcity for others. The dirtiness of river waters was another significant topic of the first meeting of the Sivas general council. The representatives complained that sewage was getting mixed with river water which supplied the drinking water for the province. They asked for 71,066 *kuruş* from the central treasury to repair the route of the River Behram Paşa and thus solve the problem. In addition, there were also requests for the construction of fountains in villages for drinking water.²³¹

Table 4.1. Sivas General Council's petitions, by subject (1869)

Contents	No. of Requests
Agriculture	12
Water-related issues	15
Construction/repair of bridges	9
Construction/repair of roads	2
Construction of government buildings, schools and mosques	16
Weaving industry	3
Establishment of bazaars	5
Taxation	2
Construction of public baths	2
Construction of telegraph lines and stations	4
Others	4
Total	74

Source: BOA. I. ŞD, 17/722.

Since most of the people in Sivas earned their livelihood from agricultural production and the region is a fairly flat (non-mountainous), inland area, it is unsurprising that water-related problems comprised a significant part of the meeting's agenda. However, the representatives' complaints about the decayed textile industry of the region were also quite interesting.

Until the nineteenth century, Ottoman fine textiles, yarns, and leathers had markets in surrounding states, but the position of Ottoman manufacturing had been gradually deteriorating

²³¹ BOA. I. ŞD, 17/722. (3 Temmuz, 1869).

over the last two centuries through a process of deindustrialization.²³² One of the articles that came from the representatives complained about the decline of the weaving industry in Tokat. This claimed that there had been nearly 150 cheesecloth (*tülbent*) and 400 dye (*boyacı*) looms producing goods for the imperial markets, but their number decreased to just a few looms because of the flow of imported, European (*efrenç*) goods. Indeed, the production of textiles was expensive and required skilled labor. The representatives therefore asked simply for the organization of a commission and construction of a textile factory to be able to compete. According to their calculation, 400 or 500,000 *kuruş* would be enough for such a project.

The provincial administrative council found this request appropriate and sent it to the center. However, the central government failed to give a response to this and other requests from Sivas, unlike in the Bosnian case, where it not only responded but also positively, in general. A similar request from Sivas asking for incentives in the shawl weaving industry also was passed over by the provincial administrative council, which in this case just impressed on the people and the wealthy persons of the region the need to organize a company to develop a shawl-weaving industry.²³³

Meltem Toksöz's study clearly demonstrates the infrastructural framework of peripheralization during the nineteenth century in the case of Ottoman Çukurova. Since the region was an important area for cotton cultivation, it was gradually transformed into a cotton-producing area for the global markets. Therefore, the increased request of core trading countries for cotton changed the whole structure of existed power configurations in Çukurova and turned it into a

²³² Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 134–35.

²³³ BOA. I. ŞD, 17/722.

region that produced a staple supply for the European manufacturing industry.²³⁴ The same large-scale transformative process also deeply affected the Sivas' manufacturers, but negatively. The lack of requests for Sivas textiles and unequal competition with European goods forced the province's manufacturers to close down their looms. At best, they could only sell the raw materials for cloth-making to the foreign textile manufacturers.

Sivas General Council also differed from the other cases in sending an activity report to the center. The report of the first meeting consisted of twenty-seven articles, in which each detailed development in the province. For instance, it reported on the construction of a workhouse to train children in Sivas and on the transportation of agricultural seeds to the Merzifon district. The report included the seals of the council's representatives along with that of the governor-general's assistant. Although the governor-general was the leader of the council, he did not himself stamp this report. Probably he must have thought that a letter of appreciation from the local representatives would increase his prestige at the capital and that including his seal in the report acknowledging each of the 27 activities could seem strange. However, the important thing was the use of the council as a way of gaining prestige with Istanbul. Rather than just petitioning, the governor-general was attempting to convince the center of the significance of his activities in Sivas.²³⁵

²³⁴ Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Making of the Adana-Mersin Region, 1850-1908* (Brill, 2010), 55–56.

²³⁵ BOA. I. ŞD, 17/722.

4.4. The case of Trabzon

Trabzon General Council held its first meeting under the leadership of the province's governor-general, Muhlis Pasha, in 1869 to discuss the development of the province and offer suggestions. All members of Trabzon Provincial Administrative Council attended the meeting including the governor-general, unlike in Bosnia, Crete, Sivas (and also Edirne). There were twelve Muslims and non-Muslims representatives in total, three from each of the four districts of Trabzon. Only eleven of them were able to attend the meeting, one of the representatives (from the Canik district) leaving due to illness.²³⁶

Compared to the other cases, the number of requests was low in Trabzon. There were only 38 articles recorded in the meeting at Trabzon, but this was also a smaller administrative unit, so this number was quite substantial for the first meeting. The agenda of the first meeting did not include any noticeable requests that differed significantly from the other cases; again, the representatives asked for agricultural investments, transportation facilities, school and government office buildings, and the construction or repair of roads and bridges (Table 4.2).²³⁷

The Trabzon general council sent a separate list of requests directly to the Ministry of Interior. The list was composed of eleven articles of requests ranging from the construction of schools, roads, and telegraph stations to state-buildings, but the request for the establishment of a common fund (*memleket sandıkları*) to supply credits for agriculture was the most striking request in the list.²³⁸

Agricultural credit funds had been established first in 1863 in the Tuna province under the governorship of Midhat Pasha. The aim was to supply loans to the peasants at low rates of interest.

²³⁶ "...na-mizaç olduğu..."

²³⁷ For the detailed description of the demands, see the Table IV.

²³⁸ BOA. I. ŞD, 15/658. (7 June 1869)

In order to collect the necessary capital, the pasha brought the uncultivated state lands such as swaps and grass lands into the use of the peasants. However, the collection of funds changed from region to region. In addition to the *öşr* tax, in some regions the peasants gave five percent of their wheat, barley, corn or rye harvest to the fund.²³⁹ The agricultural credit fund in Tuna had reached a capacity of 20,000,000 *kuruş* through this process.²⁴⁰ The representatives of the Trabzon council were also hoping to create such an agricultural credit fund for their districts.

Table 4.2. Trabzon General Council's petitions, by subject (1869)

Contents of Requests	No. of Requests
Agriculture	8
Forests	1
Education	3
Construction/repair of roads and bridges	9
Construction/repair of state buildings	7
Establishment of trade companies	1
Construction of barracks	1
Establishing bazaars	1
Construction of harbors	1
Others	6
Total	38

Source: BOA. I. ŞD, 15/658.

However, the establishment of an agricultural credit fund in Trabzon became a little complicated. While some state lands in the region were unsuitable for agriculture, those that were had been allocated to the Caucasian refugees.²⁴¹ Since there was no option of cultivating state lands collectively and transfer their revenue, the only way of creating a fund was to collect money from

²³⁹ Seçil Akgün, "Midhat Paşa'nın Kurduğu Memleket Sandıkları: Ziraat Bankası'nın Kökeni," in *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler ve Tartışmalar, Edirne, 8–10 Mayıs 1984*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, sa. 86 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), 189–193.

²⁴⁰ Tevfik Güran, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Zirai Kredi Politikasının Gelişmesi, 1840-1910," in *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler ve Tartışmalar, Edirne, 8–10 Mayıs 1984*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, sa. 86 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), 116.

²⁴¹ Trabzon was a significant station for the Muslim Caucasian migration wave in 1864. For detailed information, see: Özgür Yılmaz, "1864 Kafkas Göçü Hakkında Bir Rapor," *Mavi Atla*, no. 3 (2014): 133–56.

the people. With this aim, the central government suggested collecting 2.5 percent of the wheat, bean, rice, corn, nut, grape, orange and canvas revenues, these being the popular products of the region. The fund thus created was to be used in the creation of agricultural credit funds in the eight sub-districts of the Trabzon and Samsun districts. The central government expressed the reason for creating this agricultural fund as protecting people from the appropriation of moneylenders, who supplied credits to the peasants at high interest rates.²⁴²

4.5. Evaluation of the cases

The various operations of the general councils in different provinces shows that the functioning of these councils was highly dependent on local realities and the specific socio-spatial relations of power. In the previous chapter, it was shown that the representatives of the Bosnian general council, the governor-general of the province, and the central government benefited from the council as a proper place for negotiation. Both sides used their power to gain the best result for their interests. However, the important point was that the Bosnian general council representatives and the Bosnian governor-general succeeded in bringing the central government to the bargaining table. In the first council in 1867, the central government responded directly to 33 out of 128 petitions recorded in the meeting.²⁴³ Most of the other requests were small-scale projects that could be easily dealt with by the provincial government without assistance from Istanbul. However, the representatives and the Bosnian provincial administrative council did receive a response whenever requests were directed to the center. In the other cases, however, the state only responded to the governor-general's report and the requests highlighted by him.

²⁴² BOA. I. ŞD, 15/658.

²⁴³ BOA. I.MMS, 35/1421 (April 22, 1867).

In the case of Crete, there was a disparity from the beginning between the representatives of the island's general council, the provincial governor, and the state. Even though the representatives showed great interest in the meetings, the council did not go far from the established power, acting primarily as a tool for the governor-general in controlling non-Muslims in the island and working towards their assimilation. The governor-general was not willing to use this council as a way of resolving the problems expressed by and inherited from the revolution and far less on more mundane, day-to-day matters, such as improving the island's infrastructure and economy. Instead, he aimed to use it to collect money for his educational reform project, opened the meetings with the sole article, and only sent summaries of the requests given to him by the representatives.²⁴⁴

In the Trabzon and Sivas cases, the representatives brought their requests to overcome ongoing problems in the province. While the water-related issues were predominant in the Sivas general council, the representatives of the Trabzon general council brought the issue of agricultural credit funds to the fore. Thus, these councils became a channel between the central government and the localities through which to negotiate on how to solve region-specific problems and improve the infrastructure of the imperial territories. The development of that negotiation was itself dependent on the regional specificities,

For instance, we observe that the leverage of a Cretan representative was not the same as one from Sivas; while the former had a special connection with the Greek Kingdom through its Greek-Orthodox population, the latter was a province in Central Anatolia that had minimum external connections and a low trade capacity. Thus, the different capacities of the representatives

²⁴⁴ BOA. I. ŞD, 15/655.

in these councils regarding their leverages were displayed through the way and what they requested and led to different practices on the part of the central government in respect of the requests of each council.

In Bosnia, the subject range of petitions was broad, but with the special feature of its geopolitical positioning that thus not only highlighted special concerns but also provided leverage for local actors in their bargaining position with the state. In Bosnia, situated on the Austria-Hungarian border, security was a concern for the center as well as the region, which the latter could use to advantage. This was something which the other provinces considered did not enjoy. Similarly, road and bridge repair and construction were given an emphasis in Bosnia not seen in the other provinces, to the extent that their high standard was remarked on. This, of course, was partly due to the political considerations of the day, the matters that seemed to be of most pressing concern to the local people and that were deemed suitable for action at higher levels, ultimately going from the provincial to imperial center.

4.6. Provincial general councils in the context of a changing century

The differences and similarities of the provincial general councils as determined by the many factors in play is only one aspect that needs to be considered in an assessment of their functioning. There is also the question of how the general councils as a new tier of governance functioned in respect of the existing administrative arrangements. Did they, and if so to what extent did they replace the existing structures of local and regional service provisioning arrangements? Did the new political administrative bodies of the Tanzimat system effectively usurp the primarily *millet*- (ethno-religious) and family-based charitable organizations that were previously operative, in particular those of the numerically dominant Muslim population, the *waqfs*? This issue was

clearly one of politics and the secularizing state, but it was also intricately and intimately tied in with that of economics and in particular the financing of the activities of the provinces from the center during a period of increasing stress for the state treasury.

The nineteenth century witnessed the dislocation of administrative structures and their replacement by new arrangements in many if not most parts of the world. Similarly, across the world, public debts kept growing throughout the century. Some 205 wars were financed by governments worldwide during the 1800s.²⁴⁵ The nineteenth century was a breaking point in every sense. Old regimes started to crumble, one after the other, and fiscal crises triggered the rise of liberal societies wedded to the ideal of nation as alternatives. In short, the increased number and costs of war were beyond the capacities of most imperial states in the world; thus, they reformed their fiscal and administrative institutions.

The Ottomans were not outside this picture. While during the years between 1860 and 1865, the empire channeled nearly two-fifths of its general, overall budget for military expenses in order to maintain the extensive land empire, this had increased even to half of the budget between 1880 and 1885, following the war with Russia. The Ottoman Empire had started to take loans of three and five million pounds sterling respectively from Dent, Palmers & Co. and Rothschild's of London after the Crimean War in 1856, which signaled the beginning of a long series of loans that were eventually in 1881, to cause the bankruptcy of the empire.²⁴⁶ The question that then arises in respect of the general council provisioning of the Tanzimat reforms becomes one of finance. In such an atmosphere, where the central government suffered grave financial

²⁴⁵ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D. 990–1990*, Reprint (Cambridge, MA: Studies in Social Discontinuity, 1993), 67.

²⁴⁶ Edhem Eldem, "Ottoman Financial Integration with Europe: Foreign Loans, the Ottoman Bank and the Ottoman Public Debt," *European Review* 13, no. 3 (July 2005): 434.

difficulties and the heavy burden of war expenses, how did it meet the financial requirements of the provinces and their local projects? Indeed, quite how concerned were the authorities in Istanbul to enable these projects to be realized?

As a reflection of the transformative processes in the world, the Ottomans also changed their discourse in regard of legitimating their authority in the imperial territories during the nineteenth century. After the French Revolution, the term “citizenship” diffused into the agendas not only of nationalist leaders, also of the emperors. New methods of constructing legitimacy by emphasizing individual rights and responsibility for the well-being of the people—of individuals, of the citizenry—as opposed to just control and usage through taxation, labor, and conscription—of subjects, of the populace—provided both a need and an opportunity for the Ottoman sultans to (re)constitute their authority in the empire.

Opposed to the imperial idea that emphasized the sultan’s seclusion (distance) as an important constituent of his authority, Mahmud II made himself visible to the public through his domestic travels and image placed on the walls of government offices.²⁴⁷ This created the image of a ruler controlling the different aspects of daily life and thus ultimately if not directly answerable to the people as his citizens. Then, the Tanzimat edict in 1839 also referred a different terminology which underlined the concept of equality before the law. The republican ideals of the French Revolution were finally spreading even to the by now ailing Ottoman Empire.

These changes in the rhetoric of the empire indicate the shifts in the idea of governance. The salient point here is that the state attempted to design each individual as a taxpayer in return

²⁴⁷ Cengiz Kırılı, "Surveillance and Constituting the Public in the Ottoman Empire," *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa*, (Ed.) Seteney Shami (NY: SSR, 2009), 293.

for the social justice as well as political security that it claimed to provide them. In other words, it was attempting to undertake the role of tax farmer to provide not only security but also infrastructural services, increasingly extending into areas such as health and education. Indeed, this attempt was both successful and unsuccessful. In terms of financing, it was successful insofar as it was able to change and extend the preexisting patterns of land taxes, but it was also unsuccessful in that the central government never totally dislocated the collection of taxes through tax farmers. Thus, the *öşr* continued to be repartitioned, village by village and family by family even until the last moments of the empire.²⁴⁸

Yet, the changing mechanisms of legitimacy in the nineteenth century of the Ottoman Empire also required new methods to collect information from the provinces. One of the main aims of the Tanzimat institutions was to overcome the monopoly of the local powerholders on information by creating places to share power among many people rather than a few. However, this also laid a burden on the central government by turning it into the most critical actor for regional infrastructural development, a role it had never played before. This was an unaffordable duty not only financially, but also for the bureaucratically crawling empire. Even in 1894–95 the Ottoman Empire only had 185,000 civil servants for the entirety of its vast territories.²⁴⁹ The Greek Kingdom, the newborn neighboring state of and many times smaller, already had 23,000 officials by 1870.²⁵⁰ Given the scarcity of qualified officials, what was the plan of the Ottomans to collect information about the local needs of the people?

²⁴⁸ Ozbek, *Imparatorlugun Bedeli*, 90.

²⁴⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, Turkish and Ottoman Studies (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 218.

²⁵⁰ Victor Roudometof, "The Social Origins of Balkan Politics: Nationalism, Underdevelopment, and the Nation-State in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, 1880–1920," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (August 1, 2000): 155.

One claim that may be made in this respect is that the establishment of provincial general councils was precisely the solution of the central government to the problem of financial and insufficient bureaucratic capacity. These councils increased the sources of information for the central government and put it in the picture as an actor for the transformation of the local territories. The provincial general councils provided the central government with a unique opportunity to overcome the problem of collecting information about the provinces without the rapid development of an expanded bureaucracy.

Councils gathered once a year could report all the infrastructural problems, security, and protection issues of the province to the center. They could also help the state in distributing the duty of providing information to many representatives rather than just a few *ayans*. Even if the representatives in these councils were still drawn from the powerful strata of their regions, the government was still succeeding in increasing the numbers of its information suppliers and gathering them under the roof of the Tanzimat institution. This was like killing two birds with one stone for the central government. While it was overcoming the problem of a constricted bureaucracy, it also distributed the power in the councils among relatively many rather than just a few. Nevertheless, the main question remains; how did the central government finance local projects and regional development?

4.7. Provincial general councils as financiers of local construction projects

Until the first half of the nineteenth century, it was the notable families and their *waqfs* that mainly provided infrastructural services and helped to conduct public works. The former was significant because they not only financed the public works directly but also established family *waqfs* to provide such services in the Ottoman countryside. These services were ways to legitimate

their authority in their district both in respect of their subjects and the central government. Sometimes they used these services to ask the center's favor or to provide for them as a result of these favors. The crucial point was that the notables acted as the powerbrokers of the empire, not as the servants of the central government.²⁵¹

For instance, the Karaosmanoğlu family of the Aydın region was the biggest investor in public works and infrastructural development there. Yuzo Nagata indicates that the family constructed seven mosques, ten madrasas, a primary school, hadith school, and library, five bridges, one water storage and one water point (*sebilhane*), thirty fountains, seven roadways, and many water wells and water channels during the seventy years from the half of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth century.²⁵² Similarly, Ali Yaycıoğlu explains that Ismail Aga of Ruse, a powerful *ayan* in the Balkans, also undertook the duty of financing public works and security issues. He met all the expenses of the Ruse's water system by considering this as a *waqf*.²⁵³

These services were connected with the changing meaning of “*ayan*” from the eighteenth century as the socioeconomic position and thus political standing developed. The gradually increased accumulation of wealth in the hands of the *ayan* class transformed their status from regional tax-collectors to regional powerholders who constructed schools, fortresses, and roads and built whole armies, indeed. Therefore, *ayans* not only became the local notables of a region enjoying enormous wealth and prestige. In addition, they acted as the people responsible for their

²⁵¹ Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions*, 1 edition (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016), 67.

²⁵² Yūzō Nagata, *Tarihte Ayanlar: Karaosmanoğulları Üzerinde Bir İnceleme*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997), 147.

²⁵³ Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 127–28.

territories. The responsibilities they thus took on included infrastructural investments, public works, and security matters.²⁵⁴

The Ottoman institution of the *waqf* also played a critical role in terms of providing social, economic, and cultural services to the Ottoman subjects. In a sense, they were micro-economies of the empire, with a larger place in the urban areas and financial resources that enabled them to continue their service role.²⁵⁵ Established by royal family members, or imperial and provincial elites, Ottoman *waqfs* provided mosques, madrasas, hospitals, kitchens, libraries, markets, baths, and other facilities in the imperial lands and then sponsored their functioning. In other words, *waqfs* in the Ottoman Empire not only constructed buildings but also supported them through repair work and restoration; they undertook the responsibilities that were to come under the authority of state ministries and municipalities in modern nation-states.

According to the study of Nazif Öztürk, these micro-economies for public use constituted a quarter of the total Ottoman general budget during the eighteenth century. Huge financial resources were accumulated in the hands of *waqfs*. However, this figure would decrease to nearly 15% percent during the course of the nineteenth century.²⁵⁶ Mahmud II's reform policies played a considerable part in this dramatic fall. After the destruction of the Janissary institution in 1826, the emperor continued to expand his authority by claiming the rights of such organizations, a one of his policies' targets was control of the *waqf* institutions and their beneficiaries. With this aim, the

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 126.

²⁵⁵ Amy Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem*, SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 4–5.

²⁵⁶ Nazif Öztürk, *Türk Yenileşme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakıf Muessesesi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları; İlmi Eserler Serisi, 144. 34 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 25.

Ottoman government designed the *Evkaf* Directorate to supervise the management of *waqfs* across the empire.²⁵⁷

The *Evkaf* Directorate reform envisaged control of the collection of *waqf* revenues and their expenditures through the supervision of a central directorate (so, rather than permitting *waqfs* to continue their existence as non-governmental organizations). This was a clear attempt by the Ottoman government to centralize non-governmental institutions—which does not mean that it was entirely successful. These types of practices of the Ottoman Empire helped the government to establish itself as a sole legitimate mechanism in terms of collecting tax revenues by excluding the claims of the religious class and provincial elites, but the results were very dependent on the specific socio-spatial contexts in the different parts of the empire.²⁵⁸

It is clear that the central government planned to replace the already decreasing role of *ayans* and *waqfs* in provincial development with the provincial general councils. Since these councils did not have any executive power, they could not control a budget to take any action. However, they did constitute an economy of donations for their regions. They became a place of negotiation between the central authorities, the provincial officials, and community representatives to discuss local projects and bargain on the distribution of expenditures—costs and investments—among the local people and the central government.

As observed, most of the big-budget projects requested in the provincial general councils were based on a mutual share on the expected costs. For instance, local representatives offered to contribute half of the necessary cash, labor, and timber for the construction of a bridge, road or a

²⁵⁷ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 93.

²⁵⁸ Huri Islamoglu, ed., *Constituting Modernity: Private Property in the East and West* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 26-27.

government office, and in return they asked the central state to supply the rest. Four out of the eleven suggested projects in the Trabzon general council that entered the agenda of the central government were such donation-based projects, based on the mutual support of the local people and the central government. In the Sivas general council, 11 out of the 21 projects were similar, donation-based projects, as were a total of 51 out of 120 petitions in the Bosnian general council sent to the central government.

The unique location of Crete, the conflict of interests among the governor-general and the representatives, and unique historical temporality of the region prevented its general council from consolidating donation-based projects. However, our other three cases clearly used the donations to convince the central government agents to carry the intended projects into effect. For instance, the governor-general forwarded the request of the council's representatives on the repair of the water channels in the town of Karahisar-ı Şarki (Şebinkarahisar), in the province of Sivas. The strategy there was to promise 15,000 out of the 40.000 *kuruş* needed for the repair work and request the remaining 25,000 from the central government. Another request was to rebuild the three bridges on the rivers of the Aziziye town using 6,000 *kuruş* from the central treasury with, as the representatives offered on their behalf, the local people supplying the necessary timber and stone and transportation. The central government reacted positively to these requests and sent them to the ministry of finance.²⁵⁹

The process functioned similarly in Trabzon. One of the petitions made to the general council there that went to the center was to build a telegraph office in Livane district. A budget of around 10,000 *kuruş* was deemed sufficient for this operation, with the representatives

²⁵⁹ BOA. I. ŞD, 17/722.

guaranteeing that telegraph pole and transportation expenses would be met by the wealthy people of the region. There was a request related to the construction of a dormitory (*islahhane*) under the roof of the *rüşdiye* of Trabzon. The construction and the annual expenses for teachers' salaries, students' clothing, and food provision combined required 150,000 *kuruş*. The representatives reported the consolidation of a donation fund for this operation, which had reached 7,600 *kuruş* at the time. Again, the central government approved this project on condition that the construction would start after the collection of enough money in the fund.²⁶⁰

At the first meeting of Bosnian general council, in 1867, 23 out of the 138 projects on the meeting agenda were donation-based projects. The requesters offered physical labor, transportation, and building materials and/or a fair amount of cash to convince the central government to go ahead with the intended projects. At the second meeting, in 1868, the ratio of donation-based projects jumped to nearly half of all requests (51 from 138).²⁶¹ The reason for this increase can be taken as the positive results of the donation-based approach in convincing the local and central government, because only the two out of 23 donation-based projects in the first year had been rejected (by either the local or central government).

Clearly, the representatives, the local, and central government together developed a common language for negotiation about the distribution of the local projects' burden between the people and the authorities. Most of the requests that were not based on any donations were either rejected or delayed by the local government until the preparation of a bill of costs. Indeed, the request of such an estimate constituted an act of leaving the table for the state officials. It meant that they had gone as far as they could, or would, and there was nothing to bargain on. Therefore,

²⁶⁰ BOA. I. ŞD, 15/658.

²⁶¹ BOA. I.MMS, 35/1421. BOA. I. ŞD, 13/613.

donations were the most important way of taking the attention of the central government on the requests and negotiating on the carrying of such projects into effect.

4.8. Social relations and the Bosnian council: two projects

Two projects brought to the Bosnian general council helps us a lot to see the multilayered relations between the representatives, the local and the central government. Each of these sides had its different motivations for carrying the projects into effect. The first project was the construction of a madrasa in Ostrošće sub-district, which was under the administrative sphere of Bihke district. The representatives of Bihke mentioned the lack of a madrasa for the religious and scientific education of the children in this region. They reported that the people there were ready to meet all the expenses for the construction of a madrasa, in return, they were expecting the appointment of a teacher and the compensation of his salary from the central treasury. The local government reacted positively to this request and sent it to the center.²⁶² When the donation records (*iane defteri*) were received at Istanbul, it also approved the request and immediately appointed a teacher with a 500 *kuruş* salary.²⁶³

The donation records give important clues about the financiers of the project. There were two classes of contributors: individual donators, who gave cash, and the common people, who provided building materials, such as timber and stone. While the former consisted of state officials, local elites, wealthy merchants, and artisans of the district, the latter comprised the low-income inhabitants who had limited capacity to donate something (these would have been smallholder

²⁶² BOA. I.MMS, 35/1421 (January 6, 1867).

²⁶³ BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 392/43 (October 21, 1867).

farmers mostly, since vendors, peasants and agricultural laborers would generally be too impoverished to contribute).

The number of individual investors for the madrasa project was 113. At the top of them were the governor-general of Bihke district and the governor of Ostroşçe sub-district, who made donations of 1,000 and 750 *kuruş*, respectively. The representative members of the Ostroşçe administrative council also made considerable contributions. Representative Ahmed Ağa donated 1500 *kuruş*, thereby surpassing the contributions of both the district and sub-district governor. Elhac Mustafa Ağa also donated 750 *kuruş* for the construction. The other members of the Ostroşçe administrative council, such as the collector (*tahsildar*), scribe (*mal katibi*), and assistant foreman (*naib*), also contributed to the fund, in their cases between 200 and 300 *kuruş* each. In addition, Mahmud and Mustafa Ağa, members of the Köraliç family, contributed 250 *kuruş*.

Not only inhabitants of the region but also merchants from other districts of Bosnia donated money to the madrasa project in Ostroşçe. For instance, Yahya Hasan Ağa, a merchant in Bihke district, donated 25 *kuruş*. Beside these, other contributors were classified according to their neighborhood in the Ostroşçe sub-district. Most of them were merchants, craftsmen, and religious men. Their contribution to the project ranged from five to 100 *kuruş* per person. All the donations in cash added up came to a total of 8,187½ *kuruş*.²⁶⁴

Donations paid in kind were collected neighborhood by neighborhood, although the amount paid by each neighborhood was not the same. For example, the neighborhood of Todorava provided timber equivalent in value to 600 *kuruş*, while Sazin's material contribution was equal to 1,500 *kuruş*.²⁶⁵ The contribution of each neighborhood was sealed by the neighborhood headman

²⁶⁴ BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 392/43.

²⁶⁵ The quarter of Sazin was the exact location in which the madrasa was planned to be built.

(*muhtar*). The material contributions of some neighborhoods were classified in the donation records according to their usage in the construction. The timber supplied by the quarters of Todorava and İstane, for example, were to be used for the construction of the madrasa floor (*döşeme direği*). The neighborhood of Tereşçe provided wooden posts (*temel direği*) for the foundation of the building. Another neighborhood supplied wood for the construction of the roof (*çatı direği*).

All such donations in kind from the eleven districts were equal to 7,800 *kuruş* in total. The value of both cash and material donations came to 15,987½ *kuruş*. The administrative councils of Ostroşçe also sent a report of all expenses for the construction of the madrasa to Istanbul. The report demonstrated that the donations were fully sufficient to meet the costs of construction of the madrasa which was to comprise of sixteen rooms.²⁶⁶ Henceforth, the responsibility of appointing a teacher belonged with the central government.

Another project presented at the first general council in Bosnia involved the construction of a bridge across the River Usora to connect Saray and Brod streets in Teşne subdistrict.²⁶⁷ The representatives of Banaluka offered to cover all the expenses of the construction. The method of collecting donations was the same as in the Ostroşçe example. Both the individual donators and the common people from nearby villages fed the fund. There were 329 persons who contributed to the fund in cash. Again, the state officials and the district council representatives were at the top of the list as donators, and merchants, craftsmen, religious men, and important families followed.

The individual donations of the state officials and civilians in Teşne were lower than in Ostroşçe. Abdullah Efendi, governor of the Teşne sub-district, donated 500 *kuruş*, for example,

²⁶⁶ BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 392/43.

²⁶⁷ Teşne was under the administrative authority of Banaluka district.

while the Muslim representatives of the district's councils also donated 300 *kuruş*. However, there were also non-Muslim contributors to the project in this case. Kuzman, the non-Muslim representative of the district council, also gave 300 *kuruş* as his share. Yove Ağa, a merchant in Banaluka district, also donated 300 *kuruş*. The total contribution in cash which came from all the individuals, Muslim and non-Muslim, state officials and civilians, totaled 23,970 *kuruş*.²⁶⁸

In addition to the donors of money, the people of the 95 villages in Teşne sub-district contributed to the project in kind. The amounts of their contributions differed from village to village. These villages also send 4,425 laborers for the construction work, a donation equivalent to 22,425 *kuruş* when calculated at five *kuruş* a day (as a typical daily wage). The villagers guaranteed to not receive any payment for their services from the state's treasury. The sum of all the donations of the people from villages, both by way of construction materials and physical labor, was equal to 78,600 *kuruş*. Therefore, the construction of this bridge would cost 102,570 *kuruş* in total, when the donations of the individuals and the villages were combined. The donations of the people from the villages were triple that of the individual donations, showing that their role in the construction of this bridge was key.²⁶⁹

It was obvious that the central government gained from the realization of these projects. Since it had a limited budget that could not accommodate such expenses, the infrastructural development via donations provided a good solution. Besides, it also brought prestige to the central government insofar as the process delivered material results under the authority of the state. Unlike the *waqfs* and individual investors such as *ayans* that undertook all the expenses and claim the prestige of their civic work, the central government became involved in the construction processes

²⁶⁸ BOA. İ. DH, 586/40793 (May 15, 1868).

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

through the general council. All the records of the donations were sent from Saraybosna to Istanbul, where the final decision was made. Therefore, the central government became one of the principal actors in local development, while meeting a considerable amount of the expenses from the provinces.

While the benefits of these types of donation-based projects for the state were evident, the motives behind the contributions of local state officials, elites, merchants, artisans, and common people for the construction projects were less so. Our two cases offer some clues about the motives of the donators to participate in infrastructural and social investments. For instance, the governor of Teşne sub-district was awarded the Mecidiye medal at the fourth rank for his services in carrying the project into effect.²⁷⁰ The governor's promotion was the visible tip of the iceberg, however, and we do not know the exact benefits accrued by the other state officials and individual donors.

Undoubtedly, the donation business was very prestigious, and there could be important gains for the donors at the local level but gaining from these webs of interests and mutual benefit was not so easy as rising through the state's cadres. For the madrasa construction, the donation of 1500 *kuruş* by Ahmed Ağa of the Ostroşçe administrative council was higher than the governor's and all other contributors' donations.²⁷¹ The motive behind making such a considerable donation could have been the increase in his prestige, at both the local society and state levels. This prestige could have made him a suitable candidate for vacant positions in the state cadres, one may surmise, it may have increased his regional power and his local standing in respect of later business, and it may also have been an end in itself, the inherent reward of civic duty and morally good action. It may have been motivated by a desire to contribute to the local development of their regions for

²⁷⁰ BOA. İ. DH, 586/40793 (January 26, 1869).

²⁷¹ BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 392/43 (August 2, 1867).

socio-economic reasons or to reinforce relations with the authorities by helping the project pioneered by the district governor. Any and all of the above reasons would have been possible, no doubt, and more besides.

The other side of the donation-based projects was the material supports and physical labor given by the people of the villages and sub-district neighborhoods. It seems that the main organizers of materials' collection and physical labor were the chiefs at the village and neighborhood level. However, there is no clear evidence about whether and the extent to which people *voluntarily* supplied materials and physical labor for the construction or if the local headmen *obliged* them to provide these. An interesting point in this respect is that there was a small passage on every village and neighborhood donations clarifying that people had supplied them as donations gratefully without waiting for any payment from the central treasury.²⁷² This concern to assert the common man's liberty may contrarily reveal its lack, one suspects.

The village and neighborhood headman's seals under these passages demonstrate that the person authorized with the responsibility for each village and neighborhood was required or at least expected to declare that these were taken from the people of their own free will. As the two cases demonstrated, the donations from the common people both as materials and physical labor were an essential component of the intended construction. Their share was more than half regarding the compensation of both these projects' expenses. Therefore, it was possible that the headmen could force people to provide such "aid" for the construction projects. However, the "force" involved could be moral, to do good for the community like everyone else. Really, we need more information about the complex socio-spatial relations of power among the local

²⁷² "...ahali tarafından ita kılınan yüz yirmi beş kuruluşluk keresteyi ianeten bila ita canib-i hazine-i celileye terk ve teberru eyledikleri..." I.DH, 586/40793. BOA. A.MKT.MHM, 392/43.

provincial government, the districts' government, the local headmen, and the people to say much on this subject. A more detailed and agent-based analysis may be able to go beyond the aims of this chapter in indicating some of the possibilities regarding donor motivation.

The donations in cash reveal the complex relations of the local agents with the center. The individual contributors ranged from local state officials and powerful families to merchants and artisans, and the contribution of local state officials to the donation campaigns in both of these cases—the Ostroşçe madrassa and the Teşne bridge—suggests political pressure on these officials as one of the motives behind their donations. Certainly, pioneering such local projects by the regional and local officials could result in promotion. Increasing their political weight vis-à-vis Saraybosna and Istanbul seems to have been a consideration for officials that would have impelled the realization of projects through the established imperial power relations. It is possible that such hopes and expectations triggered the local officials to be the initiators of such projects by collecting sufficient donations from people of their districts. However, we do not have any idea about the collection method or sufficient evidence to say that powerful families, merchants, and artisans were forced to contribute for the projects, by political or social pressure or in some other way. Similarly, the members of rich families and others in the districts could open mobilization channels for themselves at the local and regional levels. Again, a detailed study of the various provincial networks of power and patronage, from the central to the local, is indicated for further elucidation.

4.9. Conclusion

The provincial general councils were certainly not just “doing paperwork.” After the diminishing role of the *waqfs* and *ayans* in the Ottoman society especially after the Tanzimat, these councils became one of the main areas for negotiation among the central government, local state

officials, and the councils' representatives regarding socio-economic, educational, and cultural development of the provinces. However, the cases of the four example provincial general councils used in this chapter show that the functioning of the councils was very strictly dependent on the socio-spatial relations of power and unique historical specificities.

The Cretan general council in particular was limited by its historical inheritance and thus dictated to in order to prevent any types of negotiations among the representatives and the central government. The governor-general determined the agenda by himself but was unable to gain local support for his intended educational reforms (aimed in part at the assimilation of the island's Greeks). The unity among the representatives of the general council was grounded in ethnoreligious considerations and the recent rebellion on the island just a few years before the opening of the council. This caused the governor to act with suspicion especially towards the non-Muslims of the island and their representatives in the council. Therefore, he wanted to dominate the council meeting by preventing the discussion of any requests (except the education matters).

The Bosnia, Trabzon and Sivas general councils functioned well compared to that in Crete. Yet, the Bosnian general council received more attention, both at the local level, in terms of the number of petitions and items (articles) on the meeting agenda, and in terms of responses from Istanbul. While the central government only replied to the requests presented by the governor-general of Trabzon and Sivas in the summary of the meeting reports, it dealt with every article of the requests leaving the decision to the center in the Bosnia reports.

One of the reasons for this special attention was the unique location of Bosnia on the borderland of the empire, which was linked to its position as a region inhabited by different ethnoreligious communities. The cosmopolitan structure of the province combined with the increased mobilization of Serbs and Montenegrins on the western borderland alarmed the

government and impelled reform in the region. The British, French, and Russian Empires had been keeping an eye on Bosnia since the rebellion in 1851, so the sensitivity of the border region pushed the Ottomans to address promptly the Tanzimat and provincial reforms.

There was another aspect to the Bosnian general council's fruitful atmosphere, however, which concerned the governance there more generally. Governor-General Topal Osman Şerif Pasha watched over the reforms and the newly consolidated institutions closely. He attended the meetings of the general council and the bureaucratic structure operated well for the functioning of the council. Differently from the other cases, there was a standard way of negotiation among the central government, the local administrative council, and the representatives of the general council. Thus, while the Trabzon and Sivas General Councils made contact with the center only through the summary report of the governor-general, every request in the Bosnian general council was the part of a bureaucracy. If the local administrative council had the power and authority to solve the request, it did not send it to Istanbul and made the decision itself. Requests were directed to the center when necessary, at which point the central government became involved and made the final decision. This structure only apparent in Bosnia, and it changed after 1869, which coincided with the removal of the governor-general from his duty. This shows the special endeavor of Topal Osman Şerif Pasha regarding the functioning of Bosnia's general council.

The provincial general councils were also significant because they became an alternative to the local-infrastructural development via the *waqfs* and the powerful *ayans*. These were losing ground during the nineteenth century, while the domination of the central government both in the local public sphere and the government gradually expanded. The main motive behind this transformation was the empire-wide fiscal reforms aimed at financial centralization. This policy was partially successful. The share of tax farmers on the tax revenues, which had been more than

a half in the 18th century, was reduced to a rate less than a fifth in the last decades of the 19th century.²⁷³ However, this was not a result of top-down transformation, even though the Tanzimat was designed at the center, since it included also both negotiated and coerced institutional reconsolidations at the local level.

Charles Tilly describes fiscal centralization as a cycle including resistance, repression, and bargaining among the state and its subjects that ends with the creation of new institutions.²⁷⁴ The Ottoman fiscal centralization fell into this mode. Even though the center aimed to standardize the bureaucracy and centralize the non-governmental institutions, it did not have enough power or, in some cases, the will. This opened a way for negotiations which led to either repression or bargaining between the central government and the various powerholders around the empire, resulting in different practices in different regions. The provincial general councils were reflections of this process of interaction between the center and its peripheries. While both the head of local government (governor-general) of Crete and the central government repressed the general council representatives there to limit their agenda and blocked the way for any negotiations, the trio of imperial center, regional government, and the local representatives of the general council created a basis for negotiation in Bosnia on the infrastructural development of the province.

The success of these new institutions in replacing the old ones requires a deeper analysis with an increased number of cases. Nevertheless, the important thing to note here is the center's attempt to direct and become involved in the reconfiguration of the local territories, including its intent to negotiate on matters related to social, educational, and economic development. Depending

²⁷³ Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli*, 29.

²⁷⁴ Charles Tilly, "Extraction and Democracy," in *The New Fiscal Sociology: Taxation in Comparative and Historical Perspective*, ed. Isaac William Martin, Ajay K. Mehrotra, and Monica Prasad, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 180.

on the unique socio-spatial relations of power and historical temporalities, this attempt failed in some provinces, resonated less well with the people, or functioned quite smoothly. Above all else, however, it promised a negotiation channel between the central government and local agents for reshaping the provinces, where none had previously existed.



Chapter V

Conclusion

This thesis has presented an analysis of the Ottoman provincial general councils that emerged after the declaration of the Provincial Regulation (*Tuna Nizamnamesi*) in 1864 and the General Provincial Regulation of 1867. It has mainly focused on the Bosnian General Council as an institution and Bosnia as a provincial unit during the Tanzimat. It has also examined the transformative power of this institution at the local level. By basing the study on primary evidence from this period, including council meeting records, official correspondences, petitions, and British consular reports, the thesis has explored the negotiations between the central government, local state officials, and the council's elected representatives in the shaping of the localities.

The introduction presented important historiographical issues in the study of the Tanzimat period. I commented on the terms “negotiation” and “flexibility”, demonstrated as the most significant ability of the Ottoman ruling class, ideas that encapsulate the approach employed to keep the empire alive for more than six hundred years and still quite popular in the revisionist historiography. Rather than taking these terms abstractly in the service of grand historical narratives, I discussed the importance of using them concretely for institutional analysis. Furthermore, I argued that what was practiced at the regional and local (provincial and district) level was not always what the center had imagined for it, by basing the analysis on a state-in-society perspective. Lastly, I examined how the same ideas of reforms transformed into different practices in unique socio-spatial contexts.

The first main chapter provided a brief analysis of Bosnia's adaptation to the Tanzimat reforms after 1850. It demonstrated that response of the Tanzimat reform aimed at tackling the

existing structural problems of the region that had led to insurrections—particularly corvée labor and the domination of powerful Muslim landlords—was insufficient and often irrelevant during the 1850s. However, the central government increased its attention to resolving these issues in the next decade with the assignment of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha as the inspector of Bosnia in 1863.

After the reports of the Ahmed Cevdet Pasha to the center, Bosnia's local powerholders were convinced to provide soldiers to the central army, and the regulation on corvée labor was brought into force under the Provincial Regulation of 1864. Then, through the unique efforts of the governor-general, Topal Osman Şerif Pasha, both local administrative and general councils came into effect for the administration of the province, and some of the Tanzimat reforms put into practice. However, these only created small changes which did not have any great impact on the deep-rooted problems of the province.

First, the tension between the Muslim landlords and their tenants eased but never abated. Second, the Tanzimat could not solve the problem regarding the relationship between the different strata of the province. The loose connection between the different groups of Bosnia pushed them to contact directly with the center. This did not provide absolute authority to the central government in the province, rather the loose connections among the different strata of the province pushed them to create espionage relations with the center that provided little and mostly manipulated information to the center. The central government acted according to the weak information instead of consolidating a control mechanism.

The second main chapter detailed the functioning of the Bosnian general council. By examining the records of the council, I analyzed the multi-layered relations between the central government, the local administrative council, and the general council representatives. The Bosnian general council acted to solve local problems with the help of the local administrative council in

the first instance, and, if this proved impossible, the latter sent it to the center, giving the order and forwarding the requests to the related ministries as it deemed appropriate.

This chapter demonstrated some of the rhetorical strategies of the representatives used to convince the authorities about the value of their projects. The unique geographical location of Bosnia, religious obligations, educational backwardness, and security matters were identified as the main leverages utilized by the Bosnian representatives to have their demands met. Sometimes, the regulations of the state were even used by representatives to justify their demands against the local population. When the Muslim landlords complained about their tenants, they alleged the Farming Regulation published in 1859 as leverage against the center to demand assistance in restraining their tenants.

This chapter also showed that *negotiations* between the different claimants were a characteristic of the Bosnian general council. Neither did the representatives solely expect something from the state, nor did the latter provide help without expectation. This *quid pro quo* aspect of what became joint or cooperated projects were an important part of the demands. The two sides involved in the discussion—the local people (the representatives) and the state (provincial and central government) discussed the input of cash, physical labor, and transportation to carry the intended projects into effect. Sometimes the central government met half of the expenses and the local people met the other half, and sometimes the former met all the necessary amount of cash to be matched by materials and physical labor. This chapter showed how these negotiations were dependent on location, the content of demands, the rhetorical skills and leverages of the representatives, and the profitability of a deal for the three parties.

The class and community-based conflicts in Ottoman Bosnia were also considered in this chapter. Muslim landlords were found to be dominant in shaping the council's meeting agenda, as per the landlord demands of Muslim for action to be taken against their tenants, against which the other side was silent. The reason was not their unwillingness to respond but rather the penetration of the council either by the landlords themselves or else indirectly, through their advocates. The local, territorial, ethnoreligious-based stratification also kept some subjects of Bosnia silent at these council meetings. There is evidence that those districts and villages assumed to be resistant to the Ottoman's authority were excluded from the council.

While this chapter focused on the functioning of the Bosnian general council, the next one looked at the limits of the central government's negotiating capacity through an analysis of the four selected provincial general councils. The comparative analytical perspective of this chapter showed that the relative success or failure of these councils was very closely tied to the socio-spatial relations of power and unique historical temporalities.

The governor-general of Crete and the central government together prevented the representatives from negotiating on the local development of the island, for example. The governor-general determined that there would only be discussion of educational matters in the council meeting and prevented the representatives from negotiating on any other issues. In contrast, the Trabzon and Sivas along with Bosnian councils were all more active. However, the geographically unique position of Bosnia made the Bosnian general council more significant for the center. The central government put the requests specified in the governor-general's report into operation, and it discussed every article in which the decision was left to the center, generally with positive results for the provincial actors. Since the Bosnian province was located on the border of

the empire, the central government attributed great importance to the implementation of reforms in the region and carried out a more reconciliatory policy there than elsewhere.

The second half of this chapter provided a discussion about the institutional history of the Ottoman Empire. I argued that the provincial general councils served to replace the decreasing role of private *waqfs* and local *ayans* on the local infrastructural development of the imperial domains. The donation-based economy that emerged as a part of the general councils enabled the central government to collect necessary funds from the various interested local groups for the construction projects requested and enjoyed a share of the prestige gained from providing this service.

Two donation-based projects from Bosnia were selected from the petitions to prove that the number of contributors to charity works or infrastructural development increased in number and range from a single private *waqf* or powerful *ayan* to many contributors, including local state officials, *ayans*, merchants, and artisans through to ordinary people. People from villages and urban neighborhoods also donated basic construction materials and physical labor in return for executing the requested projects. By dividing the prestige of a construction project among many agents, including the state at the top, the latter was preventing the emergence of powerful agents and institutions outside its domain. At the same time, the donation-based projects via the provincial general councils gave to the state the power of regulating the circulation of money, labor, and materials. This overlapped with the expanding idea of bureaucratization and fiscal centralization of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century.

In addition to this, the issue of “donations” was debated. The content of our documents was found to be inadequate for a full explanation of whether people donated money, materials, and physical labor voluntarily or through pressure from local state officials or the central government. Probably, the motivation to contribute included both volition and duress. One of our cases

demonstrated that effecting these types of projects brought prestige and promotion to the local state officials. The governor of Teşne district gained promotion and a Mecidiye medal for his services during the construction of a bridge in Banaluka. The other contributors, including various groups, could pursue these types of aims, such as securing a position in the local state bureaucracy or just creating a good relationship with the local government. Doing good for its own sake was also surmised as a reward in itself, one that would positively impact on social relations.

While this constitutes the positive feedbacks of the donations for the contributors, the donation-based economy facilitated through the provincial general council also resulted in the emergence of a community pressure among the state officials of different districts. It is possible that this pressure pushed these officials to pressure the local notables, merchants, and artisans of their districts to support their construction projects. In the collection of construction materials and provision of physical labor from villages and neighborhoods, the chiefs and religious men undertook the duty of allocating these materials and organizing physical labor. However, there is a need for further study on the dynamic web of relations at play in the different parts of this story. Without revealing the connections among these agents, it is impossible to understand exactly what was happening behind the donation-based economy of the provincial general councils.

Among the limitations of this thesis, coverage of the main unit of analysis, the Bosnian Provincial General Council, has been beset by various gaps. While I compiled the whole records of the first two councils, there were only the summaries of the petitions for other years, dispersed among the related ministries. This prevented me from using them to create a meaningful narrative for these years and completing an important part of the study. In order to overcome this problem, I compared the functioning of the Bosnian provincial general council with those of Crete, Trabzon, and Sivas.

Further, while we know that the Bosnian general council continued to exist until the de-facto annexation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, this study cannot provide any details about the fate of the institution during the administration of the Austro-Hungarians. The barrier of language constrained investigation into the transformation or disappearance of this public body. An investigation of the German or local language sources could also enrich the empirical side of this study and provide valuable information to fill some gaps in the narrative.

Overall, this research encompassed an analysis of how the provincial general councils became—or not, as in the example of Crete—an area of negotiation among various actors with different interests. The content of negotiations, the leverages of actors, and the outcomes were very dependent on the unique socio-spatial contexts and historical temporalities. The negative atmosphere of a rebellion before the gathering of the Cretan council blocked the negotiation channels among the representatives, the local state officials, and the central government. In Bosnia, Sivas, and Trabzon, the councils functioned well, but latter two not so well as the first, where the socio-economic and geopolitical importance of the province increased the attention of the central government to the region and provided leverages to the local actors to secure their demands. In the broader context, therefore, this study showed that the implications of the Tanzimat reforms and consolidation of the Tanzimat institutions were region-specific. They took shape as a result of the negotiations among the local agents, officials, and the central government authorities in the context of local conditions in a manner that was different from that which the state and its regulations predicted or imagined.

Looking forward, this work invites researchers to focus more on the consolidation of local government mechanisms in the Ottoman and other empires during the nineteenth century. Notably, these types of local institutions were also quite active in the socio-political scene of the Austro-

Hungarian and Russian Empires. A comparison of the narratives of these three empires regarding the emergence of regional councils and their functioning would help to place the story of the flourishing of local governance organs in these empires on a larger scale. Analysis of their articulation in world-historical processes, such as urbanization and fiscal centralization, would also seem to be an area of rich investigation. Finally, such studies could make a significant contribution to the historical sociology literature on the emergence of the mechanisms of state.



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