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Author (full names) HALIL İBRAHİM ERBAY.....
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..... MADRASAS OF ISTANBUL DURING THE LATE
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This dissertation deals with madrasa education in Istanbul during the late Ottoman period. It mainly focuses on the period between 1839 when the Tanzimat was promulgated and 1908 when the Young Turk Revolution took place. The subject has usually been neglected by the existing literature and treated within the general assumptions relying on dichotomous and simplistic analyses. This study aims to demonstrate that the history of Istanbul madrasas is more complex than the existing literature has suggested, primarily using the archival documents from the Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri*) as well as the Şeyhülislamate Archives (*Meşihat Arşivi*) in Istanbul, memoirs and biographical works.

The subject has been dealt with in two main parts. Each part is composed of two chapters. In the first part, madrasa teachers are the focal point of analysis. The first chapter examines the professional, institutional and intellectual aspects of madrasa teachers. In the second chapter, the social, cultural and educational composition of Istanbul dersiams has been explored statistically through the information extracted from their personnel files. The third chapter attempts to draw a comprehensive picture of madrasa students in the period in Istanbul. Taking into account their educational activities as well as career patterns in non-religious fields, it is also aimed to demonstrate their responses/reactions to shifting circumstances that occurred as a result of the reforms and some other factors such as international relations in the period. The last chapter mainly concentrates on the state perception of madrasa education and thus the relationship between the rise of modern state apparatus and madrasa education chiefly through disciplinary cases and imperial integration policies.

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TEACHING AND LEARNING
IN THE MADRASAS OF ISTANBUL
DURING THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

BY
HALIL IBRAHIM ERBAY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY
IN SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Halil Ibrahim ERBAY

ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with madrasa education in Istanbul during the late Ottoman period. It mainly focuses on the period between 1839 when the Tanzimat was promulgated and 1908 when the Young Turk Revolution took place. The subject has usually been neglected by the existing literature and treated within the general assumptions relying on dichotomous and simplistic analyses. This study aims to demonstrate that the history of Istanbul madrasas is more complex than the existing literature has suggested, primarily using the archival documents from the Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives (*Basbakanlik Osmanli Arsivleri*) as well as the Seyhülislamate Archives (*Mesihat Arsivi*) in Istanbul, memoirs and biographical works.

The subject has been dealt with in two main parts. Each part is composed of two chapters. In the first part, madrasa teachers are the focal point of analysis. The first chapter examines the professional, institutional and intellectual aspects of madrasa teachers. In the second chapter, the social, cultural and educational composition of Istanbul dersiams has been explored statistically through the information extracted from their personnel files. The third chapter attempts to draw a comprehensive picture of madrasa students in the period in Istanbul. Taking into account their educational activities as well as career patterns in non-religious fields, it is also aimed to demonstrate their responses/reactions to shifting circumstances that occurred as a result of the reforms and some other factors such as international relations in the period. The last chapter mainly concentrates on the state perception of madrasa education and thus the relationship between the rise of modern state apparatus and madrasa education chiefly through disciplinary cases and imperial integration policies.

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To my parents.

ABBREVIATIONS

DIA: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*

EI2: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn.

EI2 (Fr): *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn (French version).

HD: *Huzur Dersleri*

IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*

IA: *İslam Ansiklopedisi*

İÜ: *İstanbul Üniversitesi*

MEB: *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*

OTAM: *Ankara Üniversitesi, Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*

SOAS: *School of Oriental and African Studies*

TTK: *Türk Tarih Kurumu*

n.a.: Not available

n.d.: No date

n.p.: No place / no publisher

Note: Abbreviations used for the archival sources are provided in the Bibliography.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious education is an issue that will not go away, giving impetus to a fiery political debate on the relationship between the state and society that has polarized Turkish society. Secularizing reforms during the early Republican period put strict limits on religious education, marginalizing religious institutions vis-à-vis the public sphere. Despite the relative stability of the early Republican period, demand for religious education increased, particularly after World War II. In the decades that followed, Turkey witnessed an increase in the number of religious colleges, or *imam-hatip* schools, particularly during the 1970s when the country experienced an economic boom and rapid urbanization resulting from industrialization.¹ In the 1980s, the nexus of religion and education entered a new and potentially problematic phase when young women began attending Turkish universities. Many were graduates of religious schools and accustomed to wearing their headscarves on campus and in the classroom as their democratic right.

Religious education and headscarves are issues that the Turkish ruling elite group together as relating to the ambiguous and broad notion of the ‘public sphere’ insofar as they are religious symbols posing a threat to ‘secularism’. As such, the administrative and legal restrictions placed over them have always been backed by the verdicts of the Turkish legal establishment in the name of defending ‘secularism’ despite diverse approaches to the issues taken by various political groups.

¹ For recent research on the issue of imam-hatip schools, see Rusen Çakir, *et.al*, *Imam-Hatip Liseleri: Efsaneler ve Gerçekler*, (Istanbul: TESEV Yayinlari, 2004) and Mehmet Ali Gökaçti, *Türkiye’de Din Eğitimi ve Imam Hatipler*, (Istanbul: İletisim Yayinlari, 2005).

Although classified as the symbol of ‘backwardness’ by many, the headscarf played an important role in modernizing Muslim women by assisting them in existing as modern individuals in society while maintaining their own values.² Likewise, the subject of religious education is problematized as an anti-modernist dynamic in Turkish society.³ This tendency is certainly a historically rooted phenomenon as the social and political aspects of ‘religion’ began to be marginalized by the ruling elites, particularly after the Young Turk revolution in the early twentieth century.⁴ The underlying assumption is that secularism and modernity are not only synonymous but run contrary to anything religious. Accordingly, modernity cannot proceed forward and assume its rightful place in history unless, and until, religion acquiesces. The history of the late Ottoman period begs to differ, the relationship between religiosity and modernity is rather a more complex matter.⁵ The madrasas of Istanbul are cases in point. Drawing upon the extensive primary source materials in the Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives (*Basbakanlik Osmanli Arsivleri*) and the Archives of the Seyhülislamate (*Mesihat Arsivi*) in Istanbul, I will probe more deeply into the question of religious education and modernity during the late Ottoman period as wide array of social and cultural agencies, locus of political expression, and vehicle for social change.

REFORM, RELIGION, ULAMA AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

The history of the Ottomans in the nineteenth century can be viewed as a period of rapid and sweeping transformation. Although the nineteenth century has

² Such an approach to the modernization of Turkish society has been promoted and extensively utilized by Nilüfer Göle. For her analyses, particularly on the subjects of modernization and Muslim women in Turkey, see Nilüfer Göle, “Snapshots of Islamic Modernities,” *Daedalus*, 129/1 (2000) and Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Mahrem? Civilization and Veiling*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

³ For a typical example of this kind of problematization, see the text of the presidential veto to legislation passed in the Turkish Parliament regarding the arrangements for university entrance of imam-hatip school graduates in Çakır, *Imam-Hatip Liseleri*, pp. 257-65.

⁴ The attitudes of the Young Turk circles to the ulama and other Islamic institutions, and their reactions to them, have been thoroughly examined in the work of Amit Bein, “The Ulema, Their Institutions, and Politics in the Late Ottoman Empire (1876-1924),” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University (2006).

⁵ A similar complexity in the relationship between the religion and modernization has also been recognized for Western ‘secular’ societies by a growing literature which questions the inevitability of secularization as a by-product of modernization. For a few examples, see Grace Davie and David Martin, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Nathan O. Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

been called “the longest century of the empire,”⁶ attempts to ensure the empire’s survival did not save it from collapse in the end. This is one vantage point from which to see the problem. Another, more optimistic perspective, holds that all such efforts to save it extended the life of the empire, keeping it alive during a very turbulent century. As a consequence, two fundamentally opposing explanations for the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire have been proffered. As one historian explains: “The [Ottoman] Empire declined because it betrayed its roots, or else because it failed to betray them!”⁷ By ‘roots,’ tradition is meant. Islam, as the dominant religion, played a critical role in shaping all spheres of Ottoman life. Until the late eighteenth century, a return to its classical origins was the slogan of Ottoman rulers and the direction the empire took—a re-construction that looked back to the heyday of the past and the solution to the problem of the future. In the nineteenth century, this changed, the new slogan of Ottoman rule ‘adoption of the new,’ marking a substantial shift in understanding. And yet, despite this change in direction, religion continued to play a role as a major force for change.

Under Sultan Selim III, extensive reform movements were introduced. However, the real champion of reform was Mahmud II and the destruction of Janissary corps, establishment of a new army, and educational reform. The promulgation of the Tanzimat Rescript, or *Gülhâne Hatt-i Hümayûnu*, and declaration of Ottoman modernization in 1839 by Sultan Abdülmecid was the fruit of Mahmud II’s preparations. This was a new era in Ottoman history, known as the Tanzimat Period, which lasted until the latter part of the nineteenth century and reign of Abdülhamid II (1876). The Gülhane Rescript was followed by another major declaration in 1856, the Rescript of Reformation, or *Islahat Fermani*.

All these efforts to reform the empire—from its provincial administration and financial system to its courts and schools—were centrist in nature. Centralization was usually achieved by creating new modern institutions or by modernizing existing ones. The reform process, which lasted until the very end of the empire, influenced state institutions as well as society.⁸ Dramatic changes in the lives

⁶ İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorlugun En Uzun Yüzyili*, (Istanbul: Hil Yayin, 1987).

⁷ F. A. K. Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878-1888*, (Istanbul: Isis, 1996), p. 2.

⁸ Changes in life styles received recognition even in the literature of the early Tanzimat period. Mehmed Kamil Efendi, a professor in the Medical School wrote a book on cooking in 1858. In the

of Ottoman subjects sometimes led to revolt in provinces, especially during the early Tanzimat period.⁹ Because of these reforms, political life changed as the century progressed. As new political patterns emerged, the perception of political legitimacy began to change, too.

Reform and its social impact are related to religion in Ottoman society. Almost every Ottoman reform during the nineteenth century touched, directly or indirectly, its religious institutions in one way or another. Understanding the issues related to reforming religious institutions is important to understanding the reform dynamic of Ottoman society. What role did religious institutions and infrastructure play in reforms of the period? To answer this question, it is necessary to examine more closely the relationship between religion and reforms during this period.

The establishment of a new school system in addition to madrasas paved the way for public education after the Tanzimat. While madrasas were closely linked to the Seyhülislamate, the ultimate authority in the religious establishment of the empire, the new governmental departments and councils founded to reform the educational system and the administration of these new quasi-public schools were completely outside the jurisdiction of the Seyhülislamate.

The legal system was another target of reform during the Tanzimat period and intervened in the affairs of the religious establishment. This period saw numerous innovations to the Ottoman law-making process and the dispensing justice. For the first time, Ottomans adopted laws from a non-Muslim country, i.e., the French penal code. A new law court was introduced into the justice system where such the 'non-Islamic' laws could be adjudicated. The purview of this new court became larger and larger. The problem of staffing was partly solved by the founding a new law school, *Mekteb-i Hukuk*. In the meantime, provincial sharia judges, or *kadi*, lost much of their authority over local administrative matters. According to the Tanzimat reforms, the authority of sharia judges passed to newly established local

preface, he said that he compiled this book because there was a need for a new cuisine since the life style had changed and, therefore, the old dishes were not sufficient anymore; cited in Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çagdas Düşünce Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Ülken Yayinlari, 1998), pp. 42-43.

⁹ For a detailed account of the revolts in Nis and Vidin, see Halil Inalcik, "Tanzimat'in Uygulanmasi ve Sosyal Tepkiler," in Halil Inalcik (ed.), *Osmanli Imparatorlugu, Toplum ve Ekonomi*, (Istanbul: Eren, 1993), pp. 361-424.

councils and departments. Moreover, new state departments in both the imperial centre and outlying provinces employed the graduates of the new schools.

This revolutionary period in Ottoman history gave rise to such heroes of reform as Sultans Selim III and Mahmud II, but also high ranking bureaucrats such as Mustafa Resid, Âli, Fuad, Ahmed Cevdet, and Midhat Pasas. Remembered more for their notoriety, Namik Kemal, Ali Suavi, Midhat Efendi, Sinasi, and many others—occupying lower positions of power within the administration —laid the foundations for the creation of a cadre of independent-minded intellectuals who were both cooperative and combative depending on their mood and the issue. The creation of the Ottoman press, another of the reforms, allowed them to raise and disseminate their ideas to a wide audience, indeed expose the state to public ridicule and which often resulted in the closure of newspapers and exile.

* * *

The Turkish historiography on the nineteenth century suffers from a preponderance of ideological bias in the works of many authors, the idea being to defend one's personal political point of view at all costs. Necip Fazil Kısakürek, an Islamist activist and author, is one very good example.¹⁰ His books on Sultans Abdülhamid II and Mehmed Vahdeddin are a foregone conclusion in some respects, defending them at every turn. He makes no secret of his mandate to eulogize these sultans, and Abdülhamid II in particular.¹¹

However, such an approach produced many similar examples in almost every ideological wing of Turkey. For example, a popular book entitled *Kod Adi: "Ulu Hakan,"*¹² by Demirtas Ceyhun dealing mainly with the problem of Turkish modernization, focuses particularly on the issue of education. The author's positivist and progressivist perception of the Ottoman past influenced his examination of

¹⁰ Necip Fazil Kısakürek, *Ulu Hakan II. Abdülhamid Han*, (Istanbul: Ötüken Nesriyat, 1965); Necip Fazil Kısakürek, *Vatan Haini Degil, Büyük Vatan Dostu Sultan Vahidüddin*, (Istanbul: Büyük Dogu Yayinlari, 1975). For an interesting analysis of his thoughts see, Serif Mardin, "Projects as Methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science," in Sibel Bozdogan and Resat Kasaba (eds), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, (London: University of Washington Press, 1997), pp. 74-77.

¹¹ For a critical assessment of the Turkish historiography on Sultan Abdülhamid II, see Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Abdülhamid'i Anlamak: 19. Yüzyil Tarihçiligine Bir Bakis," in Tanil Bora, *et.al.* (eds), *Sempozyum Bildirileri: Sosyal Bilimleri Yeniden Düşünmek*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 1998).

¹² Demirtas Ceyhun, *Kod Adi: "Ulu Hakan" I(Türk Aydininin Drami: Medrese'den Imam Hatip'e)*, (Istanbul: Sis Çanin Yayıncılık, 1998).

matters and he disparages Ottoman reform in order to glorify the Republican period and modern Turkey. Furthermore, according to Ceyhun's assessment of the Young Turk movement., Mizanci Murad, a leading Young Turk figure, was in fact an ordinary person who should have been ignored. He states that Mizanci did not have a significant role in the history of Ottoman modernization even in the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) because he allegedly seems to have agreed on certain issues with Sultan Abdülhamid, such as using the Pan-Islamism more effectively as a means of Ottoman foreign policy over the Muslim world.

This approach apparently stems from Ceyhun's positivist and Kemalist leanings. For the sake of his ideological stand, Ceyhun even goes so far as to express his disappointment over Mustafa Kemal himself, the founder of the Turkish Republic. Ceyhun appears to have been dissatisfied with Kemal's policies, which he considers to have been compromised by the establishment of a faculty of divinity in Istanbul when the educational system was secularized by the Law of Unification of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) in 1924. Furthermore, in speaking about today's Turkey, he asserts that although the Ottoman vakifs were confiscated by the republican state in order to rescue the education from the hands of ulama, there now exist several endowments to take over the university education in Turkey.¹³ He contends that this must be regarded as a retardation of secularism and Kemalist ideology and also as a serious threat to the current secular regime of the country. It is clearly understood that the author subscribed to a certain world view that provides him with an ideological position, which he attempts to defend using history as a tool. This approach informs the perception about education, and specifically religious education, of a considerable number of the Turkish ruling elite.

The Ottoman past is also the subject of daily politics. Historical incidents and figures are appropriated or discredited in accordance with contemporary political agendas. Midhat Pasa, for example, is characterized as a very 'progressive and enlightened' to lend credence to a particular political agenda. There are two reasons Midhat Pasa suits such exploitation. First, he is regarded as a staunch advocate of

¹³ Ceyhun, *Kod Adi*, pp. 10-13. Although the author does not mention any particular name of a vakif university, universities such as Bilkent, Sabanci, Koç and Bilgi belong to the category he condemned.

reform in the late Ottoman history; and second, he opposed Sultan Abdülhamid II for being 'oppressive and backward.'¹⁴

Bülent Ecevit, a veteran Turkish politician and former Prime Minister of Turkey, published an article about Midhat Pasa in a book printed by his party, the Democratic Left Party, or *Demokratik Sol Parti* (DSP). It was certainly a work of party propaganda.¹⁵ In it, Ecevit characterized Midhat as being democratic and favouring village cooperatives and village-centred development, which are among the political planks of the DSP.¹⁶ He also used Midhat Pasa's example to attack political rivals, such as Turgut Özal, who was Prime Minister when the article was composed.¹⁷ Ecevit criticized Özal for claiming to devise the build-operate-transfer model as a method of public investment. Ecevit rejects this claim and argues that Midhat Pasa was the first to do so during his governorships in the provinces.¹⁸ After the military coup in 1980, Ecevit had become disenchanted with the Republican People's Party, or *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP), the foremost agent of modernization in the early decades of Turkey's existence. And so, connecting his new party (DSP) to major historical reforming figures during the late Ottoman period such as Midhat Pasa makes a certain sense. The alleged Midhat connection to the DSP gives the party historical roots and a claim to the ideals of reform and modernity. Using a historical Ottoman figure to justify his party's modernist ideals, Ecevit hoped to fashion a response to Turgut Özal, who attacked the DSP for so-called neo-Ottoman policies, particularly in the area of Turkish foreign relations.¹⁹

The political atmosphere at the time has a certain influence on historical writing and reminiscence. For example, Sina Aksin's monograph on the incident of

¹⁴ It must be remembered that Abdülhamid was defended by Necip Fazil because the Sultan was seen as the protector of the faith while those who ascribe to the Kemalist approach considered him an oppressor.

¹⁵ Bülent Ecevit, "Midhat Pasa Kimdir?" in B. Ecevit, *Midhat Pasa ve Türk Ekonomisinin Tarihsel Süreci*, (Ankara: Demokratik Sol Parti Yayinlari, 1993).

¹⁶ For the party programme and other details about DSP, see its official website <<http://www.dsp.org.tr>>.

¹⁷ Actually, Özal left the prime ministry for the presidency in 1991, two years before the book was published. But it is highly possible that the article was composed before the book published and probably during Özal's prime ministry.

¹⁸ Ecevit, "Midhat Pasa," p. 16.

¹⁹ For an analysis of the Turkish foreign policy in Özal's period, see Sedat Laçiner "Ideology and Foreign Policy," Ph.D. diss., King's College, London University (2001).

31 Mart which eventually led Abdülhamid II to leave the throne in 1909 was published in 1970 and 1972. It argues, in contrast to the prevailing wisdom at the time, that 31 Mart was not a religious uprising.²⁰ However, when the book was republished in 1994, the title was changed to read, *Seriatçi Bir Ayaklanma: 31 Mart Olayı*, that is, “A Pro-Sharia Insurgency: The Incident of 31 March.”²¹ This change becomes more meaningful when one considers the political climate of Turkey in the mid 1990s: the Islamist Welfare Party, or *Refah Partisi*, was apparently on the rise and ultimately formed a coalition government in 1997. Sina Aksin’s book endeavoured to employ ‘history’ as a tool for the defense of a political cause and thus seemingly fitted well the secularist anti-Welfare campaign at the time.²²

In addition to ideological construction in the Ottoman historical literature in Turkish, particularly regarding nineteenth century history, numerous works that appeared in the West also exhibited certain characteristics that are worthy of closer examination. Particularly noteworthy are early primary works by a handful of scholars.²³ Most such major works came into existence in the 1960s and still continue to populate the reading lists at many universities in the West as well as in Turkey.

Although new sources and vastly more sophisticated theoretical approaches have been introduced into the field of Turkish history, the influence of these early works continues unabated. Their influence is particularly noticeable in scholarly works dealing with the relationship between reform and religion at both the institutional and individual levels. Bernard Lewis begins his book, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, with a dramatic sentence: “The theme of this book is the emergence of a new Turkey from the decay of the old.”²⁴ This sentence contains a succinct indication of the author’s approach to the nineteenth century. The rest of the book is obsessed with the idea of ‘decay.’²⁵ According to Lewis, the Ottomans undertook

²⁰ Sina Aksin, *31 Mart Olayı*, (Istanbul: Sevinç Matbaası, 1970 and Sinan Matbaası, 1972).

²¹ Sina Aksin, *Seriatçi Bir Ayaklanma: 31 Mart Olayı*, (Istanbul: Imge Kitabevi, 1994).

²² For the influence of political environments on the Turkish historiography and, particularly, on that of the Hamidian period, see Çetinsaya, “Abdülhamid’i Anlamak.”

²³ Here I refer to scholars such as Bernard Lewis, Niyazi Berkes and Roderic Davison, among others.

²⁴ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. xx.

²⁵ It is interesting to note that in the Turkish translation of this book, *Modern Türkiye’nin Dogusu*, the translator prefers the Turkish word ‘yikinti’ for ‘decay,’ although ‘yikinti’ in fact means ‘ruin,’ not

reforms in the nineteenth century that originated from two opposing parties: reformers and reactionaries. The latter are all those closely affiliated with religion, while the former are said to favour true reform in the modernist sense. In Lewis' estimation, the Ottoman 'past' is not only 'old' but also prone to 'decadence.'²⁶

Another example is Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. Like Lewis, Berkes underscores the alleged duality of the period. In his view, Ottoman reform ran completely contrary to the religious faction. The dichotomy between the two is essential to his analysis of the late Ottoman period. The following is illustrative:

When, in the nineteenth century, the changes introduced were seen clearly to affect the existing order, two tendencies appeared and crystallized. One was to reject all innovations and cling to traditional institutions, which were identified with unchangeable religious values; the other was to extricate religious values from the vicissitudes of the changing world by narrowing the scope of the tradition.²⁷

Not unlike Lewis, Berkes credits foreign pressure for Ottoman reform, giving short shrift to indigenous agencies to promote change in state and society. The assumption here is simply one of traditional society lacking the necessary dynamic foresight to effect change, and so an external actor, or force, is required.

Some other scholars have proceeded to tell the story of the Ottomans as a case of reformers versus reactionaries. Avigdor Levy, for example, discusses the contribution of the Ottoman ulama to the military reforms of Sultan Mahmud II. Levy focused on a wide range of subjects, arriving at the following irrelevant conclusion: "Ultimately the participation of the ulama in the preparation and implementation of the reforms removed their inherent innovative character and gave them a rather conservative content."²⁸ Although most of the article highlights the 'innovative character' of the ulama, it ends with a somewhat damning characterization of the 'conservative content' and without further explanation. A

'decay.' It seems likely that the translator tried to omit the pejorative connotation of 'decay' since its more precise Turkish translation, '*çürüme*,' would sound harsh to the Turkish reader.

²⁶ For a broader review of Lewis' *Emergence of Turkey*, see Resat Kasaba, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities," in Resat Kasaba and Sibel Bozdoğan (eds), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

²⁷ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 508.

²⁸ Avigdor Levy, "The Ottoman Ulema and the Military Reforms of Sultan Mahmud II," *Asian and African Studies*, 7 (1971), p. 38.

similar attitude can be seen in the article “‘Ilmiyye” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), by Uriel Heyd and Ercümen Kuran:

But the modernization movement, beginning in the early 12th/18th century, caused a decrease in the influence of the Ottoman ‘*ulama*’. The suppression of the Janissary *Odjak* in 1826 deprived the ‘*Ilmiyye*’ of military support in exerting their power on State affairs and permitted Sultan Mahmud II (1808-39) to establish the Ministry of *Ewkafe* in 1834, thus ending their control over the *wakif* lands, the main source of their wealth.²⁹

A detailed and convincing explanation is sorely lacking. Typically, the Ottoman *ulama* and reform are not simply diametrical opposites, but the possibility of varying attitudes among the *ulama* is not a consideration.

David Kushner, in a relatively recent work on the same subject, admits to the complexity of the issue to some extent. For example, he recognizes the possibility that the emergence of new state departments alongside traditional ones might have created new job opportunities for *ulama* members during the reform period. He views this as paradoxical vis-à-vis the Tanzimat as it “opened new avenues to those who sought their careers as *ulema*.”³⁰ But, later, in order to support his argument that “religious opposition to the reforms was, as is well known, a continuous phenomenon throughout the period, sometimes delaying reforms and sometimes even preventing them altogether,” he adheres to the argument of Niyazi Berkes.³¹ All in all, he ignores crucial details which, in fact, make for a more nuanced discussion. For example, in one case of *ulama* opposition to reforms, the *Mecelle*, the Ottoman civil code of Ahmed Cevdet Pasa is cited.³² According to Berkes, and also Kushner, this law was codified in the realm of Islamic jurisprudence as a result of *ulama* opposition to the adoption of French civil codes.³³ Both ignore the issue of the promulgation of the *Mecelle* and the legal innovations that followed. The *Mecelle* was criticized by some Ottoman reformers and the *Seyhülislamate* as well.

²⁹ Uriel Heyd- Ercümen Kuran, “‘Ilmiyye,” *EI2*.

³⁰ David Kushner, “The Place of the Ulema in the Ottoman Empire during the Age of Reforms,” *Turcica*, 19 (1987), p. 70.

³¹ Kushner, “The Place,” p. 71 fn51.

³² On the preparation of the *Mecelle*, see Osman Öztürk, *Osmanli Hukuk Tarihinde Mecelle*, (Istanbul: Islami Ilimler Arastirma Vakfi, 1973) and Osman Kasikçi, *Islam ve Osmanli Hukukunda Mecelle*, (Istanbul: Osmanli Arastirmalari Vakfi, 1997).

³³ Berkes, *The Development*, p. 171.

Interestingly, some Tanzimat reformers were unhappy with the Mecelle, including Midhat Pasa, a madrasa graduate. One reason for the Seyhülislamate's opposition was its exclusion from the law-making process because the purview of the codification committee was set up in the Grand Vizierate office under the directorate of Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, a civil bureaucrat of ulama origin.³⁴ Suffice it to say that the issue went far beyond a simple fight between reformers and reactionaries, to which I will return shortly.

Such writing, most of it from the 1950s and 60s when modernization was in full swing can be seen as extensions of the Orientalist approach to Middle Eastern history that fail to consider the complex nature of Ottoman society. This failure is largely theoretical in nature, the idea being that Ottoman society had stagnated and due to external pressures effected change, foreign intervention essential to transformation.³⁵

The modernization paradigm still informs such works, even those dealing with the history of the Ottoman ulama and madrasa schools of late.³⁶ However, a growing body of scholarship is attempting to discard the Orientalist assumptions inherent to the modernization paradigm in search of a new Ottoman history that is full of 'ambiguities' and rather less certain of the so-called 'certainties.' A greater appreciation for the positive role that certain indigenous factors played in late Ottoman history and reform continues to make gains.

* * *

In conjunction with the perspectives presented by new trends in the social sciences, some recent works opened a broader understanding of the Ottoman past. In

³⁴ Christoph K. Neumann, "Tanzimat Bağlamında Ahmed Cevdet Pasa'nın Siyasî Düşünceleri," in Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), *Cumhuriyet'e Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Mesrutiyet'in Birikimi*, (Istanbul: İletisim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 83-84.

³⁵ Rifa'at Ali Abou el-Haj argues that the Ottoman reform movement in the nineteenth century gained its momentum from the changes that had already begun to occur in the eighteenth century. For an in-depth discussion on this subject, see his book, *Formation of the Modern State the Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1991).

³⁶ Bernard Lewis produced another work recently, and again triggered heated debates among the Middle East specialists regarding the modernization of the region; Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2002). In its later editions, its title slightly changed: *What Went Wrong?: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*. For a review of this book, see Juan R.I. Cole, "Review of Bernard Lewis's *What Went Wrong: Western Impact and Middle East Response*," *Global Dialogue*, 4/4 (2002).

this vein, the post-Tanzimat period, and particularly the Hamidian period, drew a considerable amount of attention from scholars in the field of Turkish history. Such new concepts to the Ottomans as civil society, public opinion, the public sphere, legitimacy, the existence of peripheral groups, and the role of education are now being applied and explored, broadening the scope of historical writings on the late Ottoman period.

In contrast to Eurocentric essentialist analyses, the findings of this recent body of literature on late Ottoman history demonstrate that modernization was multifaceted, evoking different reactions across the board. Although usually labelled as “Islamic,” or traditional, such religious labels should not be taken to mean out-and-out rejection of the reform process. In many societies, traditional beliefs and institutions serve as vehicles for social change, paving the way for the formation of a modern state.

Several works on nineteenth century Ottoman history, particularly on the Hamidian period, have greatly contributed to our understanding of the period—abandoning the Orientalistic view of the past. From these works, it is clear that traditional forms and structures did not necessarily impede the modernization process. Cengiz Kirli, for example, has shown that coffeehouses, particularly in Istanbul, developed into forums for an emerging Ottoman public opinion in the early and mid-nineteenth century. Coffeehouses were, in fact, traditional places where ordinary people came together to talk and exchange ideas, catch up on the latest news, and gossip. Kirli’s extensive examination of espionage reports suggests that such public discourse covered a wide range of political issues—such as Mehmed Ali Pasa, the revolt in the Balkans, and the independence of Greece. He does put this on par with the notion of public opinion in the sense that the term developed in European societies. However, he clearly illustrates how the state explored an Ottoman public opinion, how it took seriously what the Ottoman public thought about politics, the sultan and many other topics, and how it dealt with Ottoman coffeehouse dialectic preserved in espionage reports from the period.³⁷

³⁷ Kirli also authored some other works on this subject. Cengiz Kirli, “Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire,” in Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (eds), *Public Islam and the Common Good*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Cengiz Kirli, “Kahvehaneler ve Hafiyeler: 19. Yüzyıl Ortalarında Osmanlı’da Sosyal Kontrol,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 (2000); Cengiz

In addition, studying the philanthropic activities of Sultan Abdülhamid, Nadir Özbek describes how traditional structures became a modernizing force and that “the monarchical forms of politics should not be seen simply as the retardation of a rational, bureaucratic development, but the very forms of modern state formation in the Ottoman context.”³⁸ Abdülhamid made great efforts to establish modern welfare institutions and encouraged the involvement of the public in voluntary welfare activities, moreover, “as long as those activities remained within the domain of the regime’s hegemonic political discourse.” In fact, he was inclined to ‘exploit’ traditional social conventions like gift-giving (*atiyye-i seniyye*), and circumcision ceremonies in order to create a more positive image of the sultan in the minds of the needy—immigrants, children, and madrasa students. The sultan made use of traditional conventions and institutions in tandem with the creation of fully modern institutions like the Imperial Hospital for Children. Comparing the Ottoman experience to the monarchical societies of Germany and Japan at the time, Özbek argues that Abdülhamid’s modernizing efforts were intended to create “an image of the sultan as a caring monarch and hence legitimize his regime.”³⁹

In his thought-provoking book dealing with such issues as legitimacy, ideology, and symbols of power in the late Ottoman period, Selim Deringil explores the policies and ideologies employed by the Hamidian rule to overcome ‘the legitimacy crisis’, which was a common problem for empires in the nineteenth century as a result of the rise of the modern-nation state.⁴⁰ Deringil demonstrates convincingly that Ottoman rulers utilized and reshaped the religious sphere in hopes of generating the legitimate and effective solutions that an empire in the throes of modernizing desperately needed. For instance, the first Ottoman-Islamic civil code, or *Mecelle*, facilitated the dispensation of justice in the centralized empire. It was the

Kirli, "The Struggle Over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman, Istanbul, 1780-1845," Ph.D. diss., Binghamton University (2001).

³⁸ Nadir Özbek, “The Politics of Welfare: Philanthropy, Voluntarism and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1918,” Ph.D. diss., Binghamton University, (2001), p. 10.

³⁹ On this subject, also see Nadir Özbek, "Philanthropic Activity, Ottoman Patriotism and the Hamidian Regime, 1876-1909," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37/1 (2005); Nadir Özbek, “Imperial Gifts and Sultanic Legitimation During the Reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, 1876-1909,” in Mine Ener, Amy Singer and Michael Bonner (eds), *Poverty and Charity in the Middle Eastern Contexts*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003).

⁴⁰ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997).

first attempt to codify Islamic law. Through the compilation of the Mecelle, Islamic law remained in force but via a standardized version of *fikih* (Islamic jurisprudence) which was something completely new in Islamic legal history. This was a remarkable development in the modernization of the empire and dramatic transformation of Islamic law at the same time. Eventually written in Turkish, the tenets of Islamic law were reproduced in a language other than Arabic for the first time —accessible to more and more of the common people— which, in turn, “everyone” was reminded about their responsibility to honour and obey the law.

As Brinkley Messick points out, on the one hand, the compilation of the Mecelle became the basis for the formation of the modern notion of citizenship. On the other hand, it departed from traditional principles of Islamic jurisprudence, in part, because it was drafted by a commission and promulgated by the sultan. It restricted the authority of the sharia judge to a centrist, fixed legal text, adding the sultan into the hierarchy of law-making as the supreme authority of Islamic jurisprudence.⁴¹ The emergence of the Mecelle, discussions surrounding it, and the consequences, illustrate the symbiotic nature of religion and the state during the late Ottoman period, giving impetus to much interaction between reform and religion.

Another important aspect of Ottoman reform at this time was the expansion of public education as the empire became increasingly more centralized. The need for a better educated workforce and modern bureaucracy gave impetus to a network of new and ostensibly modern schools and, as such, a remarkable deviation from the past. In addition to training the manpower the empire needed, these modern schools were assigned the task of indoctrinating children. Although depicted as secular in nature, the new schools became places where loyalty and obedience to the caliph sultan were taught. This was something new and a sultan-led and hard-fought campaign to modernize education within the bounds of traditional allegiances and power relationships.

Aksin Somel’s work is the most comprehensive and detailed exploration of Ottoman public education throughout the nineteenth century.⁴² The determination of

⁴¹ Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 56-57.

⁴² Selçuk Aksin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

the Ottomans to reform education, their limits, successes, and failures are undeniable. According to Somel, Ottoman reformers took their cue from Islamic principles in the formation of the curriculum of the new schools. In the new centralized Ottoman state, these new schools were vehicles of social integration that targeted such minorities as Alevis, Kurds, Arabs and Albanians.⁴³

Related to this, Benjamin Fortna discusses how Hamidian schooling campaign militated against the threat of “proselytizing foreign missionaries, the highly motivated nationalist educators of neighbouring states, and the schools of the indigenous minorities.”⁴⁴ Drawing on school books, educational materials, the architecture of school buildings, and disciplinary cases, Fortna contends that Hamidian schools were places where modern/Western styles and Ottoman/Islamic content worked hand in hand. The teaching of morality in new schools, for example, relied on basic Islamic tenets, but refitted to the modern “realities” of the time. These textbooks differed greatly in style and emphasis from the traditional literature on the subject.⁴⁵ Above all, it is important to note that while the new Ottoman schools constituted a new path of education separate from madrasa, madrasa teachers and other ulama members served in these schools as teachers, a fact alone forcing us to rethink the interchange between modernity and tradition during this crucial period.⁴⁶

⁴³ The use of education to accomplish integration of peripheral communities in the late Ottoman period has been examined in several other studies. See Corinne Lee Blake, “Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats: Syrian Graduates of the Mülkiye Mektebi, 1890-1920,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University (1991); Isa Blumi, “Teaching Loyalty in the Late Ottoman Balkans: Educational Reform in the Vilayets of Manastir and Yanya, 1878-1912,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 21/1-2 (2001).

⁴⁴ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 10-11.

⁴⁵ Benjamin C. Fortna, “Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman ‘Secular’ Schools,” *IJMES*, 32 (2000).

⁴⁶ Randi Deguilhem’s studies on the Ottoman new style schools in Syrian province provide interesting examples concerning the interrelation between the new style schools and the local ulama and madrasas in the late Ottoman period; Randi Deguilhem, “State Civil Education in Late Ottoman Damascus: A Unifying or a Separating Force?” in Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler (eds), *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation, Bilad Al-Sham from the 18th to the 20th Century*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998); Randi Deguilhem, “A Revolution in Learning? The Islamic Contribution to the Ottoman State Schools: Examples from Syrian Provinces,” *International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World Istanbul, 12-15 April 1999: Proceedings*, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2001). For an interesting case in which a teacher with the background of madrasa and a new style school education held sessions with students of *Maktab ‘Anbar*, a new style school in Damascus, to discuss foreign literary works by Hugo, Balzac and Goethe, see Deguilhem, “State Civil,” p. 248.

MADRASA TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN ISTANBUL IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

The Ottomans developed a complex system of education that had strong links to the religious domain. The Ottoman religious profession, or *ilmiye*, was located at a crucial intersection of state and society. Madrasas were institutions that Ottoman subjects had to attend in order to acquire the necessary qualifications to enter the *ulama*; at the same time, they were places where religious knowledge, as well as ideology, was produced.⁴⁷ Ottoman madrasas underwent a major systemization during the reign of Mehmed II when the empire endured the sultan's centralization policies. This was a major step towards the formation of an official hierarchy of Ottoman madrasas and ranks of *ulama*. With the changes that took place at the time of Süleyman the Magnificent, the madrasa system developed its core structure, around which later developments in the system took place.⁴⁸

Educational institutions with a long tradition, madrasas were major components of Ottoman teaching and learning in the nineteenth century. The madrasa teachers, or *müderris* and *dersiam*, and their students, or *talebe-i ulum*, were still of considerable importance. Here we will explore institutional and pedagogic aspects of the madrasas in Istanbul and also social and cultural characteristics of madrasa teachers and students during the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods.

The madrasas were also important due to the central position of the *ulama* in the Ottoman system, as it was the case in almost all Muslim societies. As the place where the *ulama* were educated, madrasas were closely linked to the *ulama* profession. Although the *ulama* has enjoyed the considerable attention of modern scholarship, the madrasas tend to be neglected and viewed as a declining institution during the age of reform despite being one of the fundamental institutions of learning in Ottoman society. Indeed, madrasas offer a useful perspective on the interconnectedness of religion and reform in the nineteenth century. For this reason, I will focus on the Istanbul madrasas on the outset of the Tanzimat in 1839 and the

⁴⁷ For an assessment of the question of the reproduction of religious ideology in the classical period, see Ahmet Yasar Ocak, "XV-XVI. Yüzyillarda Osmanli Resmi Dini Ideolojisi ve Buna Muhalefet Problemi," *Islam Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 4/3 (1990).

⁴⁸ The early development of the madrasa system in the Ottoman Empire has been extensively dealt with in the following works; Cahit Baltaci, *XV-XVI. Asirlarda Osmanli Medreseleri: Teskilat, Tarih*, (Istanbul: Irfan Matbaasi, 1976); Mustafa Bilge, *Ilk Osmanli Medreseleri*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1984).

Young Turk revolution of 1908. References to the pre-Tanzimat period and Young Turk era will also be made from time to time to demonstrate the continuity and change in particular cases.

The Idea of Decline/Decadence of Ottoman Madrasas: From Disputes in the Young Turk Period to Republican Settings of History

The history of Ottoman madrasas in the nineteenth century is touched upon only very briefly in the existing literature. There are two prevailing scholarly attitudes. The first tends to ignore most of the century, particularly following Sultan Selim III and proclamation of the Tanzimat and up to the rise of the Young Turks. This is due to an assumption that the madrasas remained unchanged and untouched during this time. The second prefers to remain silent. There are many salient examples in the literature of both of these. For example, Ismail H. Uzunçarsili, an eminent scholar of Ottoman history and author of the only monograph that deals with the entire history of the ulama and madrasa system, discusses madrasa teachers in 1592 and then simply jumps to 1914, arguing that “this situation has continued unchanged until the promulgation of the Second Constitution.”⁴⁹ Apart from details about madrasa reforms during the Young Turk era, Uzunçarsili’s only other reference to the madrasas is the late eighteenth-century imperial decree of Sultan Selim III to Seyhülislam to be just and objective when selecting madrasa teachers.⁵⁰ Likewise, in another major work on the history of the madrasas, Sehabettin Tekindag claims that madrasas resisted change during the Tanzimat period,⁵¹ ignoring the Hamidian period altogether.

In addition to an approach that regards the nineteenth century as a historical stop-gap vis-à-vis the madrasas, scholarly works from the early Republican period reflect the modernist biases of the new Republican regime. This early literature also had an affect on the understanding of later works on the Ottoman madrasas. The secularizing reforms of Republican rule apparently reshaped the mind of authors in

⁴⁹ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye*, p.263. In this work, Uzunçarsili gives many details about the periods after 1914 and before Sultan Selim III, and ignores a long period in the nineteenth century as if madrasas remained unchanged. For another recent example of this “gap” treatment, see Yasar Sarikaya, *Medreseler ve Modernleşme* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1997).

⁵⁰ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye*, p.260.

⁵¹ Sehabettin Tekindag, “Medrese Dönemi,” in Fikret Saatçioğlu, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yilinda Istanbul Üniversitesi*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1973), p. 32.

their examination of the madrasas. The remarkable shift in their point of view from one period to another is easily discerned when one consults the various publications over time.

A prime example of this is the work of Osman Nuri Ergin, two of whose verbose monographs illustrate Republican view and circular reasoning vis-à-vis Ottoman madrasas. But, before dealing with his change of heart, it must be noted that Osman Nuri studied in a madrasa in Istanbul for a couple of years, attending Sufi circles and was known for his historical research as an official in the Municipality of Istanbul.⁵² He wrote *Mecelle-i Umûr-i Belediyye*, a history of municipal services, in 1922 when the radical secularizing agenda of the new regime had yet to be set in motion. In this instance, he defended madrasa education and religious education as exceptionally important.⁵³ Given his religious education and Sufi leanings, this makes sense. Ergin's multi-volume history of Turkish-Ottoman education, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi* (Educational History of Turkey), which he completed in 1943 is decidedly, indeed dramatically anti-madrasa. Emphasizing the ideological priorities of the new era, he claimed that madrasas had nothing to contribute to the country and thus to Turkishness, or *Türklük*, the central plank in the platform of the new regime.⁵⁴ Furthermore, in the chapter devoted to educational innovations during the early Republican period, he applauded the secularizing policies of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which included his closure of madrasas in 1924.⁵⁵

Such dramatic reversals in thinking and scholarship were not unique to Ergin. A host of Turkish intellectuals revised their thinking to accord with the new political realities of the early Republican period, taking a more critical stance after the closure of madrasas in 1924. In 1945 Fuad Köprülü presumed that madrasas ought to be abandoned because revitalization was not possible or practical.⁵⁶ However in 1913 he had believed the madrasas could be reformed and brought up to the standard of the

⁵² Ahmet Güner Sayar, "Ergin, Osman Nuri," *DIA*.

⁵³ Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i Umûr-i Belediyye*, (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1338), vol. 1, pp. 284-85.

⁵⁴ Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Eser Yayinlari, 1977), vols. 1-2, p.108.

⁵⁵ Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, vol. 5, p. 1635.

⁵⁶ Fuad Köprülü, "Demokrasi Tarihimize Umumi Bir Bakis," *Vatan*, 4 November 1945, quoted in Abdülkerim Asilsoy, "Türk Modernlesmesi Öncülerinden Fuad Köprülü: Hayati, Eserleri ve Fikirleri," Ph.D. Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi (2008), p. 179.

new schools.⁵⁷ Likewise, the attitude of M. Semseddin Günaltay, eminent historian and Prime Minister in the 1940s, changed with the political winds. In his famous *Zulmetten Nura*, published in 1913, he underscored the importance of the madrasas and thus the benefits of reforming them.⁵⁸ By the time of the book's third edition in 1925, the message changed to suit the time: closure was unavoidable because of the miserable and ruinous condition of the madrasas.⁵⁹

Republican rule also directly intervened in the realm of literary writing to propagate its radical reforms. For example, Resat Nuri Güntekin wrote a novel, entitled *Yesil Gece*, at the request of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1928 with the understanding that it would support the decision to close the madrasas in 1924.⁶⁰ The main character in the novel was a new school teacher, or *muallim*, named Sahin, who had interrupted his madrasa education in Istanbul during the Second Constitutional Era when he discovered it was backward and opposed to the Enlightenment and thus rational thought. The plot revolved around Sahin's fight with madrasa authorities as he made his rounds from the late Ottoman to early Republican periods.⁶¹ A positivist slant on religion in fictional social context, the novel represents the ideological settings of Republican rule in cultural and educational fields, but also provides clues to the origins of historical studies on the madrasa came at the time.

Many of these works in which the ulama and madrasa are said to decline supported this by referring to the histories of the decline of the Ottoman empire from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ottoman intellectuals like Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli Efendi (d. 1600),⁶² Koçi Bey (d. c.1648)⁶³ and Katip Çelebi (d. 1656)⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Fuad Köprülü, "Muhasebe-i İctimaiye: Mekteb-Medrese," *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 12 Mart 1329 [15 March 1913]. I am grateful to Abdülkerim Asilsoy for informing me about this material.

⁵⁸ M. Semseddin Günaltay, *Zulmetten Nura*, First ed., (1331 [1913]), p. 189.

⁵⁹ M. Semseddin Günaltay, *Zulmetten Nura*, Third ed., (1341 [1925]), p. 150.

⁶⁰ Birol Emil, *Resat Nuri Güntekin'in Romanlarında Sahislar Dünyası*, (Istanbul: İÜ Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1984), p. 213.

⁶¹ Resat Nuri Güntekin, *Yesil Gece*, (Istanbul: Suhulet Kütüphanesi, 1928).

⁶² Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1986); Mustafa Isen, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali*, (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1988); Andreas Tietze (ed.), *Mustafa Ali's Counsel for Sultans of 1581 -Nasihati's-Selatin*, (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979).

⁶³ For his life and career, see Colin Imber, "Koci Beg," *EI2*; M.Çağatay Uluçay, "Koçi Beg," *IA* and Rhoads Murphey, "The Veliyüddin Telhis: Notes on The Sources and Interrelations between Koçi Bey and Contemporary Advice to Kings," *Belleten*, 43 (1979).

are among those who first pronounced a broad decline in the empire, including the ulama and madrasa. Mainly, they complained about the privileges granted the children of high ulama. Mustafa Âli, for instance, calls attention to the insufficient performance of mudarrises in the late sixteenth century and low standards in teaching and learning.⁶⁵ In his view, standards were so low because most of the posts were given to the sons of high ulama:

They [the sons of the high ulama] do not need to do anything in the field of learning. They become *mülazim*, or candidates, for a teaching post without any formal madrasa education even when they are a tiny baby, and they are given the opportunity to have a post for teaching when they are able to speak a few words and proceed to a great judgeship when they reach adolescence.⁶⁶

Koçi Bey is much sharper in his criticism and gives an exact date for the decline of the madrasas. He argues that “until 1003 [1594/95] the teaching assistants of the *Sahn* Madrasas had been as prestigious as the madrasa teachers today.”⁶⁷ As a part of the Ottoman genre of advice literature, both authors mentioned here are clearly critical of the times in which they lived.

This literature had a great influence on twentieth-century Ottoman historiography.⁶⁸ Yet, recent scholarship cautions against taking it without critical examination.⁶⁹ We also know that this literature was not immune to the political environment in which it existed. Some examples of “decline” literature were compiled to suit political agendas and attack rivals.⁷⁰ Categorization of Ottoman

⁶⁴ Most detailed account of his life and writings can be found in these works; Orhan Saik Gökyay, *Katip Çelebi: Yasami, Kisiligi ve Yapitlarindan Seçmeler*, (Ankara : Türkiye İis Bankasi Yayinlari, 1982) and *Katip Çelebi: Hayati ve Eserleri Hakkinda Incelemeler*, 2nd ed., (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1985).

⁶⁵ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanli Devletinin Ilmiye*, 69-70.

⁶⁶ “Tarik-i tahsilde kendülerine hareket lazim olmayip yani hiçbir medresede sira tahsili görmeden besikte iken mülazim, söz söylemeye kudreti olduğu zaman müderrislik almaga yol açilir ve bulug yasina gelince mollaliga (büyük kadiliga) dogru yol alır,” cited in Uzunçarsili, *Osmanli Devletinin Ilmiye*, p.70.

⁶⁷ [Koçi Bey], *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, Ali Kemal Aksüt (ed.), (Istanbul: Vakit Gazete, Matbaa, Kütüphane) p.10.

⁶⁸ For further elaboration on this literature, see Bernard Lewis, “Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline”, *Islamic Studies*, 1/1 (1962). For an excellent survey and criticism of the decline theory, see Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, (1997-98), 4.

⁶⁹ Douglas Howard, “The Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of ‘Decline’ of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Journal of Asian Societies*, 22 (1988).

⁷⁰ Rifa’at ‘Ali Abou-el-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State, the Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 23-26.

history (i.e., with reference to “rise” and “decline”) is more complex than the decline literature suggests.⁷¹ Ottoman subjects in earlier periods were not necessarily better off. For example, Ottoman probate records from the eighteenth century suggest that living conditions were better than that of their progenitors living during the so-called “golden age” of Süleyman.⁷²

Reforming the Madrasa

As in the other periods of Ottoman history, scholarly works on the nineteenth century Ottoman madrasas seem to have been affected to a great extent by notions embedded in the decline literature. In addition to the political constraints, this is partly due to the lack of direct investigation of the Ottoman madrasas in the period and also due to the problematic—but prevailing—tendency that assumes a parallel destiny between the collapse of the empire and the madrasas: madrasas were neglected after the Tanzimat and nothing was done to reform them until 1914. But, then, it was too late to do anything and both madrasas and the empire collapsed. This idea has been repeated in many works without showing comprehensive and convincing evidence.⁷³

It must be noted here that this view implicitly refers to the assumption of a categorical conflict between the reforms and the madrasa as a traditional/religious institution: if the reformers had attempted to reform the madrasa, they would inexorably have confronted the ulama.⁷⁴ Although such a view seems logical at first glance, my contention is the opposite: the Ottoman reformers did intervene in the madrasa system and consequently the madrasas, particularly in Istanbul, underwent certain institutional reforms in parallel with other state institutions. In contrast to rampant tendencies in the existing literature, this dissertation attempts to underscore

⁷¹ For a further discussion on the categorization of the Ottoman history, see Rhoads Murphey, “Mustafa Âli and the Politics of Cultural Despair”, *IJMES*, 21 (1989).

⁷² Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” p. 50.

⁷³ Hüseyin Atay, “Medreselerin Gerilemesi,” *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, (1981), p. 24; Ersoy Tasdemirci, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Medreselerin Bozulmaları, Medreseleri İslah Etme Tesebbüsleri ve Kapatılmaları,” *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, (1990), p. 4; Ömer Özyılmaz, “Medreselerin Bozulma Sebepleri ve Bunların İslahi Yönünde Yapılan Çalışmalara Kısa Bir Bakış,” *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 5/5 (1993), to name but a few.

⁷⁴ For such a claim, see Mehmet Ipsirli, “Osmanlı Uleması,” in Güler Eren (ed.), *Osmanlı: Bilim*, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999), v.8, p. 78.

the complexity and multidimensional aspects of Ottoman madrasas in the nineteenth century, avoiding a tendency to vilify or vindicate them.

This dissertation will show that the Tanzimat and succeeding reforms affected madrasa education in Istanbul in many respects, although Ottoman rulers had not intervened in the traditional structure of madrasa education as radically as they did in the Second Constitutional period when madrasas were restructured administratively and pedagogically in accordance to modern concepts under the Young Turk rule.⁷⁵ A major change took place in the recruitment method of madrasa teachers and a new payment system was introduced to the madrasa teaching profession. The role of the religious endowment system in Islamic teaching and learning tended to disappear in Istanbul. Along with these, the Seyhülislamate Office dominated the administration of Istanbul madrasas. New bureaucratic units within the Seyhülislamate emerged after the Tanzimat in relation to madrasas and this trend increased during the Hamidian period.

The bureaucratization of the Seyhülislamate had two main concerns: Firstly, official authorities continuously demanded a precise register of existing madrasa students in Istanbul. Frequent failures led to new attempts at reorganization and registration reform by the authorities. Secondly, discipline and surveillance of students was stepped up. Social, cultural and political changes made certain effects on the mode of disciplinary perceptions by authorities. Keeping a close watch on student behaviour, not only within educational venues but also in their public lives, became an important part of the official objectives. Managing madrasa matters, including the limitation of student numbers in Istanbul, sometimes caused tension between the Seyhülislamate and state departments. In such cases, the Seyhülislamate usually defended its autonomous jurisdiction over Islamic teaching and learning, especially during the Hamidian period.

In spite of significant institutional innovations introduced after the Tanzimat, pedagogical modifications did not receive formal recognition in Ottoman madrasas until the Second Constitutional era.⁷⁶ The curriculum of madrasa education in Istanbul in the nineteenth century was a continuation of a long tradition going back

⁷⁵ Zeki Salih Zengin, *II. Mesrutiyette Medreseler ve Din Eğitimi*, (Ankara: Akçag Yayinlari, 2002), pp. 90-106.

⁷⁶ Zengin, *II. Mesrutiyette*, pp. 107-133.

for centuries. The traditional curricular setting remained almost entirely unchanged with only minor rearrangements of scheduling and the length of courses. On the other hand, the conservative nature of the madrasa curriculum prompted many criticisms and challenges from Ottoman society, as well as from inside the madrasa institution itself.

As the changes in the madrasa system will be dealt with in the following chapters, I will demonstrate the preoccupation of the Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals with madrasa education vis-à-vis demands to reform the Ottoman madrasas during the century. For example, one of the Tanzimat Grand Viziers, Mehmed Emin Pasa, offered to reform the madrasas pedagogically and administratively as early as 1854.⁷⁷ Some voices even called for radical reforms in 1878 and thus to convert all madrasas into *rüsdîyes* and *idadîs*, the new-style schools of the Tanzimat.⁷⁸ Reform demands for reform came not only from those at the centre but also from those in the provinces. Ottoman intellectuals also kept madrasa reform alive, particularly during the Tanzimat period. Namik Kemal and Ali Suavi, for example, were critical of the current state of the madrasas and frequently wrote about the issue in their articles for the press.⁷⁹ But neither of them played a decisive role in the “rehabilitation” of the formal structure of madrasa teaching and learning during the Tanzimat and Hamidian eras. The addition of modern subjects into the madrasa curriculum, an idea proposed by many critics, was never realized.

Despite the conservatism of the madrasa, two developments in the nineteenth century demonstrate its capacity for change. Firstly, modern subjects were studied by madrasa students as a matter of personal interest and there were always madrasa teachers in Istanbul who concentrated on different modern subjects and taught them to madrasa students. Apart from madrasa teachers, teachers in new style schools like the Imperial Engineering College, or *mühendishane-i hümayûn*, were also available to madrasa students. Secondly, Istanbul offered its madrasa students a wider range of

⁷⁷ For the report of the Grand Vizier Mehmed Emin Pasa, see Hayreddin, *Vesâik-i Tarihiye ve Siyasiye Tettebbuatı*, (Istanbul: Ahmed İhsan ve Sürekâsi, 1326 [1908]), v.2, p. 41.

⁷⁸ Abdül Efendi, a member of the First Ottoman Parliament from Yanya, made this radical offer in 1878; Hakki Tarık Us (ed.), *Meclis-i Meb'ûsân*, (Istanbul: Vakit Gazete Matbaası, 1954), v.2, p. 145.

⁷⁹ For the writings of Namik Kemal, see Nergiz Yılmaz Aydogdu and İsmail Kara (eds), *Namik Kemal: Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri, Bütün Makaleleri*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2005). For Ali Suavi, see Hüseyin Çelik, *Ali Suavî ve Dönemi*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994) and İsmail Doğan, *Tanzimatın İki Ucu: Münif Pasa ve Ali Suavi*, (Istanbul: İz Yayınları, 1991).

extra-curricular educational opportunities should they be so inclined. New educational institutions in the capital, offering everything from secular law to medicine, were of interest to madrasa students. Grounding in religious as well as new-style education was typical of many madrasa students who often worked for modern institutions due to having obtained qualifications from the new schools.

Personal interest in modern subjects expanded the borders of madrasa learning although such subjects were never officially admitted into the religious curriculum. Importantly, this can be seen as an informal/non-institutional endeavour and how the madrasa adapted itself to the new intellectual and cultural circumstances that emerged during the reform period. That said, more substantial consequences of these trends among the madrasas are not observable until the Second Constitutional era.

Madrasas in the Hamidian Context

Sultan Abdülhamid II developed a unique relationship with the madrasa, particularly in Istanbul. He favoured new style schools over the madrasas, becoming the object of criticism of madrasa apologists. Further, his madrasa policy has been considered as “benign neglect” by some modern historians.⁸⁰ Whereas this is true of the lack of structural reform of the madrasas during the Second Constitutional period, Abdülhamid II’s policies do not appear to have been hostile to the madrasa, but a factor of pragmatic consideration. He was preoccupied with founding a school of religious education that resembled the new schools vis-à-vis a regulation for a college of religious subjects, or *ulûm-u diniyye mektebi*, in 1884.⁸¹ Such a college did not exist at the time this draft was prepared. But, at the suggestion of Abdülhamid, the Ottoman University, *Darülfunun*, would include a branch for religious subjects, or *Ulûm-i diniye subesi*, in 1900.⁸² Despite support for religious education at this time, substantial reform of the madrasas did not ensue.

On the other hand, the madrasa was actively considered by Abdülhamid as an effective means of political and cultural integration. He always used numerous

⁸⁰ Amit Bein, “Politics, Military Conscription, and Religious Education in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *IJMES*, 38 (2006).

⁸¹ YEE 2/9, 2 Rebiulevvel 1300 [20 December 1884].

⁸² Ekmelettin Ihsanoglu, “Darülfunun,” *DIA*.

occasions to demonstrate his benevolence for madrasa teachers and their students, such munificence being often publicized in the press. Such benevolence was also accompanied by a hint of caution. Due to security concerns, Abdülhamid attempted to curb the flow of new madrasa students to Istanbul and restricted the number of newcomers in any given year. Although he failed to put a restriction on newcomers, he opened new madrasas or renovated existing ones in provincial areas so that students could study in their hometowns. At the same time, he brought nearly a dozen Shia youngsters from Iraq to educate them in the Sunni faith, insisting that this be carried out at Istanbul madrasas and nowhere else. As I will attempt to show in the chapters that follow, although Hamidan rule did not undertake a pedagogical and structural reform as such, madrasas at this time served the political interests of the sultan, functioning as a tool of religious and political propaganda to infuse a positive sultanic image into the Ottoman society and to correct the faith of non-Sunni subjects.

Social and Cultural Aspects

One of the major outcomes of Ottoman reform in the nineteenth century was the altered composition of the Ottoman imperial centre. Combating internal and external menaces to the empire by redefining the imperial centre required innovative methods and radical policies. Successes and failures dramatically affected the relationship between the state and its citizenry. Modern schools meant education for everyone, a radical proposal at the time, creating greater opportunities for upward mobility than every before.⁸³

As a result of the reforms in education as well as in other fields, the imperial centre gained new features while losing some old ones. Greater educational opportunities for more and more led to the creation of a diverse Ottoman literati and ruling elite. Such opportunities through education can be seen in the composition of the Young Turks' revolutionary oppositional organization, the Committee of Union and Progress in the beginning of the twentieth century. Many of its leading figures came from humble social and economic backgrounds and from various parts of the

⁸³ Joseph S. Szyliowicz, "The Ottoman Educational Legacy: Myth or Reality?" in Leon Carl Brown (ed.), *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 286-90.

empire.⁸⁴ Even Arabs became a part of the new imperial centre as a consequence and through such educational channels.⁸⁵

By the late nineteenth century, the madrasas in Istanbul played a similar role, educating people of humble social and economic background from the provinces in the main. Teaching posts in Istanbul madrasas became a means of social mobility and promotion for the sons of families, particularly those having ulama fathers, from humble social and economic backgrounds in the provinces. A career in the capital put such nouveau madrasa teachers and their families in contact with the scions of late Ottoman educational reform. It is possible to identify the offspring of Istanbul mudarrises working in the professions vis-à-vis the reformed institutions created in the late Ottoman and Republican eras. One of the most noticeable features of the madrasa teaching profession was the abundance of Turkish-speaking people, with native Arabic-speakers conspicuously absent in this period.

Importantly, Sufi lodges, or *tekkes*, were places where the madrasas and Sufi learning overlapped. This encounter with Persian, the language of Sufism, linked the madrasas to Ottoman bureaucracy since Persian was the lingua franca and thus means of cultural expression—particularly through poetry—of Ottoman high culture and the literati. To be sure, mudarrises tended to be more conservative in outlook. Their knowledge of French and familiarity with the new school education was less than satisfactory in many cases. However, this changed during the Hamidian period, with knowledge of French and graduation with new school diplomas increasing among such madrasa teachers as education became more accessible to provincial Ottoman subjects.

For madrasa students *per se*, the reforms that began under Mahmud II and continued up until the Second Constitutional period made them the subject of intense state surveillance, resulting from an increase in state institutions such as the police department and, of course, an expanding Seyhülislamate bureaucracy. Discipline, registration, and funding issues linked the state and madrasa students.

⁸⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 166-81.

⁸⁵ Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria before 1914: A Reassessment," in Rashid Khalidi, *et.al.* (eds), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

Following the Tanzimat, petty offences by groups of madrasa students declined significantly, such 'criminal' behaviour becoming more individual and political. In response to the spread of new social and cultural forms under the influence of European contacts, state authorities intervened more and more in the everyday life of students. Another reason for the mounting state surveillance was the emergence of oppositional political parties which appealed to students in the main.

Funding sources of madrasa students mostly remained in their traditional forms in the period. They had to travel to provincial areas to perform some religious duties and to collect money, food and clothes in return. Hamidian funding of students on occasions like holy nights and sacred months, a practice going back to former sultans, was another common source of funding for madrasa students.

Another social aspect of the late Ottoman period that greatly affected madrasas in Istanbul was the problem of accommodation of immigrants, fire, and war victims in the Ottoman capital. Abundance of needy people in this sense forced official authorities to consider madrasa infrastructure as an immediate solution to the problem. This was a factor in the increasingly difficult circumstances that madrasa students faced as they had to share the city's limited resources with so many other people in urgent need. This often caused friction between the users of public victual houses, or *imaret*, where free meals were served, and madrasa students who normally ate there. Madrasa buildings became another battlefield of public charity and where students and the poor fought over a limited number of beds. For this reason, the Seyhülislamate was determined to keep madrasa buildings under its authority, religious institutions taking on the role of social service provider.

Examining the Istanbul madrasas, I attempt to demonstrate that madrasas in Istanbul had a complex history in contrast to the perspectives presented by the existing historiography. As will be seen in the following pages, Istanbul madrasas cannot simply be viewed through the dichotomous perspective that prevails in the existing literature. This dissertation intends to highlight a number of details that have been ignored by the earlier historiography. In summary, despite the lack of the extensive structural and curricular change during the period under scrutiny here, the Istanbul madrasas through numerous individual cases can be seen as dynamic endeavours to accommodate themselves to the new circumstances and reforms of the period. Madrasa teachers, students and graduates played a role to a certain degree in

accommodating the educational reforms coming from the imperial centre. The general attitude of the ulama to reform, and modernization, during the late Ottoman period lies at the heart of the issue.

Religion as a vehicle for social reform was an idea that even positivist Ottoman intellectuals such as Abdullah Cevdet and Ahmed Rıza defended.⁸⁶ However, this presumes that the Ottoman ulama in general and madrasa teachers and students in particular were passive and peripheral to mainstream Ottoman society. On the contrary, they were very much a part of the society in which they lived, social and cultural changes affecting their attitudes and thinking as well.⁸⁷

CHAPTERS

The dissertation is divided into two main parts, with two chapters in each. The first is devoted to madrasa teachers, or mudarris, or *dersiam*, and the second to madrasa students, or *talebe-i ulum*. The first chapter deals with the professional aspects of madrasa professorships in Istanbul and the concepts of continuity and discontinuity between the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods vis-à-vis changes in the recruitment and finance of the teaching profession. In addition to the professional dimension, unofficial aspects of madrasa teachers' lives are considered. Using the experience of select participants, I will explore the intellectual response of madrasa teachers to reform during the late Ottoman period, as well as the activities of mudarrises outside of their madrasa teaching. Additional financial resources and connections with new institutions, particularly educational ones, will be discussed. Furthermore, challenges to the madrasa curriculum from various segments of Ottoman society and the interest that many madrasa teachers showed in the modern curriculum will be analyzed.

The following chapter will survey the social and cultural underpinnings of Istanbul's madrasas using a form of quantitative analysis adapted to the subject. Using 230 personnel files, a statistical case can be made for the madrasa professorship as a means of social mobility and an indication of the high degree to

⁸⁶ Sükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*, (Istanbul: Üçdal Nesriyat, [1981]), pp. 129–40.

⁸⁷ Ruth Austin Miller, "From Fikh to Fascism: The Turkish Republican Adoption of Mussolini's Criminal Code in the Context of Late Ottoman Legal Reform," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University (2003). Miller even illustrates that a considerable number of the sharia judges held on to judicial posts in the Republican legal system. Miller, "From Fikh," pp. 34-35.

which educational reform penetrated the religious community and educational profession. The educational and cultural formation of Istanbul dersiams will also be discussed. As an indication of the similarities and differences between different professions on certain points, I will include a discussion of the intersection of sharia judges and officials of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The last two chapters will concentrate on the madrasa students in Istanbul. In the first of these, I will paint a portrait of the typical 'madrasa student' in the period of reform, focussing on the pedagogical and social aspects of student life. In addition to traditional settings of madrasa learning, extra-curricular contact with modern subject material will be discussed critically. Istanbul's changing social environment will be examined vis-à-vis the problematic relationship between students/natives and immigrants that plagued the Ottoman capital after the middle of the nineteenth century, as well as state-funding for religious/madrasa schools/students and the career possibilities for madrasa graduates.

The final chapter will focus on the relationship between madrasa students and the state, the increase in state control over madrasa students, and the official perception of discipline that developed during the Hamidian period. Although the Hamidian state undertook a policy of strict surveillance of madrasa students due mostly to an increase in resistance and oppositional feelings among them, it nonetheless regarded Istanbul's madrasas as a vehicle of social control and integration.

CHAPTER 1

MADRASA TEACHERS IN ISTANBUL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Halil Inalcik points out that “[t]he essential element in an Islamic education was the *müderris*, a man of recognized authority in the religious and spiritual sciences.”¹ In 1330, the very first Ottoman madrasa was opened in Iznik, the capital of the young Ottoman Principality. The Ottoman rulers then invited Davud-i Kayserî, a prominent scholar of the time, to teach there. This invitation was significant because it had an effect on the moulding of the Ottoman religious mind-set that influenced, if not formed, the path Ottomans would take.² Consequently, understanding the Ottoman madrasa system’s tradition of teaching and learning is useful in understanding the dynamics of Ottoman modernization, the hallmarks of

¹ Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire, the Classical Age 1300–1600*, (London: Phoenix, 1997), p.166.

² Through Davud-i Kayserî and some other mudarrises, the school of thought of Fakhr al-Din al-Radhi became influential in Ottoman madrasas. Ismail Hakki Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teskilati*, (Ankara: TTK, 1988), pp.75-76. On this topic, also see Ahmet Yasar Ocak, “Osmanlı Medreselerinde Es’ari Geleneginin Olusmasında Selçuklu Medreselerinin Tesirleri,” *13. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara 4-8 Ekim 1999: Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler*, vol. 3, (Ankara: TTK, 2002).

which include fast and extensive changes, a multiplicity of driving forces, and uncertain indicators and agents.

Madrassa teachers as a group can be considered a middle layer in the ulama ranks vis-à-vis income and prestige. A teaching post earned its holder a relatively lower income than a judgeship, but paved the way to climb the ranks of the ulama and attain prestige in the profession, as well as in Muslim society.

In this chapter, I will use available data to show that the madrasa teaching profession was covered by the reform projects of the empire in the nineteenth century without any substantial opposition from madrasa teachers. To the contrary, there are many cases of reform demands by mudarrises for pedagogic changes. As I discussed in the introduction, the existing literature—profoundly aligned with the modernization theory and the Orientalist conviction of the East—assumes that Islam and its practitioners and guardians, namely the ulama, categorically opposed reforms of the nineteenth century. Further, this assumption claims that the reforms were achieved despite religious opposition and as a result of external dynamics rather than indigenous efforts.³ It also forces us to presuppose a dichotomy between religion and reform in the political, legal, social, and cultural arenas of the time. It is, however, hardly surprising to see that this assumption fails to agree with the facts of religion in Ottoman society. This failure arises from a tendency on the part of secular critics of religion to underestimate the phenomenal and positive role of Islam in Ottoman history, overemphasizing the conservative aspects of the religion that actually existed and neglecting its dynamic and functional aspects in the period under examination. Inevitably, this negative and essentialist approach is highly selective vis-à-vis contemporary sources. At this point, I should mention that the object here is not to depict religion, the madrasa system and madrasa teacher as wholly and merely *the* transforming force in the Ottoman Empire. However, taking Istanbul madrasa teachers as a case study, I will demonstrate that Islam cannot be categorically dismissed as insignificant to Ottoman reform.

³ For instance, the words of Bernard Lewis, one of the leading advocates of such assumptions, may serve as a brief but clear depiction of the modernization theory: “[T]he reforms were basically the forcible imposition, on a Muslim country, of practices and procedures derived from Europe, with the encouragement, if not insistence, of European powers...” Bernard Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 125.

A quick glance at nineteenth-century Ottoman reforms suggests a couple of critical questions concerning the position and attitudes of the ulama regarding reform. How did the ulama—particularly those residing in the Ottoman capital and who traditionally enjoyed a great deal of social, cultural and political power—react to the reforms in question? Also, did they necessarily feel disturbed by them? Examining the reforms in the legal, cultural, educational and political spheres of the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, I will re-examine how madrasa teachers, as part of the madrasa institution, and as individuals, adapted to the new circumstances of the period. I will argue that although the madrasa system was protective of many aspects of traditional practice, the teachers undertook some very remarkable reforms to recruitment and payment in parallel to other factions within the state bureaucracy during the Tanzimat period. Apart from this, there were also considerable informal attempts by madrasa teachers to familiarize themselves with new/modern pedagogic developments that occurred outside the madrasa system.

MADRASA TEACHING: A CHANGING PROFESSION

The Tanzimat consisted of a number of administrative, fiscal, and judicial reforms, the effects of which were not limited to the state apparatus but extended into the social and cultural lives of the Ottomans in a more general sense. Many experts in the field acknowledge that the Tanzimat reforms demarcate a new era in Ottoman history. The reorganization of central and provincial administration led to the emergence of a “modern” bureaucracy. A new elite composed of bureaucrats rose to pre-eminence during this time, their existence becoming highly visible in various aspects of society such as literature, the press, and politics. One can say that both state and society underwent a transformation because of the interactive and interrelated role such individuals played.

The core of Tanzimat reform can be grouped in two main parts. The first is composed of taxation and local administration, and the second of education and justice. Even then, one should bear in mind that all these were interrelated. Through these measures, Ottoman rulers aimed at strengthening the empire against external and internal threats. The empire’s territorial losses always preoccupied the Ottoman ruling elite, fearful the empire would disintegrate at any moment. In order to avoid such a disaster, a powerful central army, which was essential to the protection of the imperial borders, required a huge state budget which the traditional taxation system

and provincial administration could not afford. Another aspect of reform was the unrest it created, particularly the end of the old taxation system in Anatolia and the Balkans.⁴ On the other hand, reforms in the provincial administration endeavoured to add local notables to the roster, accustomed to a good deal of autonomy, via local councils and the granting of official titles and governorships.⁵

Among the changing elements in the empire was the ulama. Within the ulama corps, judges especially attracted the interest of reformers due to the pragmatic and practical nature of reform. Opening a new judge school (*Muallimhane-i Nüvvab*) and enacting new regulations regarding the functions of judges were among the first things Tanzimat reformers addressed.⁶ The reformers' priorities suggest that they considered the judicial problem much more pressing than that of the madrasas. But, many schools founded by Tanzimat reformers and Hamidian rule had commons with madrasa learning. Indeed, Tanzimat schools (*idadis* and *rüsdîyes*) can be seen as reformed madrasas rather than "secular schools," considering their syllabus, teaching staff,⁷ disciplinary principles, and architecture—all having Islamic designs and motifs.⁸ Late Ottoman schooling combined Islamic education, traditionally provided by the madrasa, with a more practical/modern education designed to train bureaucrats, the latter normally trained in the palace and governmental offices. In the minds of Ottoman reformers, it is obvious that the traditional system was not capable of producing the necessary manpower the empire desperately needed. This

⁴ Halil Inalcik, "Tanzimatın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri," *Bellekten*, 28/112 (1964); Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Direnişler*, (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2002).

⁵ Halil Inalcik, "Centralization, Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," in T.Naff & R.Owen (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), pp. 35–40.

⁶ İlhami Yurdakul, "Osmanlı İlmîye Teskilâtî'nin (Bâb-i Mesihat) Yenilesme Süreci (1826-1878)," Ph.D. Diss., (Marmara University, 2004), pp.149-155. For a detailed account of the new judge school, see Jun Akiba, "A New School for Qadis: Education of the Sharia Judges in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Turcica*, 35 (2003).

⁷ For details about their syllabus and teaching staff, see Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Eser Nesriyat, 1977), vol.1-2, pp.383-83, 495-500; Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), pp. 111, 129-33; For an excellent analysis of the school books on moral education in the Hamidian period, see Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *IJMES*, 32/3 (2000). For another interesting work on the textbooks in the Hamidian and Constitutional periods in terms of "socialization" of students, see Nuri Dogan, *Ders Kitapları ve Sosyalleşme*, (Istanbul: Baglam Yayınları, 1994).

⁸ For an appealing analysis of the disciplinary cases and school buildings in the Hamidian period, see Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom, Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 130-64.

combination also explains the apparent lack of concern Ottoman rulers showed for the madrasas—which the existing literature often mentions.

Taking radical measures, Tanzimat reformers hoped to protect the empire without creating a secular state or society. However, reform proved definitive in the reconstruction of the empire around a new bureaucratic centre and revitalization of Ottoman society over time.⁹ In fact, the ulama traditionally occupied a vital place in Ottoman society via education, the law, and politics.¹⁰ As I will show, madrasa teachers, as a part of the ulama corps, actively engaged in the revitalization of the larger society, much of the historiography presuming the opposite to have been the case. Madrasa teachers were a part of the imperial centre at this time. As will be shown in more detail in the following pages, Ottoman civil authorities were not the only elites to undergo a process of pragmatic rationalization that ultimately led to bureaucratization. Madrasa teachers also went through a similar process of change.

Recruitment Examination of Madrasa Teachers

Although the Ottoman madrasa system after Süleyman the Magnificent did not experience the same organizational and structural changes as those in 1914,¹¹ this

⁹ Although the imperial centre was the place where the reforms were produced, the primary reform projects had been altered and accorded to the peripheral needs and conditions through negotiations between the centre and the local elements. For further assessment of this particular subject, see Yonca Köksal, "Imperial Center and Local Groups: Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne and Ankara," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 27 (2002) and Yonca Köksal, "Local Intermediaries and Ottoman State Centralization: A Comparison of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Ankara and Edirne (1839-1878)," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University (2002).

¹⁰ Actually a number of scholarly works exist concerning the place of the Ottoman ulama in the nineteenth century. But they mostly focused on the higher ulama members and usually on their role in politics. None of them are specifically devoted to madrasa teachers; Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman Ulama and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud II," *Scripta Hierosolymitana: Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, 9 (1961); Avigdor Levy, "The Ottoman Ulama and the Military Reforms of Sultan Mahmud II," *Asian and African Studies*, 7 (1971); David Kushner, "The Place of the Ottoman Ulama in the Ottoman Empire During the Age of Reform (1839-1918)," *Turcica*, 19 (1987); Richard Chambers, "The Ottoman Ulama and the Tanzimat," in Nikkie R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East Since 1500*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Osman Özkul, *Gelenek ve Modernite Arasında Osmanlı Uleması*, (Istanbul: Birharf, 2005). One of the most recent works on the subject is Ahmet Cihan's book setting forth a quantitative analysis on the Ottoman ulama in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ahmet Cihan, *Reform Çağında Osmanlı İlimiye Sınıfı*, (Istanbul: Birey Yayincılık, 2004).

¹¹ For the madrasa reforms in the Second Constitutional period, see Salih Zeki Zengin, *II. Mesrutiyet'te Medreseler ve Din Eğitimi*, (Ankara: Akçag Yayinlari, 2002); Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Darül-hilafeti'l-aliyye Medresesi ve Kuruluş Arefesinde İstanbul Medreseleri*, (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1978).

was not necessarily because of a scarcity of concern at the highest ranks of society. The madrasas were encompassed by the Tanzimat and subsequent reform policies to some degree.

A major innovation introduced into the Ottoman administration by the Tanzimat concerned income. In the new system, officials were allocated regular salary from the central budget and later, ulama were treated as state employees and included salary system whereas prior to this they earned their income from the fees (in sharia courts) and endowments.

Among the innovations enacted by the Tanzimat were changes to recruitment of new officials and the end of the traditional practice. In fact, the new recruitment system the Tanzimat instituted was not completely foreign to the ulama. Madrasa teachers were subject to scrutiny in most cases. A symbolic and limited form of nepotism, however, was incorporated into the recruitment system even after the Tanzimat was enacted. Yet, before the Tanzimat, state officials were principally the children of government officials¹² and newcomers received their education and training from departments under the supervision of senior officials.¹³ Having established a special school in 1839, the *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye*,¹⁴ the Ottoman Empire began to restructure its administration to satisfy the needs of the government via a more radical/objective recruitment and training system. The traditional system was completely abandoned and officials received a formal education from the proper schools, success predicated on the successful completion of state examinations which qualified one for work in the civil service.¹⁵

These reforms, together with others, was not simply a measure taken by the Ottoman rulers to make the state apparatus work more efficiently, having unprecedented consequences that Tanzimat reformers may not have wanted for the larger Ottoman society. Tanzimat reformers were devotees of a centralized and thus

¹² Ismail H. Uzunçarsili, *Osmanli Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teskilati*, (Ankara: TTK, 1984), p. 50-51; Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 174.

¹³ Ali Akyildiz, *Osmanli Merkez Teskilatinda Reform, Tanzimat Dönemi: 1836-185*, (Istanbul: Eren, 1993), pp.52-54. For a detailed account of the entrance and promotion patterns in the period prior to the Tanzimat, see Bernard A. Lalor, "Promotion Patterns of Ottoman Bureaucratic Statesmen from the Lâle Devri Until the Tanzimat," *Güney-Dogu Avrupa Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 1 (1972).

¹⁴ Akyildiz, *Osmanli Merkez*, pp. 226-28. Ergin, *Maarif Tarihi*, vol.1-2, pp. 394-406.

¹⁵ Akyildiz, *Osmanli Merkez*, pp.54-56.

bureaucratized empire, a deviation from the pre-Tanzimat period. All reforms, particularly those in education, served this end. The emergence of new schools led inexorably to dramatic changes in the nature of this new centralized Ottoman way of governance. While the Ottoman centre witnessed a major shift, from the traditional way of ruling to a new reformed one, a new intellectual elite rose to pre-eminence as a consequence of bureaucratization.

In the nineteenth century, the madrasa system had already inherited a culture of examination. In the first appointments and promotions of madrasa teachers, examinations had been widely used as a method of assessment. As previously indicated, one of the dramatic changes in Ottoman bureaucracy was the new recruitment policy, and this change revealed itself in the adoption of entrance examinations and end of the patronage system. At this point, it should be noted that the introduction of examinations into the Ottoman bureaucratic system was part and parcel of the rationalization and modernization of governance, and the idea of competition for positions vis-à-vis examinations was nothing new to the madrasa, a facet of official regulation prior to the nineteenth century. Ottoman biographical sources present many examples of examinations for appointments and promotions going back to the sixteenth century.¹⁶ The examples mentioned in Uzunçarsili's seminal work, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin İlmîye Teskilati*, indicate that the Ottoman madrasas adopted a system of assessment, a culture of examination having a long history. In 1528, for example, an examination session was held in Ayasofya Mosque to fill a teaching post at the Fatih Madrasa.¹⁷ In 1558, another assignment to the same madrasa was decided on the basis of a written examination that resulted in the appointment of Tosun Efendi.¹⁸ In some cases, the appointees were expected to prepare a written work (*risale*) and read it in front of a jury, or give a lecture followed by a discussion in front of an audience of several distinguished mudarrises.¹⁹ The sources reveal a good deal of discontent among some candidates regarding their examination scores.²⁰

¹⁶ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, pp.63–71.

¹⁷ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, p. 64.

¹⁸ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, pp. 64–65.

¹⁹ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, pp. 65–66.

²⁰ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, p. 65.

The adoption of examinations to select the most suitable person for an appointment or promotion profoundly influenced nineteenth-century reforms, particularly in the new schools and the emergent state bureaucracy. Of course, this is not to say that the idea of administering examinations was unique to the madrasa system, but the two cases mentioned allow us to see the roots of an examination system that conjoined the 'traditional' and the 'new' in the nineteenth century.

Two cases from the pre-Tanzimat and early Tanzimat years provide better insight into the matter. In the early days of 1826, Ibrahim Bernevi Efendi was appointed to teach Arabic and Persian grammar, as well as Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*) in the Bab-i Maliye Mosque in Istanbul for a monthly salary of 150 kurus. He was replaced by Sair Ayni Efendi. Teaching did not go as well as expected and classes were reduced to two days a week in 1837. Then, el-Hac Pertev Efendi was given the extra burden of teaching in the mosque.²¹ In another case, Ibrahim Efendi began taking 15 kurus in 1841 after writing his examination on the *Izhar*.²² He sat for the general examination in 1845, too, after completing the *Molla Cami*, which is a major book in Arabic grammar.²³ The examination took place in the Süleymaniye Mosque and the Seyhülislam adjudicated.²⁴

Nevertheless, neither of these cases concern madrasa education as such. In the first case, the mosque sessions were organised to train officials working in the administrative and financial departments of the Ottoman government in Istanbul. It is noteworthy that in a period when the Ottoman administration was undergoing systemic reforms vis-à-vis the Tanzimat (1839), a few particular measures taken to improve the quality of service in the governmental departments were apparently inspired and shaped to a great extent by the forms which were originally practiced by the madrasa. The second case belongs not to a madrasa student but to a secondary school student, or *rüşdiye*, who would later be known as Ascidede Ibrahim Halil.²⁵

²¹ Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Merkez*, pp.53-54.

²² *Izhar al-Asrar* is a book about Arabic syntax written by an Ottoman ulama member, Birgivi Mehmed Efendi (d. 1573).

²³ 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ahmad al-Jami (d. 1492), *al-Fawaid al-Dhiyayya*.

²⁴ Ascidede Halil Ibrahim, *Geçen Asri Aydınlatan Kıymetli Vesikalardan Bir Eser: Hatıralar*, Resat Ekrem Koçu (ed.), (Istanbul: İstanbul Ansiklopedisi ve Nesriyat, 1960), pp. 21–22.

²⁵ For further details about Ascidede's life, see Carter V. Findley, "A Muslim Pilgrim's Progress: Asçi Dede Ibrahim on the Hajj, 1898," in C.E. Bosworth *et al.* (eds), *The Islamic World, from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989); Carter V.

He studied there to join the new Tanzimat bureaucracy and consequently began his career in the Ministry of War (*Seraskerlik*) after graduation.²⁶ Likewise, the influence of the madrasa on the new schools during the Tanzimat and subsequent periods cannot be doubted. In fact, these cases also help to illustrate the mentality of many Ottoman reformers and the positive role the madrasa played to educational reform in general up to the last days of the empire. In his memoirs, Muallim Cevdet, an educational activist living in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, argues that the Arabic curriculum in the teacher-training school was superior to that of the madrasa, which is why he scored higher on the Arabic examination than madrasa students.²⁷ Thus, by implication, some of the courses taught in madrasa were still a significant part of some new schools.

Adjustment in Madrasa Professorships

We now turn to another aspect of the madrasa to show the interrelations between the madrasa and reform in the nineteenth-century. While making certain contributions to the formation of the new bureaucracy, the madrasa was not isolated from change, undergoing a re-formation of its own.

Gaining entrance to the teaching profession was re-shaped by the Tanzimat. These changes manifested themselves first in the elimination of the apprenticeship system, which was formed by the Seyhülislam Ebus-suud Efendi in the sixteenth century and modified in the eighteenth century.²⁸ According to the apprenticeship system, for teaching posts in a madrasa in Istanbul a candidate had to find a member of the higher-ranking ulama as a patron and enrol under his auspices. After an

Findley, "Social Dimensions of the Dervish Life, as Seen in the Memoirs of Asçi Dede Halil Ibrahim," in Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Paul Dumont, *Economie et sociétés dans l'Empire ottoman (fin du XVI-Ile-début du XXe siècle)*, (Paris: Centre National De La Recherch, 1983).

²⁶ Asçidede, *Geçen Asri*, p. 23.

²⁷ Osman Nuri Ergin (ed.), *Muallim M. Cevdet'in Hayati, Eserleri ve Kütüphanesi*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Belediyesi, 1937), pp. 7-9.

²⁸ Madeline C. Zilfi, "The *İlmiye* Registers and the Ottoman *Medrese* System Prior to the Tanzimat," in J.L. Bacqué-Grammont and P. Dumont (eds) *Collection Turcica vol.III, Contributions à l'Histoire économique et sociale de l'Empire Ottoman*, (Leuven: Editions Peeters, 1983), pp. 321-23.

observation period, he was assigned to a madrasa.²⁹ The system was re-adjusted many times before the nineteenth century when it was also customary for children of the ulama (*zâdegân*) to be given preference.³⁰ However, the apprenticeship system remained in force until the nineteenth century.

Sultan Selim III was anxious to reform the whole ulama system.³¹ Selim III was particularly concerned with the training and quality of graduates. In an imperial decree dated 1796, he emphasized the necessity of the examination for apprentices wishing to become mudarris,³² an issue that had been debated during the eighteenth century vis-à-vis the huge number of seemingly under-qualified mudarrises in the capital.³³ In the decree, Selim III intended to create a set of principles for teaching posts in madrasas, so that “by this way, the teaching career would be well-protected and preserved from those who are not qualified” (*ve tarik-i ilm-i serif bu vechile gayet himaye ve nâ-ehilden siyânet oluna*).³⁴ Selim III’s decree agrees with much that Ottoman reformers did and included religious institutions in the broad reform agenda of the nineteenth century.

After the initial reforms of Selim III, the process gained strength during the rule of Mahmud II. The most visible effect of reforms to the teaching profession was a shift from the classical ulama model to a more centralized one. The decommissioning of the Janissary corps was a watershed in the bureaucratization of the Ottoman ulama. Indeed, their support in destruction of the Janissaries gained the Seyhülislamate a permanent office which was previously used by the chief-commander of the Janissary army, called *Agakapisi*. Mahmud II decreed the headquarters of the Janissary corps to be converted to the central office of

²⁹ Mehmet Ipsirli, “Osmanlı İlmîye Teskilatında Mülazemet Sisteminin Önemi ve Rumeli Kazaskeri Mehmed Efendi Zamanına Ait Mülazemet Kayıtları,” *Güney-Dogu Avrupa Arastirmalari Dergisi*, 10-11 (1981-82), pp. 221–24; Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, pp.45–53;

³⁰ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, pp.48–50.

³¹ Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, pp.255–60.

³² HH 7543, 1210 [1795-96]; Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, p.260. This imperial decree was based on the proposal of Seyhülislam Dürrizade Mehmed Arif Efendi, Sehabettin Tekindag; “Medrese Dönemi,” in Fikret Saatçioğlu, *et.al.* (eds), *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yilinda Istanbul Üniversitesi*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1973), p. 31.

³³ Tekindag; “Medrese Dönemi,” pp. 30–31; Madeline C. Zilfi, “The *İlmîye* Registers,” pp. 313, 322–23.

³⁴ HH 7543, 1210 [1795-96]; Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye*, p.260.

Seyhülislam in 1826.³⁵ Having a permanent office and place in the new bureaucracy, the Ottoman ulama entered a new phase in its history. As for madrasa teachers, a process of centralization similar to that in the civil service exercised greater control over recruitment and salaries of mudarrises.

Recruitment of mudarrises during the pre-Tanzimat period was a two-fold procedure. As briefly stated above, the candidate for a teaching post in Istanbul had to be enrolled as a novice and after a certain period of time—usually seven years—the novice received a certificate (*ruûs*) to teach in a madrasa. The available sources do not mention anything about a qualifying examination. Selim III was the first Ottoman ruler to introduce an entrance examination for aspiring novices. It soon becomes clear that during the age of reform, the Ottoman state wanted to regulate the ulama profession just as it did other departments in the administration. For instance, in madrasa teaching, the reforms eliminated vakif rules that had been originally established by the founder of the vakif himself. Consequently, a mudarris was no longer chosen by vakif administrators or those stipulated in the vakif deed, but by the central authority represented by the Seyhülislamate.

This was followed by another radical change in the area of salaries paid to madrasa teachers. Traditionally, mudarrises were paid from the revenues of the vakif, again according to the rules set by the founder. But, after the centralization of the vakif, vakif rules and the appointment/payment of madrasa teachers in Istanbul was broken up. How the traditional way of appointment/payment was replaced by the new monthly salary and central appointment/treasury is the question. Indeed, the history of the Ottoman vakif is one of the significant issues for ulama studies vis-à-vis late Ottoman history and the day-to-day issues that lands inherited from the Ottomans continually faced.³⁶

³⁵ İlhami Yurdakul, "Osmanlı İlmîye Teskilâtî'nin (Bâb-i Mesihat) Yenileme Süreci (1826-1878)," Ph.D. diss., Marmara Üniversitesi (2004), pp. 7–19; Esra Yakut, *Seyhülislamlik, Yenileme Döneminde Devlet ve Din*, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), pp. 55–56. For the emergence and subsequent developments of the Seyhülislamate, see Richard Repp, *The Müfti of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1986) and Murat Akgündüz, *XIX. Asir Baslarına Kadar Osmanlı Devletinde Seyhülislamlik*, (Istanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2002).

³⁶ Disputes over the status of vakif lands still continue in Turkey as witnessed in a very interesting dispute that has recently occupied the agenda of the Turkish media. When included into the rounds of *Formula 1* car races, one of the most difficult problems of organisers in Istanbul was to find a suitable area for the race complex. The land on which the complex, Istanbul Park, was built became

One could argue that changes in the vakif system made the system of madrasa teaching overly complicated. The centralization policy of Ottoman rulers had a strong impact on the integration of the ulama into the bureaucracy, particularly at the level of madrasa teachers. It was still possible in the early 1820s to be appointed as a mudarris to the Tabhane Madrasa in Istanbul, the applicant merely required to meet the criteria stipulated in the vakif. Failing that, extra time was given so the applicant could pass and receive the appointment.³⁷ However, following reforms to the vakifs, especially the establishment of the Ministry of Evkaf (*Evkaf Nezareti*) in 1826³⁸ and the Seyhülislamate bureaucracy, becoming a madrasa teacher became a matter of the Seyhülislam's office rather than vakif rules and thus the Ministry of Evkaf. Teaching and the payment of madrasa teachers was the business of the office of Seyhülislam after Tanzimat. The ever-widening gulf that separated the teaching profession and the vakif system in Istanbul was unique to the capital, the provinces holding closer to the original pattern and relationship. This is stated more clearly in the Law of the Distribution of Evkaf Duties (*Tevcihat-i Cihât Nizamnamesi*).³⁹

The Tanzimat and Hamidian periods oversaw a crystallizing of the teaching profession as it turned to be integral to the new centralized and bureaucratized system in Istanbul and an emphasis on the use of examinations by the Ottoman rulers since the dawn of the nineteenth century. Whereas the traditional apprenticeship (*mülazemet*) was abolished, entrance to the professions was governed by stricter rules. Why and when exactly the apprenticeship system was abolished is less clear. The system was still in use until the late eighteenth century.⁴⁰ Available sources suggest a change beginning no earlier than 1862. Sehri Sevket Efendi, the mudarris of Bereketzade Ismail Hakki who was a madrasa-educated Young Turk, completed his studies in 1862, sitting the examination for a teaching post in Istanbul in 1863.

the subject of a legal controversy because it was partly a vakif land, *Hürriyet* (Istanbul), 29 May 2003 at <<http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/05/29/295628.asp>>.

³⁷ HH 27024, 1235 [c.1820].

³⁸ [Inal], Ibnülemin Mahmud Kemal- Hüseyin Hüsameddin, *Evkaf-i Hümayun Nezaretinin Tarihçe-i Teskilati ve Nüzzarin Teracüm-i Ahvali*, (Darülhilafetilaliyye [Istanbul]: Evkaf-i Islamiyye Matbaası, 1335 [1919]), p.26; Öztürk, *Vakif Müessesesi*, p.68–9. For the application of vakif reforms in the provinces, see Abdullah Saydam, "Vakif Anlayışında Yenilenme İhtiyacı ve XIX. Yüzyıl Ortalarında Trabzon Vakıfları," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 23 (2004).

³⁹ "Tevcihât-i Cihât Nizamnamesi," *Düstûr*, Birinci Tertib, vol. 2, p.177.

⁴⁰ According to Ahmed Cevdet, aspirants for teaching posts had to wait for seven years in apprenticeship before taking the entrance examination (*ruûs imtihani*) in the late eighteenth century, Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1309), vol. 1, p. 171.

Sehri Sevket reported that he obtained an apprenticeship two years before graduating. However, he did not provide any further detail on how or why. His experience departs significantly from that of traditional apprenticeships, the practicum following rather than preceding graduation.⁴¹ In Sevket Efendi's case, apprenticeship had lost considerable importance by the age of reform, completely disappearing during the early Tanzimat.

Abolishing the apprenticeship system was a corollary of the bureaucratization of the teaching profession. Considering the relation between vakifs and teachers, the effects of centralization were dire. Although there is no regulation officially laying down the principles of madrasa teacher recruitment, a document from 1876 sheds some new light on the issue. A memorandum from the Seyhülislam Hayrullah Efendi talks about some of the difficulties associating with the new system (*ahîren ittihaz olunmus olan usul*) after the abolishment of apprenticeship.⁴² According to the system that Hayrullah Efendi complained, candidates sat an annual examination for their teaching permits, teaching four years before getting tenure. However, this system, Hayrullah Efendi argues, had serious problems, producing a glut of teachers among them which the available budget could not afford.⁴³ To solve the funding problem, Hayrullah Efendi suggested a return to the classical recruitment system (*kaide-i mergûbe-i kadime*), which was composed of two examinations, one for the apprenticeship, and, after five to seven years, a second examination for the teaching certificate.⁴⁴ By implementing this proposed system, Hayrullah Efendi hoped the number of madrasa teachers in Istanbul would not prove quite so problematic in future and fewer in number by comparison.⁴⁵

This proposal was adopted at the suggestion of Seyhülislam Hayrullah Efendi when he was appointed in May 1876, but quickly replaced by a new decree dated 29

⁴¹ "1279 senesi Recep ayında Abdurrahman Efendi'den icâzet aldi...Merhum, 1277 senesinde...ruûs mülazemetine ulastigi gibi...", Bereketzade, *Yâd-i Mazi*, p. 333.

⁴² MAIKD [vol.1], "arz" 25 Cemaziyelahir 1293 [18 July 1876] and "irade" 4 Receb 1293 [26 July 1876].

⁴³ MAIKD [vol.1], "arz" 25 Cemaziyelahir 1293 [18 July 1876] and "irade" 4 Receb 1293 [26 July 1876].

⁴⁴ MAIKD [vol.1], "arz" 25 Cemaziyelahir 1293 [18 July 1876] and "irade" 4 Receb 1293 [26 July 1876].

⁴⁵ MAIKD [vol.1], "arz" 25 Cemaziyelahir 1293 [18 July 1876] and "irade" 4 Receb 1293 [26 July 1876], "...derece-i matlûbede dâiyandan muallim yetistirilmeye bâdi olacagından...".

June 1877.⁴⁶ Nearly a month later, on 26 July 1877, Hayrullah Efendi was dismissed.⁴⁷ Interestingly enough, Hayrullah Efendi's appointment was a factor of his links to the reformist group of Midhat, Hüseyin Avni and Rüşdü Pasas.⁴⁸ Abdülaziz chose him for the office to appease madrasa students who were protesting against the massacre of Muslims in the Balkans.⁴⁹ Hayrullah Efendi also provided the official religious opinion (*fetva*) for the deposition of Abdülaziz and the enthronement of Murad who was thought to favour reform.⁵⁰ But he would not escape the fate of his reformist colleagues during the reign of Abdülhamid II, stripped of office and then expelled to Hicaz where he later joined Midhat Pasa in Taif.⁵¹ The selection of Kara Halil Efendi as his successor provides some insight into the reasons for Hayrullah Efendi's dismissal: the *fetva* for the abolishment or dismissal of the first Ottoman Parliament was issued by Kara Halil.⁵² Abdülhamid II had eliminated the possible opponents to his regime and it was no surprise that he considered Hayrullah Efendi among them.

Now let us turn to modifications made by Hayrullah Efendi on 29 June 1877, only a month before his leaving office, before discussing whether it is possible to argue that his his reformist agenda was connected to his teacher recruitment policy on the one hand, and his removal from the office to Abdülhamid II's political agenda, on the other.

The new law of 1877 returned the recruitment system back to its pre-1876 status: the apprenticeship system was abolished, again. According to the law as of 29 June 1877, candidates were expected to complete their study or close to it before taking the examinations.⁵³ All examinations were proctored by Seyhülislam's office

⁴⁶ *Ceride-i Havadis*, no.3432, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1294 (29 June 1877). I am grateful to Jun Akiba for bringing this material to my attention.

⁴⁷ *İmniyye Sâlnâmesi [1334]*, (Istanbul: Isaret Yayinlari, 1998), pp.486-88; Abdülkadir Altinsu, *Osmanli Seyhülislamлари*, (Ankara: Ayyildiz Matbaasi, 1972), pp.206-08.

⁴⁸ Mehmet Ipsirli, "Hayrullah Efendi, Imam-i Sultanî," *DIA*; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: volume II: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1908-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.163.

⁴⁹ Shaw and Shaw, *History*, p.163.

⁵⁰ Shaw and Shaw, *History*, p.163.

⁵¹ Ipsirli, "Hayrullah Efendi, Imam-i Sultanî," *DIA*.

⁵² Altinsu, *Osmanli Seyhülislamлари*, p.211.

⁵³ The madrasa education in Istanbul ended with Jalal al-Din al-Dawwani's (d.1502) book on Islamic theology (*kelâm*), *Risala fi İthbat al-Wajib al-Qadima*, which was renowned as 'Celâl.' Candidates

one a year during the Hijri month of Receb. The examination consisted of 40 questions from the *Mutavvel*⁵⁴ and other fields (*ulumu-u settâdan*) and each candidate had to answer correctly not less than 21 of 40 questions to pass the examination. While the successful candidates were to be granted licenses (*sehâdetname*) and dispatched to the mosques to teach, any who failed were given to two more chances to pass the examination. After three years of teaching, they received their teaching certification, or *ruûs-ü hümayûn*. The ruûs, as we will see later in this chapter, came with a claim to a monthly salary from the government—an innovation brought in after the Tanzimat.

The changes in the June 1877 law struck a difference balance from the previous law which had a two-fold system of selection for prospective madrasa teachers, dual examinations, and a protracted apprenticeship before the ruûs was granted. The new law of 1877 simplified the process, requiring only three years to qualify for the teaching certificate. Simplifying the procedure marked the beginning of the Hamidian policy to expand the influence of the madrasa in Istanbul by attracting more aspirants. The conflicting nature of the two laws is notable. The previous law was rooted in financial worries, as related archival documents make clear.⁵⁵ The intention underlying the old law was to control the student population in Istanbul by putting a cap on the number of madrasa teachers because of their role in the dethronement of Sultan Abdülaziz. The new law of 1877 makes no mention of financial shortcomings or some future threat that may come from an increase in the number of madrasa students in the capital. In addition, it is likely that the Hamidian regime hoped to exploit religious education in the interest of public morale, particularly during the Turco-Russian War that started two months before the law was enacted.

That said, it was not long before another modification was introduced vis-à-vis a glut of madrasa teachers in Istanbul. Having complained about the

therefore had to have studied a certain part of this book in order to be eligible for the examination: "...veya Celâl'in hudus bahsini teknil etmiş görmüş bulunmak..." *Ceride-i Havadis*, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1294 [29 June 1877].

⁵⁴ *Sharh al-Mutawwal* (known as *Mutavvel*) is a commentary written by al-Taftazani (1390) on Jalal al-Din al-Qazwini (d. 1339)'s *Talkhis al-Miftah*, a book about Arabic rhetoric.

⁵⁵ MAIKD [vol.1], "arz" 25 Cemaziyelahir 1293 [18 July 1876] and "irade" 4 Receb 1293 [26 July 1876], "...ve müderrisin adedi sene bi-sene tabii tekessür ederek emr-i maisette tahsisât-i ilmiyenin kifayetsizligi bâdi olmus olduğundan..."

inconveniences caused by high number of mudarrises, a memorandum from the Seyhülislamate dated 14 September 1881 placed a limit of 15 on the number of new madrasa teachers to be certified each year.⁵⁶ The same document also mentions a mandatory period of four years to be spent teaching after the examination.⁵⁷ This requirement was another device to control the number of mudarrises, which was only three years according to the law of 1877. Abdülhamid II also paid madrasa teachers a meagre salary from his privy purse during the four-year probation period in which no salary was paid.⁵⁸

The reign of Abdülhamid II brought with it significant regulatory changes in the teaching profession and a stricter application of the rules governing madrasa schooling. The main elements of the recruitment system—examinations and the length of apprenticeship teaching—were enforced by authorities without exception. There are many cases of stringent implementation of the law. For instance, Ahmed Hâzim Efendi, a madrasa graduate, petitioned the Seyhülislamate in 1883 to replace his judgeship certificate (*devriye ruûsü*), which had been granted to him as a war veteran, with a teaching certificate (*Istanbul ruûsü*). Not only was his petition rejected, but the fineries of official procedure were listed *in toto*: if he wanted a teaching certificate, he would need to pass the examination and then spending four years in active teaching.⁵⁹ There are also reports of aspiring madrasa teachers who failed their examinations repeatedly.⁶⁰ Similarly, the Seyhülislamate adopted a tough policy for teachers in the provinces, pointing out the necessity of the examination⁶¹ and four-year probation.⁶²

⁵⁶ MAIKD [vol.2], 66/19 Sevval 1298 [14 September 1881].

⁵⁷ “[S]imdiye kadar bil-ımtihan isbat-i ehliyyet edenlerden usûlen alet-tevâli dört sene tedris-i ulûm eyleyenlerin kemâ-kâne ruûs-ü hümayûn ile taltifi...” MAIKD [vol.2], 66/19 Sevval 1298 [14 September 1881].

⁵⁸ “Dersiam,” in Mehmet Zeki Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), vol.1, p. 427.

⁵⁹ MMTKHD 46/27 Zilhicce 1300 [29 October 1883] and 7 Muharrem 1301 [8 November 1883]. For another case, see MMTKHD 55/9 Safer 1302 [21 November 1884].

⁶⁰ Mehmed Serefüddin, for example, failed in the rûus examination and ultimately became successful in his third attempt. For details about Mehmed Serefüddin, see Ibnülemin Mahmud Kemal Inal, *Son Asir Türk Sairleri*, (Istanbul: MEB, 1970), vol. 4, pp. 1788-91.

⁶¹ MMTKHD 22/5 Sevval 1301 [29 July 1884]; MMTKHD 26/5 Zilkade 1301 [27 August 1884]; MMTKHD 39/ 26 Zilhicce 1301 [17 October 1884].

⁶² Kayserili Mehmed Efendi was required to teach one more year before getting the rûus when he asked for it after three years of teaching; MMTKHD 20/ 27 Sevval 1301 [20 August 1884].

Income: From Vakif to Central Treasury

One of the major reforms introduced during the Tanzimat period and another aspect of the re-organization of the Ottoman centre was the abolition of the old payment system and installation of a periodic salary system. Since the nature of the payment system is related to the economic, financial, administrative and legal systems of the empire, the issue of madrasa teachers' salaries deserves considerable attention. The classical payment system in the madrasa was dependent on the vakif system. Consequently, vakif reforms caused substantial changes in the financial affairs of the madrasas, particularly in Istanbul.

On 27 March 1838, Mahmud II issued an imperial decree creating a new payment system for state officials, outlawing the old practice of fee collection. Salaries thenceforth would come from government coffers.⁶³ Although the shift from the old system to the new proved problematic to the bitter end, "[t]he civil officials' salary system was one of several reforms in official personnel policy that together marked the watershed between scribal service and civil officialdom."⁶⁴ Moreover, the new system was part of the fiscal centralization of the state⁶⁵ and was not only confined to the civil bureaucracy but also, in principle, included the religious "bureaucracy" particularly madrasa teachers. However, it seems that the inclusion of madrasa teachers in the salary system did not occur as swiftly as it did in the civil bureaucracy. Generally speaking, while the civil bureaucracy experienced problems in the operation of the salary system—such as generating and organizing resources—the payment system of madrasa teachers also had problems—such as covering the salaries of all mudarrises holding teaching posts in Istanbul.

Mahmud II took the initiative, reforming the religious endowment system. The reforms he introduced affected the madrasa as well as many other institutions across the empire. In theory, the vakif reforms of Mahmud II claimed to support religious endowments in ruin because of poor revenues, redistributing surplus vakif monies to this end. To achieve, a central treasury was created in Istanbul. Giving

⁶³ Akyildiz, *Osmanli Merkez*, p. 106

⁶⁴ Carter Vaughn Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 294.

⁶⁵ Carter Vaughn Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 145.

priority to the imperial vakifs whose control had been given to several high officials, the process of centralizing the administration of vakifs was launched. This initiative is often misinterpreted as a diminishing of the ulama and seizure of financial control which in turn curtailed any opposition to reform from the religious quarter. To make such claims requires substantial evidence. In fact, Mahmud II had two aims in mind when he reformed the vakif. First, he needed this money to finance his reorganization of the empire.⁶⁶ And second, Ottoman rulers had been looking for a solution to the problem of the vakifs, many defunct and in economic ruin.

After all, the aims were partly achieved and the mismanagement of the centralized system has always remained a crucial part of the vakif issue in late Ottoman history. The revenues of the evkaf treasury quite often were transferred to the state treasury. What remained was often insufficient to sustain vakifs in need. Staffing the newly established Ministry of Religious Endowments (*Evkaf Nezareti*) was another substantial problem left to the second generation of reformers. The system of appointing officials from Istanbul in order to control the provincial vakifs never worked satisfactorily in the ministry.⁶⁷ The legal and socio-economic intricacy of the vakif system before reform also created a huge crisis during the reformation, becoming a social phenomenon for later generations, rather than an ulama issue.

Reforms to the religious endowments were not intended to target the Ottoman ulama but, undeniably, the ulama were the ones most affected by the changes, as were other groups in society. A detailed account of the centralization of Ottoman vakifs will not be offered here, except for the matter of madrasa incomes.

Research on the ulama and religious endowments indicates that madrasa vakifs were operational until the first decades of the nineteenth century. There are some examples of functional vakifs in the provinces.⁶⁸ But the more problematic issue is the case of Istanbul mudarrises. The registers of the Fatih Complex (*Fatih*

⁶⁶ The state intervention in the vakifs was not unprecedented in Ottoman history. In fact, the state had frequently resorted to vakif revenues to patch its financial deficits in the past. See Rifa'at Abou-el-Haj, *The Rebellion of 1703 and the Structure of Ottoman Politics*, (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaelo, 1984), p. 81; Rifa'at Abou-el-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State, the Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 54-55.

⁶⁷ Nazif Öztürk, *Türk Yenilesme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakif Müessesesi*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), pp. 81-86.

⁶⁸ A case in Amasya in 1835 talks about the tension between a madrasa teacher receiving a stipend from a vakif and the local officials insisting on imposing a tax on him, though the mudarris was supposed to be exempted from such tax. Cevdet Maarif 4249 [29 October 1835].

Külliyesi) in Istanbul show that these mudarrises received salaries from the complex vakif in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁹ This suggests that the religious endowments were among the resources from which madrasa teachers in Istanbul earned their livelihood before the centralization process began. The available research on this, however, does not allow us to determine exactly the extent to which religious endowments in Istanbul constituted a major resource of income for madrasa teachers. At this point, it should be noted that personnel files for madrasa teachers during the Hamidian period consist of various documents concerning their financial situation. Some mudarrises received very small salaries from the vakifs not for teaching, but for work such as recitation of the hadith from the collection of *al-Sahih al-Bukhari* (*Buharî-hanlık*) and reading prayers (*duâhanlık*).

However, most mudarrises were attached to certain madrasas despite the fact that most teaching took place in mosques rather than on madrasa premises. Taking into consideration the scarcity of information on income from vakifs, the connection to the madrasas was nominal—either no financial relation between mudarrises and the religious endowments upon which madrasas were founded, or vakif payments to mudarrises were largely symbolic and why such information does not appear in any personnel files.

Regardless of the stance the vakifs took on paying madrasa teachers in Istanbul, the policy to incorporate madrasa teachers in Istanbul into the Tanzimat reforms first appeared in 1840. The imperial decree held that mudarrises ought to receive their livelihood from the Ministry of Finance on a month-to-month basis.⁷⁰ This certainly marked a turning point in the history of madrasa teaching. Through this new policy, one of the main characteristics of the madrasa system conformed to the new pattern of nineteenth-century Ottoman bureaucracy. All mudarrises who drew salaries from the Ministry of Finance were listed in a special register in the Mesihat.

Nonetheless, the new salary policy did not target all mudarrises teaching in Istanbul. The amount allotted for the salaries of all ulama members reached 25,000

⁶⁹ Fahri Unan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Fatih Külliyesi*, (Ankara: TTK, 2003), p. 235.

⁷⁰ Irade Dah 440, 14 Muharrem 1256 [18 March 1840]; “Bi-iznihî Teâlâ icrasına tesebbüs olunan Tanzimât-i Hayriye iktizasinca... müderrisîn maisetleri... mâh bi-mâh Maliye Hazinesinden itasi nizamât-i mevzua ve muktezay-i irade-i seniyyeden oldugundan...”

kurus a month in 1846, but it did not provide salaries for everyone.⁷¹ Due to a limited budget, another imperial decree points out that special attention should be given to the selection process. Poverty and desperation (*fakr u zaruret*) should be considered when allocating salaries of individual members of the ulama.⁷² Petitions in the archives from mudarrises in Istanbul indicate that economic need played an important role in the monthly salaries of individual madrasa teachers.⁷³ In many cases, opportunities for unsalaried mudarrises to be reimbursed finally had to wait for a mudarris to die and his salary assigned to another.⁷⁴

Obtaining a monthly salary was not the end of the story because most salaries were meagre. For instance, Ahmed Cevdet Pasa's monthly salary was only 150 kurus when he entered the teaching profession in 1845.⁷⁵ This underscored the need for an increase in salaries vis-à-vis the cost of living in Istanbul at that time. Ibrahim Efendi, teaching at the Süleymaniye Madrasa, for example, demanded an increase because his salary of 100 kurus was not sufficient to rent a house rent and pay his other bills.⁷⁶ We do not know what sort of reply he received, but the first increase in salaries were around this time, in 1857. The Seyhülislamate was the ultimate authority on the total sum of the increase to salaried ulama.⁷⁷ Since the Seyhülislamate failed to satisfy all the salary demands and requirements of madrasa teachers, a number of them petitioned for another increase.⁷⁸

A long-standing problem of the reformed Ottoman finance system, mismanagement of the central treasury often resulted in delays in payments in all parts of the Ottoman Empire and its bureaucracy. Madrasa teachers experienced the same logistical problems when it came to getting paid on time as other civil servants. Such problems that sometimes reached crisis proportions were perhaps the reason

⁷¹ Irade Dah 6357, 8 Saban 1262 [1 August 1846].

⁷² Irade Dah 6357, 8 Saban 1262 [1 August 1846].

⁷³ Only for a few examples, see AMKT NZD 177/71, 18 Rebiulevvel 1262 [16 March 1846]; A MKT NZD 31/85, 2 Cemaziyelahir 1267 [9 April 1851]; A DVN 98/40, 15 Cemaziyelahir 1269 [26 March 1853]; A MKT NZD 268/71, 14 Rebiülahir 1275 [14 November 1858].

⁷⁴ A MKT NZD 248/20, 9 Cemaziyelevvel 1274 [24 December 1857]; A MKT NZD 268/711, 4 Rebiülahir 1275 [14 November 1858].

⁷⁵ Fatma Aliye Hanim, *Ahmet Cevdet Pasa ve Zamani*, (Istanbul: Pinar Yayinlari, 1994), p. 48.

⁷⁶ A DVN 100/10, 1270 [1853-54].

⁷⁷ A MKT NZD 208/52, 9 Cemaziyelevvel 1273 [5 January 1857].

⁷⁸ A MKT NZD 218/36, 28 Receb 1273 [24 March 1857].

why Tanzimat reformers were not enthusiastic supporters of a policy that would add madrasa teachers to the long list of state employees, giving priority to civil servants as a rule.⁷⁹

From Exclusion to Inclusion: Expansion of Salary System in the Hamidian Period

The time of Abdülhamid II is usually seen as a period of authoritarian rule, Islamist policies applied domestically and internationally. Whether there is any divergence between the Hamidian period and the preceding Tanzimat period in terms of Islamist policies is disputed by the experts. Yet, it seems certain that, though the emergence of the salary system and its application to madrasa teachers took place in the Tanzimat period, the Hamidian regime expanded the salary system over to the madrasa teachers first in Istanbul and then in the provinces. While the adoption of such an inclusive policy agreed with the general characteristics of the period, it marks a clear discrepancy between the two periods and reflects the firm determination of Hamidian rulers towards Islamist policies.

As mentioned above, in the Tanzimat period, the salary system for madrasa teachers was applied selectively and the exclusionist nature of the new salary policy was made explicit in the official documents. Probably, this continued until the first years of Hamidian rule. Undeniably, Abdülhamid II wanted good relations with the ulama from the early days of his reign. In this regard, he sometimes sought the support of low-ranking ulama or mosque imams and primary school teachers through financial gestures.⁸⁰

The first major alteration of the Tanzimat policy occurred in 1882 through an imperial decree issued by Abdülhamid II that proposed to provide a monthly salary of 100 kuruş to every newcomer to the teaching profession and to those who were

⁷⁹ The complexity and difficulties caused by financial centralization sometimes led to disputes between state departments in the Tanzimat period. The increase in the salaries of librarians (*hafiz-i kütüb*), for example, brought about some tension between the Ministries of Education (*Maarif Nezareti*) and Religious Endowments (*Evkaf Nezareti*). The issue was settled by the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vâlâ*) and the Prime Ministry, which commissioned the Ministry of Religious Endowments to pay the increase in dispute; A MKT NZD 289/56 (c.1860).

⁸⁰ The mosque imams, primary school teachers and other ulama members in Iskodra (*Skutari*) in the Rumeli Province were given imperial stipends upon the celebration of the end of Ramadan. The ulama were asked to preach in mosques in loyalty to the Muslim public; YEE 146/27, 30 Ramazan 1297 [8 July 1880].

already in the profession but without a salary, and also to provide an increase for those who already had a salary.⁸¹ Several points seemingly set out as criteria for the distribution of salary were also mentioned in the imperial decree: access to the profession via an entrance examination, having completed a study circle and awarded a diploma (*ikmâl-i nüsh ile icazet vermiş olan*), and being currently engaged in teaching. Later implementations of the new system point out that a precise application of the above criteria was firmly observed. For instance, almost a year after the salary system was revamped, a salary request by a certain Safranbolulu Receb Efendi, who talked about his poverty, was rejected because Efendi did not meet the criterion of being actively engaged in teaching.⁸² This case points to another deviation from the Tanzimat in which poverty was considered one of the criteria for being granted a better salary.

The decree of 1882 also proposed to declare the change in the madrasa teachers' salary system via the press.⁸³ This suggests that one of the official motivations behind the change was to shape Muslim public opinion through two channels: first, the press, and second the exploitation of opportunities presented by madrasa teachers who were traditionally assumed to have influence on Muslim society.

Expansion of the salary system to almost all madrasa teachers does not necessarily mean that the system worked satisfactorily and that all objectives were met. The long-lasting problems of the Ottoman financial system, such as payment delays, did not entirely evaporate in the Hamidian period, either. As a result of such problems, a kind of group solidarity among madrasa teachers in Istanbul began to emerge, evidenced by documents from of the period. When a long delay in salary payments took place in 1884, 27 madrasa teachers petitioned the palace, complaining about the difficulties caused by the deferment, for they lived solely on their salaries.⁸⁴ The problem was immediately solved by the palace. The Ministry of Finance paid all deferred salaries the following day.⁸⁵

⁸¹ YA Hus 171/109, 18 Zilhicce 1299 [31 October 1882].

⁸² MMTKHD 50/ 9 Muharrem 1301 [10 November 1883].

⁸³ YA Hus 171/109, 18 Zilhicce 1299 [31 October 1882].

⁸⁴ YA Hus 176/56, 25 Receb 1301 [21 May 1884].

⁸⁵ YA Hus 176/56, 26 Receb 1301 [22 May 1884].

In the meantime, delayed payment was not confined to madrasa teachers. The mosque personnel (*eimme ve hutabâ*) of Istanbul appear to have suffered from the same problem. The interesting point here, which probably indicates the general atmosphere of the times, is that salaries were not paid despite an imperial decree, mosque personnel preparing to leave their duties and to shut down all the mosques in Istanbul in protest.⁸⁶ Consequently, the Ministries of Evkaf and Security inquired whether such preparations among the mosque personnel were really taking place. Upon investigation, the information proved to be false.⁸⁷ Despite this, it is interesting to see how the ulama were demonized by the political actors at the time. Therefore, one may assume that the reconstruction of the Ottoman centre and incorporation of the ulama resulted in new levels of professional consciousness among members of the Ottoman ulama so that they could cooperate to improve working conditions.⁸⁸

To keep the salary system functional, Abdülhamid II diligently monitored the performance of the system. A memorandum sent by the Grand Vizier Kâmil Pasa to the Ministry of Finance illustrates the manner in which relations between madrasa teachers and Hamidian authorities developed vis-à-vis the salary system. In the memorandum, Kâmil Pasa asked the Minister of Finance about the deferred salaries of madrasa teachers who petitioned the palace for payment.⁸⁹ At this point, it should be mentioned that in his new memorandum, Kâmil Pasa talked about two previous imperial decrees, dated 23 November 1885 and 6 April 1886, dealing with the salary problem. Previous imperial decrees had called for all deferred salaries to be paid without further delay because the sultan allegedly “never tolerates any suffering inflicted on them with deferring their salaries which are so small [anyway].”⁹⁰ On the very same day of the memorandum, the minister extracted the needed amount from

⁸⁶ YA Hus 176/56, 28 Rebiulevvel 1301 [27 January 1884]

⁸⁷ YA Hus 176/56, 6 Rebiulahir 1301 [4 February 1884].

⁸⁸ The idea of striking for better pay was not unusual at the time. Since the early 1860s, many strikes for deferred salaries took place; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, “Osmanlı Sanayi İşçisi Sınıfının Doğusu, 1839-1923,” in D.Quataret and E.J.Zurcher (eds), *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sine İşçiler*, (Istanbul: İletisim, 1998), p.30. These were followed by strikes to demand increases in salaries. For example, just a couple of years before the incident above, post office workers had gone on strike because high inflation devalued their wages, Ali Akyıldız, *Para Pul Oldu: Osmanlı'da Kağıt Para Maliye ve Toplum*, (Istanbul: İletisim, 2003), p.282.

⁸⁹ YA Hus 190/46, 8 Receb 1303 [12 April 1886].

⁹⁰ YA Hus 190/46, 8 Receb 1303 [12 April 1886].

the budget reserved for last minute military expenses (*masârif-i fevkalâde-i askeriye*).⁹¹

In 1891, the amount of the total salary payment to madrasa teachers in Istanbul reached 160,000 kurus a year.⁹² The increase in the total amount, it has been said, was due to the fact that newcomers to the profession began to receive 200 kurus a month after the mid-Hamidian period.⁹³ Nevertheless, the system needed to be rectified because of emergent problems. The abundance of madrasa teachers who persistently drew a salary after leaving active teaching posts and joining the judicial ranks—which had its own separate payment system—produced unrest among madrasa teachers in Istanbul. In fact, the salaries of those who left the profession were supposed to be used as a new resource for newcomers and increasing existing salaries. Disturbed by such problems, 61 madrasa teachers did not hesitate to submit their complaints to the palace in December 1891.⁹⁴ In another case, the palace wrote to the Ministry of Finance: “Any delay hereafter would bear a responsibility [upon you, the minister]!”⁹⁵

Hamidian rule took every opportunity to show its generosity to mudarrises. As mentioned, Sultan Abdülhamid II provided the new mudarrises with four liras from his privy purse (*Hazine-i Hassa*) over four years, until they received official salaries from the Ministry of Finance.⁹⁶ The holy month of Ramazan was reserved for this purpose. During this month, every year, some madrasa teachers were assigned to preach in mosques and paid for their services.⁹⁷ Preaching was given a great deal of significance by the Hamidian regime. Financial support was not the only manifestation of Hamidian support for the ulama, for preachers were also strictly monitored by the palace, as well as religious and security authorities. For example, based on information gathered by the Palace at the beginning of Ramazan in 1900, the Seyhülislam’s office and the police were instructed to stop non-qualified

⁹¹ YA Hus 190/46, 8 Receb 1303 [12 April 1886].

⁹² Y PRK BSK 30 Rebiülevvel 1309 [3 December 1891].

⁹³ “Dersiam,” in Pakalin, *Osmanli Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. 1, p. 427.

⁹⁴ Y PRK BSK 30 Rebiülevvel 1309 [3 December 1891].

⁹⁵ “[B]undan ba’dema tehure düsürülmesi mücib-i mesuliyet olacagından,” YEE 150/24 24 Cemaziyelahir 1317 [28 November 1899].

⁹⁶ “Dersiam,” in Pakalin, *Osmanli Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. 1, p. 427.

⁹⁷ Dah-Reft 5/24, 17 Sevvâl 1311 [23 April 1894].

persons from preaching in mosques. What made the case particularly urgent was the fact that so-called preachers allegedly talked about politics in their sermons.⁹⁸ If a madrasa teacher made such a ‘mistake’, that teacher was exiled without pay.⁹⁹

Additional Jobs for Madrasa Teachers

While the reform movements of the Tanzimat period had certain effects on the madrasa teaching profession, a few old practices persisted among madrasa teachers. First, though dramatic changes took place in the vakif system, mudarrises still had the chance to enjoy some financial opportunities vis-à-vis vakifs in Istanbul. Second, madrasa teachers aspired to positions in state departments and institutions that came into existence as a result of reform.

The first opportunities for mudarrises were educational in nature and involved a kind of religious ritual in specific locations, or positions in the *ilmiye*, such as a judgeship, imamet, and administrative position in the Seyhülislamate Office.

Recitation of some hadith collections in religious places such as mosques was a common practice in Ottoman socio-cultural life. The reciter was usually selected from among the ulama or madrasa student body¹⁰⁰ and paid a stipend from the vakif from which the post originated. However, in some cases, a person could obtain multiple vakif duties and thus make a considerable amount of money. A *dersiam* in Bayezid Mosque, for example, reported that he had four vakif appointments in total for recitation of different religious texts and prayers in different places and earned around 350 kurus a month in addition to his salary of 400 kurus for madrasa teaching.¹⁰¹

This practice continued even after the inception of vakif reforms in the mid-1820s. In 1833, for example, seven members of the ulama were appointed to recite *Sifa-i Serif*, a well-known book on the Prophet Muhammad’s life and moral

⁹⁸ YEE 5/19, 1 Ramazan 1318 [25 October 1900].

⁹⁹ Irade Hus 10 Safer 1321/34 [8 May 1903].

¹⁰⁰ Ahmed Cevdet Pasa talks about his recitation experience during his study in Istanbul in his autobiography. Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, *Tezâkir: 40-Tetimme*, (Ankara: TTK, 1991), p. 6.

¹⁰¹ USAD, no: 3768.

values,¹⁰² each receiving 48 kurus 48 para.¹⁰³ There are also many examples during the Tanzimat period of widespread uses of the post like this one, five madrasa teachers applying for recitation posts in 1855.¹⁰⁴

Apart from such posts, there were also symbolic teaching posts reserved solely for members of the ulama. Mahmud Cemaleddin Efendi¹⁰⁵ was teaching in Fatih Mosque at the time, for instance, and applied for a recently vacated post to teach hadith (*muhaddislik*) in the madrasa of Abdülhamid I in Istanbul.¹⁰⁶ This post, *muhaddislik*, in fact, was no longer an active teaching post, but a source of income for its holder. Though not mentioned in the archival documents, this nominal post earned Mahmud Celaleddin Efendi some extra money which came from the Evkaf Treasury.

Having had a look at the relationship between madrasa teachers and ulama jobs during the period, we can now deal with madrasa teachers in the reformed state apparatus as members of the new Ottoman bureaucracy. The point here is not to determine the quantitative participation of madrasa teachers¹⁰⁷ but rather the composition of the Ottoman centre from the point of view of madrasa teachers. A survey of their participation will demonstrate the relationship with the Ottoman centre during the age of reform. In this regard, the evidence will be the correspondence between various state departments at the time.

It is not clear how frequently madrasa teachers joined the civil bureaucracy. The case of Ibrahim Rüşdi Efendi illustrates the range of posts that were in demand. It is understood from an undated document, likely originating in the early Tanzimat period, that he had a deep personal interest in the world outside the Ottoman Empire and travelled all over Europe when he could. His knowledge of Persian took him to

¹⁰² Abu al-Fadl 'Iyadh b. Musa (d. 1149), *Kitab al-Shifa' bi Ta'rif al-Huquq al-Mustafa*.

¹⁰³ Cevdet Maarif 4447, 6 Cemaziyelahir 1248 [26 February 1833].

¹⁰⁴ A MKT 84/93, 27 Muharrem 1272 [9 October 1855].

¹⁰⁵ Ebü'l-Ula Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, (Istanbul: Ismail Akgün Matbaasi, 1966), vols 2-3, pp.267-68.

¹⁰⁶ Y MTV 100/69, 19 Muharrem 1312 [23 July 1894].

¹⁰⁷ Not madrasa teachers, per se, but the Ottoman ulama as a whole during the period of reform are the subject of a quantitative analysis, see Cihan, *Reform Çağında*. Cihan mainly deals with the quantitative presence of the ulama members in the Ottoman decision-making mechanisms. Ruth Austin Miller recently conducted additional quantitative research on Ottoman ulama in the new-style judicial posts, such as in the *nizamiye* courts. See Ruth Austin Miller, "From Fikh to Fascism: The Turkish Republican Adoption of Mussolini Criminal Code in the Context of Late Ottoman Legal Reform," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University (2003), pp.35-42.

Iran, where he worked for the Ottoman Embassy as a dragoman. Since his service in Iran was considered satisfactory by his superiors, they encouraged Ibrahim Rüsdi Efendi to leave madrasa teaching and work in the office of foreign affairs, making an official application on his behalf.¹⁰⁸

During the Tanzimat period, and later, it was typical of madrasa teachers to seek a career in the civil bureaucracy.¹⁰⁹ Among the many professional fields, interest in the field of education, which Ottoman reformers imbued with extraordinary significance, proved most alluring, indeed. This can be seen even in the first attempts to reform Ottoman education. For example, *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye* (The Imperial School of Learning), founded in 1838, was largely staffed by the ulama.¹¹⁰ It is significant that madrasa teachers at the time deliberately wished to join this school's faculty. Ruscuklu Ali Efendi, another mudarris in Istanbul, was appointed to the school as a teacher because the former teacher Tevhid Efendi had left. Ruscuklu Ali was probably attracted to this new job due because of its relatively high salary—1500 kurus a month. That the appointment of Ruscuklu Ali took place after a proficiency examination¹¹¹ suggests that the position was in high demand and, therefore, the applicants were required to compete.

This does not explain the whole subject but does suggest the direction taken by people in madrasa teaching. There are many examples of madrasa teachers who joined the ranks of the new educational institutions. The case of Sahin Efendi proves quite significant. He was recommended by the Minister of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umûmiye Naziri*) to be appointed a member of the Council of Education (*Meclis-i Maarif*). On 20 April 1868, an imperial decree was issued.¹¹² This date is close to when the council prepared a report to the Grand Vizier on issues related to Qur'anic schools (*sibyan mektebi*), outlining the measures that the council considered

¹⁰⁸ Irade Dah 528/1 [n.d.].

¹⁰⁹ Irade Dah 43935, 19 Safer 1288 [10 May 1871].

¹¹⁰ Ergin, *Maarif Tarihi*, vol.1-2, p.397.

¹¹¹ Irade Dah 349, 1255 [c.1839]. The salary specified in Osman Nuri Ergin's work does not correspond with the one mentioned in the document. The document states that the new teacher Ruscuklu Ali Efendi was to take over the salary of the former teacher, Tevhid Efendi. Therefore, the difference may be due to the special status of Tevhid Efendi about which we do not have any information. Ergin, *Maarif Tarihi*, vol.1-2, p.397.

¹¹² Irade Dah 39989, 27 Zilhicce 1284.

necessary in order to reform such religious centres of learning.¹¹³ It is also noteworthy that his appointment was followed by the Regulation of Public Education, introduced by the Ministry of Education on 1 September 1869.¹¹⁴ This regulation was a crucial development, providing a legal framework for reforms in the field of Ottoman education. Even though the objectives were not fully attained, they certainly influenced the direction of educational reform during the late Ottoman period and, to some extent, the Republican period as well. The appearance of a madrasa teacher in the ranks of a newly founded, reform-minded state institution is revealing, the attitude of experts in Islamic learning toward reform in the late Ottoman period a positive one. This was not limited to the formative years of reform, but characteristic of later periods as well.¹¹⁵

Madrasa teachers also held teaching positions in the new schools. The existence of madrasa teachers on staff (mostly *rüsdîyes* and *idadis*) became more visible in the late Tanzimat period and increasingly during the Hamidian era and a result of rapid increase in the number of such schools and staff rather than due to a major shift in educational policy.¹¹⁶

Madrasa teachers were usually hired as *muallims*, or school teachers, in order to teach Islamic subjects, language, and literature courses in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. Although Mehmed Sabit Efendi, a *dersiam* in Fatih Mosque, taught Islamic jurisprudence,¹¹⁷ Burdurlu Mustafa Hilmi Efendi's teaching duties included a combination of courses on Ottoman grammar (*kavaid-i Osmaniye*), Arabic, and a variety of religious subjects (*ulum-i diniye*).¹¹⁸ There were madrasa teachers who taught specific Islamic subjects (*akaid*)¹¹⁹ and Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*).¹²⁰ It was

¹¹³ Selçuk Aksin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire: 1839-1908, Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001), pp. 45-46.

¹¹⁴ Ali Akyıldız "Maârif-i Umûmiyye Nezâreti," *DIA*; Somel, *The Modernization*, pp. 86-90. Although this regulation was created in the time of Abdülaziz, Abdülhamid widely used it and tried to achieve the objectives set up by it. For its application in the Hamidian era, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp. 91-93, 98-99.

¹¹⁵ For instance, in the late Hamidian period, an imperial decree was issued appointing Mehmed Efendi, who was a *mudarris* teaching in Fatih Mosque in Istanbul, to the Ministry of Public Education. See Irade Hus, 7 Rebiülahir 1322/38 [21 June 1904].

¹¹⁶ For a few examples, see Mehmed Lütfi Efendi, USAD no 3389 and Mehmed Emin Efendi, USAD no: 3469. Both madrasa teachers taught in new schools in late Tanzimat.

¹¹⁷ Alaiyeli Mehmed Sabit Efendi, USAD, no:3403.

¹¹⁸ Burdurlu Mustafa Hilmi Efendi, USAD, no: 3440.

¹¹⁹ Salih Sabri Efendi, USAD, no: 191.

also possible to see dersiams as muallim offering subjects that differed from the usual ones such as geography.¹²¹ The available data indicates that most madrasa teachers worked as muallim without a diploma from a teachers' college. Yet, there were also those who graduated from teachers' college (*Darülmualimin*), others having passed a special examination necessary to become a muallim. The above mentioned Mustafa Hilmi Efendi, for example, began his teaching career in Eyüb Sultan Military Veterinary Secondary School (*Askeri Baytar Rüşdiyesi*) after taking such a special examination.¹²²

Administrative positions at some schools were sometimes held by madrasa teachers who were also teachers' college graduates, rising in the profession more quickly than others as a result. Izmitli Mehmed Emin Efendi, dersiam in Bayezid Mosque who also completed his study in Istanbul Darülmualimin, was appointed principal to a provincial rüşdiye school in 1877. His teaching career led to membership in the Grand Council of Education (*Meclis-i Kebir-i Maarif*) in 1901, a key legislative body in the Ottoman educational system.¹²³ Moreover, a certain Ishak Efendi, dersiam in Süleymaniye Mosque who had graduated from Istanbul Darülmualimin, was appointed vice-principal (*muallim-i sani*) to Beylerbeyi Rüşdiyesi in Istanbul at the very beginning of his career. He was later promoted to inspectorate of rüşdiye schools (*rüşdiye müfettişliği*) in the Ministry of Education.¹²⁴ Madrasa teachers also taught in private schools as well as state schools.

The salaries for such teaching added significantly to the livelihood of madrasa teachers. They were sometimes paid more for teaching at the new schools than at madrasa schools, although salaries varied. For example, a muallim reported that he earned 1,000 kurus a month for teaching at two schools at the same time.¹²⁵ Salaries varied widely. This was due to the fact that some schools ran their own

¹²⁰ Rizeli Hafız Ahmed Rifat Efendi, USAD, 3427.

¹²¹ Dobrucali Mehmed Nuri Efendi, a dersiam in Süleymaniye Mosque, also graduated from Istanbul Darülfunun. See USAD, no: 226.

¹²² Burdurlu Mustafa Hilmi Efendi, USAD, no: 3440.

¹²³ Izmitli Mehmed Emin Efendi, USAD, no: 3469.

¹²⁴ Rizeli Hafız Ishak Nuri Efendi, USAD, no: 197.

¹²⁵ Alaiyeli Mehmed Sabit Efendi, USAD, no: 3403.

budgets, while others depended on state finances.¹²⁶ Administrative positions also paid better as a rule.¹²⁷

ICAZET, MADRASA TEACHERS AND SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN ISTANBUL MADRASAS

The Ottoman madrasa system relied on mudarrises, bringing about two results. First, madrasa students selected their mudarris rather than a madrasa to study. Second, the diploma (*icazet*) was a certificate issued by madrasa teachers (*müderriş* and *dersiam*) not the madrasa itself. Therefore, it is not possible to determine from an *icazet* with precision where graduates studied. Yet, a chain of teachers going back to the Prophet Muhammad, in many cases, and the subjects taught can be seen in the *icazet*. This was a traditional feature of madrasa *icazets* and distinctive vis-à-vis the modern concept of diploma adopted in the new schools during the late Ottoman period.

The *icazet* was based on the authority of the teacher who awarded it, and its basic function was to enable the graduate to teach others, connecting him to the larger tradition of Islamic scholarship. The style of *icazets* was not uniform but personal and unique in several respects, including such things as prayers to God, praise for the Prophet and for acquiring knowledge, the names of books one studied, moral instruction on how a teacher ought to act, as well as a long genealogy of teachers. Last but not least, the *icazet* was signed and dated by the awarding teacher alone with no further approval required.¹²⁸

After extensive reforms to the madrasa system during the Young Turk era, madrasa *icazets* took a new form. Uniformity in shape and style meant that *icazets* were indistinguishable from the diplomas awarded by the new schools. The awarding authority shifted from teacher to institution as the *icazet* was signed by teachers who taught a specific subject, as well as such higher administrative authorities as the head of the teachers' committee (*meclis-i müderrişin reisi*) and director of the madrasa

¹²⁶ For such a case, see Dobrucali Mehmed Nuri Efendi, USAD, no: 226.

¹²⁷ To compare salaries for different teaching and administrative positions in new schools, see Mehmed Tayyib Efendi, USAD, no: 3524; Mustafa Hilmi Efendi, USAD, no: 3440; Rizeli İshak Nuri Efendi, USAD, no: 197.

¹²⁸ Hüseyin Atay, *Osmanlılarda Yüksek Din Eğitimi, Medrese Programları- İcazetnâmeler- İslahat Hareketleri*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1983), pp. 102-04.

concerned.¹²⁹ Such changes reflected a shift in authority and understanding of knowledge from traditional to modern as an outcome of the reforms of the Young Turks, a process ending in the closure of the madrasa in the early years of the Republican period.¹³⁰

The Ottoman icazets, including those awarded in the nineteenth century, reflect the scholarly roots of the ulama. Accordingly, Ottoman scholarship stretches back to al-Ghazali (d. 1111), whose works and views were a major turning point in the history of Islamic theology (*kelam*) in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries vis-à-vis his incorporation of Aristotelian logic into Islamic theology. In addition to his theoretical contribution, his teacher, al-Juwayni (d. 1085), as well as al-Ghazali's students played crucial roles in defending Sunni Islam against Ismaili Shi'ism via the Nizamiya Madrasas.¹³¹

The teachings of al-Ghazali and his eminent follower Fakhraddin al-Razi came to Anatolia via their students who taught in madrasas during the Seljuqid and Ilkhanid periods.¹³² The Ottoman madrasas were a continuation of the madrasa tradition that emerged in the region as reflected in the deeds of religious endowments that certain Ilkhanid and Ottoman madrasas were based on, and more importantly in the chains of scholars in Ottoman icazets that reach back to al-Ghazali through Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani, Qutbaddin al-Shirazi, Nasiruddin al-Tusi and Fakhraddin al-Razi.¹³³

The subjects taught in Ottoman madrasas, particularly in Istanbul, were not determined by state authorities. In theory, subjects and books were settled by the founder of the madrasa endowment. However, in practice, the books taught, especially in the nineteenth century, suggest a connection to a tradition composed over centuries that prevailed in Istanbul. This tradition was not officially constituted

¹²⁹ Atay, *Osmanlılarda Yüksek*, pp. 128-30.

¹³⁰ For an interesting analysis on the textual impacts of legal modernization, which took place in Yemen, on judicial documentation, comparing fatwa texts and official forms used in modern judiciary, see Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 231-50.

¹³¹ Majid Fakhri, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 223-228 and Josef van Ess, *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 39-44.

¹³² Ismail Hakki Uzunçarsili, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teskilati*, (Ankara: TTK, 1988), pp. 76-77; Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, "Osmanlı Medrese geleneginin Dogusu," *Bellekten*, 247 (2002), p. 881.

¹³³ İhsanoğlu, "Osmanlı Medrese," p. 882.

but greatly influenced particularly by the regulations of madrasas founded under the sultans, namely Fatih and Süleymaniye Madrasas opened in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, respectively.¹³⁴

Teaching in Istanbul madrasas operated according to a flexible curriculum that consisted of different subjects and books depending on the preferences of different teachers and madrasas. There was a core set of books considered compulsory in order to obtain an icazet, but madrasa students could study a variety of subjects from different scholars in the madrasa in Istanbul.

For the nineteenth century, there is no official document listing the subjects and books to be studied in Istanbul madrasas. But there are several sources of information that provide a partial picture of what went on. According to these sources, the core curriculum consisted of Arabic morphology and syntax (*sarf ü nahiv*), Arabic rhetoric (*belagat*), logic (*mantik*), Islamic theology (*kelam*), and Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*). Many different books on these subjects were read in Istanbul madrasas according to the needs, wishes, and preferences of teachers, students, founders of the madrasa endowments, and state authorities.¹³⁵

Concerning the subjects and books taught in Istanbul madrasas, three points are noteworthy vis-à-vis the nature of madrasa education. Firstly, the primary subject studied was usually Arabic grammar, syntax, and logic. The main rationale behind this was to prepare students to enter the larger Islamic scholarly world. It would not be wrong to claim that these subjects were the keys to reaching, studying, and understanding the Islamic cultural and intellectual heritage. The later stages of madrasa education also certainly required mastery in these fields. Secondly, Islamic theology was largely that of the Ashari school.¹³⁶ This is interesting due to the fact that the Ottomans belonged to the Hanafi (legal) school, suggesting a joining of

¹³⁴ For the role of official regulations of Fatih and Süleymaniye Madrasas on the whole Ottoman madrasa system, see Uzunçarsili, *Osmanli Devletinin*, pp. 7-10, 33-38.

¹³⁵ For a comprehensive list of books read in Ottoman madrasas and brief information about their contents, see Cevat Izgi, *Osmanli Medreselerinde İlim*, 2 vols., (Istanbul: İz Yayincilik, 1997).

¹³⁶ There are two main Sunni theological schools in the Muslim world; the Ash'arism and the Maturidism. The former was first founded by Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari (d. 941) in the tenth century and underwent development through his pupils, in particular al-Ghazali and Fakhraddin al-Razi. The latter came from Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 945) whose views usually prevailed in the regions where the Hanafi school of law was practiced. For further information on the history of Islamic theological thought, see Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: An Extended Survey*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997).

Hanafi legal doctrine and Maturidi theological teaching. Although they adopted the Hanafi interpretation of Islamic law, Ashari interpretation dominated the theological education in madrasas in Istanbul and many other parts of the empire vis-à-vis the books by such authors as al-Ijī (d. 1335), Taftazani (d. 1382) and al-Jurjani (d. 1413).¹³⁷

One may consider the dominance of Ashari thought as a continuation of the Nizamiya madrasa tradition of al-Ghazali and his followers who played a crucial role in the codification and dissemination of Ashari thought. Yet, politics was also a factor, particularly in the struggle against the Shi'i interpretation of leadership (*imamet*).

The question of eligibility for the caliphate (*hilafet* or *imamet*) and choosing a caliph was a political matter for the Sunni ulama compared to the Shi'i who regarded it as a theological matter. Nonetheless, Sunni theological works began to expound such an interpretation after al-Ashari in order to defend the Sunni stand against Shi'i expansion.¹³⁸ In the meantime, some Ashari theologians also discussed another related issue, namely, that the caliph must be a descendant from the Quraysh, the tribe to which the Prophet Muhammad belonged, and refuted such a condition.¹³⁹ This did much to bring in a more moderate understanding of the caliphate in Sunni circles. After all, this in reality served the interests of non-Qurayshi Sunni caliphs against Shi'i rivals, lending credence to Sunni authority throughout the Muslim world.

The other subject that came to the fore in madrasas was Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*). Given the text books on the subject, it is clear that the Ottomans adopted the Hanafi school of law. Although the sources mention the titles of many legal works, some were redundant. In the nineteenth century, two legal works are mentioned in

¹³⁷ Ahmet Ocak, "Osmanlı Medreselerinde Es'ari Geleneginin Oluşmasında Selçuklu Medreselerinin Tesirleri," 13. *Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara, 4-8 Ekim 1999: Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, v. 3, (Ankara: TTK, 2002).

¹³⁸ İhsan Fazlıoğlu, "Osmanlı Düşünce Geleneginde 'Siyasi Metinler' Olarak Kelam Kitapları," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 1/2 (2003), pp. 382-83.

¹³⁹ For example, al-Baqillani (d. 1013) and Sadr al-Sharia' (d. 1346). See Fazlıoğlu, "Osmanlı Düşünce," pp. 388-89.

the main: *Mülteka* and *Dürer*.¹⁴⁰ The first of these was a combination of some other works in Islamic jurisprudence widely circulated in Ottoman madrasas,¹⁴¹ central to the madrasa and sharia judiciary.¹⁴²

The influence of the first, the *Mülteka*, on the Ottoman sharia judiciary in the nineteenth century was something foreigners observed as “the Ottoman code of law.”¹⁴³ Through madrasa legal education, the *Mülteka* played a decisive role in the application of sharia law. It was also consulted in the compilation of the first Ottoman codification of Islamic law, or *Mecelle*, between 1869 and 1876.¹⁴⁴ The second, the *Dürer*, was another widely studied source for legal education in Istanbul madrasas of the period. It was a part of the curriculum of the new school for sharia judges, or *Muallimhane-i Nivvab*, established in 1855, and designed to provide advanced training to madrasa graduates and those close to graduating.¹⁴⁵ This is striking because the curriculum of this new school was designed primarily to instruct students in the art of legal procedure. Meanwhile, *Dürer* as a textbook was still included in the curriculum in 1908 long after the implementation of the *Mecelle*.¹⁴⁶

The subjects taught in Istanbul madrasas were not limited to these. A broader set of subjects that were studied upon request—which might include religious texts like the *Hadis* (the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad) and *Tefsir* (Qur’anic commentary) as well as non-religious texts. Such non-religious subjects included

¹⁴⁰ While *Mülteka* stands for *al-Multeqa al-Abhur* composed by Ibrahim b. Muhammad Halabi (d. 1549), *Dürer* was used to refer to *Durar al-Hukkam fi Sharhi Ghurar al-Ahkam* written by Molla Khusraw (d. 1480).

¹⁴¹ Selim Sükrü Has, “The Use of *Multaqa’l-Abhur* in the Ottoman Madrasas and in Legal Scholarship,” *Osmanli Arastirmalari*, 7-8 (1988), p. 395.

¹⁴² Uzunçarsili, *Osmanli Devletinin*, p. 115 fn 1.

¹⁴³ Has, “The Use of *Multaqa*,” pp. 397, 402-04, 407-08.

¹⁴⁴ Has, “The Use of *Multaqa*,” pp. 409-11. The author evidently demonstrates the affinities between *Mülteka* and *Mecelle*. For intriguing extractions from *Mülteka* that were integrated into *Mecelle* as articles, see Has, “The Use of *Multaqa*,” pp. 414-18. For details about the formation of *Mecelle*, see Ebul-Ula Mardin, *Medeni Hukuk Cephesinden Ahmed Cevdet Pasa*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi, 1996) and Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 54-58.

¹⁴⁵ Jun Akiba, “A New School for Qadis: Education of the Sharia Judges in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Turcica*, 35 (2003), pp. 125, 139-40. The school took several names from its foundation to its closure and some historians tend to attribute political and cultural meanings to the changes of its name. For a skilful analysis of this particular matter by the author, see pp. 148-55.

¹⁴⁶ This information is provided in the timetable of the school in February 1908. The curriculum also included a number of subjects in sharia and secular laws such as *Mecelle* and the Land Law. But, according to the timetable provided, none of them alone reached the amount of weekly hours of *Dürer* lessons. See Akiba, “A New School,” p. 160.

everything from geometry to philosophy and metaphysics (*hikmet*), to math, astronomy (*heyet*), and linguistics (*ilm-i vad'*). When a madrasa teacher taught a special subject, he awarded a special icazet on the subject to the student.¹⁴⁷

Optional courses made the madrasa more student-centred, providing opportunities for madrasa teachers to teach students in subjects they found personally interesting. The variety of subjects even included the modern sciences, a subject to which I will return later. These subjects were not equal in any sense to the traditional component of the madrasa curriculum, but due to several reasons such as the rise of the Ottoman press, opportunities to study at European universities and the establishment of new schools in modern medicine and engineering, many madrasa teachers had access to the modern curriculum and sciences, possessing just enough knowledge to teach across curricula. Although the extent of such interest and teaching has not yet been fully established, a nucleus of such modern teaching in madrasa milieu existed in Istanbul in the nineteenth century.

CHALLENGES TO THE TRADITIONAL MADRASA CURRICULUM AND THE IDEA OF REFORM

A number of traditional aspects of Ottoman madrasa education remained in force in the late Ottoman period, like the core curriculum and icazet. Nonetheless, before the reforms of the Young Turks, the madrasa system at the time was being challenged from all fronts, with criticism of bureaucrats and ulama underscoring various 'flaws' and three in particular: the age of the curriculum, the poor quality of Arabic instruction, and the length of study.

As mentioned in the Introduction, demands to reform the madrasa system came as early as 1854. It seems that the question of the madrasa was hotly debated in ulama and non-ulama circles. Meanwhile, reform was largely an attempt to integrate the madrasa system into the framework of an emergent modern school system. This would be accomplished by eliminating outdated subject matter and by adding new courses that better served the educational needs of the day.

After the 1860s, the madrasa gradually became a *cause célèbre* in Ottoman society. This was due in part to the Ottoman press and the rise of a new type of intellectual. These critics came from diverse backgrounds. While some were

¹⁴⁷ Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, for example, studied Hadith and was awarded an icazet in this special subject. For this icazet, see YEE 37/111.

bureaucrats, politicians, and journalists, some were also ulama and even madrasa students. Ziya Pasa, a Tanzimat writer, statesman and poet, was someone who frequently wrote for the newspapers. His writings, along with others, were influential and lasting. His critical approach to the madrasa was motivated by practical concerns, such as the need to train officials of the empire. Accordingly, he did not consider madrasa graduates to be competent and thus skilled enough to deal with such difficult matters as provincial governance, state finance, and international relations. He also thought that a madrasa education was too long and thus a complete waste of one's time if public service was the goal.¹⁴⁸

Another early critic of madrasa education was Ali Suavi, a Tanzimat intellectual and activist who was killed in a plot against Abdülhamid to reinstate Murad V (1878).¹⁴⁹ What makes his criticisms worthy of serious consideration is that he bothered to study the traditional curriculum, allowing him to address the issue as an insider of sorts. In the newspapers he published in Istanbul, Paris, and London—written in Turkish as well as in French and English—he commented on a wide array of social, cultural, religious, and political issues at the time, targeting nearly every subject in the madrasa curriculum as problematic. According to him, Arabic grammar, rhetoric, logic, Islamic jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, and metaphysics (*hikmet*) were far from useful, the text books composed ages ago and thus completely outmoded. After many years of studying, he argued, most madrasa students still had no proficiency in Arabic, unable even to write a simple poem in the language of the Prophet. In his view, theology (*kelam*) was mere sophistry (*safsata*).¹⁵⁰ His criticisms are due to a comparison between madrasas subjects and the modern sciences. In his opinion, modern physics, for example, was a useful set of rules and issues and conducive to an increase in industry (*sanayi*).¹⁵¹ The traditional curriculum, in comparison, was woefully inadequate compared to that of the modern sciences.

¹⁴⁸ *Hürriyet* (London), 27 July 1864, cited in Ergin, *Türk Maarif*, vols. 1-2, pp. 105-06.

¹⁴⁹ For the most detailed account of his life, thought and activities, see Hüseyin Çelik, *Ali Suavi ve Dönemi*, (Istanbul: İletisim Yayinlari, 1994).

¹⁵⁰ *Muhbir* (Istanbul), 21 Ramazan 1283 [27 January 1867], cited in Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Eser Yayinlari, 1977), vols. 1-2, pp. 102-03.

¹⁵¹ *Muhbir* (Istanbul), 21 Ramazan 1283 [27 January 1867], cited in Ergin, *Türk Maarif*, vols. 1-2, p. 103.

Ali Suavi concluded that the number of madrasas should be limited and that should provide the religious training necessary for religious posts in the empire, that is, the Seyhülislam Office, sharia courts, madrasas, and muftis. He recommended a degree of updating and thus the addition of some modern sciences to the traditional curriculum such as geography, math, history, and astronomy.¹⁵² He also underscored the need for Turkish language instruction in the madrasa,¹⁵³ which he considered crucial to a career in the law. To support his idea, he translated a set of books in Islamic jurisprudence known as *Fetâvây-i Alemgiriyye*.¹⁵⁴ Soon after this, he translated another Arabic book of Islamic legal methodology (*fiikih usulü*) into Turkish, which he published in his newspaper.¹⁵⁵ Ali Suavi's proposals did not receive any immediate recognition from official authorities at the time, but he did have allies in the cause to Turkify the madrasa.

The challenges of such Tanzimat intellectuals were accompanied by a new law, the *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*, in 1869 and a major turning point in Ottoman educational history. The law became the legal foundation for new schools and also a map for later Ottoman governments and reforms to education. However, it made no mention of madrasa education per se. After the rise of harsh criticism of the madrasa from outside and the fundamental changes to the new school system, a group of ulama members proposed a series of reforms from within the system in 1873. A committee composed of fourteen ulama—mostly high-ranking ulama but madrasa teachers, too—prepared a detailed program for madrasas.¹⁵⁶ Whether it was

¹⁵² "Maarif-i Umumiye," *Ulum* (Paris), no: 7, 1286 [1869], pp. 414-15, cited in Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, pp. 654-55 and reproduced in Seyid Battal Ugurlu, "Ulüm Gazetesi Tematik Incelemesi," MA thesis, Yüzüncü Yil Üniversitesi (1997), pp. 64-65.

¹⁵³ "Maarif-i Umumiye," *Ulum* (Paris), no: 7, 1286 [1869], pp. 414-15, cited in Çelik, *Ali Suavi*, p. 655.

¹⁵⁴ *Le Mukhbir* (London), no:1, 31 August 1867, p. 2, reproduced in Abdülmecit Canatak, "Muhbir Gazetesinin Sistemik Tahlili," MA thesis, Yüzüncü Yil Üniversitesi (1995), p. 38.

¹⁵⁵ *The Mukhbir* (London), no: 40, 25 June 1868, p. 1, reproduced in Canatak, "Muhbir Gazetesinin," p. 38.

¹⁵⁶ *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no: 1570, 15 Safer 1290 [14 April 1873]; *Beyanül-Hak*, no:15, 18 Zilhicce 1326 [11 January 1909]. The date of this report varied according to the sources that published it. It appeared in *Takvim-i Vekayi*, the Official Gazette, in 1873, but the date was mentioned as 1869 in the other source, *Beyanül-Hak*, an Islamist newspaper in the Second Constitutional period, that republished the report in 1909. Moreover, the latter source does not give any explanation for the difference. After all, the information in *Takvim-i Vekayi* looks more reliable. For other evaluations of this report, see Atay, *Osmanlılarda Yüksek*, pp. 189-92; Zeki Salih Zengin, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Örgün Eğitim Kurumlarında Din Eğitimi ve Öğretimi (1839-1876)*, (Istanbul: MEB, 2004), pp. 136-39.

in direct response to madrasa critics at the time is moot. There is no evidence to suggest that it was ever implemented, although some later cases suggest that it was a guide vis-à-vis the subjects taught and text books used.¹⁵⁷

The report shared some concerns of the earlier critics, such as the length of study as a waste of time. It also listed subjects, such as math, astronomy, geometry, and philosophy as optional (*cüziyyat*). But, it toed a conservative line on the core subjects in the madrasas. The maximum length of study was limited to fourteen years in total. The report endeavoured to consolidate madrasa study, but without any major changes to the core curriculum.

In 1880, Safvet Pasa, a major reformer in education during the late Tanzimat and Hamidian era, had an approach similar to that of Ali Suavi, presenting a special report to Abdülhamid on the current state of the madrasa and offering his own solutions. Apart from stressing the age of the madrasa curriculum and suggesting the inclusion of new subjects as Ali Suavi's had, Safvet also pointed out the need to employ teachers (*muallim*) to teach madrasa students in modern sciences such as finance, math, geography, and law. Another radical innovation in the report is highly noticeable: Desks (*sira*) would be located in mosques where madrasa lectures took place.¹⁵⁸ These had already been used in new style schools (*mekâtib*) and represented a clear divergence from the madrasa tradition. Safvet's proposal diverged slightly from that of Suavi. When his reforms were implemented, the state would consequently have many trained judges in sharia and secular courts and provincial administrators (*mutasarrif, kaymakam*).¹⁵⁹ After all, a report that hoped to alter the madrasa curriculum and thus expand opportunities for madrasa graduates was never put into practice though similar ideas would resurface.

Disputes over the madrasa curriculum included madrasa students. In the late 1880s, ninety-two madrasa students from Istanbul wrote the sultan directly in a petition, avoiding the press and thus exposure to a wider audience. They reported on the problems of the madrasa from a student's point of view. They complained about the length of madrasa study, which they believed could be completed in seven or

¹⁵⁷ Ebul-ula Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, (Istanbul: Ismail Akgün Matbaası, 1966), v. 2, pp. 327, 347, 349.

¹⁵⁸ YEE 43/114, 20 Muharrem 1297 [3 January 1880]; Atilla Çetin, "Medreselerin Islahına Dair Safvet Pasa'nın Düşünceleri ve Bir Arizası," *Türk Dünyası Tarih Dergisi*, 95 (1994), pp. 17-18.

¹⁵⁹ YEE 43/114, 20 Muharrem 1297 [3 January 1880]; Çetin, "Medreselerin Islahına," p. 18.

eight years. Their solution to the problem of the duration of study was ingenious as well as revealing: those subjects that proved too difficult ought simply to be removed from the curriculum, although they failed to mention which ones. The central demand in the petition was for Abdülhamid himself to take the initiative and reform the madrasas via an order (*intizam*). To support this, they referred to the many improvements undertaken by the sultan in other fields, again without mentioning them specifically and education clearly understood to be among them. A similar style of writing and memorandum can be seen in a petition sent by the provincial director of education (*Maarif Müdürü*) of Sivas to Sakir Pasa, the Inspector of Reforms in Anatolia. In it, the local director praised the new schools as a corollary of the sultan's intervention, pointing out the disarray that existed in the madrasas by comparison and thus likely to benefit from an intervention as well.¹⁶⁰ It is understood from the petition that these students had repeatedly applied to the state authorities before, but they were not answered.¹⁶¹ The first known criticism of the madrasa by students would be followed by many others during the Second Constitutional period with a political tone.¹⁶²

In the meantime, a commentary on the Hadis, published in Turkish in 1901,¹⁶³ bears mention. The author, Mehmed Arif Bey, studied for a while in a madrasa in his hometown, Erzurum, in Eastern Anatolia. But he followed his father's career and worked for different departments of the Ottoman Army and Ministry of Justice.¹⁶⁴ Importantly, he used this experience to address the issue of religious education and the larger social framework, repeating almost all the same arguments we have heard thus far—such as the uselessness of theology, logic, and study of

¹⁶⁰ YEE 131/29, 2 Temmuz 1312 [14 July 1896].

¹⁶¹ Y PRK MS 2/41, 1 Cemaziyelahir 1306 [2 February 1889].

¹⁶² For such critical statements of madras students, see Ismail Dede, "Sebilürresad Dergisi'nde Medrese Öğrencilerinin Medreseyi Degerlendirmeleri," M.A. thesis, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, (2006); Ramazan Boyacioglu, "Beyanü'l-Hak'ta Ulema, Siyaset ve Medrese," *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2 (1998), pp. 88-90.

¹⁶³ Mehmed Arif Bey, *Hadisleri Anlamada Toplumsal Boyut, Son Dönem Osmanlı Toplumunu ve İlimiye Sınıfına Yönelik Eleştiriler*, Ibrahim Hatipoglu (ed.), (Istanbul: Darülhadis Yayınları, 2000). The original print of the book was made in Cairo in 1901 by the author's descendants; *Binbir Hadis-i Serif*, (Kahire: Matbaatül-Maarif, 1319). For a brief assessment of this book, see Ibrahim Hatipoglu, "Hadis Serhi Vesilesiyle XIX. Yüzyıl Sonu İlimi Hayatına Tenkidi Bir Nazar," *Osmanlı*, vol. 8, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999).

¹⁶⁴ Mehmed Arif Bey, *Hadisleri Anlamada*, pp. 19, 21.

Arabic, although Arabic language and Muslim unity are corollaries in his thinking.¹⁶⁵ He was also not averse to modern philosophical and scientific currents, such as *Darwinism* and *materialism*, that had developed in the West and had increasingly found followers in the Muslim world at the time, particularly among Ottoman intellectual elites.¹⁶⁶ According to him, Arabic was a fundamental means of communication among Muslims, but the contents of Arabic lessons in the madrasa fell prey to trivial (*mâlâ-ya'ni*) details.¹⁶⁷ His views on teaching Arabic had a Pan-Islamist flavour. The book suggests that he was personally interested in the unity of the Muslim world though he does not claim a personal connection to the Hamidian Islamist policies.

In contrast to his practical, and somewhat political, approach to the problem of language teaching, Mehmed Arif had a more nuanced position on Islamic theology (*kelam*) than his predecessors. He went beyond the problem of it being outdated to the issue of Darwinism and materialism for Islamic theology in general. Defending Sunni Islam against marginal sects and heresy in the Muslim world was no longer the issue, with modern science pulling the rug out from under Islam *in toto*.¹⁶⁸ In fact, this kind of secular thinking would become a larger and larger part of the dispute concerning the place of religion in human life after the dawn of modern science. Such disputes surfaced especially during the Second Constitutional Period, during which time Islamist intellectuals attempted to revitalize Islamic theology in response to the challenge of modernity. Izmirli Ismail Hakki, an eminent scholar and Islamist, would emerge as the preeminent defender of a new theological synthesis that combined the Islamic beliefs and modern scientific thought known as *Yeni Kelam*, or the New Islamic Theology.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Mehmed Arif Bey, *Hadisleri Anlamada*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁶⁶ Such philosophical ideas even influenced the political movements in the late Ottoman period. For example, for the relationship between the Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), the main political organization at the time, and philosophical ideas like Darwinism and materialism, see M. Sükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution, The Young Turks, 1902-1908*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), particularly chap. 10.

¹⁶⁷ Mehmed Arif Bey, *Hadisleri Anlamada*, p. 50.

¹⁶⁸ Mehmed Arif Bey, *Hadisleri Anlamada*, p. 48.

¹⁶⁹ For the rise of the idea 'Yeni Kelam,' see ; M. Sait Özervarli, *Kelâmda Yenilik Arayisleri: XIX. Yüzyil Sonu-XX. Yüzyil Basi*, (Istanbul: ISAM, 1998). Additionally, there is a growing literature specifically on Izmirli Hakki and his ideas. For recent ones, see M. Sait Özervarli, "Alternative Approaches to Modernization in the Late Ottoman Period: Izmirli Ismail Hakki's Religious Thought Against Materialist Scientism," *IJMES*, 39 (2007); Sami Erdem, "Tanzimat Sonrasi

In late Hamidian era, the madrasa became an issue that opponents of Abdülhamid II, mostly ulama, incorporated into their oppositional rhetoric against the sultan's rule. This was particularly true during the Second Constitutional period.¹⁷⁰ Seyh Alizade Hoca Muhiddin's writings illustrate this very well. A madrasa graduate, he headed the oppositional organization *Cemiyet-i Tedirisiye-i Islamiye*, which later joined the Committee of Union and Progress,¹⁷¹ and authored several books on politics in connection to Islamic principles. One of these, *Medreselerin Islahi* (Reforming the Madrasas) was published in the late 1890s.¹⁷² Despite its respectful tone, it was typical of oppositional texts written at this time, accusing the Yıldız Palace and the Hamidian secret police (*hafiyeler*) of being responsible for financial shortfalls in education.¹⁷³ Regarding the curriculum of the madrasa, he underscored the twin issues of content and length of study.¹⁷⁴ In his condemnation of the madrasa curriculum, Muhiddin emphasized the importance of high technology at the time, such as steam ships, printing machines, and balloons.¹⁷⁵

Muhiddin also believed that a new Islamic theology was necessary—more or less similar to Izmirli Ismail Hakki's proposal to adapt religion to modernity. He even called it by a similar name: *Cedid Ilm-i Kelam*, or the New Science of Theology.¹⁷⁶ He also proposed his own madrasa program. The major difference was the coexistence of modern sciences like geometry, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and world history with classical madrasa subjects such as Islamic jurisprudence,

Osmanlı Fikih Usulü Kavramları ve Modern Yaklaşımlar," Ph.D. diss., Marmara Üniversitesi, (2003); Bayram Ali Çetinkaya, *Izmirli İsmail Hakki: Hayati, Eserleri, Görüşleri* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000); Ali Birinci, "Hafız İsmail Hakki'nin (İzmirli) Teracim-i Ahvalı," *Kebikeç*, 4 (1996).

¹⁷⁰ The subject of ulama opposition to Abdülhamid and their political activities in subsequent periods has been examinationed in many works. For some examples , see Ismail Kara, "Ulema Siyaset İlişkisine Dair Metinler II: Ey Ulema Bizim Gibi Konus!", *Divan*, 2 (1999); Ismail Kara, "Ulema-Siyaset İlişkilerine Dair Önemli Bir Metin: Muhalefet Yapmak/Muhalefete Katılmak," *Divan*, 4 (1998); Ismail Kara, *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*, (İstanbul: İz Yayınları, 1994).

¹⁷¹ M. Sükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 51-52, 102-03.

¹⁷² Seyh Aliefendizâde Hoca Muhiddin, *Medreselerin Islahi*, (n.d./n.p.). This treatise bears no date of publication, but there is a note at the last page saying that this work was also submitted to the Sultan Abdülhamid to implement its contents in 26 Saban 1314 [30 January 1897].

¹⁷³ Seyh Aliefendizâde, *Medreselerin*, p. 29.

¹⁷⁴ Seyh Aliefendizâde, *Medreselerin*, pp. 2-6.

¹⁷⁵ Seyh Aliefendizâde, *Medreselerin*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁶ Seyh Aliefendizâde, *Medreselerin*, p. 25.

Qur'anic commentary, theology, and hadith. This new curriculum would be taught, moreover, using textbooks in Turkish for Turkish students.¹⁷⁷

The call for Turkish language instruction at the madrasa had numerous supporters at the time. For example, Ali Riza Efendi, the head of the court of first instance in Kosovo, sent a report to the Grand Vizierate on the problems of sharia court judges. In the report, Ali Riza mentioned the importance of Turkish for the madrasas and, stated that above all, textbooks ought to be in Turkish. He even suggested that entrance to the madrasa should be based on fluency in Turkish.¹⁷⁸ Making Turkish the language of teaching and learning, a Turkish linguistic standard (lingua franca) for all court procedures and documentation in the Ottoman judicial system was the hope. The relevant portions of his report were sent to the Seyhülislamate. No evidence exists to suggest that a response was issued. Similar reports were not implemented during the Hamidian period, but certainly paved the way for reform and 'Turkification' of the madrasas in the Second Constitutional period.

The Interest of Madrasa Teachers in Modern Subjects and Their Demand for Reform

As we have seen thus far and despite institutional reforms, madrasa education resisted formal change during the period in question, sticking to the traditional curriculum and 'mudarris-centric' in the main. This exposed it to criticism from different factions within Ottoman society regarding "its insufficiency" vis-à-vis the practical problems of the emergent modern state and a traditional society in transition. That said, the flexibility of the madrasa curriculum and the freedom afforded its teachers to follow their hearts and go off madly in all directions educationally speaking, opened the way for numerous pedagogic accommodations to modernity despite the conservative outlook of religious education. As a consequence, modern thought and the sciences were subjects with which madrasa teachers were familiar via personal contacts and private networks, and how modern knowledge was disseminated to their students via a wide array of informal pedagogical channels. Unfortunately, official sources failed to document this, forcing one to consult

¹⁷⁷ Seyh Aliefendizâde, *Medreselerin*, pp. 16-19.

¹⁷⁸ Y PRK MS 7/53, 19 Zilhicce 1319 [23 March 1902].

unofficial sources from later periods. From a purely research standpoint, it proves less than ideal but not overly problematic.

We can now look at tangible examples of those who veered from the classical curriculum. The names dealt with below actively taught madrasa students in Istanbul modern sciences, and there were also madrasa teachers who offered new synthesis of traditional madrasa subjects and modern sciences because they viewed some traditional subjects –such as Islamic theology (*kelam*)- inappropriate to teach any more at the time due to the considerable progress in modern sciences in the West.

These include such mudarrises as Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi, Hoca Tahsin Efendi, Abdülkerim Efendi, Abdüllatif Harputi, Karlovali Hüseyin Efendi and Ismail Saib Efendi during the same period who attempted to prompt a new form of teaching, as well as some others who shared in this mission to reform the madrasa from within.

Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi

Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi was among the leading intellectual figures in early nineteenth-century Istanbul.¹⁷⁹ He was born to an ulama family in 1771. His father, Kethüdazâde Sadik Efendi, was a high-ranking member of the ulama, who finally held the seat of the *Rumeli Kazaskerligi*, a posting ranked second in the ulama hierarchy, occupying numerous judicial posts throughout the empire during his lifetime.¹⁸⁰ Arif Efendi chose a similar route, rising up the ranks of the ulama as his father had. He studied with scholars of varied backgrounds and received numerous diplomas. Serving for many years as a sharia court judge, he resided in Istanbul and taught at home for the balance of his life.

¹⁷⁹ “Kethüdazâde Arif Efendi,” *DIA*,; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, “19. Asrin Baslarinda –Tanzimat Öncesi- Kültür ve Egitim Hayati ve Basiktas Cemiyet-i Ilmiyesi Olarak Bilinen Ulama Grubunun Buradaki Kültür ve Egitim Hayati ve Besiktas Cemiyet-i Ilmiyesi Olarak Bilinen Ulama Grubunun Buradaki Yeri,” in Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu (ed.) *Osmanli Ilmi ve Mesleki Cemiyetleri, 1.Milli Türk Bilim Tarihi Sempozyumu: 3-5 Nisan 1987*, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1987), pp. 61–7; Ismail Hakki Uzunçarsili, “Nizam-i Cedid Ricalinden Valide Sultan Kethüdasi Meshur Yusuf Aga ve Kethüdazâde Arif Efendi,” *Bellekten*, 79 (1956), pp.495–97; Ismail Erdogan, “Kethüdâzâde Ârif Efendi ve Felsefi Görüşleri,” *Firat Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 15/1 (2005), pp. 171–188.

¹⁸⁰ Uzunçarsili, “Nizam-i Cedid Ricalinden Valide Sultan Kethüdasi Meshur Yusuf Aga ve Kethüdazâde Arif Efendi,” *Bellekten*, 79 (1956), pp.495–97.

Mehmed Arif Efendi wrote the examination for his teaching certificate (*ruûs*) in Istanbul but the sources do not mention his teaching at the madrasa or mosque. That said, his biography, *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi*, written by his disciple, Emin Bey, documents the degree of religious home schooling that Efendi did, teaching out of his house in Besiktas, a suburb of Istanbul along the Bosphorus.¹⁸¹ We also know the identities of some of the ulama he taught.¹⁸² Several of his private students played a significant role in the Ottoman reform movement—such as Safvet Mehmed Esad Pasa,¹⁸³ Yusuf Kâmil Pasa,¹⁸⁴ and Midhat Pasa.¹⁸⁵ His intellectual interest in modern science and philosophy brought him into contact with leading scholars of the early nineteenth century such as Ismail Ferruh Efendi, Sâ nizâde Atâullah Efendi, and Melekpasazâde Abdülkadir Bey, and regarded as the first Ottoman learned, or *Besiktas Cemiyet-i Ilmiyesi* by many.¹⁸⁶ Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi explicated the essentials of philosophy and literature twice a week to members of this growing body of Ottoman intellectual elites.¹⁸⁷ Historians dispute whether it was a proper learned society or merely a circle of like-minds interested in the pursuit of knowledge at a less rapid pace. They were eventually considered a

¹⁸¹ Emin Bey, *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi*, (Dersaadet: n.pbr., 1305).

¹⁸² Ibnülemin Mahmut Kemal Inal, *Son Asir Türk Sairleri*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayinlari, 1988), vol.1, p.35.

¹⁸³ Salim Aydüz, “Kethüdazâde Arif Efendi,” *DIA*.

¹⁸⁴ Ibnülemin Mahmut Kemal Inal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayinlari, 1982), vol.1, p.196.

¹⁸⁵ Inal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, vol. 1, p. 315; Pakalin, *Son Sadrazamlar ve Basvekiller*, (Istanbul: Ahmet Sait Matbaasi, 1940), vol.1, p.189; Aydüz, “Kethüdazâde Arif Efendi,” *DIA*; Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Political Thought*, (New York: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 232.

¹⁸⁶ Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, *Vak'anüvis Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 1999), vol.1, p.123; Ebuzziyâ Tevfik, “Besiktas Cemiyet-i Ilmiyesi,” *Mecmûa-i Ebuzziyâ*, IV/39 (Istanbul, 1302); Resat Ekrem Koçu, “Besiktas Cemiyet-i Ilmiyesi,” *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5, pp. 2574–75; Kâzım Yetis, “Besiktas Cem’iyet-i Ilmiyesi,” *DIA*; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, “19. Asrin Baslarinda Tanzimat Öncesi Kültür ve Egitim Hayati ve Besiktas Cemiyeti Ilmiyesi Olarak Bilinen Ulama Grubunun Buradaki Yeri,” in Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu (ed.) *Osmanli Ilmi ve Mesleki Cemiyetleri, 1.Milli Türk Bilim Tarihi Sempozyumu: 3-5 Nisan 1987*, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1987). For the emergence and development of the Ottoman learned societies in the nineteenth century, see Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, “Genesis of Learned Societies and Professional Associations in Ottoman Turkey,” *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 14 (1995-96); Hüseyin Hatemi, “Bilim Derneklerinin Hukuki Çerçevesi (Dernek Tüzelkisi),” in Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu (ed.) *Osmanli Ilmi ve Mesleki Cemiyetleri, 1.Milli Türk Bilim Tarihi Sempozyumu: 3-5 Nisan 1987*, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1987); Richard L. Chambers, “The Encümen-i Danis and Ottoman Modernization,” *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara, 1-15 Ekim 1976: Kongreye Sunulan Tebligler*, vol.2, (Ankara: TTK, 1981).

¹⁸⁷ Ilber Ortaylı, “Tarikatler ve Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanli Yönetimi,” *Osmanli Imparatorlugu'nda İktisadi ve Sosyal Degisim: Makaleler 1*, (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2000), p.347.

serious enough threat to be dispelled by Ottoman political authorities when the janissary corps was decommissioned.

Mehmd Arif Efendi's life helps us to understand the Ottoman social dynamics at the time. Four facets of his life deserve mention: his perception of the West, the idea of progress, his intellectual interest in the Western world, and his dissemination of Western learning to his private students. He advocated the adoption of certain Western inventions and concepts reminiscent of Islamists of the late Ottoman period. At the same time, he believed that Ottoman society would do well to resist the centripetal pull of European popular culture, fashion, and even architectural reforms which threatened to undermine certain religious core values. "We have got [our] religion. What shall we do to it? Their way is not suitable to us!" And what he meant, essentially, was that the Ottomans avail themselves of certain modern, Western necessities in order to protect themselves against attack, because, in his view "there is no other way to stand against the enemy."¹⁸⁸

Industrialization was part of this, the Ottomans losing precious time by not building up an industrial factory complex. He made much of the story of a certain Englishman living in Istanbul at the time of Selim III and had converted to Islam. This Englishman was also known for his expertise as a steel worker, drafting plans for a steel factory which he presented to the Ottoman statesmen, or *rical ve kibar*. The factory would not be built because of persecution, the Englishman returning to his native Christianity and mother Britannia because of the poor treatment he received at the hands of his 'fellow' Muslim brothers. For Mehmed Arif Efendi, it was a lost opportunity, regardless. "If we had dignified and treated that man well," Efendi writes, "we would now have huge and well-organized steel factories. We lost him!"¹⁸⁹ Importantly, Arif Efendi as a madrasa teacher was not condemn about the Englishman's apostasy which is severely condemned by Islamic law, focussing instead on the more important economic issues and lessons to be learned. In this case, Islam did not lose a "revert" but rather the Ottomans lost a good opportunity to make a buck.

¹⁸⁸ Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde el-Hac Mehmed Arif Efendi Hazretleri*, ([Istanbul] 1305), p.48.

¹⁸⁹ "Eger o adami tevkir ve idare edeydik, simdi büyük büyük muntazam demir fabrikalarimiz olurdu. Onu kaybettik!" Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde*, pp. 130-31.

The most notable part of Arif Efendi's life was his abiding interest in the Western intellectual tradition. The *Menakib* suggests that he developed his ideas about the West based on his observation of and contact with European society and culture. He frequently attended balls at the European embassies in Istanbul and loved to visit a church in Beyoglu to listen to the organ. It is also interesting, that he often turned up at such non-Muslim venues wearing his traditional ulama dress.¹⁹⁰ He also loved the study of foreign languages, especially French, which considered absolutely necessary to an understanding of the military and industry (*sanayi-i nâriye*), the best works in both fields written in French. Ironically, his study of French was under an American monk in Istanbul, albeit a short-lived experiment in cross-cultural communication and second-language learning.¹⁹¹ His personal observations on the teaching of astronomy at European schools, compared to Islamic astronomy, are also revealing of a man living in two worlds and across cultures.¹⁹²

His interest was not limited to the modern sciences in Europe, but also Islamic studies from a Western point of view. That al-Ghazali's *Ihyâ' Ulûm al-Din* had been translated into German and in its sixth edition at the time, was a fact he used to reproach his fellow Muslims for their lack of interest in the Islamic philosophical tradition.¹⁹³ Al-Ghazali's *Ihya* had not yet been translated into Turkish, and Mehmed Arif Efendi used the German example to underscore the need for more Turkish translations of classical Islamic/Arabic texts which surely would benefit a younger generation of Turkish native-speaking students.¹⁹⁴

As mentioned above, some of those who went through Mehmed Arif Efendi's teaching sessions took part at some point in the reform movements in their time. It is apparent that he was attracted by the developments in Europe, and seemingly was motivated by the desire to catch up with the level of progress there. Consequently, such scholarly interest ostensibly led Kethüdazâde to work with people, with whom he had similar intellectual interests. There are also some researchers who view Kethüdazâde and his friends as the founders of the first Ottoman learned society and

¹⁹⁰ Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde*, pp.148-49.

¹⁹¹ Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde*, p.259.

¹⁹² Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde*, p. 41.

¹⁹³ Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde*, p. 281.

¹⁹⁴ Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde*, p. 282.

they also compare this “society” to its European counterparts.¹⁹⁵ Importantly, madrasa teachers were included and active participants in this dissemination of modern knowledge, and all were ulama with one exception.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, the formal curriculum was not the whole of a madrasa education which included a wider range of subjects than the classical or religious core material suggests, learning in this case an informal business grafted to the traditional discipline.

As we know from contemporary Ottoman sources from the nineteenth century, Istanbul was the centre of culture and education and thus full of possibilities for those wishing to enhance their knowledge via a number of formal and informal channels.¹⁹⁷ Kethüdazade Mehmed Arif Efendi was part and parcel of the richness of Istanbul and a religious educational milieu of considerable breadth that included courses such as math, algebra, astronomy, and philosophy.¹⁹⁸ This new curriculum also attracted the best and brightest minds, minds like Kabulî Mehmed Pasa,¹⁹⁹ Safvet Pasa²⁰⁰ and Midhat Pasa.²⁰¹ What becomes clear is the extent to which a

¹⁹⁵ For an attempt at such a comparison, see Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, “19. Asrin Başlarında Tanzimat Öncesi Kültür ve Eğitim Hayatı ve Besiktas Cemiyeti İlimiyesi Olarak Bilinen Ulama Grubunun Buradaki Yeri,” in Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (ed.) *Osmanlı İlimi ve Mesleki Cemiyetleri, 1. Milli Türk Bilim Tarihi Sempozyumu: 3-5 Nisan 1987*, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1987).

¹⁹⁶ İsmail Ferruh Efendi was a member of the group, but in fact, did not have a madrasa education. His great love of science helped him gain entrance to this group. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, “19. Asrin Başlarında Tanzimat Öncesi Kültür ve Eğitim Hayatı ve Besiktas Cemiyeti İlimiyesi Olarak Bilinen Ulama Grubunun Buradaki Yeri,” in Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (ed.) *Osmanlı İlimi ve Mesleki Cemiyetleri, 1. Milli Türk Bilim Tarihi Sempozyumu: 3-5 Nisan 1987*, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1987), p.59.

¹⁹⁷ Ahmed Cevdet Pasa presents a great deal of information about the exclusive opportunities in Istanbul for learning. For details, see Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, pp. 9-12, 16-19; Fatma Aliye, *Ahmet Cevdet Pasa*, pp. 29-40.

¹⁹⁸ Emin [Bey], *Menâkib-i Kethüdazâde*, p. 218.

¹⁹⁹ He served in the bureaucracy as the provincial governor in Izmir and Sayda (Sidon), and in diplomacy as the Ottoman ambassador to Vienna and St. Petersburg. He also held the post of ministry of commerce for a while, Uzunçarşılı, “Nizam-i Cedid Ricalinden Kethüdazâdeler,” p. 513.

²⁰⁰ Safvet Pasa worked in the foreign office of the Ottoman bureaucracy in the beginning of his career and was appointed to Paris as the Ottoman ambassador several times. He also served as the foreign minister and even reached the Grand Vizierate at the end of his career. Uzunçarşılı, “Nizam-i Cedid Ricalinden Kethüdazâdeler,” pp. 513-14.

²⁰¹ It should also be noted here that Kethüdazâde and the other members of his group did not limit themselves solely to Muslims. Kethüdazâde, for example, taught non-Muslims who wished to know about Islam [*Menâkib*, p.282] and Melekpasazâde and Sanizâde, two other members of the group, also had contact with European intellectuals. For the account of two meetings between the latter two and Edward Raczynski, a Polish archeologist, see Edward Raczynski, *1814'de İstanbul ve Çanakale'ye Seyahat*, Kemal Turan (trns.), (Istanbul: Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser, 1980), pp. 61-62, 185.

madrassa education and mudarrises themselves supported the modern project and thus helped in the creation of a new Ottoman cultural and institutional centre.

Hoca Tahsin, İngiliz Kerim, Abdüllatif Harputi, Karlovali Hüseyin and Ismail Saib Efendis

Other mudarrises shared Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi's interest in modern subject matter throughout the entirety of the nineteenth century. During the Tanzimat period, for example, Hoca Tahsin Efendi is but one example. Born in 1813 into an ulama family of Albanian origin, he took his first madrasa education from his father. Like many others, he came to Istanbul to further his his education, earning his icazet in due course and becoming a madrasa teacher in Istanbul.²⁰² Most of what we know of his life comes from the period after he turned forty, but it is clear from his application to the Seyhülislamate in 1878 that he was still a member of the ulama and mudarris at the time.²⁰³

In 1857, Hoca Tahsin was sent by the Ottoman government to France to study modern science (*fünûn-i cedide*) in anticipation of a teaching position in Darülfunun, the first Ottoman university, founded in 1870. Around the same time, he became the imam to the Ottoman Embassy in Paris.²⁰⁴ His studies included math, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and geology about which he would go on to write copiously. While in Paris, Tahsin also became interested in materialism. When Darülfunun was established, he became its first director. However, his thinking proved too radical for many in Istanbul and he was dismissed.²⁰⁵ He later returned as a lecturer in chemistry and physics.²⁰⁶

Hoca Tahsin also played a major role in transferring some modern sciences into the empire through teaching as well as publishing books and articles for the *Mecmua-i Ulum* (Journal of Sciences) and *Cemiyet-i Ilmiye*, a scholarly society to which Tahsin and his firends belonged and wrote for. This society and its journal was

²⁰² Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdas*, p. 196; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 181.

²⁰³ Basbakanlik Osmanlı Arsivi, Bab-i Mesihat Ayniyat Def., no: 1082, p. 14, cited in Ömer Faruk Akün, "Hoca Tahsin," *DIA*, vol. 18, p. 201.

²⁰⁴ Akün, "Hoca Tahsin," p. 199.

²⁰⁵ Inal, *Son Asir*, vol. 4, pp. 1833-34.

²⁰⁶ Inal, *Son Asir*, vol. 4, p. 1836.

a result of a growing interest in modern sciences during the Tanzimat period. What made Tahsin's society of learneds distinctive was its essentially Islamic nature, the idea being to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam and modern science. The members were also predominantly of ulama extraction.²⁰⁷

Hoca Tahsin published on a wide range of subjects—everything from psychology to education, chemistry, physics, and even astronomy—which then made their way into the Ottoman intellectual world.²⁰⁸ For example, his book on psychology is accepted as the first work on modern psychology in Turkish.²⁰⁹ His major work is on the philosophical notion of “being” that has a strong materialist component.²¹⁰ And yet, he declares that he accepts the orthodox Islamic understanding of creation.²¹¹ His books on the modern sciences enjoyed considerable popular success which was due, in part, to his desire to write for a popular audience.

In addition to his published works and apologies for Islamic thought, he taught the modern subjects to many people including madrasa students out of his home near *Bab-i Âli* in Istanbul. He was equally famous for his knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, Qur'anic commentary, and Arabic literature.²¹² Madrasa students in Istanbul included his lectures as an important part of their studies.

Amasyalı Abdülkerim Efendi was another madrasa teacher from the Tanzimat period with a penchant for both the traditional and the modern. Abdülkerim was born to a prominent ulama family living in the province of Amasya.²¹³ He completed his madrasa education in Istanbul²¹⁴ as among the city's brightest and most promising students.²¹⁵ After graduating, he became a madrasa teacher and

²⁰⁷ Alim Kahraman, “Mecmua-i Ulûm,” *DIA*; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, “Cemiyet-i İlmiye ve Mecmua-i Ulum,” in E. Ihsanoglu (ed.), *Osmanlı İlmî ve Meslekî Cemiyetleri*, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1987).

²⁰⁸ Yavuz Unat, “Hoca İshak Efendi'den Hoca Tahsin'e Çağdas Astronominin Türkiye'ye Girişi,” Paper presented to *XV. Ulusal Astronomi Kongresi*, (26 August–1 September 2006, Istanbul).

²⁰⁹ [Hoca] Tahsin, *İlm-i Ruh*, (Istanbul: Sirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, 1310). For the views of Hilmi Ziya Ülken on this book, see Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdas*, pp. 70, 244.

²¹⁰ Hoca Tahsin, *Tarih-i Tekvin yahud Hilkat*, (Istanbul: Sirket-i Mürettibiye Matbaası, 1310).

²¹¹ Akün, “Hoca Tahsin,” pp. 204-05.

²¹² Inal, *Son Asir*, vol. 4, pp. 1836-37.

²¹³ Abdîzâde Hüseyin Hüsameddin, *Amasya Tarihi, I, Mukaddime*, (Ankara: Amasya Belediyesi Kültür Yayinlari, 1986), p.280.

²¹⁴ Cevat İzgi, “İngiliz Kerim Efendi,” *DIA*.

²¹⁵ Abdülkerim Efendi had already been known as a highly promising madrasa student in the period of his study. See Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, *Tezâkir: 40-Tetimme*, p. 10.

taught at the Fatih Madrasa.²¹⁶ In the meantime, Abdülkerim Efendi's achievements and potential drew the Grand Vizier Resid Pasa's attention. As a consequent, Abdülkerim would be invited to join students of Resid Pasa to study science in Europe, which eventually would take him to England for further study.²¹⁷ Suffice it to say that Abdülkerim was well informed on matters related to East and West and the issue of Western progress.²¹⁸ He published a large number of books, many of which were on philosophy and logic. He taught both Islamic courses and courses in the modern sciences which he claimed were mutually inclusive.²¹⁹ He was also an important member of various intellectual circles in Istanbul where scholars of science from different countries came together to discuss recent developments in science and related fields.²²⁰ Driving much of this was a desire to accommodate traditional belief and practice to the intellectual, cultural, and social demands of modernity.

In the course of the time, this attempt to harmonize past and present, Islam and modernity, led many Ottoman ulama intellectuals to reformulate the contents and basic principles of Islamic theology (*kelam*). This would be the cause of much scholarly debate vis-à-vis the Young Turk revolution in 1908 and the New Islamic Theology (*Yeni İlm-i Kelam*) concomitant with the Second Constitutional Period—both having roots in early challenges to the madrasa curriculum.

One of the pioneers of this was Abdüllatif Harpûtî, another madrasa teacher from Istanbul. Born in 1842, he came to Istanbul for a madrasa education and received his icazet from the Fatih Madrasa. He then became a dersiam in the Bayezid Mosque. He also worked as an adviser to Zihni Pasa, minister of public works and trade (*Nafta ve Ticaret Naziri*), until 1891. Abdüllatif Harpûtî was also appointed as

²¹⁶ Müjgan Cunbur, *Türk Dünyası Edebiyatçıları Ansiklopedisi*, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 2002), vol. 2, p. 262.

²¹⁷ Semih Mümtaz, *Evvel Zaman İçinde, Tarihimizde Hayal Olmuş Hakikatler*, (Istanbul: Hilmi Kitabevi, 1948), p. 216.

²¹⁸ In one of his books, *Tezkiretü'l-Ekâlîm*, which was submitted to the Sultan Abdülmecid in 1851 in hand-written form by the author, Abdülkerim Efendi criticized the scarcity of subjects like math and geography in the Muslim world. Abdülkerim Efendi, *Tezkiretü'l-Ekâlîm*, (Istanbul Atatürk Kitaplığı, Muallim Cevdet Böl., no. K316), p.3-4. For further information on Abdülkerim Efendi's work, see Cevat İzgi, *Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlim*, (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1997), vol. 2, pp. 272-74.

²¹⁹ Bursalı Mehmed Tahir Efendi, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, (Istanbul: Meral Yayınevi, n.d.), vol.1, p.382. One of his students, Mehmed Takiyyüddin Efendi who became a madrasa teacher in late nineteenth century, mentioned that he studied logic, Islamic theology, Islamic jurisprudence as well as astronomy from Kerim Efendi in Istanbul; USAD, no: 3416.

²²⁰ Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdas*, p. 59.

lecturer in Islamic theology (*kelam*) at the Darülfunun in 1901.²²¹ He awarded the icazet first time in 1888²²² and scores of students received icazet from him during his teaching term at the Bayezid Mosque.²²³

Abdüllatif Efendi published several books, but two were important to his understanding of and approach to the teaching of Islamic theology, science, and philosophy. These were *Tenkihül-Kelam fi Itikad-i Ehl-i Islam* and *Tarih-i Ilm-i Kelam*. His basic argument was that Islamic theology relied far too much on Aristotle's philosophy, which modern science and philosophy had invalidated in the main. In his view, Islamic theologians needed to avail themselves of the best of modern philosophy because the traditional arguments of Kelam became outmoded after the rise of materialism and positivism.²²⁴ A new formulation/kelam was needed.

His publications came into existence during the Young Turk era (c. 1908). His research and writing suffered somewhat from his inability to read the modern scholarship of Europe in the original, relying instead on Arabic and Turkish translations.²²⁵ He prepared the above work, *Tenkihü'l-Kelam*, and submitted it to the Seyhülislam for official inspection prior to 1908. The Seyhülislam, according to Abdüllatif, was critical of his discussion of modern astronomy in particular and troubled by its modernist thoughts in general. And so, he feared to publish it and the manuscript would have to wait until the Second Constitution, when greater intellectual "freedom" existed, before being deemed worthy of publication.²²⁶ He did bother to respond to the criticisms of the Seyhülislam and its rejection of modern

²²¹ Ishak Sunguroglu, *Harpüt Yollarında*, (Istanbul: Elazig Kültür ve Tanıtma Vakfı, 1959), vol. 2, pp. 141-43.

²²² Abdüllatif Lütfi Efendi, USAD, no: 3420.

²²³ Metin Yurdagür, "Harpütü, Abdüllatif," *DIA*, vol. 16, p. 235. For one of the students whom he awarded icazet in 1888, see Sadik Albayrak, *Son Devir Osmanlı Uleması*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 1996), vol. 3, p. 274.

²²⁴ Metin Yurdagür, "Harpütü, Abdüllatif," *DIA*, vol. 16, pp. 235-36.

²²⁵ "...bati dillerinden hiçbirine vakıf olmadığımıza göre yeni felsefe ve yeni akli ilimlerde usul kanunlarına ve yeni muhaliflerimizin sözleri ve gidis yollarına Türkçeye tercüme edilmiş bazı risaleler ile Misir'da Arapçaya çevrilmiş bazı kitaplardan alabildiğim bilgilerle..." cited in Özden Kanter Ekinci, "Abdüllatif Harputi'nin 'Tarih-i Ilm-i Kelam' Adli Eseri ve Kelam İlmi Açısından Analizi," M.A. thesis, Firat Üniversitesi (2003), p. 82.

²²⁶ Abdüllatif Harputi, *Tenkihü'l-kelam fi akaidi ehli'l-Islâm*, (First ed.), (Istanbul: Necm-i istikbal Matbaası, 1327).

astronomy vis-à-vis a penchant for traditional astronomy that held sway during the Hamidian period.²²⁷

Another figure in the late nineteenth century was Karlovali (Filibeli) Hüseyin Efendi. What we know about him comes from one of his students, Kamil Efendi, who wrote a memoir detailing many of the facts of his beloved teacher's life. Kâmil helped Karlovali Hüseyin Efendi prepare a calendar which earned both of them a little money after publication.²²⁸ Karlovali, who taught science, was, in fact, a mudarris teaching at the Fatih Mosque.²²⁹ He was also interested in astronomy and engaged in private study of the subject.²³⁰ In his memoirs, Kamil Efendi tells an interesting episode about his teacher's knowledge of astronomy. In 1898, there was a rumour circulating in Istanbul that a comet would collide with the earth at any moment. Kamil Efendi went to his teacher to learn the truth, or rather the likelihood of such a cataclysm. Using detailed calculations, Karlovali was able to demonstrate the impossibility of such an astronomical collision. Of course, the comet failed to make an appearance, proving Karlovali's prognostication.²³¹ Based on his reputation in astronomy, and although he was a madrasa teacher, he went on to become Chief Imperial Astronomer (*Müneccimbasi*) in 1909.²³²

The last madrasa teacher of this accommodationist approach I will discuss is Ismail Saib Efendi. He was the son of a military officer, born in Erzurum, and moved to Istanbul with his family when he was still very young. He completed his madrasa education in 1896, but also studied at a new style school, *askeri rüsdîye mektebi* (military secondary school).²³³ Ismail Saib became a madrasa teacher following his examination and began teaching at Bayezid Mosque in 1903.²³⁴ Renowned for interest in the sciences—both classical and modern—one friend and medical doctor Izzet Bey recalls that he attended classes at the Civil Medical School (*Mülkiye*

²²⁷ Abdüllatif Harputi, *Tenkihü'l-kelem*, pp. 439-456.

²²⁸ Ertur, *Tamu Yelleri*, p. 25. This calendar was published in 1894/95 and named *Mir'âtül-Evkât*; Filibeli Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi, USAD, no: 309.

²²⁹ Karlovali Hüseyin Efendi began his madrasa teaching career in 1896; Filibeli Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi, USAD, no: 309. For one of his students, see Mehmed Said Efendi, USAD, no: 528.

²³⁰ Filibeli Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi, USAD, no: 309.

²³¹ Ertur, *Tamu Yelleri*, p. 44.

²³² *İlmîyye Sâlnâmesi [1334]*, p. 66; Filibeli Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi, USAD, no: 309.

²³³ Azmi Bilgin, "Ismail Saib Sencer," *DIA*.

²³⁴ Ebulula Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vol. 2-3, p. 993.

Tibbiyesi) in ulama dress where he studied anatomy, physiology, general diseases (*emrâz-i umumiye*) and other medical subjects between 1904 and 1906.²³⁵ During this time he taught madrasa students, awarding his students with their icazet for the first and possibly last time 1913. Following this, he continued to assist any seekers of religious and secular truth even during the Republican period. For example, he was a major source of knowledge regarding Turkish-Islamic medical history upon the founding of the Institute of Medical History at Istanbul University in 1933.²³⁶

The full involvement of madrasa teachers in the teaching of the modern sciences and dissemination of modern learning is not knowable. However, the above cases of mudarrises who studied and taught modern subjects during a time of change is surely noteworthy. Because the sciences, for example, were not an official part of the curriculum, we must rely on personal accounts of such extracurricular teaching of modern subjects at the madrasa milieu during this period —memoirs from persons close to such teaching and teachers. Existing accounts suggest that the interest of madrasa teachers and their instruction in modern subjects throughout the nineteenth century, in Istanbul and elsewhere, was a conduit for a variety of new perspectives and ideas in Ottoman society at the time.

The Demands of Mudarrises for Reform

Apart from challenges to the madrasa from a curricular point of view, demands for structural reforms came from within the institution itself. Archival records show that madrasa teachers were keen to retool the entire profession of religious teaching, the ulama system in general and madrasa education in particular vis-à-vis other reforms in the empire. A petition to the sultan by one mudarris outlined in detail the poor condition of the Islamic judicial system. Another petition drafted by four mudarrises proposed various changes that were certain to improve the quality of religious education throughout the empire.²³⁷

²³⁵ Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vol. 2-3, pp. 994-95.

²³⁶ Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vol. 2-3, p. 1033. Particularly for the part of his life during the Republican period, see Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vol. 2-3, pp. 996-1047.

²³⁷ There is, in fact, another report written by fifteen members of the ulama including eight madrasa teachers in the Tanzimat period 1873 regarding madrasa education, which might fit into the context of the discussion here. However, its discussion is omitted here and this report has been examinationined in another part of this chapter in a different context.

The first belongs to the early Hamidian period, dated December 1880.²³⁸ Halil Asim Efendi, a mudarris in Istanbul, had gone home to Atina, a sub-district in the eastern Black Sea region, to fend off the Russian advance in what became the Turco-Russian War of 1877-78. Following the war, he remained in Atina as the judge of the town, his judgeship later rescinded by the Seyhülislamate after several complaints from the public. (The specifics were never revealed.) Halil Asim returned to Istanbul and applied directly to the sultan to clear himself of all charges because the Seyhülislamate unmoveable in its decision to debar him. In his brief, Halil Asim lauded the virtues of a judicial career and the need to pay greater attention to the employment of judges. He talked about various problems related to the judgeship—ignorance and corruption—which, if left unattended, were certain in his view to damage the social order and render ineffectual the entire judicial system and rule of law. He also criticized the ulama and the Seyhülislamate as staffed by un-qualified people whose certificates (*ruûs*) for teaching and judgeship were not worth the paper they were written on. He blamed the Seyhülislamate for most of the problems that had befallen the religion and the state. He believed that nothing short of a complete overhaul, or reformation (*tashih ve islah*), the ulama system was necessary if the caliphate was to remain effective and relevant. Halil even suggested that detectives be hired to investigate and thus remove all unqualified ulama from the profession.²³⁹

At first glance, the petition seems to have been written by an angry and defensive victim of the very charge he levelled at the authorities—incompetence. But, it is interesting that he placed so much emphasis on the idea of reforming the ulama system from top to bottom. In his opinion, such reform was necessary to the survival of the state. Halil's petition, right or wrong, is a good indication of the extent to which madrasa teachers, and ulama judges, felt the need to reform the madrasa. It is also evident, from Halil's petition, that in the mind of the ulama the state and religion were indivisible.

Another report, dated 1898, likewise outlines the necessities of a madrasa-inspired reform project in the provinces and the integration of the ulama into a

²³⁸ Y MTV 4/144, 30 Zilhicce 1297 [3 December 1880].

²³⁹ "...[M]üstekîmül-etvar hafiyeler marifetiyle tahkik-i ahval buyurularak adem-i ehliyeti tebeyyün edeceği meczûm bulunan pek çok zevatin zulüm ve cüretinden ibadullahin kurtarılması..." Y MTV 4/144, 30 Zilhicce 1297 [3 December 1880].

central administration in concert with what was happening in the new schools.²⁴⁰ This report was composed by another group-of-four so to speak, these reform-minded mudarrises from the general neighbourhood of Çarsamba near Fatih Mosque in Istanbul. Before reaching the sultan, it won the approval of palace officials as well as mentioned in the document.²⁴¹ It began with a declaration of appreciation for all the progress accomplished under Hamidian rule, and in the field of education to be precise, ‘humbly’ suggesting that other reforms were needed:

[I]t is gratefully becoming visible. . .that your imperial subjects . . . gradually pass through the levels of progress [*merahil-i terakki*]. While, in the era of Your Majesty, the bright sun of education became the illuminator of horizons, we unassumingly dare to present to your imperial view that there are some particular subjects, which have not yet benefited from the profits of the progress and are really in need of guidance and courage.²⁴²

What becomes clear is the concern for the state of madrasa education throughout the empire, the main problem being the lack of a centralized administrative body to govern all madrasas. Because of this, madrasa education was not producing enough competent graduates to fill the ranks of both religious and secular schools and offices. Finance was another major problem, particularly the vakifs, which were no longer in the right hands or being administered properly and according to the fineries of their respective endowments. This had resulted in a loss of revenue which, in turn, prevented more competent scholars from teaching at the madrasas because salaries were simply too low. Another problem that had led to a deepening of the financial crisis for madrasa teachers was the introduction of the printing press into Ottoman cultural life, undermining calligraphy as a traditional source of income for many mudarrises. Another of the problems and obstacles to improvement of madrasa education was a failure to properly fund and thus the lack

²⁴⁰ YEE 81/44, Zilhicce 1315 [May 1898].

²⁴¹ YEE 131/27, 3 Muharrem 1316 [24 May 1898].

²⁴² “[T]eba-i sahaneleri...tedricen tayy-i merahil-i terakki etmekde oldugu meshud-u uyun-u sükran... olmaktadir. Devr-i dilaray-i tacidarilerinde sems-i tâbân-i maarif ziya-endâz-i âfak oldugu bir sirada henüz niamat-i terakkiden tamamiyla müstefid ve mütena‘im olamayan ve cidden muhtac-i irsad ve tesvik bulunan bazi hususata nazargâh-i dekaik-agâh-i meham-i asiyanelerine min gayr-i haddin arz u beyana cesaret ediyoruz,” YEE 81/44, Zilhicce 1315 [May 1898]. It should be noted here that the word *maarif*, which literally means education, refers to the newly established schools rather than madrasas.

of public support for the *cer* trips, which had been important to the religious needs of the outlying districts and communities.²⁴³

The solution in the report consisted of two parts. First, a central administration network would be established so that certified administrators would monitor the teaching and administration of examinations at the madrasas vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Nezareti*) and its governance of civil education throughout the empire. Second, mandatory military service for madrasa students would be restored and the conscription examination (*kur'a imtihani*) reinstated. However, the exam would also include questions from additional subjects such as calligraphy and recitation of the Qur'an.

The overarching objective was to restore order to the madrasa, that is, "reinforce the loyalty and courage of young Muslim people." Of course, the report called upon the sultan to provide every small town (*nevahi*) with its own madrasa, making him a truly great historical figure and defender of the faith (*müceddid-i din*).²⁴⁴ The praise of the sultan for doing so, and the language employed, "müceddid," is a religious concept wherein each period in history is said to have one man who is called to revitalize the religion. Importantly, its derivatives (*tecdid*, *cedid*, *teceddiüd*) were often used in reference to Ottoman intellectuals in the late nineteenth century.²⁴⁵ At the turn of the century, the second of these, *cedid*, became synonymous with the reformist wing of Crimean Muslims under Ismail Gaspirali/Gaspirinski, known as Jadidism (*Cedidcilik*). Gaspirali formulated a new curriculum of religious education (*usul-i cedid*) for Muslims living in Central Asia.²⁴⁶ The mudarrises of Istanbul hoped the sultan would undertake a similar

²⁴³ The *cer* trips were made by madrasa students and mudarrises mainly to provincial areas during the three holy months, Receb, Saban and Ramazan. During these trips, they provided religious services like preaching and leading the daily prayers and, in return, collected money and some other things in kind, on which they were going to live, at least in part, during the following year.

²⁴⁴ YEE 81/44, Zilhicce 1315 [May 1898].

²⁴⁵ On the meaning of the words, see Ismail Kara, *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*, (Istanbul: İz Yayınları, 1994), pp. 121-23; Ismail Kara, "İslam Modernizmi ve Akif'e Dair Birkaç Not," in I. Kara, *Din ile Modernleşme Arasında, Çağdas Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2003), p. 199.

²⁴⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam, Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 296-302. For an account of the emergence of the Jadidist movement, see Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). On Gaspirali's thoughts and the movement he founded, see Hakan Kirimli, *National Movements and National Identity among the Crimean Tatars (1905-1916)*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Ahmet Kanlidere,

revival and revitalization of religious education in the capital and the provinces. Their depiction of the problem and its solution focused on the same elements that existed in the new school system at the time: expansion (of madrasas), an efficient exam system and a central administrative body. All of these elements were aimed at inciting loyalty, which the Hamidian regime desperately needed during the centralization of the empire. In other words, converting the madrasas to more new-school-like institutions made the sultan a reformer, but this message was conveyed using a seemingly religious term: *müceddid*.

The madrasa teachers listed do not represent a majority to be sure. But their stories suggest that a more nuanced and reform-minded ulama lobbied for reform as vociferously as many others in the Ottoman society. The madrasas in the Ottoman capital played a role in the final decades of Ottoman rule, adapting, absorbing, and ingesting the “new” in creative and transformative ways that looked within and without for an answer to the great problem of the twentieth century how best to accommodate to the dramatic social and cultural changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Reform within Islam: The Tajdid and Jadid Movement among the Kazan Tatars, 1809-1917: Conciliation or Conflict?, (Istanbul: Eren, 1997). For the texts by Central Asian Muslim intellectuals, see Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 223-71.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL COMPOSITION OF THE DERSIAM OF ISTANBUL: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Mustafa Enver Efendi was awarded an honorary medal by the Iranian Shah when he paid a visit to Istanbul.¹ He had done his best, not only in his translation work from Turkish to Persian and *vice versa*, but also for his skill in operating the telegraph system vis-à-vis his masterful supervision of the correspondence between Istanbul and Tehran during the Shah's visit to the capital.

Mustafa Enver was born to a notable family in 1860 from Tirnova, an Ottoman sub-province in the Balkans located near the Danube and Cerevic Mountain, now in Bulgaria. His father, Dâizade Hacı Mehmed Efendi, was said to

¹ This must have been during the visit of the Iranian shah, Muzaffar al-Din Shah, who came to Istanbul as the guest of the Sultan Abdülhamid II in the autumn of 1900. Nejat Göyünç, "Muzaffereddin Sah ve II. Abdulhamid Devrinde Türk-Iran Dostluk Tezahürleri" in *Iran Sehinsahligi'nin 2500. Kurulus Yildönümüne Armagan* (Istanbul: MEB Yayinlari, 1971), pp. 164-5. For further information on Ottoman-Iranian relations, see Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Essential Friends and Natural Enemies: The Historic Roots of Turkish-Iranian Relations," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 7/3 (2003) and Stanford J. Shaw, "Iranian Relations with the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" in Peter Avery, Gavin R. G. Hambly, and C. Melville (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, VII*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

have worked as an accountant (*muhasebeci*) and also a tax farmer (*mültezim*). A wealthy man, he had an abiding interest in the fine arts of music and painting. It is said that he once climbed up to the upper balcony of a minaret to paint a landscape of his town, which was later bought by one of the foreign diplomats residing in Tuna, the provincial centre.

When he was of age, Mustafa Enver was sent to the *sibyan mektebi*, or primary school, renowned for its strictness, as well as its high quality of education. Once he completed his primary schooling, he attended the local secondary school, Tirnova *Rüsdıyesi*, where he studied modern subjects such as geography and mathematics, as well as the traditional ones like Arabic and Persian. In 1876, he was admitted to *Telgraf Mektebi*, or the School of Telegraphy, which would have a profound effect on his future life and career. The following year, he was briefly appointed to the Office of Telegraph in Edirne.²

The second phase of Mustafa's life was marked by political changes that took place in the Balkans and a consequence of military defeat. Tirnova, his hometown, was a place where people from different religions and ethnicities lived together in relative peaceful co-existence.³ But Muslims outnumbered non-Muslims (Christians) in the region of what is now modern Bulgaria and when nationalists held sway in the Balkans in the second part of the nineteenth century. After the Edirne Treaty of 1829,⁴ Russian influence increased, adding to both ethnic and religious tension in the region and sealing the fate of Muslims there. Within the sphere of this influence, nationalist movements were ignited among Bulgarians and several paramilitary groups made their appearance at different times. The years 1875 and 1876 saw two nationalist uprisings, the first of these a miserable tactical failure, the second ending in massive bloodshed. This was the beginning of the end for the Ottoman Empire in

² For the history of the introduction of the telegraph system into the Ottoman Empire, see Roderic H. Davison, "The Advent of the Electric Telegraph in the Ottoman Empire," *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West*, (Austin: University of Texas Press- Saqi Books, 1990), pp. 133-79.

³ Muslim population in the European part of the Ottoman Empire including Istanbul was 3,833,209 and non-Muslim population 5,000,222 in 1872, Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 117.

⁴ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II, Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 31-32.

the Balkans, culminating in a disastrous war with the Russians in 1877. With this war, the Ottoman presence in the Bulgarian part of Balkans was withdrawn and a massive exodus of Muslims living in the region took place. The exact numbers are still a matter of some controversy.⁵ However, the consensus holds that no less than a hundred thousand Muslim war refugees fled the Balkans for Istanbul as hundreds of thousands made their way to Anatolia.⁶

Mustafa and his family were among them, the miseries of mass migration deeply affecting them. During this chaotic period, the family was split up and moved around. Mustafa's father would not survive, the remaining family members making their home in Istanbul.

As previously mentioned, Mustafa Enver began his career in the Telegraph Office in Edirne. However, once war broke out, he was transferred to Sumnu (Shumla), where the Second Army was positioned. He served there as telegraph officer for the duration of the war. When Sumnu fell to the Russians the summer of the same year, he returned to his hometown of Tirnova. However, it was not long before the Russian advance made its way to Tirnova, forcing Mustafa to join the ranks of Muslim refugees heading for Istanbul.

Even though it is not certain when he arrived in Istanbul, he managed to rejoin his family who left Tirnova before him. It did not take long to find work in his field as a telegraph officer in Istanbul. While doing this, he also studied French in his spare time. He had a bright and promising career as a telegraph officer. Indeed, Abdülhamid II paid special attention to the Telegraph Office because of its strategic importance vis-à-vis communication and intelligence services. Reports and correspondence from every corner of the empire were being collected and dispatched by Mustafa Enver's office and where he was making a name for himself. In fact, this

⁵ For a detailed account of the Muslim immigrants from the Balkans to Ottoman lands in the late nineteenth century, see Faruk Kocacik, "Balkanlar'dan Anadolu'ya Yönelik Göçler (1878-1900): Karsilastirmali Yerli ve Göçmen Köyü Monografileri," Ph.D. diss., Hacettepe Üniversitesi (1978); Justin McCarthy, "Muslims in Ottoman Europe: Population from 1800-1912," *Nationalities Papers*, 28/1 (2000). For broader information on Ottoman population, see Karpat, *Ottoman Population* and Cem Behar (ed.), *Osmanli İmparatorluğu'nun ve Türkiye'nin Nüfusu: 1500-1927*, (Ankara: Basbakanlik Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1996).

⁶ The total number of Muslim immigrants from the lost Balkan lands to other Ottoman lands between 1876 and 1896 was calculated as nearly 850,000. Shaw and Shaw, *History*, p. 117. But it is argued that this number corresponds only to the number of those who managed to arrive at a certain destination alive, not including those who left their land but died on the way, Kocacik, "Balkanlar'dan Anadolu'ya," pp. 67-68.

was when the Shah paid a visit to Istanbul, and Mustafa's services (his knowledge of Persian in particular) proved so remarkable that he received, as I mentioned earlier, a medal of distinction.

His story thus far is that of an ordinary officer working for the Telegraph Directorate in Istanbul, beginning with his family and educational background to his professional performance in Istanbul, which took place during the Hamidian period for the most part. His story becomes more interesting, however, when we take into account that he was a madrasa graduate and subsequently a madrasa teacher, or *dersiam* as it states in a biography written by his son, Süheyl Ünver, a prominent historian of Ottoman art.⁷

The young Mustafa Enver attended numerous private study circles on Islamic subjects offered by the local ulama in Tirnova. He also attended one of the new schools that had come into existence as the result of reforms under the Tanzimat, and telegraph school in particular. Like many other families during this time, Mustafa Enver's family urged him to follow the two paths simultaneously. When he travelled to Istanbul, he found room in Tabhane Madrasa in the Fatih complex (*külliyesi*) in Istanbul, where he resumed his religious studies which had been interrupted by the political disarray following the defeat of the Ottomans in the Balkans. Mustafa never relinquished his position as telegraph officer in Istanbul despite the demands of his madrasa teachers. Once he completed his madrasa education, he obtained a license to teach in Istanbul madrasas (*Istanbul ruûsü*). He then pursued two careers at the same time: teaching at the madrasa and working for the Telegraph Office in Istanbul.

How he switched from one to the next each day is noteworthy, one of his junior colleagues at the Telegraph Office remembering that "his being a madrasa teacher in Fatih Mosque was noticed and understood by his colleagues as he used to change his dress after his shifts and put on his turban and his special cloak."⁸ He was connected himself to an ulama family through marriage, his wife Safiye Hanım the daughter of a prominent ulama family⁹ that was an old practice among the ulama,

⁷ Ahmet Güner Sayar, *A.Süheyl Ünver, Hayati, Sahsiyeti ve Eserleri: 1898-1986*, (Istanbul: Eren, 1994), pp. 23-40.

⁸ Sayar, *A.Süheyl Ünver*, p. 34.

⁹ Sayar, *A.Süheyl Ünver*, pp. 41-43.

particularly those who were passionate to climb the ladder.¹⁰ After the restoration of the Ottoman constitution in 1908, he was also invited to consider a career in politics by some of his friends in the Committee of Union and Progress, or *Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, and the most influential political organization at the time.¹¹

Mustafa Enver's story sheds light on little-known aspects of the madrasa profession in the context of late Ottoman history. In this case, members of the Ottoman ulama in general and madrasa teachers in particular could play a part as active participants in an emergent, modern empire's new institutions. However, they remained true to some traditional aspects of madrasa professional life. Of course, all of madrasa teachers may not be singled out in terms of their participation in and attitudes towards the reform process.

This chapter will address the social, educational, and cultural backgrounds of madrasa teachers in Istanbul in the late Ottoman Empire vis-à-vis quantitative analysis. A number of factors will be taken into consideration, such as the geographic origin of madrasa teachers, occupation of their fathers, knowledge of languages other than Turkish and Arabic, and education. To intention is to identify career patterns among Istanbul madrasa teachers, as well as the social and cultural nature of and reasons for them.

SOURCES

The main sources utilized in this chapter are the personnel files (*sicill-i ahval dosyaları*) of the Ottoman ulama which are housed at the Archives of the Sharia Court Registers (*Ser'i Siciller Arşivi*) in Istanbul.¹² Two types of personnel records

¹⁰ Madeline C. Zilfi, "Elite Circulation in the Ottoman Empire: Great Mollas of the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 26/3 (1983), pp. 331-33; Madeline C. Zilfi, *Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age, 1600-1800*, (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), p. 86.

¹¹ Sayar, *A.Sühayl Ünver*, p. 35.

¹² For the historical evaluation of and more details about the Archives of Sharia Courts, the collection of personnel records, and the Seyhülislam Archives (*Mesihat Arşivi*) preserved in the same place, see Faruk Bilici, "Les archives du Seyh'ül-Islam en tant que source de l'histoire de la fin de l'Empire Ottoman," in Daniel Panzac (ed.), *Histoire économique et sociale de l'Empire Ottoman et de la Turquie (1326-1960): actes du sixième congrès international tenu à Aix-en-Provence du 1er au 4 Juillet 1992*, (Paris: Peeters, 1995); Bilgin Aydın, "Osmanlı Yenilemesi Döneminde Bab-i Mesihat'ın Bürokratik Yapısı ve Evrak İdaresi," MA thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi (1996); Hümeysra Zerdecı, "Osmanlı Ulema Biyografilerinin Arşiv Kaynakları (Ser'iyye Sicilleri)," MA thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi (1998). The catalogue of the registers in the Mesihat Arşivi in İstanbul

are noteworthy. The first includes original documents—printed questionnaires—filled in by every member of the ulama affiliated with the Seyhülislamate Office, as well as copies of individual diplomas (*icazet*), letters of appointment (*mürasele*), and identity cards (*tezkire-i Osmaniye*). The questionnaires contain personal and professional background information, such as father’s name and occupation, his place and date of birth, his educational background, languages, and other relevant career details. Although the files number 6386, this can be misleading. In some cases, one individual has more than one file. The second type of personnel record of note consists of seven volumes of personnel registers. Whereas some individuals appear in both, others appear in one or the other. The reason for this discrepancy is not clear. Since only the files are classified and catalogued, what follows is a quantitative analysis based on them only..

The creation of personnel records was a part of the bureaucratic reform policies of the Hamidian rule, put into practice in 1877.¹³ Yet, it appears that the new practice was not implemented by the Seyhülislamate. Personnel files reveal that all those with a salaried position and thus connected to the Seyhülislamate Office had a file—everyone from high ranking members of the ulama to lowly custodial staff of the Office such as gardeners.¹⁴ Files on madrasa teachers were not kept until the Second Constitutional Period. Whereas it is possible to date the keeping of such files on sharia court judges back to 1882,¹⁵ there do not appear to be any files on record for madrasa teachers prior to 1910. The bulk of these madrasa teacher files bear a date of either May or June 1910 despite the fact that most had been working at their job before filling their CVs. The rest of the files bear an even later date.

has been published very recently. Bilgin Aydin *et al.* (eds), *Bâb-i Mesihat, Seyhülislamlik Arsivi Defter Katalogu*, (Istanbul: ISAM, 2006).

¹³ Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p.27; İsmet Binark, *Basbakanlik Osmanli Arsivi Rehberi*, (Ankara: Basbakanlik Devlet Arsivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1992), p.224.

¹⁴ Those who were allocated a personnel file can be grouped as follows: 1. Functionaries of the Seyhülislamate Office; 2. Judges and other functionaries of the sharia courts; 3. Madrasa teachers in Istanbul and in provinces; 4. Provincial jurist consults (*müftis*); 5. Preachers (*vaiz – kürsi seyhi*); 6. Administrators of orphans’ fund (*emval-i eytam sandığı*); 7. Sons of high ranking ulama (*zâdegân*); 8. Minor employees in the Seyhülislamate Office (*muhzir, odaci, etc.*).

¹⁵ Even though the year 1882 appears as the oldest date in sharia judges’ files, the year 1892 is a more common date for the expansion of the file system to sharia judges as noted in the files. Jun Akiba, “The Making of a Judge in the Late Ottoman Empire: Some Observations on Social Mobility and Integration,” Paper presented in MESA 2000 Meeting, Orlando, Florida, 17 Nov. 2000, p.3. My special thanks are due to Jun Akiba for allowing me to see this paper.

According to the files catalogue,¹⁶ there are some 6386 entries in the Archives of the Sharia Courts' Registers (*Ser'i Siciller Arsivi*) in Istanbul. Out of this number, 344 belong to madrasa teachers. However, only 252 contain curriculum vitae, the rest devoid of the information necessary for a systematic and thorough analysis. I have composed my sample using 230 files of madrasa teachers, not counting those who entered the profession after the ratification of the Second Constitution in 1908. Some files could not be consulted due to their poor physical condition.

INSTITUTIONAL ASPECT

Madrasa teachers in Istanbul have always occupied an important position within the teaching profession in the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul a center of religious education. However, for many historians, there is some confusion about the titles by which madrasa teachers were known. *Mudarris* is the common title for madrasa teachers throughout the Islamic world. Yet, the historical sources in general use the word *dersiam* instead of "mudarris" for referring to the madrasa teachers in Istanbul during the nineteenth century. Although *dersiam* literally means "public lecture" rather than "lecturer," the reason for the usage of "dersiam" is unknown. One possibility is that "dersiam" replaced "mudarris" due to the rise in the number of madrasa teachers in Istanbul and the gradual shift of teaching venue from madrasa rooms to select Istanbul mosques. The word itself goes back to the sixteenth century. "Dersiam" began to be used as a title for madrasa teachers in the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Over time, "dersiam" replaced "mudarris" in Istanbul. Official documents from the period that concerns this chapter refer to madrasa teachers as *dersiams*. Importantly, *mudarris* continued to be used in the provinces.¹⁸

To enter the teaching profession in Istanbul, aspirants were required to make their application to the Seyhülislam Office and sit the entrance exam after the *icazet*, or diploma was awarded by an Istanbul *dersiam*. The personnel files suggest that teaching posts in Istanbul were restricted to those who had obtained an *icazet*

¹⁶ The catalogue of the entire ulama personnel files is the part of a master dissertation. For the historical evolution of the file system and details about the contents of the ulama personnel files, see Zerdecı, "Osmanlı Ulema."

¹⁷ Mehmet Ipsirli, "Dersiam," *DIA*, v.9, p.185.

¹⁸ For details about using the titles *mudarris* and *dersiam*, see Zerdecı, "Osmanlı Ulema."

from a madrasa teacher who had been teaching in Istanbul. For this reason, 121 dersiams in this sample interrupted their studies in their hometowns to move to Istanbul to advance and complete their education. (Table 1). Three dersiams acquired another *icazet* in order to qualify to teach in Istanbul. Hafiz Ismail Hakki Efendi from Kastamonu, for example, received his *icazet* from the Seyid Efendi Madrasa in his home town and then attended the circle of Istanbulî Mehmed Esad Efendi in Istanbul where he was appointed to the imamate of Ayasofya Mosque. After receiving a second *icazet* from an Istanbul dersiam, he qualified to sit the exam for a license to teach as he was awarded in 1906 to teach at the Ayasofya Mosque.¹⁹ Abdüllatif Lütfi Efendi of Ma'mûretül-Aziz (Elazîz,/Elazig) followed a similar path, but solely for educational purposes. He studied and earned an *icazet* in Harput before travelling to Istanbul at the age of thirty. He entered the Damad Cedid Ibrahim Pasa Madrasa in Istanbul and continued under the tutelage of Emedli el-Hâc Ali Efendi, earning a second *icazet*. Abdüllatif began his teaching career in 1876.²⁰

There are 106 other cases of madrasa teachers commencing their studies in Istanbul. Interestingly, for dersiams from the Balkans, beginners outnumber seasoned applicants 34 to 31 respectively. For Anatolian dersiams, the figures are reversed: 54 to 85 for seasoned applicants.

The length of time the *dersiam* spent in Istanbul to complete their studies vary, depending on whether madrasa students were just beginning or not. For 91 *dersiam* beginners, the average length of study was 16.5 years. For 82 more experienced applicants, the average was not as long, 12.7 years. The difference in time of study is no doubt a factor of experience, late-comers as it were benefiting from their erstwhile studies at the local madrasa in their hometown before traveling to Istanbul. Despite the calculated averages, a period of 20 years of study was not unusual.²¹

¹⁹ Hafiz Ismail Hakki Efendi of Kastamonu, (USAD no: 918).

²⁰ Abdüllatif Lütfi Efendi of Ma'mûretül-Aziz, (USAD no: 3420). The other dersiam holding a second *icazet* is Ismail Efendi of Osmancik, (USAD no: 3489).

²¹ For some examples of such cases based on approximately 20 years of study, see Ahmed Nureddin Efendi of Balikesir (USAD no: 3379) (22 years); Mehmed Arif Efendi of Ankara (USAD no: 3473) (21 years); Ali Haydar Efendi of Gümülçine (USAD no: 195) (20 years).

SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS

To understand the social background of madrasa teachers in Istanbul, the information with regard to occupations of their fathers can provide a reliable foundation. Following in one's father's footsteps was common among the ulama in the Ottoman Empire. The work of David Kushner demonstrates that more than one third of the ulama in his sample preferred to follow their fathers' chosen career (38.6 %).²² However, since Kushner's work is a collective research within the official ulama, ignoring the differences between the various lines within the career path, it only reflects a very general tendency. Importantly, in relation to madrasa teachers, the figure differs from Kushner's, but is consistent on the point that the largest proportions in the both researches –excluding the category of “unknown”– belong to the ulama. As indicated in Table 2 below, which shows the fathers' occupation among the Istanbul dersiams, 74 of 230 dersiams (32.2%) were sons of ulama holding several positions in the profession. In this case, ulama is being used in the broadest sense of the word. For example, teachers of primary schools (*sibyan mektebi*, *ibtidâi mekteb* and *köy mektebi*) are also included in this category. Because teachers' colleges (*darümuallimin* first established in 1848 and *darümuallimat* or women teachers college in 1871) were slow to move into the provinces at this time, most primary schools were staffed by madrasa educated teachers, many of whom had not yet completed their studies.²³

As mentioned, the percentage of madrasa teachers who followed their fathers into the profession is lower than Kushner's research suggests. The figure is lower than that of sharia judges in the same category according to another research encompassing 295 sharia judges from all over the empire, which reaches a percentage covering more than half or 55%.²⁴ It seems clear that a teaching career in an Istanbul madrasa did not appeal to the sons of high-ranking ulama and this could

²² David Kushner, “Career Patterns Among the Ulama in the Late Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyum; Ankara, 31 Ekim-3 Kasım 1989*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), p.168.

²³ Yahya Akyüz, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1933'e*, (Istanbul: Kültür Koleji Yayınları, 1994) p. 154. For the first regulation of Darümuallimin, see Yahya Akyüz, “Darümuallimîn'in İlk Nizamnamesi (1851), Önemi ve Ahmet Cevdet Paşa,” *Milli Eğitim*, 95 (1990). For comprehensive research on the history of teacher training in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, see Cemil Öztürk, *Türkiye'de Düünden Bugüne Öğretmen Yetistiren Kurumlar*, (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2005).

²⁴ Akiba, “The Making of a Judge,” p.8, 16.

be due to the relatively lower income earned by a dersiam in contrast to that of a judge or a higher ranking member of the ulama.

The figures allow us to determine the extent to which the Istanbul dersiams adopted a new line in the profession. As seen in Table 3 below, patrician ulama sons did not pursue madrasa teaching posts in Istanbul. Such posts were the special purview of sons of the ulama with relatively humble income such as mudarrises (19 % of ulama families), primary school teachers (12.1 %), *seyhs*, or leaders in the Sufi order (6.7 %), and *imams*, or mosque functionaries (8.1 %). Arguably, teaching posts in Istanbul paved the way for ulama of modest means to rise up the ranks over the course of generations.

Those from relatively higher ulama families such as sharia court judges and *müftis*, or jurist consultants interestingly are represented in very low numbers, i.e. four and two fathers for the sub-categories respectively. Additionally, in only three cases, the fathers of two dersiams in this sub-category held the title of *kazasker*, the second and third highest positions within the official ulama hierarchy.²⁵ One of these two, Ahmed Ramiz Efendi, belonged to an aristocratic ulama family; his grandfather was also a *kazasker*. Such cases were rare, indeed, and this supports the general trend determined by the overwhelming majority of lower ulama background in the teaching profession.

The largest group of dersiam fathers worked in agriculture. However, the vagueness of the terms used by dersiams in their curriculum vitae to describe their fathers' professions proves slightly problematic in this case. A number of terms, all related to agricultural activities, appear in the personnel files: *köy ahalisi*, *reñber*, *zürra* and *çiftci*. A problem arises in determining the differences between these terms. For example, it is not clear that any of these refers to land possession. None of the dersiams in the sample indicate their fathers possessed a piece of land when listing agriculture as their profession.²⁶

²⁵ Mehmed Sevketi efendi of Istanbul (USAD No: 19) and Ahmed Ramiz Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 78 and 1192). The other dersiam in this category is Ibrahim Edhem Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 48), whose father was a high level sharia judge.

²⁶ The contemporary Ottoman dictionaries such as Semseddin Sami, *Kamus-i Türkî*, (Istanbul: Ikdam Matbaasi, 1899) and Ahmed Vefik Pasa, *Lehce-i Osmanî*, (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaasi, 1306 [1889]) do not make any clear distinction between the terms. On the other hand, as relates to "possession" of land, the words *köy ahalisi*, *reñber* and *çiftci* are clearly defined to mean that they

Given these ambiguities, all of these fathers will be considered as a single group and described as “agriculturists.” When combined together, they constitute a larger percentage than ulama fathers, 24 % (57 cases). The other categories of fathers’ occupations are worthy of close attention as none of the other occupational types reach even 10 %. Artisan fathers of Istanbul dersiams number 16, making up the third largest group with 6.9 %, following the ulama and agriculturists. The number goes down to 10 in cases in which the fathers were engaged in some form of trade, constituting 4.3 % of the whole.

For fathers working as officials, the figure dramatically falls to 3% (only 7 such cases). Looking closely at fathers in the civil service, three held lower administrative positions in the provinces. For instance Mehmed Said Efendi’s father Ahmed Efendi,²⁷ and Yakub Sabri Efendi’s father Mehmed Efendi,²⁸ served as aides to the governors of Sivas and Baghdad, respectively. The position held by Serfiçeli Mehmed Emin Efendi’s father, Saban Efendi, was not mentioned. Apart from these three cases, the rest (except for one such official) worked in Istanbul. Salih Nazim Efendi’s father, the late Ahmed Muhtar Efendi, worked as the district treasurer (*Defterdar*) of the Hicaz,²⁹ a post which could be considered high level in comparison to the others. Abdullah Efendi, father of Istanbul Mehmed Hilmi Efendi, retired from the Yildiz Palace, but his position was left blank.³⁰ Two fathers worked in the Imperial Treasury³¹ and another in the Palace Stables (*Istabl-i Âmire*).³² As all this suggests that dersiam posts in Istanbul were occupied by people from humble social and economic backgrounds in the main. The “unknown” backgrounds of a high percentage of dersiam fathers constitute the largest group (26.1 % or 60 fathers) and also indicate their humble social and economic backgrounds.

cultivate a piece of land which belongs to someone else. Definitions for the term *ziirra* are even vaguer so that it is impossible to determine whether they possessed land.

²⁷ Mehmed Said Efendi of Sivas (USAD no: 528).

²⁸ Yakub Sabri Efendi of Arhavi (USAD no: 3502)

²⁹ Salih Nazim Efendi of Erzurum (USAD no: 3595).

³⁰ Mehmed Hayri Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 3675).

³¹ Mehmed Neset Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 37).

³² Hafiz Ebu Bekir Efendi of Sinob (USAD no: 126).

Compared to sharia judges with ties to the Istanbul dershams, one might presume that middle and lower-ranking ulama posts were usually filled by people from agrarian or lower ulama families, of little or no attraction to sons from the bureaucratic and mercantile backgrounds. Contrary to the fact that sharia judgeships attracted sons from military families (2%) and local notables (9 %) to a certain extent,³³ it is important to note that not a single dershiam father could lay claim to either. Although insufficient data does not permit a definitive conclusion vis-à-vis Istanbul's dershams, it nevertheless reflects a social tendency of the time.

Carter Findley's figures for officials in the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Nezareti*) provide a vivid picture of the career choices of sons of Ottoman officials. Most patrician sons preferred posts in emergent Ottoman bureaucratic institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rather than teaching and judgeship posts; and so a high percentage of foreign ministry officials were sons of Ottoman officials.³⁴ The paucity of fathers from the merchant class, military officers, and local landowners further shows that Ottoman elites had little interest in teaching posts in Istanbul in the late Ottoman period. And so, given the social status of most of Istanbul's dershiam fathers, a teaching post in an Istanbul madrasa was a means of upward mobility for many such sons.

The figures showing continuity of family lines from generation to generation within the ulama profession demonstrate the extent to which the Istanbul dershams adopted a different position from their fathers in the ulama career. As Table 3 demonstrates, 14 out of 74 (19 %) followed their fathers' career path into the madrasa. A considerable amount of ulama fathers were teachers of Quran schools, *seyhs*, and *imams*, which amounted to 20 (nearly 27 %). Therefore, the departure from their fathers' positions within the ulama profession helped madrasa teachers in Istanbul achieve upward mobility, particularly taking into account their predominantly rural backgrounds.

Among all sub-categories in Table 3, the greatest proportion goes to the "unknown" (36.5). A similar situation also occurs among the occupations of all fathers where the "unknown" sub-category took a share of 26.1 (Table 2). In both

³³ Akiba, "The Making of a Judge," p. 17.

³⁴ Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp.103-11.

tables, these high proportions most possibly refer to modest background and thus the respondent dersiams preferred to ignore to provide detailed information.

Examining regional origins helps to determine the social backgrounds of Istanbul dersiams. While, as seen above, the proportion of dersiam fathers engaged in small scale cultivation was considerably high, the figure for dersiams with rural backgrounds supports the idea that being an Istanbul dersiam was a means for upward mobility. As seen in Table 4, 80 Istanbul dersiams, slightly more than one third of all surveyed, had a rural background. They were born and spent a certain period of their lives in villages. Even though, in this category, the majority of dersiams were from urban settlements such as sub-districts (*nahiye*), districts (*kaza*) and provinces (*vilayet*), the number of dersiams with rural backgrounds is considerably higher than the same category in relation to sharia judges and in the ulama members in Kushner's survey. Whereas its proportion in Istanbul dersiams is 34.8 % with 80 persons, it falls down to nearly 19 % for both sharia judges³⁵ and the ulama group in Kushner's work.³⁶ The figure for dersiams from the countryside is even higher if *nahiyes* –small administrative units composed of a large village or a number of villages– are included.³⁷ All these figures suggest that dersiam posts in Istanbul were a career opportunity that appealed to youngsters from rural areas seeking their fortune in the imperial capital.

The birthplace of dersiams gives interesting clues regarding the geographical composition of the madrasa teaching profession. Table 5 displays the dersiams' birthplaces by region. The striking feature in this category is the relatively under-representation of Istanbul-born dersiams, which number only 14 persons. This is not low when compared to the proportion of Istanbul's population (3.3 %) in the overall Ottoman population. However, it gets more interesting when a comparison is made between the Istanbul dersiams and the groups of sharia judges, the official ulama and officials in the Ministry of Foreign Office. While the proportion of the Istanbul-borns among the dersiams is 6.1 %, it comes close to 10 % for both the sharia judges and

³⁵ Akiba, "The Making of a Judge," p. 9.

³⁶ Kushner, "Career Pattern," p.166.

³⁷ *Nahiyes* are not included in the "rural background" category due to the fact that they were not administratively regarded as villages, and so appointed their own judges.

the general ulama,³⁸ and it rises dramatically to 76 % among the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁹

Istanbul-born dersiams had similar family backgrounds. Despite their small number, 10 Istanbul-born dersiams were from ulama families. Four ulama fathers occupied high posts, such as that of *kazasker* and senior sharia judgeships.⁴⁰ That said a goodly number descended from more modest stock, such as Mehmed Esad's father, Bekir Efendi, a dersiam at the Ayasofya Mosque.⁴¹ Also, Mehmed Tevfik's father, Ibrahim Halil Efendi, taught at a primary school in Üsküdar on the Asian side of Istanbul.⁴² Two more fathers of Istanbul-born dersiam were officials of lower rank,⁴³ two more still whose profession was not reported (Table 6A).

The same figures for sharia judges and officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are illustrative. Istanbul-born sharia judges make up 11 % of all sharia judges and overwhelmingly from ulama families: 31 out of 33 were sons of ulama fathers from Istanbul.⁴⁴ Although the career preference for sons from ulama families living in Istanbul seems clear, what was the general tendency in Istanbul? Statistical information about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggests that over two thirds of the total number of officials in this ministry were native to Istanbul.⁴⁵ A secular position was the preference for many vis-à-vis traditional posts. At the same time, many ulama families sought after more powerful posts within the ulama profession.

Another striking feature is the under-representation of those from the Arab lands, just two in this sample: Resid Efendi from Damascus⁴⁶ and Mehmed Murad Efendi from Haifa.⁴⁷ From a Damascene ulama family, Resid Efendi memorized the

³⁸ Akiba, "The Making of a Judge," pp. 9–10; Kushner, "Career Pattern," p.166.

³⁹ Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp. 99–100.

⁴⁰ For *kazasker* fathers, see Mehmed Sevketi Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 19) and Ahmed Ramiz Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 78 and 1192). For high level sharia judges, see Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 246) and Ibrahim Edhem of Istanbul (USAD no: 48).

⁴¹ Mehmed Esad Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 3386).

⁴² Mehmed Tevfik Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 221).

⁴³ Mehmed Hayri Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 3675) and Mehmed Neset Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 37).

⁴⁴ Akiba, "The Making of a Judge," p.10.

⁴⁵ Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp. 99–100.

⁴⁶ Hafiz Resid Efendi of Sam (Damascus) (USAD no: 3621).

⁴⁷ Mehmed Murad Efendi of Haifa (USAD no: 2099).

whole of the Qur'an to become a *hafiz*, and then attended a local madrasa (Muradiye) in Damascus. Following his graduation from the madrasa in his hometown, he came to Istanbul and joined the study circle of Tirebolulu Hacı Ahmed Efendi. He is said to have traveled around Syria working as a school teacher after obtaining his *icazet* from Damascus, but finally came back to Istanbul and worked as a *dersiam* at the Fatih Mosque after his second *icazet*.⁴⁸ The other *dersiam* from the Arab lands was Mehmed Murad who was born in Haifa in 1880. He first travelled to al-Azhar to study. After eight years of studying, he came to Istanbul to continue his studies of Islamic subjects. Staying at the Dizdariye Madrasa, he attended a study circle at the Bayezid Mosque. After being awarded an *icazet* in 1902, he taught at the Bayezid Mosque.⁴⁹

Such cases were rare by the nineteenth century, though a century earlier it was commonplace for many Arabs from the region of Syria and Palestine to emigrate to Istanbul to study in Ottoman madrasas. It was possible to see Damascenes coming to the Ottoman capital in order to obtain a teaching post after completing their madrasa education there.⁵⁰ Even for the ulama of Jerusalem in the eighteenth century, Istanbul rivaled Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad as the most preferred locale for advanced study and posting in the ulama profession.⁵¹ As time passed, fewer and fewer Arabs seemed willing to spend the time and money necessary to obtain a teaching post in Istanbul at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, Arabs still continued to come studying in Istanbul madrasas at the turn of the nineteenth century. According to Mahmud Yazbak, 9 out of 47 Arabs from ulama families living in Nablus, made the trek to Istanbul between 1870 and 1914. Three went on to become sharia court judges (*naib*) and another three became madrasa teachers in their hometowns.⁵² Not one would become a madrasa teacher in the Ottoman capital. A much higher number, 14 cases, chose Damascus over Istanbul and where they

⁴⁸ Hafiz Resid Efendi of Sam (Damascus) (USAD no: 3621).

⁴⁹ Mehmed Murad Efendi of Haifa (USAD no:2099).

⁵⁰ Stephan E. Tamari, "Teaching and Learning in an Early Modern Arab Society," Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University (1988), pp.111-12.

⁵¹ Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "The 'Ulama' of Ottoman Jerusalem (16th -18th Centuries)," in Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand (eds), *Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City, 1517-1917*, (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2000), pp. 48-49.

⁵² Mahmud Yazbak, "Nabulsi Ulama in the Late Ottoman Period, 1864-1914," *IJMES*, 29 (1997), pp. 78-79.

went to study in Hanbali madrasas, suggesting that sectarian or theological differences played a role in where one chose to study the Islamic religion at the more advanced level.⁵³

The situation in other areas of the ulama profession is different from the Istanbul dersiams. According to Kushner's findings, 11.6 % of the ulama posts were held by Arabs in the empire,⁵⁴ 15% in sharia judges—which, for obvious reasons, declined dramatically following the Young Turk revolution.⁵⁵ For an Ottoman Arab, a judgeship was preferred to a dersiam posting in Istanbul, in part, because it was possible to work in an Arabic-speaking province. A penchant for secular and gainful employment was typical of Ottoman subjects in general, including Arabs.⁵⁶ For instance, 4% of the Ministry of Foreign Office was of Arab extraction. The percentage of madrasa teachers in Istanbul from the Arab provinces was much lower by comparison.⁵⁷

The percentage of Istanbul dersiams from the Balkans was much higher, 28.3 % or 65 cases, and arguably a high proportion considering the fact Muslim males from the Balkan provinces were 14 % of the total Muslim male population of the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth hundred.⁵⁸ This was no doubt a consequence of mass migration that followed the territorial losses at that time.⁵⁹ Mustafa Enver Efendi is a case in point, leaving for Istanbul just before the Balkans fell to the

⁵³ Yazbak, "Nabulsi Ulama," p. 79.

⁵⁴ Kushner, "Career Pattern," p.166

⁵⁵ Akiba, "The Making of a Judge," pp.15–16.

⁵⁶ Roded, "Social Patterns," p. 153. For the career patterns of Arabs in the Ottoman bureaucracy, see Joseph S. Szyliowicz, "Changes in the Recruitment Patterns and Career-Lines of Ottoman Provincial Administrators during the Nineteenth Century," in Moshe Ma'oz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975).

⁵⁷ Findley claims that the number of Arabs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs slightly increased in the Hamidian period due to the Hamidian policies towards integration of the Arabs into the Ottoman imperial system. See Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp. 99-100.

⁵⁸ The proportion is calculated according to the data presented in Karpas, *Ottoman Population*, p. 168.

⁵⁹ Kemal Karpas asserts that the mass immigration of Muslims to Anatolia, the main land of the empire, particularly from the Balkans had a great impact on the social, political and cultural structures of the Ottoman Empire and consequently on the Republican Turkey. See Kemal H. Karpas, "The *hijra* from Russia and the Balkans: The Process of Self-definition in the Late Ottoman State," in Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (eds), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 141–52.

Russians in 1877. The chaos in the Balkans gave madrasa graduates from that region more than a little incentive to seek their career fortunes in Istanbul.

Edirne and Selanik provided the highest number of dersiams, 20 and 8 respectively (Table 7). No other Balkan province comes near to this. Edirne's close proximity to Istanbul may explain the proportionally high number of Edirne-born dersiams in Istanbul. Easy access to Istanbul appears to have played a role because the majority of them (12 dersiams) received their entire education at Istanbul madrasas while 8 Edirne-born dersiams first studied at a hometown madrasa before emigrating to Istanbul for education. Approximately 30 % of Edirne-born dersiams were from ulama families, suggesting a tradition of madrasa teaching in the area. On the other hand, Selanik-born dersiams from ulama families number only 1 in 8. For dersiams from both Edirne and Selanik, most were from rural areas. For instance, 8 dersiam fathers from Edirne and four more from Selanik worked in agriculture (Table 6B).

Unlike the dersiam of Balkan origin, those from Anatolia make up nearly two thirds of the total (61.3 %) and the same percentage of the Anatolian Muslim male population of the Ottoman Empire (65 %) in the early twentieth century.⁶⁰ Dersiam from the four provinces of Anatolia made up nearly half the entire number in Istanbul, that is, 105. 36 dersiams were born in the Trabzon province, 26 in Kastamonu, 20 in Ankara, and 23 in Konya (Table 7).

The cases from the Trabzon province deserve closer attention since the largest group of Istanbul dersiams hailed from there, 15.7 % of the total. The province is located along the coast of the eastern Black Sea of Turkey. Batum also is included in this calculation since it was regarded as a part of Trabzon province before taken by the Russians. Not every district in the province is represented here. Gümüşhane lists only one dersiam and Canik only two representatives. Whereas a group of 8 dersiams were from the central district of Trabzon and its environs, 8 were Batum-born dersiams.

The largest proportion within the Trabzon province comes from the Lazistan district, renowned as an area of ulama-oriented professions, with 17 dersiams that represent nearly 50 % of the intake for Trabzon province as a whole. The situation in

⁶⁰ Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p.168.

Lazistan supports the figures for sharia judges. Trabzon was home to a high proportion of sharia judges (13.1 % with 39 cases) although this is a slightly smaller share compared to the Istanbul dersiams.⁶¹ In addition, Lazistan district alone made up 43 % of the total with 17 sharia judges, nearly half, from Trabzon.

The presence of so many Trabzon-born dersiam in Istanbul, similar to sharia judges, may have been a result of few opportunities in the region vis-à-vis the scarcity of land in the region and harsh geographical conditions.⁶² Michael Meeker's work on the Black Sea region and the social circumstances at the time, based on British consular reports, points out that the region suffered from a "state of anarchy" and westward migration of Muslims.⁶³ In addition, feudal local dynasties (*agha*-families) fought over who ought to dominate the various fiefdoms,⁶⁴ which no doubt led ordinary people to seek opportunities elsewhere. Ulama posts were opportunities for the youth of the region. This would eventually, and somehow inevitably, bring people to the capital where many ulama posts existed for eligible seekers. Furthermore, the figures regarding fathers' occupations of the Trabzon-born dersiams suggest the existence of a family tradition related to Islamic education and learning in the area.⁶⁵ The number of ulama fathers is 13 which represent 36.1 %. The proportion among the Trabzon-born sharia judges goes down to 31 %; lower than the Istanbul dersiams, but still considerably higher than many other places.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Akiba, "The Making of a Judge," pp.14–15, 19–20. I have adjusted the figure for Trabzon-born sharia judges given here after the Batum-born sharia judges is also included in the calculation.

⁶² For greater elaboration on this subject, see Justin McCarthy, "Age, Family and Migration in Nineteenth-Century Black Sea Provinces of the Ottoman Empire," *IJMES*, 10 (1979); Ibrahim Güler, "XVIII. Yüzyilda Trabzon'un Sosyal ve Eknomik Durumuna dair Tesbitler," in Kemal Çiçek, et al. (eds), *Cumhuriyet'in 75. ve Osmanli Devleti'nin 700. yilinda Trabzon Tarihi Ilmi Toplantisi (6-8 Kasim 1998)*, *Bildiriler* (Trabzon: Trabzon Belediyesi Yayinlari, 1999). I am grateful to Prof. Kenan Inan for providing me a copy of this source.

⁶³ Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire, the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, (Berkeley: University of California Pres, 2001), p. 264.

⁶⁴ Meeker, *A Nation of Empire*, pp. 257–58. The *agha*-families were a phenomenon in the region. Their influence was visible almost in every sphere of society. For a reflection of their influence during the implementation of the Tanzimat reforms, see Abdullah Saydam, "XIX. Yüzyilda Reform ihtiyacinin Tasradaki Yansimalarina Bir Örnek: Akçaabâd Kazasi," *Osmanli Arastirmalari*, 21 (2001).

⁶⁵ The fact that the region held a high number of madrasas, students, mudarrises and other ulama members also explicitly supports the existence of ulama family tradition. For such figures, see Meeker, *A Nation of Empire*, pp. 269-70, 274-75; M. Emin Yolalici, "Maarif Salnamelerine Göre; Trabzon Vilayeti'nde Egitim ve Öğretim Kurumları," *OTAM*, 5 (1994), pp. 444-48.

⁶⁶ Akiba, "The Making of a Judge," pp. 19–20.

Again, the high percentage of Trabzon-born ulama and dersiam in Istanbul jobs can be explained as a factor of tradition and economic deprivation.

Kastamonu, Ankara, and Konya were home to a high percentage of Istanbul dersiam, too (Table 7). These three provinces were geographically very large and covered most of central Anatolia—from the western Black Sea in the north to the Mediterranean in the south. The mere size and population of the region is one reason for the high numbers. The distribution of dersiams within the provinces was also level across the board without concentration in any particular place. Fathers in this case with professions listed as “unknown” number 7 out of 26 for Kastamonu, 6 out of 20 for Ankara, and 7 out of 23 for Konya. Fathers engaged in agriculture but farmers without land possession number 7, 5, and 4 for Kastamonu, Ankara, and Konya respectively, suggesting that the majority of Istanbul dersiam from these provinces came from economically deprived families (Table 6A).

Importantly, there is not even one single case from Bursa, a center of madrasa learning and education and quite accessible to Istanbul.⁶⁷ There are only three dersiams in Istanbul who hail from within the vicinity of Bursa. However, not one received even the initial part of their madrasa education there.⁶⁸ This may be due to the fact that Bursa had a long tradition of madrasa education as well as scores of madrasas going back to the early years of the empire. Forty-nine madrasas were located within the centre of town from the fourteenth early seventeenth century, a majority functional and surviving well into the twentieth century.⁶⁹ Therefore, Bursa itself was another popular choice and centre of madrasa learning and this avoided having people go to Istanbul in pursuit of teaching posts.

EDUCATIONAL COMPOSITION

It is a well-known fact that education was targeted by Ottoman reformers as crucial to the formation and maintenance of a “properly functioning state apparatus,” which would allow the *Devlet-i Aliyye*, or Sublime State, to survive. Although the

⁶⁷ For the historical background of madrasa education in Bursa, see Mefail Hizli, *Mahkeme Sicillerine Göre Osmanlı Klasik Dönemi Bursa Medreselerinde Eğitim-Öğretim*, (Bursa: Esra Fakülte Kitabevi, 1997); Mefail Hizli, *Osmanlı Klasik Döneminde Bursa Medreseleri*, (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1998).

⁶⁸ Ali Nakib Efendi of Inegöl (USAD no: 3439); Ahmed Nureddin Efendi of Balıkesir (USAD no: 3379); Merkez Fevzi Efendi of Erdek (USAD no: 3459).

⁶⁹ Hizli, *Osmanlı Klasik*, p.198.

overall success of this is far from clear, it would affect every level of education—from primary schools to higher education in the early nineteenth century. Mahmud II issued an imperial decree which made primary education compulsory and thus families responsible for sending their children, regardless of gender, to elementary school.⁷⁰ This coincided with the founding of new schools at every level, which his successors continued as part of a larger plan to create a better qualified workforce for the state. The Law of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umûmiye Nizamnâmesi*) of 1869, proposed the establishment of an *ibtidâi*, or elementary school, in every neighborhood and village; a *rûsdiye*, or advanced primary school, in every town of five hundred households; an *idadî*, or preparatory school, in every town of a thousand households; and a *Sultanî*, or lycée, for every provincial center.⁷¹ These new schools operated in tandem with the more traditional madrasa and pre-existing elementary schools. To what degree these innovations in public education effected the dersiam is worthy of serious consideration vis-à-vis the contention that dersiam were an impediment to the overall success of such educational reforms.⁷²

Ulama personnel files provide information on the educational background of Istanbul dersiam beyond the madrasa. For example, Istanbul dersiam participated in several forms of primary educations across the empire at the time. As seen in Table 8, most Istanbul dersiam had a primary education of one kind or another—although it was not always formal in nature. In the sample, four dersiam attended a madrasa without any preparatory education. In such cases, an initial period of education for advanced madrasa learning and similar to that in an elementary school, was undertaken. In 37 cases, the degree of primary education is unknown, although it is doubtful that all 37 entered the madrasa without some preparatory study. In this vein,

⁷⁰ Selçuk Aksin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 25. For the full text of the imperial decree making primary education compulsory, see Mahmud Cevad Ibnûsseyh Nâfi, *Maârif-i Umûmiye Nezareti Tarihçe-i Teskilât ve İcrââtı*, Taceddin Kayaoglu (ed.), (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayinlari, 2001), pp. 3-5.

⁷¹ Shaw and Shaw, *History*, pp. 108-109; Andreas M. Kazamias, *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), pp. 63-64. For the analyses of the Law of Public Education, see Somel, *The Modernization*, 86-90; Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom, Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 91-93.

⁷² Carter Findley devotes pages to how the Ottoman ulama opposed the educational reforms, basically depending merely on Osman Nuri Ergin's work, *Maarif Tarihi*, a book composed in the atmosphere of the early Republican period when the anti-Ottomanist ideas were officially favored and appreciated. For example, see Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp. 135-39.

nearly 80 % claimed some primary education prior to their studies at the madrasa. In 59 cases, representing 25.6 % of the total number of dersiam, reference is made to a village elementary school (*köy mektebi*) or neighborhood elementary school (*mahalle mektebi*) without specifying whether it was an *ibtidaî*, or *sibyan*, that is, new or old. A group of 55 attended *ibtidaî* school, or 24 % of all Istanbul dersiam. *Sibyan mektebi* attendees numbered 43 cases, or 18.7 %. Taken together, Istanbul dersiam with an elementary education from a formal institution comes to 157, or 68.3 % of the total.

It soon becomes clear that some form of primary or preparatory education—if not always formal in nature—was a pre-condition for admission to the madrasa. The question is whether Istanbul dersiam were not the products of the new Ottoman school system. As discussed, the duality in Ottoman education was a facet of the mid nineteenth century. The Ottoman reformers made considerable efforts to uphold the elementary school system particularly from two points of view. First, the elementary schools had been regarded as the essential educational means to give basic education to Muslim children in the empire. Second, these schools were meant to prepare the prospective students for the new style secondary and high schools, such as the *rüsiye* and *idadî*, the establishment of which was the life-time endeavor of many Ottoman reformers. However, instead of creating an entirely new system of schooling, the Ottoman governments rather tended to focus on re-arranging the existing elementary schools, called *sibyan mektebi* (literally, “school of children”) through revising their curriculum and moving their administration from the hands of *ulama* to the control of central government. The governmental efforts gained momentum in the late 1850s.⁷³ As flaws in the existing primary education system became apparent, the government adopted a new plan of action in 1872, that being, direct intervention in primary education and the foundation of a new elementary school system known as *ibtidâi mektebs* and under the complete control of the Ministry of Education.⁷⁴

Although the overall success of *ibtidâi* schools is difficult to gauge, 24 % of Istanbul dersiam received their primary education in these schools. As a consequence, Istanbul dersiams came from an environment in which reforms had

⁷³ Somel, *The Modernization*, pp. 74-75.

⁷⁴ Somel, *The Modernization*, pp. 108-09.

attached themselves to cultural and social life. Again, fathers and their professions prove evocative vis-à-vis *ibtidâi* school attendees among the dersiam. A considerable proportion, approximately 35%, was ulama, whereas fathers working in agriculture and those for whom a professional designation is not known constitute a larger number, 45.5% of the total (Table 9). In light of these figures, educational reform at the primary level was clearly acceptable to Ottoman society, even to the so-called most conservative part, the ulama.

Another interesting aspect of the Istanbul dersiams' primary education reflects the conservative environment in which they were raised, in contrast to the situation in the *ibtidâi*-educated dersiams. For example, 22 dersiam, or 9.5%, were taught the rudiments by a member of their immediate family and by their fathers in most cases, going on to the madrasa without any elementary school experience. All 22 dersiam were sons of ulama fathers who held various posts in the profession. A few were taught by some other member of the family. Hasan Tevfik Efendi, for example, was taught by his brother even though their father was a madrasa teacher in their village.⁷⁵ Another dersiam, Mehmed Tevfik Efendi, received his first lessons from his uncle who was a madrasa teacher at the Degirmenönü Madrasa in Denizli, as well as a calligrapher, or *hattat*.⁷⁶ One final example: Mehmed Hilmi Efendi was taught the basics, including Islamic studies, at the feet of his grandfather.⁷⁷ The titles added to his name, *Haci Hasan Efendi* suggest that he was a member of the ulama. For these dersiams, a more formal primary education was perhaps not possible for the simple reason that a new school had yet to be established in their immediate vicinity.

Trabzon, and particularly the sub-province of Lazistan, had a strong ulama tradition. However, the ulama of Trabzon had not developed a system for transmitting knowledge between generations and within the family. As Table 10 clearly indicates, only 3 out of 22 were from Trabzon. Istanbul dersiams emerged from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from some that proved receptive to social changes through the new institutions, to some arising from a conservative core of society. But it is also important to keep in mind, as previously mentioned, that all the

⁷⁵ Hasan Tevfik Efendi of Sultanyeri (USAD no: 205).

⁷⁶ Mehmed Tevfik Efendi of Denizli (USAD no:3720).

⁷⁷ Mehmed Efendi of Tirnova (USAD no:3453).

cases with a tradition of family education involve a relatively older generation; they were composed of people all born in the pre-Hamidian period. In the oldest case, Ali Riza Efendi was born in 1841⁷⁸ and the youngest in 1871,⁷⁹ a time period that overlapped with the Tanzimat era. In fact, reforms to education were fast and furious during the Tanzimat period though not entirely successful in every case, or region. Indeed, the lack of elementary schools left many ulama families with little choice but to educate their children at home and thus according to a religious, or madrasa, agenda.

At this point, in order to continue exploring the relationship between the Istanbul dersians and the new institutions, it is helpful to draw a wider picture of their participation in the new schools in the level above elementary education. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first attempt to open a new civil school on a level above elementary appeared in the time of Mahmud II. This first attempt soon turned into a Tanzimat initiative supporting the new style of schooling, an endeavor that caused a new channel of learning to exist alongside the madrasas until the latter were closed in the early years of the Republican period. The Tanzimat reformers proposed a three-fold schooling system composed of elementary and middle schools and, above them, university. Efforts were made to open *sibyan/ibtidai* schools at the elementary level, the *rüşdiye* schools at the middle level and the *Darülfünûn* at the university level.⁸⁰ The Law of Public Education was published in 1869, going into many details about what to do with regards to promoting public education; it remained as a route map after the Tanzimat period. However, Tanzimat schooling at the elementary level and, in particular, at the middle level seemingly could not escape failure. Following this period, the Hamidian rule indeed put remarkable emphasis on schooling, in accordance with its own perception of threats exposed to the empire and of other objectives.

In the mind of the Hamidian statesmen, one of the major threats arose from the deficiencies in the field of education where the empire had been highly

⁷⁸ Mehmed Esref Efendi of Lüleburgaz (USAD no:3381); Ömer Lütfi Efendi of Sivrihisar (USAD no:3464).

⁷⁹ Ali Riza Efendi of Vakfikebir (USAD no: 915).

⁸⁰ Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp.115–116.

vulnerable to educational and cultural activities run or sponsored by foreigners.⁸¹ Among the measures that the Hamidian statesmen undertook was the building of their own school system. The efforts in this newly adopted direction resulted in creating an Ottoman school network, which is said to have reached around 10,000 schools of all levels and kinds all around the empire in the Hamidian period.⁸² It is important to note, as one scholar contends, that “the effects of this building campaign were most apparent in the provinces and at the secondary level, the areas most neglected by the previous efforts of the Tanzimat. By creating its own network of institutions, the state hoped to ensure that its own version of education would be implemented.”⁸³

Presumed to be “secular” in nature,⁸⁴ these reforms operated in accordance with the pre-Hamidian Law of Public Education, or *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*.⁸⁵ Between 1882 and 1894, 51 idâdi schools were opened.⁸⁶ Hamidian educational reform had dire consequences, in particular the rise of the Ottoman political opposition movement *Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, or the Committee of Union and Progress. This opposition movement would be the death of Hamidian rule in 1909 and a turning point in late Ottoman politics. Ironically, the *Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* owed some of their success to the new schools which cultivated and spread such oppositional thinking. Indeed, the new schools were among the more visible aspects of societal transformation and crucial to the modernization of Ottoman society. The new schools indeed influenced and shaped, to a great extent, the destiny of Ottoman society and even that of the states that emerged after the empire had broken up. Bearing all of this in mind, at this stage, another dimension of the Istanbul

⁸¹ For a detailed account of how the Ottomans have tried to handle the educational threats posed by foreign missionaries, minorities and neighbouring countries, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp. 43-86.

⁸² Corinne L. Blake, “Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats: Syrian Graduates of the Mülkiye Mektebi, 1890-1920,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University (1991), p.64.

⁸³ Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, p.99.

⁸⁴ For a thought-provoking account of the secular nature question of the Hamidian schools, see Benjamin C. Fortna, “Islamic Morality in the Late Ottoman ‘Secular’ Schools,” *IJMES*, 32/3 (2000).

⁸⁵ Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, p.113.

⁸⁶ Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Egitim Sistemi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), pp.125-26; Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, p.124.

dersiams' educational background could provide us with a perspective through which to view the practical connection of the dersiams with the new schools.

In this survey, 27 dersiam studied in one of the new schools that emerged during the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods (Table 11). The percentage of dersiam educated in new schools was rather low, 11.8 %, compared to the findings in David Kushner study of 500 such cases, the percentage in this case almost twice as high, that is, 20.4 %.⁸⁷ A majority of dersiam (14) attended a rüsdîye school, a new educational institution that was, in fact, designed by Tanzimat reformers. These were initially intended to prepare students who had come through the primary school system for entrance to the higher institutions at the time⁸⁸ and spread across the empire. By 1877, when the Russo-Ottoman war broke out, there were more than 400, that number falling to 316 in the wake of defeat and the loss of territory to the Russians.⁸⁹ However, the Hamidian rule was determined to expand the rüsdîyes, and consequently, the total number of such schools rose to 470 in 1884.⁹⁰ Consequently, they became the most accessible of the new schools to the general public at that time and appeared most frequently among the dersiams surveyed in this category.

The *Darülmüallimin*, or the Teachers College, in Istanbul attracted the dersiams as the second most prevalent type of school with a group of 9 cases, 6 of which are reported only to have attended the Teachers College while the rest went to another new school as well. The first darülmüallimin was founded in 1848 in order to fulfill the growing need for qualified teachers for the rüsdîye and other schools following expansion all over the empire.⁹¹ Later on, many other teachers colleges opened in the provinces.⁹² To graduate as a qualified teacher, one of the jobs in demand at the time, seems to have been the main goal for those who preferred these schools. The case of Hafız İshak Nuri Efendi is illustrative in this respect. The young İshak Nuri came to Istanbul from Rize, his hometown in the eastern Black Sea area, in 1868 and managed to find a place in the Süleymaniye Madrasa. After 14 years, he

⁸⁷ Kushner, "Career Patterns," p.169.

⁸⁸ Ergin, *Maarif Tarihi*, v.1-2, pp. 383-85.

⁸⁹ Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri*, p.101.

⁹⁰ Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri*, p.96.

⁹¹ Akyüz, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi*, p. 154.

⁹² Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri*, p.153. Öztürk, *Türkiye'de Düinden*, pp. 9-61.

was granted an icazet from the dersiam Ferhad Efendi in 1882. But, before the icazet, he had already completed the Darülmualimin in Istanbul and received his diploma in 1880. His teaching as a certified dersiam commenced in the Süleymaniye Mosque in 1884 and, in the meantime as a school teacher, Ishak Nuri Efendi had already begun teaching in the Rüşdiye School at Beylerbeyi (Istanbul) in 1881. He spent 28 years teaching in several rüşdiye schools and was even promoted to the position of head teacher in the Rüşdiye School at Unkapani in 1898.⁹³ Of course, there were also teachers college graduates who were not involved in teaching in the rüşdiye schools, such as Hasan Efendi who sufficed with a madrasa professorship.⁹⁴ In the late Ottoman period, more dersiams reaped the benefits of both educational systems than the secondary literature suggests. In the meantime, as seen in the previous chapter, there were also dersiams who were engaged in teaching in new schools without studying in a teachers' college.

There are a number of individuals who had the chance to attend two kinds of the new schools and finally get diplomas from a rüşdiye school in addition to either the Teachers' College or *Darülfunûn*, the Ottoman university in Istanbul. Mehmed Emin Efendi is one such case. Born in 1846 to an artisan father from Izmid, Mehmed Emin attended a rüşdiye school in his hometown and then came to Istanbul to join a madrasa. In 1880, he obtained his icazet from the dersiam Eginli Ibrahim Efendi. During this time, he was also admitted to the Darülmualimin and graduated in 1876 which allowed him to work in the new schools in addition to teaching in the Bayezid Mosque, starting in 1890. He taught at several Istanbul rüşdiye and idâdi schools, becoming a member of the Grand Council of Education, or *Meclis-i Kebir-i Maarif*, in 1901, which he retained until the Second Constitution in 1908.⁹⁵ Gürünlü Mehmed Hilmi Efendi is another case. Born in 1878, he also attended the rüşdiye school in his hometown, travelling to the neighbouring town of Darende for madrasa lessons. He later moved to Kayseri, close to Gürün, for advanced madrasa studies before setting off for Istanbul. The early part of his life in Istanbul was a busy schedule of study. On the one hand, his goal was the *Darülfunûn*. On the other hand, he studied at the

⁹³ Hafız Ishak Nuri Efendi of Rize (USAD no: 197).

⁹⁴ Hasan Efendi of Devrek (USAD no:3458).

⁹⁵ Mehmed Emin Efendi of Izmid (USAD no:3469).

madrassa under Kayserili Hamdi Efendi and was awarded an icazet from the same.⁹⁶ Another dersiam, Mehmed Nuri Efendi of Dobruca graduated from two new Ottoman schools, the Fevziye Rüşdiyesi and the Darümuallimin in Istanbul. He also held two teaching posts at the same time, one at the madrasa and another at rüşdiye schools in and around Istanbul.⁹⁷ In the first two cases, the dersiams went to the local rüşdiye schools outside Istanbul. In addition, note that, in the first case, Mehmed Emin went to a rüşdiye in the town called Izmid, a place within the vicinity of Istanbul. However, the town to which Mehmed Hilmi went in the second case was located in the heart of Anatolia. Considering the distance between two places and also the occupations of their fathers, an artisan in the former case and a blacksmith in the latter, we may assume that the gradual expansion made access to the rüşdiye schools possible for those with modest backgrounds.

The cases of Mehmed Hilmi Efendi of Nigde and Salih Efendi of Istanbul are two examples of those who graduated from one single institution of higher education, namely the Darümuallimin and Darülfunûn respectively. Mehmed Hilmi concluded his studies at both the madrasa and Darümuallimin in 1869. He had travelled outside Istanbul for a number of years, working as a school teacher for the rüşdiye and idâdi school system. Back in Istanbul, he taught at new schools and the madrasa.⁹⁸ Native to Istanbul, Salih Efendi pursued two lines of study at the same time. As it turned out, his department at the Darülfunûn he attended included offerings in the Islamic sciences, or *ulûm-u âliye-i diniyye subesi*, allowing him to study Qur'anic exegesis (*tefsir*), Islamic jurisprudence (*usûl-i fikh*), Islamic theology (*kelam*) and Islamic history (*tarih-i din-i Islam*). All were part of the madrasa curriculum.⁹⁹ Upon completion of the Darülfunûn, he did not leave Istanbul to teaching in the provinces because it was not customary for the native ulama of Istanbul to leave the city.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Mehmed Hilmi Efendi of Gürün (USAD no:919).

⁹⁷ Mehmed Nuri Efendi of Dobruca (USAD no: 226).

⁹⁸ Mehmed Hilmi Efendi of Nigde (USAD no:224).

⁹⁹ It is interesting that the Ottoman reformers needed to establish a department to teach Islamic sciences in the new university, *Darülfunûn*. Although the available sources do not provide enough information to know the real rationale behind the formation of such a department in the university, one may assume that this facilitated the acceptance of the idea of a university in Ottoman public opinion after the disastrous first experience in 1863. For the history of this Ottoman institution of higher education, see Mehmed Ali Ayni, *Darü'l-fünun: Üniversite Tarihi*, Metin Hasirci (ed.), (Istanbul: Pinar Yayinlari, 1995).

¹⁰⁰ The native ulama of Istanbul rarely left Istanbul for provincial duties. Mahir Iz, the son of a prominent ulama family in Istanbul in the late Ottoman Empire, confirms this rather unofficial rule

While lecturing at Fatih Mosque, he was appointed to teach Islamic history at a school in Makriköy, an Istanbul suburb, today known as Bakirköy.¹⁰¹

Among the more interesting Istanbul dersiam was Hafiz Resid Efendi of Damascus. His background is very different from the others in many respects. He is mentioned here because of two diplomas he earned from new institutions of Ottoman learning, as well as the two icazets awarded him from traditional centres of learning. Resid, the son of an ulama father from Damascus, studied for 15 years at a madrasa in his hometown. After receiving his first icazet, he attended the local teachers' college, or *Darülmualimin*, in Damascus. A few years later, he travelled to Istanbul to continue his studies, earning a second icazet. During his study for this second icazet, he stayed at the Çayirli Madrasa in Fatih. Furthermore, a passion for learning drove him to the Darülfunûn, completing that course of study in due time as well.¹⁰² One of only two Istanbul dersiams from an Arab province, he was the only dersiam to graduate from both of the new Ottoman higher schools, or *Darülmualimin* and *Darülfunûn*.

The social backgrounds of dersiam who graduated from new schools is instructive. In 27 cases, 9 fathers were ulama and 5 were artisans (see Table 12A). Only one father worked in the civil service and two worked in agriculture. The occupations of most fathers in the case, 10 (or 37 % of the total) are not listed. Excluding them, the majority of dersiam holding a new school diploma(s) were from a lower socio-economic background. That said, and as Table 12B clearly shows, most were from urban rather than rural settlements, 21 to 6 respectively.

As briefly discussed earlier, even if the Ottoman educational endeavour had been initially devised by the Tanzimat reformers, the reforms actually materialized largely during the Hamidian period. Accordingly, a survey of the dersiams that is limited to those who were of school age in the Hamidian period will give us a clearer idea about the practical relationship of Istanbul dersiams with the new schools.

in his memoirs narrating his father's appointment to Midilli (Lesbos) as a judge in the sharia court in 1899; "Although it was not customary in the past for the ulama of Istanbul, called '*Sehrî*', to go to the provinces unless there was an unavoidable situation [*zaruret olmadıkça*], my father accepted with pleasure the offer for the judgeship of Midilli." See Mahir İz, *Yılların İzi*, (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2000), pp. 19-20.

¹⁰¹ Salih Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no:3629).

¹⁰² Hafiz Resid Efendi of Sam (USAD no:3621).

Factoring in those who were born in and after 1863, as they make up the group targeted and addressed by the educational reforms of the Hamidian period, there are 36 cases to consider. These cases indicate that more than one third of them attended at least one type of the new schools. Nine of them joined only one type such as the *rüsiye*, *Darülmualimin* or *Darülfunun*, and four graduated from a combination of the new schools (Table 13).

Interestingly, the category of fathers' occupations is dominated by the ulama fathers with 15 cases (Table 14). But, despite the preponderance of ulama fathers, there are only three cases among them who received his primary education from any member of his family (Table 15). It also should be noted here that, on the one hand, the *ibtidâi* schools prevail as the form of primary education of these *dersiams*. On the other hand, the *sibyans* (the old style elementary schools) were represented by only one case in this group. The 36 cases range as follows: 20 cases with *ibtidâi* education, 5 with unknown background, 6 with unspecified style of primary education and only 3 with family instruction. Only one person in these cases began to study directly in a *madrassa*. Bearing in mind the need to be cautious about the small size of the sample, there is some evidence that the tradition of family-centred primary education among ulama families tended to be dissolved or eclipsed while the new public educational system expanded and became more accessible in the cases concerned here during the Hamidian period.

CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS

Carter Findley's seminal *Ottoman Officialdom* divides officials of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs into two groups. One criteria he uses is a knowledge of French, Arabic, and Persian which is intended to distinguish between moderns and conservatives.¹⁰³ Using this criterion is not a wholly successful determinant. But, it works to some degree to determine the cultural foundations of a group under survey. It is noteworthy that Istanbul *dersiam* had limited interest in or knowledge of languages other than Arabic and Persian (Table 16). In total, there are 14 *dersiams* claiming knowledge of a number of languages, namely French, Albanian, Georgian, Armenian and the Laz language. Only 4 had a working knowledge of French. Other *dersiams* claimed to speak the local languages of the

¹⁰³ Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp. 93, 144.

Ottoman provinces or neighbouring areas at the time. Presumably, these dersiams reported their knowledge in the languages of their locales. For example, five dersiams with knowledge of Albanian were from Manastir, Kosova and Yanya where ethnic Albanians lived.¹⁰⁴

Given the number of dersiam with diplomas from one or more of the new schools, their poor showing vis-à-vis French as a foreign language is surprising. Ironically, Mehmed Esad Efendi (hereafter Esad), son of a respected madrasa teacher in Istanbul, is the lone exception. A graduate of the madrasa, it appears that he taught himself French. Despite this, he joined the teaching staff at the Darülmüallimin in Istanbul in 1892 where he taught logic.¹⁰⁵

The Istanbul dersiams, as one may expect, appear to have been far more knowledgeable in Persian than, for instance, in French. In the Ottoman context, the Persian language was a matter of religious culture and related to the Sufi tradition in Islam—the language of Sufi literature and poetry. Historically, the madrasa and Sufism have been at cross purposes: the former thought to represent orthodox Islamic principles, or *seriat*, the latter more the spirit or truth of the religion, or *hakikat*. The Kadizâdeli movement in the seventeenth century underscores the conflict between the orthodoxy and Sufi tradition in Ottoman history.¹⁰⁶ But Persian was also considered by some to be the language of oppositional literature in the Ottoman world. Mehmed Naim Fraseri, who died around the turn of the century, is one example. An Albanian nationalist and brother of Semseddin Sami Fraseri, the famous Albanian Ottoman encyclopaedist and lexicographer,¹⁰⁷ Naim Fraseri authored a

¹⁰⁴ Hafiz Receb Efendi of Pirlebe (USAD no:240); Abdülcemil Efendi of Kalkandelen (USAD no: 870); Abdürrahim Efendi of Yakova (USAD no: 3401); Mehmed Ali Efendi of Ergiri (USAD no: 913).

¹⁰⁵ Mehmed Esad Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no:3386).

¹⁰⁶ For further details and the assessment of the Kadizadelis movement, see Madeline Zilfi, "The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45 (1986) and Madeline Zilfi, "Vaizan and Ulema in the Kadizadeli Era," *Proceedings of the Tenth Congress of the Turkish Historical Society*, (Ankara: TTK, 1994).

¹⁰⁷ For the life and works of Semseddin Sami, see Mehmet Kaplan (ed.), *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Antolojisi: A. Vefik Paşa, E. Nihad, A. Midhat, S. Sami, F. Aliye, M. Murad, M. Semseddin, H. Bedreddin, M. Rifat, Yagcizade A. Nuri*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1979); Secaattin Tural, *Semseddin Sami*, (Istanbul: Sule Yayinlari, 1999); Bülent Can, "Semsettin Sami mi, Yoksa Sami Fraseri mi?" *Tophumsal Tarih*, 114 (2003). He also led the Society for the Publication of Albanian Writing (Shoqërie të shtypuri shkronja shqip) based in Istanbul, which prepared textbooks for the newly emerged Albanian schools. Isa Blumi, "Teaching Loyalty in the Late Ottoman Balkans: Educational Reform in the Vilayets of Manastir and Yanya, 1878-1912," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 21/1-2 (2001), p. 20.

Persian grammar book and taught Persian at various schools in Istanbul. His poetry was notorious for promoting strong nationalist and separatist feelings among Albanians. Interestingly, some of his nationalist poetry from the early 1880s mimics that of Mevlana Celaleddin Rûmi's *Mesnevî*,¹⁰⁸ no doubt due to his Sufi beliefs and membership in the *Bektasî* Sufi order. His knowledge of Persian language and literature served Albanian nationalist ends. In the Bektasî tradition, for example, Ali, the son-in-law and nephew of the Prophet Muhammad, personified the oppressed and their struggle against the oppressor. The significance of the subject is evidenced in the fact that the Sufi order found disciples by casting widely in the Balkans, particularly among Albanians. This was particularly apparent after the destruction of the Janissaries in 1826. The Ottoman government's anti-Bektasi policy caused the Bektasis to take refuge in Southern Albania, where the central authority was loosely felt.¹⁰⁹ As a consequence, the Bektasî adherents of the Albanian nationalist movement were also profoundly inspired by such themes and exploited them against the Ottomans for the sake of an independent Albanian state.¹¹⁰

Due to the inadequacy of the data, it is difficult to establish a direct connection between the Istanbul dersiams' political orientation in the late nineteenth century and their knowledge of Persian. Certainly, however, Persian was among the channels of cultural orientation. There are many episodes in the memoirs that belong to the late Ottoman period about learning Persian.¹¹¹ Learning Persian was not

¹⁰⁸ Muhammed Emin Riyâhî, *Osmanli Topraklarında Fars Dili ve Edebiyatı*, (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995), p. 241.

¹⁰⁹ Metin İzeti, "Arnavutlar ve Bektasilik," *Uluslararası Bektasilik ve Alevilik Sempozyumu-I, Bildiriler-Müzakereler, 28-30 Ekim 2005*, (Isparta: SDÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 2005), p.522.

¹¹⁰ Riyâhî, *Osmanli Topraklarında*, p. 242-43; İzeti, "Arnavutlar ve Bektasilik," pp.522-23. It is said that nearly 90 % of the Albanian Muslims in the South Albania and in the province Yanya (Janina) were the members of Bektasi order, Selçuk Aksin Somel, "Ottoman Islamic Education in the Balkans in the Nineteenth Century," *Islamic Studies*, 36/2-3 (1997), p. 462 fn67. For more information on this subject, see H[arry] T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World*, (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1993). The Bektasi movement was also spread in other parts of the Balkans such as Greece. For Bektasis and their lodges in Greece, see Giorgos Mavrommatis, "Monuments and Communities: Bektashism in 20th Century Greece," *Uluslararası Bektasilik ve Alevilik Sempozyumu-I, Bildiriler-Müzakereler, 28-30 Ekim 2005*, (Isparta: SDÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 2005). For the history of all Sufi movements in the Balkans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Metin İzeti, *Balkanlar'da Tasavvuf*, (Istanbul: Gelenek, 2004). For the history of the Ottoman Bektasis in the nineteenth century, see Yılmaz Soyzer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektasilik*, (Izmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 2005). For the role of the Bektasîs in the late Ottoman and early republican periods, see Hülya Küçük, *The Role of the Bektashis in Turkey's National Struggle*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

¹¹¹ For several examples, see Benjamin C. Fortna, "Education and Autobiography at the End of the Ottoman Empire," *Die Welt Des Islam*, 41/1 (2001), pp. 26-30.

necessarily related to Sufism since it covered a broader area of poetic subjects. Unlike Arabic, Persian contained “profane as well as religious material.”¹¹²

In the narration of his Persian studies in Istanbul, Ahmed Cevdet Pasa talks about how he went to Fehim Efendi, a retired Ottoman official and a poet, to advance his Persian. During the Persian lessons, many high officials and other people also frequently visited Fehim Efendi and educational and political issues (*mesâil-i politikiyye*) were among the subjects of the talks there.¹¹³ Fehim Efendi was an old bureaucrat and not a member of the ulama and, as Ahmed Cevdet said, he had little knowledge of Arabic, but was fluent in Persian.¹¹⁴ This makes sense, for Persian was language of Ottoman professional and bureaucratic discourse and apparently constituted a base for people from different professional backgrounds to come together and exchange ideas.

Although the dersiam connection to Sufism is difficult to determine, an interest in the Sufi tradition, literature, and the Persian language is evident. It is interesting to note that Persian was part of the new school curriculum, but never included in the formal madrasa learning. But it always took a part in the wider madrasa milieu in the nineteenth century. The ulama personnel files demonstrate that there are 56 cases claiming to have known different levels of Persian.

In Istanbul, finding a Persian teacher proved no great obstacle for any dersiam so inclined vis-à-vis the many Sufi lodges scattered throughout the city and likely to service such needs.¹¹⁵ Dersiams also offered Persian lessons. For example, Arabgirli Muhammed Hazim Efendi spent many years teaching Persian at the Fatih Mosque. How he learned Persian is something of a mystery, although he was a member of a Sufi order, an obvious clue to the source of his knowledge of Persian.¹¹⁶ He later became the *seyh*, or Sufi leader, of the dervis lodge called Ussâki Bedreddin Tekkesi in Istanbul, serving there until all such Sufi lodges were closed in the early

¹¹² Fortna, “Education and Autobiography,” p. 28.

¹¹³ Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, *Tezâkir: 40-Tetimme*, (Ankara: TTK, 1991), p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 13.

¹¹⁵ The autobiography of Mehmed Murad Efendi, a madrasa graduate and a Sufi leader, presents rich details for learning Persian in Istanbul in the nineteenth century. For his autobiography, see Fahri Unan, “Bir Âlimin Hayat Hikâyesi ve Klâsik Osmanli Egitim Sistemi Üzerine,” *OTAM*, 8 (1997). Ahmed Cevdet Pasa also reports that he attended the Persian sessions of Mehmed Murad Efendi in his lodge in Fatih district of Istanbul, Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, pp. 13–14.

¹¹⁶ He belonged to the Halveti Ussakî order, Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vols 2-3, p.216.

Republican period. In addition, he held a position at the Imperial Publishing House, or *Matbaa-i Âmiri*, as a proof-reader of all Persian books.¹¹⁷

Learning Persian for purely mystical reasons and because of its literary and poetic wonders connected madrasa teachers to a variety of social and cultural worlds, expanding the sphere of the madrasa at this critical juncture in Ottoman history and educational reform. Persian was also part of the rüsdîye school curriculum.¹¹⁸ For example, Osman Bedreddin Efendi, another Istanbul dersiam, learned Persian in his rüsdîye school.¹¹⁹ That six dersiams with rüsdîye education claiming knowledge of Persian suggests that the rüsdîye schools were a source, among others, for learning Persian.¹²⁰

In summary, ulama families maintained a tradition of encouraging their children to enter the ulama or family profession. Ulama fathers of would-be dersiam sons were a part of the learning process, “encouraging” their sons to follow in their footsteps. 26 dersiam with the knowledge of Persian were the scion of ulama when then contradicts to some degree the contention that the madrasa and Sufism were at cross purposes throughout much of the nineteenth century.¹²¹ Furthermore, learning Persian for purely mystical reasons and because of its literary and poetic wonders connected madrasa teachers to a variety of social and cultural worlds, expanding the sphere of the madrasa at this critical juncture in Ottoman history and educational reform.

Many dersiam in our sample were both students and faculty at new schools, at both rüsdîye and idâdi schools, civil and military schools, and at every level of the new schools. Some were administrators. Their teaching included courses such as

¹¹⁷ Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vols 2-3, p.216.

¹¹⁸ Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri*, p.111.

¹¹⁹ Osman Bedreddin Efendi of Ordu (USAD no: 196).

¹²⁰ Klaus Kreiser deals with the integration of Persian into the curriculum of the new schools in the late Ottoman period and also states that it was aimed to balance Western influence by Persian. Klaus Kreiser, “Persisch als Schulsprache bei den osmanischen Türken: Von der Tanzîmât-Zeit zur frühen Republik,” in J.P. Laut and K. Röhrborn (eds), *Sprach- und Kulturkontakte der türkischen Völker, Materialien der Zweiten Deutschen Turkologen-Konferenz*, (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1993).

¹²¹ For such divergence and distortion in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century, see Madeline Zilfi, “The Kadizadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45 (1986); Madeline Zilfi, “Vaizan and Ulema in the Kadizadeli Era,” *Proceedings of the Tenth Congress of the Turkish Historical Society*, (Ankara, 1994).

history, law, a wide array of Islamic subject matter, as well as Arabic and Turkish.¹²² Their active participation in new schools and contribution to the reform process is a clear indication of a positive attitude toward reform.

Although difficult to determine as regards offspring of madrasa teachers, Ruth Roded shows for several ulama families in Syria that the divergence of ulama fathers' and their sons' career paths was "often the first step in a more radical but gradual change which might proceed over generations." As happened in the cases she studied, "subsequent members of the same family would switch from the quasi-religious administrative posts to full assimilation in the Ottoman bureaucracy."¹²³ In this regard, some bits of information presented by Ebul-ula Mardin in his biographical work, *Huzur Dersleri*, show the existence of a similar tendency among the ulema in Istanbul who attended the Palace Lectures (*Huzur Dersleri*). When he was compiling his work during the early Republican period, he contacted and sometimes received information from the children or grandchildren of ulama members. Consequently, he recorded some of his sources' professions in the republican period. Many of such persons were high-school teachers, academicians, lawyers, engineers, etc. Such information supports the idea that there occurred a shift from religious jobs to a wide range of careers, including non-religious ones, through the generations in the late Ottoman and subsequent periods.¹²⁴

Ismail Necati Efendi is a case in point. Ismail Necati was born about 1840 in Safranbolu, a provincial town located in central Anatolia, the son of Haci Mehmed

¹²² Only for a few examples, see Salih Efendi of Sinob (USAD no: 191), Abdullah Hilmi of Nevsehir (USAD no: 226), Hafiz Ishak Nuri Efendi of Rize (USAD no: 197), Salih Efendi of Istanbul (USAD no: 13629), Mehmed Emin of Izmid (USAD no: 3469), Hafiz Ismail Hakki Efendi of Kastamonu (USAD no: 918 and 3493).

¹²³ Ruth Roded, "Social Patterns Among the Urban Elite of the Syria during the Late Ottoman Period (1876-1918)," *Paletsine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), p. 149.

¹²⁴ For example, Muhammed Sevki Efendi's son was a judge, Nevsehirli Halil Vehbi Efendi's son was a medical doctor as well as an inspector in the Ministry of Health, Silifkeli Muhammed Emin Efendi's daughter was a teacher, possibly in a high school, and Ipekli Muhammed Tahir Efendi's son was a veterinarian, Ebul-ula Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, (Istanbul: Ismail Akgün Matbaasi, 1966), vols 2-3, pp. 290-92, 324, 338, 966. Another interesting example among many is Muammer Tuksavul, a high technology expert who is the son of the judge of Mecca (*Mekke Kadisi*), Hocaishakzâde Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi. For his memoirs, see Muammer Tuksavul, *Ben de Müslümanım*, (Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 2000). For more information as to his grandfather Harputlu Ishak Efendi, see Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vols 2-3, pp. 276-77, 955-56.

Aga, whose title, *aga*, suggests was not a member of the ulama.¹²⁵ Ismail studied under the local mudarris, Müfti Mehmed Hilmi Efendi, in the town of Safranbolu. In 1868, Ismail travelled to Istanbul for advanced studies at the madrasa. Afterwards, he became a dersiam and taught at the Bayezid Mosque, beginning in 1876 and awarding his first icazets to students in 1893.¹²⁶ Ismail went on to an appointment at the Palace Lectures, or *Huzur Dersleri*, as a discussant, or *muhatab*, in 1898 where he was honoured by the sultan with two imperial medals.¹²⁷ After a distinguished career, Ismail Necati died in 1920.¹²⁸ His son, Muhammed Fehmi Efendi was born in 1864 in Safranbolu. He was determined to follow in his fathers' footsteps, moving to Istanbul and getting his icazet from his father in 1893. A decade later, got his *rüûs*, or teaching certification, and began teaching at the Bayezid Mosque in 1902 (Illust. 1.1).¹²⁹ He married Emine Behice Hanim who was from a family of bureaucratic elites in Istanbul (Illust. 1.3), a marriage that was only possible because of connections to the Sufi lodge, *Gümüşhanevi Tekkesi*, where both families visited.¹³⁰ Muhammed Fehmi also taught religious subjects such as Islamic law and theology and Arabic at the new style schools where he worked, idadi schools, the Galatsaray Lyce, the School of Law, or *Mekteb-i Hukuk*, and School of Civil Cervices, *Mekteb-i Mülkiye*. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Muhammed Fehmi was appointed as the first head of the Istanbul office of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Illust. 1.2), or *Diyanet Isleri Reisligi*, which was established in 1924 to replace the Seyhülislamate.¹³¹

As seen in their brief biographies, the promise of a madrasa education and professorship brought many young men of intellectual promise from small provincial

¹²⁵ There is a controversy in the sources regarding the title of Hacı Mehmed. While the personnel file of his son, Ismail Necati Efendi, records him as "aga," the bibliographical information provided by his grandson, Sabri Ülgener, mentions him as "efendi." As an earlier document, the information in the personnel file is preferred here. Cf. "Ismail Necati Efendi of Safranbolu" (USAD no: 3394) and Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vols 2-3, p.177.

¹²⁶ "Ismail Necati Efendi of Safranbolu" (USAD no: 3394).

¹²⁷ Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vol. 1, pp. 153; USAD no: 3394.

¹²⁸ Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vols 2-3, p.177.

¹²⁹ Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vols 2-3, p. 365-68; Sadik Albayrak, *Son Devir Osmanli Ulemasi, Ilmiye Ricalinin Teracim-i Ahvali*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yayinlari, 1996), vol. 3, pp. 145-46.

¹³⁰ Ahmed Güner Sayar, *Bir İktisatçinin Entellektüel Portresi Sabri F. Ülgener*, (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1998), pp. 27-43.

¹³¹ Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, vols 2-3, p. 365-68.

towns to the imperial capital where they might provide for their families, advance their careers, and change the course of education in the modern era. It is also interesting to note the changes that appeared in outlook both within individuals and between generations in course of the time (See Illustrations). A member of the third generation of this family, Sabri Ülgener (Illust. 1.4), the son of Muhammed Fehmi Efendi, was to be born in Istanbul and later to become a well-known university professor in sociology and the pioneering academician in applying Weberian principles to Ottoman history in Turkish academia.¹³²

¹³² Ülgener published three books in which he widely used the Weberian analytical tools to explain the economic collapse of the Ottoman Empire: Sabri Ülgener, *Tarihte Darlık Buhranlari ve İktisadi Muvazenesizlik Meselesi*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi, 1951); Sabri Ülgener, *İktisadi Çözülmenin Ahlak ve Zihniyet Dünyasi*, (Istanbul: Der Yayinlari, 1981) and Sabri Ülgener, *Dünü ve Bugünü ile Zihniyet ve Din: İslam, Tasavvuf ve Çözülme Devri İktisat Ahlaki*, (Istanbul: Der Yayinlari, 1981). For his life and intellectual formation, see Sayar, *Bir İktisatçinin*; Ahmet Özkiraz, *Sabri F. Ülgener'de Zihniyet Analizi*, (Ankara: A Yayınevi, 2000); Orhan Çakmak, *Sabri Ülgener*, (Ankara: Alternatif Yayinlari, 2003).

TABLES

Table 1

***Place of Beginning of
Dersiams' Madrasa Education***

	Istanbul	Province
<i>Regional Origin</i>	N	N
Istanbul	14	-
Anatolia	54	85
Balkans	34	31
Other	4	5
Total	106	121
Unknown	3	

Table 2

Occupations of Dersiam's Fathers

	N	%
Ulama	74	32.2
Agriculturist	57	24.8
Artisan	16	6.9
Merchant	10	4.3
Official	7	3
Other	6	2.7
Unknown	60	26.1
Total	230	100 %

Table 3***Occupations of Ulama Fathers***

	<i>N</i>	N	%
High ranking ulama*		3	4
Mudarris		14	19
<i>Provincial mudarris</i>	11		
<i>Istanbul dersiam</i>	3		
Teacher		9	12.1
Seyh		5	6.7
Imam		6	8.1
Judge (<i>naib</i>)		4	5.4
Müfti		2	2.7
Other		4	5.5
Unknown		27	36.5
Total		74	100 %

* They have been stated in the files as *kazasker*, *harameyn payeli* and "high ranking ulama."

Table 4***Dersiams with Rural Background***

	<i>N</i>	N	%
Village		80	34.8
Other		150	65.2
<i>Nahiye</i>	13		5.7
<i>Kaza-Sancak-Vilayet</i>	137		59.5
Total		230	100 %

Table 5***Dersiams' Birthplaces by Region***

	N	%
Istanbul	14	6.1
Anatolia	141	61.3
Balkans	65	28.3
Arab Regions	2	0.8
Other*	8	3.5
Total	230	100 %

*Crimea and Daghistan.

Table 6 A***Occupations of Dersiams' Fathers by Birthplace***

	Istanbul		Trabzon		Kastamonu		Ankara		Konya	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ulama	10	71.4	13	36.1	7	27	7	35	8	34.8
Official	2	14.3	-	-	1	3.8	-	-	-	-
Artisan	-	-	3	8.3	2	7.6	1	5	3	13
Merchant	-	-	6	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculturist	-	-	10	27.7	7	27	5	25	4	17.4
Other	-	-	2	5.6	2	7.6	1	5	1	-
Unknown	2	14.3	2	5.6	7	27	6	30	7	30.5
Total	14	100 %	36	100 %	26	100 %	20	100 %	23	100 %

Table 6 B***Occupations of Dersiams' Fathers by Birthplace***

	Edirne		Selanik	
	N	%	N	%
Ulama	6	30	1	12.5
Official	-	-	-	-
Artisan	1	5	-	-
Merchant	-	-	1	12.5
Agriculturist	8	40	4	52
Other	-	-	-	-
Unknown	5	25	2	25
Total	20	100 %	8	100 %

Table 7***Dersiams' Birthplaces by Province***

	N	%
Istanbul	14	6.1
Trabzon	36	15.7
Kastamonu	26	11.3
Ankara	20	8.7
Konya	23	10
Edirne	20	8.7
Selanik (Salonika)	8	3.5
Other*	83	36
Total	230	100 %

* Places with less than 8 representatives.

Table 8***First Education of Dersiams***

	N	%
Family	22	9.5
Ibtidai	55	24
Sibyan	43	18.7
Unspecified*	59	25.6
	<i>Village 34</i>	<i>14.8</i>
	<i>Mahalle 25</i>	<i>10.8</i>
Madrasa	9	3.9
Other	5	2.2
Unknown	37	16.1
Total	230	100 %

*Unspecified as ibtidai or sibyan.

Table 9***Occupations of
Ibtidai-graduates' Fathers***

	N	%
Ulama	19	34.5
Artisan	6	10.9
Agriculturist	11	20
Official	5	9.1
Unknown	14	25.5
Total	55	100 %

Table 10***Origins of Family-educated
Dersiams by Region***

	N	N	%
Balkans		11	50
Other		11	50
<i>Trabzon</i>	3		
<i>Other</i>	8		
Total		22	100 %

Table 11***Dersiams with Modern School Education***

	N	%
Rüsdiye (R)	14	6.1
Darümuallimin (DM)	6	2.6
Darülfunun (DF)	2	0.9
R+DM	2	0.9
R+DF	2	0.9
DM+DF	1	0.4
Subtotal	27	11.8 %
None	203	88.2 %
Total	230	100%

Table 12 A***Occupations of
Modern-educated Dersiams' Fathers***

	N	%
Ulama	9	33.3
Artisan	5	18.5
Agriculturist	2	7.5
Official	1	3.7
Unknown	10	37
Total	27	100 %

Table 12 B***Rural Background of Dersiams
with Modern School Education***

	N	%
Village	6	22.2
Others	21	77.8
Total	27	100 %

Table 13***Dersiams with Modern School
Education (born after 1863)***

	N	%
Rüsdıye (R)	6	16.6
Darümuallimin (DM)	1	2.8
Darülfunun (DF)	2	5.6
DM + DF	1	2.8
R+DM	1	2.8
R+DF	2	5.6
Subtotal	13	36.2 %
None	23	63.8 %
Total	36	100%

Table 14***Occupations of Dersiams' Fathers
(born after 1863)***

	N	%
Ulama	15	41.7
Official	1	2.8
Agriculturist	6	16.6
Artisan	3	8.4
Unknown	11	30.5
Total	36	100 %

Table 15***First Education of Dersiams
(born after 1863)***

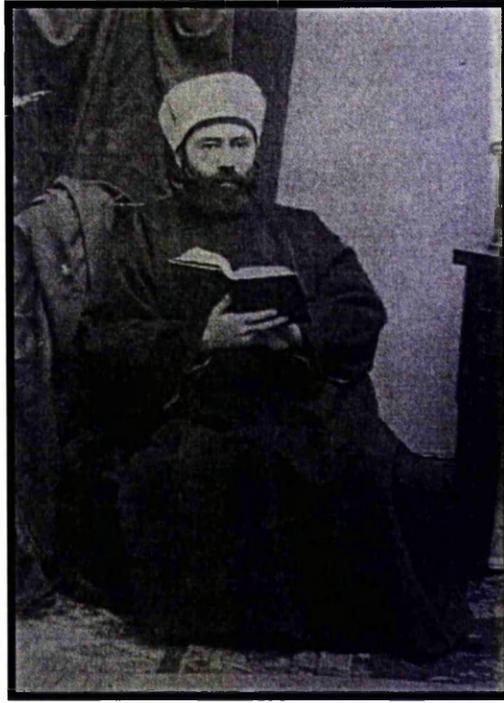
	N	%
Ibtidai	20	55.5
Family	3	8.3
Unspecified	6	16.7
Madrassa	1	2.8
Sibyan	1	2.8
Unknown	5	13.9
Total	36	100 %

Table 16***Language Knowledge of Dersiams
(other than Arabic)***

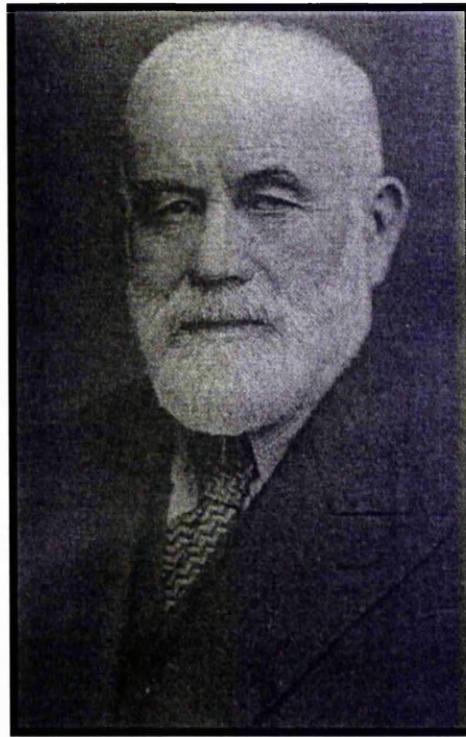
	N	%
French	4	1.7
Local Languages*	10	4.3
Persian	56	24.3

*Albanian, Georgian, Armenian and the Laz language.

ILLUSTRATIONS



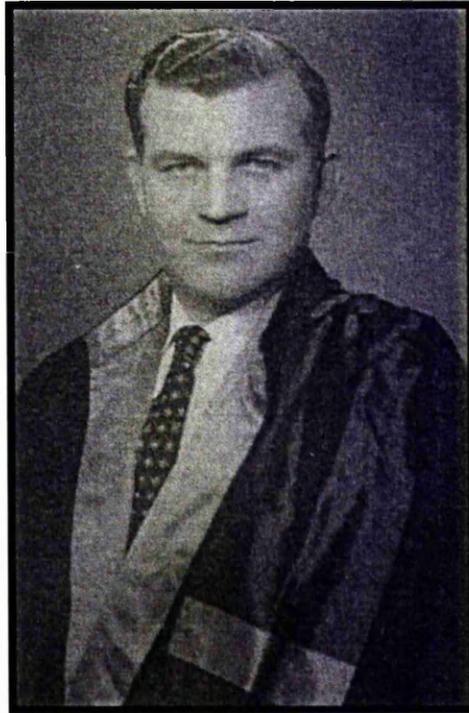
1.1 Mehmed Fehmi Efendi in his dersiam dress probably in the early 1900s.



1.2 Mehmed Fehmi Efendi in the early Republican period.



1.1. *Emine Behice Hanım, the wife of Mehmed Fehmi Efendi.*



1.2. *Prof. Dr. Sabri Ülgener, the son of Mehmed Fehmi Efendi.*

Source: Ahmed Güner Sayar, *Bir İktisatçının Entellektüel Portresi: Sabri F. Ülgener*, (Istanbul: Eren Yayinlari, 1998), pp. 146, 148-49, 152.

CHAPTER 3

MADRASA STUDENTS IN ISTANBUL AFTER THE TANZIMAT

Istanbul has been the centre of Ottoman learning since its incorporation into the Ottoman Empire. Despite creating parallel institutions of learning, the changes brought about by the educational reforms of the nineteenth century never diminished the centrality of Istanbul in this respect. The Istanbul madrasas continued to attract students in large numbers for centuries until the collapse of the empire. This commonly resulted in the existence of a large group of madrasa students in Istanbul who made up one of its important social groups. This fact is significant when one considers the course of reforms in the nineteenth century as the Istanbul madrasas still appeared to have been a major educational force.

Madrassa learning has usually been dealt with from an institutional point of view, ignoring the pedagogic, social, cultural, and economic aspects of the students who constituted the heart of the madrasa phenomenon. In fact, it seems essential to explore aspects of the students' lives in order to understand the role of religion in practice and that of Islam in the Ottoman context. We will investigate madrasa students as human beings, as well as the raw material, product and objective, of a madrasa education. Details about the lives of madrasa students provide clues that may help us to understand the otherwise obscure social side of the changes taking place in Ottoman society. Two historical examples of madrasa educated figures that played roles in the transformation of Ottoman-Turkish society illustrate the important position of the madrasa to the change taking place during the late Ottoman period. The first example is Ahmed Cevdet Efendi a leading reformer and Ottoman bureaucrat, bearing the title *pasa*, leaving *efendi*, since the latter apparently was used to refer to his ulama affiliation.¹ It would be impossible to understand the scope of the reforms in so many fields at the time without taking into account his madrasa learning in Istanbul. Ahmed Cevdet began his career as a religious advisor to the Ottoman reformers in the early Tanzimat period, a post he obtained because of his mastery of religious subjects. But he later played a crucial role in many legal and educational reforms. The other example is a figure from the late Ottoman and early Republican period, namely Veled Çelebi. He was a madrasa graduate as well as a *Mevlevî* sheikh. These two sides of Veled Çelebi never prevented him from becoming a close friend to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, or from supporting his secularizing reforms.² Others details from

¹ There exists substantial literature on Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, mostly in Turkish. For a few examples, see Fatma Aliye Hanim, *Ahmet Cevdet Pasa ve Zamani*, (Istanbul: Pinar Yayinlari, 1994); Ebul-ula Mardin, *Medeni Hukuk Cephesinden Ahmed Cevdet Pasa*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi, 1996); Richard Chambers, "The Education of a Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Alim, Ahmed Cevdet Pasa," *IJMES*, 4/4 (1973); Hulusi Yavuz, "Ahmed Cevdet Pasa and the Ulema of His Time," *Islam Tetkikleri Dergisi*, 7/3-4 (1979); *Ahmed Cevdet Pasa (1823-1895), Vefatinin 100. Yilina Armagan (Sempozyum: 9-11 Haziran 1995)*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi yayinlari, 1997); Christoph K. Neumann, "Whom did Ahmed Cevdet Represent?" in Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.), *Late Ottoman Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005) and Christoph K. Neumann, *Araç Tarih Amaç Tanzimat: Tarih-I Cevdet'in Siyasi Anlami*, Meltem Arun (trns.), (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt yayinlari, 2000).

² For details of his life and career, see Veled Çelebi Izbudak, "Hatıralarım," in *Canlı Tarihler*, (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1946); Nevin Korucuoglu, *Veled Çelebi Izbudak*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayinlari, 1994); Metin Akar, *Veled Çelebi Izbudak*, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayinlari, 1999); Ismet Kayaoglu, "Çagdas Mevlevi Bilgin ve Edip Veled Çelebi Izbudak," *6. Milli Mevlana Kongresi (Tebliğler): 24-25 Mayıs 1992, Konya*, (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Selçuklu Arastirmalari Merkezi, 1993); Mustafa Kara, "Izbudak, Veled Çelebi," *DIA*.

his life, including Veled's madrasa years, are helpful to an analysis of the socio-cultural underpinnings of modern Turkey.

This chapter will discuss several aspects of the lives of madrasa students in Istanbul in the nineteenth century with special reference to the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods. It should be noted at the beginning that this chapter not only deals with the institutional and formal structure of madrasa learning in Istanbul, but also the social, cultural, and economic side of madrasa students. The institutional aspect will also be considered in the interest of a broader understanding on the subject. This perspective should present a more precise view of madrasa students and religious education at the time.

At the outset, it is necessary to find out more about the madrasa student of the nineteenth century. This part of the chapter is concerned with the formal patterns of madrasa learning in Istanbul. The aim is to reach a practical—if not fully formal—description of a student seeking knowledge at the Istanbul madrasas. The reason for emphasizing the practical side rather than the formal is the lack of documentation and official regulations related to madrasa learning. The fact that the administrative department for madrasas, namely the Seyhülislamate Office, or *Mesihat*, had several fires during the nineteenth century is one of the main reasons for the lack of sufficient archival sources about madrasas in Istanbul. This fact means that we must lean more on historical accounts, memoirs, and archival sources from other state departments. Sources related to the livelihoods of madrasa students are another area in need of investigation vis-à-vis their relationship to the state and society.

WHO WAS THE MADRASA STUDENT IN ISTANBUL?

Madrasa learning drew on a long tradition. Over the course of centuries, madrasa students have been designated by several names and titles. *Softa*, *suhte*, *molla*, *talebe-i ulûm*, and *çömez* are some of the names attributed to them. While *softa* and *molla* were used to refer to a single madrasa student, *softa* (from the word “*suhte*”) appears to have turned into a name signifying backwardness and religious fanaticism, in modern usage.³ *Talebe-i ulûm*, in its strict Arabic meaning refers to “students of religious sciences.” *Çömez* signifies the impoverished and beginner

³ “*Softa*,” *Türkçe Sözlük* at <www.tdk.gov.tr>.

madrassa student who generally served a senior madrassa student in return for sharing his room and for tutorship in his studies.⁴ A *çömez* would become a senior student after several years. Halil Halid Bey, who studied in a madrassa in Istanbul, writes in his memoirs that he became a senior student after three years and then he shared a room with another senior student.⁵

A madrassa education was open to all Muslim males. Despite the fact that the education of women is a somewhat modern phenomenon, there is no historical evidence indicating the existence of a madrassa for Muslim women. It is worthy of note that there is no law historically known to have restricted women's access to Islamic learning in Ottoman history. The first institution for girls above the level of elementary school came into existence in 1859 when the girls' Rüşdiye School was established in Istanbul.⁶ This was followed by the foundation of an upper-level school for girls in Istanbul in 1870; and the *Darülmüallimat*, or a teachers' college for girls, which was intended to train female teachers for new schools for girls at the time.⁷

Non-Muslim subjects were eschewed since the madrassa curriculum was comprised of Islamic subjects. However, in the case of medical madrasas, non-Muslim students attended, albeit in scant numbers. It is said that in Padova, a town located in the Balkan part of the empire, a Christian man and his two sons were allowed to study in the local medical madrassa in the eighteenth century. As a consequence of this, they were also granted other rights that normally were limited to Muslims, such as an exemption from paying *cizye*, or the poll-tax levied on the Christian and Jewish subjects of the empire, dressing like Muslims, and riding a horse in the Muslim neighbourhoods of their town.⁸ By converting to Islam, a man could immediately become eligible to go to a madrassa in order to learn the basic principles of Islam and how to perform the daily rituals.⁹

⁴ "Çömez," in Mehmet Zeki Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1983), v. 1, p. 381.

⁵ Halil Halid, *The Diary of a Turk*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903), pp. 101–102.

⁶ Yahya Akyüz, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1993'e*, (Istanbul: Kültür Koleji Yayınları, 1994), p. 143.

⁷ Cemil Öztürk, "Darülmüallimat," *DIA*, vol.8, pp. 549–50.

⁸ Ziya Kazıcı, *İslam Müesseseleri Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Kayihan Yayınevi, 1991), p. 246.

⁹ Hatt-ı Hümayun 16507, 1238 [1822–23].

Admission to a madrasa depended on certain conditions being met. As the madrasas operated according to a religious endowment system, the conditions to be met by students to enter were stipulated by the founder of the endowment. However, the role of madrasa teachers often took precedence, in practice. The conditions would change according to the preferences of the mudarris. There were some mudarrises who wished to attract more mature, talented, and intelligent students, whereas others did their best to dissuade such students, considering them too difficult to handle. Ahmed Cevdet Pasa sarcastically writes about several cases of this kind and how mudarrises refrained from teaching students who were too passionate and assertive, wanted to debate openly the lectures, or were simply difficult to manage in the classroom.¹⁰

To be admitted to a madrasa, the aspirant had to be old enough, too. Although the minimum age for the madrasa was established centuries ago at 14 years,¹¹ it was usually adjusted according to practical needs of madrasa life. Therefore, it was strictly required that the beginner be an adolescent, or at least mature enough to comply with the demands that madrasa life imposed. The rules regarding the maturity of beginners were quite strict and rigorously enforced. The authorities did not hesitate to expel students for being, or seeming to be, too young for a madrasa education, even if they had already been enrolled as students at another madrasa. Salih Efendi of Silistre, for example, was sent back to his family in 1885 when the Council of Students' Affairs (*Meclis-i Mesalih-i Talebe*) came to realize that he was too young to stay at the madrasa even though Salih had already been enrolled in the Samanizade Madrasa in Istanbul. The council wrote to *Zabtiye Nezareti*, or the Ministry of Police, to send him away since "his stay in Istanbul is not free of trouble."¹² Despite the strict application of rules as to the minimum age of entrance to the madrasa, it appears that no upper age limit was stipulated.

A youngster's attendance at the madrasa sometimes required him to spend a few years as a *çömez*, or a junior student in the service of a senior student with whom he shared a room. In exchange for his service, the *çömez* was given tutorials by the

¹⁰ Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, *Tezâkir: 40--Tetimme*, (Ankara: TTK, 1991), pp. 11–12.

¹¹ Hasan Akgündüz, *Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Medrese Sistemi: Amaç, Yapı, İşleyiş*, (Istanbul: Ulusal Yayınları, 1997), pp. 435–36.

¹² Zab–Reft 4/22, 24 Rebiülevvel 1303 [31 December 1885].

senior student. During this period of time, the çömez had to deal with the common needs of the room including cleaning, bringing water, making tea, preparing bread dough to cook in the bakery, washing up, and doing laundry.¹³ According to Ahmed, in some cases senior students paid for the services of their juniors.¹⁴ The juniors also had to improve their handwriting skill through intense practice,¹⁵ for it was crucial for them to master the written word in order to take notes during the lectures. The senior student was responsible for teaching the juniors Arabic morphology (*sarf*) and syntax (*nahiv*) at the elementary level. After a couple of years, after attaining seniority at his madrasa, the çömez was discharged from his domestic duties and, in some circumstances, allocated a single room within the madrasa complex.¹⁶

A student had to find a *hücre*, or a room, in which to live in alone or to share with one or two others. Upon finding such a room, he became a madrasa-boarded student (*medrese-nisîn*). The availability of madrasa rooms changed from time to time and from one place to another. In the provinces, it was not hard for students to find a spare room. In Kayseri, for instance, a student did not need to wait too long to get a room in the madrasa he wished to attend, even in the first decade of the twentieth century. But, the rooms might need some repair work and refurbishing since their physical condition was not always ideal.¹⁷

As mentioned above, Istanbul was the target for those who wished to acquire an advanced madrasa education. The story of Baskatibzâde Ragib Efendi, an activist in several political movements, including the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), is a good example. When the young Baskatibzâde continued to take lessons from the local ulama in his native town in Kayseri up to a certain point, his grandfather insisted that he go to Istanbul to advance his education once he reached the age of twenty, particularly after seeing his talent and enthusiasm for learning.¹⁸ When his parents did not feel comfortable with the idea, his

¹³ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 18; Halil, *The Diary*, p. 94; Caner Arabaci, *Osmanlı Dönemi Konya Medreseleri, 1900–1924*, (Konya: Konya Ticaret Odası Yayınları, 1998), pp. 53–54.

¹⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 6.

¹⁵ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Halil, *The Diary*, p. 101.

¹⁷ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Baskatipzâde Ragip Bey, *Tarih-i Hayatim: Tahsil, Harp, Esaret, Kurtulus Anilari*, (Ankara: Kebiçeç Yayınları, 1996), pp. 21–24.

grandfather, who was also a member of the ulama, convinced them to let their son go by saying that “the big fish grows in the big lake! (*büyük balık büyük gölde büyür!*).”¹⁹ Baskatibzâde’s case was typical—most likely the experience of families living outside of Istanbul.

The founder of a Sufi order, Ahmed Ziyaeddin Gümüşhanevî, had a similar experience. Despite objections from his parents, he insisted on carrying on his education in Istanbul. Later on, his Sufi order, the *Naksibendiye*, became an influential centre of Sufism and deeply affecting the politics of the Hamidian period.²⁰ Ziyaeddin Gümüşhanevî came to Istanbul first to pursue family business at age eighteen, interrupting his studies at the local ulama in his home town. Having finished with the family business, he refused to return home even when his father threatened to cut off his financial support if he remained in Istanbul. He attended several ulama circles, residing in the Bayezid and Mahmud Pasa Madrasas. After earning his icazet, he also became deeply involved in the Naksibendi branch of Sufism and eventually became a Naksibendi Sufi leader in Istanbul in 1864.²¹ The high number of Istanbul madrasa teachers who came to the city to receive an advanced madrasa education also demonstrates the deep seated interest of provincial people to study in Istanbul.²²

The situation in Istanbul turned out to be a more complicated problem in the nineteenth century. As the capital of the empire, subjects of the empire were attracted to Istanbul for many reasons.²³ It is a well known fact that a lot of people had come to the capital for centuries in the interest of learning. Some were merely interested in knowledge for its own sake, whereas others had their eyes on a post in the ulama

¹⁹ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 25.

²⁰ For the socio-political influence of the naksibendi order particularly in late Ottoman history, see Serif Mardin, “The Naksibendi Order in Turkish History,” in Richard Tapper (ed.), *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*, (London: IB Tauris, 1991).

²¹ İrfan Gündüz, *Gümüşhanevî Ahmed Ziyaüddin: Hayati, Eserleri, Tarikat Anlayışı ve Halidiyye Tarikati*, (Istanbul: Seha Nesriyat, 1984), pp. 12–29.

²² For the information regarding the educational background of the Istanbul dersiams, see Chapter 2.

²³ One of the reasons to go to Istanbul was to seek asylum, a phenomenon that Ottoman Empire continuously experienced after the Crimean War as millions of Muslims from Balkans and Cacausia fled to heartland territories of the empire. As will be dealt with below, the increasing number of immigrants had a negative effect on madrasa infrastructure in Istanbul.

profession.²⁴ Istanbul hosted large numbers of madrasa students at all times. However, it must be noted here that the total number of madrasa students in Istanbul increased during the nineteenth century. In an archival register, the number of madrasa students in Istanbul was around 2,500 in the late eighteenth century.²⁵ But, the student population dramatically rose to 5,369, according to a census conducted in 1869.²⁶ The madrasa students studying in Istanbul were not only beginners, but also those who had interrupted their studies begun in their native towns and villages, coming to Istanbul to attend the lectures of well-known madrasa teachers. Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, for example, came to Istanbul in 1839 as a young man in order to pursue an advanced madrasa education, which he had already begun in his home town.²⁷

The increasing number of madrasa students in Istanbul, among other factors, inevitably proved problematic because of simple issues of student room and board in the nineteenth century. It could be difficult for candidates to find a vacancy in a madrasa. Sometimes, students managed to find a room after they arrived in Istanbul, such as the young Ahmed Cevdet.²⁸ However, others were not a fortunate. One example can be seen in an archival document dated 1854 and written up after a madrasa student allegedly participated in a political demonstration. This student, Ahmed Efendi of Ahiska, gives some details concerning the purpose of his stay in Istanbul in his answers to preliminary questions posed by his interrogators. He says that he came to Istanbul six years earlier in order to acquire knowledge (*tahsil-i ilm*), not to engage in business. Upon arrival, he could not find a place at the madrasas to enrol. For this reason, he sought a job and soon found one in Kasimpasa as a boatman, a job he kept for six months. Having given up this job, he began to work as

²⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam, Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla*, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), pp. 72–73.

²⁵ Kepeci–Nüfus 6589/1, 25 Cemaziyevvel 1206 [20 January 1792]. But Madeline Zilfi does not find convincing the estimates regarding the number of madrasa students in the late eighteenth century in Istanbul, arguing that the estimates between 1,500 and 2,000 madrasa students neglected the day students staying “not in medrese cells (*hücre*) but in private housing.” Madeline C. Zilfi, “The *İlmiye* Registers and the Ottoman *Medrese* System Prior to the Tanzimat,” in J.L. Bacqué-Grammont and P. Dumont (eds) *Collection Turcica vol. III, Contributions à l'Histoire économique et sociale de l'Empire Ottoman*, (Leuven: Editions Peeters, 1983), pp. 322–23.

²⁶ Mübahat Kütükoglu, “1869’da Faal İstanbul Medreseleri,” *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 7–8 (1976–1977), pp. 278–80.

²⁷ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 5.

²⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 5.

a caretaker in the Fatih Mosque, which lasted two years. After two and a half years, he finally became a madrasa student under the mudarris Ali Efendi of Çankiri, staying at the Tetimme-i Sani Madrasa in Fatih.²⁹

Conditions for many madrasa students during the mid-nineteenth century had changed very little by the dawn of the twentieth century. For example, Baskatipzâde Ragib Efendi left his home town of Kayseri for Istanbul at age twenty. He tried to gain admittance to several madrasas in Istanbul, but none would have him. He almost lost hope and began thinking of going back to Kayseri, but then he met Büyük Hamdi Efendi, a prominent ulama member in Istanbul at the time. Through his personal connections, Baskatipzâde found a room at the Bayezid Madrasa, and where the sons of leading ulama were staying.³⁰

Searching for a spare room was among the struggles faced by candidates and even current students in Istanbul. There were also some students who were allowed to attend the lessons of madrasa teachers even though they were living outside the madrasas. The Council of Students' Affairs closely followed such students and even gave them notice to move out if their lodgings were found to be inappropriate—such as the case of students who were living in certain mosques and public fountains around Istanbul in the mid 1880s.³¹ Applications to the Seyhülislamate Office and thus a place at the madrasas never ceased.³² To overcome the accommodation problem, some madrasa teachers made personal efforts. The mudarris Abdulkadir Efendi, teaching in the Fatih Mosque, applied to the Council of Students' Affairs to arrange lodging for two of his students, stating that he had already found a room for another group of five students.³³ Under these circumstances, there was often discord and friction in the struggle to find a place to live at the madrasa. A dispute on distributing the rooms forced the Council of Students' Affairs to intervene in a case in 1885. In an earlier meeting for the distribution of rooms at the Çiftebas Kursunlu Madrasa in Fatih, a controversy arose between the mudarris Ibrahim Sevki Efendi

²⁹ Irade MVL 12324, "Sultan Mehmed Hocalarından Ispirli Ali Efendinin Talebesi Ahiskavî Ahmed Efendinin Ifade-i İstintaki," 27 Cemaziyelahir 1270 [27 March 1854].

³⁰ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatım*, pp. 27–28.

³¹ MMTKHD 65/ 21 Rebiülevvel 1302 [8 January 1885].

³² For several examples of such applications by madrasa students, see A MKT 30/12, 21 Cemaziyelevvel 1267 [24 March 1851]; A MKT 248/76, 12 Cemaziyelevvel 1274 [29 December 1857]; A MKT 301/67, n.d. [c.1860]; MMTKHD n.n./10 Kânunuevvel 1301 [22 December 1885].

³³ MMTKHD 50/9 Safer 1302 [28 November 1884].

and one student. The case was taken to the Council. However, it could not be settled as the Council wished. The student brought the case to the Istanbul Court of First Instance, Criminal Division (*Istanbul Bidayet Mahkemesi, Ceza Dairesi*), accusing the mudarris of insulting him. The Council then put pressure on the student and strongly demanded that all students refrain from wasting the court's time with such "tiny" matters (*mevâdd-i cüz'îye*), for such actions were not only occupying the courts' time, unnecessarily, but a distraction for students who ought to concern themselves, first and foremost, with their religious studies.³⁴

The problem of accommodation for madrasa students was also closely connected to socio-political circumstances that the Ottoman capital faced after the mid-nineteenth century. Political relations with Russia in particular, had serious social implications for madrasa infrastructure in Istanbul. Massive immigration to Ottoman lands as a result of conflicts in the Balkans and between the Ottoman Empire and Russia put pressure on madrasa buildings which state authorities saw as the most logical and best first choice for immigrants to take shelter. This particular subject will be dealt with below in more detail.

Boarding of Madrasa Students and Immigrants in Istanbul

Madrasa students frequently faced serious social problems in Istanbul caused by waves of immigrants during the nineteenth century from a vast area that was no longer under the rule of the Ottomans or any Muslim state. Poverty among immigrants was an unavoidable outcome of forced immigration and, consequently, the limited resources in Istanbul had to be shared, as did the social services upon which madrasa students depended. Free food dispensed at the imaret, for example, was frequented by the poor of Istanbul in increasing numbers of the century progressed. The main reason for the social and economic inadequacies of late nineteenth-century Istanbul and the ensuing conflicts was the increasing demands of immigrants flocking to the city.

The immigration problem in Istanbul began to be felt after the Crimean War in 1854-56. The Turco-Russian wars were the main reason for the Muslim retreat to

³⁴ MMTKHD 67/22 Kânunusani 1300 [3 February 1885].

the Ottoman centre.³⁵ For example, 500,000 Crimean Tatars migrated to Ottoman lands in 1856, followed by millions of Muslim Caucasians in 1862. The movement of huge numbers of Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds and back to the Ottoman centre continued unabated until the end of the empire vis-à-vis the Turco-Russian War of 1877-78, the Balkan Wars in 1912-13, and, finally, the devastation of World War I.³⁶ Immigrants settled in different parts of the empire. As a magnet for Muslim refugees, Istanbul had two critical roles. Firstly, it was a gateway for many newcomers, including those who would eventually leave the capital in search of another destination. And secondly, Istanbul was a place of permanent settlement for many.³⁷

There were madrasa students among such war refugees. Petitions from immigrant students of varied backgrounds to Ottoman authorities for stipends give us some idea of the magnitude of the problem, especially in Istanbul and following the Crimean War.³⁸ The main theme in these petitions was the desperate situation of students in the wake of war. The tone of many of the official responses to these petitions by Ottoman authorities suggests that a degree of affirmative action existed. For example, three madrasa students to arrive in Istanbul from Crimea applied for a stipend. According to the archival documentation, the distribution of such monies to immigrant students was very nearly a matter of course, in part because the Grand Vizierate charged the Istanbul Municipality (*Sehremaneti*) with the task of discerning why these needy fellow Muslims were not approved for a stipend when most of their

³⁵ In fact, Muslims were not the only religious group inflicted with the burden of coercive migration in the nineteenth century, but Jews were also forced to leave their homeland particularly in Russia and Greece. For details on Jewish immigration to Ottoman lands, see Kemal Karpat, "Jewish Population Movements in the Ottoman Empire, 1862-1914," in Avigdor Levy (ed.), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1994).

³⁶ Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam, Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 184; idem., *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, (Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 65-70.

³⁷ According to the records of Commission of Muslim Immigrants (*Muhacirîn-i Islamiye Komisyonu*), 21,192 Muslim and 71 Jewish immigrants arrived directly in Istanbul mostly from the Balkans and Caucasia only between March 1899- February 1900, a period that was a relatively stable time; Y MTV 201/14, 4 Zilhicce 1317 [5 April 1900].

³⁸ For a number of examples see Irade Dah 23824, 25 Rebiülevvel 1273 [23 November 1856]; Irade Dah 23824, 8 Cemaziyelahir 1273 [3 February 1857]; A MKT MVL 86/74, 24 Saban 1273 [19 April 1857]; A MKT NZD 253/96, 30 Receb 1274 [16 March 1858]; Irade MVL 424/18601 18 Rebiülahir 1276 [14 November 1859]; A MKT MHM 198/63, 11 Rebiülahir 1277 [27 October 1860].

counterparts had already received theirs.³⁹ Immigrant students received an allowance from the Ottoman government, as well as lodging at the madrasa.⁴⁰ There were also immigrant students who made demands on the state for their books on several subjects, such as Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*) and theology (*akâid*).⁴¹

While needy immigrant students constituted only one part of the problem, hosting immigrants in Istanbul created another problem that affected local students already settled in the city. To handle the temporary accommodation problem of immigrants, Ottoman immigration officials considered mosques, sufi lodges, and madrasa buildings as a part of an immediate solution to the problem. The problem was so urgent that it was possible to discharge the current students of the madrasa in order to host immigrants. For example, in September 1878, soon after the end of the Turco-Russian War, the Seyhülislamate demanded that a hundred students in Yavuz Selim Madrasa in Fatih district be evacuated and the madrasa given to immigrants.⁴² This took place during the holy month Ramazan when madrasa students were expected to stop their studies and travel to provincial areas. Therefore, the demands of the Seyhülislamate were carried out without resistance from students possibly because a majority of them were already away at the time.

The high numbers of madrasa students in Istanbul usually caused a rise in accommodation problems for newcomers. As mentioned, aspirants seeking a madrasa education spent months searching for available room in one of the madrasas in the city. Due to the high demand for accommodation for both students and the needy, official authorities found themselves in the middle of numerous disputes, especially during the Hamidian period.

Students' insistence that their rooms be returned to them after being temporarily allocated to immigrants led to struggles between the top administrative authorities of the Seyhülislamate and the Commission for Immigrants (*Muhacirîn Komisyonu*).⁴³ A case in 1883 illustrates this vis-à-vis the conditions prevalent in

³⁹ A MKT NZD 209/191, 20 Cemaziyelevvel 1273 [16 January 1857].

⁴⁰ A MKT MHM 138/22, 11 Muharrem 1275 [21 August 1858].

⁴¹ A DVN 156/59, 15 Rebiülevvel 1277 [1 October 1860].

⁴² Zab-Reft (1322) 56, 19 Ramazan 1294 [27 September 1878].

⁴³ This commission was first established in 1860 and Hafiz Pasa was appointed as the head; Karpas, *Ottoman Population*, p. 67. In the course of time, several administrative commissions were set up to conduct the affairs of immigrants, and the name of these commissions changed slightly each

Istanbul at this particular time. Karinâbadli Hüseyin Efendi, a madrasa student staying in Ahmediye Madrasa in Üsküdar, petitioned the Seyhülislamate, complaining that the Commission for Immigrants dislodged him from his madrasa room, his madrasa having now being settled by immigrants with the Commission's blessing. The Seyhülislamate defended the student's right to stay there and reminded the commission that immigrants were required to leave madrasas if they refused to go to the provinces and simply preferred to stay in Istanbul, referring to an imperial order when making their case.⁴⁴

But, after the Commission's official reply in October 1883, the matter was not resolved swiftly. According to the Commission, Ahmediye Madrasa had been derelict since 1878 as well as at the time when immigrant families had settled there. Karinâbadli Hüseyin was allowed to stay there only because he was regarded as an immigrant student. During the implementation of the imperial order the Seyhülislamate referred to, he was notified that he would have to leave the madrasa within the week by the Commission. In fact, Hüseyin ignored the notice and kept his room. After a while, the Commission had to remove his things since it was reported by the government that a group of immigrants from the Caucasus was about to arrive in Istanbul and needed a place to stay for a few days. His room was urgently needed. Upon hearing this, the Üsküdar branch of the Commission transferred all the orphans under its care to Ahmediye, Semsî Pasa and Mihrimah Sultan Madrasas (in Üsküdar), in order to free up enough beds for the immigrants in question. In its response, the Commission added insult to injury, arguing that Hüseyin was wealthy enough to make do on his own, for it had been reported to the Commission that he had purchased a house for 150 lira.⁴⁵

All this detailed information provided by the Commission did not convince the Seyhülislamate to agree to the use of madrasa buildings by the immigrants. In its final decision, the Seyhülislamate rejected the demands of the Commission without any reference to the case of Karinâbadli Hüseyin. It is obvious that the

time although their purpose and functions remained almost unchanged. For the activities of the Immigration Commission and its extensive role in shaping the late Ottoman society, see David Cameron Cuthell, "The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An Agent in the Transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860—1866," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University (2005).

⁴⁴ MMTKHD (2195) 27, 20 Seval 1300 [24 August 1883].

⁴⁵ MMTKHD (2195) 71, 25 Seval 1300 [29 August 1883].

Seyhülislamate was not happy with the current situation and tried to use all available arguments to protect the madrasa buildings from such non-qualified users. In its following communication to the Commission dated 2 January 1884, the Seyhülislamate needed to declare how it generously helped the Commission recently by giving madrasa buildings in Fatih, Eyüb and Üsküdar to immigrants despite being crowded before, reminding the Commission again about the imperial order regarding the transfer of immigrants to provincial areas and the return of madrasa buildings to students. The Seyhülislamate also compared the conditions of madrasa students to immigrants, pointing out that student poverty was a more pressing issue, supporting its position by arguing that madrasa buildings were falling in the hands and under the control of vagrants when they should be restricted to those in the service of education.⁴⁶ This, in fact, sounds like an indirect blame-game vis-à-vis the Commission's alleged mismanagement of madrasa buildings temporarily under its control.

The matter of Ahmediye Madrasa and other Üsküdar madrasas was not finalized in 1884 as reflected in other documents. The problem was again brought to the attention of the Commission by the Seyhülislamate in 1888. But, this time, the Commission was not involved in the matter and directed the Seyhülislamate to another state department, the *Şehremâneti*, which was in charge of municipal services in Istanbul, given the fact that the occupiers of the madrasa buildings in dispute were not considered immigrants any longer. In its official communications with various state departments, the Seyhülislamate emphasized the purpose of madrasa buildings and the accommodations needs of growing student population. This time the Seyhülislamate was able to get back some of its buildings, but the end result was less than alluring. It was reported that Ahmediye had already been returned to students after all immigrants were vacated from the building. However, Semsî Paşa Madrasa was no longer considered suitable for students since it was badly damaged, and so immigrants living there were allowed to stay.⁴⁷

The fact that Madrasa students were continuously waiting for madrasa rooms restarted communications between the Seyhülislamate and related state branches on

⁴⁶ MMTKHD (2195) 71, 25 Sevval 1300 [29 August 1883], "Meclis-i Mesalih-i Talebeden Yazilan Derkenar (3 Rebiülevvel 1301 [2 January 1884])."

⁴⁷ Zab-Ref (1322) 7/36, 29 Safer 1306 [4 December 1888] and 6 Rebiülahir 1306 [10 December 1888].

the state of student housing. Besides, students needed to be kept informed because their rooms and madrasas were being taken over by immigrants at the order of various state departments when deemed necessary, as well as simply taken by force by immigrant families and soldiers in the city. In 1884, for example, Murad Pasa Madrasa was partly occupied by immigrant families when students were away for the cer trip, refusing to leave the madrasa when asked to do so. Attempts by students and the mudarris to remove the occupiers from the premises failed, and so the Seyhülislamate decided to use police force.⁴⁸ At the same time, there were also madrasa buildings where the police were themselves the unlawful occupiers, such as the Mihrimah Sultan Madrasa which was converted into a military police station (*nizamiye karakolu*). However, the Seyhülislamate did not accept this *fait accompli* and wrote the Istanbul Central Command Headquarters (*Dersaadet Merkez Komutanligi*) asking for the building to be returned to its lawful owners.⁴⁹

Given the difficult political and social circumstances prevailing in Istanbul during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the next century, madrasa buildings often served as institutions of higher education and emergency housing in the event of social crises. The Seyhülislamate always strove hard to maintain its control over the buildings, pushing other state departments to do their part to protect this student sphere from being overrun by a needy but undeserving mob. But, the depth of the immigration problem and war hampered state authorities in the execution of their duties. Accordingly, the demands of the Seyhülislamate were not met in many cases. In 1908, for example, Istanbul Municipality reported that it had doubts about demolishing four wooden lodges built in a madrasa garden by immigrant families and having to remove them from the madrasa, because of the fact that not “directing them to another place to stay will cause pain and complaints.”⁵⁰

Despite the struggles of the Seyhülislamate and students, madrasa buildings in Istanbul could not entirely fulfil their primary purpose at that time.⁵¹ A survey

⁴⁸ MMTKHD (2195) 30, 21 Zilkade 1301 [11 September 1884].

⁴⁹ MMTKHD (2195) 49, 8 Tesrinisani 1300 [20 November 1884].

⁵⁰ Y MTV 308/75, 13 Rebiülevvel 1326 [15 April 1908].

⁵¹ Similar problems were also experienced in provincial madrasas as well. For such a case in Adapazari, see MMTKHD (2195) 55, 1 Safer 1301 [29 December 1883].

carried out by the Seyhülislamate in the years 1914 and 1918 provides us with a very clear picture of the miserable condition of the madrasas; a substantial number of them were places of shelter for immigrants, soldiers, and the victims of fire and war. Many were dilapidated as a result.⁵² The madrasa infrastructure in Istanbul never recovered from this, nor was it likely to return to its former glory in the short time that the Ottomans had remaining.

Dress Code

The uniformity of dress in educational institutions is usually credited to the introduction of new schools into the Ottoman society. The shape, and in some cases the colour of school uniforms was assigned to the students of all new schools. Madrasa students also had a tradition of school uniforms that was still upheld in the nineteenth century—the main features coming into existence over the centuries, but certain changes occurring mostly within the latter part of the nineteenth century. As one might expect, the madrasa dress code differed from the modern dress codes brought in by Ottomans in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The dressing law of Mahmut II was the first such step in this regard, state official required by law to dress in a manner befitting the European style or fashion at the time.⁵³ As the sources vividly depict, change in dress became necessary for new madrasa students from the very first day. In fact, the sartorial tradition concerned a larger community, that of the ulama, only one part comprised of madrasa students. Distinctive apparel was one of the distinguishing features of the Ottoman ulama and designed to bind the religious institution and its members together—from the lowest level to the highest—and thus a kind of professional credential. In addition, a common outward appearance of all members of the madrasa, high and low, suggested a particular social status with historical roots that was recognized officially and publicly.

⁵² Mübahat Küçükoglu, *Darü'l Hilafeti'l-Aliyye Medresesi ve Kuruluşu Arefesinde İstanbul Medreseleri*, (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1978).

⁵³ "Fes," in Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. 1, pp. 610-13. The application of this policy of Mahmud II also included the military imams. For the regulation of their uniform, see Halil İbrahim Erbay, "Imams in the Reformed Army of Mahmud II: Uniform Regulations from Ottoman Military Archives, c.1827," in Camron Michael Amin, et al. (eds), *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 471-76. For an interesting survey of forms of dress in the modern Middle East, see Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham (eds), *Languages of Dress in the Middle East*, (Surrey: Curzon-SOAS, 1997).

The tradition of a student dress code encompassed every aspect of clothing from head to foot. The *sarik*, or turban, was white or green, while the *cübbe*, or gown, was black. Over time, some changes occurred in the dress code: the *entari*, or the old style loose robe, was replaced by the white shirt (*beyaz gömlek*) and baggy trousers (*salvar*) and similar in style to the modern style of dress brought in by the reforms of the nineteenth century. A shaved head and a beard, if one was old enough, completed the picture.⁵⁴ One of the aims of the madrasa dress code was social control of madrasa students. The madrasa uniform made madrasa students easy to spot and thus under the constant and watchful eye of the Muslim community in which they lived..

Apart from controlling dress as a form of social control, state authorities in Istanbul monitored the behaviour of madrasa students vis-à-vis their clothes. A memo sent by the Seyhülislamate to the Ministry of Police (*Zabtiye Nezareti*) in 1884 reflects the official attitude toward the enforcement of the dress code and rules of conduct. The Office declaration read, “it is an old rule and the requirement of the current procedure to retrieve the rooms of the madrasa boarding students who have changed out of the clothes [of studentship] and the occupation [of learning], and to allot them to those who deserve them more.”⁵⁵ The Seyhülislamate made this declaration once it discovered that Mehmed Ali Efendi of Trabzon, a student in the Papazoglu Madrasa, apparently began to wear clothes that were considered unsuitable for a madrasa student and had abandoned his madrasa education in the process. The Seyhülislamate not only ordered the mudarris to remove him, but also alerted the police to the case. It is clear from the same document that the Police Directorate of Istanbul (*Istanbul Polis Müdüriyet-i Behiyyesi*) helped remove the student concerned after only twelve days of learning of the case.⁵⁶

Another case regarding a dress violation deserves brief attention. In late December 1893, the Directorate of Police informed the Seyhülislamate that two madrasa students had been spotted around the Ayasofya Mosque at 3 o'clock in the morning without their turbans (*sarik*). For this reason, they were taken into police

⁵⁴ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 17; Halil, *The Diary*, p. 88; Caner Arabaci, *Osmanlı Dönemi Konya Medreseleri, 1900–1924*, (Konya: Konya Ticaret Odası Yayınları, 1998), pp. 113–14.

⁵⁵ Zab-Reft 7/26, 14 Cemaziyelevvel 1301 [12 March 1884].

⁵⁶ Zab-Reft 7/26, “Muamelat-î Cârîye,” 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1301 [24 March 1884].

custody. Because of previous disciplinary infractions, the Council of Students' Affairs decided to send them back to their home regions.

The relationship between dress and studentship was a well-established concept at the time. The case of Halil Halid Efendi, also a Young Turk, proves most intriguing in this case. He attended Law School (*Mekteb-i Hukuk*) in Istanbul while still a madrasa student where he continued in the tradition of wearing his turban and gown until he completed his studies in the school. However, afterwards, he felt no less compelled to discard his religious clothing and student uniform in the interest of pursuing a professional career in the civil service. He describes the situation at the Law School as follows:

When I passed the final examination in the law college I began to attend the Courts to see and learn the actual working of the forms of the procedures. I now grew to dislike having to go to the Courts and Government offices in the *Ulema* costumes, which still I wore⁵⁷... I had to leave the life of the *madresseh* altogether, for the people in those ancient institutions regard the discarding of the academical turban and long cloak, and the adoption of European clothes, as a renunciation of the profession⁵⁸...Following my example four other men among the students of the law college who came from *madresseh* also changed their costume. Of course, they had also to leave their *madresseh* on account of their conduct.⁵⁹

Likewise, the official authorities did not look kindly on cases of non-madrasa students donning madrasa apparel. Such actions were frowned upon by state authorities, such as the practice of impersonating students, which apart from security concerns led to abuses of facilities and privileges reserved for madrasa students—such as using *imarets*, or public victual houses. The Seyhülislamate Office and Ministry of Police were most concerned that all such violators be prosecuted to the full extent of the law as can be seen in a such case that occurred in 1876. A man in madrasa student clothes named Arab Salih, was identified by a group of *bona fide* madrasa students as an impostor, something they immediately reported to the police. Eventually captured by the police, Arab was taken to the Seyhülislamate and questioned about his status as a madrasa student. He then was sent to the Ministry of Police.⁶⁰ Nearly three weeks later, the Seyhülislamate asked the Ministry of Police

⁵⁷ Halil, *The Diary*, pp. 134

⁵⁸ Halil, *The Diary*, p. 135

⁵⁹ Halil, *The Diary*, p. 141

⁶⁰ Zab-Reft n.n./13, 26 Rebiulahir 1293 [21 May 1876].

concerning the outcome. In the correspondence from the Seyhülislamate to the Ministry of Police, there is mention of another student involved in the case. Although there is little information regarding the other student, it is interesting to note this other student, Ismail Efendi, was wanted by the police in Istanbul and for the crime, that being, carrying “his madrasa clothes with himself in a box”⁶¹ in attempt to conceal his true identity as a *bona fide* madrasa student. Arab Salih, a madrasa student impostor, was detained by the police for more than seven weeks before being sent to his home and it seems likely that he was the object of a critical investigation. Moreover, his father was forced to pay the Seyhülislamate a visit and appeal for his son’s release, his application sent to the Ministry of Police straight away.⁶²

A Day of Learning in Istanbul Madrasas

An ordinary day in the life of a madrasa student began with the morning prayer (*sabah namazi*), a daily ritual performed in the hour preceding sunrise. This was followed by breakfast and then a series of lectures.⁶³ Strictly speaking, in nineteenth century Istanbul, no official law prescribed where these lectures should take place. However, as far as can be known from the available sources, a switch from madrasa halls (*dersane*) to mosques occurred in Istanbul. The autobiography of Ahmed Cevdet Pasa confirms such a change by mid-nineteenth century in Istanbul.⁶⁴ The biographies of the ulama members who studied in Istanbul support the fact that such a switch took place at this time.⁶⁵ Lectures thus took place in both madrasa halls and mosques until the 1860s and, more than likely, a consequence of an increase in the number of madrasa students in Istanbul during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Thereafter, mosques became the primary locus of madrasa teaching.

⁶¹ “[T]alebe kiyafetini kutuda gezdiren...” Zab-Reft n.a./16, 15 Cemaziyelevvel 1293 [8 June 1876].

⁶² Zab-Reft n.n./29, 18 Cemaziyelahir 1293 [11 July 1876]. Attempts to don students’ clothes to take advantages of studentship occurred in the provinces as well as in Istanbul. For such a case, see Y MTV 53/102, 24 Muharrem 1309 [30 August 1891].

⁶³ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, pp. 29, 35.

⁶⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 10.

⁶⁵ The following works contain numerous cases verifying that teaching moved from madrasa to mosque in Istanbul: Sadik Albayrak, *Son Devir Osmanli Ulemasi, Ilmiye Ricalinin Teracim-i Ahvali*, 4 vols, (Istanbul: Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yayinlari, 1996); Ebul-ula Mardin, *Huzur Dersleri*, 2 vols, (Istanbul: Ismail Akgün Matbaasi, 1966).

However, lectures could also be held in more private locales vis-à-vis the demands of student numbers and other special considerations.⁶⁶

Lectures were usually given in two sessions: in the mornings (*sabah dersleri*) and in the afternoons (*ikindi dersleri*).⁶⁷ Whereas morning sessions were mainly devoted to the practical sciences (*ulum-u âliye*) such as Arabic grammar (*sarf* and *nahiv*) and Arabic rhetoric (*belagat*), afternoon sessions consisted mainly of *ulum-u âliye*, or the higher sciences, such as Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*).⁶⁸ In addition to these, sessions could be arranged to meet student demand, during vacation periods, and especially for the holy months of Receb, Saban and Ramazan when large numbers of students left Istanbul for their cer trips.⁶⁹ No lectures were scheduled for Tuesdays or Fridays in Istanbul,⁷⁰ whereas this was not strictly enforced at provincial madrasas. For instance, a new schedule for lectures was introduced in Kayseri around the turn of the nineteenth century and afternoon lectures normally held on Mondays and Thursdays were rescheduled for Tuesdays and Fridays.⁷¹

In the mosque, students of the mudarris formed a circle around him, and, depending on the size of mosque, there might be several circles in a single mosque at any one time.⁷² The method of teaching in these circles was based on the reading of some text by the mudarris (*takrir*), the memorization of the text by students (*hifz*), and a debate and question period that took place between the mudarris and students (*müzakere*).⁷³ Students were also expected to write their notes in the margins of their textbooks.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 10; Bereketzâde, *Yâd-i Mâzî*, pp. 37–38.

⁶⁷ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 19; Arabaci, *Osmanlı Dönemi*, p. 56.

⁶⁸ Süheyl Ünver, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Tarihine Baslangıç, Fatih Külliyesi ve Zamani İlim Hayati*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1946), 113; Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 19.

⁶⁹ Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995), v. 1, pp. 80-81.

⁷⁰ Bereketzâde, *Yâd-i Mâzî*, p.33.

⁷¹ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 19.

⁷² Bereketzâde, *Yâd-i Mâzî*, pp. 29–30.

⁷³ Bereketzâde, *Yâd-i Mâzî*, pp. 24–26.

⁷⁴ H. Abdülkadir Erdogan, "Konya'da Eski Medreseler ve Medreseliler," *Konya*, 26–27 (1938), p. 1390.

During the discussion period, it was customary for students to challenge the opinions expressed by their mudarris. In his memoirs, Ahmed Cevdet Pasa notes how often he challenged his mudarris on a variety of subjects touched upon in the lecture:

Vidinli Hoca launched his vacation lectures to teach *Mutavvel*⁷⁵ in Fatih Mosque. More than 300 students came together. In the beginning, there were many who were discussing [the matters] with the teacher. One by one they later gave up. [Finally] there were a few of us left who were constantly discussing with Vidinli Hoca and questioning him, and those who were constantly discussing [with him] were given place near him... Vidinli Hoca was a self-aggrandizing and arrogant person. But he was also extremely fair and his arrogance never exceeded his fairness. One day I even insistently stood against him [on a matter in the lecture]. He became disturbed and rebuked me severely!⁷⁶

Nevertheless the next day, the mudarris declared—and for all to hear—that Ahmed Cevdet was right to have objected.⁷⁷ According to Ahmed Cevdet, this was one way mudarrises earned prestige and won the respect of their students. He also recalls the open-ended teaching style of three other mudarrises: Kara Halil Efendi, Kezûbî Hasan Efendi and Serif Efendi. A group of bright students, including Ahmed Cevdet, and famous for their ability to question and dispute, inquired of their mudarrises whether it might be possible to continue receiving lectures during the vacation period. The first mudarris was amendable, successfully manoeuvring around this famous group of somewhat difficult and certainly demanding students—which earned him a very favourable reputation and considerable prestige. Consequently, or coincidentally, he later secured the post of the Seyhülislamate. The second mudarris, agreed at first to student demands for more lectures, but decided against the idea as the lectures progressed, concocting a poor excuse. Afterwards, he never managed to regain their respect or achieve the recognition as from madrasa students in Istanbul as a cut above the rest. The third mudarris simply refused to teach them.⁷⁸

The dialectic that ensued between mudarrises and students was one way that students were evaluated. Bereketzâde Ismail Hakki Bey, a madrasa graduate and a Young Ottoman, recalls that his ability to debate his teacher improved over time and,

⁷⁵ *Sharh al-Mutawwal* (known as *Mutavvel*) is a commentary written by al-Taftazani (d. 1390) on Jalal al-Din al-Qazwini (d. 1339)'s *Talkhis al-Miftah*, a book about Arabic rhetoric.

⁷⁶ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p.10.

⁷⁷ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p.11.

⁷⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p.11.

as a consequence, he would eventually earn his praise and respect.⁷⁹ This relationship is important in terms of the nature of madrasa education because administering a formal examination was not the preferred method of measuring student performance. It is also worth noting that a mudarris sometimes assigned one of his students, in most cases one he considered the best and brightest in the class, to give the lecture in his place.⁸⁰ As the experience of madrasa students like Ahmed Cevdet and Bereketzâde, the madrasa offered a dynamic learning experience for any so inclined in nineteenth-century Ottoman society.

Students had a variety of subjects from which to choose, and scores of mudarrises to follow in Istanbul. Students usually attended the lectures of one mudarris for the morning session until receiving their *icazet*, or diploma, for completing that particular set of subjects and the standard courses that every madrasa student had to take.⁸¹ As for the afternoon sessions, students were free to choose another mudarris or mudarrises with whom to work on different subjects that were out of the core madrasa curriculum. It was also possible to arrange private lessons with a member of the ulama and which was often arranged through personal contacts. For example, Mehmed Said Efendi received his *icazet* from Hacı Hafız Sakir Efendi, a *dersiam* at Fatih Mosque. However, his afternoon studies were under seven different ulama members, all at the same time.⁸² Madrasa students also studied for special *icazets* on subjects of their individual liking from mudarrises of their choosing.⁸³

The seasons of the educational year were in accordance with the Muslim lunar calendar, and so dates floated from year to year vis-à-vis the solar calendar. The educational season lasted nine months, the three Islamic holy months of *Receb*, *Saban* and *Ramazan*, the *Sühûr-u Selâse* or Three Months, was the vacation period. During the vacation period when teaching ceased, most madrasa students and mudarrises left Istanbul for their home towns or other locales to perform religious

⁷⁹ Bereketzâde, *Yâd-i Mâzi*, pp.27, 34

⁸⁰ Irade MVL 12324, 27 Cemaziyelahir 1270 [27 March 1854].

⁸¹ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 11.

⁸² Mehmed Said Efendi, USAD, no: 528.

⁸³ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, pp. 8–11; Bereketzâde, *Yâd-i Mâzi*, pp. 33–35; Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatim*, p. 28; Hüseyin Atay, *Osmanlılarda Yüksek Din Egitimi, Medrese Programları, İcazetnameler, İslahat Hareketleri*, (Istanbul: Dergâh yayinlari, 1983), 103–105.

duties such as leading daily prayers (*namaz kildirmek*) and reciting the Quran. Preaching was another part of the life and work of madrasa students. In exchange for this, students often received money, food, and clothes from people who benefitted from this, providing many students with the monies necessary to meet their expenses and continue their studies.

MADRASA STUDENTS AND MODERN SUBJECTS

As seen in the case of Kethüdazade Mehmed Arif Efendi and others from the first chapter, the phenomenon of students taking courses in the modern sciences at the madrasa began in the early nineteenth century. During the Tanzimat era, the experience of *Darülfunun*, the Ottoman University, though short-lived and strongly opposed by the religious establishment at the time, points to an interest on the part of madrasa students in such modern subject matter, in addition to their traditional and religious course requirements. The testimony of Ali Suavi attests that numerous madrasa students frequented the lectures of Dervis Pasa, a prominent intellectual, a teacher at the Darülfunun, and an active member of *Cemiyet-i Fünun-i Osmani*, or the Ottoman Society of Sciences which was the first scientific society in Ottoman history. Ali Suavi also notes that a certain Cevdet Efendi taught madrasa students geography and anatomy at a mosque in Istanbul.⁸⁴

Up to and including the Hamidian era, the teaching of Hoca Tahsin Efendi played an important role in the cultivation of relations between the general public – including madrasa students— and the study of modern science although the concept and creation of a modern university to which he contributed greatly had failed ultimately. Madrasa students attended his lectures in the modern sciences which were offered in his home.⁸⁵

Bereketzade, a madrasa student in the early 1870s, describes the situation in his memoirs: “I and Nevrekoblu Mahmud Efendi [a friend of Bereketzade from madrasa] wanted to go to the Civil Service School (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*)... Our ambition was not to be a provincial governor (*kaymakam*), but relied on the idea to benefit from the sciences taught there.”⁸⁶ Following their ambitions, they entered the

⁸⁴ “Nizam-i Beray-i Maarif-i Umumiye,” *Ulum*, vol. 7, p. 412.

⁸⁵ For details about Hoca Tahsin and his relation with madrasa, see Chapter 1.

⁸⁶ Bereketzade Ismail Hakki, *Yâd-i Mâzî*, (Istanbul: Nehir, 1997), pp. 36-37.

School via the exam. After one and a half years, Bereketzade changed his school and enrolled in the newly established *Darülfunun*, where he studied until it was shut down. He listed the subjects and teachers that he most enjoyed in the both schools: Geography and general history from Hilmi Efendi, finance from Münif Pasa, physics from Aziz Bey, and math from Vidinli Tevfik Pasa.⁸⁷ Bereketzade did not include Hoca Tahsin Efendi in this list because he wanted to devote an entire section to him in his memoirs. For him, Hoca Tahsin was one of the most distinguished scholars of his time. Bereketzade also stated how much he had benefited from Hoca Tahsin's teaching, praising his perfection in scientific search and defending his mentor against the criticisms of opponents at the time.⁸⁸

Another student of Hoca Tahsin Efendi, Ahmed Talat Bey, while attending the madrasa lectures of Berlofçali Abdürrahim İلمي Efendi, a Fatih dersiam, in 1877, a friend had told him of the legendary Hoca Tahsin. Ahmed joined his friend to take in the lectures of Tahsin and, principally, as a chance to study physics, astronomy, and theology under a single umbrella.⁸⁹ Hoca Tahsin's efforts to teach modern sciences were also acknowledged even by non-madrasa students. For example, Besim Bey, a high official in Ottoman Customs Administration (*Rüsumat İdaresi*), praised Tahsin for his proficiency in modern astronomy as another beneficiary of Hoca Tahsin's teaching in Istanbul.⁹⁰

Hoca Tahsin's students were not only schooled in the modern sciences but also in modern political concepts. For example, Hoca Kadri Efendi, an ulama member of the most influential political organization in late Ottoman period, Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), was also tutored by Tahsin while studying at Fatih Madrasa in Istanbul at the same time.⁹¹ Hoca Kadri went on to disseminate a wide array of modern political concepts—such as parliamentary and constitutional governance—among madrasa students in the

⁸⁷ Bereketzade, *Yâd-i Mâzî*, p. 37.

⁸⁸ Bereketzade, *Yâd-i Mâzî*, pp. 35-36.

⁸⁹ Inal, *Son Asir*, vol. 4, pp. 1846-47.

⁹⁰ Inal, *Son Asir*, vol. 1, pp.184-85.

⁹¹ For more detailed information about Hoca Kadri's life, see Ali Birinci, "Hoca Mehmed Kadri Nâsîh Efendi," in Ali Birinci, *Tarihin Gölgesinde, Mesâhir-i Meçhûleden Birkaç Zât*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayinlari, 2001), pp. 74-80.

capital.⁹² In this regard, he also enjoyed considerable success as a teacher in the new schools according to Mehmed Akif, another graduate of the madrasa and a new school, going on himself to become an Islamist activist during the Second Constitutional period. For Mehmed Akif, Hoca Kadri was one of the most influential teachers and intellectual influences on his thinking as a young man.⁹³

For madrasa students, experts in the modern sciences were a source of learning and often knowledge passed from student to teacher as well. Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, for example, taught madrasa subjects to a professor from the Army Engineering School (*Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayûn*), and in return he took lessons in modern mathematics from him, using textbooks that were no doubt part of the curriculum of the engineering school.⁹⁴ This style of learning was not unique to Ahmed Cevdet but seems to have been practised by many others. A certain Haydar Efendi, for example, had an interest in medical studies which he added to his madrasa education. Consequently, he inquired after the military medical doctor, Miralay Ahmed Bey, to read physics, chemistry, and dissection (*nazarî tesrih*) under him.⁹⁵

It is clear that studying modern sciences was not officially internalized into the madrasa system in the nineteenth century. However, student interest was considerable as seen in the cases above that were mostly from the Tanzimat and early Hamidian eras. Further, the memoirs of Kamil Efendi, a sharia court judge living in the late Ottoman period, suggests a strong interest in the modern sciences from within the madrasa and goes a long way to explain the origin of “reformist” attitudes adopted by many ulama members, particularly after 1908.

Kamil Efendi was a madrasa student of provincial origins living in Istanbul in the 1880s and 90s. In 1880, he stayed in the capital during a vacation for six weeks. As a consequence, he decided to spend his time studying science (*fen dersleri*), becoming a student of the ulama member Hacı Ramiz Efendi who taught out of his home. Kamil was not alone in wanting to study modern science and Ramiz’s lectures were attended by many madrasa students of like mind. Nevertheless, the subject

⁹² YEE 15/138, 13 Tesrinievvel 1311 [25 October 1895] and 6 Muharrem 1315 [7 June 1897].

⁹³ Düzdag, *Mehmed Âkif*, p. 5.

⁹⁴ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p. 7.

⁹⁵ Inal, *Son Asir*

matter was increasingly difficult and many lacked the necessary stamina to see them to the end.⁹⁶ In the following years, Kamil wanted to study astronomy and found a master in the person of Karlovali Hüseyin Efendi, a madrasa teacher in Istanbul and later Chief Imperial Astronomer (*Müneccimbasi*).⁹⁷ Kamil studied astronomy, mathematics, and logarithms as a consequence,⁹⁸ which, in turn, proved of immense assistance to him in the preparation of a calendar published in 1894, entitled *Mir'atül-Evkat*.⁹⁹

From his memoirs, we can conclude that Kamil had no desire to work in the sciences per se, going on to become a sharia court judge and then on to a position of pre-eminence at the central office of the Seyhülislam. The later part of his career life is interesting, too, as he became a member of the last Ottoman Parliament and then joined the Turkish war of liberation. His affiliation with the ulama did not stop him from working closely with the Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) and later under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In 1937, when he was putting the final touches on his memoirs, he wrote glowingly of Atatürk vis-à-vis the latter's reform policies—which, incidentally, included the more secular reforms.¹⁰⁰

Apart from an expressed interest in the modern sciences, madrasa students showed an interest in learning modern European languages as well. In one case, Ataullah Efendi was one madrasa student who studied French and German from private teachers. His knowledge of these European languages led him into the related fields of literature, philosophy, and sociology.¹⁰¹

The interest that madrasa students showed in the modern sciences and social sciences is extremely important when one considers the reformist/modernist attitudes and outlooks adopted by ulama members after 1908. Many ulama and madrasa-educated writers and thinkers came together around societies and periodicals advocating reformist approaches and modern solutions to problems in the legal,

⁹⁶ Ertur, *Tamu Yelleri*, pp. 19-20.

⁹⁷ For details about Hüseyin Efendi, see Chapter 1.

⁹⁸ Ertur, *Tamu Yelleri*, pp. 25-26, 44.

⁹⁹ "Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi," USAD no: 309.

¹⁰⁰ For his relation with Mustafa Kemal and other Republicans, see Ertur, *Tamu Yelleri*, chap. 7, particularly pp. 214-17.

¹⁰¹ Mahmud Kemal Inal, *Hos Sada: Son Asir Türk Musikisinaslari*, (Ankara: Türkiye Is Bankasi, 1958), p 83.

educational, and political fields. The study of modern science and related subjects does not fully account for modernists among the more traditional educational sector of late Ottoman society, but one can point to an interest in such learning as a contributing factor to a modernist mentality that existed among many madrasa educated people and devotees of the Republican era and secular reforms to education that ensued.¹⁰²

SOURCES OF LIVELIHOOD

Living expenses for madrasa students was a complicated issue. Students could meet their expenses with family support if their families had sufficient funds. Besides this, the sources available in Istanbul were restricted to the *imarets*, or public victual houses, and a major food source of primary importance to madrasa students and the poor of the city. Food was served to nearly 5,000 individuals twice daily in twenty imarets.¹⁰³ The menu was mixture of soup, rice, and sweets, which attracted many students despite its simplicity. Some students sold meal to make money.¹⁰⁴

The relationship between the public of Istanbul and the madrasas was another source of income for students. Prosperous families often were the source of benevolent assistance for students staying at madrasas in or around their domiciles. They sometimes send food and other gifts to the madrasa, inviting students as a group to their houses on certain occasions like dinner (*iftar*) in the month of Ramazan. During these occasions, students were usually expected to perform religious services such as leading prayers and reciting the Quran in exchange for such kindnesses.¹⁰⁵

The classical sponsoring system, or the Ottoman religious endowments (*vakif*), was also still functional and a source of income for madrasa students throughout the nineteenth century. But, the vakif system was becoming less efficient, which directly affected its financial sufficiency and ability to sponsor madrasa students as the century came to a close. In essence, there were two types of vakifs

¹⁰² A. H. De Groot, "Modernist Attitudes in Otoman Official Islam (1856-1918)," in C. Van Dick and A. H. De Groot (eds), *State and Islam*, (Brill: Leiden, 1995).

¹⁰³ "Imaret," Pakalin, *Osmanli Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. 2, p. 61.

¹⁰⁴ Abdülaziz, *Osmanli Adet*, vol. 1, p. 77.

¹⁰⁵ Abdülaziz, *Osmanli Adet*, vol. 1, p. 78.

that provided the bulk of the monies for madrasa students. These were the madrasa vakifs and vakifs that came in the form of property or money.

Most madrasa students relied on stipends from the endowment of the madrasa where they were studying. Students were entitled to obtain money from madrasa endowments. In theory, the endowment system remained in effect throughout the nineteenth century, despite the changes that followed reform. The extent and consequences of reforms to the Ottoman religious endowment is still something of a mystery, yet to be explored in detail. Such an detailed inquiry falls outside the scope of this study.

Suffice it to say that the aim of vakif reforms was to ensure that all vakif revenue was collected by a single central treasury. Vakifs that failed to generate enough income to sustain themselves were to be given the necessary financial resources from the central treasury.¹⁰⁶ To this end, a central administrative organization was authorized to inspect and govern all vakifs from within the government. Archival evidence suggests that, around 1826, the centralization of the vakif commenced as the district governor (*mutasarrif*) of Selanik was given the order to take over the administration of vakifs and funnel all revenues to the evkaf treasury (*evkaf hazinesi*).¹⁰⁷

Following the implementation of these vakif reforms, it became evident that the targeted group and outcomes did not match. A balance could not be struck between poorer vakifs and their wealthier counterparts. Huge deficits in the state treasury affected the success of these reforms, as well. In nearly every case of financial crisis, the evkaf treasury served as an emergency measure and the money it saved was transferred to the central state treasury.¹⁰⁸ In 1826, the evkaf treasury could not afford the maintenance expenses related to vakif buildings, such as

¹⁰⁶ Nazif Öztürk, *Türk Yenilesme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakif Müessesesi*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), p. 69. In the eighteenth century, vakifs were mostly controlled by their own founders, being administered according to the stipulations made by endowers. Out of all vakifs, 56% were administered by the families of endowers, 11% by the appointees of endowers and the remaining 33% by the local judges (*kadi*) and official endowment supervisors (*nazir*) or their appointees who were also mostly selected from among the families of endowers. Bahaeddin Yediyıldız, "Türk Vakif Kurucularının Sosyal Tabakalaşmadaki Yeri, 1700-1800," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 3 (1982), pp.154-55.

¹⁰⁷ Öztürk, *Türk Yenilesme*, p. 68.

¹⁰⁸ John Robert Barnes, *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1986), pp. 84, 156.

mosques and madrasas which had also been devastated by such natural disasters as fires and earthquakes. The money in the evkaf treasury had also been transferred to the state treasury.¹⁰⁹ Sultan Mahmud II had turned to the evkaf treasuries as the solution to such financial difficulties; his successors did so often enough that it had become standard practice. Consequently, vakif reforms were extended to the rest of the empire. In the late 1840s, the Ottoman government began to appoint officials from the capital in order to ensure that evkaf revenues from the provinces flowed to Istanbul as quickly as local employees could affect such transfers. Despite this, the new system still had defects. To solve the problem of a system that was understaffed, the government increased the number of employees and the amount of their salaries in 1861.¹¹⁰

The available data does not allow us to determine the extent to which madrasa students were affected by the new religious endowment system. A recent study of the Fatih Complex (*Küllüye*) that also includes the Fatih madrasas provides some information regarding the financial relations between students and the vakif of Fatih Complex prior to the reforms. According to the financial records of the Complex, the daily stipend paid to students had remained the same for centuries, that is, two akçes.¹¹¹ Despite the static nature of these stipends, the income potential of the Complex in 1768 reached a level that was six times larger than it was at the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹¹² Over the course of the eighteenth century, however, the Complex had failed to generate the same monies.¹¹³

The fact that the vakif system was in decline does not mean that individuals stopped creating or sponsoring religious endowments. Thanks largely to Ottoman-Islamic vakif law, there were people who donated great sums of money, as well as properties and estates, for the creation of an endowment—which were to be used exclusively for the benefits of madrasa students. Cash endowments, in general, were meant for businessmen, merchants, and sometimes “ordinary” men and as a source of capital and borrowed money. In the eighteenth century, these endowments were

¹⁰⁹ Öztürk, *Türk Yenilesme*, p.72.

¹¹⁰ Öztürk, *Türk Yenilesme*, pp.83–84.

¹¹¹ Fahri Unan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Fatih Külliyesi*, (Ankara: TTK, 2003), p. 205.

¹¹² Unan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze*, p.132

¹¹³ Unan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze*, pp. 155–59.

31.77%¹¹⁴ of the total, reaching 56.81% by the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵ This money was also loaned to individuals who had a guarantor and mortgage; in exchange, the borrower had to pay 15% interest.¹¹⁶

During the nineteenth century cash vakifs were among the principle financial sources available to madrasa students; there were many such vakifs in Istanbul and the provinces. Students received stipends from the bulk of interest earned by cash vakifs. For instance, Hacı Ali Pasa Efendi, the governor (*mutasarrif*) of Alanya and İçel, founded a vakif endowing of 2,500 kurus in 1869. According to the stipulations of the vakif, 1500 kurus were to be loaned at an interest rate of 15 %. From the interest only, the expenses related to the graduation banquet and madrasa student diploma ceremony (*icazet merasimi*) every year would be met.¹¹⁷ Ahmed Cevdet Pasa provides us with a number of details suggesting that such a system was operating in Istanbul in his time.

In addition, other vakifs, besides cash vakifs supported madrasa students. These were organized and run differently from the cash vakif system. A vakif in Balıkesir is an example of the range of vakif founded to support madrasa learning. El-Hâc Mahmud Aga endowed a bakery shop in 1839. The shop was to be rented for 100 kurus a year which the tenant paid in three easy instalments. Once the rent was collected, the funds were to be distributed to madrasa students in town.¹¹⁸

It was also possible for students to seek a salaried post at the vakif foundation. In one case, two brothers studying at a madrasa in Istanbul presented a petition to the sultan explaining their situation and requesting a suitable posting at one of the vakifs in Sivas which would allow them to cover their costs in Istanbul and help their families in Sivas. Their application was approved by the sultan and the necessary despatches were sent to the governor of Sivas and provincial director of

¹¹⁴ Bahaeddin Yediyıldız, "XVII[I]. Asir Türk Vakıflarının İktisadi Boyutu," *Vakıflar Dergisi*, 18 (1984), p.40.

¹¹⁵ Öztürk, *Türk Yenilesme*, p. 52. For the rise and development of the Ottoman money vakifs, see Tahsin Özcan, *Osmanlı Para Vakıfları: Kanuni Dönemi Üsküdar Örneği*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003).

¹¹⁶ Öztürk, *Türk Yenilesme*, p. 26.

¹¹⁷ Yusuf Küçükdağ, "Hadimi Medresesine Dair Bir Vakfiye," *Vakıflar Dergisi*, 27 (1988), pp. 81-82.

¹¹⁸ Cevdet Maarif 4238, 1255 [1839].

vakif foundations, instructing them to give the two students in question the posts they had requested the moment a vacancy arose.¹¹⁹

Sultan's Gifts

Another financial source for madrasa students was the sultan himself. Like other people, students had the right to apply by letter to the sultan and ask for financial aid. This was a kind of a gift from the sultan to his subjects, which was called “*sadaka-i seniyye*” or “*atiyye-i seniyye*,” and an imperial gift, in short. The applications from the public for such imperial gifts usually took place during the public procession of the sultan on Fridays (*Cuma selamligi*), which was an invention of the late eighteenth century. In this way, letters from the public were collected and their summaries were presented to the sultan in a list called the “*maruzât-i rikabiye*.” To allow the sultan to meet such requests, a part of the state budget was usually reserved for the sultans, a practise which became an imperial routine after the Tanzimat.¹²⁰

The imperial gift system gained momentum during the Hamidian period as the sultan widely utilized and expanded the system. First of all, he seemed to have personalized the system, which had been bureaucratized during the Tanzimat period. The sultan included students from all kinds of schools and particularly madrasa students in Istanbul. There are numerous archival documents indicating how he tried hard to demonstrate his generosity to them on many occasions.¹²¹ This shift in the imperial gift system during the Hamidian period can be interpreted as being converted into a tool of legitimacy for his absolutist rule, against which oppositional groups had begun to emerge.¹²² In order to achieve this aim, Abdülhamid II used the press to publicize such imperial gift distribution events. For example, an Istanbul newspaper, *Sabah*, reported the details of meat distribution as the gift from the sultan

¹¹⁹ A MKT DV 65/3, 20 Muharrem 1269 [3 November 1852].

¹²⁰ Mehmet Ipsirli, “Osmanlılarda Cuma Selamligi,” *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoglu’na Armagan*, (Istanbul: İÜEF Tarih Arastirmalari Merkezi, 1991), pp.459–71.

¹²¹ For several examples of food and money distribution to madrasa students as the imperial gift, see Y PRK MS 7 Cemaziyelevvel 1320 [12 August 1902]; Y PRK AZJ 27/96, 22 Cemaziyelevvel 1321 [16 July 1903]; Y PRK MF 5/6, 25 Rebiülevvel 1322 [9 June 1904]; Y PRK EV, 4/31, 9 Receb 1322 [19 September 1904]; Y PRK MS 8/63, 26 Saban 1325 [4 October 1907].

¹²² Nadir Özbek, “The Politics of Welfare: Philanthropy, Voluntarism and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1914,” Ph.D. diss., State University of New York, Binghamton (2001), chap. 3.

in a madrasa in 1906.¹²³ This obviously provided the sultan the opportunity to create the image of a generous, caring sultan in the minds of his subjects, beyond those in the madrasa itself.

The other new aspect of imperial gift distribution in the Hamidian period was the thankful responses of madrasa students to the sultan after their distribution. There are many letters presented to the palace by students expressing their gratitude and happiness as a consequence of the sultan's generosity.¹²⁴ Although it is not fully clear what the real motivations behind the students' responses were, it is possible that the madrasa students concerned were urged by officials to write such letters. But, there is also information suggesting that the Hamidian gift giving system became successful and madrasa students genuinely admired the sultan in a deeply personal way. For example, Emin Bey, an eminent politician during the Republican period who studied in madrasa during the Hamidian period in Istanbul, regrettably described in his memoirs how fanatically he had admired Abdülhamid II during his madrasa days.¹²⁵ Regardless, Abdülhamid II considered these letters to be the fruit of good policy, one that cared for madrasa students and, more importantly, earned their trust and loyalty. After all, it seems that Hamidian gift giving was an important source of income for madrasa students regardless of their conformity or lack thereof to Hamidian policies.

'Cer' Trips during the Holy Months

In addition to institutional sources of income, madrasa students also had other ways to support themselves vis-à-vis individual activities and assistance from their families. The *cer*, or travel during the three holy months (*suhûr-u selase*) of Receb, Saban, and Ramazan, provided many opportunities for madrasa students to earn income. Madrasa students fulfilled their religious duties, such as reciting the Quran and preaching in mosques, services increasing in demand during this period. Halil

¹²³ *Sabah*, 4 August 1906, cited in Özbek, "The Politics of Welfare," p. 106.

¹²⁴ For only a handful of examples, see Y PRK MS 2/3, 20 Saban 1303 [24 May 1886]; Y MTV 69/89, 27 Rebiulevvel 1310 [18 October 1892]; Y PRK MS 7/8, 8 Cemaziyelahir 1317 [14 October 1894]; Y PRK AZJ 30/100, 15 Ramazan 1312 [12 March 1895]; Y PRK AZJ 50/58, 16 Zilhicce 1322 [21 February 1905].

¹²⁵ "Medresede okudugum sirada Sultan Hamid'e çilginca hayrandim. Tabii sonradan anladim..." Emin Sazak, *Emim Bey'in Defteri, Hatiralar*, (Istanbul: Toklun Yayinlari, 2007), p. 47.

Halid, who spent several years at a madrasa, extended the length and scope of his cer trips bit by bit: “[the madrasa students] go every year during the *Ramazan*, the month of fasting, to different provincial towns and villages to preach, to teach, and to do some writing for the illiterate villagers....”¹²⁶

These travels had two dimensions: students earned money and acquired goods in return, but the cer also functioned as a platform for their religious idea and practicum where they put into practice what they have learned at the madrasa. Cer trips established a link between madrasa teaching and Muslim subjects throughout the empire. Students had the chance to travel to various locations and to have contact with people of different backgrounds within the Ottoman territory.¹²⁷

Some students, who were not interested in the cer, came from wealthy families that could support them. Ahmed Cevdet Pasa gives a detailed account of his life when he was studying at a madrasa in Istanbul. Because he received sufficient financial support from his family, he never bothered with cer trips, but rather spent his time at the *suhûr-u selase* where he obtained additional private tutoring from several mudarrises in town.¹²⁸ However, for other madrasa students of his social and economic standing, the cer was a way for them to experience real life even if they did not need the income that came with the cer. The story of Baskatipzade Ragib Bey is illustrative of the different ways the cer trip was perceived. Since he was from a relatively wealthy family, the young Ragib received substantial support from them. He was also aware of the difficulties associated with any cer trip vis-à-vis the location of a suitable place to perform one’s duties and that establishing good relations with the general public, given his young age, might not be easy. Despite it all, he dared to take a chance and went on a cer trip after much encouragement from his mudarris.¹²⁹

These trips can also be seen as a vehicle for the dissemination of the Ottoman capital’s agenda to the provincial areas. Contemporary foreign sources clearly show

¹²⁶ Halil, *The Diary*, p. 94.

¹²⁷ In his memoirs, Hüseyin Kamil Ertur, a madrasa graduate, states in detail the places where he visited and stayed during his cer trips such as Filibe, Cyprus, Beirut, Damascus, Lazkiye and Bursa; Esat K. Ertur (ed.), *Tamu Yelleri: Emekli Yargıç Hüseyin Kâmil Ertur’un Anıları*, (Ankara: TTK, 1994), pp. 16-31.

¹²⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir*, p.7.

¹²⁹ Baskatipzâde, *Tarih-i Hayatım*, p.35.

that the political agenda of Istanbul was brought to the provinces via madrasa students who left Istanbul on holiday.¹³⁰ Kemal Karpat, for example, credits Istanbul madrasa students with the spread of constitutionalism “to the remotest villages of Anatolia and Rumili”¹³¹ in the 1870s as a consequence of their holiday preaching and religious work.

An event, recorded in detail, which took place in Cairo during the month of Ramazan in 1711 is interesting in this regard. A Turkish madrasa student came to Cairo with a group of companions and stayed in one of the cells of the Muayyad Mosque. After a couple of days, he began to preach in the same mosque, mostly against Sufism and in hopes of dissuading his audience from engaging in Sufi practices such as visiting the tombs of Sufi saints.¹³² His lectures had serious consequences, among them a public uprising that erupted in the city. It is said that the student’s thoughts about Sufism paralleled the principles of the *Kadizâdeli* group, a religious purification movement that prevailed in Istanbul in the seventeenth century, but later lost its dominance.¹³³ However, it seems that some young madrasa students in Istanbul still subscribed to the tenets of this movement even after its eclipse. Not unlike the case in Cairo, they dared to make their ideas known and engage the public in acts of civil unrest that were in defence of their Islamic beliefs.

In another case that occurred in the early 1880s, a madrasa student named Hüseyin Kamil Efendi recording the details about his first trip to Cyprus in his memoirs. Hüseyin was assigned to preach in the great mosque of Lefkosa (Nicosia)

¹³⁰ For such a comment for the Hamidian period, though in a highly pejorative manner, see Lucy M. J. Garnett, *Turkish Life in Town and Country*, (London: George Newnes, 1904), pp. 136-37. Roderic H. Davison also promotes a similar argument in *Reform in the Ottoman Empire: 1856-1876*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1963), p. 347.

¹³¹ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 104.

¹³² Rudolf Peters, “The Battered Dervishes of Bab Zuwayla, A Religious Riot in Eighteenth-Century Cairo,” in N. Levtzion and J. O. Voll (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 94-95. For the conflicts between the local ulama and Sufi circles in Egypt in later periods, see Svetlana Kirilina, “Islamic Institutions in the Ottoman Egypt in the 18th-Beginning of the 19th Century: Ulama and Sufis,” *Essays Ottoman Civilization: Proceedings of the 12th Congress of the Comité International d’Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes, Praha 1996*, (Praha: n.p., 1998).

¹³³ Peters, “The Battered Dervishes,” p. 102. As mentioned above, the Kadizâdeli movement had lost its dominance in the empire, but it was still possible to find individuals who maintained links to the ideas of Imam Birgivi, the mentor of the Kadizâdeli movement, in the late nineteenth century. For a treatise by a member of the Ottoman ulama containing references to Birgivi, see Rudolph Peters, “Religious Attitudes towards Modernization in the Ottoman Empire: A Nineteenth Century Pious Text on Steamships, Factories and the Telegraph,” *Die Welt des Islam*, 26 (1986).

during his stay. During his second cer trip the following year, he spoke about the harm to society that the charging of interest for money lending caused vis-à-vis the orthodox Islamic understanding. His harsh criticisms of interest deeply disturbed the local müfti because he was in the business of extending credit and charging interest. The mufti justified this by arguing that it agreed with Islamic principles. Hüseyin Kamil's lectures again such practices eventually caused local people to question the mufti. Tension arose between Hüseyin Kamil and the local mufti whose reputation as well as income he had damaged.¹³⁴ The mufti brought the case to the Seyhülislamate, accusing the young Kamil Efendi of being a member of the Young Turk movement, failing to mention of the matter of his charging "interest" although Kamil, it turns out, was no Young Turk.¹³⁵

These two cases clearly demonstrate that madrasa students had their own agendas that they developed as a consequence of their training in Istanbul. Thus, while madrasa students, the poor ones in particular, earned a substantial proportion of their livelihood while on their cer trips, their way of thinking travelled with them and throughout the empire.

MADRASA EDUCATED PEOPLE IN NON-RELIGIOUS FIELDS

Madrasa graduates had always the majority of religious positions, most of them falling under the umbrella of the *ilmiye*, or the *ulama* profession, and working as sharia court judges (*kadi*, *naib*), jurist consults (*müfti*), and madrasa teachers (*müderris*, *dersiam*). People with madrasa educations—completed and in progress—staffed the Seyhülislamate Office, sharia judicial system, Ministry of Religious Endowments (*Evkaf Nezareti*), their provincial branches and offices, primary schools, and mosques. Not all attended the madrasa merely to gain entrance to the *ulama*. But where else did such madrasa graduates expect to end up after their studies if they did not entertain some hopes of membership in the *ulama*? Were they able to work in non-religious professions such as the civil bureaucracy and new schools after the Tanzimat? These are questions that attempt to speak to the assumption that the decline of traditional/religious institutions and rise of modern/secular put the squeeze on madrasa students. But such an assumption lacks the necessary documentary

¹³⁴ Ertur, *Tamu Yelleri*, pp. 20-24, 26-27.

¹³⁵ Ertur, *Tamu Yelleri*, pp. 28-29.

support, and has been taken for granted since it fits so perfectly with the dichotomous perception of the late Ottoman period.

The madrasa had always been one of the most open institutions of learning for Muslims of the Ottoman Empire. Before the rise of the new schools, madrasas provided training for state officials, particularly those in Istanbul. Trainee officials attended the lectures of a madrasa teacher while continuing to work for one of the many state departments.¹³⁶ This also went beyond the walls of the madrasa. For example, as discussed in the first chapter, a special course tutored by madrasa teachers was organized in Istanbul to improve the professional skills of officials currently working in certain state departments in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The course was not simply a bizarre manifestation for coping with the problem of training officials and the lack of new schools at the time. However, it is usually assumed that professional opportunities for those with madrasa education gradually declined as new-style schools and new state departments rose to pre-eminence during the late Ottoman period.

Such an argument actually needs to be supported by a quantitative survey of official sources regarding the educational background of Ottoman officials recruited after the Tanzimat. Did people with madrasa educations simply vacate the non-religious career fields, the state bureaucracy, school system, and press? Before moving onto our analysis, the survey by Carter V. Findley on the officials of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides some initial insights into the question. According to Findley, only five (out of 259) Muslim officials held a madrasa diploma. Yet, the number of those with some madrasa education was twenty, and so the number is not as small as one might first think.¹³⁷ In addition to these relatively small numbers, Findley's study suggests that a higher number than previously thought had training in traditional subjects such as Arabic, Persian, and Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*). Moreover, more than 95 % of Muslim officials in the Ottoman

¹³⁶ Halil Inalcik, "Osmanlı Tarihinde Dönemler: Devlet, Toplum, Ekonomi," in H. Inalcik-G. Renda (eds), *Osmanlı Uygarlığı*, (Ankara: TC Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2004), v. 1, pp. 150-51.

¹³⁷ Carter Vaughn Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp.163-64.

Foreign Ministry had studied the traditional curriculum in private settings and from family members, as well as at the madrasa.¹³⁸

As Findley has shown, a mixture of new and old schooling best defines the generation of Ottoman officialdom in the last decades of the nineteenth century.¹³⁹ This was obviously a result of the emergence of new schools, particularly during the Hamidian period. In the meantime, it would not be wrong to say that the preference at the time favoured the new schools over traditional education. But, in the case of foreign office officials, evidence of traditional education can be seen well into the early twentieth century. Conversely, many madrasa students pursued careers in the new schools, in particular madrasa students living in Istanbul who took advantage of the full range of educational and employment opportunities available to them in the capital.

In the pages that remain in this chapter, I will deal with the phenomenon of madrasa graduates working in non-religious fields, everything from high-ranking positions in the various state departments to the more modest teaching posts in the new schools. The aim here is not one of exact numbers for madrasa graduates working in non-religious posts, but rather a broad survey of the diverse fields and ranks that madrasa educated persons occupied throughout the nineteenth century.

To do so, it is useful to look at biographical sources dealing with individuals who lived in the nineteenth century. In this regard, the works of Ibnülemin Mahmud Kemal Inal contain a wealth of biographical information for numerous individuals engaged in the various professions, including the arts, during this time. As might be expected, many had some connection to the madrasa, ending up in occupations that were non-religious in nature.

Ibnülemin composed several biographical dictionaries for people from different backgrounds who lived in the late Ottoman period. Two of his works are useful to this study: *Son Asir Türk Sairleri* (Turkish Poets of the Last Century)¹⁴⁰ and *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar* (the Last Grand Viziers during the Ottoman

¹³⁸ Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp. 145-47.

¹³⁹ Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*, pp. 145-46.

¹⁴⁰ Mahmud Kemal Inal, *Son Asir Türk Sairleri*, vols. 1-3, (Istanbul: MEB Devlet Kitapları, 1969), vol. 4 (Istanbul: MEB Devlet Kitapları, 1970).

Age).¹⁴¹ Both are mainly devoted to the nineteenth and early twentieth century. İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal (1870-1957), was the son of an Ottoman statesman, Mühürdâr Mehmed Emin Pasa, and utilized the wealth and position he inherited from his father to good effect. Using his personal and family connections, he was able to personally meet with many of the people about whom he would write his volumes. He also spent years working in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul as an official researcher and expert administrator. As a result of his unique privileges, he frequently provides original information about the personalities with whom he dealt, providing us with a very comprehensive picture of officialdom and the cultural life that existed in the late Ottoman era vis-à-vis the professional interests of those coming out of the ilmiye realm at this crucial juncture in Ottoman history.

Many new institutions emerged as a result of reforms in the nineteenth century. This situation is viewed by some modern historians as limiting the career opportunities for ulama members in general and madrasa educated people in particular. This seems a reasonable assumption at first glance were it not for the fact that a madrasa education figured in the hiring of officials in both the public and private sectors.

For example, the Ottoman non-religious courts, *Nizamiye Mahkemeleri*, were erected during the Tanzimat period along with new law schools to staff them. It is generally assumed that this created competition in the legal sphere. However, many sharia court judges occupied the benches of the new “secular” courts. In short, madrasa graduates staffed these new courts until the end of the empire, in part, because of a shortage of trained lawyers and experienced judges. Appointments of judges for the court of first instance (*bidayet mahkemeleri*) and court of appeals (*istinaf mahkemeleri*) which were part of the new secular legal system were made by the Council of Appointment of Sharia Judges (*Meclis-i Intihab-i Hükkâm-i Ser’iyye*) in the Seyhülislamate and not by the Ministry of Justice (*Adliye Nezareti*). The Ministry was merely represented by an official on the Council.¹⁴² Thanks to recent

¹⁴¹ Mahmud Kemal Inal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, 4 vols., (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınlari, 1982).

¹⁴² Fatmagül Demirel, “Adliye Nezareti’nin Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri (1872-1914),” Ph.D. diss., İstanbul Üniversitesi (2003), p. 74. For further details on this subject, see Miller, “From Fikh to Fascism” and Faruk Bilici, “İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete Geçiş Döneminde Türk Uleması,” *V. Milletlerarası Türkiye Sosyal ve İktisat Tarihi Kongresi*, (Ankara: TTK, 1990). For the formation and functions of the Council of Appointment of Sharia Judges (*Meclis-i Intihab-i Hükkâm-i*

studies of the Ottoman secular justice system, it is also clear that many positions in the Ministry of Justice were filled by madrasa-educated staff at every level and not simply the nizamiye. Indeed, many ulama chaired, or were members of, committees that were responsible for the development and operation of the new court system.¹⁴³

In this regard, the Istanbul Law School (*Mekteb-i Hukuk*) is worth mentioning. This school was established to train legal staff in the workings of the new secular judicial system that emerged in the Tanzimat period and to operate beyond the pale of ulama jurisprudence. However, the Law School attracted madrasa students in droves; religious individuals formed a large proportion of the student population.¹⁴⁴ The abundance of madrasa students at the Istanbul Law School can be seen in the arrangements following graduation. In 1887, the length of the apprenticeship (*mülazemet*) for Law School graduates was kept to six months instead of a year because there were so many madrasa students and such a long term without salary might have proved problematic since most were very poor.¹⁴⁵ Interestingly, in a picture showing two law-school students in the Photograph Collection of Abdülhamid II, the students appeared in turban and gown, a typical ulama dress. These students thus were presumably still studying in an Istanbul madrasa in the meantime and were selected to represent their school in the collection possibly due to their high number of the same type in the school (see Illust. 2.1).

Privileges granted madrasa students only increased as time passed. A major advantage was accorded madrasa students in 1908 when they were admitted to the school without having to take the entrance exam, whereas graduates from the idadis and sultanis received no such special consideration.¹⁴⁶ The latter contradicts the assumption of a sharp decline of madrasa students in the field of law once secular courts appeared on the scene.

Ser'iyeye see İlhami Yurdakul, *Osmanlı İlmîye Merkez Teşkilatı'nda Reform (1826-1876)*, (İstanbul: İletisim Yayınları, 2008), pp. 190-97.

¹⁴³ Miller, "From Fikh to Fascism," p. 45.

¹⁴⁴ Ahmed Muhtar Efendi, for example, entered the Istanbul Law School while taking madrasa lessons in Sinan Pasa Mosque in Beşiktaş. He ultimately became an attorney in 1912. For his memoirs, see Ahmet Muhtar Nasuhoglu, *Yâd-i Mazi ve Hayatimin Tarihi, Mesrutiyetten Cumhuriyet'e Bir Hukukçunun Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2007), pp. 135, 247.

¹⁴⁵ MV 18/53, 2 Receb 1304 [27 March 1887].

¹⁴⁶ MV 122/18, 11 Zilkade 1326 [5 December 1908]; Ruth Austin Miller, "From Fikh to Fascism," p. 118 fn 282.

Going through the biographical sources mentioned above, and some other available sources, it seems that madrasa graduates pursued many different career paths outside of the *ilmiye*. Another was a teaching position at one of the new schools. As stated in the first chapter, teaching posts in new schools appealed to madrasa teachers who taught at the madrasa as well. The fact that the curriculum of the new schools included traditional, Islamic courses inevitably required the services of teachers with a madrasa background. But there were also cases in which the presence of madrasa graduates in new schools' staff went beyond teaching Islamic courses. There were even some cases in which the entire staff of provincial new schools was hired from among the *ulama*.¹⁴⁷

Muallims¹⁴⁸ with Madrasa Background

It was possible to see madrasa-educated people who taught not only in secondary schools like *rüşdiyes* and *idâdis*, but also in higher schools such as the School of Civil Service (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*), the Law School (*Mekteb-i Hukuk*), institutions created by reform-minded and modernist Ottoman elites. For example, Hacı İbrahim Efendi taught Ottoman-Turkish rhetoric (*belâgat-i Osmaniye*) and the art of writing (*kitâbet*) at the School of Civil Service and the Istanbul Law School. Hacı İbrahim was born in Istanbul in 1826 when the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II were first introduced and gaining in prominence. He attended the lectures of a *dersiam* in Bayezid Mosque and continued there for a long time until leaving Istanbul because of an appointment that took his father, and the family, to the Hicaz. In the Hicaz, he studied Arabic, eventually returning to Istanbul. During his stay in the capital, he became involved in debates that took place in the press and between intellectuals. The subject matter included linguistic controversies as well as literary issues in both Turkish and Arabic, which earned him a good reputation in Istanbul. Soon afterwards, he was offered (thanks to his good reputation) a position at the *Darüssafaka*, a new school specifically designed to educate Muslim orphans.¹⁴⁹ He

¹⁴⁷ Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, p. 137.

¹⁴⁸ The word "muallim" was officially used to refer to teachers in the new schools in the late Ottoman period.

¹⁴⁹ For the history of *Darüssafaka*, see Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Eser Kültür Yayinlari, 1977), v. 1-2, pp. 487-494.

later joined the teaching staff of the Law School in 1883. That same year he founded a private secondary school, *Darü'tta'lim*, where he developed a new method to teach Arabic.¹⁵⁰ Hacı İbrahim was very critical of the classical method of learning Arabic used by the madrasa, which in his view required too much time. Accordingly, his critical stand on the teaching of Arabic as a second language caused him to establish his own school where he taught Arabic rudiments to students in two years, using a special textbook he composed for just such a streamlined curriculum.¹⁵¹

Another intriguing example of a madrasa educated teacher in the new schools was Mehmed Zihni Efendi. He came from a similar background to that of Hacı İbrahim. Mehmed was born in 1846 in Istanbul during the Tanzimat period and his father was also an official. But, unlike Hacı İbrahim, Mehmed Zihni completed his studies at the madrasa in Istanbul and obtained an *icazet*. But he never joined the *ilmiye*. When he was eighteen years old, he earned a post at the Sublime Porte and then transferred to the Official Gazette (*Takvim-i Vekâyi'*) after two years. Mehmed Zihni began teaching Arabic at the Imperial School (*Mekteb-i Sultani*) and Galatasaray Lycée in 1879. He was also appointed to the School of Civil Service to teach Islamic jurisprudence (*usul-u fıkıh*).¹⁵² In the meantime, he offered private sessions for students interested in Islamic subjects such as Qur'anic exegesis and the prophetic tradition (*hadis*). These sessions were not held in a madrasa or mosque but during the off hours at another new school, *Mekteb-i Edeb* where graduates of the School of Civil Service often attended.¹⁵³

Mehmed Zihni Efendi was a unique person who had an impact on education at the time. He authored/translated books on a wide range of subjects, from Arabic grammar, to Sufism, and even philosophy. The Arabic grammar books that he wrote for his Galatasaray students received international recognition after sending sample copies to the International Congress of Orientalists that gathered in Stockholm in

¹⁵⁰ For the details of his life and career, see Ahmet Turan Aslan, "Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Kadar Arapça Öğretimi," *13. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara, 4-8 Ekim 1999: Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, 3. Cilt, 2. Kısım, (Ankara: TTK, 2002). For plenty of interesting details about the school Hacı İbrahim founded and the activities of his followers see Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Eser Kültür Yayınları, 1977), v. 3-4, pp. 956-996.

¹⁵¹ Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Eser Kültür Yayınları, 1977), v. 3-4, p. 967.

¹⁵² Hamza Ermis, "Son Dönem Osmanlı Alimlerinden Mehmed Zihni Efendi'nin Hayati ve Eserleri," *Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 11 (2005), pp. 53-57.

¹⁵³ Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Eser Kültür Yayınları, 1977), v. 3-4, p. 1022.

1888.¹⁵⁴ However, Arabic was not the only area that he mastered. He also published a kind of encyclopaedia on the theme of prominent Muslim women in Islamic history, entitled *Mesâhirün-Nisâ* —a work of two volumes, including a vast number of primary sources, and the biographies of 542 Muslim women.¹⁵⁵ This work was written at the bequest of the Ministry of Education and to be used as a reference book at the Women's Teacher's College (*Darülmuaallimat*).

The most striking feature of the work is the number of Muslim women included who were not distinguished by their piety. What becomes clear is that the aim of the book was to create a greater sense of gender equality among its prospective female readers and teachers. For example, woman poets are compared to their male counterparts as equal in stature. In some instances, and via a critical analysis of male and female poetic writing, the superiority of the female poet in question is underscored, if not boastfully so in its adoration of the female over the male literary talent.¹⁵⁶ An ideal female role-model for Muslim women is the goal. However, she is a good daughter, wife, and mother, but also someone of supreme professional and artistic ability.

His eminence in education brought him to the attention of Sultan Abdülhamid II. It appears that he won the support and confidence of the sultan and, consequently, was appointed to key positions on councils to decide Ottoman educational policy within the Ministry of Education, such as the Grand Council of Education (*Meclis-i Maarif-i Kebîr*). His effective and enduring presence as a teacher in Galatasaray and other new schools, his work as an administrator, as well as his extensive publishing record put him in good stead with the broader educational policies of Hamidian rule vis-à-vis the adoption of Western educational styles and adapting them to the specific needs of Ottoman Muslims and Ottoman society.¹⁵⁷ Mehmed Zihni Efendi continued

¹⁵⁴ Hamza Ermis, "Son Dönem Osmanlı," p. 60.

¹⁵⁵ Sükrüye Akgül, "İslam Tarihçiliğinde Mesahirünnisa Gelenegi ve Mehmed Zihni Efendi'nin Mesahirünnisa Adli Eserinin İncelenmesi," MA thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, (2006), p. 129.

¹⁵⁶ Sükrüye Akgül, "İslam Tarihçiliğinde," pp. 139-40.

¹⁵⁷ For the dramatic alterations in curriculum and teaching staff towards Islamization and Ottomanization in the Hamidian educational endeavour in the case of Galatasaray Lycée, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp. 99-112.

to hold such a position of importance and influence until the end of his life, as he was exempted from compulsory retirement in 1909.¹⁵⁸

Madrassa students of provincial origin were also able to enjoy the opportunities available in Istanbul. Ali Naki Efendi was one of them. Born in Trabzon in 1836, Ali Naki, studied under a local scholar in his native town, coming to Istanbul in 1857 to complete his madrasa education. After five years of study, he obtained an icazet from an Istanbul dersiam (1862). He also received private tutoring in math, French, cosmology, and algebra. Following his graduation from the madrasa, he began work as an official in the Seyhülislamate. However, he left his position there after a short period and also changed his style of dress to that of a civil servant, exchanging his turban and cloak for a fez and a frock coat.¹⁵⁹

Ali Naki took an active role in the foundation of the Darüssafaka, a new secondary school, where Hacı İbrahim Efendi also taught. The initiative taken to found this school came from a society called the *Cemiyet-i Tedrisiye-i İslamiye*, or the Society of Islamic Teaching. The initial aim of this society was to educate illiterate children working as apprentices in the Grand Bazaar (*Büyükçarsi* or *Kapalıçarsi*) and the state departments in Istanbul, using primary schools nearby and teaching these children in their spare time before and after working hours.¹⁶⁰ When the project attracted more and more students, they had to move to a larger building. Ali Naki first joined the teaching staff of the school, substituting for Namik Kemal Bey, the poet, writer, political activist and Young Turk who fled to Paris in 1867.¹⁶¹ Later, Ali Naki and his colleagues decided to open the *Darüssafaka* of their own for needy Muslim children, particularly orphans. Ali Naki played an active role in the opening of the school.

Ali Naki's activities in the new educational system did not end there. When he returned to his native town, Trabzon, in 1878, he got involved in a similar project there and through his leadership, a group composed of local notables managed to

¹⁵⁸ Hamza Ermis, "Son Dönem Osmanlı," pp. 59-61.

¹⁵⁹ Ali Birinci, "Seyhül'l-Mebusın Ali Naki Efendi," *Trabzon Tarihi Sempozyumu, 6-8 Kasım 1999*, (Trabzon: Trabzon Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 1999), pp. 423-27.

¹⁶⁰ Ergin, *Maarif Tarihi*, v.1-2, pp.487-88.

¹⁶¹ For the life and ideas of Namik Kemal, see Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thoughts*, chap. 10 and Nergiz Yılmaz Aydogdu - İsmail Kara (eds), *Namik Kemal, Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri, Bütün Makaleleri 1*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2005).

open a new private school, called *Mekteb-i Hamidi*, which was to be incorporated into the Trabzon Idadi School, the state secondary school. In the meantime, he became the first Provincial Director of Education in Trabzon (*Maarif Müdürü*).¹⁶² He also represented Trabzon in the Ottoman Parliament between 1908 and 1912.¹⁶³

There were also many who received both types of education, namely madrasa and new style schooling, and became teachers at the new schools. Predictably, they hailed from the generation of madrasa graduates living in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the new schools first made their appearance. Halim Sabit Efendi deserves mention. He was a Tatar Muslim from Kazan, born in 1883. He came to Istanbul in 1904 in order to complete the madrasa education that he had started in Kazan. He would receive his icazet from Dagistanli Abdülfettah Efendi, a dersiam at Fatih Mosque, after only two years. He also attended Mercan Idadi School and then *Darülfunûn*, the Ottoman University in Istanbul. Following his graduation from Darülfunun, he became a teacher of Islamic subjects in the idadi school system before going on to a teaching position in the history of religions and Islamic history at Darülfunun in 1914.¹⁶⁴

Halim Sabit was also drawn into the political controversies of his day. He approached the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) and became one of their ulama mentors. This proved useful to the CUP, in particular to its political propaganda and disputes with Islamists.¹⁶⁵ Halim Sabit also contributed greatly to the project of madrasa reform during the Seyhülislamate of Musa Kazim Efendi in 1910 when the Committee was in power.¹⁶⁶

The subjects that madrasa teachers taught in the new schools were usually related to Islamic language and literature. Because of the content of a madrasa education and the kind of degrees taken from new schools, such as the Teachers' College, the *Darülfunûn* or Ottoman University in Istanbul, and the Law School, they

¹⁶² Birinci, "Seyhül'l-Mebusîn," p. 425.

¹⁶³ Birinci, "Seyhül'l-Mebusîn," p. 426.

¹⁶⁴ The most detailed information about his life and activities can be found in Ali Birinci, "Halim Sabit Sibay," in *Tarihin Gölgesinde: Mesâhîr-i Meçhûleden Birkaç Zât*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayinlari, 2001), pp. 50-72.

¹⁶⁵ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (New York: Routledge, 1998), p.383; Jacob M. Landau, *Tekinalp: Bir Türk Yurtseveri (1883-1961)*, (Istanbul: Iletisim, 1996), p. 411.

¹⁶⁶ Fatih Kerimi, *Istanbul Mektuplari*, (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayinlari, 2001), p. 289.

were able to offer a wide range of subjects. For example, Hüseyin Hasim Bey studied at the School of Fine Arts (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*) and obtained his degree from the department of painting while also studying at the madrasa. Hüseyin Hasim would work as an official in the various state departments and a teacher at the Military Veterinary School (*Askeri Baytar Mektebi*) and Bayezid Rüşdiye School.¹⁶⁷ Fazil Ahmed Bey is another case in point, and a colourful one at that. The son of a provincial governor, Fazil Ahmed had to live in many different towns where his father was appointed. As a consequence, he had to study for his madrasa diploma, which he began in Istanbul, as well as his rüşdiye and idadi diplomas in a number of different places. Returning to Istanbul, Fazil Ahmed joined the School of Fine Arts and studied architecture. His teaching took place mostly in two schools, Galatasaray and Istanbul Teachers' College, where he taught ethics, philosophy, psychology, and French.¹⁶⁸

Apart from staffing new schools in Istanbul, madrasa graduates also provided the manpower for new schools in the provinces. Like Ali Naki, already mentioned, there were other madrasa graduates making substantial contributions to the expansion of new schools in the provinces, including remote areas like Basra in Iraq. Mehmed Said Efendi is another example of this trend, working as the director of the Izmir Teachers' College for years. He belonged to a local ulama family and his father was the Müfti of the town. Consequently, Mehmed Said joined the ulama, travelling to Istanbul for his madrasa diploma after his graduation from the local rüşdiye school. But, after returning to his native town once his madrasa education in Istanbul was complete, he did not join the ulama immediately. Instead, Mehmed Said worked as the director of the town's official gazette (*Vilayet Gazetesi*) and then as director of the Izmir Teachers' College, teaching Arabic and Persian at the Izmir Idadi School. He only became an official member of the ulama when he became the Müfti of Izmir after his father's death. Mehmed also represented the constituency of Izmir in the Ottoman Parliament during the Second Constitutional Period.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 1, p. 572. He obtained his icazet from Sehri Hoca Ahmed Remzi Efendi, a dersiham in Fatih Mosque in Istanbul.

¹⁶⁸ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 1, p. 374.

¹⁶⁹ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 3, p. 1602.

A later case, Yusuf Ziyaeddin Efendi had a similar experience. He went to Istanbul from Izmir to get a madrasa education, and became a teacher in the Izmir Teachers' College once he returned home. Yusuf Ziyaeddin not only taught, but founded a new school, or *Darüledeb*, in his home town. The rest of his career was devoted to teaching, travelling to Istanbul time and again to teach Persian at Galatasaray School and Istanbul Teachers' College.¹⁷⁰

As mentioned above, schools in the remote areas were also among the places where teachers from a madrasa background taught. A certain Mehmed Tahir Efendi, for example, was appointed to the Imperial School (*Mekteb-i Sultani*) of Basra as the director as well as a teacher of Islamic subjects. In fact, his educational résumé seems too bright to leave Istanbul for a place so far away from the capital as he held an icazet from Hoca Nazmi Efendi in Üsküdar and furthermore graduated from the Kilis Rüşdiye School, the Üsküdar Idadi School and from the literature department of the Ottoman University in Istanbul. In addition, before he went to Basra, he had already occupied teaching and administrative positions in several new schools. Nevertheless Mehmed Tahir went as a teacher and stayed there until Basra was occupied by the British troops during the World War I.¹⁷¹ It seems that his knowledge of Arabic and his experience in teaching may have caused him to be selected for the post in Basra, an Arabic-speaking area of the empire.

Officials with a Madrasa Background

During the nineteenth century, Ottoman officialdom still depended on the madrasa as a source of man-power. Biographical information attests to the large number of officials with madrasa training, as well as diplomas from the new schools in many cases, holding down administrative positions at various levels in the Ottoman bureaucratic system. It was not uncommon for trainees to take courses at madrasas in Istanbul. Since entering the Ottoman civil service usually took place at a very young age, one's madrasa education and apprenticeship in a state department often overlapped. The case of a certain Sakir Recai Bey from the early nineteenth century illustrates this aspect of the system very well. Sakir Recai became an

¹⁷⁰ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 4, p. 2033.

¹⁷¹ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 4, p. 1824.

Ottoman bureaucrat at the tender age of sixteen (1819). He was employed by the same department in which his father worked. He attended lectures at the Bayezid Mosque in the morning and then went straight to the state office where he worked.¹⁷² It seems that such cases were not peculiar to the early nineteenth century. For example, Riza Safvet Bey was admitted to a state department as an apprentice in 1871 at the age of fourteen. He was then still attending the Besiktas Rüşdiye School. While working as a state official, Riza Safvet also managed to obtain his madrasa diploma, but not until 1887 when he had reached his thirtieth birthday.¹⁷³ What this suggests is that a madrasa education in Istanbul was not required to become a state official, but was of personal and cultural importance to one's education in the broad sense.

Madrasa graduates pursued a career path that mixed the religious and non-religious. Ahmed Cevdet Pasa is well-known in this respect. He fulfilled several non-religious duties in addition to those that came with his affiliation with the ulama. Before he attained the vizierate and ended formal relations with the ulama once and for all, he held the title of *kazasker*, the second highest post in the Ottoman religious hierarchy. Ahmed Cevdet was not alone in this, for many madrasa graduates were employed in non-religious posts, remaining loyal to the *ilmiye* all the while.¹⁷⁴ Not everyone rose to the same level as an Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, to be sure, but it was not unusual to find many such madrasa graduates in key positions of power even after the Tanzimat. A certain Ali Haydar Efendi is a case in point, graduating from the madrasa and School for Sharia Judges (*Muallimhane-i Nüvvâb*)¹⁷⁵ in Istanbul, but also a student of the secular curriculum—math, geometry, and physics. As a result of this, he worked as a sharia judge in several courts and was promoted to positions of more authority within the sharia judicial system. During the Hamidian period, he was

¹⁷² Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 3, p. 1373. Sakir Recai Bey was the father of Rezaizâde Mahmud Ekrem, an eminent Ottoman novelist in the nineteenth century. For his life, see Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 1, p. 276 and Ismail Parlatir, *Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem*, (Ankara: Akçag Yayinlari, 2004).

¹⁷³ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 3, p. 1482. For a later case, see Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 4, p. 1814.

¹⁷⁴ David Kushner, "The Place of the Ulema in the Ottoman Empire during the Age of Reform (1839-1918)," *Turcica*, 19 (1987).

¹⁷⁵ The School for Sharia Judges (*Muallimhane-i Nüvvâb*) was first established by Seyhülislam Mehmed Arif Efendi in 1853 to train specialized judges for sharia courts. The name of the school changed to *Mekteb-i Nüvvâb* in 1885. For the history of this school, see Jun Akiba, "A New School for Qadis: Education of the Sharia Judges in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Turcica*, 35 (2003).

appointed in 1882 to the Council of State (*Surâ-yi Devlet*), a legislative state organ established during the Tanzimat period in 1867, and then to the Grand Council of Education (*Meclis-i Maarif-i Kebir*), the official body of legislative duties for the new schools, in 1885.¹⁷⁶ As these cases suggest that madrasa graduates were still able, to quote Kushner, to “find ample chances for employment and advancement, not only in their traditional institutions, but also in other state bodies” after the reforms of the Tanzimat period.¹⁷⁷

The courses offered at the madrasa were also taught by private teachers in their homes, as I have mentioned. Some public officials followed such a course of action. In some cases, private lessons were in advance of formal studies at the madrasa. In other cases, private madrasa instruction and education at a new school went hand in hand. The latter was the case in many families of high ranking bureaucrats and provincial notables (*esraf*).¹⁷⁸ For example, Nafi Cevdet Efendi descended from a notable family from Adana, studied his madrasa subjects under a private tutor in his home town. When Nafi Cevdet came to Istanbul, he continued his madrasa education like so many we have seen. But he did not choose an ulama career, going into the civil service instead. He specialized in finance and worked as the directorate of provincial revenue offices (*Defterdârlık*), going on to provincial governorships without the title of vizierate, and in essence the governor of Musul and Mamüretülaziz in 1879 and 1883 respectively.¹⁷⁹ Although not mentioned in his biography, it might be possible that the private tutorials he received also included math, which made him eligible for the position of district treasurer (*defterdâr*).

Ibnülemin Mahmud Kemal was another example of this, the son of a high ranking bureaucrat, Mühürdar Mehmed Emin Pasa. In his autobiography, Ibnülemin lists the names of ulama members under whom his brothers and he studied madrasa subjects, in private, at the family mansion in Istanbul.¹⁸⁰ One of their tutors was

¹⁷⁶ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 1, pp. 586-87.

¹⁷⁷ Kushner, “The Place,” p. 70.

¹⁷⁸ Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanli Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt Yayinlari, 1995), v. 1, pp. 75-76, 85.

¹⁷⁹ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 2, p. 1065.

¹⁸⁰ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 4, pp. 2148-49.

Ipekli Hoca Tahir, a dersiam at Fatih Mosque in Istanbul.¹⁸¹ Working toward his madrasa diploma, including lessons in Persian and calligraphy which he took from several ulama members, Ibnülemin also attended new schools, graduating from the Istanbul Law School (*Mekteb-i Hukuk*). Again like so many of his peers, he began working in the civil service when he was very young. Throughout his career, he occupied several posts in the central governing offices in Istanbul, until 1922 when he retired and the new Ankara government took over as the chief governing authority of Istanbul.¹⁸²

The cases mentioned above are composed of low- or middle-ranking officials. None of them reached the rank of vizierate, and accordingly their names do not include the suffix, or title of *pasa*. But there were many with madrasa backgrounds who occupied positions of high rank in the Ottoman State throughout the nineteenth century, both in Istanbul and in the provinces. They played a role in the decision-making process at the government level and to the many changes to the political, legal, and educational system undertaken at the time.

The best-known of these pasas with a madrasa/ulama background was, to repeat, Ahmed Cevdet Pasa who occupied several ministerial posts of high rank. His only formal education was from a madrasa in Istanbul, holding the second highest ranking in the ulama profession, before becoming a pasa. He was not alone. Others held the same title and made significant contributions to state policy and new projects, their madrasa backgrounds often ignored. Research into the religious background and education of public officials living in the late Ottoman period reveals the extent of madrasa influence in the period. For example, a study of provincial governors during the late Hamidian period (between 1895 and 1908) suggests that the madrasa was a factor. Out of 93 provincial governors, ten had madrasa educations, eight of these holding the title of pasa. Besides these, 34 provincial governors received madrasa educations in private settings.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Dücane Cündioğlu, *Bir Kur'an Sairi, Mehmed Akif ve Kur'an Meâli*, (Istanbul: Etkilesim Yayinlari, 2007), pp. 17-18. Ipekli Hoca Tahir was the father of Mehmed Akif Ersoy, an Islamist activist and poet in the late Ottoman period and also the author of the Turkish national anthem of the Republican Turkey.

¹⁸² Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 4, pp. 2149-62.

¹⁸³ Abdülhamit Kirmizi, *Abdülhamid'in Valileri: Osmanli Vilayet Idaresi, 1895-1908*, (Istanbul: Klasik Yayinlari, 2007), pp. 72-75; Abdülhamit Kirmizi, "Rulers of the Provincial Empire:

There are several examples of madrasa-educated officials who achieved the rank and title of pasa that deserve mention. Mehmed Esad Safvet Pasa is one, born in Istanbul in 1814. At the end of a very bright career, he reached the post of Grand Vizier in 1878. Before this, he held different ministerial posts. In particular, his appointments to the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Nezareti*) which influenced education in the late Ottoman period as many innovations were introduced during his term in office.¹⁸⁴ The Law of General Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) in 1869, one of his major contributions to Ottoman education, became a road-map for later educational reforms during the Hamidian period.¹⁸⁵ He also was the one to establish the *Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultanisi* (Galatasaray Lycée) in 1868, as well as the first Ottoman university, *Darülfunun*, in 1870.¹⁸⁶ Safvet was considered a successful statesman and consequently rose up the ranks very quickly. His education was largely from a madrasa in Istanbul. He attended madrasa lectures in Bayezid Mosque and was tutored by his brother. During his madrasa study, he joined the Ottoman bureaucracy at the age of seventeen (1831). When he was transferred to the Translation Bureau (*Terçeme Odasi*) in 1833, he had the chance to learn French.¹⁸⁷ In spite of his madrasa education, he was known for his radical reforms to education.¹⁸⁸ Safvet was also critical to the madrasa system at the time. In a memorandum presented to the sultan in 1880, he complained about the content of the madrasa curriculum. In his view, had the changes to the madrasa curriculum been implemented as he suggested, madrasas graduates would have been better equipped to meet the government's need for better trained personnel.¹⁸⁹ Despite his achievements in education, reforms to the madrasa system that he also called for

Ottoman Governors and the Administration of Provinces, 1895-1908," Ph.D. diss., Bogaziçi University (2005), pp. 84-85.

¹⁸⁴ İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayinlari, 1982), v.2, pp. 809-11, 818, 822.

¹⁸⁵ Mahmud Cevad İbnüsseyh Nâfi, *Maârif-i Umûmiye Nezareti Tarihçe-i Teskîlât ve İcrââtı*, Taceddin Kayaoglu (ed.), (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayinlari, 2001), p. 292. For the full text of the Law, see Mahmud, *Maârif-i Umûmiye*, pp. 424-459.

¹⁸⁶ Mahmud, *Maârif-i Umûmiye*, p. 111; İnal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, p. 817.

¹⁸⁷ İnal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, pp. 809-10.

¹⁸⁸ For instance, Safvet Pasa suggested to remove a religious text, a kind of prayer being recited during the lessons of Arabic alphabet (*elifbâ*), from the curricula because he thought it made the process of learning harder; Mehmed Zeki Palalin, *Safvet Pasa*, (Istanbul: Ahmet Said Matbaasi, 1943), pp. 182-83.

¹⁸⁹ For a full transcribed version of the memorandum, see Attila Çetin, "Medreselerin İslahına Dair Safvet Pasa'nın Düşünceleri," *Türk Dünyası Tarih Dergisi*, 95 (1994).

were not realized in his lifetime. It is ironic that this Ottoman statesman from the madrasa was such a defender of the new schools and such a critic of madrasa schools, the latter in his view outperformed and outmoded.

Midhat Pasa was another leader and fundamental to the the first Ottoman constitution and parliament of 1876-1877.¹⁹⁰ His accomplishments as a provincial governor earned him a good reputation.¹⁹¹ Although the Ottoman Parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) and the Ottoman Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*)—his major achievements in the realm of Ottoman politics—were inspired by the European experience, his educational background was traditional in nature. Importantly, this did not stop him from appreciating such modern concepts and institutions. At the age of ten (1832), he memorized the Qur'an by heart, continuing his madrasa studies under Toyranli Mehmed Efendi, Zagrani Serif Efendi, and Seyh Mehmed Efendi at Fatih Mosque in Istanbul. Midhat also sought to expand his knowledge by private study under Kethüdazâde Mehmed Arif Efendi, and Hoca Hüsameddin Efendi, well known ulama members in Istanbul at the time. Midhat began his career in the state departments in Istanbul in 1834 and in conjunction with his on-going madrasa education. In 1838, an interesting development regarding his education occurred: He and his young colleagues registered with the newly founded *Mekteb-i İrfaniye* for further training. Yet, he would leave the school soon afterwards, finding it to be inadequate for his needs. According to the young Midhat, his former madrasa education was far and away a better educational experience. He also studied French in 1857, at a relatively late stage in his life. He also advanced to the level of provincial work before attaining the title of pasa, which he would subsequently achieve by being appointed to Nis province in the Balkans as governor in 1859.¹⁹² During his career, he travelled to several provinces to officiate as governor, was appointed to several different ministry offices, as well as Grand Vizier, twice. His

¹⁹⁰ Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1963).

¹⁹¹ For his governorship in Tuna (Danube) province, see Milen V. Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864-1868," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University (2006).

¹⁹² Ali Haydar Midhat (ed.), *Tabsira-i İbret: Midhat Pasa, Hayat-i Siyasiyesi, Hidamati, Menfa Hayati*, (Istanbul: Hilal Matbaasi, 1302 [1884]), v. 1, p. 3-4.

political life came to an end as a consequence of Abdülhamid II's consolidation of power.¹⁹³

Mehmed Said Pasa was another madrasa graduate who made a bright career for himself during the late Ottoman period. He was born in 1838, the son of an official family from Erzurum. He began his madrasa education in Erzurum and then continued his studies at the Ayasaofya Madrasa in Istanbul—four and seven years respectively. Mehmed Said's thirst for knowledge was not limited to the madrasa and traditional curriculum, for he also took pains to study history, geography, math, law, economics, and politics. He studied French as well as Persian. His career life began in Erzurum in 1855, going on to become an officer of the Ministry of Finance in Istanbul and investigating military expenses.¹⁹⁴ Mehmed Said supported the integration of Arab regions through education and other reform, and he was regarded as "the first enforcer of the Islamist policy of Abdülhamid II."¹⁹⁵ Moreover, the success and expansion of education during the Hamidian period can be credited to him, in part, because of his financial savvy and ability to raise funds for education.¹⁹⁶ Yet his most remarkable quality was the frequency with which he occupied the post of Grand Vizier—a total of nine times, and the last two during the Second Constitutional period.¹⁹⁷

There were many others with administrative responsibility and power that hailed from the madrasa. Hüseyin Nazim Pasa, the Minister of Security (*Zabtiye Naziri*) and provincial governor many times over, studied at the Bayezid Mosque in Istanbul though he did not graduate. Instead, he took his diploma from the Bayezid Rüşdiyesi and was sent to Paris to study law as an official of the Bureau of Foreign Correspondences (*Tahrirat-i Ecnebiye Odasi*). He also became a vizier in 1894.¹⁹⁸

There were also high-ranking military officers with madrasa educations. Süleyman Hüsnü Pasa is but one case. He pursued a double major of sorts. Although

¹⁹³ Inal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, v. 1, pp. 316-18, 326-30, 340-48.

¹⁹⁴ Inal, *Son Sadrazamlar*, v. 2, pp. 989-90.

¹⁹⁵ Karpat, *The Politicization*, pp. 190-91.

¹⁹⁶ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom, Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 118-20.

¹⁹⁷ Karpat, *The Politicization*, p. 190.

¹⁹⁸ Inal, *Son Sairler*, v. 2, pp. 1142-43.

he graduated from the *Darülmaarif*, a new school, he also attended the study circle of mudarris Mudurnulu Ismail Efendi at the Bayezid Mosque. Süleyman Hüsnü interrupted his madrasa education to attend a military high school and then the Military Academy (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*). Finishing his military education in 1859, his first appointment was to Bosnia. Upon returning to Istanbul, he completed his madrasa studies and was awarded his icazet (diploma) by Sehri Ahmet Nüzhet Efendi.¹⁹⁹ Importantly, Süleyman Hüsnü went on to become a key figure in the deposing of Sultan Abdülaziz in 1876 as the head of the War Academy and supporter of constitutional reform.²⁰⁰ Along with his military interests, he had a strong intellectual bent. His writings cover a wide range of subjects such as world history, Islamic law, and Turkish grammar.²⁰¹ His career came to an abrupt end when he failed to execute his duties in Tuna in 1878, and so he was banished to Baghdad where he spent rest of his life.²⁰² In exile, he reported to Istanbul about the dangers of Shi'i expansion in Iraq. His proposed counter measures to combat the "dangers" of Shi'i extremism had an important impact on local Shi'is, mostly through religious education and missionary activities.²⁰³

During the Tanzimat and subsequent periods, madrasa graduates were engaged in different professions, both religious and secular. Despite the fact that we cannot be certain about the exact number of madrasa-educated people in the non-religious professions, there were many areas open to them and in which they participated. Education had a particular appeal for many madrasa graduates who preferred to work as teachers, administrators, initiative takers, and decision makers on the ground. It is interesting to note that in the limited number of pictures available in the Photograph Collection of Abdülhamid II which illustrate the Teachers College students in Istanbul, two photos were reserved for madrasa-educated students very likely due to their high population in the College (see Illustrations 2.2 and 2.3).

¹⁹⁹ Süleyman Pasazade Sami, *Süleyman Pasa Muhakemesi: 1293 Osmanli-Rus Muharebesinden*, (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Ebüzziya, 1328 [1910]), p.4.

²⁰⁰ Shaw, Stanford J. and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1908-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 163.

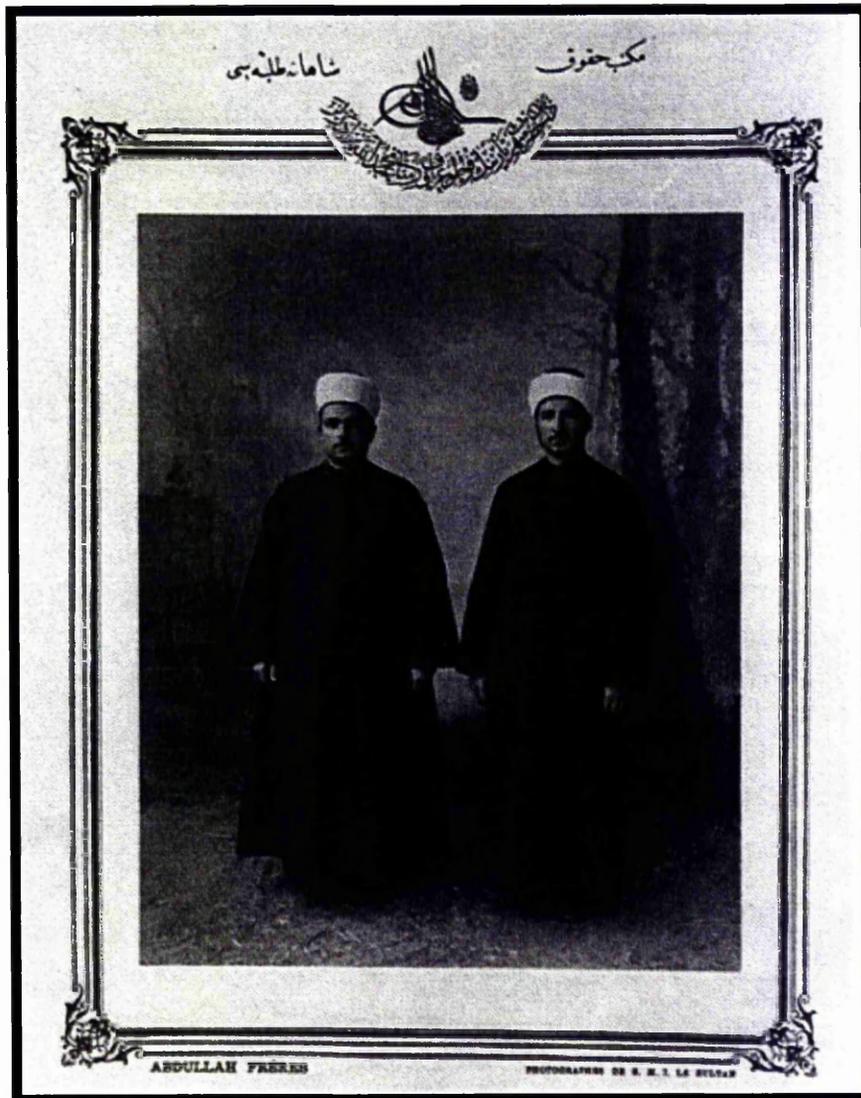
²⁰¹ For the list of his works, see Süleyman Pasazade, *Süleyman Pasa*, pp. 9-10 and Aydin Efe, "Süleyman Hüsnü Pasa'nin Tarih Anlayisi," M.A. thesis, Atatürk Üniversitesi (2003), pp. 6-9.

²⁰² Süleyman Pasazade, *Süleyman Pasa*, pp. 8-9.

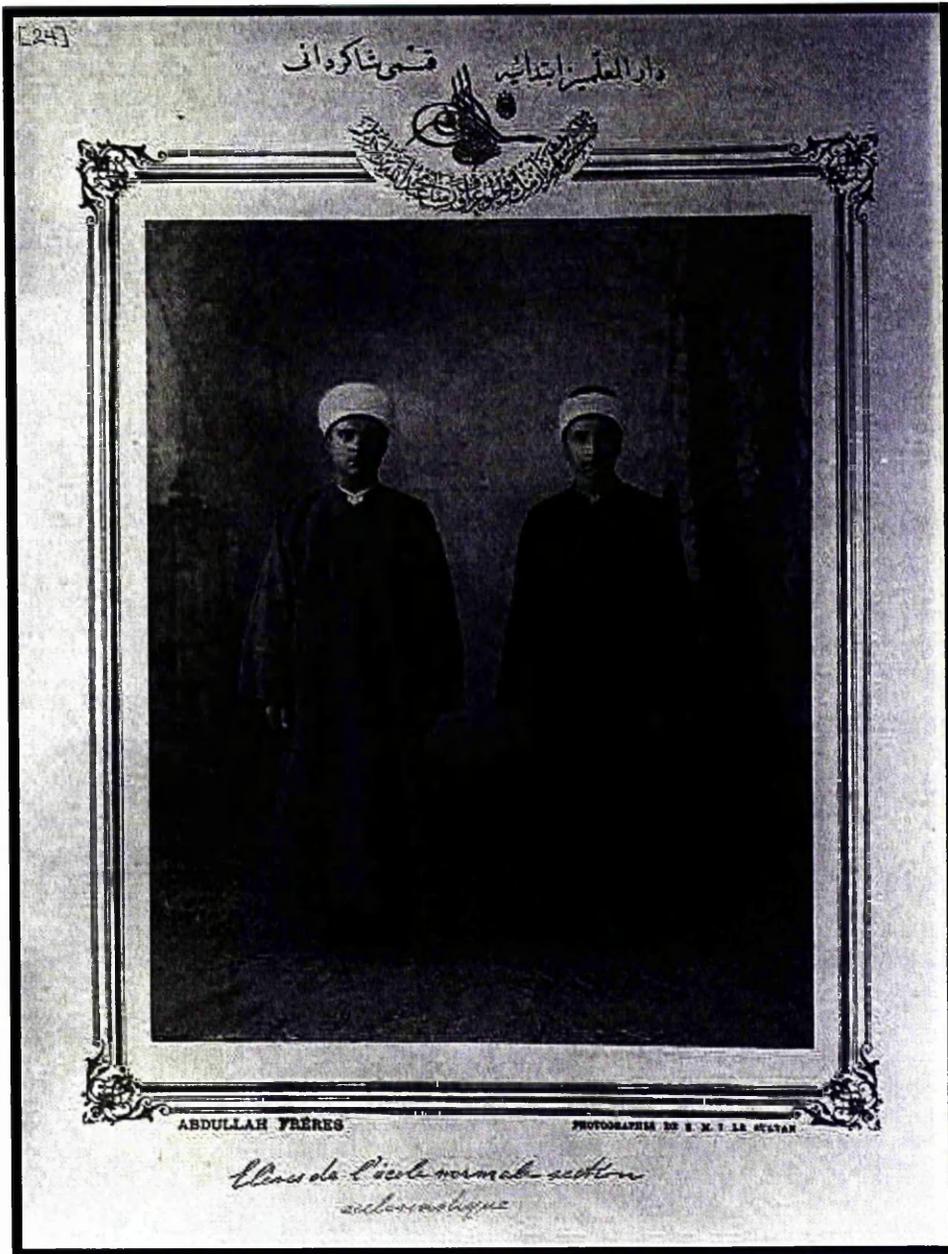
²⁰³ Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Ottoman Administration of Iraq: 1890-1908," Ph.D. diss., Manchester University (1994), pp. 242-43.

Moreover, there were certainly opportunities to rise up the ranks of Ottoman officialdom, which many would do as well. The madrasa orientation of many state bureaucrats can be seen in their many and varied activities, such as the writing of text books for new schools and policy papers.

ILLUSTRATIONS



2.1. Two students from the Law School in Istanbul (c.1890). Note their ulama dress, which indicates that they either were most likely still studying in madrasa in the meantime, or completed their madrasa education. The title of the picture reads “*Mekteb-i Hukuk-i Sahane Talebesi* (Students of the Imperial Law School)” (Source: Library of Congress at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b28339>).



2.2. Two students in ulama dress from *Darülmüallimin İbtidaiyye Kismi*, (the Teachers College for Primary Schools) in Istanbul (c.1890).
(Source: Library of Congress at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b28382>)



2.3 Two students in ulama dress from *Darülmüallimin-i İbtidai ve Rüşdiye* (the Teachers College for Primary and Secondary Schools) in Istanbul (c.1890). (Source: Library of Congress at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b28383>).

CHAPTER 4

DISCIPLINE, STATE CONTROL AND HAMIDAN APPROACH TO MADRASA EDUCATION

After defining a madrasa student in Istanbul, this chapter will examine their activities, which often were found to be unpleasant and even criminal by the state authorities. By doing so, we will examine the social limits of madrasa students in the capital. This will be followed by an analysis of the approaches that the state developed to deal with madrasa education. In this part, it will be seen how the state attempted to control and manipulate madrasa students.

State policies on madrasa students were inspired by several factors that went from fully social ones to political ones. Whereas madrasa students tended to be viewed by state authorities in terms of security concerns in the early nineteenth century—due to their criminal activities such as fighting and carrying guns—political and moral concerns became relatively more dominant during the Hamidian era.

Crime among students did not disappear entirely, but it is clear that the subject of madrasa students turns out to be a more complex issue by the late Ottoman period. This trend had strong affinities with the transformation of Ottoman society, for madrasa students appear to have undergone some of the same socio-cultural changes as those that affected the wider Ottoman society. This subject will be

discussed through cases related to private social habits (entertainment) as “unwanted” from the point of view of state officials in Istanbul.

After the Tanzimat, state authorities seem to have tried hard to keep up-to-date on information about madrasa students in the city. This was clearly reflected in the institutional evolution of the Seyhülislamate. During the bureaucratization process of the Seyhülislamate, a new department was established, based on a traditional post in order to deal with student matters. The important point here is that the first attempts to control and monitor students took place during the Tanzimat period and considerable progress was realized in the Hamidian time. As will be seen, the approach of Hamidian rulers to madrasas and students diverged from the past. State control expanded to all spheres of student life more than ever before. Sometimes conflicts occurred between state departments vis-à-vis the number of new students that would be allowed to enrol at Istanbul madrasas. In such cases, it seems that the Seyhülislamate dominated.

Another distinctive aspect of the Hamidian surveillance of students can be observed in its integrative policies toward the Shi'is of Iraq. Despite the enormous energy expended by Hamidian ruler to create new schools throughout the empire, the way in which the Shi'i problem of Iraq was understood and attempts to solve it by the Hamidian bureaucracy proved most unique, indeed. The final solution to the problem of Shi'i expansion that Abdülhamid II and his high bureaucrats arrived at involved the madrasa. The project, though small in size, says something about the mind-set as well as the pragmatic outlook of the Hamidian rule.

The following examination of disciplinary records of madrasa students in Istanbul mainly relies on correspondence between the Seyhülislamate and the Ministry of Police (*Zabtiye Nezareti*) that have been extracted from Registers of Outgoing Documents from the Seyhülislamate to the Ministry of Police (*Mesihatten Zabtiye Nezaretine Reft Defterleri*) kept in the Mesihat Archives. This correspondence is composed of memos sent by the Seyhülislamate to the Ministry. The importance of these archival registers for this study is to fill a gap in the research, for there are no other codified disciplinary regulations regarding madrasa students in Istanbul. They reflect regulative practices of the Seyhülislamate against real disciplinary incidents rather than a list of disciplinary rules that would outline the ideal modes of behaviour expected, and the prescribed reactions by the state

authority. It should be noted that these registers are not police records, but memos from the Seyhülislamate that contain instructions, suggestions, cooperation, and sometimes objections for the police to consider when conducting their affairs with madrasa students. Therefore, the content of these materials allow us to detect what happened rather than what should have happened vis-à-vis the prescribed rules. Furthermore, such correspondence with the police and other state departments has something important to say about the limits of Seyhülislamate influence on the lives of madrasa students.

THE PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE IN ISTANBUL MADRASAS

The disciplinary cases provide a vantage point from which to observe the relations between and among madrasa students, the state, and society, the last two undergoing profound changes during this period. Interestingly enough, one of the major problems that concerned the authorities were arms carried by madrasa students in the streets of Istanbul in the first half of the nineteenth century. They usually dealt with the problem of armed madrasa students through imperial decrees, particularly in the years leading up to the Tanzimat. Over the course of time, the nature of the problem changed greatly, involving security departments more and more of the time.

In 1815, for instance, two imperial decrees were issued to a group of madrasa students who had been involved in a fight with other madrasa students in Istanbul. Being exiled to several remote locales for their crimes, eight madrasa students were reported to have escaped from their places of exile and clandestinely returned to Istanbul. When some of them attempted to return to their madrasa rooms and discovered that new residents had already by assigned these rooms, they troubled and assailed the new students. Consequently this led a security force of Janissaries to intervene in the case. But the troublemakers were able to run away.¹ Disturbed by the existence of an armed group of madrasa students walking the streets of Istanbul, Sultan Mahmud II issued an imperial order that would put a handle on the situation in the city. Fearing the possibility of an increase in the number of such “boors” in the capital, the sultan instructed the Grand Vizier to find a solution to the problem in cooperation with the Seyhülislam.² By means of tightened controls and inspections,

¹ HH 22767-A, 1230 [1815].

² HH 22777, 1230 [1815].

the security forces worked hard to curb madrasa student loitering, even raiding madrasas from time to time. Following reports that criminal types were hiding in a madrasa near the Küçükpazar neighbourhood, security forces raided the madrasa there and captured the student felons who, it should be added, were in possession of “a lot of arms and ammunitions,”³ which suggest that the captured arms were firearms rather than swords and daggers.

By 1820, the problem of armed students still occupied the time and patience of the Ottoman authorities. The measures taken to solve the problem did not work as hoped. The students carrying arms in the street became a major security concern for authorities in Istanbul. A student armed presence constituted a potential for conflict with other persons armed by duty in the city, such as the janissaries. A memorandum by the Grand Vizier at the time described the situation in some detail. A group of fifteen armed madrasa students from the Fatih Madrasas went to Eyüb via Balat where they passed by a group of security men (*kolluk*). Having chatted with their friends at the madrasa in Eyüb, they came back to Fatih. The Grand Vizier also mentioned in the memorandum a piece of gossip circulating in Fatih that signifies the extent of the arms issue among the madrasa students. The gossip concerned the return of two madrasa students from the Fatih Madrasas who were exiled a year earlier because of a weapons violation. They removed the students who were staying in their old rooms in the madrasa by threat of force, pointing guns in their faces. Fortunately, the porter of the madrasa informed the mudarris who returned the rooms to their lawful lodgers the minute the armed students vacated the madrasa. The Grand Vizier also reported that the names of the students in question had been recorded and the Seyhülislam informed of the problem. The Seyhülislam thereafter invited five mudarrises from the Fatih Madrasas and advise them to warn students of the penalties for carrying arms and of the need for madrasa students to comport themselves with more decency. Promises were made to deal with the problem of student lodging.⁴

Another memorandum by the Seyhülislam reveals that in his meeting with the mudarrises from Fatih, the Grand Vizier emphasized the seriousness of the arms issue, criticizing mudarrises for not taking more steps to prevent such behaviour by

³ Cevdet Maarif 3157, 10 Rebiulevvel 1230 [20 February 1815].

⁴ HH 22735, 1235 [1819/1820].

their students. He added that “what the madrasa students own should be books, not arms.” The mudarrises conveyed this message from the Seyhülislam to their students, that if they continued to carry arms and behave in other ways unbecoming madrasa students, security officers would gather them up and the Seyhülislam would impose the strictest punishments upon them.⁵

The Grand Vizier notified the sultan that the mudarrises had conveyed such warnings to students who then promised to behave accordingly. However, Mahmud II was not satisfied with how things were progressing, expressing his displeasure and pointing out that previous attempts had proved unsuccessful. Furthermore, he feared that armed madrasa students were teasing his security officers (*neferât*), which could lead to a clash between these two groups if the officers did not obey their superiors (*zabitân*). It seems that Mahmud II wanted to prevent such a clash because it might give ambassadors from Christian states visiting Istanbul the wrong impression of the city and its Muslim inhabitants. “What does it mean that madrasa students carry arms? Are these soldiers, so walking around with arms?” With these questions, the sultan made his anger known to all concerned, instructing the Seyhülislam to diffuse this situation since “this sort of depravity occurring every day gives discomfort to [him] and all of God’s subjects (*kâffe-i ibâdullah*).”⁶

The depiction of armed students during the pre-Tanzimat period has a number of distinctive features. On one hand, the problem appeared to reflect group solidarity among madrasa students. The incidents usually involved a group of students who operated together via force of arms. On the other hand, the issue emphasised the problematic nature of student fidelity. Such activities by students were condemned as inappropriate and thus damaging the image of Muslims inside and outside the empire. Needless to say, the problem persisted and not only were armed assaults committed,⁷ but they also occurred between madrasa students, some of whom ended up dead.⁸ Nevertheless, the nature of the problem during the Tanzimat period differs from the previous periods in a number of ways. The cases involved individual

⁵ HH 22759, 1235 [1819/1820].

⁶ HH 22735, 1235 [1819/1820].

⁷ A DVN 83/76, 8 Rebiulevvel 1269 [20 December 1852].

⁸ For a case of lethal assault among madrasa students, see A MKT MVL 48/80, 28 Safer 1268 [23 December 1851] and A MKT MVL 49/3, 5 Rebiulevvel 1268 [29 December 1851].

students rather than groups or organizations. The problem also was understood by state authorities to be a matter of public security more than anything else. It is also clear from the archival evidence that strong emphasis was placed on security concerns and a central recording system by the state authorities for regulating the bearing of arms in madrasas. In 1854, the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Valâ*) appointed a group of high ranking officials, including some ulama members and security officers, to make a record of madrasa students in Istanbul who had weapons. The students were to be allowed to carry arms when travelling to their home towns during the three holy months (*sühûr-u selase*) but not during their stay in Istanbul. Carrying weapons to the market or when walking the streets of the city was strictly forbidden. When an armed student was caught in the street, he was not to be considered a student and was to be treated as an ordinary person before the law. In accordance with this, madrasa students were banned from walking in groups of ten to fifteen. In addition, students not engaged in studies were to be removed from madrasas and considered artisans (*esnaf*).⁹

The Seyhülislam Office attempted to promulgate a disciplinary regulation for madrasa students in February 1857.¹⁰ The Seyhülislam considered this crucial since the crimes increasingly committed by madrasa students urgently required for the imposition of just and consistent punishment. In the meantime, the Grand Vizier proposed to include the crimes committed by madrasa students within the jurisdiction of the new Ottoman penal code (*Ceza Kanunname-i Umumisi*), which seems an attempt to restrict the authority of the Seyhülislam over student matters.¹¹ The Seyhülislam's proposal appears eventually to have been approved by the sultan, but it remains unknown as to the extent it was implemented.

A decision in 1858 by the Council of Ministers (*Meclis-i Mahsus-u Vükela*), a Tanzimat institution, underscores the changing disposition of madrasa students toward the state and *vice versa* during the Tanzimat period. The *Zabtiye Müsiri*, or the Head of Police, reported the case of armed persons in student dress and some madrasa students who had assaulted women and youngsters in the streets in the Fatih

⁹ Irade MVL 11821, 5 Rebiulahir 1270 [5 January 1854].

¹⁰ A MKT NZD 212/71, 8 Cemaziyelahir 1273 [3 February 1857].

¹¹ Irade Dah 24230, 27 Cemaziyevvel 1273 [22 February 1857].

district.¹² The Council of Ministers launched an investigation, alerting the Seyhülislam to the full extent of the problem. Some madrasa students were involved in assaults and when the police intervened the behaviour of some students was offensive in the extreme, including the waving of guns in the air and in the faces of the police officers. More dangerous still, such incidents ended in bloodshed. In one case, a madrasa student murdered someone in a fight at the local bazaar. And yet, the Council was careful and respectful, describing the criminals in question as fugitives from military service and exculpating the majority of students in this case. Reminding the Seyhülislam to maintain a stricter hold on madrasa affairs by inspecting the madrasa more often and surrendering any criminals to the police, the Council pointed out the necessity of urgent measures to punish criminal behaviour by madrasa students. The Council also asked for the Seyhülislam's opinion regarding the proposed measures as the official authority on madrasa matters.¹³

Although the Seyhülislam's answer is nowhere to be found, the Council demanded the approval of the Seyhülislam for the implementation of its proposals. Consequently, the Ministry of Police was assigned by the Council to arrest madrasa students carrying arms and to send them away from Istanbul. This included the officers in the police and military police stations as the decision was dispatched to the Commander-in-Chief (*Serasker*) as well as to the Ministry of Police. The Council demanded that authorities demonstrate sensitivity in this matter. However, in its dispatch, the Council referred to another decision made the previous year and the measures taken to deal with another group of armed madrasa students. It is clear from the dispatch that the arms issue was never resolved. The Council issued another statement directed at artisans (*esnaf*) and clerks (*ketebe*) in Istanbul, many criminals coming from among these groups as well. In particular, artisans were admonished to avoid the company of vagabonds. The idea was to make Istanbul a safer place for people to live via the involvement of more of the city's state departments, such as the city municipality (*Şehremâneti*).¹⁴

Documentary evidence suggests that towards the end of the Tanzimat period and beginning of the Hamidian era, the number of criminal assaults committed with

¹² A MKT NZD 267/49, n.d. [c.1858]

¹³ A MKT NZD 266/76, n.d. [c.1858]

¹⁴ A MKT NZD 267/50, 23 Rebiülevvel 1274 [31 October 1858].

arms and posing a threat to the general public good fell dramatically. What is striking in this period is that the cases were usually confined to the internal affairs of the madrasa in Istanbul. In 1876, for example, two students from the Fatih Madrasas assaulted two other madrasa students, nearly killing them. Although the assailants were imprisoned, the Seyhülislamate wrote to the Ministry of Police, enquiring what actions had been taken vis-à-vis their victims. The Ministry updated the Seyhülislamate Office concerning the stage of the legal proceedings in this case. The assailants were still at the bar in the Criminal Division of the Court of First Instance of Istanbul (*Istanbul Bidayet Mahkemesi, Ceza Dairesi*).¹⁵ Probably due to the serious nature of the fight between these students, the case was heard in this court—one of the major innovations of the Ottoman legal reforms—instead of being tried by the Seyhülislamate as a simple student disciplinary case.¹⁶

As mentioned earlier, the carrying of arms by madrasa students in Istanbul declined over time. Security authorities tightened controls on the use of arms by madrasa students. The Istanbul police acted firmly on the issue, as demonstrated by a police operation that took place on 28 March 1873, as well, when a fight broke out at the public victual house (*imaret*) of Sultan Selim in Fatih and the offending students were arrested. That same day, police arrested three more madrasa students at a coffeehouse in Aksaray even though there was nothing violent about their actions, and only because they were found to be carrying firearms in public. The Seyhülislamate would write to the Ministry of Police: “These [i.e. the students carrying arms] regard their student dress as an inducement of liberty for their harmful actions!”¹⁷ Accordingly, the Seyhülislamate determined that the students in question had given up the right to stay in Istanbul.¹⁸

Compared to the beginning of the century, the institutionalization of the Tanzimat is highly noticeable in the cases dealt with here. The state seems to have taken control of the situation of madrasa students carrying weapons by the end of the Tanzimat period. The reorganization of the Ottoman bureaucracy gave birth to new

¹⁵ Zab-Reft n.a./92, 23 Cemaziyelevvel 1293 [16 June 1876].

¹⁶ For the establishment of Nizamiye courts, see Sedat Bingöl, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı'da Yargı Reformu: Nizâmiyye Mahkemeleri'nin Kuruluşu ve İşleyişi, 1840-1876*, (Eskisehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004).

¹⁷ Zab-Reft n.n./2, 28 Muharrem 1290 [28 March 1873].

¹⁸ Zab-Reft n.n./5, 5 Safer 1290 [4 April 1873].

institutions that affected the lives of madrasa students in Istanbul, as seen in the security authorities' change in attitude towards the armed students before and during the Tanzimat. The shift to individual crimes from collective ones is ostensibly a development that paralleled the creation of security institutions devoted to internal security affairs (*Zabtiye Müsiriyeti* in 1846 and *Zabtiye Nezareti* in 1879). Any correlation between the two is still questionable, yet it seems that madrasa students were increasingly subjected to close state monitoring after the Tanzimat. Monitoring methods will be discussed later in this chapter, such as attempts to keep files on madrasa students.

Another aspect of the change in madrasa students' criminal behaviour was the trend towards internal violence. In this vein, assaults on mudarrises can be observed in the capital. In 1889, for example, the correspondences between the Seyhülislamate and the police about a student's attack on a mudarris took some time to complete due to the persistent enquiries of the former as to the first attacker.¹⁹ Students' assault on mudarrises might be seen as the reflection of their struggle to keep their student status because worsening social and political conditions in Istanbul made such a status more valuable. An incident that occurred in 1882 also reflects the hard push by students in this regard: two madrasa students forced their way into the home of their mudarris in order to threaten him in regard to their registration status.²⁰

Another kind of internal violence among the madrasa students occurred in *imarets*, or the public victuals houses. As a major source of student foodstuffs, the public victuals houses were places madrasa students often went to eat. To avoid wasting time, and to take advantage of the free food, many students were attracted to the imarets.²¹ For this reason, the imarets gave impetus to much conflict between poor madrasa students in particular. Conflicts taking place in the imarets were sometimes simple fights but, at the same time, knives were sometimes brought out when the fighting turned from bad to worse. In 1883, for instance, two madrasa students stabbed each other during the distribution of rice and sweets.²² Two more

¹⁹ Zab-Reft 11/22, 12 Safer 1307 [8 October 1889].

²⁰ Zab-Reft 9/17, 19 Safer 1299 [10 January 1882].

²¹ Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, K. Ansan and D. A. Günay (eds), (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995), vol. 1, p. 77; Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. 2, pp. 61-63.

²² Zab-Reft n.a./67, [27 December 1883].

madrassa students attacked a third in 1895, resulting in their expulsion from the capital.²³

The reasons for fights in the imarets were numerous. However, the circumstances reflected in the archival documents suggest that the poor conditions of the imarets in the late nineteenth century were among the main causes of student conflict. Although madrasa students and immigrants, who were the main groups to benefit from the imarets, reached large numbers in the late nineteenth century, the imarets could not function properly. The investigation conducted by the Committee of Students' Affairs (*Meclis-i Mesalih-i Talebe*) in 1884 noted that one of the primary reasons for fights between students was the shortage of bowls in the Sultan Selim Imaret where food was distributed. The Committee finally decided to apply to the Ministry of Religious Endowments (*Evkaf Nezareti*) for the needed bowls to prevent future disruptions and disorder among students.²⁴ Sometimes, those distributing food at the imarets provoked fights between students, as another investigation by the Committee concluded. Although the Committee suggested that "everything necessary" be done to end the violence, it did not specify any particular action or solution to the problem.²⁵

Violence was not, of course, the only criminal behaviour committed by madrasa students Istanbul. Theft was another problem that the state authorities worked hard to eradicate. There are many archival documents dealing with cases of theft committed by madrasa students, from the beginning to end of the nineteenth century, none of them acts of organized crime, but rather individual in nature.²⁶ Interestingly, the punishment meted out in all cases of burglary was either imprisonment or expulsion from Istanbul. The cases were usually settled in the Seyhülislamate since the delinquent persons were madrasa students.²⁷

²³ Zab-Reft 3/22, 6 Rebiulevvel 1313 [27 August 1895].

²⁴ MMTKHD n.n./91, 28 Rebiulevvel 1301, [27 January 1884].

²⁵ Zab-Reft 11/20, 9 Cemaziyelevvel 1312 [8 November 1894].

²⁶ For a number of examples, see Cevdet Maarif 2060, 17 Sevval 1225 [15 November 1810]; Cevdet Adliye 5163, 2 Cemazielevvel 1254 [24 July 1838]; A MKT NZD 248/57, 11 Cemaziyelevvel 1274 [28 December 1857]; A MKT 129/47, 1 Rebiulevvel 1275 [9 October 1858]; Zab-Reft 22/559, 17 Receb 1299 [4 June 1882].

²⁷ For a few examples of burglary cases that took places in Istanbul madrasas, see MMTKHD, n.a./22, 6 Sevval 1300 [10 August 1883]; MMTKHD, n.a./42, 26 Zilhicce 1301 [17 October 1884].

Apart from the disciplinary cases deemed part of the educational environment as seen above, madrasa students engaged in other illegal activities such as tobacco smuggling. Related to the huge public debt, which Ottoman Empire struggle to solve for a long time, tobacco was always subject to strict state controls, particularly in the late nineteenth century, because it was a major source of tax revenue. The Ottoman government was determined to stop the smuggling of tobacco at all costs as students involved in smuggling were spotted in streets and even their madrasa rooms by the security and tax officers.²⁸ For example, in its reply to an inquiry by the Seyhülislam Office, the Ministry of Police stated that a certain madrasa student, Sakir Efendi of Ivryana had been detained on 22 March 1876 due to the fact that he had forcibly resisted tax officers, who caught him smuggling tobacco. Sakir was awaiting trial at the Criminal Division of the Second Instance Court (*Mahkeme-i Istinaf Ceza Kismi*), now four months in the making.²⁹ It seems likely that Sakir Efendi was trying to avoid having to pay the high tax on tobacco. Similarly, Haci Mustafa Efendi was imprisoned for failing to pay the sum of 852 kurus, the penalty for the tobacco that he was bringing to Istanbul from Gebze.³⁰ Furthermore, strict control was not limited to the possession of tobacco in the street, but inside the madrasa as well. The police inspected madrasa rooms for tobacco, as well as arms, as in the case of the Sakizagaci Madrasa. The police searched the room of Ali Efendi and took him into custody after receiving a tip that he was in possession of contraband tobacco.³¹

What we have seen thus far of madrasa student life is their misbehaviour and disciplinary records. The cases presented are exemplary of the changes in the behaviour of madrasa students over the course of the nineteenth century. Some events, in which madrasa students participated, such as the abolishment of the janissary corps, have been deliberately omitted because it is difficult to discern the role of a particular group in such political events in the early nineteenth century. But their disciplinary records constitute another vantage point from which to survey the

²⁸ For a detailed account of the tobacco issue in the late Ottoman period, see Donald Quataert, *Social Disintegration and Popular Resistance in the Ottoman Empire, 1881-1908, Reactions to European Economic Penetration*, (New York: New York University Press, 1983), particularly chap. 2.

²⁹ Zab-Reft 29 Cemaziyelahir 1293/ 9 Temmuz 1292 [22 July 1876].

³⁰ Zab-Reft n.n./59, 4 Safer 1294 [18 Subat 1877].

³¹ Zab-Reft 24 Rebiulevvel 1294 [8 April 1877].

social changes brought about by reforms at this time. It was rare for madrasa students to act as an organized group by century's end. That said, internal madrasa violence was on the rise, as in the case of student-mudarris conflict and student skirmishes at public victual houses. This often resulted from the fact that the demand for madrasa learning and, more importantly, lodging increased exponentially whereas the infrastructure and facilities remained more or less the same. One of the reasons for the rise of demand was the coercive Muslim immigration from the Balkans and the Caucasus. The rising value of a madrasa education in Istanbul caused some students to take out their frustrations on their mudarrises vis-à-vis registration and lodging requirements. Further, as conditions worsened, the public victuals houses were places where more and more madrasa students can be seen venting their anger. The financial crisis of the empire also turned tobacco into a strategic product and source of revenue for the state. Madrasa students often got into trouble because of tobacco violations, although possession of a controlled substance in this case seems entirely a case of personal use rather than a case of trafficking with intent to sell. Ultimately, another interesting point is that many of these disciplinary cases paved the way for madrasa students to come into contact with the new "secular" courts.

The Rise of State Control

Beside ordinary disciplinary cases involving fights and attacks by madrasa students, a unique phrase was used to describe another violation that did not often appear in the documents: *tedhîs-i ezhân*, or bewildering of minds. Given that the exact nature of this crime is not clear, one presumes it was a euphemism for untoward political activism which the Hamidian regime considered to be beyond the pale. This sort of violation by a student also is said to have involved speaking *tefevvühat*, or unpleasant words, and *kelimât-i nâ-sezâ*, or inconvenient words. In 1877, the Seyhülislamate Office wrote to the Minister of Police, demanding the arrest of Hafiz Halil Efendi of Konya, a madrasa student who was alleged to have bewildered minds (*tedhis-i ezhan*) using *kelimât-i nâ-seza*. The allegation was based on intelligence and an investigation carried out by the Seyhülislamate.³² Likewise, another student from the Tabhâne Madrasa was spotted by the police "bewildering

³² Zab-Reft 6/11, 8 Rebiulevvel 1294 [23 March 1877].

minds among madrasa students.” The police asked for the Seyhülislamate to approve their decision to expel him from Istanbul.³³

During the Hamidian period, the practice was to impugn the characters of criminal students vis-à-vis their speech rather than their activities. For example, three memos written by the Seyhülislamate to the Ministry of Police in April of 1877 employed such an approach to madrasa students, based on their inappropriate language. The students in question stood accused of using “seductive” speech (*sâi-i ilkaât*). Six students on 5 April,³⁴ another two students on 10 April³⁵ and then ten more on 15 April³⁶ who all found guilty of using seductive words and, because of this, their enrolments were annulled and they were all returned to their home towns. In other cases, students were simply expelled without explanation, except to say they were in a “bad state.”³⁷

What could such crimes have been? As the documents concerned here do not provide any direct information on this point, an earlier case could be helpful in shedding light on the subject. Yakub Efendi of Alavonya was a madrasa student in Istanbul who was imprisoned for allegedly corrupting minds (*ifsad-i ezhan*) in 1848. Yakub was sent to his home town of Avlonya in the Albanian-speaking part of the empire. When he was there, he was accused of taking part in a rebellion and of giving Albanian rebels a *fetva*, or religious opinion sanctifying this revolt. This led to his arrest by Ottoman military authorities as they were tussling with the rebels in the region.³⁸ This document clearly suggests that, for Ottoman officials, the phrase “corrupting minds” referred to any involvement in oppositional movements and thus demanded to be punished. One assumes that similar vocabulary was used in relation to madrasa students in the Hamidian period could indicate their active participation in the oppositional political movements that were flourishing at the time.

Students were always subject to some strict official control, particularly over their activities perceived by the state authorities to be harmful and immoral. Official

³³ Zab-Reft 17/37, 29 Cemaziyelahir 1310 [18 January 1893].

³⁴ Zab-Reft 5/14, 21 Rebiulevvel 1294 [5 April 1877].

³⁵ Zab-Reft 7/16, 26 Rebiulevvel 1294 [10 April 1877].

³⁶ Zab-Reft 8/16, 1 Rebiulevvel 1294 [15 April 1877].

³⁷ Zab-Reft 10/20, 8 Rebiulahir 1310 [30 October 1892].

³⁸ Irade MVL 3223, 11 Sevval 1264 [10 September 1848].

control intensified in the late period and particularly under the Hamidian regime. The official documents concerning student affairs and disciplinary cases in particular frequently used certain phraseology to describe subversive behaviours during the period. Madrasa students were also required to uphold a high moral standard (*kendi irz ve edebleriyle mesgul olmak*)³⁹ and thus not to act contrary to the behaviour expected of madrasa students (*talebe sifatina münafi hareket*).⁴⁰ The wrongdoing, effects, and punishments are detailed in the official correspondences. They make clear that a madrasa student should not be seen among a group of such harmful persons (*eshas-i muzirra*)⁴¹ or vagabonds (*serseri makûlesinden*),⁴² or to have acted in such illegitimate ways (*harekât-i gayr-i mesrûa*).⁴³ In one case, madrasa students are encouraged to behave in keeping with the moral principles of the ulama (*adab-i ilmiye*).⁴⁴

It would not be appropriate to attach a political label to all the cases unless there is specific evidence. However, given the circumstances prevalent during the Hamidian era, the abovementioned phraseology frequently used in the official documents pertaining to madrasa students reflect the political circumstances of the time. Following the rise of political oppositional groups, madrasa students were targeted for propaganda. A contemporary source, Ahmed Muhtar Kevakibi, attests such oppositional activities: He and his friends distributed pamphlets of anti-Abdülhamid II propaganda among madrasa students in Istanbul mosques in the mid 1890s.⁴⁵ Under these conditions, sensitivity to anything likely to be interpreted as opposed to the Hamidian regime was a well-known phenomenon and always subject to state investigation. Social control and manipulation vis-à-vis censorship and espionage were the most notable of these.⁴⁶ All the various mechanisms used to

³⁹ Zab-Reft 5-24/3272, n.d. [c.1881].

⁴⁰ Zab-Reft 15/44, 24 Cemaziyelevvel 1306 [26 January 1889].

⁴¹ Zab-Reft 2/21, 11 Ramazan 1309 [9 April 1892].

⁴² Zab-Reft 4/23, 18 Rebiulevvel 1311 [29 September 1893].

⁴³ Zab-Reft 13/33, 25 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [27 December 1891].

⁴⁴ Zab-Reft 5-24/3272, n.d. [c.1881].

⁴⁵ Ahmed Muhtar, *Intak-i Hak*, (Istanbul: n.p., 1930), p. 14.

⁴⁶ For a rather sarcastic account of censorship and domestic espionage, see Süleyman Kâni İrtem, *Abdülhamid Devrinde Haftiyelik ve Sansür, Abdülhamid'e Verilen Jurnaller*, (Istanbul: Temel Yayinlari, 1999). For social manipulation and its means utilized by the Hamidian regime, see Selim Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire: 1876-1909*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998); idem., "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman

control and manipulate society were, in a way, a consequence of the authoritarian mind-set of the Hamidian rulers, in which obedience of all Muslim-Ottoman subjects to the caliph-sultan was *a priori*. In most cases, the mere articulation of an idea that ran counter to the authoritarian ideology of the period was judged as criminal and penalized as a matter of course.

The control of madrasa students, broadly speaking, was a matter of serious concern to Ottoman rule after the Tanzimat. The archival documents suggest that a central registration system for madrasa students was on the minds of state authorities before the promulgation of the Tanzimat. The need to monitor madrasa students in Istanbul arose in tandem with centralization. In the pre-Tanzimat period, or around 1820, state authorities dealt with troubles involving madrasa students in Istanbul using precise registers of madrasa student disorderly conduct.⁴⁷ In one violent incident that took place at the Hamidizâde Madrasa, the Grand Vizier reported to the sultan how the problem was handled. It was an argument between students at the madrasa and a porter who wanted a room there for one of his countrymen from another madrasa in Istanbul. Eventually, both the students and the porter were evicted from the madrasa and the mudarris deposed for failing to keep such an incident from happening. In his imperial decree on the subject, Sultan Mahmud II drew attention to the geographical origins of the students in question, emphasizing the need to keep better records of madrasa students upon their arrival to Istanbul as a kind of preventative medicine.⁴⁸

It is unclear whether a central registration system for madrasa students was in effect at the time of the Seyhülislamate which had not yet managed a permanent office and officials of its own. But, after considerable reforms incorporated into the structure of the Seyhülislamate, Mahmud II issued an imperial order in 1837 instructing the Seyhülislam to set up rules for the admission of students to the Istanbul madrasas. The imperial order also included a caveat, requiring that a record of existing students in Istanbul be kept. According to the details of the order, the Grand Vizier would determine the wage to be paid to the officials assigned to this

State," *IJMES*, 23 (1991); idem., "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808-1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35/1 (1993).

⁴⁷ For a couple of examples as to the troubles caused by the madrasa students in Istanbul in addition to the ones already mentioned here, see HH 22747, 1235 [c.1820]; HH 22664, 1235 [c.1820].

⁴⁸ HH 22715, 1235 [c.1820].

job.⁴⁹ After ten months, madrasa students were subject to the same rules as local residents in the neighbourhoods of the city.⁵⁰ The complete record was seventy pages and presented to the sultan.⁵¹ This suggests that at this time a substantial move had taken place in the construction of a central registration system. Even so, the new registry system did not operate as well as expected or hoped.

After the Tanzimat, the centralization of the registration of madrasa students became a larger part of the Ottoman agenda. The changing atmosphere of Ottoman society and the rise of new forms of political opposition during the Tanzimat period, led Ottoman statesmen to give more importance to a central registry. It was regarded by the authorities as a means of keeping students under state control so that any inappropriate acts could be prevented. However, student discontent underscored the need for strict maintenance of this student registry. Mass demonstrations organized by the madrasa students in 1853 reminded state authorities of the need to update madrasa students' records once again, the last time this was done some seven years ago.⁵²

Despite all the proposals and measures taken by the authorities, an efficient system of recording and inspection of madrasa students could not be established in Istanbul. In November 1859, state officials were again alerted to a situation involving madrasa students, but this time the Sufi disciples (*dervis*) residing in the lodges around Istanbul were also taken into consideration. Accordingly, a new recording operation was implemented then for both groups and it was also determined that the records were to be updated every two months. The expenses of this proposed system were to be met by the imperial treasury instead of the Seyhülislamate.⁵³

A later imperial decree stated that strictly monitoring the madrasa students, particularly the incoming and outgoing ones, would help to ameliorate the problem of an increasing number of vagabonds (*serseri*) and persons of unknown background (*meçhûlul-ahval*) staying in the madrasas without the knowledge of the authorities in Istanbul. Having recognized the significance of the problem, the imperial decree

⁴⁹ Cevdet Maarif 6177, Safer 1253 [May 1837].

⁵⁰ HH 52166, 29 Zilhicce 1253 [26 March 1838].

⁵¹ HH 52166A, 29 Zilhicce 1253 [26 March 1838].

⁵² Irade Dah 17944, 24 Rebiulevvel 1270 [25 December 1853].

⁵³ A MKT NZD 296/28, 27 Rebiulahir 1276 [23 November 1859].

expanded the responsibility of updating madrasa student records in the early 1860s, assigning *Sehremâneti*, or the Municipality of Istanbul, in addition to the Court of Istanbul (*Istanbul Mahkemesi*), the job of scrutinizing madrasa students coming and going from Istanbul.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the records of the dervises of Istanbul were compiled in March of the same year.⁵⁵

In the meantime, a new department in the Seyhülislamate was created based on a traditional post, namely *Ders Vekaleti*, or the deputy for teaching. It was first generated in the time of Sultan Bayezid II as he stipulated that Seyhülislams were to teach at the madrasa that he founded (*Bayezid Medresesi*) in Istanbul. However, Seyhülislams were usually too busy to undertake such an extra job, and this situation inevitably led the emergence of the post of teaching deputy to carry out the teaching job on behalf of seyhülislam. In due time, the responsibilities of the post expanded, including matters regarding madrasas.⁵⁶ During the Tanzimat period, while undergoing a new bureaucratic formation, Seyhülislams were gradually delegated more responsibilities over the *Ders vekili* on the administration of madrasas in Istanbul, with a growing staff working under him. In 1866, the ders vekili was given an assistant, and then, a year later, a special secretary for madrasa students (*katib-i talebe-i ulum*) was appointed. Another assistant for the secretary was also employed in 1872.⁵⁷ The department was developed into a council in 1878, i.e. the Council of Madrasa Students (*Meclis-i Talebe-i Ulum*) composed of ders vekili as the head, twelve members, and a secretary.⁵⁸ After a while, it was called the Council of Students' Affairs (*Meclis-i Mesalih-i Talebe*) and the number of members dropped to nine in 1879.⁵⁹ That the Council consolidated the business of overseeing the madrasas in Istanbul can be seen in many documents on the subject. The development of the Council paralleled the considerable growth in student numbers in the capital and Sultan Abdülhamid II's accession to the throne. It seems that

⁵⁴ Irade MVL 18789, 20 Receb 1276 [12 February 1860].

⁵⁵ A MKT NZD 310/26, 8 Ramazan 1276 [30 March 1860].

⁵⁶ Mehmet Ipsirli, "Ders Vekaleti," *DIA*.

⁵⁷ İlhami Yurdakul, *Osmanlı İlimiye Merkez Teskilâtı'nda Reform: 1826-1876*, (Istanbul: İletisim, 2008), p. 45-46.

⁵⁸ *Salname* [Sene 1295], pp. 170-71; Yurdakul, *Osmanlı İlimiye*, p. 46.

⁵⁹ Yurdakul, *Osmanlı İlimiye*, p. 46 fn 83. According to İlimiye Salnamesi, the number of members dropped further down to five in 1916, *İlimiye Salnamesi*, p. 145.

Abdülhamid II gave the Council considerable power, including a mandate to form a reliable registration system for madrasa students.

It is clear from the archival documents that the problem of the registry largely remained unsolved during the Hamidian period. But since it was important for Abdülhamid II to maintain a reliable system for registering madrasa students, he continuously made efforts to create an effective system. The Seyhülislamate and the Ministry of Interior (*Dahiliye Nezareti*) were assigned to operate this registry. However, the two departments did not always work well together. In May 1884, the ministry demanded that the Seyhülislamate send them the current register of madrasa students because it was time to revise them. In its reply, the Seyhülislamate reminded the ministry of a simple fact, namely, that it was not a good time to carry out such a job because it was then in the middle of the cer season of madrasas (the month of *Saban*), and consequently many of the students were away.⁶⁰

A report submitted to the palace by the Seyhülislamate also suggests something about the state of madrasa student records in Istanbul. The report was prepared to give details about the distribution of imperial gifts (*atiyye-i seniyye*) to all madrasa teachers and students in Istanbul during the upcoming holy month of Ramazan. The whole business of gift distribution is reported to have taken nine days, a period of time that the authorities regarded as much longer than expected and blamed on the poor state of madrasa student records.⁶¹ In the meantime, the problem grew in size apart from current concerns. The military service of madrasa students became a matter which was closely monitored by authorities at this time. A precise registration system was required to run an efficient conscription. Hamidian officialdom attempted to enforce a sophisticated control system for madrasa students in Istanbul in 1892 with the aim of carrying out a proper military conscription for the students for the first time. However, it should be kept in mind that in the year 1892, and succeeding years, Ottoman political history witnessed the rise of oppositional movements to the Ottoman government organized in an unconventional way, which virtually developed in parallel to the reformation of the empire after the Tanzimat.

⁶⁰ MMTKHD 19/ 6 Saban 1301 [31 May 1884].

⁶¹ YEE 38/38, 20 Saban 1306 [24 May 1886].

In September 1892, madrasa students encountered an unusual practise in the capital. The Hamidian rulers began to consider the madrasa students as a potential source of political opposition and adjusted its agenda to strengthen its own position to ward off their potential threats. Within this framework, Abdülhamid II, as expected, began dealing with the long-standing problem of a comprehensive registration system. In an imperial decree dated 20 September 1892, the Seyhülislamate was informed that the Minister of Police would provide necessary assistance in fulfilling the task of compiling detailed files on madrasa students, some of whom were being transferred to the provinces while others remained in Istanbul.⁶² The details of the transfer appear in the memorandum of the Seyhülislamate submitted to the palace on the same day. Up until then, the number of students boarding ships to go to the provinces reached 1,550, and those who were at an age to serve in the military remained in Istanbul.⁶³ The Seyhülislam explained the difficulties encountered during the compilation of the new registers, that they could not verify accurately the number of students studying at Istanbul madrasas. The available registers, in fact, had been compiled during the previous gift distribution process and based on information gathered from the mudarrises and porters of the madrasas. These registers were not regarded by the Seyhülislamate as reliable because they still contained the names of those who had passed away or abandoned their studies.

The Seyhülislam, at the same time, acknowledged the importance of obtaining such information in order to maintain order and security in the madrasas—to ascertain the capacity of the all madrasas and to record the names of students, both those who resided at the madrasas and those lodging at inns (*han*) or their own houses.⁶⁴ In reply to the Seyhülislamate's memorandum, the palace issued an imperial decree that detailed a method for the registration of madrasa students. Having agreed with the Seyhülislamate on the idea of determining the exact numbers for all madrasas in the city, the imperial decree took a further step by limiting the number of madrasa students to the boarding capacity of the madrasas. To clarify this move, the imperial decree referred to a survey made at the time of the Seyhülislam,

⁶² MAIKD [vol.3], 30/2111, 27 Safer 1310 [20 September 1892].

⁶³ Y MTV 67/89, 27 Safer 1310 [20 September 1892].

⁶⁴ MAIKD [vol.3], 30/44, 27 Safer 1310 [20 September 1892].

Üryanizade Ahmed Esad Efendi and the former Minister of Security, Hafiz Pasa, when Istanbul madrasas all together had a maximum capacity of just 2,000 beds. In the imperial decree, the Seyhülislamate was instructed to compose a main register with the cooperation of mudarrises every six months with an accurate count of all students and their distinctive characteristics so that they could be recognized easily. In the meantime, the mudarrises were also obliged to keep their own registers in which they would have to record every single student who departed from Istanbul for any reason and who joined their madrasa to study. These registers were to be brought to the Seyhülislamate where they would be updated every six months.⁶⁵

The most intriguing innovation introduced by this imperial decree was the student identification document (*tezkere*) which every madrasa student had to carry with them at all times. The document was intended to include certain personal information—such as the student’s name, distinctive name (*söhret*), age, place of birth, father’s name and the name of madrasa where the student was enrolled and residing. It was a form to be printed by the Seyhülislamate and signed by the mudarris of the related madrasa. Failure to present this document on demand would lead to serious consequences, including invalidation of one’s student enrolment.⁶⁶

In the meantime, the registry was modified by the Seyhülislamate since many mudarrises were incapable of implementing the registration. Instead, a team of seven talented mudarrises was formed. They would cover all the madrasas at once, and this was to create the foundation for the proposed registration system.⁶⁷ In those days, a campaign of imperial gift distribution vividly depicts the wretched state of the official records of madrasa students in Istanbul. In the campaign, any remaining imperial gifts that were initially intended to be given only to the students travelling to their hometowns were given out to students remaining in the capital. The Seyhülislamate took over this duty, as always, but the Office had to ask the palace for more money since the existing money was insufficient. The Seyhülislamate thus demanded a sum of 1,000 lira, based on a rough estimation of the student population in the small madrasas scattered throughout Istanbul. The Office had to guess since it

⁶⁵ MAIKD [vol.3], 30/2112, 27 Safer 1310 [20 September 1892].

⁶⁶ MAIKD [vol.3], 30/2112, 27 Safer 1310 [20 September 1892].

⁶⁷ MAIKD [vol.3], 68/65, 8 Rebiulevvel 1310 [30 September 1892].

did not know exactly how many students were staying at the madrasas.⁶⁸ In addition to implementing an efficient registry, a new measure was introduced and a special position within the Seyhülislamate was created to keep these student registers, that is, the Registry of Madrasa Students (*Talebe-i Ulum Mukayyidligi*).⁶⁹

Measures controlling the madrasa student population in Istanbul were tightened over time by placing restrictions on those who attended the capital's madrasas. This was meant to keep the student population at a level that would be easier to control. To achieve such an aim, some indirect coercive measures were taken to keep provincial students at home. The application of these measures was two-fold. First, provincial madrasas were to be repaired to accommodate more local students. And second, new mudarrises of talent were to be appointed to teach there so that there would be no need to go to Istanbul. In 1901 and 1902, provincial and district governors were instructed to repair local madrasas and to report whether there were talented mudarrises in their localities.⁷⁰ At the end of 1902, the Ottoman government decided to send nearly six hundred recent graduates from Istanbul madrasas, to work as mudarrises, to provinces that lacked capable staff.⁷¹ Five mudarrises, for example, had already been sent to Doyran alone, a district in the Selanik province.⁷² At the same time, provincial administrators did not allow local students to go to Istanbul for madrasa education if they had madrasas and mudarrises where they lived and sufficient to the task.⁷³

Sultan Abdülhamid even considered forbidding Istanbul students who were in the provinces on *cer* trips during the holy months from returning to the city. However, the Council of Students' Affairs resisted such a plan and immediately applied to the sultan to bring a halt to the restriction, pointing out that studying in Istanbul was considered an honour by students. The restriction gave impetus to a host

⁶⁸ Y MTV 68/65, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892].

⁶⁹ Dah-Reft 48/67, 12 Rebiülahir 1311 [23 October 1893].

⁷⁰ Y PRK DH 1/105, 3 Ramazan 1319 [14 December 1901]; Y PRK BSK 66/105, 14 Rebiülevvel 1320 [21 June 1902]; YEE MKP 86/16-1532, 2 Rebiülahir 1320 [9 July 1902]; Y MTV 232/24, 3 Rebiülahir 1320 [10 July 1902].

⁷¹ Irade İlimiye 26 Saban 1320/3 [20 December 1902].

⁷² Y MTV 238/25, 7 Safer 1320 [16 May 1902].

⁷³ The governor of Adana province, for example, was instructed not to send any madrasa students to Istanbul because the capacity of the city for madrasa education was classified as sufficient; Y PRK UM 59/17, 21 Rebiülevvel 1320 [28 June 1902].

of complaints that were conveyed to the Seyhülislamate, most of these coming from Istanbul students currently on *cer* trips in the provinces where local officials did not allow them to return to Istanbul. According to the Council, 450 newcomers should be admitted to Istanbul madrasas every year,⁷⁴ though the government had already been planning to restore the provincial madrasas in order for students to get the opportunity to study in their hometowns. In the meantime, reports were being sent from the provinces regarding the development of more local madrasas.⁷⁵ It seems that the measures to stop incoming students did not work. As a result of continuous pressure, the government eventually sent telegrams to the governors of provinces in order to allow students to return to the capital.⁷⁶ However, control was unrelenting. In 1907, for example, the Ministry of the Interior was assigned the task of monitoring the newcomers to Istanbul madrasas, and the Office of Population Registry (*Nüfus Idaresi*) in the ministry began to keep records of newcomers—which was limited to 400 students every year.⁷⁷

Another aspect of state control over madrasa students was widespread police and secret police organizations throughout the empire that monitored and reported on a wide range of human activities that had links to politics, even in provincial areas such as the Balkans. The story of Osman Efendi from Filibe,⁷⁸ a student at the Fatih Madrasas in Istanbul, indicates the extent of Hamidian security concerns. Osman went to Filibe, a district in the province of Rumeli-i Sarkî, on a *cer* trip and returned after the month of Ramazan in 1906 to Istanbul where he was studying at the time. He was taken into custody because of seditious statements he was reported to have made in a coffee house in Filibe. In the interrogation session, he denied everything and the case could not be settled because the eyewitnesses were still in Filibe. The court refused to hear the case due to the fact that the place of the crime was outside its jurisdiction. For this reason, Osman was supposed to return to Filibe for trial. But the Ministry of Police disagreed, suggesting that he be banished to a province in

⁷⁴ MAIKD [vol. 4], 435/ 19 Sevval 1320 [19 January 1903]; Y MTV 238/49, 19 Sevval 1320 [19 January 1903]

⁷⁵ For a short report from Mosul, see Y PRK UM 43/38, 10 Rebiülahir 1898. In 1900, the Council of Students' Affairs presented a report to the sultan, listing the areas where local madrasas were restored; Y PRK MS 7/23, 13 Rebiülevvel 1318 [10 August 1900].

⁷⁶ YEE MKP, 86/17, 10 Sevval 1319 [20 June 1903]

⁷⁷ Y MTV 298/139, 26 Rebiülahir 1325 [8 June 1907].

⁷⁸ Plovdiv, now in Bulgaria.

Anatolia. The ministry's suggestion was presented to the sultan for approval.⁷⁹ However, almost two months passed with no decision while the family of Osman asked for a sultan's pardon. After one and half months, the imperial court had yet to make a decision and Osman's family desperately tried to save their son who was still in custody.⁸⁰ Madrasa students could not escape the tough security measures enacted by Hamidian rulers. On 15 April 1904, for example, a committee composed of officials from the palace and the Seyhülislamate expelled a number of madrasa students for their involvement in a secret society that had recently been unveiled in Istanbul.⁸¹

Unwanted Habits of Madrasa Students and the Rise of Beyoglu, Galata, and Pera

Habits like adultery and drinking among madrasa students had always been perceived by Ottoman authorities as serious delinquencies that had to be punished. While one may consider the existence of such "delinquencies" within the parameters of Islamic learning to be incongruous—for Islam unequivocally condemns such behaviour—it is a fact that madrasa students, although studying a wide range of Islamic subjects, including faith, acted in ways that contradicted the religious principles taught at the madrasa. This very fact reminds us not to overlook the human side of student life, and even persons of religious education. Not surprisingly, students exceeded the lines drawn within the texts, either religious or official, creating their own approach to the world outside of their educational environs. As Benjamin Fortna has rightly pointed out, regarding Ottoman secondary schools during the Hamidian period, merely relying on regulative texts which depict the ideal at the madrasas and mechanistic in nature, does not allow for a realistic picture of student life.⁸²

The unwanted habits of madrasa students in Istanbul apparently demonstrated several behavioural shifts that seem in part to parallel the social and cultural transformation in the city. The archival evidence makes clear that in the pre-

⁷⁹ Y MTV 293/46, 12 Zilhicce 1325 [27 January 1907].

⁸⁰ Y MTV 295/160, 29 Muharrem 1325 [14 March 1907].

⁸¹ Y PRK SGE 10/21, 29 Muharrem 1322 [15 April 1904].

⁸² Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom, Islam, The State, and Education in The Late Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 150-64.

Tanzimat and Tanzimat periods, adulterous acts by madrasa students frequently took place in the madrasa buildings or nearby. From the late Tanzimat and particularly the early Hamidian period, the venue for such activities moved out of madrasa cells to certain parts of the Ottoman capital as the city underwent a social alteration and, as a result of this, physical changes. Our main concern here is to show the correlation between the shift in madrasa student behaviour and the rise of neighbourhoods in Istanbul where the “unwelcome” habits of students could be practiced overtly by one and all.

In the course of the nineteenth century, Istanbul witnessed its own transformation and certain parts of the city gained some features that, in fact, did not exist in the previous century. In particular, following the Tanzimat reforms and particularly increasing contacts with European countries through trade agreements with England in 1838 and 1861, as well as military alliances with various European powers during the Crimean War in 1854, neighbourhoods like Beyoglu, Galata, and Pera emerged, having a unique social composition and physical landscape. Although these districts of the city, as Edhem Eldem demonstrates, had been inhabited predominantly by Muslims in the eighteenth century, they became centres of a Westernized way of life after “Frankization,” that is, the rise in international trade, turning them into a commercial zone.⁸³ Pera was already known for its European characteristics because it was the residence of the French ambassador in the sixteenth century. However, the number of embassies in the neighbourhood reached sixteen by the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ Additionally, the demographic structure largely changed as a result of commercial contacts with Western countries. Non-Muslim Ottomans were preferred by European traders as business partners. The end result was the remarkable growth of non-Muslim groups such as Greeks and Armenians moving to the area and becoming a new merchant class of considerable wealth and status. The transformation of the area and its inhabitants even led to

⁸³ Edhem Eldem, “A Vision Beyond Nostalgia: The Ethnic Structure of Galata,” *Biannual Istanbul*, 1 (1993) pp. 29-33. A more elaborate analysis of Galata with other districts of the Ottoman capital by the same author, see Edhem Eldem, “Istanbul: From Imperial to Peripheralized Capital” in Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters (eds) *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.135-206.

⁸⁴ Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, pp. 97-98.

domestic disputes within these religious communities.⁸⁵ The area was also inhabited by foreigners who either worked in embassies or came as agents of foreign companies.⁸⁶

Beyoglu, Pera, and Galata became a market district where many European goods could be easily found. There were, for example, three shops that sold only European style hats. In 1897, the number of rubber shoes imported from France was 600, 000 pairs.⁸⁷

This part of Istanbul also became a centre of entertainment, vis-à-vis the establishment of theatres, halls for concerts, balls and parties, *café chantants*, drinking houses, and brothels.⁸⁸ While this “red light” district was frequented by Muslim and non-Muslim alike, for conservatives of all religious persuasions Beyoglu-Galata was to be avoided at all costs. In the Muslim conservative imagination, the area represented a worldly western life style that went far beyond Islamic social boundaries. In his memoirs, Halil Halid Bey, a Young Turk and a literary man, talks about his visit to the district with his cousins when he came to Istanbul as a youngster to register at the madrasa in the 1890s:

My cousins and I were given two weeks' holiday by my uncle in which to explore the city and see the sights. One day we were allowed to go over the Golden Horn to visit Pera, the European quarter of the capital, where we were amazed at the evident signs of the prosperity and richness of its population. While we were enviously imagining how happy these people must be, an old man, who was guiding our little party, warned us that to set our ambitions on such worldly progress was not in accordance with the ideals of contentment of the faithful,⁸⁹ ...On coming back from Pera, however, we received quite a different impression, for we witnessed the seedy side of European life. The large portion of the European quarter is inhabited by Greeks, Poles, Levantines, Italians, and Maltese. Here may be seen dirty cut-throats

⁸⁵ In the area, there was a tendency among Greeks and Armenians, who in fact had their own churches in Istanbul, to convert to the faith of their European partners, namely Catholicism and Protestantism. For this information, see Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 99.

⁸⁶ Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 98.

⁸⁷ Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 100.

⁸⁸ Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 101. For a list of theatres and *café chantés* in Istanbul in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Ruhi Kalender, “Yüzyilimiz Baslarında İstanbul’un Musiki Hayati,” *Birinci Türkoloji Kongresi (İstanbul 6-9 Subat 1978, İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türkiyat Enstitüsü): Tebligler*, (İstanbul: Kervan Yayinlari, 1980), pp.509-16. For the image of Beyoglu in the modern Turkish literature, see Ali Sükrü Çoruk, *Cumhuriyet Devri Türk Romanında Beyoglu*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1995). For the history of entertainment life in Istanbul, see Refik Ahmet Sevensil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu*, (İstanbul: İletisim, 1998).

⁸⁹ Halil, *The Diary*, p.84.

with crime written large on their faces, and, above all, many a habitual drunkard, whose face tells the tale of his debauched life. Here, too, we saw disreputable houses, with half-naked and painted creatures sitting on their balconies or standing on the thresholds of their doors, and calling out invitations to all who passed by.⁹⁰

On their tour of the area ended, Halil's uncle prohibited him from visiting Beyoglu again for a long time.⁹¹

The pejorative Muslim image of Beyoglu had, in fact, already begun to appear in the earlier years. Ahmed Cevdet Pasa described Beyoglu as a transitional place between Europe and the Muslim lands. He viewed the area as existing outside the Muslim imagination of space although located in the heart of Istanbul.⁹² This perception led to a degree of "culture shock" among madrasa students. Whereas the Beyoglu-Galata-Pera district of Istanbul attracted many younger madrasa students, official authorities, including the Seyhülislamate, did everything possible to stop them going there and thus avoid its many temptations.

Restriction over Pera and Galata was not always a family matter. As mentioned earlier, drinking and adultery were punished by removing students from their madrasas. The cases documented in the archival sources clearly indicate a change in the state's response to such activities. In July 1882, the Seyhülislamate instructed the Ministry of Police on how to treat madrasa students caught drinking. It was reported that some students were sitting in places where alcohol was sold, even sometimes drinking openly. The Seyhülislamate viewed this as a violation of *seriat* and also of decency (*hilaf-i Seriat ve adâb*) and feared that the public would view this as foul behaviour. For these reasons, the Office demanded that the police intervene if any madrasa student was found in such places and drinking in public, including the picnic areas.⁹³

The number of madrasa students engaged in such immoral activities continued to occupy the Seyhülislamate's time and resources. According to a communication between the Seyhülislamate and the Police in late January of 1884,

⁹⁰ Halil, *The Diary*, p.85.

⁹¹ Halil, *The Diary*, p. 86.

⁹² "Siz Beyoglu'nda oturdunuz. Degil bütün ahval-i Islamiyye, Istanbul'un ahvaline bile lâyikiyla muttali' olamadiniz. Zîra Beyoglu, Memâlik-i Islamiyye ile Avrupa arasinda berzahdir. Siz oradan Istanbul'u dürbîn ile görürsünüz, lâkin kullandiginiz dürbînler hep çarpiktir," Ahmed Cevdet Pasa, *Ma'ruzât*, (Istanbul: Çagri Yayinlari, 1980), p.109.

⁹³ Zab-Reft 4/23, 16 Saban 1299 [3 July 1882].

six drunken students were spotted by the police. Whereas four of them were captured, the other two managed to flee.⁹⁴ Another Seyhülislamate document discussing the same incident also implies that the students had committed adultery, reporting that they were caught walking around the brothels of Galata at night. Another document used more severe language to describing the district, as full of badness and salacity (*mintika-i sâ-ü sehvet*).⁹⁵ Despite the risks, there were always madrasa students who dared to visit Galata. Sometimes they attempted to avoid the attention of security forces by taking off their turbans. However, they were not always successful as the case of three attests, caught by the police in Galata at night, attempting to hide their turbans by rolling them around their waist.⁹⁶

The available archival sources suggest that there were more frequent drinking cases among the madrasa students in the Hamidian period than in the Tanzimat period, but usually outside the madrasa premises. This was the result of an increase in official control over madrasas and because of this such cases tended to take place outside the madrasa buildings. But, by this time, madrasa student drunkenness spilled into the streets of quarters other than madrasa buildings. For example, two madrasa students, who were staying in a hostel in Fatih instead of their madrasa rooms, were taken by gendarmes after complaints that they made disturbing noises while drinking.⁹⁷ In another case, the Seyhülislamate was asked by the Ministry of Police for its opinion about a student from the Kalenderhane Madrasa who had been found drunk by the police, lying face-down in the street. The Seyhülislamate recommended that the ministry send him away from Istanbul⁹⁸ like many others.⁹⁹

It seems that the Seyhülislamate was continuously searching for more effective means to fight madrasa student misbehaviour, like drinking alcohol or adultery, and to preserve their “moral” order. As seen in its demand for the police to intervene when madrasa students were seen drinking or sitting in places where

⁹⁴ MMTKHD 77/ 2 Rebiülahir 1301 [31 January 1884].

⁹⁵ MMTKHD 78/ 2 Rebiülahir 1301 [31 January 1884].

⁹⁶ Zab-Reft 6/25, 10 Rebiülahir 1301 [8 February 1884].

⁹⁷ MMTKHD 5/ 6 Receb 1302 [21 April 1885].

⁹⁸ Zab-Reft 4/33, 7 Rebiulevvel 1304 [4 December 1886].

⁹⁹ For some other cases of removal of madrasa students from Istanbul due to drunkenness, see MMTKHD 80/10 Rebiülahir 1301 [8 February 1884]; Zab-Reft 16/45, 5 Cemaziyülevvel 1305 [19 January 1888]; Zab-Reft 3/32, 15 Sevval 1305 [25 June 1888]; Zab-Reft 10/30, 2 Rebiülahir 1309 [5 November 1891].

alcohol was served, the Seyhülislamate Office steadily expanded its authority over madrasa students to include their lives outside the learning premises. To achieve this aim, in November 1886, the Seyhülislamate banned students from sitting in coffee houses (*kahvehane*) because games like checkers and chess were being played there. In addition, the task of enforcing this ban was given to three officials from the Seyhülislamate, who were to be joined by police officers if needed.¹⁰⁰ Probably inspired by the Seyhülislamate, this method of inspection was adopted by new schools, such as the Galatasaray lycée, where spies were employed to prevent students from going to places like wine houses (*meyhane*), of which there were many in the area of Beyoglu.¹⁰¹

In the meantime, it is important to note that Hamidian rulers tried to maintain a certain balance between the Seyhülislamate and the police when handling madrasa student criminal behaviour, although the police were granted the authority to interfere with the madrasas and to seize students when necessary in 1877.¹⁰² But later, the Seyhülislamate took charge of madrasas and Abdülhamid II also backed this. A memo sent from the palace to the Ministry of Police in April 1907 concerning an imperial order vis-à-vis a police officer who wore an ulama dress when investigating a murder case, probably that of a madrasa teacher or student. But the imperial order required the ministry to cooperate with the Seyhülislamate in all madrasa cases and prohibited police officers from entering and scrutinizing any madrasa building without officials from the Seyhülislamate being present.¹⁰³

In the cases above, the correlation between madrasa student misbehaviour and social and physical change in Istanbul during the nineteenth century might seem obvious. It is also important that in spite of the moral and ethical objectives of a madrasa education and the rise of state surveillance, madrasa students were able to establish a space in which they lived their own lives. This sometimes led to conflict with state officials. But, confrontation was not unique to the madrasas and existed in

¹⁰⁰ Zab-Reft 3/32, 26 Safer 1304 [24 November 1886].

¹⁰¹ Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp. 153-54.

¹⁰² Zab-Reft 14/23-12, 14 Cemaziyelevvel 1294 [27 May 1877].

¹⁰³ Y PRK BSK 77/19, 25 Rebiülevvel 1325 [14 April 1907].

other educational settings despite the fact that discipline was particularly strong under Hamidian rule.¹⁰⁴

Mental Health

Several archival records indicate that the mental health of madrasa students was a subject with which the authorities were concerned. The authorities appear to have been determined not to allow such individuals to remain in Istanbul as students. There are incidents mentioned in the sources,¹⁰⁵ and I will deal with one of them to demonstrate the reaction of the authorities to such incidents that were possible to have social effects.

Ottoman authorities did not perceive mental disorders of madrasa students to be merely a health issue. One such case that occurred on 21 January 1853 illustrates this point. During the Friday prayer at the Ayasofya Mosque, a young man climbed up the pulpit (*minber*) of the mosque, holding a book in one hand and a sword in the other. He made a very short speech: “O people of Muhammad! I have come on behalf of Allah, our Greatest Lord! I am the Messiah of the Messenger’s family! Be faithful! (*Ey Ümmet-i Muhammed! Ben Allah-i Azimüssân efendimiz hazretlerinin tarafından geldim. Ben Mehdi-i âl-i Rasulüm! Imana gelin!*)”¹⁰⁶ The man was immediately intercepted by a high official named Mazlum Bey who was in the mosque and handed him over to police. The incident was swiftly reported to the palace in two separate reports issued the same day. In his interrogation by police, it became clear that he was a student named Mustafa Nuri living at the Haseki Madrasa in Fatih. Mustafa Nuri sincerely believed that he had been chosen by Allah as the Messiah. It is interesting to note that although police officers understood that he was certainly mentally disturbed, they remained circumspect and then decided to ask the opinion of the Seyhülislam on what to make of the book pulled from Mustafa Nuri’s

¹⁰⁴ For Hamidian policy of social disciplining through public education, see Selçuk Aksin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908, Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 179-87.

¹⁰⁵ For some cases of mentally ill students, see Cevdet Maarif 219, 14 Zilhicce 1233 [15 October 1818]; Irade MVL 18578, 7 Rebiulahir 1276 [3 November 1859]; A MKT NZD 302/15, 11 Cemaziyelahir 1276 [5 January 1860] and Zab-Reft 10/29, 8 Cemaziyelevvel 1312 [7 November 1894].

¹⁰⁶ Irade Dah 16534, “Bugün Aksamüstü Parmakkapi Merkezinden Vürud Eden Jurnal,” 11 Rebiulahir 1269 [21 January 1853].

hand.¹⁰⁷ The Seyhülislam Arif Hikmet Beyefendi did not seem alarmed by the incident. In his reply, he approached the subject as an ordinary incident, proposing that Mustafa Nuri be sent to the Imperial School of Medicine (*Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Sahane*) for treatment, if possible. The book, he also added, was a textbook widely read by madrasa students.¹⁰⁸ The Imperial order came out the next day, which followed exactly the thinking of the Seyhülislam. Accordingly, the student was sent to the School of Medicine first and, if that did not help, was to leave Istanbul.¹⁰⁹

The mental health of madrasa students apparently caused authorities much concern. The speeches in the last two cases seemingly had the potential to make a social impact since the first one, though very short, utilized the messianic belief (*Mahdism*) and outside the pale of orthodox Islamic theology, but respected in many parts of the Islamic world. In Islamic history, the concept of *Mahdi* usually appears in connection to the idea of the oppressor and the oppressed.¹¹⁰ Suffice it to say that it has, or had, political implications, posing a possible threat to the status quo. This could have been a factor in the minds of Ottoman officials.¹¹¹ For both administrative and security officials, there were good reasons to deal with such cases with caution and sensitivity vis-à-vis the potential side effects of being heavy-handed for the larger Muslim population.

¹⁰⁷ Irade Dah 16534, "the Minutes of the Police Interrogation," 11 Rebiulahir 1269 [21 January 1853].

¹⁰⁸ Irade Dah 16534, "the Memorandum of the Seyhülislam Arif Hikmet Beyefendi," 15 Rebiulahir 1269 [25 January 1853].

¹⁰⁹ Irade Dah 16534, 16 Rebiulahir 1269 [26 January 1853].

¹¹⁰ Yusuf S. Yavuz, "Mehdilik," *DIA*; P.M. Holt, "al-Mahdiyya," *EI2*. For how this concept was used in Sudan in the late nineteenth century against the British colonizers and developed into a religious-political movement the effects of which exist even today in Sudan, see Peter Malcolm Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958) and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi: A Study of Neo-Mahdism in the Sudan, 1899-1956*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Messianic beliefs also existed in other religious communities within the empire and the Ottoman rulers sometimes had to struggle against them. For the case of a messianic claim within the Ottoman-Jewish community, see Cengiz Sisman, "A Jewish Messiah in the Ottoman Court: Sabbatai Sevi and the Emergence of a Judeo-Islamic Community," Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University (2004).

¹¹¹ For a similar incident that took place in Adana province in 1907 involving messianic messages by a local sharia judge (*naib*) and for the official reactions to the incident, see Ömer Hakan Özalp, *Elbistanli Nakiboglu Kadi Mustafa Kâmil Efendi*, (Istanbul: Özgü Yayinlari, 2007), pp. 22, 71-108.

MADRASA EDUCATION AND MANIPULATING FAITH IN THE INTEREST OF LOYALTY

It is usually assumed that nineteenth-century Ottoman history was a period of inevitable struggle between the old and new in a polarized society. As this research demonstrates, a detailed analysis of the history of the period does not support such an idea. The issue is more complex than it seems.

Related to this is how madrasa learning was utilized by the state authorities as a means to make peripheral parts of the empire more receptive to centralization. Particularly during the Hamidian period, ulama members were sent to remote parts of the empire such as Iraq, Syria, Cyprus, and Albania in the interest of imperial integration.¹¹² In this chapter, we will see how the madrasa was cooperated with in the Ottoman modernization process vis-à-vis the case of Iraq as a unique vantage point from which to observe the role of madrasa learning in the centralization policies that Abdülhamid II adopted.

There were several problems in Iraq for Ottoman statesmen to overcome since the region contained a religiously, ethnically, and socially diverse population. The imperial centre began to realize the problematic nature of the situation in the early 1880s. The problems were observed by a wide range of Ottomans, mostly bureaucrats of military, civil, and ulama origin. They described the problems in lengthy reports, as will be seen below, and a number of possible solutions were suggested for the sultan considered opinion. Proposals, regardless of who made them, focused largely on educational endeavours, and madrasa as well as ulama constituted a substantial part of it. This definitely coincided with the expansion of mass education throughout the Ottoman Empire and the world during the nineteenth century.¹¹³ Ottoman Iraq in the nineteenth century can thus be seen as a kind of laboratory where Ottoman statecraft perceived, defined, and solved its social,

¹¹² Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom, Islam the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 93-95; Selçuk Aksin Somel, "Ottoman Islamic Education in the Balkans in the Nineteenth Century," *Islamic Studies*, 36/2-3 (1997), p. 455.

¹¹³ For the development of modern public education in the Ottoman Empire, see Somel, *The Modernization* and Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Egitim Sistemi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988). For a comparative analysis of Ottoman education with some other contemporary experiences in the world, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp. 26-41.

economic, and political problems. From such a vantage point, we will locate more clearly the place of madrasa learning in such Hamidian integrative projects.

Iraq was a region dominated by Shi'i and thus at odds doctrinally with Sunni Islamic mainstream, particularly regarding the idea of the *imamet*, or political leadership—a controversial issue in Islamic political thought from the very beginning of the religion. The issue of political and religious leadership in Islam was of particular importance during the Hamidian era. The religious authenticity of Ottoman claims to the Caliphate was a problem to be resolved once and for all vis-à-vis the struggle against British colonialism and disputes regarding Ottoman lands populated by Arabs as well as Arab claims to the Caliphate that began to take hold. While the *de facto* situation in the area in the earlier periods had not troubled the Ottoman rulers much, the issue of a single or central religious and political authority reached a fever pitch during the Hamidian era, the situation in Iraq of great concern to Ottoman statesmen.

Centralization inevitably brought with it many changes that had direct effects on the administration and economy of many remote areas, that is, the installation of local governors, the appointment of officials from Istanbul, and the levying of new taxes. In eastern Anatolia and northern Iraq, both adjacent to Shi'i-dominated parts of Iraq, Kurdish tribes enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. Central authority was reinstated by the centralization policies tenaciously implemented by Mahmud II and Abdülmecid through the annihilation of powerful local notables. However, since the destruction of traditional structures did not necessarily bring about the rise of an alternative social order in the region, the Ottoman government had to deal with the serious security problems that arose from the social disorder created by the small tribes in the region.¹¹⁴

Ottoman Iraq had been a distant concern for the Ottoman central authority. Despite the fact that the area was still under Ottoman control, evidence of political control as not clearly visible in Iraq. This situation began to change after the

¹¹⁴ Selçuk A. Somel, "Periferik Nüfus Grupları," *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 (1999/2000), p.195. For the social, economic and political results of Tanzimat reforms, see Halil İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler," in Halil İnalcık (ed.), *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Toplum ve Ekonomi*, (Istanbul: Eren, 1993); Yonca Köksal, "Imperial Center and Local Groups: Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne and Ankara," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 27 (2002); Yonca Köksal, "Tanzimat döneminde Bulgaristan: Osmanlı'da Merkezi Devletin Olusumu, 1839-1876," *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 (1999/2000).

Tanzimat when efforts were made to integrate the area, like all others, into the more centralized Ottoman system. Iraq came under the close scrutiny of Ottoman statesmen vis-à-vis the implementation of reforms. In particular, it grew in importance after the empire lost the substantial and fertile lands of the Balkans along with the revenue from that region. To compensate for these losses, Iraq was among the first to be deemed as a promising new province in the empire. During the years following the disastrous defeat of the empire by Russia, Sultan Abdülhamid II received a number of reports from district governors (*mutasarrif*) and ministers on the question of the agricultural potential of Iraq.¹¹⁵ The most common points made in all these reports were the miserable material conditions and the poor quality of human resources in Iraq, but the recommendations to redress them usually had no chance to be implemented due to never-ending financial shortages or Abdülhamid's unwillingness that predictably originated from his highly vigilant style of ruling the empire.

In about 1890, the Ottoman rulers critically turned to the issue of Iraq as a part of an extensive attempt to reform the provincial Ottoman armies.¹¹⁶ In the year 1890, a Committee of Military Inspection (*Heyet-i Teftisiye-i Askeriye*) was formed to investigate the situation in Iraq. The major concern of the Committee was the improvements necessary for the Sixth Army located the region. The report of the Committee came up with certain recommendations that focused on three points: registration of the population for a more effective conscription, settlement of the tribes, and the efficiency of local security and administrators in the region.¹¹⁷ All of these hoped to reinstate state authority that had acquiring a new character because of reforms. The Ottoman statesmen envisioned that maintaining all these matters, particularly conscription and settlement of tribes, would meet local resistance and would therefore require a long period of time to be implemented. It was also thought

¹¹⁵ YEE 12/8, 29 Zilhicce 1296 [14 December 1879]; YEE 12/10, 8 Sevval 1297 [13 September 1880]; YEE 7/12, 24 Sevval 1298 [29 September 1880]; YEE 9/8, 29 Sevval 1298 [4 October 1880]; YEE 44/144, 30 Receb 1298 [28 June 1881]. For the report by Hasan Fehmi Pasa, the Minister of Public Works, particularly suggesting to build railways in the region to improve the economic conditions of the area, see Celal Dinçer, "Osmanli Vezirlerinden Hasan Fehmi Pasa'nin Anadolu'nun Bayindirlik Islerine Dair Hazirladigi Layiha," *Belgeler*, 9-12 (1968-1971). For more detailed accounts of all these reports, see Çetinsaya, "Ottoman Administration," ch.2.

¹¹⁶ In fact, there existed some earlier piecemeal reports or memoranda regarding the Iraq issue, but the most influential inquiry was to be made in 1890. For details on this, see Çetinsaya, "Ottoman Administration," pp. 224-33.

¹¹⁷ Çetinsaya, "Ottoman Administration," pp. 75-6.

that the use of force was not sufficient to achieve all the imperial objectives for the region, and the incorporation of the local population into the so-called “circle of civilization” was crucial to success.¹¹⁸ All of the ideas in the Committee’s report suggest that the state apparatus attempted to extend itself into the region in hopes of duplicating modern state structures in remote parts of the empire.

In a second set of reports on the Iraq region, military issues were front and centre, although the problem of Shi’is loomed largest.¹¹⁹ The religious situation in Iraq took a different form from the one Ottoman rulers had hoped. In order to overcome this problem, a high ranking official suggested that education, a spreading of knowledge (*nesr-i maarif*), was the answer. The aim of education, he added, was to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqis to Ottoman government (*halki hükümet-i Osmaniye isindirmek*).¹²⁰ The spread of education soon became part of the Ottoman political agenda for the region.¹²¹

Once civil and religious officials mostly from the region alerted the Ottoman centre to the Shi’i problem, education became a means to tackle the spread of Shi’ism in Iraq. To understand the Ottoman officials’ emphasis on education, the several points made in these reports worth noting. A report sent by the governor (*mutasarrif*) of Basra, Mehmed Ali, at the beginning of 1889, depicted the problem establishing links between Shi’ism and domestic and international threats to which the empire was likely to be exposed. He argued that the Sixth Army in the region was almost entirely composed of Shi’i soldiers. Thus, Iran as an officially Shi’ite country that was a historical rival of the Ottomans could take advantage of the situation. According to the governor, religious education by the Sunni ulama should be expanded in order to secure the loyalty of local people.¹²² Furthermore, the Committee of Military Inspection (*Heyet-i Teftisiye-i Askeriye*) inquired after the opinion of Sirri Pasa, the governor of Baghdad, who pointed out that a madrasa

¹¹⁸ Çetinsaya, “Ottoman Administration,” p. 77.

¹¹⁹ The Shi’ite population of Iraq began to grow in the eighteenth century as the area received an influx of Shi’i professors and, consequently, students in huge number to study the Shi’i theology and jurisprudence. Such factors apparently accelerated the expansion of Shi’ism in Iraq. For more detailed information, see Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi’is of Iraq, with a New Introduction*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 13-48.

¹²⁰ Çetinsaya, “Ottoman Administration,” p. 81.

¹²¹ Çetinsaya, “Ottoman Administration,” pp.75–87.

¹²² YEE 9/3, 8 Kanunusani 1304 [20 January 1889].

education and qualified ulama might indeed help thwart Shi'i expansion in his province, arguing that action of both a religious and political nature should be called for.¹²³

The memorandum of Süleyman Pasa, an internal exile to Baghdad as governor, to the sultan also contains interesting thoughts on the solution to the Shi'i problem. When describing the people of Iraq in the memorandum, he pointed out a number of features that he thought they possessed; they were not bound to the Ottoman State via race (*cinsen*), sect (*mezheben*), or language (*lisânen*), living in the darkness of ignorance, and yet it was clear to him that that they were on friendly term with Iranians vis-à-vis sectarian solidarity. As Selim Deringil points out, Süleyman Pasa put stress on the ideological consequences of Shi'i expansion.¹²⁴ According to Süleyman, the people of Iraq were uncivilized. As he went on to deal with several issues varying from military to trade in Iraq, he also offered to found an organization under the control of the Seyhülislamate to spread the Sunni-Hanafî doctrine among Shi'is and even non-Hanafî Sunnis. The proposal should have benefited from experience of European and American missionary societies to operate efficiently. Further, he put great emphasis on education in accordance with the Sunni-Hanafî principles. If achieved, it would be possible to spread the love of religion (*din*), of country (*vatan*), of nationality (*milliyet*), and most of all of loyalty to the caliph.¹²⁵

Major Ali Riza Bey, the former Ottoman consul (*sehbender*) in the Iranian cities of Hoy and Selmas and serving in the Ministry of Defense (*Erkân-i Harbiye-i Umûmiye Dairesi*) at the time, presented another report bearing no date, drawing attention to the danger of Shi'i expansion in Iraq.¹²⁶ His solution to the problem concentrated on educational measures, like opening new schools in the region with teachers selected from among the graduates of Istanbul's Teachers' College

¹²³ YA Res 55/9, 13 Saban 1308 [24 March 1891].

¹²⁴ Selim Deringil, "The Struggle against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq, a Study in Ottoman Counter-Propaganda," *Die Welt des Islam*, 30 (1990), p. 54.

¹²⁵ YEE 9/34, 9 Ramazan 1309 [7 April 1892]. This memorandum has also been analyzed in further detail in some other works, Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp. 62-66; Deringil, "The Struggle Against Shiism," pp. 53-54. For Süleyman Hüsnü Pasa's life and career, see Erol Özbilgen, *Osmanlinin Balkanlardan Çekilisi: Süleyman Hüsnü Pasa ve Dönemi*, (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2006); Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire: 1876-1909*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 1998), p. 49.

¹²⁶ YEE 7/17, [n.d.].

(*Darülmualimin*). In the proposal, he listed a number of features, such as appointees being trained in Islamic jurisprudence (*ilm-i fikha intisabi olanlar*) and thus possessing the necessary doctrinal adroitness to combat Shi'ism. Similar thoughts were also submitted to the sultan by other officials, such as the provincial treasurer (*defterdar*) of Baghdad, Mehmed Rifat Menemenlizade. He particularly emphasized how badly the expansion of Shi'ism affected the Ottoman administration in Iraq and urged the sultan to revitalize local madrasas as one of the measures to be undertaken.¹²⁷

Religious solutions, as expected, appeared in reports by ulama members, such as the former Seyhülislam Hüseyin Hüsni Efendi, who suggested sending members of the ulama to Iraq, and to establish madrasas in the region. In his opinion, the ulama would explain the weaknesses of Shi'ism to the people of Iraq and, more importantly, they would report on any Shi'i activities that had the potential to damage the state.¹²⁸ But, as Selim Deringil states, the proposal might lead to the formation of a secret police composed of ulama members.¹²⁹ He seems to have assumed no contradiction between the teaching and preaching aspects of the ulama and the idea of spying for the sake of the state. Although we do not know whether this proposal was put into practice, it tells us something about the mind-set of Ottoman ulama at the time vis-à-vis the concepts of religion and state as an undivided sacred duality.

As we have seen from the above-mentioned documents, Ottoman officials deemed the problems in Iraq to be a reciprocal mix of civil, religious, socio-economic, and political matters. The most promising solution in their minds was integrating the region into the new Ottoman political system through reforms. The most visible and striking thing about Iraq was the religious affiliation of the regional people, namely Shi'ism, which had deeply divided the Islamic world. While it was not as yet a problem for the Ottomans prior to the Tanzimat, centralization policies created friction in the region and made clear the discrepancy between the Ottoman centre and Shi'i Iraq. According to most of the proposals made by officials, the

¹²⁷ Irade MMS 5537, G. Receb 1309 [31 January 1892]. For this report, also see Deringil, "Struggle against Shiism," pp. 54-55.

¹²⁸ YEE 9/14, [n.d.].

¹²⁹ Deringil, "Struggle against Shiism," p.50.

integration of Shi'ites in Iraq was only possible through religious re-education wherein the notion of loyalty to the Caliph would be instilled in the hearts and minds of Shi'is in Iraq.

It is not among the purposes of this study to go into every detail, but it is worth noting that statehood in Ottoman bureaucratic and civil circles had many features in common with that of the ulama; both upheld the idea of the survival and integrity of the empire. The perspective of members of the ulama approached the Shi'i problem was not very different from that of their secular counterparts. Two reports illustrate this very well and authored by two local men who appear to have been members of the regional ulama. The first report was dispatched as a letter to the Seyhülislamate on 3 November 1893 by a former sharia court judge. Ostensibly, this was not a letter on the issue of Shi'ism in Iraq, but rather socio-economic aspects of tribal life in Baghdad and Aleppo.¹³⁰ Unlike others, this report focused on the idea of the settlement of tribal peoples living in the desert area. Their desert life distanced them from governmental control since desert conditions provided them with a relatively autonomous space that was hard for the state authority to penetrate. The author of this letter went into some detail concerning the revenue lost to the state treasury because of the uncontrolled cattle-dealing of the tribes who were able to hide their livestock and thus avoid being taxed. Farms where tribes would be resettled, he argued, would make it possible for the central treasury to a sum of nearly 5-6 million kurus a year in taxes from them.¹³¹

In another memorandum directed to the palace, Said Efendi from Baghdad spoke more directly to the problem of Shi'ite expansion in the region.¹³² In spite of insufficient information, one may assume that he was also a member of ulama given his title, *ed-dâi*, which was usually ascribed to ulama members,¹³³ and his language, which seemingly has a religious tone. Said Efendi described the financial system upon which an expanding Shi'ism had been based. The system was run by Shi'ite

¹³⁰ "8, 23 Rebiülahir 1311 [3 November 1893].

¹³¹ Y PRK MS 5/18, 23 Rebiülahir 1311 [3 November 1893].

¹³² Y PRK AZJ 31/8, 20 Zilhicce 1312 [15 May 1895].

¹³³ This term was used by the members of Ottoman ulama and Sufi sheikhs in their signatures. It has two other variations such as *'dâiniz*' and *'dâileri*.' It literally means the man who prays [for you]. "Eddaî," in Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (Istanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1993), v.1, p. 501.

religious leaders' collecting money from their followers. With this financial support, they trained students and then sent them to the tribes composed of uneducated people to convert them to Shi'ism. According to Said Efendi, hatred and seditious thoughts against the Ottoman government were disseminated among the people in the region through such preaching. As for the effects of Shi'i activism, Said Efendi argued essentially two points. First, Shi'is were notorious for rebellion and frequently attempted to seize the state apparatus. And second, and more interestingly, all these activities did considerable damage to the Ottoman treasury possibly because the common people were increasingly reticent about paying their taxes. While Said Efendi approached the issue from a socio-economic point of view, he attributed to the sultan a highly religious motivation, for "this crucial matter," he wrote, "is immediately realised among [other] pious and beneficial doings of His Excellency who is the guardian of the holy religion..."¹³⁴

In this part of the chapter, we have seen the perceptions of Ottoman statesmen concerning a religious problem in Iraq. To put it another way, in Iraq a religious phenomenon turned into a political one in the course of reforms. The relationship between the Iraqi problem and reform movements in the empire may seem obvious and a factor of social change and the economic uncertainty that often accompanies this. Further, it is notable that religious as well as civil bureaucrats of the empire had similar approaches to the problem in Iraq; although the problem was really one of religious diversity, Ottoman officials deeply rooted in political divergence and its corresponding social and economic impact. The solution proposed by Ottoman officials from all departments had one common denominator: education. By emphasizing education in Iraq, they meant that Shi'is in Iraq would be converted to Sunnism and, more specifically, to the Hanafite school of the religion. This, in turn, required the services of madrasa education and the appointment of ulama members, particularly from Istanbul.¹³⁵ Having taken the mind set of Ottoman officialdom into account, we can now examine the attempt to use madrasa education in the struggle with the Shi'is in Iraq.

¹³⁴ "Hâmi-i dîn-i mübin efendimiz hazretlerinin icraat-i hayriye-i dindarâneleri sirasinda bir an evvel su emr-i ehem de sûret-nümâ husul olur ise...", Y PRK AZJ 31/8, 20 Zilhicce 1312 [15 May 1895].

¹³⁵ Benjamin Fortna rightly draws attention to the use of ulama by the Hamidian rule for its educational cause. He demonstrates that in contrast to the Tanzimat approach to education, the state employed "travelling clerics...to scour the countryside armed with the Holy Book and rail against the threats posed to the Muslim population," Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, pp. 93-95.

A Madrasa for Sunnification and Ottomanization of Iraqi Shi'is

As seen above, the early 1890s witnessed an alarming rise in the number of Shi'ites in Iraq. Abdülhamid II was displeased with the Baghdad governor, Sirri Pasa, for his failure to stop the spread of Shi'ism in Iraq. Further, he could not prevent Iranians from controlling Baghdad. This resulted in the dismissal of Sirri Pasa in June of 1891.¹³⁶ In fact, he had been exposed as a charlatan after several allegations of corruption were made against him.¹³⁷ That said, it was his approach to the Shi'ite question that caused him to lose the sultan's favour. According to a confidential telegram from the Sixth Army Inspectorship (*Altinci Orduy-u Hümayun Müfettisligi*), Sirri Pasa cooperated with Iranians and exempted Shi'ites from conscription.¹³⁸ Abdülhamid II was closely monitoring the situation in Iraq, and the Sixth Army in particular. He received a report prepared by a special committee set up to deal with the situation which proved highly disturbing.¹³⁹ The committee concluded that it was not sufficient to preach (*nasihat etmek*) and thus convert the people of Iraq from Shi'ism to Sunnism. Instead, some coercive measures were required. The committee recommended that the Conscription Law be applied to the Shi'ite tribes that were, in fact, out of the jurisdiction of the law, and that Shi'ite soldiers of the Sixth Army be dispatched and dispersed to the armies in other regions. Abdülhamid II forwarded the suggestions to Grand Vizier Kâmil Pasa and the Chief-of-Staff (*Serasker*) with orders to make it so.¹⁴⁰

The Grand Vizier did not immediately accept the suggestions of the special committee. In his reply to the sultan, he reported his reservations as to such coercive measures. In his opinion, it was not possible to change a person's beliefs by use of force. Moreover, if the Conscription Law was implemented, though not required by law, and if Shi'ite soldiers were transferred to other armies, they had only to pretend to be Sunnis to escape detection. Therefore, none of the aims would be accomplished. Instead, Kâmil Pasa proposed education and preaching as more

¹³⁶ YA Hus 248/74, 16 Zilkade 1308 [23 June 1891]; YA Hus 248/44 16 Zilkade 1308 [23 June 1891].

¹³⁷ Y PRK ASK, 69/42, 23 Cemaziyelevvel 1308 [4 January 1891]; Y PRK ASK 73/124, 14 Zilkade 1308 [21 June 1891].

¹³⁸ Y PRK ASK 73/102, 2 Temmuz 1307 [15 June 1891].

¹³⁹ Y PRK BSK 22/51, 7 Zilhicce 1308 [14 July 1891].

¹⁴⁰ Y PRK BSK 22/51, 7 Zilhicce 1308 [14 July 1891].

preferable and effective method. Youngsters, he contended, would be selected from among the Shi'ites in Baghdad, Basra, Najaf and Karbala and sent to al-Azhar in Cairo to study. All their expenses during their study would be paid by the Ottoman government and, once they had completed their education, they would be given salaried government positions to teach students and preach to the general public in their home towns. This, he surmised, would lessen the impact of Shi'ite clerics in the region. To strengthen his proposal, Kâmil Pasa also pointed to the example of American missionaries among the Armenians. Armenian students converted by American missioners became Protestants because of their education in the missionary schools, returning home to their communities as teachers and preachers of the Protestant faith. Kâmil Pasa urged the Ottoman government to follow the same course.¹⁴¹ After two days, on 23 July 1891, an imperial order was issued approving the Grand Vizier's proposal but with one small change: students who were to be selected from among the Shi'ites in Iraq would come to the capital instead of going to Cairo, where they would be enrolled in a madrasa and instructed in Arabic by mudarrises of the Seyhülislam's choosing.¹⁴² This suggests that the sultan appreciated the idea in general, but Cairo did not seem appropriate since it was a remote area for Abdülhamid II to control, a place that became a hotspot of Young Turkish opposition.

It is important to note that having completed their education in Istanbul, these Iraqi students were expected to convert Shi'ite people in their towns and tribes to the Sunni faith.¹⁴³ Social assistance for Sunni children was also part of the project and meant to underscore the generosity of the sultan.¹⁴⁴

This project coincided with another educational endeavour of the Hamidian rule that aimed at the integration of Arabs: *Asiret Mektebi*, or the Tribal School. This school was founded in 1892 and intended to win the allegiance of tribes in the remote parts of the empire, particularly the Arab lands, the Balkans and eastern Anatolia,

¹⁴¹ Irade Dah 96880, (the memorandum of Kamil Pasa) 14 Zilhicce 1308 [21 July 1891].

¹⁴² Irade Dah 96880, 16 Zilhicce 1308 [23 July 1891].

¹⁴³ Irade Dah 98525, 29 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [31 December 1891].

¹⁴⁴ Deringil, *The Well-Protected*, p. 100.

and more specifically Arabs, Albanians and Kurds.¹⁴⁵ The idea received a warm welcome from the tribal leaders.¹⁴⁶

In contrast to the humble background of the Iraqi students above, the Asiret Mektebi was designed to host the sons of local elites. The aim in the Asiret Mektebi was to prepare its students for governmental posts and the graduates of the school were going to be appointed to state posts in their local areas. This project was expected to bring the loyalty of local subjects under their tribal control. As for the students brought to Istanbul from Iraq for madrasa education, they were intended to advance their Islamic learning in order to facilitate the conversion of Iraqi people from Shi'ism to Sunnism. The difference between the two projects was quite obvious. The students in the Tribal School were to be given the chance to proceed with their education for a career either in the Ottoman military or civil service.¹⁴⁷ But the Iraqi students would not be able to attain any secular state profession.

The sultan provided an initial sum of 5,000 kurus to this end.¹⁴⁸ Soon thereafter, the governor of Baghdad selected 12 children—10 Shi'ite and 2 Sunni—to be sent to Istanbul. Their expenses were paid and reached a sum of 11,351 kurus. This included preparation costs as the students in question coming from poor backgrounds and in need of certain basics. Although Abdülhamid II approved such extra expenditures, he emphasized the necessity of achieving the goal in sight after such an outlay of cash: “[It is important] to acquire the expected benefit from their study since this much expense has been made for these [students]. (...*bunlar için bu kadar masraf ihtiyar olunduguna göre tedrislerinden faide-i matlubenin husûlü...*).¹⁴⁹ Two cooks would serve these students the national diet to avoid unpleasantness, but they be not allowed to take the cer trip because of their unfamiliarity with local customs.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Eugene L. Rogan, “Asiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II’s School for Tribe (1892-1907),” *IJMES*, 28 (1996); Deringil, *The Well-Protected*, pp. 101–04.

¹⁴⁶ Deringil, *The Well-Protected*, p. 102.

¹⁴⁷ For the career path of some graduates of the Tribal School, see Rogan, “Asiret Mektebi,” pp. 101–03.

¹⁴⁸ Irade Dah 98993, 19 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [21 December 1891].

¹⁴⁹ Irade Dah 98525, 29 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [31 December 1891].

¹⁵⁰ Y MTV 57/61, 13 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [15 December 1891].

In the meantime, the Seyhülislam reported to the palace the arrival of the students in Istanbul. Upon arrival, every new student was granted 100 kuruş as an imperial gift and to be used for their immediate needs. They were to be hosted by the Seyhülislam until a suitable madrasa could be found.¹⁵¹ Sultan Abdülhamid II seemed to be following the project optimistically and closely. In his memo to the Seyhülislam and the Grand Vizier, he detailed the students' programme: They were immediately, even on the same night, to be handed over to the *Dersvekili*¹⁵² instead of being hosted temporarily in the Seyhülislam Office in order for him to arrange permanent places for them to stay. The *Dersvekili* was instructed to distribute them in pairs to pious and wise mudarrises teaching in Fatih Mosque. They were first to be instructed in the Sunni principles of the Islamic faith, so the sultan assumed, to make them renounce Shi'ism as a heresy.¹⁵³

Care and Surveillance

The sultan also ordered that each student be provided a monthly stipend of 300 kuruş. This was intended to pre-empt any contact between Iranians and students, in the case the latter would go to Iranians in Istanbul for money. Abdülhamid II seemed to be worried about such a possibility and instructed the Seyhülislam and the Grand Vizier to take preventive measures.¹⁵⁴ Similar concerns influenced how Ottoman authorities controlled the Tribal School. Campus life was isolated and students were prevented from mixing with the public, Abdülhamid II receiving reports regularly on their progress, and comings and goings.¹⁵⁵

In accordance with the sultan's order, Iraqi students were subject to close police surveillance at all times. The sultan's worries were well founded as the Seyhülislam was informed of a certain Iranian man, Gulam Riza, dropping in on the Valide Madrasa in the Çarsamba neighbourhood of Fatih district to visit students temporarily staying there.¹⁵⁶ The Seyhülislam wrote to the Ministry of Police

¹⁵¹ Y PRK BSK 24/66, 21 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [23 December 1891].

¹⁵² The head of the division in the Seyhülislam Office who was responsible for teaching and learning in madrasas. "Dersvekili," in Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri*, v.1, p.428.

¹⁵³ Y PRK BSK 24/66, 21 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [23 December 1891].

¹⁵⁴ Y PRK BSK 24/66, 21 Cemaziyelevvel 1309 [23 December 1891].

¹⁵⁵ Rogan, "Asiret Mektebi," p. 95.

¹⁵⁶ Zab-Reft 22/242, 11 Saban 1309 [11 March 1892].

without delay and requested a quick investigation into the Iranian visitor, who was apparently staying in Üsküdar.¹⁵⁷ The man was soon captured by the police and interrogated about his stay in the capital and his visits with Iraqi students. It turned out that he was an Iranian from the Khurasan region simply travelling the world. Having visited India, Britain, France, Austria, Romania, and Russia, he had come to Istanbul seven years earlier. He had also gone on the Hijaz via Alexandria and Egypt and returned to Istanbul. He said he lived on the money that he made reciting poetry in praise of the Prophet (*kaside*). He claimed that he visited the students at the madrasa twice and by invitation of one of them, Bagdadli Ali, preparing an amulet for his hosts and introducing himself as a sheikh of the *rufâi* order. In return, they had given him 20 kurus for his travel expenses (*araba ücreti*). Even though the investigation did not confirm the sultan's fears, the Ministry deported the man to his home country of Iran.¹⁵⁸

Iraqi students were initially recruited from Baghdad. In May 1892, three more came from Basra joined the others.¹⁵⁹ The Hamidian rule apparently took good care of these students, which is not too surprising given Abdülhamid II's respect for education in general. In contrast to his overall image as an authoritarian ruler, he quite often attempted to establish good relations with the students in many schools.¹⁶⁰

The Iraqi students also had the chance to enjoy such a privilege granted by the sultan during their study. They were allotted 5,000 kurus each month from the imperial treasury for their livelihood and maintenance costs. All payments were made through the Seyhülislamate. Meanwhile, all matters regarding Iraqi students were handled quickly by officials. On one occasion, the Seyhülislamate had difficulties with the payments to Iraqi students from its financial system,¹⁶¹ and an application to the palace for a solution received a quick and positive response from

¹⁵⁷ Zab-Reft 22/242, 11 Saban 1309 [11 March 1892].

¹⁵⁸ Y MTV 60/59, 20 Saban 1309 [20 March 1892].

¹⁵⁹ MAIKD [vol.3], 28/ 7 Sevval 1309 [5 May 1892].

¹⁶⁰ In a newly established school of his time, *Hendese-i Mülkiye*, a different student each day used to bring an example of the lunch of the day to the palace for a quality check and also to eat his lunch in the palace. Have been taken a picture of his lunch there, he was granted a golden lira by the sultan and returned to his school. For more information on this, see İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Eğitim ve Bilgi Üretim Sisteminin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü*, (Ankara: TTK, 1993), pp.79-80.

¹⁶¹ MAIKD [vol.3], 32/ 20 Zilkade 1309 [16 June 1892].

the sultan. In fact, an imperial order was issued as early as the next day allowing the Seyhülislamate to pay Iraqi students using funds from the Ministry of Finance on a weekly basis.¹⁶² Furthermore, accommodation issues were eventually sorted out vis-à-vis a madrasa devoted exclusively to their needs and such purposes in September of 1893. In this, a madrasa titled Moravî Osman Efendi was repaired and refurbished by the Ministry of Religious Endowments for them, and its former occupants were transferred to other madrasas.¹⁶³

Disappointment and Resistance

Such sympathy and care did not always result in the expected result. Despite the fact that Iraqi students were brought to Istanbul and given a madrasa education paid for by the state, some were reticent to perform their duties. This may have been a consequence of comparisons they could not help but make between their madrasa education and new schools in Istanbul at the time. While the former, in their opinion, open doors to a world in decline at the time, the latter had more to offer them from a strictly professional point of view. As a result of this, nine out of the 15 Iraqi students presented a petition to the Seyhülislamate after they had been living in Istanbul for some time, stridently stating their disappointment as to their circumstances. They said that they had come to Istanbul, leaving their families and loved ones, in the service of religion and the state (*din ve devlete hizmet*), but preferred to be educated in the new schools rather than the madrasas. They contended that the governor of Baghdad had promised to send them to the new schools in Istanbul, but they found themselves at the Valide Madrasa in Fatih instead. The promise of a modern education had caused them to embark on such a venture, and the goal in sight was to study the modern sciences (*ulûm ve fînûn*) rather than the Islamic subjects (*ulûm-u diniye*), and at a madrasa no less.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² MAIKD [vol.3],, 7906, 21 Zilkade 1309 [17 June 1892].

¹⁶³ Y PRK MS 5/16, 8 Rebiülevvel 1311 [18 September 1893].

¹⁶⁴ Apart from the professional point of view, the Ottoman understanding of modern sciences and arts is indeed an issue that preoccupied the Ottoman intellectuals, particularly after facing the intensive reforms in the nineteenth century. For more elaborate accounts related to this issue, see Ismail Kara, "Modernleşme Dönemi Türkiye'sinde 'Ulûm, Fînûn' ve 'Sanat' Kavramlarının Algılanışı," in Ismail Kara, *Din ve Modernleşme Arasında: Çağdas Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2004), pp.126-97; Ismail Kara, *Bir Felsefe Dili Kurmak: Modern Felsefe ve Bilim Terimlerinin Türkiye'ye Girişi*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2001).

They thought that spending a year in studying the Islamic sciences was long enough to achieve the aim of the project as originally envisioned, having gained the ability to discern right (*hak*) from wrong (*batil*). The students went on to say that “if the idea for bringing us here is to convert to the Hanafite, we already left the Jafarite sect and everyone [of us] entered the Hanafite sect on his own free will (*eger bu kullarini Hanefi etmek efkariyla celb buyurulmus ise...?imdiden Caferi mezhebini terk ile herkes kendi hüsn-ü rizasiyla Hanefi mezheb-i serifine duhül etmiş oldugumuz...*).”¹⁶⁵ They concluded with pleas for a modern education: “Please let us be admitted to the newly established Tribal School! (*lütfen ve merhameten...yeni tesis olunan Asiret Mektebine kayd ve kabul buyurulmaktigimizi...*).”¹⁶⁶ Otherwise, they declared that they did not want to stay in Istanbul, but return to go back home.¹⁶⁷

The unprecedented demands of the Iraqi students bordered on ingratitude but understandable, given the strange circumstances that had embraced them in Istanbul. The new schools were regarded by many Ottomans as more appealing for varying reasons, but mostly because of their increasing prestige and opportunities for advancement that such an education promised. The case of Halil Halid Bey, a former madrasa student and graduate of the Law School, *Mekteb-i Hukuk*, typifies the desire among young Ottomans to attend the new schools. As a young madrasa student, Halil Halid sought to explore new countries and boarded a French liner to Beirut in the last decade of the century. In his memoirs, he recounts how he decided to go to a new style school during the voyage and outlined his reasons:

On my way I stayed at Smyrna, and I visited the Turkish islands of Chios and Mitylene. During my travels I saw many young men who, having completed their studies in modern colleges, had been appointed by the Government to various posts in the provinces, with salaries which at that time seemed to me higher than could have been expected by any young man. An idea crossed my mind that I might change the course of the antiquated studies on which I was wasting my time. On making inquiries about a rational system of education to which I could devote myself and by which might eventually make a future career and earn a competence...¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Y MTV 74/133, ‘the students’ petition,’ 25 Cemaziyelahir 1310 [14 January 1893].

¹⁶⁶ Y MTV 74/133, ‘the students’ petition,’ 25 Cemaziyelahir 1310 [14 January 1893].

¹⁶⁷ Y MTV 74/133, ‘the students’ petition,’ 25 Cemaziyelahir 1310 [14 January 1893].

¹⁶⁸ Halil Halid, *The Diary of a Turk*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903), p. 102.

After travelling for three months, Halil Halid decided “to try his luck” on the entrance exam and managed to secure a place at the Law School. In addition, he mentions four other classmates who had been madrasa students.¹⁶⁹ Surrounded by such an atmosphere, therefore, it is not surprising that Iraqi students were more fascinated by the new schools than by a madrasa education.

In contrast to other student matters that had been handled so quickly, the Seyhülislamate took its time with this request. Mehmed Cemaleddin Efendi took the case to the sultan more than a month later, on 16 February 1893.¹⁷⁰ He reported that although the Iraqi students in question had been provided with the best conditions and education possible to bring them into the light of Sunni Islam, the plan to win them over had not worked. They insisted on attending the Tribal School (*Asiret Mektebi*) instead of pursuing their madrasa studies.

Likewise, the palace also was not pleased about the case and the reply only appeared ten days later. The imperial order to the Seyhülislam dated 25 February 1893 never signalled any possibility of the sultan sympathizing with the students’ idea of attending the Tribal School,¹⁷¹ for they were in Istanbul to be trained as ulama. The Seyhülislam was instructed to keep advising and encouraging them to carry on with their madrasa studies. If all else to convince them failed, they were to be allowed to go home.¹⁷² The Tribal School was closed to them!

Abdülhamid II acted with determination. As seen in the Tribal School case, he pushed hard to keep the plan on track. The sultan’s stubborn determination can be seen in another student grievance, that of Ibrahim Hakki Efendi from Kerbela, who had an infection in his arms and doctors at the Gülhane Hospital suggested he should take a vacation as part of his treatment. This would mean that he would be allowed to return home to Kerbela. However, the Seyhülislamate did not consent to the diagnosis made at the Gülhane Hospital and sent him to another doctor for a second opinion. As the second examination called for the same treatment, the

¹⁶⁹ Halil, *The Diary*, p. 141.

¹⁷⁰ MAIKD [vol.3], 60/ 29 Receb 1310 [16 February 1893]; Y MTV 74/133, “the Seyhülislam’s memo,” 29 Receb 1310 [16 February 1893].

¹⁷¹ Y MTV 74/133 (the Imperial Order), 8 Saban 1310 [25 February 1893].

¹⁷² MAIKD [vol.3], 6094/ 8 Saban 1310 [25 February 1893].

Seyhülislamate informed the sultan.¹⁷³ An imperial order appeared the very next day instructing that such treatment could take place in Istanbul under the supervision of competent doctors, and preferable to the alternative because such a vacation to his home place was likely to set a bad example for other students at the madrasa.¹⁷⁴ To ensure a treatment in Istanbul, the Seyhülislamate was also informed that Sirac Hakki Baba, probably a Sufi leader in Istanbul at the time, would cure Ibrahim Hakki Efendi, using his mystical abilities.¹⁷⁵

Despite all the efforts made to keep the project going, six students left their study in Istanbul for their home after nearly one and a half years.¹⁷⁶ In addition to those who quit voluntarily, one student, Naci Efendi from Basra, was sent back to Iraq due to his criminal activities. Since he committed a second criminal offence, bruising one of his friends in his madrasa, Necmeddin Efendi from Baghdad, the Seyhülislamate decided to send him back to Iraq.¹⁷⁷

Graduation and Closure

As far as can be determined from the available sources, the project ended in failure. In 1906, three of its Iraqi students, Sevket, Mahmud and Abdülhadi Efendis obtained their diplomas (*icazet*) and were put to work in Iraq as defenders of the policies and Sunni beliefs of Abdülhamid II.¹⁷⁸ Accordingly, the Seyhülislamate was instructed to make arrangements for them to draw their salaries in Baghdad where they were also engaged in teaching and preaching.¹⁷⁹ Even though the exact date of their departure from Istanbul to Baghdad is not known, both were paid 1759.5 kurus from the Ministry of Finance in March 1907 as compensation for their travel costs.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ MAIKD [vol.3], 62/ 6 Saban 1310 [23 February 1893].

¹⁷⁴ MAIKD [vol.3], 6079/ 7 Saban 1310 [24 February 1893]; Y PRK BSK 29/61, 7 Saban 1310 [24 February 1893].

¹⁷⁵ "...ve Istabl-i Amireye memur Sirac Hakki Babanin bu gibi bazi ilel ve emrazda tesir-i nefesi mücerreb olmasıyla mezkûr hastaneye gidib hastaya nefes etmesi müma-ileyh Hakki Babaya tenbih ettirilmis olmagla..." Y PRK BSK 29/61, 7 Saban 1310 [24 February 1893].

¹⁷⁶ Cezmi Eraslan, "II. Abdülhamid Devrinde Osmanli Devleti Dahilinde ve Afrika Kitasında Islam Birliğı Faaliyetleri," MA thesis, Istanbul Üniversitesi (1985), pp. 64-65.

¹⁷⁷ Zab-Reft, 18 Receb 1314 [23 December 1895].

¹⁷⁸ Irade Hus, 13 Saban 1324/30 [2 October 1906].

¹⁷⁹ Irade Hus, 13 Saban 1324/30 [2 October 1906].

¹⁸⁰ Irade Ilm, 4 Rebiülevvel 1325/1 [7 March 1907], "the *leff* of the Ministry of Finance (*Maliye Nezareti*)."

This was the end of an education project that Abdülhamid II had invested so much of his time and energy, and money, to stop the advance of Shi'ism in Iraq and revitalize a failing empire. Failure was due, in part, to the fact that students were unwilling to see their madrasa educations to their logical and political conclusions. The Tribal School was also closed, and for the same reasons.¹⁸¹ The naïve political atmosphere at the time and the spread of nationalism surely had played a role in the failure of both projects.¹⁸²

Shortly thereafter, Abdülhamid II would lose his power in 1908 and the throne in 1909. During his rule, he had always been cautious concerning madrasa students and actually had good reasons for being so. His measures to suppress oppositional tendencies among them apparently failed. He always felt the need to reform madrasa education,¹⁸³ but he did not rule long enough to implement the needed reforms—which would be realized in 1914. Perhaps he lacked the necessary bravery to do what needed to be done. Despite it all, it is important that he never lost faith in the madrasa, though his faith in this institution of higher religious learning and a younger generation of madrasa students was misplaced in hindsight.

¹⁸¹ Rogan, "Asiret Mektebi," p. 95.

¹⁸² Deringil, *The Well-Protected*, p. 104.

¹⁸³ Alâaddin Çetin and Ramazan Yıldız (eds), *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han, Devlet ve Memleket Görüşlerim*, Istanbul: Çigir Yayinlari, 1976), pp. 256–57.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has focused on the nineteenth-century Ottoman madrasas in Istanbul through their teachers and students, particularly from the Tanzimat period until the Second Constitution of 1908. It has sought to explore their educational, social, cultural and political components in the period concerned. Since the history of the madrasa in the late Ottoman period has been little explored and the madrasa has largely been seen on the basis of a simplistic model, this study has aimed to demonstrate the complexity of the history of this traditional institution.

This dissertation offers a number of conclusions. First of all, the reforms of the nineteenth century from the time of Sultan Mahmud II had a considerable impact on the employment of madrasa teachers. Their recruitment became subject to prescribed rules and firm procedures for examination and apprenticeship. But the most dramatic change is seen in the termination of financial relations between the vakif system and madrasa teachers. Like civil officials, they were also taken into the

new financial system of the Tanzimat in 1840 and salaries of mudarrises were allocated from the central Ottoman treasury. At the beginning, the salary system was not comprehensive. A limited budget reserved from the central treasury for their salary forced the Seyhülislamate to be selective in determining the mudarrises eligible for it. During the Tanzimat years, underpaid mudarrises and those on the poverty line were given priority. It was not until the Hamidian period that all mudarrises were included in the system. This never prevented mudarrises from demanding a rise in their salaries, which were usually inadequate. Indeed, it was a radical divergence from the traditional formation of the Ottoman madrasa. As a result of the Tanzimat reforms, a regular income for every mudarris in Istanbul was eventually guaranteed by the state although the new system in Istanbul madrasas that replaced the vakif finance did not run smoothly most of the time, as was the case in other state departments.

The madrasa teaching profession reflected certain social and cultural characteristics in the late-nineteenth century. The most striking one is the domination of provincial people in the profession. They were mostly the sons of lower ulama fathers or of agriculturist families without large land holdings. Chapter 2 indicates that madrasa teaching posts in Istanbul were able to appeal to few native people in Istanbul. This study has revealed that professorships in the capital served as a means of social mobility, particularly during the Hamidian period. Therefore, teaching in Istanbul madrasas paved the way for children from a socially humble and provincial background to gain a place in the imperial centre. Accordingly, people from places with poor economic and social conditions like Trabzon noticeably crowded the profession. Another remarkable fact is the under-representation of madrasa teachers from higher ulama families. Instead, their sons more often preferred posts in sharia courts in the ulama profession, but not madrasa teaching.

The sons of Ottoman officials also disappeared from madrasa teaching. New state departments in the capital that rose as a result of reforms mostly after the Tanzimat provided many job opportunities for career seekers and the people of Istanbul, including those from ulama and officials' families who were more interested in such jobs. In addition, the Ottoman capital as the host of a wide range of new educational institutions had an important role in shaping the career plans of its inhabitants and accordingly more prestigious and paid posts were available for

graduates of the new schools. It is also interesting to see that while this apparently made madrasa teaching, a traditional post with modest income, more accessible to provincial people who were mostly from socially and economically humble background, the next generations of Istanbul mudarrises with provincial origins seem very often to have followed non-religious careers.

Educational reforms of the nineteenth century had a certain impact on the educational constitution of mudarrises. The Tanzimat reforms are clearly visible in their history, but this study clearly shows that a considerable portion of madrasa teachers in Istanbul had attended at least one of the new-style schools particularly at the primary level, although they had a low attendance in schools above primary level in the same period. On the other hand, this changed noticeably in the Hamidian period as a result of the Sultan's efforts in expanding new-style schools at all levels. Accordingly, it is striking to see that a substantial number of the mudarrises who had been of school age during the Hamidian period were graduates of new-style schools above primary level. Surprisingly a considerable number of new school graduates came from ulama families.

As regards the cultural composition of madrasa teachers, their interest in Persian stands out. As rather an artistic language which did not appear in the formal madrasa curricula, Persian extended the intellectual boundaries of the madrasa milieu. The Persian language apparently led mudarrises into contact with two different worlds of culture: the Sufi tradition as a religious area and the literary world of Ottoman bureaucracy as a more secular field.

The Ottoman madrasa honoured its pedagogic tradition and never changed the curricular subjects that were chosen long before the period under research. At a time when the scientific and intellectual advancement of the West was acknowledged by many in the Ottoman intellectual and political elites, the madrasa's formal curriculum confronted harsh challenges from different segments of Ottoman society, including even ulama circles. Criticisms usually pointed to the old-fashioned content of current madrasa education and its failure to defend the Islamic faith against new materialist philosophies that were emerging in the West at that time. The solutions proposed included a wide range of reform demands, from curricular changes and setting up Turkish as the language of instruction to the closure of all madrasas. Organisational reforms were also an important part of the proposals.

An extensive madrasa reform was only realised after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. Yet the madrasa had already developed informal responses to such challenges. Many madrasa teachers took initiatives to get involved with modern sciences throughout the period. These initiatives can be seen as informal attempts to integrate modern subjects in the madrasa milieu in Istanbul. As for the madrasa students in the Ottoman capital, while many joined informal study circles run by mudarrises or teachers/specialists in new schools and new subjects, they also had an opportunity to adapt to the new circumstances of the time through new schools, particularly the Law School (*Mekteb-i Hukuk*), the Civil Service School (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*) and the Teachers' College (*Darülmualimin*) in Istanbul. All these generated two important outcomes for Istanbul madrasas. First, the boundaries of traditional madrasa teaching were conspicuously broadened, albeit informally and indirectly. Second, career opportunities for madrasa graduates increased, particularly in modern education and law fields where many were employed.

Studying in madrasas was traditionally centred around the mudarris. Admittance of students to a madrasa was subject to the approval of a mudarris and the authority to grant the icazet was left exclusively to mudarris. The central position of the mudarris in this regard remained unchanged until the extensive reform in the Young Turk Era. There were no official rules to regulate students' admittance, but a minimum age for acceptance as a madrasa student was required. Traditional forms and terms still dominated in the period. Although there was no legally prescribed dress code for students, turban (*sarik*) and gown (*cübbe*) were regarded as a kind of official uniform for students, especially in the Hamidian period, and it was strictly observed by the state authorities.

The educational terms and daily timetabling were arranged according to religious rituals. For example, lectures ended every year at the start of the Three Holy Months (*Suhûr-i Selase*) in accordance with the Hijri calendar for the lunar year. During this period, most students dispersed all around the empire earning money in exchange for their religious services to the public (*cer* trips). But the *cer* also acted as a means of dissemination of ideas from the Ottoman capital to provincial areas. Many students not only performed religious duties in provincial areas, but also carried the agenda of Istanbul with them.

The relationship of students with mudarrises was not entirely subordinate, in contrast with what the existing literature usually describes. Anecdotal cases demonstrate that disputes and even challenges by students were not uncommon in the lectures. Students were able to change their mudarris and follow different mudarrises for different subjects. The most traditional aspect of madrasa education was still the dominant position of the mudarris in issuing a diploma (*icazet*) to his student. Until the madrasa reform in the Young Turk Era, madrasa students continued to receive their icazets from the mudarris, not from any particular institution. After the reform, madrasa diplomas were issued by an institution in the name of the state authority. This shift from mudarris to institution was indeed a reflection of the modernisation projects of the Young Turks in education.

The number of madrasa students considerably increased during the nineteenth century in Istanbul. This might partly be a result of the post-Tanzimat state policy of conscription in which military service became compulsory in principle for every male Ottoman subject. As studentship was a reason to be exempted from the service, many regarded the madrasa as a place of refuge. Despite the increase in student numbers, the madrasa infrastructure had worsened during the century. Conditions for madrasa education were also negatively affected by forced immigration of Muslim subjects from the lost Ottoman lands. Istanbul quite often had to host flocks of immigrant masses, and madrasa buildings were among the first places to accommodate them. Madrasa students also had to share their other facilities in the city such as public victual houses (*imaret*) with immigrants. While this caused tensions between students and immigrants many times, the Seyhülislamate appeared to resist other state departments in order to protect madrasa infrastructure and its own authority over madrasas. The material conditions of madrasas, however, never improved, as the political and social instability of the empire continued to worsen.

Disciplinary cases were an important area in which relations between state and madrasa can be clearly observed. The rise of the modern state apparatus seems to have had certain effects on the understanding of discipline issues in madrasas. While, as many disciplinary records indicate, criminal activities of armed madrasa student groups steadily decreased in the course of the century, individual crimes began to be seen more often, particularly in the Hamidian period. The establishment of new security departments in the capital after the Tanzimat might have caused changes in

the nature of students' crimes. Furthermore, the state authority increasingly tended to monitor students' behaviour not only within educational premises but also in the street. The nature of crimes changed considerably and moral behaviour was also included in official surveillance. Carrying tobacco could be a reason for a madrasa student to be charged because it had gained a unique economic meaning in the Hamidian period. Again in that period, the government developed sensitivity about activities that could be viewed as political, and hence the security measures of Hamidian rule targeted madrasa teachers and students. On the other hand, the moral control over students by the state authority was extended to the determination (or limitation) of neighbourhoods for students to visit like Beyoglu, or places to sit in, like coffeehouses, or games to play, like checkers. This was a typical reflection of the concept of the modern state that tends to intervene in all spheres of human life. Accordingly, the Ottoman state underwent many modern reforms after the Tanzimat often attempted to shape the lives of its subjects.

Likewise, the official aspiration to control madrasa students was also seen in attempts to keep precise records of existing students. In fact, many Ottoman governments had tried to maintain registers of students in the capital. But such attempts were more insistently carried out after the Tanzimat and particularly in the Hamidian era. Apart from institutional needs, there were also other reasons to maintain records such as military conscription and distribution of sultanic gifts. A steady and reliable system of registry could not be achieved, however, although some internal arrangements were made within the Seyhülislam Office. To this end, other state departments were also sometimes assigned to keep the student registers, but such formulas did not work effectively.

This dissertation has emphasised another neglected part of Ottoman madrasa history, namely, the role of madrasa teachers and students in integrating the reforms in society. In the same vein, madrasa graduates were assigned to many non-religious positions and madrasa teachers often even held a variety of teaching posts in the new-style schools. This made a crucial contribution to these institutions inasmuch as they gained public recognition, although this subject has also been overlooked in the literature. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence demonstrates that some high-ranking bureaucrats with a madrasa background played a significant role in several reform projects, particularly in the field of education.

Istanbul Madrasas in the Hamidian Period

The Hamidian period has been given special mention because of its uniqueness in terms of the imperial perception of madrasa teaching and learning. Sultan Abdülhamid II merged the traditional forms with modern concepts and utilised them widely in his policies in many fields, particularly in the centralisation and integration of the empire and in strengthening his sultanic legitimacy. He clearly adopted the Tanzimat policies and extended them to Istanbul madrasas. Most importantly, whereas the Tanzimat governments had acted selectively, Abdülhamid II included all mudarrises in the central salary system. Furthermore, he even allocated a modest amount of money from his privy purse to those in the period of apprenticeship. The Ottoman treasury had always suffered from shortcomings and deferment in salary payments, but Abdülhamid never appeared reluctant to listen when he was made aware of complaints from mudarrises on this subject.

The Ottoman State had always been generous to madrasa students, but Abdülhamid incorporated them into his broader gift-giving projects and publicised this relationship through the press. At the same time, however, the Sultan retained his cautious nature. Accordingly, he tried hard to exert control over madrasa students in the capital. While the bureaucratic character of the Seyhülislamate improved in the Hamidian time, he sometimes involved other state departments in keeping the registers of current students. More interestingly, however, he attempted to limit the number of newcomers to Istanbul, a move which was eventually warded off by the Seyhülislamate, and to counterbalance this move, he invested his time and resources in revitalising provincial madrasas. This is especially important because it indicates that madrasas occupied an important position on Abdülhamid's agenda, although he did not attempt to make a comprehensive institutional and pedagogic reform of the madrasa system.

To portray the official perception regarding the madrasa students in the Hamidian period, I took into account the case of Iraqi Shi'i students. This case indicates that in the minds of the sultan and the Ottoman civil, military and religious bureaucrats of the time madrasa education was an influential prescription for the removal of immediate threats against the integrity of the empire and its survival. Despite the failure of the project in the end, it was an important indication of the Ottoman mind-set during the period. Sunnification of Ottoman subjects was part of

the imperial centralisation policies, since it was to establish the connection of legitimacy between the imperial centre and non-Sunni subjects living in remote parts of the empire. Therefore, the madrasa was a useful tool. There are, however, two particular points to note; namely, the place of the proposed education, Istanbul, and the strict boundaries laid down for those who were brought from Iraq to pursue only a madrasa education, as all other types of education were forbidden to them. This policy indicates that madrasa education was part of the imperial solutions to imperial problems and needed to be undertaken in the imperial capital under the strict surveillance of the authorities.

Nevertheless, the circumstances regarding the relationship between the madrasas and the Hamidian regime created a paradox for Sultan Abdülhamid. Although he felt it necessary to be extremely cautious in the face of the potential threat posed by madrasa students in Istanbul, he nevertheless considered madrasa education to be a handy tool to achieve his political aims. In fact, he experienced a similar predicament in his relations with the Ottoman ulama. This situation brought problems for him since the policies that the sultan pursued apparently entailed the ulama's siding with the sultan. In the meantime, many members of the Ottoman ulama approached the opposition's organisations during the Hamidian period.¹ As this study has confirmed, however, the madrasa students as well as their teachers should not be singled out as a monolithic group from the historical context of the late Ottoman period, as they were diverse in many respects. This fact seemed to offer Abdülhamid the required space to carry on with the aforementioned paradox.

¹ For an examination of the relationship between the Ottoman ulama and the opposition movements in the late Ottoman period, see Ismail Kara, "Turban and fez: Ulema as Opposition," in Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.), *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005).

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A MKT NZD: *Sadaret Mektubî Kalemi Nezaret ve Devâir Kismi*

A MKT UM: *Sadaret Mektubî Kalemi Umum Vilayet Kismi*

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