

“IMMORALS” IN OTTOMAN SOCIETY: GENEALOGY OF THE OTTOMAN MORALITY DISCOURSE IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY

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Abstract

Since the Tanzimat edict, the Ottoman state started to adopt liberal governmental rationality similar to the Western states. At the turn of the century, the Ottoman state, which had increased its administrative modernization and centralization, became responsible for public security and order. However, there was a great number of civil servants who acted contrary to this agenda of the state. In the late 19th century, there was an increasing number of complaints and trials regarding the immorality of state officials. This study examines the genealogy of the governmental discourse of good governance, that is to say, "enhancing the society as individual citizens and as a community" adopted by the modern Ottoman state. It is argued that the traditional moral discourses existing in the Ottoman society were juxtaposed with this new governmental liberal rationality of the Ottoman state in state discourses. The study is based on a historical case study that employs Foucault's genealogical methodology for the historical analysis of hegemonic discourses. Various cases in which Ottoman state officials were prosecuted for their immoral manners and attitudes were discussed, and the discourses used in government correspondence during the legal and administrative processes carried out regarding these cases were examined. The data used in the study is retrieved from the primary archival sources obtained from the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and also from secondary sources. The study reveals that the category of "immoral officers" who challenged traditional moral norms consisted of state officials who ignored social distinctions based on gender and religion and policemen and officers who publicly engaged in prostitution in residential neighborhoods. Hence the state apparatus resorted to punitive practices to correct the behavior of these officers and tried to provide public order by reproducing the traditional morality of the neighborhood. In other words, the moral discourse of the neighborhood was juxtaposed with the citizen-based liberal administrative discourse that responded to public safety, public health, and the citizens' demands. This study, which presents the genealogy of moral discourse in the late Ottoman society, reveals that the moral regime in the premodern period Ottoman neighborhood is combined with the modern administrative discourse focused on "good governance," which serves the safety and well-being of the society and citizens.

Keywords: Ottoman state, Foucault, Governmentality, Neighborhood, Traditional morality, Discourse, Genealogy

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OSMANLI TOPLUMUNDA “AHLAKSIZLAR”: ONDOKUZUNCU YÜZYIL SONUNDA OSMANLI AHLAK SÖYLEMINİN JENEOLOJISI

Özet

Tanzimat fermanı ile birlikte Osmanlı devleti Batılı devletlere benzer liberal bir yönetim rasyonalitesi benimsemeye başlamıştı. Yüzyıl döneminde yönetsel modernleşmesini ve merkezileşmesini artırmış olan Osmanlı devleti kamusal güvenlik ve nizamın sorumlusu haline gelmişti. Ancak, devletin bu ajandasına aykırı olarak hareket eden devlet memurlarının sayısı oldukça fazlaydı. 19. yüzyılın sonlarında devlet memurlarının ahlaksızlıklarına dair artan sayıda şikayetlere ve yargılamalara rastlanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, modern Osmanlı devletinin benimsediği “vatandaş bireylerin ve toplumsal nüfusun iyileştirilmesi” şeklindeki liberal yönetim söyleminin şeceresi (jeneolojisi) incelenmektedir. Osmanlı toplumunda var olan geleneksel ahlaki söylemlerin, Osmanlı devletinin bu yeni yönetsel liberal rasyonalitesini beyan eden söylemleri ile yan yana getirildiği ileri sürülmektedir. Araştırma, hegemonik söylemlerin tarihsel analizi için Foucault'nun uyguladığı jeneoloji metodolojisini kullanan tarihsel bir vaka çalışmasına dayanmaktadır. Osmanlı devlet memurlarının ahlaka aykırı tavır ve davranışları nedeniyle yargılandığı çeşitli davalar ele alınmış ve bu davalara ilişkin yürütülen hukuki ve idari süreçlerde devlet yazışmalarında kullanılan söylemler incelenmiştir. Çalışmada kullanılan veriler, İstanbul'daki Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi'nden elde edilen birincil arşiv kaynaklarından ve ayrıca ikincil kaynaklardan elde edilmiştir. Bu dönemde geleneksel ahlaki normları sabote eden “ahlaksız kabilinden memurlar,” toplumsal cinsiyet ve dine dayalı toplumsal ayrışmalara dikkat etmeyen memurlar ile meskûn mahallelerde alenen fuhuş yapan polis ve memurlardan oluşuyordu. Bu nedenle devlet aygıtı bu görevlilerin davranışlarını düzeltmek için cezai uygulamalara başvurmuş ve geleneksel mahalle ahlakını yeniden üreterek kamusal nizamı sağlamaya çalışmıştır. Son dönem Osmanlı toplumunda var olan ahlak söyleminin jeneolojisini sunan bu çalışma, premodern dönem Osmanlı mahallesindeki ahlak rejiminin, toplumun ve vatandaşların güvenliği ve iyiliğine hizmet eden “iyi yönetim” odaklı modern yönetsel söylem ile bitştirildiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Devleti, Foucault, Yönetsellik, Mahalle, Geleneksel ahlak, Söylem, Jeneoloji

Introduction

Moral decadence was a dominant theme in Turkish literary products from the mid-nineteenth century (Mardin, 1974). The novels of the Tanzimat era and the Turkish press of the late nineteenth century all emphasized the moral dissolution of the Ottoman society, that is to say, the Ottoman Muslims, due to the appropriation of both the material products and cultural characteristics of the West (Brummett, 2000). The archives of the police

department (Zaptiye Nezareti) of the late nineteenth century also consist of many “immoral officials” similar to the ones prevailing in the Turkish literature and press of the same era.

A quick observation of the summaries of these archival documents reveals the identities of these immoral state officials. From 1881 to 1904, various state officials and sometimes even their wives were denounced, investigated, and punished because of their immoral or inappropriate behavior (“edebe aykırı ve uygunsuz hallerinden dolayı”). The category of improper conduct ranges from the most common misdemeanor to surprising ones. One can easily predict that prostitution and drinking alcohol would be found among the indecent acts since these acts have always been against the law in every Islamic country. However, it is surprising to see that such acts as the marrying of police officers with women who are known for their inappropriateness without getting any permission (izin almadan uygunsuzluğuyla bilinen kadınla evlenmesi), having an affair with such women, and divorcing their virtuous wives (ehl-i namus eşlerini boşamaları), having friends or any relationship with the non-Muslims and acting in the theatre as an actor were all considered as improper behavior. The wives of the state officials were also denounced for their inappropriate acts, such as laughing too loudly in public, wearing obscene outfits that display their bodies and hair, and behaving rather in a loose manner (rahat hareketlerde bulunması), etc.

This study is an endeavor to illustrate the conditions of possibility and boundaries of the morality discourse, which seems to be hegemonic in the Ottoman state bureaucracy and society in the late nineteenth century, by offering an analysis of various denunciations (ihbar /jurnal) and investigation reports (tahkikat raporu) of the so called “immoral” or “inappropriate” behavior.

The study will also shed light on the communication mechanism regarding the dissemination and reproduction of hegemonic moral discourse by the Ottoman common people and the state, how and to what extent this discourse of morality was circulated, appropriated, produced, and reproduced by the Ottoman society, that is to say, the Ottoman Muslim majority.

1. Foucault, Governmentality Studies and Governmentalization of the Modern Ottoman State

The historical literature on the Ottoman state of the nineteenth century indicates the transformation process of the state into a modern central state with its modern institutions and agendas. It seems that consistent efforts of the Ottoman sultans and the upper echelons of the state bureaucracy to modernize the Ottoman state throughout the long nineteenth century have been successful by the end of the century. By the last quarter of the century, the Ottoman state consisted of many modern institutions, such as the modern army, administrative organizations, schools, hospitals, and police forces, all designed in accordance with their counterparts in the modern European states (Özbek, 2002).

Moreover, the Ottoman state also developed modern state rationality regarding its relationship with its citizens. Similar to the modern Western states, the Ottoman state emerged as a modern form of power in the late nineteenth century.

Foucault offers us a conceptual framework to understand the characteristics of this modern power and its primary institutional crystallization: the modern state. Foucault's famous terminology "governmentalization of the state" refers to the foundation of the modern governmental administration, which had followed the collapse of feudalism and feudal communal ties upon the Protestant Reformation of Europe.

For Foucault, the modern form of power is power over life, meaning that its main objective is to ensure, maintain and develop the lives of individuals and populations and to put this life in order (Foucault, 1984c, pp. 259-260). Foucault points to the introduction of new technologies for the exercise of power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In contrast to feudal societies, where power was exercised through signs and taxation, this new form of power began to exercise itself through social production and service (Foucault, 1984d). He further states that the organization of this power over life is deployed in two forms, the disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population, which are two poles of this power being intimately related. The disciplinary techniques of power focus on the body and aim at turning the body into a machine by enhancing both its capabilities and docility (Foucault, 1984d, pp. 261-262). The second form of modern power center on the population. All the aspects of the population's life are administered through various interventions and regulations. Foucault defines this new era of the

subjugation of the bodies and control of populations as the era of “bio-power” (Foucault, 1984d, pp. 262).

Foucault’s study of modern power needs to be considered in relation to his analyses of the modes of objectification and/or subjectivation of the subject. Foucault asserts that the modern form of power dominates the very individualization process of the subject. “This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him.” (Foucault, 1984d, p. 212). According to Foucault the modern form of power imposes a certain kind of morality on the subjects through its disciplinary techniques. It turns them into subjects who appropriate a certain type of identity. In this respect, for Foucault subjects are entrapped into their own subjectivities.

Foucault also indicates the essential role of the modern state for articulating this modern form of power. For him, power relations have come more and more under state control. Hence “power relations have been progressively governmentalized, that is to say, elaborated, rationalized, and centralized in the form of state institutions.” (Foucault, 1982, p. 224). According to Foucault, government refers to “the conduct of conduct,” and governmentality is the state’s use of such governmental techniques for conducting the acts of individuals.

Liberal rationality and technology of government which took shape in the latter part of the eighteenth century, cannot be reduced to the formula of *laissez-faire* that gave birth to an ideal of minimal government. Government concerns the management of those processes (quasi-natural processes found in the population and the economy are considered and associated with the question of security) and discovering an optimal level of governmental regulation of them. (Dean, p.123)

Following Foucault, it is considered that the late nineteenth-century Ottoman state emerged as the primary agent of this modern form of power in Ottoman society. The reign of the II. Abdulhamid witnessed the full-fledged development of the modern state with its modern state institutions which aimed at good government, public security and care of the public and citizens similar to the Western states which had adopted a modern liberal governmental rationality.

The new modern surveillance and disciplining mechanisms of these institutions united certain discourses of morality hegemonic in the society, that is the traditional morality of the neighborhood and the discourse of modern governmental rationality, meaning the state's obligation to reply the citizens' needs and demands of health and security.

Benjamin Fortna illustrates this point in his analyses of the curriculum and educational practices of the Hamidian schooling system. He argues that the Hamidian state abandoned the secular education policy of the Tanzimat era. Hence, moral education based on the principles of Hanafi Islam and traditional social and political hierarchies became a significant part of the curriculum of the new modern schools of the Hamidian era (Fortna, 2005).

Similar to the military schools, the civilian schools also started to register the moral reports of the students (ahlak karnesi). Hence, the students were either punished because of their moral misdemeanor or approved for their proper behavior throughout their bureaucratic careers. Thus the students were subjected to a particular form of morality that aimed at constituting bureaucrats or citizens who would endow an Ottoman Muslim identity and therefore loyal to his family, his sultan, his state, and his religious principles.

2. Foucault and Genealogy as a Methodology for Writing Critical History

Genealogy can be considered a critical form of history writing, not based on ideological criticisms of the past from the perspectives of nationalist or Marxist historiographies. The genealogical approach offers a critical analysis of the historical conjunctures leading to the development of hegemonic discourses in a certain historical period.

The purpose of genealogy, for Foucault, is not therefore a description of actual events. Genealogy is a history of the present designed to outline the historical conflicts and strategies of control by which knowledge and discourses are constituted and operate, and to use these descriptions as a counter-memory. Rather, the aim is to query the discourses and practices of the present by referring them back to the hegemonic conditions under which they have been established, which also includes pointing out ruptures in the grounds on which strategies, institutions and practices are shaped. (Andersen, 2003, p.19-20).

Foucault has developed his genealogical analysis upon his archaeological analysis as a breakthrough in his studies. Although the two analytical historical methods share much, they also differ in terms of their emphases in their research questions. While the

archaeological study focuses on the regularity/dispersion of statements in historical discourses, the genealogical study focuses on the continuity/discontinuity among historical discourses. (Andersen, 2003, p.17-20).

Genealogy provides no explanations of causality. The lines of descent are not causal, for example 'at first, there were hospitals, which were further developed in the mental institution, which led to the development of psychoanalysis'.... The endpoint of genealogy determines which discourses and discursive kinships one discovers." (Andersen, 2003, p.21).

Following Friedrich Nietzsche, Foucault developed his analytical method of genealogy by formulating Nietzsche's question of the historical conditions of possibility of the values themselves. Thus, the aim of genealogical analysis is "to question the value of values in all facets. The genealogy of morals is also therefore a *critique of morality*." (Andersen, 2003, p.17).

As mentioned above, genealogical analysis of history requires the study of both the continuity and transformation of the historical discourses. Hence such a study needs to implement discursive analysis in order to find out the continuing and changing discourses from the past to the present. In this study, Michel Foucault's approach to discourse analysis will be employed.

According to Foucault, discourse refers to a discursive formation which "is a system of dispersion for statements. It is not a structure existing on a level different from statements; discursive formation is simply the regularity of the irregular distribution of statements" (Andersen, 2003, p. VI).

In addition, discourse does not provide a singular meaning. It can be articulated with other discourses, statements, issues, or concepts that seem to be relevant or irrelevant. Therefore, a discourse reconstructs meaning by changing it due to its flexible nature. Individuals or institutions -while making use of a discourse- can bring together different or oppositional discourses and the categories, definitions, or semantic relations associated with these discourses, thus creating new discursive formations (Andersen, 2003, p. 8-17). As a result of these discursive juxtapositions, language and culture are reproduced in every discursive expression or practice.

In our study, the genealogy of the governmental discourse of good governance, that is to say, "enhancing the society as individual citizens and as a community" adopted by

the modern Ottoman state is examined. The traditional morality or the moral discourses of the Ottoman society which were inherited or taken over by the Ottoman state will be deciphered by using Foucault's discursive analysis. It will be analyzed how the existing traditional moral discourses of the Ottoman society were juxtaposed with this new governmental liberal rationality of the Ottoman state in a certain discursive framework.

Various cases in which Ottoman state officials were prosecuted for their immoral manners and attitudes were discussed and the discourses used in government correspondence during the legal and administrative processes carried out regarding these cases were examined. The data used in the study is retrieved from the primary archival sources obtained from the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and also from secondary sources.

3. Socio-political conjuncture of the Hamidian Era: Sustaining Public Opinion and Legitimacy of the Government

With the advent of modernity, modern states started paying attention to the voices of their subjects. Arlette Farge refers to the emergence of "public opinion" as a legitimate source of information in eighteenth-century France (Farge, 1995). In contrast to the pre-modern states' understanding of public opinion as noise to be silenced, modern states found it significant and listened to their subjects through various spying mechanisms. This illustrates the fact that the modern states not officially but implicitly acknowledged the fact that people had the legitimate authority in generating ideas about political issues (Kırlı, 2008). Therefore, we can argue that while the rulers of the imperial states were becoming deprived of their sacred authorities, the public opinion was turning into the new basis of authority for the modern states in the modern era.

The Ottoman state and sultans also had to reproduce their authority and legitimacy in order to sustain the allegiances of their subjects. By the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state was under the increasing threat of Western political and economic power. The Western states and companies emerged as the external forces challenging the Ottoman state's authority over its subjects. While they were dissolving the loyalties of the non-Muslims in the empire to the Ottoman state by offering them political and economic protection, they were also diminishing the legitimacy of the Ottoman state in the eyes of the Muslim majority due to the fact that Ottoman Muslims were becoming increasingly

deprived of their political and economic dominance in the empire because of the state’s liberal policies in the political and economic realms. Moreover, the Ottoman sultan who had the caliphate title, could not protect and cherish the lives of the Muslims in its lands and foreign countries. The Muslims in the Caucasus and Balkans were forced to migrate from their lands by the Russian state and the newly established states in the Balkans from 1862 onwards (Karpat, 2003). The Hamidian state was also faced with the issue of establishing the loyalties of the Muslim migrants to the Ottoman state in addition to its agenda of sustaining the allegiance of its existing Muslim population.

Selim Deringil and Nadir Özbek examine the policy of the Hamidian state to establish and enhance the loyalty of the Muslim majority in their studies of the reign of II. Abdulhamid. While Deringil (2002) indicates the constitution of the legitimacy of the sultan through the appropriation of various symbols and rituals in the political realm, Özbek (2002) illuminates a significant dimension of the institutional basis of this legitimization process through the analyses of the mechanisms of philanthropy and gift giving which were successfully used by the Hamidian state. Hence, we see that the literature on the modern Ottoman state in general and the Hamidian state, in particular, refer to this legitimacy crisis faced by the modern Ottoman state and the efforts of the state to re-establish it. As the socio-economic aspects of this crisis are analyzed, it is considered that the social inequalities, conflicts, and demands of the Ottoman Muslim population which arose as an effect of the socio-economic turmoil of the late nineteenth century had a great impact on the development of the discourse of morality dominant in the Hamidian state and era.

The literature on the Ottoman society of the last quarter of the nineteenth century emphasizes the process of socio-economic and demographic transformation of the Ottoman big cities or port cities in general and Istanbul in particular (Eldem, et al.1999). In the mid-century the capital city faced with an influx of non-Muslim immigrants who had sold their lands to the Muslims in the rural areas (Karpat, 2003, p. 141). These non-Muslims were able to find lucrative jobs as a *dragoman* (translators of the foreign ambassadors) and as employees of various European embassies and private companies. They were also able to work as tradesmen or middlemen providing the trade transactions between the European tradesmen and Muslim producers and tradesmen. Hence the non-

Muslim population in Istanbul started to enhance its economic power due to its political and economic relationships with the European powers.

In contrast to the rising social, political, and economic status of the non-Muslims in the city and empire, the majority of the Muslim population started to lose their upper hand in the economic life of the city. According to the population census of 1885, most of the Muslims living in Istanbul were migrants who either came to the city as a result of the enforced migrations from Russia and the Balkans since 1862 or left their lands to find work in the city which offered relatively higher wages (Karpas, 2003, p. 141-3). Most of these migrants were bachelors or part of very small households. The migrants from Anatolia were bachelors who were mostly employed in seasonal jobs or lower status jobs in the docks and transportation sector mostly as a *hamal*, *kayıkçı*, *sandalcı*, *mavnacı* and *liman işçisi* (porter, sculler, boatman, bargeman and docker) (Quataert, 1987). In 1890 the Ottoman state granted the privilege to build and operate a modern harbor in Istanbul to a company that was basically composed of French investors (Quataert, 1987, p.86). The state's decision of modernization resulted in a serious conflict that lasted for two decades between the port company and the guilds whose vested interests would be diminished by the implementation of the new technologies of transportation. The guilds of *hamal* and *kayıkçı* had always owned the monopolies of land transportation and installation in the Istanbul port. These guilds were the most powerful guilds of the city whose members were mostly bachelor Muslims having strong solidarity bonds among themselves (Quataert, 1987, p.87). Although the guilds achieved success at first against the port company, they lost their dominance in the port by 1899. The conflicts between the port company and the guilds escalated in 1899 when the port company acted against the law, which supported the guilds' monopoly to hire workers, and started to employ non-Muslims in the port. By 1907 the port company gained significant authority in the port.

Perhaps the most significant symbol of the European control of the Ottoman economy was the establishment of the Foreign Debts Office (Düyun-u Umumiye) in 1881 which would directly receive the taxes from certain products and customs for the payment of Ottoman debts. In 1884 *Reji* was established as a separate organization that would order the tobacco production and directly collect the tobacco taxes for thirty years (Quataert, 1987, p.24). The regulations of *Reji* resulted in serious economic deprivation

of many Muslim tradesmen, farmer, money lenders and factory workers who lost their jobs, market, and income. For example, almost 300 local tobacco companies were closed down after the foundation of *Reji* (Quataert, 1987, p.27). The fact that many protests and strikes came about and illegal trading of tobacco increased in great amounts illustrates profoundly the range of social conflict between the Muslims and the company.

While the non-Muslims and Europeans started to gain the upper hand in the Ottoman economy, the districts of Galata and Pera became the new commercial, cultural and residential centers of the city and Ottoman society by the late nineteenth century (Eldem, et al.1999; Duben and Behar, 2002). In addition to the loss of domination in the economic sphere, the Ottoman Muslims were also losing their social and cultural capital. Traditional forms and places of living were becoming outmoded and a new class of Ottoman Muslims was coming into existence, that is the new bureaucracy. The new state bureaucracy whose members were educated in the new modern schools of the Hamidian state was appropriating the new Western lifestyles, technologies, and products. Moreover, the state bureaucracy turned out to provide the most lucrative job opportunities to Muslims (Karpat, 2003). Hence these new bureaucrats of the state were turning into a distinguished class of Muslims different from the Muslim lower classes with respect to their social and economic capital. The Ottoman literature reveals that there was a rising criticism among the Muslim lower classes against this new state bureaucracy which seemed to be reproducing the lifestyles of the non-Muslims and Europeans rather than that of the traditional Muslim society.

The studies focusing on the analyses of the press and publications of the period of Abdulhamit II., such as the newspapers-magazines, treatises, and novels, reveal the fact that "West" was considered the "other" in the media discourse of the Ottoman empire.

“Firstly, the press accepted and appreciated that the "West" was advanced in technology and science, but the civilization of the "West" did not show the necessary progress ‘morally’...Ottoman intellectuals of this period frequently warned the society about the civilization and progress of the "West" in their writings and stated that the technology and scientific progress of the "West" should be taken as an example, but its "moral elements" should be avoided....the "occidental - civilization" understanding of

the press excludes "Western" civilization as the "other"; as it is not "us," not suitable for "us," not similar to "us" (Reyhan and Halaçoğlu, 2019, p. 165)

The media discourse also reproduces the binary opposition between the "alafranga" representing Westernized Ottoman Muslims and the "alaturka" representing the Ottoman Muslim majorities holding the traditional lifestyle and mentality. (Reyhan and Halaçoğlu, 2019, pp. 163-165) While the "alafranga" is mainly associated with the new Muslim bureaucracy, it was positioned hierarchically lower than the "alaturka" as it was criticized, ridiculed, and humiliated throughout the narratives in the media or the novels.

Similar criticism against the West and the degenerated Ottoman Muslims continued in the period after the 1908 revolution. Palmira Brummett illustrates this critical viewpoint in her analyses of the satirical figures and caricatures drawn in the newspapers between 1908 and 1911. The main elements of criticism emphasized in these caricatures were consumerism, adoption of Western lifestyles, and close relationships with the Europeans and non-Muslims.

The transformation of the Ottoman economy resulted in the social and economic deprivation of most of the Ottoman Muslim population. However, a part of the Ottoman Muslims, that is to say, the new bureaucrats of the state prospered together with the non-Muslims in the empire, started to adopt Western culture and lifestyle, purchased luxurious Western goods, and even moved to the newly established districts of the non-Muslims and Europeans, Galata and Pera. Hence, this led to the increasing suspicion of the lower-class Muslims, who started considering this new bureaucracy as "degenerated" and "alienated" from the traditional lifestyle of the Ottoman Muslims. In that respect, the new Muslim bureaucracy seemed to challenge the conventional distinction between the Muslims and the non-Muslims or the Europeans.

4. Traditional Morality Embedded in Modern Governmental Rationality of the Ottoman State

The conditions of possibility of the discourse of morality, which was appropriated and imposed by the Hamidian state on the Ottoman state officials, emerged in the late nineteenth century. The boundaries of the Hamidian discourse of morality were established in relation to the existing anxieties and demands of the lower-class Ottoman

Muslims, who were the essential victims of the socio-economic transformation of the late nineteenth century.

In addition to the various political agenda of the Hamidian state for deploying such a discourse of morality, the demands and anxieties of the lower-class Muslims also influenced the state’s embodying the duty of the moral ordering of its citizens. This discourse of traditional morality which was appropriated by the Hamidian state, was indeed the moral discourse of the Ottoman Muslim communities living in the central socio-political unit of the Ottoman society, that is to say, the neighborhood. The Muslim neighborhoods had been reproducing the traditional moral discourse for centuries until modernity based on two certain binary oppositions, which can be identified as the gender distinction between the males and the females and the communal distinction between the Muslims and the non-Muslims.

Ortaylı uses the two terms, the village (*köy*) and the neighborhood (*mahalle*) as synonymous. They denote the smallest administrative unit of the empire with the demarcation of its boundaries and the existence of a certain number of dwellers. They are both social and physical units in that respect. The village in the countryside and its counterpart, the neighborhood in the cities were considered as similar in terms of the neighborhood system functional in organizing life in these minor units of society. (Ortaylı, 2010, s.305-306).

Neighborhood (*mahalle*) refers to both the space and the community living in a particular district called *mahalle*, which is responsible for reproducing this traditional moral discourse (Düzbakar, 2003, p. 99-100).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the new bureaucracy, especially police and other state officials, were performing against this conventional discourse. Some of them were violating the moral code of female-male segregation, which is termed as prostitution. Some were violating religious segregation or behavioral principles diverting Muslims from non-Muslims and westerners. These were modern petite officials. Hence, these violations were considered and answered by the Hamidian government both for legitimacy purposes and for modern governmental rationality responding to the citizens’ demands.

State officials, among whom most were police officers, were reported to the government in terms of their immoral acts of being with prostitutes or getting involved in the prostitution business in their towns. Being with prostitutes was considered a problem of public security and morality, not only as criminal acts of certain individual officials. First of all, the public opinion regarding the state was challenged due to the improper deeds of the state officials. Hence, the legitimacy of the government was threatened by the indecent officials who were to protect the well-being of the citizens and the public order in society.

In 1893, a correspondence sent to Yıldız Palace was entitled as such "It is essential from the point of view of Islam and public order." It was stated that the heads of the Izmir police and gendarmerie who were primarily responsible for the public order and security of Izmir, ignored all kinds of immoral acts in return for money and that the chief commissar (başkomiser) had a significant share in the increase of immorality in Izmir. It was reported that the chief commissar and the police officers in his command supported situations contrary to public morals such as prostitution, gambling, theft and bribery. It has been stated that Muslim women were let to engage in prostitution with Christian and Jewish men in hotels. Moreover, although it was allowed to operate a brothel in only one district, there were even brothels in Kordon (a central, crowded, and old district of the city), and most importantly, if the government did not intervene immediately and order was not established, the government was informed regarding the danger of public insurrection. It has been indicated in the petition that the support of these movements, which are contrary to the beliefs and morals of the society, by state officials, breaks the trust of the people in the state (Çabuk, 2020, p.1511-2)

In line with the traditional and Muslim moral discourse, a Muslim woman's intercourse with a Christian or Jewish man was an act against religious teaching and sensitivity in Ottoman society. In 1860, a similar event took place in Beirut when a Christian man and a Muslim prostitute were committing adultery in Beirut, their raids at home caused days of conflict and riots that were hard to suppress. (Çabuk, 2020, p.1518)

On the other hand, some people who had enmity with the regional administrators, had treacherous feelings towards the state, and wanted to create chaos for the sake of their interests, were taking advantage of this sensitivity of the society about prostitution and

prostitutes to upset the public order by raising houses and mansions. A similar incident occurred in Sapanca. The house of Zeki Bey, the manager of Sapanca, was surrounded by the residents of the neighborhood because he had a prostitute in his house. Upon this report, police officers immediately went to the scene and investigated the case. According to the investigation, the principal's house was attacked with the provocation and encouragement of some people who acted against the government (Çabuk, 2020, p. 1518).

Another incident took place in Osmaniye Town when some villagers gathered around the house of District Governor (kaymakam) Ali Rıza Efendi, attacked and insulted the house. The police arrived on time and dispersed them immediately. It was understood by the investigation that this incident had taken place because the district governor had taken a prostitute to his house and for this reason, it would not be appropriate for him to continue as a civil servant, and a deputy was appointed instead of him (Çabuk, 2020, p. 1519).

When a certain İbrahim Naim Efendi locked up three prostitutes in his house while he was serving as the deputy governor in Bursa, it caused outrage in the society and all three prostitutes were evicted from the house in front of people. For this reason, the anger that occurred was tried to be placated, and İbrahim Efendi was immediately dismissed from his civil service. The people, who were upset during the Balkan wars and Armenian-Kurdish conflicts, did not find it right that İbrahim took such an action. İbrahim was arrested and exiled to Istanbul when the police heard that the people would gather and do harm to him.

Since the second half of the 19th century, prostitution had been a serious problem to be handled by the Ottoman government, especially in cities where the foreign population was dense, such as Izmir and Istanbul. In addition to the rising number of brothels and prostitutes, there were also houses or places that functioned as brothels in secrecy. Hence the Ottoman state started to implement a governmental technique in line with its liberal governmental rationality in order to cope with this rising problem of prostitution. The demands of the neighborhood members to govern immorality were answered by segregating the brothels from neighborhoods and regulating the people involved in prostitution with certain administrative measures in order to protect public health. Examination and treatment of the women in the brothels were deemed appropriate

and it was decided to inspect the brothel in Istanbul with instruction in 1884. Thus, unofficial brothels were licensed and acquired an official identity (Çabuk, 2020, p.1511).

There were rising complaints of common people living in the neighborhoods in the cities. In Istanbul especially in the Beyoğlu district, the people gave petitions to the police against the prostitution taking place in their neighborhoods.

“In all the petitions summarized above, the main references of the petitioners, while articulating their complaints, are to sets of polarizations such as normal and deviant, moral and immoral, respectful and disrespectful, honourable and dishonourable that led to the social, moral and spatial stigmatization of prostitutes. The petitioners mainly enforced their claims of possession of the street by inscribing these differences in space. They demanded that the ‘deviant and immoral’ existence and activities of the prostitutes be kept away from ‘their streets’ and closeted away from their respectable gaze, particularly that of their wives and daughters.” (Özbek, 2010, 563).

In line with liberal governmental rationality, the government tried to answer citizens’ complaints in order to provide good government. However, in general, instead of a complete prohibition of prostitution, it has produced solutions by permitting it to be implemented within certain limits outside the Muslim neighborhoods (Özbek, 2010, p. 563-4).

This juxtaposition of the state discourses of traditional morality and social security and order is revealed in a draft for an additional penal code that was prepared by the Director of Police in 1911.

“The draft proposed that those who prevent the police while taking the necessary measures to protect the morality of the people, guarantee the security and order of the neighborhoods and avoid the dissemination of venereal diseases and those who do not heed the warnings of the police in this respect are to be imprisoned from twenty-four hours to ten days and will pay a specified amount of cash.” (Özbek, 2010, p. 565)

A similar discourse of the state’s protection of the traditional morality and the health and care of its citizens can be detected in the note of the Ministry of Education sent to the Ministry of the Interior in 1913. It was a complaint regarding “the naked prostitutes behaving disgracefully on the balconies of houses facing the classrooms of the Mekteb-i Sultani” (Özbek, 2010, p.565). According to the note, the Ministry defined the situation as corrupting the morals of the innocent students studying in their classrooms (Özbek, 2010, p.566). The Ministry of Education’s note reveals the governmental rationality regarding the issue. As an administrative authority, the Ministry appropriated a certain

discourse of protecting the traditional morality together with the discourse of protecting the young students from elder prostitutes’ corrupted behaviors. The Ministry demanded certain measures to be taken by the Ministry of the Interior such as the closure of the brothels in that district.

The morally and socially inappropriate behavior of the state officials was the subject of complaints from the people. These complaints were generally expressed as impropriety and misconduct and were met with punishment and even dismissal of the officer.

In 1913, District Governor Kadri Efendi and Chief of Penalty Yusuf Kemal Bey were accused and recorded because they exhibited inappropriate and unprofessional behavior in a summer house they went to at the invitation of one of Safranbolu's prominent Greeks (Türkkan, 2020, p. 51). In this case, the moral code based on the distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims was violated in addition to the fact that the officials were considered to be involved in improper acts such as prostitution and etc.

The analyses of the archival data, found in the *Zaptiye Nezareti Evrakı* and *Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Zaptiye Nezareti Maruzatı*, with respect to the “immoral” or “inappropriate” behavior of the Ottoman policemen and bureaucrats provide us further understanding regarding the boundaries of the morality discourse offered by the Ottoman state. Moreover, the analyses of various denunciations and investigation reports would help us contemplate the possible responses of the Ottoman Muslims to this morality discourse to which they were subjected.

The archival documents mostly define the improper behavior with these specific terms, “umumi ahlaka aykırı” (contrary to the public morality), “gayr-ı edebi” (immoral), and “adab-ı İslamiyyeye mugayir davranışlar” (deeds against Islamic decency). First of all, it is witnessed that the inappropriate acts were mostly about sexual and personal life. The misdemeanors of the officials mostly consisted of committing adultery, engaging in affairs with prostitutes, marrying “inappropriate” women/prostitutes, and getting divorced from their virtuous or religious wives. In this respect, the individual’s sexuality was under the surveillance of the state and any breach of the norm was immediately denounced, then punished or corrected.

The immediate punishment for these kinds of breaches can be conceptualized as a disciplinary technique which is called the dividing practice by Foucault. According to Foucault individual is turned into a subject through the implementation of the dividing practices which try to divide him either inside himself or from others (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). In his analyses of the birth of the asylum at the end of the eighteenth-century Foucault illustrates the disciplinary techniques through which insane men were divided in themselves and from the others, sane ones. Before the birth of the asylum, the insane were treated with violence whereas in the asylum physical violence was mostly used as a threat. By the use of this strategy of fear, the madman acknowledged that his madness was an object to be punished and something to become regretted. Hence the madman who became aware of his guilt considered his madness or himself as an object to be corrected by himself and others (Foucault, 1984b, p.146).

All in all, the disciplinary techniques which were appropriated in the asylum divided the madman in himself as someone who was insane but who also owned reason beneath that madness. Hence insane existence of man was objectified by himself for the attainment of his reason. In this respect, although the madman was liberated from the iron chains on his wrists, his conscience was made his new chains.

Foucault illustrates brilliantly the liberal discourse of morality which was prominent in delineating the discursive boundaries of sanity in the eighteenth-century society of France. In the asylum, while the insane was trained to become sane, he was also manipulated to have a certain form of sanity, which was based on bourgeois morality. Foucault shows that the asylum was a juridical space where madman was continuously accused and then immediately judged and condemned. In this respect, madman was not free to act beyond the norms of the bourgeois society of the eighteenth century. As Foucault puts it, “disobedience by religious fanaticism, resistance to work, and theft, the three great transgressions against the bourgeois society, the three major offenses against its essential values, are not excusable even by madness.” (Foucault, 1984a, p.157). Any such transgression was immediately punished by repression and madman recognized his guilt.

Foucauldian conceptual framework outlined above helps us analyze the discursive boundaries of morality in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman society.

In 1893 a Muslim merchant who was among the notables of a certain neighborhood denounced the existence of a disorderly house in his neighborhood and accused several policemen for engaging in affairs with the prostitutes. As a result of the police investigation, it was found out that one of the denounced policemen, Vidinli Salih Efendi had divorced his wife and married one of the prostitutes called Pakize. Hence, he was punished by being expelled from his job (BOA, Zaptiye Nezareti Evrakı, 61/79. 1 Haziran 1893).

This example indicates that any transgression of the traditional family life prevailing in the Muslim quarters was unacceptable for the Muslims and the Ottoman state. The traditional family life had always been under the surveillance of the people living in each Muslim neighborhood and any breach against this form of life was punished by the people. The residents of the disorderly houses were immediately expelled from the neighborhood as a result of “mahalle baskını” (house raid) until the mid-nineteenth century. This internal social mechanism of surveillance dominant in the Muslim quarters was legally abolished by the Reform Decree of 1856 which brought legal protection to the personal lives and places of residences of the individuals. However, Ahmet Rasim indicates that house raids still continued in the last decades of the nineteenth century in Istanbul with a single difference from the earlier ones, that is the state or its police forces replaced the role of the residents of “mahalle” in these raids (Ahmet Rasim, 2007). The archival document mentioned above also seems to support this issue. The notable Muslim merchant of a certain neighborhood resorted to the local police station in order to provide the punishment of the breach. By the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman state was acting as the central agent responsible for sustaining public morality. The historical data reveals that traditional family life was the essential aspect of this discourse of morality which was appropriated by the Hamidian state and the Ottoman Muslims.

Another investigation report was also illuminating for understanding the boundaries of this morality discourse. One of the translators of the court, Sırrı Bey and his wife were denounced by another state official who worked in the Foreign Debts Office and several policemen due to their improper conducts in *Burgazada* (BOA, Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Zaptiye Nezareti Maruzatı 12/38. 2 Nisan 1894) According to the denunciations, in their visits to *Burgazada* Sırrı Bey and his wife wandered around the island together, went to certain promenades (seyregah), walked around the public places

like coffeehouses, attended to a café (gazino) together, smoked and drank coffee there. Moreover, they also visited the Hristos monastery, had dinner and drank wine there, and sat among the non-Muslims in a rather loose manner. In addition to that, they laughed loudly on the ferry among the non-Muslims and the non-Muslims applauded them.

There are three basic violations that were strictly emphasized throughout the denunciations mentioned in the investigation reports. First of all, the wife of Sırrı Bey violated the principle of the public invisibility of Muslim women. Second, the couple also seemed to violate the gender hierarchy dominant in the traditional family life by acting like the Western couples who attended the public realm together. In this respect, the appropriation of the Western style of family life and gender relations by the Muslim family was considered to be a serious breach of public morality. Third, the traditional segregation of the Muslim and non-Muslim communities from each other and thus the Muslim-non-Muslim hierarchy were challenged by this couple. Sırrı Bey and his wife wandered in the non-Muslim districts and contacted with the non-Muslim community in physical terms but they also acted like the non-Muslims and thus came close to the non-Muslims in cultural terms. Therefore, they seriously violated the Muslim-non-Muslim hierarchy which physically and culturally segregated the two communities from each other. In this respect, Sırrı Bey represents the class of new state bureaucrats which is considered to be a dangerous class that threatened the existing traditional hierarchies of gender and community. Indeed, this point was also revealed in the denunciations. These kinds of improper behavior of Sırrı Bey and Muslims like him would provide models for the Muslims and thus they were considered to be serious challengers to the public morality and needed to be immediately corrected.

According to another investigation report, a certain policeman İsmail was denounced for his improper conduct of acting in theatre (BOA, Zaptiye Nezaretı Evrakı, 70/23, 3 Aralık 1893). İsmail submitted his defense to the police department in which he narrated the incident in detail. He said that the accusation about his acting in the theatre was slander but he approved that he had really been in the theatre that day. He went there to help his friend, Ali Efendi who was a former policeman acting in the theatre. He said that he had to lend his shoes to his friend who immediately needed them for his performance. Therefore, İsmail sat behind the curtain as he was waiting for Ali Efendi to get back his shoes after his performance. İsmail also criticized the criminalization of

himself for attending to the theatre and questioned his being accused by saying “Is it necessary for a person to be arrested by writing a play and being the author of it?” (“Bir insan tiyatro piyesi yazmak ve müellifi olmakla tevkif mi olmuş lüzum gelir.”)

This incident requires contemplating on the meaning of theatre both for the state and the Ottoman people. In the Hamidian era, the theatres were under the surveillance of the state. There were many reports given to the sultan about the audiences and contents of the plays. We can figure out that the theatres were considered to be dangerous places that could propagate opposition against the regime. We can also argue that as a Western form of entertainment, both the Hamidian state and the Ottoman Muslims of the lower strata were considered theatre as a threat against the public morality. However, the case illustrates the fact that the two policemen who were the members of the lower-class Muslims were also infatuated with theatre and did not consider this Western form of entertainment as something improper. In this respect, the case displays the existence of different responses of the people to the morality discourse imposed on them. It reminds us that the morality discourses or truth regimes in Foucault’s words are not totally hegemonic in defining the identities of the subjects. People may accept or refuse the offered morality discourses with respect to their differential subject positions.

Moreover, the significance of agency is also revealed in the incident that took place in *Burgazada*. As the archival data reveals, some of the members of the new state bureaucracy did not follow the discourse of morality that was both dominant among the Ottoman Muslim lower classes and reproduced by the state itself.

Conclusion

Since the Tanzimat edict, the Ottoman state started to adopt liberal governmental rationality similar to the Western states. According to Foucault, government refers to “the conduct of conduct” and governmentality is state’s use of such governmental techniques for conducting the acts of individuals.

Like all its Western contemporaries, the Ottoman state defined various populations (categorically defined groups of people as chaste family women, prostitutes, children, students, civil servants, policemen, etc.) as the subject of its modern management strategy. Individuals in each population were also governed by various modern

institutions of power (hospital, police, school, army, etc.) through various practices of surveillance, punishment, and reward.

Presenting the genealogy of moral discourse in the late Ottoman society, this study showed that the moral regime in the premodern Ottoman neighborhood was combined with the modern governmental discourse focused on good governance, which served the safety and well-being of society and citizens (i.e., populations and the individuals within them, respectively).

The agenda of ensuring legitimacy among Muslim citizens, who constitute the majority of the population, was also effective in the reproduction of the moral norms of the society by the state. In this period, the misfits who sabotaged these moral norms consisted of state officials who did not pay attention to public social segregations based on gender and religion, and police and civil servants who publicly engaged in prostitution in residential neighborhoods. To correct the behavior of these civil servants, the state was using punitive practices. In this context, moral discourse was supported by the state apparatus and those who did not comply with these traditional moral codes were spied on and judged by the authorized officers upon the complaints of the locals or the thought that the locals would be disturbed.

Thus, the research illustrated that the discourse of morality reproduced by the Ottoman state bureaucracy and institutions was not only constructed and imposed on the people by the upper echelons of the state bureaucracy and the sultan himself as an effect of an Islamist conservative ideology but the anxieties and demands of the lower strata of the Ottoman society had a great impact on the constitution of such a discourse.

Late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire started to protect and control the morals of its citizens, similar to the internal control of the premodern period neighborhood and protecting the local morality. The moral discourse of the neighborhood is combined with the "governmental discourse of looking after the citizens" of the state. However, the modern Ottoman state at the turn of the century was in direct contact with its citizens instead of dealing with a political body or an intermediary institution, that is to say, the neighborhood.

The house raids in the neighborhood and the prevention of moral control by the people of the neighborhood were prevented by laws after 1856. When the modern power

apparatus of the state could not make people or state officials behave in accordance with the norms of the neighborhood, there could be unrest or social reactions could evolve into communal conflicts. The hegemonic moral discourse in society, based on norms such as the separation of men and women, the spatial and social segregation of religious groups, constituted the codes of behavior in the neighborhood.

In this respect, the modern state had to control these norms in order to meet both the security of the citizens and their demands. At the turn of the century the Ottoman state, which had increased its administrative modernization, became the sole responsible for public security and order. The state apparatus provided this public order by preserving the traditional neighborhood order. In other words, the citizen-centered state discourse whose main agenda was public safety, public health and the demands of the citizens was juxtaposed with the traditional moral discourse of the Ottoman neighborhood in the late nineteenth-century governmental discourse of the Ottoman state.

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