Analysis of Pax-Ottomanica in Minorities Society : A Case Study of Millet System

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Abstract

This paper focuses on Pax-Ottomanica in a case study of the Millet System through multi ethnic and multi religious communities in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the Millet System has successfully roamed people in Europe, Asia, and Africa for nearly 600 years. This paper also discusses Islamic law on the relationship between other religions such as Judaism and Christianity. This study uses a qualitative method with a whole literature approach. Based on the data analyzed, it was found that harmony occurs between fellow religious and ethnic people with the freedom to embrace their respective religions and maintain their respective cultures. This paper aims to analyze the state of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious society in the Ottoman Empire by providing various references from both Turkish and Western historians. In addition, this paper aims to introduce Ottoman-style freedom through this Millet system, which has succeeded in bringing all non-Muslim communities into one Ottoman commonwealth.
Keywords: *Pax Ottomanica, Millet System, Minorities, Ottoman Empire.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada Pax-Ottomanica dalam studi kasus Sistem Millet berhubungan dengan komunitas multi etnis dan multi agama di Kekaisaran Ottoman. Secara khusus, Sistem Millet telah berhasil merangkul orang-orang Eropa, Asia, dan Afrika selama hampir 600 tahun. Tulisan ini juga membahas penerapan hukum Islam tentang hubungan antara agama-agama lain seperti Yudaisme dan Kristen. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka. Berdasarkan data analisis, ditemukan bahwa sistem Millet ini telah berhasil menjaga kerukunan antara sesama umat beragama dan etnis dengan kebebasan memeluk agamanya masing-masing dan tetap mempertahankan budayanya masing-masing. Tulisan ini juga bertujuan untuk menganalisis keadaan masyarakat multi-etnis dan multi-agama di Kekaisaran Ottoman dengan memberikan berbagai referensi baik dari sejarawan Turki maupun Barat. Selain itu, tulisan ini bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan kebebasan ala Ottoman melalui sistem Millet yang berhasil menyatukan tiap bangsa dalam satu pesemakmuran Ottoman.
Kata Kunci: *Pax Ottomanica, Sistem Millet, Minoritas, Kekaisaran Ottoman*

Introduction

For more than 600 years, the Ottoman Empire managed to control an area that stretched from Europe, Asia, to Africa. This vast territory caused the Ottoman Empire to having a diverse population both ethnically and religiously. In this context, the Ottoman Empire is a historical example of the coexistence of various religious and social groups. In the Ottoman Empire, Muslims, Christians, and Jews could worship side by side and enrich their cultural identities. The story of Ottoman history involves the Ottoman dynasty and the many peoples who ruled the Empire and were ruled by it: Turks, Arabs, Serbs, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Albanians, North Africans, and others.

Every ethnicity and religion are allowed to maintain their identity. In this sense, the Ottoman Empire was the only empire officially recognized the three monotheistic religions in the Middle Ages and modern times. It ensured harmonious coexistence with their ethnic and religious groups. The Ottoman Empire has always welcomed non-Muslims who were oppressed and persecuted in various countries because of their religion. Freedom of worship and conscience was granted to non-Muslims, and no pressure was put on them to change their religion (Kazıcı, 2002).

Pax Ottomanica or, in Turkish, Pax Ottomana is a term taken after Pax Romana in the history of the Roman Empire. This expression is used by Ottoman historians, especially Western historians, to describe the harmony of the nations subject to the order established by the Ottoman Empire (Donahue, 2015). In the Ottoman Empire, each region was integrated into the main structure within the framework of its compartment. Ottoman society lived for centuries with the "Millet System." Today, 64 countries were born from the fragments of the Ottoman Empire. Thirty-three of these are Muslim-majority countries, and 31 are non-Muslim-majority countries (one of which is Jewish-majority). Some of the peoples belonging to these countries lived together in peace for six hundred years, some for four hundred years, and some for a longer or shorter period.

The majority of people living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire were Muslims. About a third of the entire population is non-Muslim. While Turks and Arabs make up most of the elements that make up the Muslim population, the elements that make up the Christian population are more dispersed and consist of small but diverse elements. The Ottoman Empire, whose territory covered significant parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, had a population of about 35 million during the Tanzimat period. About 15.5 million live in "Rumelia" on European soil, about 16 million in Anatolia and the Arabian

Peninsula, and 3.8 million are from Tripoli and Tunisia (Çinar, 2019). Therefore, there is no unity of religion, sect, language, or lineage. There is no unity of tradition and culture among those who are considered one ancestor. Apart from the absence of religion, sect, language, and lineage, the geographical and historical differences caused by the vast land are harmful.

Typical of the social structure of the Middle East in terms of population distribution and quality is the diversity and complexity of the groups gathered around ethnic, religious, and tribal ties. Middle Eastern social structure as a "social mosaic" or "divided society" derives from this feature (Çinar, 2019). In addition to ethnic divisions such as Turks, Arabs, and Iranians, divisions into Muslims, Christians, and Jews, the sectarian differentiation of Sunni-Alevi Muslims and sectarian differences among Christians give the Middle East the appearance of a social mosaic. The situation in Macedonia is no different. Serbs, Bulgarians, and Greeks lived a mixed life. The three elements are Orthodox. However, religious feelings are not enough to boil these elements. The fact that their national feelings are more substantial than their religious feelings and that they claim land rights to each other causes conflict between them, which leads to endless and frequent clashes. happen.

Based on the background described above. The purpose of this paper is to provide an in-depth analysis of the life of multi-ethnic and multi-religious people in the Ottoman Empire. Thus providing a critical view of some Western historians who think that the harmony of the state in the Ottoman Empire is just nonsense. Through the term Pax Ottomanica which was developed by several Turkish historians such as Halil nalçık and Iber Ortaylı, we can describe this harmony as the value and capital of the world community in the future. That life can still go on even though differences are everywhere. Respecting diversity can avoid the disintegration of the nation. This thought made me interested in writing a journal entitled Analyses of Pax-Ottomanica in Minorities Society: A case study of the Millet System.

Method

In this paper, the author uses this qualitative research through a library approach. The data obtained from the documentation involves historiographical analysis and interpretation related to the history of multiculturalism in the Ottoman Empire through the study of the Millet System. These data are then evaluated and formulated critically so that the research objectives can be achieved. By involving historiographical analysis of

historical research results should be able to provide a clear picture of the research process from the beginning (planning phase) to the end (conclusion). The historiography that the author describes here is more of a historical explanation. Historical Explanation is to make an intelligible effort (understood intelligently) so that it is based on that every historical event or event has a different uniqueness.

Millet System and Legal Status of Non-Muslims

Since the Ottoman Empire managed to expand its territorial power massively, covering three continents. It is challenging if the citizens of this multicultural society from Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, and Africa do not have one identity that can unite all. The Ottoman Empire stood not only from the Turks but also from multiethnic and multi-religious. Even so, followers of Islam played a significant role in shaping policies related to multiculturalism in the Ottoman Empire.

Millet comes from the Arabic "Milla" which refers to a religious community other than Islam. In the Qur'an, millet often refers to the "millat Ibrahim" or the Abrahamic religion (Öztürk, 2014). However, this term is rarely heard in the holy books of Judaism or Christianity. The Ottoman Empire had rulers who implemented Islamic law in their government. Non-Muslims living in Islamic countries have been given the right to legal protection, and guarantees of life both materially and spiritually have been guaranteed by the state.

Non-Muslims living in Muslim countries are called "dhimmi." The Ottoman Empire maintained personal rights for every society regardless of ethnicity or religion. This dhimmi status is used to govern non-Muslims according to Islamic law. This status applies to those who remain steadfast in their own religion. Non-Muslims cannot hold strategic positions related to sovereignty - head of state, qadi, commander-in-chief, Etc., but non-Muslims may be employed in other government positions. In addition, non-Muslims are exempt from military service obligations and are required to pay the "jizyah" tax collected to be given to widows, children, the elderly, the poor, the ulama, and the sick. Non-Muslims and Muslims must comply with Islamic law and customary law in matters relating to public order. Even so, in family, heritage, some commercial affairs, and religious-cultural matters, they can follow their respective traditions and religions.

According to Barkey, the millet system, which was institutionally established during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Fatih (1444-1481) after the conquest of Istanbul as a systematic form of rights granted to non-Muslims in Islamic law, was adapted to "local

conditions and needs" in the Ottoman context. The millet system operating under state control in the Ottoman Empire began when Mehmet the Conqueror appointed the Orthodox Patriarch after the conquest of Istanbul and gave Orthodoxy broad autonomy in internal affairs and religious matters. In this period, the empire's primary administrative and secondary legal structures were created for the non-Muslim community, and the economic, legal, religious, linguistic, and cultural development of each nation recognized by the state was supported, and their unique identity was maintained. Over time, the same was provided for Armenians and Jews (Braude, 2014).

In the millet system, a religious leader is appointed as manager of the religious community and carries out the internal relations and administration of the state and non-Muslim communities. These community leaders do not only take care of religious affairs but also administrative matters (Çinar, 2019). In a sense, religious communities have the status of administrative communes. With the millet system, non-Muslims have special autonomy to take care of several areas such as education, social security, justice, population, religious affairs, and foundation services. In addition, fields such as general administration, security, finance, and military service must be taken care of by the state.

The millet system accepts the concept of religion as fundamental to all life. Therefore, non-Muslims have administrative autonomy in an extensive area, except for sovereignty and government affairs. This system is not limited to any particular geographic area. Instead, this millet system can be implemented both in cities and in villages and has qualities like governance within government (Eryılmaz, 1992). In terms of general appearance, the millet system provides non-Muslims with semi-independent status in administration and fully autonomous in matters of religion.

The millet system in the Ottoman Empire can be classified into three different social models. The first model is assimilation, the majority or dominant nation assimilating other people into its own culture. Second, the integration model is based on individual equality; pluralism is seen as a positive feature and encourages coexistence. Third, the segregation model is a model of traditional society based on differences, and other communities continue their existence in exchange for obedience to the dominant element. (Vahapoğlu, 1996).

Some Western historians think that the millet system is very discriminatory. However, this view is disputed by the Turkish historian, Halil Inalçik. He argued that the millet system could not be defined simply as an autonomous group or assembly, organized under a representative or consul. The Muslims themselves are also under the regulation of

Islamic millet in every area where they live. Millet was not wholly restricted to religion. Even the foreign merchant community was also considered millet.

The concept of "nation," which emerged in the West in modern times, literally has the same meaning as the word millet in Turkish and Persian. The word millet becomes a purely sociological and political concept by abstracting its religious content in Islamic literature. The idea that the state should be based on the nation has become the dominant political thought in other countries, and Turkey was no exception in the 19th century (Braude, 2014). However, different theories have been put forward in the political approach in each period regarding the definition and criteria of the nation. There is a discussion about whether elements such as language, religion, geography, general history, and citizenship should be criteria for nationality alone or in combination.

This Millet system can be a pioneer of the ideas of freedom in each individual, which the West then tried to adopt. The Millet system has succeeded in bringing the Ottoman Empire into harmony among the people. The Ottoman Empire made this inter-religious and ethnic reconciliation centuries ago. The Ottoman Empire began to apply universal human rights standards in classical times (14th to 19th centuries) long before the French revolution. In short, during the reign of the Ottoman Empire, personal rights and freedoms were highly protected. Their legal basis is provided there is the Qur'an. Many Christians and Jews held positions of Sadrazam or Prime Minister in the Ottoman Empire. It is believed that the norms that existed in Ottoman society, such as "your brethren in religion" or "equals in creation," served as the main principle for civil society. Sharing the highest political position with non-Muslim citizens was a great invention at that time. This is another remarkable historical fact which denies that the Ottoman Empire imposed discriminatory policies against non-Muslims.

Representation of Non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire

The representation of religion as a standard set of principles and practices outlined organizationally made religion the initial foundation of all things in Ottoman Empire society. This foundation also provides an operational basis for social interaction between communities. Therefore, understanding the interaction of religion also means understanding the complex processes that shape religious identity, religious boundaries, and religious differences. This is where religious identity begins to operate as actions to protect specific cultural and traditional values (Kaya, 2013).

Eyaletler	Müslüman Hane	Hıristiyan Hane	Yahudi Hane	Toplam Hane	Tahmini Nüfus (5xhane sayısı)
Anadolu	540.963	4.471	-	545.434	2.272.170
Karaman	143.254	2.448	-	145.702	728.510
Zülkadriye	66.776	2.687	-	69.463	347.315
Diyarbekir	72.675	11.979	-	131.843	659.215
Rum	118.683	55.237	-	173.920	869.600
Arap	131.399	444	-	131.843	659.215
Rumeli	211.783	824.613	4.061	1.040.457	5.202.285
İstanbul					400.000
Toplam	1.285.533	901.879	4.061	2.191.473	11.357.365

Figure 1. Number of Muslim and Non-Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century source: Osmanli iktisad Tarihi Anadolu University.
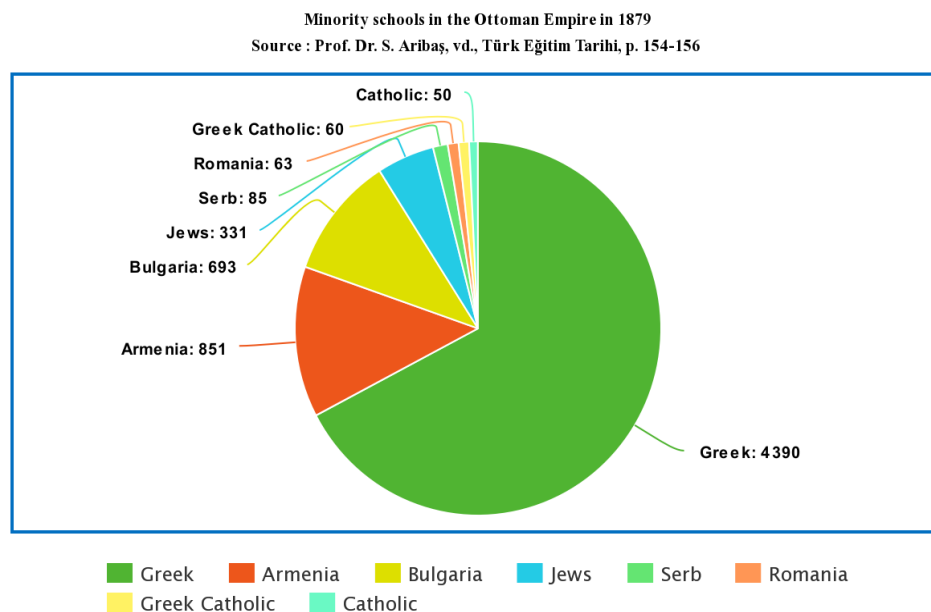
The representation of non-Muslims in the governing body of the Ottoman Empire could not be separated from the political relations established with other empires in Europe. The first political relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of France began in 1525 and began in the 16th century. Since that century, the two sides have interestingly aligned their positions in Europe in terms of common interests. The relationship between the two countries was indirectly formalized at the request of King François I of Sultan Kanuni Suleiman as a result of the alignment of European powers. The second group of non-Muslim schools opened in the Ottoman Empire apart from schools belonging to the minority were "foreign schools." During the Ottoman Empire, the first foreign schools, such as French, English, and German schools, were opened within the body of the embassy called the Kedubes Kediaman (Permanent Embassy) and for the children of officials. These schools are also allowed to attend wealthy and respected non-Muslim children in the same city (Khuluq, 2015). However, the basis for the opening of schools, the number of which increased in the following years, was a treaty of economic and commercial cooperation signed in 1536 between France, which had the mission of physical power of the Papacy, and the Ottoman Empire, which was the body of Islam, and was known as "submission." With this treaty, several economic and commercial rights were granted to France to destroy European unity and the spirit of the crusade against the Ottomans.

This agreement then acquires religious, political, legal, and social content. In line with the country's weakening, the concessions granted to France were also given to other countries such as Germany, Italy, Britain, and America. For example, foreign countries France and Italy, Catholic Christians; Germany includes Catholics and Protestants;

Russian Orthodox; British and American Protestants had protection. Modernization that occurred in the body of the Ottoman government emerged due to practical needs, unlike in Europe, where modernization emerged as a result of revolution/transformation in the philosophical, intellectual, and scientific fields (Cemil, 2010).

The Tanzimat period (1839-1876), which began with Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayun on November 3, 1839, brought about essential changes in the state's administration in many cases in the Ottoman Empire. Tanzimat is a westernization movement that emerged with an attempt to re-tighten the social ties that had been severed between the Ottoman Empire and other empires in Europe. In this regard, the Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayun recited in front of state dignitaries, large masses of people, spiritual leaders of the Ottoman people, and foreign diplomats on November 3, 1839, was a turning point in the changing state policies and social life of the Ottoman Empire and marked the beginning of a new era.

With this decree, the Ottoman Empire re-established unity among non-Muslim communities, which in the latter period experienced relaxation. The Ottoman Empire, under pressure and intervention by major European powers, wanted every non-Muslim community to live together with the Turkish and other Muslim communities. Again, by decree, security of life, property, and honor was guaranteed to all citizens. Open courts, abolition of confiscation, a regular tax system, and conscription procedures were introduced in place of the tax farming system.

Minority schools in the Ottoman Empire in 1879
Source : Prof. Dr. S. Aribaş, vd., Türk Eğitim Tarihi, p. 154-156

Catholic: 50
Greek Catholic: 60
Romania: 63
Serb: 85
Jews: 331
Bulgaria: 693
Armenia: 851
Greek: 4390

Greek | Armenia | Bulgaria | Jews | Serb | Romania | Greek Catholic | Catholic

Figure 2 Number of minority schools in the Ottoman Empire

The right to equal Muslims, granted to non-Muslims by the Decree of Tanzimat, was further expanded by the Decree of Reformation of 1856. With the New Decree, non-Muslims under Ottoman nationality had a much more comfortable living space than before. Before Tanzimat, it was possible to understand who was from which nationality in the Ottoman Empire. The primary purpose of this application is to provide this differentiation in a social sense. However, with the new regulations introduced, the discrepancy has been prevented.

However, the Decree of 1856 did not please Muslims, nor did it make non-Muslims happy. non-Muslim communities are disappointed and object to the limitation of power only given to religious leaders or priests. There was no room for this community to participate in the Ottoman government other than religious leaders who worked in church assemblies who could represent themselves in the Ottoman government. On the other hand, non-Muslims are generally satisfied with the rights granted to them. However, they are particularly disturbed by the fact that they are also given military service like Muslims. Whereas in the past, this policy did not apply to non-Muslims (Özçoşar, 2003). According to Halil nalçık, it does not rule out that some non-Muslims are willing to join the military service without any coercion. This effort was made to protect Christian areas from Muslim rulers.

Non-Muslims continue to have the political rights they had acquired through the Gülhane Line, along with previous rights and privileges. During the reign of Abdülhamit II, it is seen that Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were employed in various offices at Porte Sublime, governorships, and embassies to serve the court. The fact that Christians are superior to Muslims in modern education forces the government to take advantage of them in political and administrative offices so that they begin to be effective in the administration of the state rather than the dominant elements of the state (Eryılmaz,1996). Due to the same advantages, they become more prosperous in economic terms than the Muslim elements, cooperate with them in the exercise of commercial and industrial rights granted to foreigners, thereby increasing their wealth and welfare. They became effective in the administration of the state and obtained a different position from the Muslims in terms of education and economy. The fact that they took part in the First Parliament and occupied important positions in the administration of the state, together with the various privileges granted to them and their communities in the previous period, made this mob entirely out of control. They had already begun to show their betrayal without hiding their betrayal from the public, along with the plagues they could reach, inside and outside themselves.

However, at that time, no other country in the world could provide more opportunities to all citizens loyal to the country, regardless of race, color, religion, or language, than the Ottoman Empire. These possibilities are so overwhelming that anything is possible in the Ottoman Empire.

This situation occurred, and the Ottoman Empire, unable to keep up with the day's conditions, faced minority anti-state behavior, especially under Western influence and guided by Western influence, injected with a sense of nationalism and the ideals of establishing a state. The school occupies the most important place among the foundations on which these movements are prepared, what to do with these schools, which grew like an avalanche in a concise time and outnumbered state-owned schools in some places.

Judging from Ottoman history, the Tanzimat Period (1839-1871) was a time of radical changes in law and administration. In this period, non-Muslims living in state lands in the name of changing the world and the defense of Ottoman lands against the West were given the same status as Muslims in government and before the law. Ottoman state leaders classified nations according to national differences rather than religious differences that existed in the millet system of the past. In addition to the Sharia Courts, modern courts of law began to function within the state. During the Tanzimat Period, various "Regulations" were issued by the state, and new laws and regulations were made for non-Muslim Ottoman citizens. With the Decree of Tanzimat (1839), non-Muslims obtained the same rights as other Muslims. The country's national system changed, and the phrase "All citizens will be equal before the law regardless of religion, race or status." In the period 1839 to 1918, to prevent the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, several broad rights were granted to prevent the loyalty of non-Muslim citizens to the state and separatist activities, which were provoked by European countries and Russia at the home country (Çinar, 2010).

At the end of the 19th century, the escalation of conflicts that occurred in the body of the Ottoman government reached its peak. The conflicts that occurred came from external factors and internal ones that came from the body of the Ottoman government. Various Pan-Slavic uprisings took place in the Balkans. The spirit of resistance was also carried out by ethnic minorities such as the Armenians in Istanbul. In addition, the rapid progress of the empires in Europe made the Ottomans far behind in the military, social, political, and educational fields themselves.

Conclusion

The Ottoman Empire, which stood for almost 600 years covering various ethnicities and religions, is an exciting example of religious harmony to follow. When viewed in general, the Millet system that applies to Muslim and non-Muslim communities provides freedom for each community to maintain and carry out worship according to the values adopted by their respective religions. Apart from racial, ethnic, and religious differences, the Millet System has successfully united the entire world community under the Ottoman Empire.

Internal and external factors that hindered the progress of the Ottoman Empire politically, socially, culturally, and technologically triggered various problems within the Ottoman government. In addition, the spirit of nationalism that rose as a result of the French Revolution and the spirit of Pan-Slavism that was trying to rise in the Balkans was another external factor that caused the Millet system to end at the end of the Ottoman Empire. But we should be aware that both Muslims and non-Muslims accept some freedoms and responsibilities of their own. Non-Muslims in this system are given the freedom to practice their traditions and rituals as they wish.

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