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Reconsidering Local versus Central: Empire, Notables, and Employment in Ottoman Albania and Kurdistan, 1835–1878

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Abstract

The present article is a study of provincial administration in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Albania and Kurdistan. It examines the transformation of provincial administration in Dibra and Hazro after two towns' hereditary rulers were exiled. Focusing on the employment patterns of the notables in exile as well as the ones who occupied the posts in the absence of the former, this study challenges the binary framework mostly employed in conceptualizing the making of the modern Ottoman state. Particularly, the employment of the notables exiled to the distant parts of the empire necessitates a revision in the presumptions about the origins of appointed Ottoman officials. By focusing on the partnership operating by means of employment, this study argues that the making of Ottoman state follows a trajectory of flexible centralization based on the partnership between the government and notables, terms of which were constantly negotiated.

Key Words: Ottoman Empire; Tanzimat; notables; province; provincial administration

In 1835, the Ottoman Empire was struck by two rebellions, one in Dibra, today a Macedonian town bordering Albania, and the other in Hazro, a town in the northeast of Diyarbakır province. In the former case, Hakkı Pasha of Dibra was defeated and consequently exiled to Istanbul.¹ Meanwhile, in Hazro, the increasing discontent of the Zirki emirs due to taxation and conscription turned into open rebellion. As a part of the greater reform scheme in Ottoman Kurdistan, Mehmed Reşid Pasha defeated the forces of the emirs, banishing them to Edirne.² What made these otherwise ordinary rebellions remarkable was that their suppression terminated hereditary rule in both Dibra and Hazro. In other words, the Hoxholli beys in Dibra and the Zirki emirs in Hazro, who had ruled their provinces for centuries, were uprooted from their homelands and exiled to the opposite ends of the empire.

The survival of the provincial notables into the 19th century is a phenomenon the systematic description of which still suffers from conflicting interpretations of state and society. Two seminal works by Halil İnalcık and Albert Hourani have stimulated a large volume of studies on provincial notables, yet the resulting scholarship has been marked by an almost insurmountable opposition between those who focus on the “central” and those who emphasize the “local.”³ Notwithstanding the edgy positions and politically charged claims of the opposing sides, the two approaches to historiography in fact share a common infrastructure. In addition to a framework of curiously rich binary differences, İnalcık- and Hourani-led historiographies have in common an extreme grounding in modernization theory. The two historiographies have concomitantly confined discussions of the Tanzimat (1839–76) reform project to a spectrum of success and failure in which modernization, used at times interchangeably with

¹State Archives of the Republic of Turkey, Department of Ottoman Archives, Istanbul, Turkey (hereafter BOA), HAT. 414/21464-A, 13 Receb 1251 (4 November 1835).

²BOA, HAT. 453/22435-A, 5 Zilkade 1250 (5 March 1835).

³Halil İnalcık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600–1700,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980): 283–337; Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables,” in *The Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. W. R. Polk and R. L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 83–109.

centralization, becomes primarily an affair of institutions, conducive to positive change only in concert with modernization by the state.⁴

Questioning the historicity of the very dichotomies attributed to the transformation of 19th-century Ottoman provincial administration, the present study deals with the career trajectories of the hereditary dynasts of Dibra and Hazro in the aftermath of their exiles. The employment patterns of some of the Hoxholli beys in Dibra and the Zirki emirs in Hazro complicate the dynamics of 19th-century provincial politics, which is often overwhelmed in the literature by the insistence of scholars on viewing them through the lens of either institutional frameworks or localism. By demonstrating the frequent shifts and fluidity between local notables and central officials, this study is a historiographical intervention. Akin to Marc Aymes' approach, it puts to the test the identification of a "periphery" and "vision of the state centre."⁵ By examining the comparative employment patterns of provincial notables, I argue that the making of the modern Ottoman state was the result of flexible centralization relying on a partnership, the terms of which were negotiated between the government and provincial notables. This flexible centralization is not a unidirectional standard per se, but rather close to Olivier Bouquet's articulation of transformation: "a liberated, synthetic and integrative notion" that frees the historical analysis of societal change from retrospective interpretations based on "final acts," that is, modernization.⁶ In this transformation, it was employment of provincial notables as a result of negotiation with the government rather than co-optation that rendered the government the active, if not the unilateral, party in a bilateral interaction. This study aims to revise our understanding of Ottoman modernization, which, as a result of "doing history backward," has heretofore primarily been evaluated through the prism of a priori theories by 20th-century historians. I argue instead that the making of the modern Ottoman state was a synthesis that emerged out of a partnership that became visible only when released from the shackles of the oft-cited dichotomies of traditional vs. modern and local vs. central.⁷

Until the last decade or so, Ottoman historiography has for the most part portrayed the provincial notables as members of a coherent institution who distorted the state power in favor of the local, acting as prominent foes of the central government.⁸ Scholars inspired by the Hourani framework, however, sought the origins of proto-national Arab notables by highlighting their local power in interaction and confrontation with the central authorities.⁹ Provincial councils, one of the novelties introduced in the Tanzimat era, are a notable site of this difference in approach: whereas the center-oriented studies entertain notions of the efficacy and control of these institutions, local-oriented studies instead underline the options that councils offered to the notables.¹⁰

Up until the last decade or so, the number of studies on Ottoman provinces in the Balkans and Anatolia (i.e., the "core" provinces) has fallen behind the proliferating studies on the Ottoman Arab provinces. Even though Hourani himself developed an approach integrating notables with the Ottoman state, most of the studies on the Arab provinces have developed an interest in "ethnic, religious and other differences," framing the relation as an implicit confrontation between indigenous Arab elites and imposed

⁴Alan Mikhail and Christine M. Philliou, "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012): 739; Olivier Bouquet, "Is It Time to Stop Speaking about Ottoman Modernisation?" in *Government Practices in Turkey from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Early 21st Century*, ed. Marc Aymes, Benjamin Gourisse, and Élise Massicard (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 48.

⁵Marc Aymes, *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2014), 42–43. For the original in French, see Marc Aymes, *Un grand progrès—sur le papier: Histoire provinciale des réformes ottomanes à Chypre au XIXe siècle* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010).

⁶Olivier Bouquet, "Du déclin à la transformation: Réflexions sur un nouveau paradigme en histoire ottomane," *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, no. 53 (2016): 134.

⁷Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 18–22; Bouquet, "Is It Time?" 52.

⁸Bruce McGowan, "The Age of the *Ayans*, 1699–1812," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 637–758.

⁹Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860–1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁰Christoph K. Neumann, "Ottoman Provincial Towns in the Eighteenth to Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), 143.

Turkish elites.¹¹ The immediate result was a preference for indigenous sources at the expense of the Ottoman archives; another consequence was an increasing preoccupation with ways to tackle the state–society divide.¹² The literature has generated new conceptualizations to render the divide less oppositional, to say the least. Whereas *Ottomanization* hints at the eventual merger of imperial officials with local power holders, *Ottomanization-localization*, concerned with the former’s one-sidedness, underlines the dual, interactive, and multidimensional nature of the interaction.¹³ Notwithstanding the evolution in curbing the divide between state and society, the literature has, to a certain extent, maintained its binary framework, except for the term *bilateral factionalism*, which at least evaded the ethnic dichotomy.¹⁴

Despite the emphasis in recent pre-Tanzimat studies on notables’ fluid identities and the give-and-take nature of the relationships they established with the Ottoman government, restoration by historians of the notables into the Tanzimat proper still reflects a reified dichotomy between a centralizing state and local notables in different guises.¹⁵ The neo-Weberian approach, for instance, with its teleological narrative of centralization, does not give much space to provincial notables, since “rational settlements, uniform rules and regulations, and universal legal principles” were to replace the flexible forms of integration.¹⁶ To be sure, given the ultimate outcome of centralization, the narrative of modernization has been keen on annihilating these local intermediaries from the provincial political landscape.¹⁷ No matter how much negotiation took place between the provincial notables and the government, the success of centralization would lie with the integration of the notables into the provincial administration, which is narrated as a deliberate and unilateral act of the central state.¹⁸ In this context, the roles attributed to the notables in this transformation are primarily depicted as transitional, whereas the telos associated with modernization is articulated in terms of “arrival points” that move toward centralization of the state.¹⁹

An almost perfect mirror-image of the center-oriented studies, the recent works based on the Hourani framework reproduce the reification of the core and periphery structure. Albeit with a focus on the historical and cultural connections intricately intertwining the center and periphery, some scholars have argued that the local institutions of the Arab provinces remained in local hands “despite powerful Tanzimat centralization efforts and later Young Turk unification projects.”²⁰ Although Hourani’s definition of notables is updated to include non-Muslims, most recent studies on the Ottoman Arab provinces

¹¹Jane Hathaway, “Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Ottoman History,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19, no. 1 (2004): 35; James L. Gelvin, “The ‘Politics of Notables’ Forty Years After,” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 40, no. 1 (2006): 26; Hülya Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: ‘Ayntab in the 17th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 118.

¹²For studies relying almost exclusively on local sources, see Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1985); Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Margaret L. Meriwether, *The Kin Who Count: Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo, 1770–1840* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999).

¹³Khoury, *State and Provincial Society*, 213–14; Ehud Toledano, “The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites (1700–1900): A Framework for Research,” in *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas: A History from Within*, ed. Moshe Ma’oz and Ilan Pappé (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997), 148. See also, Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 103–7.

¹⁴Jane Hathaway, “Bilateral Factionalism in the Ottoman Provinces,” in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire: Halcyon Days in Crete V; A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10–12 January 2003*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), 31–38.

¹⁵The exceptions include Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011); Tolga U. Esmer, “Economies of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire around 1800,” *Past & Present* 224, no. 1 (2014): 163–99; and Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

¹⁶Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 286.

¹⁷For “outcome-focused” history in the context of the Tanzimat’s spectrum of success or failure, see Yonca Köksal, “Tanzimat ve Tarih Yazımı,” *Doğu Batı Osmanlılar* 1, no. 51 (2010): 202. Compare to Mikhail and Philliou, “Ottoman Empire,” 725–30.

¹⁸Yonca Köksal, *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Provincial Perspectives from Ankara to Edirne* (London: Routledge, 2019).

¹⁹Bouquet, “Du déclin à la transformation,” 131.

²⁰Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber, eds., *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), 8 (emphasis added).

maintain the pronounced localism.²¹ Beirut, for instance, was a “city of its own making,” neither a result of world economic forces nor the “natural product of the Ottoman imperial fiat.”²² Some other works blur the line between central and local by underlining the appointment of government officials from late-Ottoman Palestine to their home or neighboring districts; however, it was this very dichotomy with its constant fluctuation between cooperation and confrontation that was part of the provincial making of Jerusalem.²³

Apart from constituting the fringes of the empire for long centuries, Ottoman Albania and Kurdistan had several features in common. Geographically both regions were known for their mountains and their highlanders. Yet Dibra and Hazro, contrary to the overall features of the two regions, were situated on small plains surrounded by highlands.²⁴ Long before the advent of the theory of “martial races,” starting in the mid-18th century, both Ottoman Albanians and Kurds, thanks to their warlike ethos reinforced by the challenges of highlands, had become military laborers for the Ottoman army.²⁵ The dictates of geography were harsh in Dibra, as the economy, based on pastoralism, “almost invariably involved migrating from home.”²⁶ Sitting in the transitional zone near desert Mesopotamia, Hazro differed from Dibra in that its arid lands needed only irrigation to become a green oasis.²⁷

Both Albania and Kurdistan constituted a closed network organized around a tribal structure.²⁸ That is, agas and *bajraktars* (standard bearers) were the leaders of their respective communities at the two edges of the empire.²⁹ Dibra and Hazro had one more particular feature in common: despite the presence of tribal structure in the greater regions, both towns were free of tribal hierarchy. Rather than *bajraktars* and agas, there were prevailing beys and emirs, respectively.³⁰ Both the beys in northern Albania and the emirs in Ottoman Kurdistan were dynastic powerholders to be reckoned with, rather than tribal entities that emerged or evolved as a result of Ottoman state intervention.³¹

In addition to these similarities related to geography and tribalism, the usefulness of the Dibra–Hazro comparison is suggested most strongly by the ways their hereditary notables interacted with the Ottoman sultan in the post-conquest period. During Hasan Pasha Hoxhollı’s participation in the campaigns against Hungary in the 16th century and the shift in allegiance of the Zirki emirs to the Ottomans in the 16th-century imperial rivalry with the Safavids, the Ottoman sultans and the government maintained local rule at the two ends of the empire. Despite differences in name and titles—*bajraks* in northern Albania and *yurtluk-ocaklıks* in Ottoman Kurdistan—the provincial administrations of Dibra and

²¹For emphasis on locality, see Jens Hanssen, “Practices of Integration: Center-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire,” in Hanssen, Philipp, and Weber, *Empire in the City*, 153.

²²Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2005), 53.

²³Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem, 1872–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 309.

²⁴Nine mountains divided the greater Dibra region, whereas Hazro constituted the transitional zone between the mountains of eastern Anatolia and the plains of Mesopotamia. See Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais: La naissance d’une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 91; and Suavi Aydın and Jelle Verheij, “Confusion in the Cauldron: Some Notes on Ethno-Religious Groups, Local Powers and the Ottoman State in Diyarbekir Province, 1800–1870,” in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915*, ed. Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 22–23.

²⁵Virginia H. Aksan, “Mobilization of Warrior Populations in the Ottoman Context, 1750–1850,” in *Fighting for a Living, A Comparative Study of Military Labour 1500–2000* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 337–44.

²⁶Michel Palaret, *The Balkan Economies c. 1800–1914: Evolution without Development* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 345.

²⁷Sırrı Erinç and Necdet Tunçdilek, “The Agricultural Regions of Turkey,” *Geographical Review* 42, no. 2 (1952): 201.

²⁸Notwithstanding the orientalist bias, the accounts of Durham and Sykes are still helpful with regard to the tribal nature of Albanian and Kurdish societies: Mary Edith Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928); Mark Sykes, “The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 38 (1908): 451–86. For recent works, see Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), 50–132; and Robert Elsie, *The Tribes of Albania: History, Society and Culture* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).

²⁹For *bajraktars*, see Margaret Hasluck, *The Unwritten Law in Albania* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 115–29.

³⁰Aydın and Verheij, “Confusion in the Cauldron,” 22; Elsie, *Tribes of Albania*, 303.

³¹Even though it is beyond the scope of this study, Hasluck claims that there were no *bajraks* (standards) before the Ottoman rule. In a similar way, Özoğlu underlines that some Kurdish emirates seem to be state creations. Hasluck, *Unwritten Law*, 128; Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 54.

Hazro were both subject to a type of indirect rule in return for providing the Ottoman army with troops, a method similar to Maurus Reinkowski's "ethnic containment."³²

The comparison of Dibra and Hazro, with their distinct yet commensurable autonomous trajectories prior to the 19th century, helps bridge the distance between core provinces studied from a central perspective and peripheral ones delineated with a local approach. Unlike studies of stand-alone provinces, intra-empire comparison with an "Ottoman provincial synthesis" helps to assess the validity of the terms *local* and *central*.³³ The cases of the Hoxholli beys and the Zirki emirs, who simultaneously maintained local rule and took part in the central administration, demonstrate that this synthesis contributes not only to decentering the state but also to delocalizing the notables.

Although they were not technically borderlands, the 19th-century Ottoman discourse on the provincial administrations of Dibra and Hazro, which had to take into account "familiarity with local conditions" and "customs and dispositions," constituted one of the most important common denominators. Administration based on the discourse of difference was, however, laden with questions of whether it was possible to talk about indigenous Albanian and Kurdish notables, to say nothing of the overarching question of who was an Ottoman.³⁴ Regardless of whether they had been "Ottomanized" or not, the transregional employment patterns of the Hoxholli beys and Zirki emirs defied the polarized interpretations stemming from overattachment to a specific locality and rigidly formulated ethnic, religious, and political identities.³⁵ Rather, their changing roles—ranging from provincial notable in their home district, to "political exile" in a distant province subsisting on state allowances, to central administrator of another province—not only point to a gray area that defies politically charged normative attributions but also serve to broaden the field of analysis of who took part in the making of the modern Ottoman state.³⁶ In this gray area, what it took to be an Ottoman was not measured by the yardstick of codification. Furthermore, the appointment of a provincial notable did not impede his belonging to other institutions; rather, overlapping positions brought about a tension between different roles, unless the associated roles were harmonized into a coherent whole.³⁷ It was flexible centralization, with its gray area beyond binary oppositions, that transformed Ottoman provincial politics in the 19th century.

Exile and Employment of Notables

At the turn of the 19th century, the Ottoman government came to question its pragmatic and largely ad hoc cooperation with the provincial notables regarding tax collection and the military. In place of this cooperation, the government entered into a strategy to "reform" the Albanian and Kurdish lands by conscription of subjects in the newly established army and establishment of stricter financial control over the tax revenues of the notables.³⁸ The old imperial strategy of forced exile of provincial notables was still in force, and the government resorted to it to deal with the political turmoil that arose from conscription and taxation.³⁹ Exile, however, did not eliminate the notables from this complex structure. Contrary to the narrative of centralization, Ottoman officials were ambivalent about the prospective role of the provincial notables. The government either delegated power to provincial notables or discouraged the employment of local dynasts (*mahalli hanedan*), as conditions warranted. In short, despite the prevailing

³²Maurus Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), 269–73. For *yurtluk-ocaklıks*, see Nejat Göyünç, "Yurtluk-Ocaklık Deyimleri Hakkında," in *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1991), 269–77.

³³Jane Hathaway and Karl K. Barbir, *The Arab Lands Under Ottoman Rule, 1516–1800* (London: Routledge, 2008), 7.

³⁴For a brilliant decentered elaboration of "Ottomanness," see Aymes, *Provincial History*, 40–52.

³⁵For a similar consolidation of transregional households in the early 19th century, see Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 32–34.

³⁶Christine Philliou, "Mischiefs in the Old Regime: Provincial Dragomans and Social Change at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 25 (2001): 111; Esmer, "Economies of Violence," 196; Aymes, *Provincial History*, 167.

³⁷Aymes, *Provincial History*, 52; Bouquet, "Is It Time?" 64.

³⁸For brief information about Ottoman Albania and Kurdistan on the eve of Tanzimat reforms, see T. Ippen, "Beitrage zur inneren Geschichte Albaniens im XIX. Jahrhundert," in *Illyrisch-albanische Forschungen*, ed. L. Thallczny (Munich-Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1916), 377–79 Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 175–82.

³⁹For exile as a capital punishment, see Uriel Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law* (London: Clarendon Press, 1973), 303–4; Yonca Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006): 475.

impulse to rationalize administration according to the telos of modernization, the imperial government did not pursue a coherent policy with regard to the provincial notables.

After the suppression of their rebellion, the Ottoman government forcefully settled Receb Bey, the emir of Hazro, along with the emirs of Hani and Lice, the neighboring districts of Hazro, and their families in Edirne in the spring of 1836.⁴⁰ After the exile of the Zirki emirs, the governors-general of Diyarbakir, who in the conventional historiography are generally depicted as a central feature in this provincial matrix, administered the greater Hazro region primarily by delegating the actual work to the local notables of Diyarbakir.⁴¹

The elimination of Hoxholli rule in Dibra was not as decisive as the fall of the Zirki emirs. Following his part in a similar rebellion in Shkoder in 1835, the Ottoman government exiled Hakkı Pasha, the deputy governor of Dibra and Peshkopi, which was an administrative twin of Dibra, to Istanbul.⁴² Just after Hakkı Pasha's removal, Süleyman Bey, Hakkı Pasha's nephew, secured the deputy governorships of Dibra and Peshkopi after winning out over Talib Bey, Hakkı Pasha's brother.⁴³ In 1836, however, the intra-dynastic struggle proved to be futile, as both parties were exiled to Istanbul.⁴⁴ Soon Hakkı Pasha and his brother along with their families were exiled to Bolu, a town in northwestern Anatolia, whereas Süleyman Bey was exiled to Larissa, a town in central Thessaly.⁴⁵

The case of Dibra, however, did not reflect the idealized version of the "politics of notables." After Abdurrahman Pasha of Tetovo, a central figure with a local origin, replaced Süleyman Bey in 1836, Hacı Mahmud Ağa became the deputy governor of Dibra and Peshkopi in 1838.⁴⁶ The fact that Hacı Mahmud Ağa was not from the region, however, caused immediate strife. The hereditary notables of Peshkopi, Emin Bey and Kara Hasanoğlu Hasan Bey, in cooperation with some 100 armed men from Shupenza, a nearby village infamous for its banditry, surrounded the administrator. "We want a deputy governor among us," the mob demanded, "not an outsider."⁴⁷ Even though the nocturnal attack was repulsed, the notables of Peshkopi soothed the mob's demand with the immediate removal of the administrator and his replacement with either a local (*yerluden*) one or an outsider (*haricden*).⁴⁸ According to the Ottoman investigation, it appeared that Hacı Mahmud Ağa, who "lacked familiarity with the circumstances of Albania," employed only some of the bandit leaders of Peshkopi, which, in turn, agitated the unemployed ones.⁴⁹ In 1838, İbrahim Efendi replaced Hacı Mahmud, temporarily suspending the tension between local and outside administrators.⁵⁰

The discourses of customs and dispositions and "familiarity with local peculiarities" as the influential force behind this perennial tension became a locus of the negotiations over shifts in the provincial administration, contributing to the making of the modern Ottoman state. As in the case of the Shupenza inhabitants and their demands, provincial society "arrogated to itself a monopoly in the meanings of *tradition*—hence the position of interpreter of local realities," strengthening its dealings with the central authorities.⁵¹ As much as the discourse of tradition was a weapon in the hands of the locals against the proposed

⁴⁰BOA, HAT. 453/22435-A, 5 Zilkade 1250 (5 March 1835); BOA, HAT. 1597/65, no date; BOA, C. DH. 85/4225, 29 Rabiulevvel 1252 (14 July 1836).

⁴¹Uğur Bahadır Bayraktar, "Periphery's Centre: Reform, Taxation, and Local Notables in Diyarbakir, 1845–1855," in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, ed. Tolga Yaşar Cora, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 165–68.

⁴²BOA, HAT. 414/21464-A, 13 Receb 1251 (4 November 1835); BOA, HAT. 701/33728, no date. The Ottomans interchangeably called Peshkopi "Lower Dibra" and at times, together with Dibra, "Debreleler" (the Dibras).

⁴³BOA, HAT. 634/31301 A, 23 Ramazan 1251 (12 January 1836); BOA, HAT. 405/21176, 7 Şevval 1251 (26 January 1836).

⁴⁴BOA, HAT. 420/21702 A, 29 Rabiulahir 1252 (13 August 1836).

⁴⁵*Ibid.*; BOA, C. ZB. 36/1786, 27 Rabiulahir 1254 (20 July 1838); BOA, MVL. 81/39, 25 Muharrem 1266 (11 December 1849).

⁴⁶BOA, HAT. 420/21702 A, 29 Rabiulahir 1252 (13 August 1836).

⁴⁷The mob's demand, in the phrasing of the Ottoman official, was "*biz mütesellimi kendi içimizden isteriz haricden mütesellim ve zabta istemeyiz*"; BOA, HAT. 433/21996 A, 7 Ramazan 1254 (24 November 1838); BOA, HAT. 413/21453 B, 3 Zilkade 1254 (18 January 1839); BOA, HAT. 1247/48347 J, no date.

⁴⁸BOA, HAT. 408/21248 C, no date.

⁴⁹BOA, HAT. 413/21454 C, 5 Zilkade 1254 (20 January 1839); BOA, HAT. 1247/48347 B, no date.

⁵⁰BOA, HAT. 408/21251 F, 13 Cemaziyelevvel 1254 (4 August 1838).

⁵¹Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 148–49 (emphasis added).

reforms, the Ottoman officials also employed the discourse to deal with the imperial priorities. The fact that the Ottomans yielded to local powers or took local conditions into account, however, does not mean that there was a “persistence of tradition” or a temporal or spatial fixation of difference.⁵² Although Thomas Kuehn concedes that what constituted the “‘customs and dispositions’ of the local people [was] subject to conflict, contestation, and change,” he elaborates that “customs and dispositions” were parts of the Ottoman flexible imperial policies. The hybrid resolution he suggests, however, reifies an anachronistic binary of traditional and modern in understanding of the making of the Ottoman state.⁵³

The elimination of the hereditary households in Dibra and Hazro did not reflect most historians’ anachronistic expectations of centralization and, more importantly, their dichotomous understanding of modernization. Figures who came to be called by some scholars “lesser” notables continued to occupy an important position in accordance with their skills in mobilizing parts of society.⁵⁴ Although the fact that provincial political matrices increasingly became more participatory hints at the continuing agency of the provincial notables as part of the making of the modern Ottoman state, it also blurs the oft-cited markers attributed to the Ottoman state and its provincial society.⁵⁵ On the side of the state, the government replaced the local dynasty of Hazro with the local notables of Diyarbakir instead of appointing central administrators. On the side of society, notwithstanding their stern demand, the insistence by inhabitants of the greater Dibra region on a local administrator resulted in the rather curious appointment of an outsider by the provincial seat, Bitola.

Local vs. Outside Administrators

It was in the year 1846 that the Ottoman government introduced the Tanzimat reforms in Ottoman Kurdistan and Albania. Implicitly asserting itself as a monolithic, self-consistent, and rational entity, the word Tanzimat is a self-proclaiming rhetoric that has “clouded over the many and conscious shifts within the reforms.”⁵⁶ Contrary to the narrative of a standard and rigid system, Tanzimat policy was riven with ambiguities that yielded case-specific resolutions.⁵⁷ In terms of provincial reorganization, the reforms first established the province of Kurdistan along with the creation of three Albanian-inhabited provinces, Prizrin, Dukagin, and Skopje.⁵⁸ In principle, appointed central officials would fill the gaps in the administrative structures. However, centralization to a certain extent remained at the provincial level. The Ottoman authorities’ interest in establishing direct administration in some districts (*kaza*) soon faded, as local notables were employed in line with imperial priorities.

One reason for the Ottoman government to retain the notables in place was financial. For instance, an imperial decree in 1845 concluded that the most prominent of the ancient dynasties should administer the towns of northern Albania. Instead of regular salaries, they were to receive one-quarter of the tithe revenues of the town for the expenses associated with town administration.⁵⁹ Although not so explicitly pronounced, the case was no different in Hazro. In March 1848, a certain Hacı Hüseyin Ağa, an appointed official (*müdür*), administered Hazro for six months. His principal duty was to uncover

⁵²Dina Rizk Khoury and Dane Kennedy, “Comparing Empires: The Ottoman Domains and the British Raj in the Long Nineteenth Century,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007): 236–39; Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

⁵³Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics*, 4–7.

⁵⁴For instance, see Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics*, 48; M. Safa Saraçoğlu, *Nineteenth-Century Local Governance in Ottoman Bulgaria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 44; and Köksal, *Ottoman Empire*, 13–14.

⁵⁵M. Safa Saraçoğlu, “Resilient Notables: Looking at the Transformation of the Ottoman Empire from the Local Level,” in *Contested Spaces of Nobility in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Charles Lipp and Matthew P. Romaniello (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 268–69.

⁵⁶Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Making of the Adana-Mersin Region 1850–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 5.

⁵⁷Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung*, 264–69. Compare to Köksal’s treatment of the Tanzimat reforms as “standard policies” of the Ottoman state with the exception of “more attentive” interest in the “success of reforms” in some regions, in *Ottoman Empire*, 56.

⁵⁸Ippen, “Beiträge zur inneren Geschichte,” 357; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 60; BOA, A. MKT. 160/104, no date; BOA, A. AMD. 1/32, no date.

⁵⁹BOA, C. DH. 30/1481, 5 Rabiulahir 1261 (13 April 1845).

potential tax revenues that the Ottoman finance departments had so far not been able to collect.⁶⁰ Once he uncovered the newtaxable resources in the town and completed the auction of the district's tax-farm contracts for the year, his services were no longer required. In the end, Abdülkerim Ağa, who was a local, replaced him without being granted any salary.⁶¹

The prevalence of the local over the outsider was not entirely a unilateral imposition of the Ottoman state. By the same token, it did not merely serve the financial concerns of the imperial treasury. First, the appointment of locals without granting them a salary, as M. Safa Saraçoğlu describes for the province of Vidin, was presumably valuable for the notables in terms of symbolic power, as well as financial leverage.⁶² Second, as the tension between the inhabitants of Dibra and Peshkopi demonstrates, the locals used the card of customs and dispositions as a weapon against the Ottoman government, prompting the officials to resort to rather flexible provincial administration.⁶³

Dibra

In 1847, the inhabitants of Dibra petitioned the government, complaining about the rule of Hüseyin Ağa, who happened to be a local notable from Bitola, the seat of the provincial council, on the grounds that he could not accommodate himself to the populace (*ahalisiyle imtizac edememesi*). Parallel to the locals' interpretation of tradition, the Ottoman government commonly used the rhetoric of adaptation (*hüsn-i imtizac*) as a pretext for replacing administrators who failed to work harmoniously with the local populace.⁶⁴ In this case, the government replaced Hüseyin Ağa with another outside notable from Bitola. He was, however, familiar with the customs and dispositions of the town, with a proven record of adaptation when he had held the office two years before.⁶⁵ Even though one outsider replaced another, the case is noteworthy as it demonstrates that the shift between local and outside administrators was itself subject to various circumstances, the demands of the local populace constituting just one.

The provincial administration by local and outside administrators also was a simultaneous process. By 1849, Kara Hasanoglu Hasan Bey, one of the hereditary notables of Peshkopi who survived the wave of exiles, had been administering both Dibra and Peshkopi for some time. Although he was a local in the eyes of the Ottoman government, this evidently was not the case for the inhabitants of Dibra, who made administration hard for the bey with their increasing complaints of misadministration. These complaints prompted the Ottoman administration to appoint an outside administrator, Osman Efendi, who was a member of the Imperial Council (*Divan-ı Hümayun*) and was deemed "familiar with the peculiarities of the region." While a central official occupied the post of Dibra, Kara Hasanoglu Hasan Bey retained his local administration of Peshkopi without a salary.⁶⁶

Even though the Ottoman officials were hopeful that administration by an outsider would ensure public order in the towns, local discontent with the administration did not come to an end. In April 1850, when Osman Efendi died, the inhabitants of Dibra and Peshkopi petitioned the Sublime Porte, complaining that the administrators appointed by the governor of Rumelia province always harassed and frightened them, presumably in the process of tax collection.⁶⁷ In another petition penned in March 1850, in a call that perfectly fits the narrative of centralization, the inhabitants of Dibra asked for the appointment of administrators directly from Istanbul.⁶⁸ Although the latter petition was a maneuver to counter any possible triumph of either the Peshkopi party or the provincial seat in Bitola, the whole ordeal was interesting

⁶⁰BOA, A. MKT. MHM. 6/18, 4 Şaban 1264 (3 September 1848).

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Saraçoğlu, *Nineteenth-Century Local Governance*, 82.

⁶³Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 148.

⁶⁴Complaining about the climatic conditions (*ab ve hava*) is an example of the rhetoric used by the Ottoman officials to either change their appointments or resign from a position. See, for instance, the cases of resignations due to failure to adapt to the local climate in Dibra and Lice: BOA, İ. MVL. 227/7750, 25 Cemaziyelahir 1268 (16 April 1852), and BOA, MVL. 608/46, 20 Şaban 1277 (3 March 1861), respectively.

⁶⁵BOA, MVL. 50/34, 7 Ramazan 1263 (19 August 1847).

⁶⁶BOA, MVL. 66/8, 20 Zilkade 1265 (7 October 1849).

⁶⁷BOA, MVL. 83/64, 3 Rabiulahir 1266 (16 February 1850).

⁶⁸BOA, MVL. 87/32, 11 Cemaziyevvel 1266 (25 March 1850)

because one party, in the end, called for direct administration instead of varying degrees of local rule. To the chagrin of the petitioners, however, the governor-general of Rumelia, Hurşid Pasha, appointed Abdurrahman Bey, another local notable from the provincial council in Bitola.⁶⁹

As much as the employment of local over central administrators was a concurrent mechanism, the coexistence of the two methods did not translate into a generic opposition between the local and the central. Rather, the occasionally abrupt shifts with regard to the nature of the rule followed an unpredictable pattern depending on the circumstances of northern Albania and Diyarbekir. There is, for instance, the puzzling question of whether Celal Bey, a local notable from Mat, a town close to Dibra and Peshkopi, was considered a local or an outsider by the inhabitants of the two districts. His administration seemed to have pleased the inhabitants, and in 1851, after serving as the deputy administrator for some time, he secured the post in person due to their satisfaction.⁷⁰

Hazro

One of the sons of the Zirki emir of Lice who had been exiled in 1835, Sadullah Bey, survived the exile from his homeland by going into hiding.⁷¹ Thanks to the details mentioned in a petition, it appears that he had succeeded in serving in different posts around Diyarbekir since 1845.⁷² Despite the eradication of hereditary rule in the region, Sadullah Bey was the very local administrator of Lice in 1849, until the public debt associated with the tithe collection for the years 1847 and 1848 led to his dismissal.⁷³ An outside administrator was appointed to Lice in 1849, but Sadullah Bey managed to secure the administration of Lice once again in 1850. Embezzlement by one of his men, coupled with increasing dislike from the locals, however, removed him from the post once again.⁷⁴

Despite the lack of local popular support, Sadullah Bey held administrative power in Lice through 1859, with occasional interruptions. According to the inhabitants' petitions, he did not pay the peasants of Lice for the provisions he appropriated for the imperial army in Erzurum.⁷⁵ Coming after years of violent rule, this final instance of fraud was the last straw, resulting in his dismissal from the post in the summer of 1859. As soon as he settled the debts payable to the peasants, however, Sadullah Bey petitioned the government asking to become administrator of Lice again.⁷⁶ Although his request was denied, Sadullah Bey secured the administration of Hazro, another homeland of the emirs. His success owed much to his relations with Gevranzade Ömer Pasha, who was Sadullah Bey's father-in-law and a member of one of the prominent dynasties of Diyarbekir.⁷⁷

Despite their wrongdoings, the employment of the less prominent notables was not contradictory to centralization. In a similar vein, the use of local notables in provincial administration by Ottoman officials did not operate within the framework of an ideological opposition between meritocracy and nepotism.⁷⁸ The dynamics of provincial administration in Dibra and Hazro were not confined to the domination of either the local or the central. In an apparently incoherent manner according to the narrative of centralization, the Ottoman government, taking into account the scarcity of financial and human resources, often preferred to employ members of once-rebellious households on condition of their rehabilitation.⁷⁹ At the same time, provincial notables interacted with the government authorities in a rather ambivalent—and at times flagrantly antagonistic—way, following their own political agendas. It was this

⁶⁹BOA, MVL. 231/53, 13 Cemaziyelahir 1266 (26 April 1850).

⁷⁰BOA, MVL. 248/9, 13 Cemaziyevvel 1268 (5 March 1852); BOA, İ. MVL. 232/8062, 22 Cemaziyevvel 1268 (14 March 1852).

⁷¹Şeymus Diken, *İşyan Sürgünleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 263.

⁷²BOA, MVL. 589/75, 7 Safer 1276 (5 September 1859).

⁷³BOA, İ. MVL. 281/11022, 4 Zilkade 1269 (9 August 1853).

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵BOA, MVL. 586/105, 25 Zilkade 1275 (26 June 1859).

⁷⁶BOA, MVL. 589/75, 7 Safer 1276 (5 September 1859).

⁷⁷BOA, MVL. 586/105, 25 Zilkade 1275 (26 June 1859); BOA, A. MKT. UM. 359/93, 14 Muharrem 1276 (13 August 1859).

⁷⁸Olivier Bouquet, "Old Elites in a New Republic: The Reconversion of Ottoman Bureaucratic Families in Turkey (1909–1939)," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31, no. 3 (2011): 590.

⁷⁹Köksal, *Ottoman Empire*, 80.

fluctuating partnership between the government and the notables that transformed Ottoman provincial politics.⁸⁰

Factionalism in Provincial Politics

Provincial societies of the 19th-century Ottoman Empire often invoked the threat of factionalism as they put forward demands for local administration.⁸¹ As in the case of Jerusalem, where factions exerted more robust action than the mediation of intermediaries, the local notables connected factionalism to the political struggles in which they engaged at regional and imperial levels.⁸² Factionalism served as a means of empowering the local component in both Dibra and Hazro, as in the Ottoman provinces. The consequences of factionalism in the two districts were more effectively transformative than, as articulated by shortsighted scholars, a process confined to the local challenge against the imperial forces.

The bilateral factionalism due to the historical competition between Dibra and Peshkopi was the prominent means by which the inhabitants of the two towns furthered their political demands. In 1853, the council members of Rumelia noted that the inhabitants of Peshkopi were divided between the current administrator, Yusuf Bey, and Kara Hasanoglu Hasan Bey, his predecessor. To calm the local factionalism, the governor of Rumelia appointed Cafer Ağa, an outside administrator from Bitola.⁸³ When he proved a failure at conscripting reserve soldiers, the need to muster troops overruled the potential upheavals associated with the factions.⁸⁴ After a few months, the governor-general of the imperial army in Rumelia, in complete harmony with the provincial governor of Rumelia, turned back to Hasan Bey, who, they believed, would be beneficial to the local administration.⁸⁵

Although fully cognizant of the strategic employment of customs and dispositions, Ottoman officials yielded to local power because of the notables' abilities to mobilize and conscript troops. "Everyone on this side [of the provincial seat] is well aware," the governor of Rumelia noted, "that the said folks [of Dibra and Peshkopi] force the administrators appointed from outside (*haricden ta'yin olunan müdirlerin*) to resign by disturbing [them] in one way or another."⁸⁶ Such pragmatism remained even though the members of the provincial council were aware that "[some] seditious men among the inhabitants of Dibra and Peshkopi regard anyone not from them as repellent and attempt to remove and replace them by splitting into factions."⁸⁷

As one of the customs and dispositions of the greater Dibra region, the habit of creating political factionalism, which the Ottoman officials tolerated as a lesser evil, served to further Kara Hasanoglu Hasan Bey's local rule beyond his hometown. In December 1854, Hasan Bey, as the local administrator of Peshkopi, encouraged his supporters to work against the administrator of Dibra, Hasan Bey of Euboea.⁸⁸ Although there were no complaints about the latter, the pressure of factionalism could not save the outsider administration. Conceding that Kara Hasanoglu Hasan Bey's administration would not be better than the current one, yet reiterating that he would better serve local conscription, the provincial council members granted him the district of Dibra in the first weeks of 1855.⁸⁹

⁸⁰For the partnership by which the provincial notables of the empire became part of the Ottoman administration, see Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 112–13.

⁸¹Jeremy Boissevain, "Factionalism," in *International Encyclopedia of the Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 8 (Oxford, UK: Pergamon, 2001), 5236–39. For an example, see Nathalie Clayer, "Local Factionalism and Political Mobilization in the Albanian Province in the Late Ottoman Empire: A Consul Caught Up in a Conflict between Villagers and the Ottoman Authorities," in *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. Eleni Gara, M. Erdem Kabadayı, and Christoph K. Neumann (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2011), 197–208.

⁸²Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine*, 363; Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Urban Factionalism in Late Ottoman Gaza, c. 1875–1914: Local Politics and Spatial Divisions," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, no. 61 (2018): 606–49.

⁸³BOA, MVL. 260/44, 29 Şevval 1269 (5 August 1853).

⁸⁴BOA, MVL. 267/14, 27 Muharrem 1270 (30 October 1853).

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶BOA, İ. MVL. 330/1453, 9 Şaban 1271 (27 April 1855).

⁸⁷BOA, MVL. 159/47, 8 Rabiulahir 1271 (29 December 1854).

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

However, even after Hasan Bey had secured the posts of both Dibra and Peshkopi, the political factionalism did not cease. In the spring of 1855, the inhabitants of Dibra stood against Hasan Bey, complaining about his corrupt administration.⁹⁰ Just as his supporters had mobilized, the opposition in Dibra formed an armed mob, encircling and intimidating Hasan Bey by firing shots at him.⁹¹ Conceding, after a few eruptions of factionalism in the region, that he had a connection to most of the incidents, the provincial council of Bitola, in correspondence with the Supreme Council, finally replaced him with an outside administrator, 'Ali Bey of Bitola, in May 1855.⁹² After a few clashes between factions over the course of two years, the dismissal of Hasan Bey soon turned into a violent affair. After some defiance and further episodes of violence, in 1855 the governor of Rumelia ordered Hasan Bey exiled to Anatolia, which he considered the ultimate solution to the maintenance of public order in the greater Dibra region.⁹³

The factions in the greater Hazro region also prompted the Ottoman government to shift the employment patterns in provincial administration. Although Sadullah Bey was the local administrator of Hazro in 1859, it did not prevent him from engaging in local politics in Lice. His intact networks in the region were valuable, allowing him to command and mobilize his factions at will. With motivations similar to those of Hasan Bey of Peshkopi, Sadullah Bey, through his retinue in Lice, harassed the council members, particularly the deputy judge (*naib*) and the imam of Lice.⁹⁴ As the bey did not refrain from running Hazro as he did Lice, his intimidation of the newly appointed administrator of Lice, Musa Bey, was not surprising.

In a collective petition signed by the administrator of Hazro and nearly forty leaders of surrounding villages, Sadullah Bey was said to have established a personal administration using his retinue, which amounted to 150 men. By buying off the local judges, the petitioners complained, Sadullah Bey had found ways of getting rid of anyone who was not from his faction. In other words, his smooth relations with the judges facilitated the suppression of his opponents, since he could easily make a member of his retinue file a charge against them.⁹⁵ Once Sadullah Bey made one of his men shoot at and wound Musa Bey; this, however, was the moment the Supreme Council got involved in the investigation.⁹⁶ In 1860, as a result of the investigation, Sadullah Bey was replaced with Mustafa Efendi, the former administrator of Beşiri, a town in the far southeast of Hazro.⁹⁷

Even though his faction was removed from power several times in the mid-19th century, Sadullah Bey did not lose his local power entirely. In 1862, he was once again the local administrator of Lice. Just as his temporary fall from power resembled the episodes involving Hasan Bey, Sadullah Bey's return to power followed Hasan Bey's trajectory. The skill of notables in mustering conscripts or irregular troops forced imperial officials to be tactful in their dealings with the notables. As a part of this tactful approach, the governor of Kurdistan, considering the delicate political situation of the province in 1862, conceded that the local powers (*yerliüden muktedirlerinin*) would be better at policing the province.⁹⁸ Regardless of his past wrongdoings, Sadullah Bey was nominated as a prospective administrator since "he was powerful enough to be immediately present at the location when ordered with the provision of a few hundred men at arms (*nefer-i 'amm*)."⁹⁹

The commensurable trajectory of provincial administration in the greater regions of both Dibra and Hazro suggests, in actuality, a more complex, more fluid, and at times more controversial portrait of provincial politics than the straightforward one suggested by the narrative of centralization. By the same token, the rhetoric of *local* and *outsider* used by different actors shows how fluid the dynamics of provincial administration were. By arming themselves with the weapon of tradition, the inhabitants struggled for a local administration, as they interpreted it. Nevertheless, this was not an entrenched opposition. Instead of an undesirable local notable, the inhabitants of Dibra opted for direct administration. In a

⁹⁰BOA, MVL. 298/24, 8 Ramazan 1271 (25 May 1855).

⁹¹BOA, İ. DH. 328/21371, 9 Zilkade 1271 (24 July 1855).

⁹²BOA, MVL. 298/24, 8 Ramazan 1271 (25 May 1855).

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴BOA, MVL. 586/105, 25 Zilkade 1275 (26 June 1859).

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶BOA, A. MKT. UM. 359/93, 14 Muharrem 1276 (13 August 1859).

⁹⁷BOA, A. MKT. MVL. 113/37, 20 Cemaziyelahir 1276 (14 January 1860).

⁹⁸BOA, MVL. 630/38, 11 Zilkade 1278 (10 May 1862).

⁹⁹Ibid.

comparable example, the inhabitants of Hazro and Lice defied the rule of the last representative of the local dynasty that had ruled the region for almost three centuries. The Ottoman government's occasional employment of Kara Hasanoğlu Hasan Bey and Sadullah Bey despite their politically hazardous factionalism is at odds with the oft-cited assumption of local resistance against central intervention. It was not opposition but mutual interaction between the Ottoman government (with its selective employment of notables depending on financial and military concerns) and the provincial notables (with their maneuvers to further their own political agendas) that constituted an indispensable part of the flexible centralization in the Ottoman provinces.

Transregional Networks: Employment of Notables in Exile

The employment of the less prominent notables was not confined to the provinces from which hereditary dynasties were banished. On the contrary, the members of these households followed similar career trajectories in their exiles. Despite forced exile, which made it evident that the political traces left behind by most of the provincial households amounted to almost nothing, they were not stripped entirely of their political power. Rather, benefiting from several options the Tanzimat transformation brought about, the notables in exile capitalized on their once-mighty military prowess and provincial legitimacy. Not unlike the notables who rose in their absences, they took part in the flexible centralization of the Ottoman provincial administration, again thwarting any sharp dichotomy between local notables and central officials.

Unlike the Zirki emirs, who were exiled permanently to Edirne, the Hoxholli dynasty, particularly Hakkı Pasha and Talib Bey, lived in several towns in Anatolia. Between 1836 and 1838, the Hoxholli brothers were in Bolu and, after a request to be relocated to Istanbul, were exiled to Trabzon, where they lived until 1840.¹⁰⁰ When the Sultan pardoned them in February 1840, they were deemed eligible to move to Istanbul.¹⁰¹ Even though it is not clear what kind of political networks the two brothers established in the imperial capital, they proved quite fortunate, as they were employed a few years after their exile. For instance, in 1844, the Ottoman government entrusted Hakkı Pasha with the suppression of the great rebellion in northern Albania.

The commission rendered Hakkı Pasha's exile null and void, making him once again an imperial employee. This demonstrated the Ottoman government's flexibility in terms of employing agents who had recently defied its authority. The provision and command of 6,000 Albanian irregulars secured Hakkı Pasha the deputy-governorship of his hometown and helped Talib Bey become the deputy governor of Tetovo, a town in Macedonia.¹⁰² Despite his service to the imperial government, however, the two beys were once again banished to Istanbul on 28 October 1844.¹⁰³ In the spring of 1845, the Ottoman government removed the titles of Hakkı Pasha and Talib Bey, forcefully settling them in Ödemiş, an Aegean town, in 1846.¹⁰⁴ This final exile, unlike the one in 1835, brought about a change in the rhetoric of Ottoman correspondence addressing the provincial notables of Dibra. That is, from 1846 onward, it was bey rather than pasha the Ottoman officials opted to use in documents when referring to Hakkı Pasha.¹⁰⁵

The exile, employment, and subsequent exile of Hakkı Bey stands in stark contrast to the preoccupation of Tanzimat historiography with formal and legal institutions. His case, however, is not exceptional: the empire-wide circulation of officials blurred the distinction between central and local. Before 1908, Arabs, according to Joseph Szyliowicz, made up 34 percent of the provincial and 7 percent of the central Ottoman administration.¹⁰⁶ Leaving aside the question of what it meant to be an Arab in the 19th century, one cannot deny that the politics the provincial notables pursued were beyond mere participation in

¹⁰⁰BOA, C. ZB. 36/1786, 7 Rabiulahir 1254 (30 June 1838); BOA, HAT. 1425/58341, no date; BOA, C. DH. 108/5385, no date.

¹⁰¹BOA, İ. DH. 53/2602, 6 Muharrem 1258 (17 February 1842).

¹⁰²BOA, C. DH. 111/5512, 23 Rabiulahir 1260 (12 May 1844).

¹⁰³Ippen, "Beiträge zur inneren Geschichte," 358.

¹⁰⁴The Ottoman government stripped Hakkı Pasha of his rank of *mirimiran*, and Talib Bey lost the rank of *kapıcıbaşı*. BOA, A. MKT. 22/85, 7 Rabiulevvel 1261 (16 March 1845); BOA, A. MKT. 160/33, no date.

¹⁰⁵There was not any change for Talib Bey in the rhetoric of Ottoman correspondence, as bey was already the lowest rank when addressing provincial notables.

¹⁰⁶Joseph S. Szyliowicz, "Changes in Recruitment Patterns and Career-Lines of Ottoman Provincial Administrators during the Nineteenth Century," in *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, ed. Moshe Ma'oz (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 249–83, quoted in Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine*, 404.

the provincial councils. Provincial notables like Hakkı Bey were busy establishing transregional households, which proved to be adaptable to the shifting realities of the Ottoman polity. Transregionality allowed the provincial notables to actively take part in state formation in the Ottoman provinces.

Hakkı Bey's different residences in Anatolia are a shining example of how provincial notables came to be a part of the participatory politics in the provinces to which they were exiled. In 1848, after spending two years in Ödemiş, Hakkı Bey petitioned the government to be relocated to Bursa, protesting that his son had recently died due to local weather conditions in Ödemiş.¹⁰⁷ Obtaining permission to reside in Bursa, the Hoxholli brothers started seeking ways to secure a post in the imperial administration. In 1847, complaining about his financial distress, Hakkı Bey asked for a governorship (*kaymakamlık*) in Anatolia.¹⁰⁸ Noting his own insufficient income in 1849, Talib Bey followed his brother's path by asking either to be granted a salary or to be appointed to any district in Anatolia.¹⁰⁹ After an imperial disagreement, the members of the Supreme Council acknowledged Talib Bey's financial distress and considered appointing him to a vacant post in the province of Hüdavendigar, today Bursa, a province in northwestern Anatolia. Finally, in 1849, Talib Bey was appointed to the district of Harmancık, but he died right after the appointment.¹¹⁰

In the summer of 1850, Hakkı Bey once again rendered his exile null and void by becoming an Ottoman official, securing an appointment to Bolu, one of his former places of exile.¹¹¹ Aside from reclaiming the ladder of official positions in a different province, Hakkı Bey also was seeking to perfect his acceptance and advance into the imperial administration. "As the province of Bolu has been run by the imperial servants who were decorated with titles (*rütbe eshabından*)," petitioned Hakkı Bey in March 1851, he was asking for a promotion to match his post.¹¹² After a few months, the imperial government accepted the bey's request, restoring the title of pasha he had lost nearly two decades ago.¹¹³ As a central official with a local background, Hakkı Pasha was removed from the office in November 1852 following local complaints.¹¹⁴ He remained a possible candidate for offices, however, and successfully became the governor of İçel, a Mediterranean province.¹¹⁵

Whereas the Hoxholli beys were successful at restoring their old titles and status, this was not the case for the Zirki emirs. Some of the emirs' sons, however, followed career trajectories similar to those of the Hoxholli beys. One of the scions of the emirs in Hazro, Bedirhan Bey's son Mehmed Faris Bey, from mid-century onward sought employment by proclaiming his financial distress. In 1850, after filing numerous petitions, Faris Bey secured a job in the service of Kamil Pasha in the province of Bosnia.¹¹⁶ Having administered a district in Bosnia, Faris Bey petitioned the government at the end of his term in December 1851, asking for another office.¹¹⁷

For the imperial government, such requests represented an ordinary practice that was beneficial to filling vacant spots in the provincial administration. For the notables, the prospects of employment, aside from offering immediate remedy to financial distress, coalesced into a new means of bargaining in provincial politics. One example of this was bargaining to return to their hometowns. Arguing that he had been unemployed for a year, Faris Bey petitioned the government in 1852, asking to be appointed to the district of Dimetoka, a town in western Thrace.¹¹⁸ An official annotation on the back of another of his petitions, however, noted that the petitioner "does not want any grant (*teveccüh*) this year but rather to be favored (*kayrılmak*) with the administration of Hazro, in the province of Diyarbekir."¹¹⁹ No matter

¹⁰⁷BOA, İ. MVL. 119/2965, 15 Cemaziyelevvel 1264 (19 April 1848); BOA, A. DVN. MHM. 5A/60, 29 Cemaziyelevvel 1264 (3 May 1848).

¹⁰⁸BOA, MVL. 11/5, 20 Safer 1263 (7 February 1847).

¹⁰⁹BOA, İ. MVL. 136/3694, 11 Rabiulahir 1265 (6 March 1849); BOA, A. AMD. 13/84, no date.

¹¹⁰BOA, İ. MVL. 159/4596 1 Rabiulevvel 1266 (15 January 1850).

¹¹¹BOA, A. TŞF. 8/21, 29 Receb 1266 (10 June 1850).

¹¹²BOA, İ. MVL. 207/6652, 16 Cemaziyelahir 1267 (19 March 1851).

¹¹³The promotion also reinstated his rank of *mirimiran*. BOA, A. MKT. UM. 59/48, 15 Receb 1267 (16 May 1851).

¹¹⁴BOA, A. MKT. NZD. 61/62, 6 Muharrem 1269 (20 October 1852); BOA, A. MKT. MVL. 58/2, 5 Safer 1269 (18 November 1852).

¹¹⁵BOA, A. MKT. NZD. 82/3, 3 Şevval 1269 (10 July 1853); BOA, A. MKT. UM. 141/86, 3 Zilhicce 1269 (7 September 1853).

¹¹⁶BOA, MVL. 95/89, 25 Zilhicce 1266 (1 November 1850).

¹¹⁷BOA, MVL. 109/8, 10 Safer 1268 (5 December 1851).

¹¹⁸BOA, MVL. 122/8, 4 Zilhicce 1268 (19 September 1852).

¹¹⁹BOA, MVL. 122/50, 23 Zilhicce 1268 (8 October 1852).

how flexible the imperial officials were in incorporating the once-hereditary rulers into the matrices of the provincial administration, the prospect of returning to their hometowns was not subject to negotiation. Denied the appointment to Hazro, Faris Bey asked for employment in the imperial service, first in Cairo, then in Damascus.¹²⁰ The Ottoman officials made it clear that it was possible for him to be employed only in the Balkans, evidently a measure aimed at preventing him from setting foot on the same continent as his hometown.¹²¹

After spending two years in Istanbul for an opportunity that would serve his political ends, Faris Bey turned down the offer of an office in Bosnia in 1853, complaining that he could not afford to travel there. In return, he petitioned the Supreme Council asking for employment in a district of Smyrna where he would once again be in the service of Kamil Pasha, then governor of the province.¹²² His request was rejected, presumably due to the imperial decree which barred him from the Asian provinces. In 1853, deciding to return to Edirne after wasting two years in the capital, Faris Bey asked for an office in a district in the province of Edirne, which also was denied, probably because it was the town where his family members lived in exile.¹²³

No matter how episodic their employment, Hakkı Pasha and Faris Bey were no longer members of the local dynasties enjoying political-cum-financial power thanks to their command of the political networks in their respective hometowns in the early 1830s. Despite being barred from their provinces, most of the notables in exile operated in a transregional setting, seeking new means of entry into participatory provincial politics. When one considers that this transregional operation existed simultaneously with pragmatic imperial strategies of co-optation, it becomes clear just how provincial the central administration really was.

The immediate military threats the Ottoman government faced distorted the terms of employment in favor of the notables, blurring further what it meant to be local and central. The Crimean War of 1853–56 prompted imperial officials to take advantage of the services of once-hereditary rulers of the empire. In 1852, the rising crisis with the Russian Empire rendered Hakkı Pasha's military skills more beneficial than his administrative ones. As a part of the general mobilization prior to the Crimean War, the Ottoman government charged the pasha with the muster and command of 5,000 Albanian irregulars to be deployed in Sofia.¹²⁴ Even though Hakkı Pasha had to leave the command to settle a pressing unsettled debt in Istanbul in 1853—and was to die in 1857—he became one of the provincial notables who survived into the mid-19th century.¹²⁵

As in the case of Hakkı Pasha, the military priorities entailed by the Crimean War provided Faris Bey with new prospects. After his consecutive failures, he succeeded in obtaining administrative and military offices under an Ottoman pasha between 1854 and 1858, thanks to the fortunes of war.¹²⁶ At the end of his term, Faris Bey returned to his ordinary job hunt. In 1861, for instance, he was asking for an office in accordance with his experience.¹²⁷ Furthermore, he still sought to subvert his employment terms to further his political ends. As late as 1868, he petitioned the government to be granted the grain provision contract for refugees settled in Resülayn, one of Hazro's villages.¹²⁸

Back from Exile

In the telos of empire to nation, the integration of provincial notables, whether residing in their provinces or in exile, is mostly regarded as ambiguous and irreconcilable with centralization. From Hakkı Pasha's mustering of Albanian troops to Faris Bey's service in the imperial army in the mid-19th century, it becomes clear that a provincial resolution emerged from imperial incorporation practices that went hand-in-hand with the centralization reforms. In this scheme, the imperial effort to keep the notables

¹²⁰BOA, MVL. 125/48, 24 Muharrem 1269 (7 November 1852); BOA, MVL. 126/23, 29 Muharrem 1269 (12 November 1852).

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²BOA, MVL. 130/26, 3 Rabiulahir 1269 (14 January 1853).

¹²³BOA, MVL. 130/68, 7 Rabiulahir 1269 (18 January 1853).

¹²⁴BOA, A. AMD. 49/52, 29 Zilhicce 1268 (14 October 1852).

¹²⁵BOA, A. MKT. UM. 149/48, 19 Rabiulevvel 1270 (20 December 1853).

¹²⁶BOA, A. MKT. UM. 329/88, 11 Rabiulevvel 1275 (19 October 1858).

¹²⁷BOA, MVL. 375/72, 7 Rabiulevvel 1278 (12 September 1861).

¹²⁸BOA, MVL. 560/77, 21 Şevval 1284 (15 February 1868).

in exile away from their hometowns became less strictly imposed from the mid-century onward. As long as exile remained a common punishment, provincial notables subjected to this sanction faced the daunting task of reasserting their position in local politics following their displacement. Evident in this mutuality was how the imperial government and the provincial notables had steered toward partnership, the terms of which were constantly being rearranged. This partnership was what it was. It need not be associated with adjectives such as ambivalent or contingent, which stem from the systematizing expectations of the narrative of centralization, a narrative that remains keen to marginalize arrangements that contrast with the supposedly clear-cut stages of centralization.

Given the prospects of this partnership, the restoration of the notables to their homelands should not be seen as contradictory. The Ottoman amnesty (followed by amnesia) reinforced the partnership by erasing both the unruly acts of the notables and the consequent punishment of exile.¹²⁹ According to a report that the governor of Prizren, a town in modern Kosovo, penned in May 1871, it appears that Sadık Bey, Talib Bey's son, succeeded in securing an imperial pardon and permission to reside in Ohrid after his father's death in 1850.¹³⁰ Similarly, the Hazro faction of the Zirki emirs succeeded in returning to their homelands in 1864. Receb Bey's son, Yusuf Bey, restored the dynastic property confiscated three decades before and got involved with the tax farm contracts of the district.¹³¹ Even though the individuals in question were exiled to the opposite ends of the empire, the two beys reaped the benefits of their respective prestigious patronyms.

As a provincial notable who was exiled due to his father's sentence yet managed to get back to his homeland thanks to the still-thriving prestige of the dynasty, Sadık Bey was vocally grateful to the imperial government for his appointment to the governorship of Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, in August 1856.¹³² Despite the distance, he seems to have been involved in the local politics of his hometown. His service on a reform commission in 1869, along with other notables from Dibra and Peshkopi, exhibits the extent of collaboration between the notables and the government.¹³³

In 1870, thanks to his useful service on the commission, Sadık Bey received a promotion to the governorship of Elbasan, today a town in central Albania.¹³⁴ The skill which proved invaluable for his promotion, however, was simultaneously a hazard to be reckoned with. The governor of Prizren noted in 1871 that the bey "has many relatives and followers in Dibra and is up to a grand scheme there."¹³⁵ "Once he completed his task of counting sheep and goats (*ta'dad-ı ađnam*)," the pasha added, "he should be appointed to a vacant district post in the provinces of Skopje or Prizren."¹³⁶

When the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78 began, Sadık Bey was the governor of Peshkopi. According to a commission report, the bey was involved in a sort of treason when he marched to Shkoder with the irregulars under his command. Declared a traitor by the commission members, he was soon removed from office.¹³⁷ Just three years later, however, the very same bey was awarded the title of pasha following his contribution to the suppression of the League of Prizren.¹³⁸

Regardless of the preferential treatment of certain ethnic groups of the empire, which is beyond the scope of this study, the Albanian dynasty can be said to have had a higher degree of incorporation into Ottoman provincial administration than Ottoman Kurdistan. Even though descendants of the Zirki emirs reclaimed the family property they had lost in 1835, their skill in retaining the local administration was limited compared to the members of the Hoxholli dynasty. As late as 1887, Mehmed Bedri Bey, Receb Bey's grandson, was the vice-administrator (*kaza muavini*) of Hazro. His attempt to secure the post of administrator after the death of the previous incumbent proved ill-fated. The Ministry of Interior,

¹²⁹Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung*, 214–25.

¹³⁰BOA, ŞD. 1997/32, 25 Zilhicce 1278 (6 March 1872).

¹³¹BOA, İ. MVL. 497/22480, 11 Cemaziyelahir 1280 (23 November 1863); BOA, MVL. 480/16, 11 Rabiulevvel 1282 (4 August 1865).

¹³²BOA, A. MKT. UM. 249/15, 21 Zilhicce 1272 (23 August 1856).

¹³³BOA, İ. ŞD. 17/715, 29 Cemaziyelahir 1286 (6 October 1869).

¹³⁴BOA, İ. DH. 618/43005, 2 Cemaziyevvel 1287 (31 July 1870).

¹³⁵BOA, ŞD. 1997/32, 25 Zilhicce 1278 (6 March 1872).

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷BOA, İ. DH. 758/61836, 2 Zilkade 1294 (8 November 1877).

¹³⁸BOA, İ. DH. 81/65535, 25 Ramazan 1297 (31 August 1880).

in collaboration with the Commission for the Selection of Officials, ruled out the bey's appointment, claiming that he was not eligible as he was not one of the elected (*müntehib*) officials.¹³⁹

No matter how much the Hoxholli beys and the Zirki emirs differed in obtaining promotions within the echelons of provincial administration, both cases exhibited the extent of flexible centralization of the Ottoman provinces. A series of reforms that started as early as 1858 continued with the Provincial Reform of 1864 and became formalized with the establishment of the Commission for the Selection of Officials in 1871, formed to standardize the eligibility criteria for provincial administration.¹⁴⁰ Aside from the standardization, the reforms also demonstrated that employment of provincial notables by Ottoman officials depended on the circumstances in each province. They were simultaneously open to a central rule in Hazro and maintaining a local rule in the greater Dibra region. However, as the central appointment preference of the Ottoman government was not a point of no return, it did not abruptly alter the terms of employment between the provincial notables and the imperial government. Whereas Sadık Pasha was exiled to Anatolia in 1890, Seyfeddin Pasha, who was Receb Bey's son, was briefly banished from Hazro to Aleppo in 1879. At the turn of the century, however, he was a provincial pasha in his hometown.¹⁴¹

The aftermath of the Russo–Ottoman Turkish war, however, severely changed the rules of the game. In addition to Albanian and Kurdish nationalisms, the triumph of the nation–states in the Balkans, particularly that of Montenegro, and the revolutionary movements of the Armenians in the Ottoman East fueled the nationalist fervors that rendered Dibra and Hazro “the shatterzones of the empire.”¹⁴² Nationalism did not emerge out of the blue in 1878, however; its contribution to the gradual disintegration of the empire was pervasive. Notwithstanding the oft-cited fact that the Hamidian regime exploited Kurds and to a certain extent Albanians to maintain a local balance with non-Muslim subjects, the increasing ethnic and clientelist considerations also shattered the partnership that had developed between the provincial notables and the imperial government.

Conclusion

In search of the making of the modern Middle East, the current literature, with a few exceptions, relies heavily on province-level dynamics. However, there are at least two disadvantages to taking the province as a unit of analysis. First, notwithstanding the increasing emphasis on the imperial context, entertaining the notion of the province in its singularity runs the risk of a retrospective projection of nation–states onto Ottoman history. Second, the emphasis on province clouds the complicated terms of administration and transformation that took place at the lower levels.

This comparative account of Dibra and Hazro, entertaining the notion of provincial administration below the level of province, paves the way for more extensive inquiries into the transformation of 19th-century Ottoman provincial administration. The full story of Dibra and Hazro serves as a reminder that this transformation was not as straightforward as that outlined by historiographies shadowed by the narrative of centralization. The latter histories have explained the survival of provincial notables into the 19th century as an extraordinary, if not controversial, phenomenon. Evident in this understanding of the phenomenon is the presumed difference between empire and nation–state. As Steinmetz notes, however, “states are never ‘formed’ once and for all.”¹⁴³ In this ongoing formation, the provincial politics of the Ottoman Empire originated simultaneously from accommodationist practices of early modern

¹³⁹BOA, DH. MKT. 1425/30, 19 Ramazan 1304 (11 June 1887).

¹⁴⁰For the selection criteria of the district administrators for the reforms of 1858 and 1864, respectively, see Musa Çadırcı, “Türkiye’de Kaza Yönetimi (1840–1876),” *Belleten* 53, no. 206 (1989): 255–57; and Milen V. Petrov, “Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Pasa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2006), 95–96. For the commission, see Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 177, 266.

¹⁴¹BOA, ŞD. 1457/25, 21 Mayıs 1296 (2 June 1880); BOA, Y. PRK. UM. 18/79, 2 Safer 1308 (17 September 1890); BOA, DH. MKT. 2407/66, 30 Cemaziyelevvel 1318 (25 September 1900).

¹⁴²Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds., *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013).

¹⁴³George Steinmetz, ed., *State/Culture: State Formation after the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 9.

sovereignty, rational mentalities of modern bureaucracy, and nationalist fervors. The pattern of provincial administration in Dibra and Hazro before, during, and after the Tanzimat edict highlights a flexible centralization forged by a volatile partnership between the provincial notables and the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to participation of lesser provincial notables in administration, the transregional networks established by the Hoxholli beys and the Zirki emirs banished to distant provinces of the empire conjure another form of provincial politics and force us to reconsider the prevalence of binary oppositions attributed to the making of the modern Ottoman state. As recounted in this study, the career trajectories of the Hoxholli beys and the Zirki emirs defy the generic and yet oft-cited divisions between local/provincial and central/imperial. Rather than succumbing to the myopic narrative of overrating the local nature of provincial notables or ascribing agency to the central officials, this study has shown that the transregional connections forged by notables in exile along with those they had in their homelands gave rise to a transformation in Ottoman provincial politics.

By investigating the 19th-century provincial administrations in Dibra and Hazro and the provincial power the Hoxholli beys and the Zirki emirs enjoyed in the distant provinces, this study has demonstrated the making of the modern Ottoman state while avoiding the trap of mutually exclusive interpretations. In light of the overwhelming emphasis on centralization or locality, the question of whether these arguments constitute an empire-wide phenomenon invites careful studies of other, similar dynasties and other provinces. These investigations will lead to reconsideration of the commensurability of the 19th-century transformation of Ottoman provinces, free of the shadows cast retrospectively by modernization and nationalism.

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