

“THE FURIOUS DOGS OF HELL”: REBELLION, JANISSARIES AND
RELIGION IN SULTANIC LEGITIMISATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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Başlık: “Cehennemın Azgın Köpekleri”: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İsyân, Yeniçeriler, Din
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Bu çalışma, on sekizinci yüzyıldan ocağın kaldırılmasına kadar uzanan sürede patlak veren yeniçeri isyanlarının teknik aşamalarını irdelemektedir. Ayrıca, isyancılarla saray arasındaki meşruiyet mücadelesi, çalışmamızın bir diğer konu başlığıdır. Başkentte patlak veren dört büyük isyan bir arada değerlendirilerek, Osmanlı isyanlarının karakteristik özelliklerine ve isyanlarda izlenen meşruiyet pratiklerine ışık tutulması hedeflenmiştir. Çalışmamızda kullandığımız metot dâhilinde, 1703, 1730, 1807 ve 1826 isyanlarını konu alan yazma eserler karşılaştırılmış, müelliflerin, eserlerini oluşturdukları süreçteki niyetleri ve getirmiş oldukları yorumlara odaklanılmıştır. Argümanların devamlılığını gözlemek için, 1703 ve 1730 isyanları ile 1807 ve 1826 isyanları iki ayrı grupta incelenmiştir.

1703 ve 1730 isyanlarının ortak noktası, isyancıların kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda padişaha yakın olan ve rakiplerini bu sayede eleyen politik kişilikleri hedef almalarıdır. Bunun sonucunda, tecrit edilen gruplar, eski mevki ya da ayrıcalıklarını yeniden kazanmak için isyancılara destek vermiştir. 1807 ve 1826 isyanlarında ise, isyancılar, politik kişilikleri değil, belli bir kurumu hedeflemişlerdir. Bu isyanlarda, saray ve isyancılar arasında daha katmerli bir meşruiyet mücadelesi yaşanmıştır. Çalışmamızda bu dört isyanın seçilmesinin nedeni, olayların karakteristik özelliklerinin benzeşmesidir. İsyanlarda izlenen ortak adımlar ve meşruiyet süreçleri bu doğrultuda incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, isyanlar karşılaştırılarak, farklı vakalarda izlenen meşruiyet süreçlerindeki –eğer var ise- değişimler ve bu değişimlerin müelliflerin eserlerinde öne sürdükleri argümanlar üzerindeki etkileri değerlendirilmiştir.

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Legitimation in the Ottoman Empire

This study aims to discuss the technical procedures of the janissary-led or involved rebellions, legitimisation patterns and the role of religious discourse as a tool of legitimization from the eighteenth century to the abolishment of the janissaries. The starting point of our study is the legitimisation issue in the abolishment of the janissaries. However, in the light of four mainstream rebellions we aimed to discuss the particularities of the rebellions against the Ottoman administration.

The method of our analysis is to focus on the inter-textual dialogues of the contemporary authors, their authorial intentions and interpretations in composing the narratives of the 1703, 1730, 1807 and 1826 rebellions and the factors, forming the reasoning of the contemporary authors. As for the continuity of the arguments, it would be safe to categorize the rebellion of 1703 and 1730 as one group and 1807 and 1826 as another group. The common point of the rebellions in the first group is that the rebels had targeted certain political figures that dominantly excluded their political rivals out of the competition. Hence, these groups realigned under the cause of the rebels to reclaim their standing or privileges. Concerning the rebellions in the second group, their opposition was against an institution. The power struggle among the different parties concentrated on the manner of establishment of this new and western institution. Thus, the legitimisation battle within the rebellions of 1807 and 1826 have more complex and sophisticated structure as both sides asserted legitimacy which depended on different reasoning.

A common motive for selecting these rebellions is that similar characteristics of the events and practices allow us to gain a deeper insight into the legitimisation process of the events. By following such a comparative method, we also aim to observe if there was a change in the legitimisation practices of different events which depended on different factors. And if there are some changes, which of these factors had influenced the contemporary authors to develop their arguments.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of studying the religion's role as a tool of legitimisation is actually the outcome of my research on *Gülzar-ı Fütihat* by Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi which was written in the aftermath of abolishment of the Janissaries. In the treatise, the author vigorously advocates the policy of Sultan Mahmud II regarding the abolishment of the Janissaries on religious context. Striking and horrific descriptions towards the Janissaries, such as naming them “*the furious dogs of hell*” drew my attention to the legitimacy arguments that were asserted by the author. These arguments can be considered as one of the key features of understanding the patterns of legitimisation which was constituted by the contemporary authors and the factors which affected the author's reasoning of the events.

The abolishment of the Janissaries was not merely a military change. Rather it triggered further changes in the economic, political, social and administrative structures of the Empire.¹ Indeed, the eradication of such a social phenomenon which had organic connections to politics, economy and military needed to be justified. Consequently, an illustration of the Janissaries as an “enemy of the state and religion” was a necessity for the Porte. However, during the following process, the negative depiction of the Janissaries has become more than illustration of “the enemy of the state and religion”.

Even after the abolishment of the Janissaries, the Porte continued to use the same depiction of the Janissaries that was installed after the “auspicious event”. According to an article which was published in *Takvim-i Vekayi* in 1833, the Janissaries had risen from their graves in Tırnova, Bulgaria.² Moreover, it was even claimed that Sultan Mahmud II had ordered the destruction the Janissary grave stones.³ These examples demonstrate that from the scope of the Porte, apart from being labelled as the enemy of the state and religion, the Janissaries were also represented as misanthropes. What kind of assertion could label the traditional corps of the Empire as misanthropes in such short time?

¹ Fatma Sel Turhan, “*Abolishment of Janissary Army and its Reflections*”, Unpublished MA dissertation, Boğaziçi University, (Istanbul 2004).

² Edhem Eldem, “Yeniçeri Mezartaşları Kitabı Vesilesiyle Yeniçeri Taşları ve Tarih Üzerine”, *Toplumsal Tarih* vol.188, (Istanbul 2009), 16-17.

³ *Ibid.*, 12-23.

The depiction of the Janissaries as “the enemy of the state and religion” shall be considered as an effort of legitimizing the order and policy of the Sultan which aimed to enhance the influence of the central authority on the military. Starting from this point, the main purpose of our study is to reveal the legitimisation practices over mainstream Janissary-led, involved rebellions and to formulise the technical procedures which were followed by the rebels and the Porte during the rebellions. In addition, the role of religion as a tool of legitimisation is another focal point which is being discussed within this context. To achieve this purpose, the case study of the Janissaries abolishment itself would be insufficient. Hence, it is necessary for us to have an insight on the legitimacy dynamics and patterns of other cases. Thus, the mainstream rebellions of the eighteenth century, involving the abolishment of the Janissaries are observed in our study to constitute a comparative analysis which aims to re-construct the arguments in the contemporary sources.

The method of our analysis is to focus on the inter-textual dialogues of the contemporary authors, their authorial intentions and interpretations in composing the narratives of the 1703, 1730, 1807 and 1826 rebellions and the factors which affected the reasoning of the contemporary authors. A common motive for selecting these rebellions is that similar characteristics of the events and practices allow us to gain a deeper insight into the legitimisation process of the events. By following such a comparative method, we also aim to observe if there was a change in the legitimisation practices of different events which depended on different factors. And if there are some changes, which of these factors had influenced the contemporary authors to develop their arguments.

According to Hakan Karateke, the legitimacy is *a form of belief ascribed as a distinctive feature by the subjects to those in power*.⁴ Hence, the rulers had to justify their own government which depended on certain concepts of legitimisation.⁵ “Justice” and “Divine Order” are considered as the most effective concepts to produce legitimacy for the ruler.⁶ The legitimacy signifies an inherited or gained right of ruling. It implies ultimate

⁴ Hakan Karateke, *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* ed. Hakan T. Karateke, Marius Reinkowski, (Boston: Brill, 2005), 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶ Referring to the order of the state and the universe, *Ibid.*, 5.

acceptance of those who were living under the regime of the ruler. The domains were subjected to unquestionable obedience. Nevertheless, the degree of obedience was according to the legitimacy of the regime. Hence, the task of the authority was to construct and maintain loyalty to its legitimacy.⁷

According to the Ottoman concepts of justice, maintaining the “world order” was the main task of the ruler, as well as with ensuring justice. As the Ottoman rulers had the power of making law, they positioned themselves as the very source of the law.⁸ When the Sultan became “unjust” and “oppressive”, he failed to fulfil his principle task of maintaining the order of the State, therefore the subjects were encouraged to organise acts against him.⁹ The basic principle of the rebels in legitimizing their cause to rebel, depended on this lawful right of taking act against the “unjust” and “oppressive” ruler. However, the process of legitimizing the antagonist cause embodied very complex structure of practices and interpretations which depended on the authority of the ruler and the influence of the rebels. This is the basic principle that was underlined in evaluating the arguments. As it will be repeated on different occasions, I believe that political realism prevailed over religious idealism in the aftermath of the events.

At this point, it would be necessary to emphasise that, this study is not an attempt to decide whether the rebellions were legitimate or not. Revealing the reasons behind the abolishment of the Janissaries, as well other rebellions, or the question of if the Janissaries were “corrupt” are beyond the scope of this study. Neither the discussion of social and political developments which led to the abolishment of the Janissaries, nor the reconstruction of the chronology of the events are among the main purposes of this study. Criticism of mainstream historiography is also beyond our scope. Even though, this study focuses on the power struggle between different social, political and military elements, it offers very little about the very nature of such struggle and economical, political and social reasons of the events.

⁷ Hakan T. Karateke “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis”, *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* ed. Hakan T. Karateke, Marius Reinkowski, (Boston: Brill, 2005), 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 38. Ali Şafak, “*Mezheblerarası Mukâyeseli İslâm Ceza Hukuku*” (Erzurum: 1977), 178-185, Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, “*The Islamic Law of the Rebellion*” Unpublished PhD Thesis submitted to University of Chicago, (Chicago, 1999), 40-53, 130-157, Khaled El Fadl, “*Rebellion and Violence in Islam*” (Boston, 2001), 32-62.

⁹ *Ibid.*.38, Halil Inalcık, “*Adâletnâmeler*”, *Belgeler Dergisi* vol.2 (Istanbul 1965), 86.

The term “rebel” is referred to as the sum of elements which opposed the Porte. “The rebels” consisted of elements among the society such as the townspeople and the *Esnaf*, the military; primarily the Janissaries, the *Ulema*, and some members of political fractions. In each case, there was a sudden shifting in the alignment of these elements due to their own interests. These changes in the alignment of the rebels actually signify that there was a power struggle between the different groups. After events reached to a certain threshold, such as elimination of the ruling cadres and the deposition of the Sultan, some of the participant elements sought ways to compromise with the new government. These manoeuvres actually changed the course of the events and the nature of legitimisation practices. Such changes are important for our purposes since the majority of the sources were written in the time of the prevailing party.

The very nature of the term “rebellion” defined as it was in Islamic law is “an act against the authority of the ruler”. In broader context, our approach to the rebellions concentrates on the legitimisation battle between the Sultan and the rebels. According to Khaled El Fadl:

*“...rebellion could be an act of passive non compliance with the orders of those in power, or on the other hand, it could be an act of armed insurrection. A rebellion could take the form of a counter culture that seeks an alternative mode of social expression, or it could take form of an assassination attempt against a famous religious or political figure. But beyond the issue of the means or form that a rebellion may take, there is also the issue of the target of the rebellion. A rebellion could be directed against a social or political institution. Alternatively, it could be directed against the religious authority of the ‘Ulama’ (the jurists) or the idea of God. Often it is very difficult to distinguish between one form of rebellion from another. For instance, it is not always possible to distinguish between heresy, treason, sedition, revolt, and an act of political opposition.”*¹⁰

Thus, the events which had occurred in 1826 and resulted with the abolishment of the Janissaries were also considered as a “rebellion” which was suppressed by the Sultan.

¹⁰ Khaled El Fadl, “*Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law*”, (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2004), 4.

As for the continuity of the arguments, it would be safe to categorise the rebellion of 1703 and 1730 as one group and 1807 and 1826 as another group. The common point of the rebellions in the first group is that the rebels had targeted certain political figures that dominantly excluded their political rivals out of competition. Hence, these groups realigned under the cause of the rebels to reclaim their positions or privileges. And as for the rebellions in second group, their target was an institution. The power struggle among the different parties concentrated on the establishment of this new and western institution. Thus, the legitimisation battle regarding the rebellions of 1807 and 1826 have more complex and sophisticated structure as both sides asserted legitimacy which depended on different reasoning. For that reason, the first two chapters and last two chapters can be considered as one group to be compared.

The sources that were used in this study are the published primary sources. The transliterated palace chronicles, special event chronicles and treatises were heavily relied on as well as with material of the secondary literature for this study. In every chapter a brief chronology of the events was given to understand the nature of the shifting in the alignment of different groups. In addition, there is a part of “The Chronicles” in each chapter to introduce the contemporary sources which are used in each chapter.

The first chapter deals with the rebellion of 1703 that is also known as “the Edirne Incident”. The first part of this chapter is an introduction which discusses the reasons of the rebellion. In addition, there is a short survey of selected secondary literature to underline the interpretations of the canonical works on the 1703 rebellion. The following part of “*Illuminating the Power Struggle*” is a discussion of the view of the contemporary sources regarding certain elements of the rebellion. In the following three parts, in order to understand the dynamics and reasoning of the palace-centred view, the roles of the military, the *Ulema*, and the condition of *Şeyülislam* Feyzullah in the narration of the events and the roles that were affiliated to these elements, are discussed in a comparative manner. Hence, observing the legitimisation battle between the Porte and the rebels and the affect of the prevailed group on the narration of events is the main purpose of the first chapter.

The second chapter deals with the rebellion of 1730. It would be useful to underline that for our purposes, the focal point of this chapter is the arguments of the contemporary sources rather than illuminating the affect of the Tulip Age on them. Indeed, the Tulip Age had affected the reasoning of the contemporary authors and the rebels' assertions which articulated to the main concepts of justice. But this study offers very little about the context of the rebels' assertions which were related to the Tulip Age, which is actually a particular field of study on its own.

Although there is a short discussion regarding the relationship between the rebellion of 1730 and the Tulip Age, this chapter offers nothing specific about the social transformation which had occurred Ottoman society between 1718 and 1730. Due their lifestyle, the rebels had labelled the palace elites as being morally corrupt. "The Moral Corruption" argument in the contemporary sources is related to the changes on consumption patterns in the Tulip Age. However the focus here is on how the rebels used this argument in different stages of the rebellion to achieve their ultimate goal rather than the content of it.

The first part of the second chapter is an introduction to underline these aforementioned conditions and a discussion on the relationship between the Tulip Age and the rebellion of 1730. The same method of analysis which is used in the first chapter is applied to the sections of "*The Cause of Justice: The Rebels and the Ulema*" and "*Damat Ibrahim Paşa as Scapegoat of the 1730 Rebellion*". The conclusion is a comparative discussion of the rebellions of 1703 and 1730 to reveal if there were similar or different concepts of legitimisation performed. Furthermore, this part is also introduces the technical procedures of the rebellions which was followed by the rebels in both events.

The third and fourth chapters deal with the cases of the rebellion of 1807 and 1826. The aim of the third chapter is to focus on the legitimisation battle between the Porte and the antagonists over the New Order implications. The part of "*The Edirne Incident of 1806*" aimed to reveal how and why the Porte initiated its propaganda regarding the legitimacy of the New Order policy, particularly the New Army. The religious context of the legitimatization battle between the Porte and the antagonists is discussed in the

following part. Two different interpretations regarding the legitimacy of the New Order are our focal point.

The next two following parts is an analysis of the Porte's official propaganda texts which had been written by a military specialist "Koca Sekbanbaşı" and a religious leader among the *Ulema*, Ubeydullah Kuşmani. "*The Creation of the Enemy of State and Religion*" and "*Fezleke of Kuşmani*" parts are devoted to the interpretations of Kuşmani regarding the rebellion of 1807. These two parts are very important to our study which aims to construct the argument which labelled the Janissaries as the enemy of the state and religion. The interpretations of Kuşmani will be inherited by the grandees of Sultan Mahmud II and constitute the official legitimisation basis for the abolishment of the Janissaries. In order to follow the continuity of the arguments of Kuşmani and the authors who supported the view of the Porte in abolishment of the Janissaries, there is no conclusion part to specifically summarize the discussion in the third chapter.¹¹

Fourth chapter starts with Mahmud II's efforts to consolidate his power on the provincial elements, central government and the military. The following parts deal with the final struggle between the Porte and the Janissaries, and the Porte's means of producing legitimacy over the abolishment of the janissaries. "*The Furious Dogs of Hell: The Janissaries and the Loyalists in the Rebellion of 1826*" is an evaluation of the fictional image of the Janissaries that was created after the abolishment of the corps.

In conclusion, I intended to reveal that the rebels applied certain basic procedures that gave rise to the Ottoman rebellions. To a certain extent, there may be a consciousness or even tradition of a rebellion which developed from preceding successful attempts. To legitimize the abolishment of the Janissaries, the Porte had illustrated the image of the Sultan as a "renovator of the Order" and the janissaries as "the enemy of state and religion". These images were based on Ubeydullah Kuşmani's interpretations on the legitimacy of the New Order and the rebellion of 1807. Hence, the policy which Selim III

¹¹ Apart from Ubeydullah Kuşmani, the narratives of other contemporary authors are not included on our analyze. On critical of the contemporary sources which dealt with the rebellion of 1807 see Aysel Yıldız Danacı, "*Vaka-yı Selimiyye or the Selimiyye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion*", Unpublished PhD Dissertation to Sabancı University, Istanbul 2008, 10-60.

had pursued for the issue of legitimacy of New Order was adopted by his successor for further attempts. Perhaps it even affected the changes in concepts of legitimisation in the “*Caliph*” Sultan image during the *Tanzimat* Era.

CHAPTER 1

“THE EDIRNE INCIDENT”: THE REBELLION OF 1703

Rebellion against “the Traitors”

Beginning with the protest of *Cebecis* (the armourers), the rebellion of 1703 displays an opposition to the rebel coalition which consisted of elements among the military, namely the *Ulema* and the *Esnaf* (the artisans) against Sultan Mustafa II and his tutor *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi. The dichotomy between the Porte in Edirne, and the rebels in Istanbul, had brought the Empire to the verge of civil war. This aligned the *Ulema*, Janissaries and *Esnaf*, *Cebecis* with the united anti-Feyzullah Efendi power who centred under their cause and formed an alternative government in Istanbul.

Each group of the rebel coalition had its own interests for joining the rebellion. There was a pragmatic relationship amongst the rebel coalition, especially between the Military and *Ulema*. The military needed the support of the *Ulema*, because without their support it would have been impossible for them to appeal the townspeople of Istanbul and give legitimacy to their cause. The *Ulema* joined the rebellion as the Military had offered them an opportunity to return to their previous positions. As the most obscure participant of the rebellion, the *Esnaf*'s goal was simply to hold on to their most valued customers, namely the palace elites. The continuity of their fragile alliance was based on their shared interests, as any prevailing group eliminated the other within this power struggle.

In order to legitimize their claims, each sides (the Rebels and the Porte) developed different religious-intellectual arguments. This chapter aims to discuss the legitimisation arguments of the 1703 rebellion in the contemporary sources. In addition, the legitimisation practices which were performed by the rebels in different stages of the rebellion will be discussed within this framework. Another concern of this chapter is to reveal how the palace-centred view illustrated an image of “the rebel”.

Among the major studies which dealt with the rebellion of 1703, Sara Follet

Meserby¹² focuses on personal myth of *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi. As the content of Meserby's work is beyond the scope of this study, it would be necessary for us to pay attention to the studies of Rif'at Abou-El-Haj¹³ and Annemarike Stremmelaar¹⁴ who had focused on different dimensions of the 1703 rebellion. El-Haj, claims that the rebellion of 1703 *doesn't represent a conflict of classes or corporate*. Rather, it demonstrates an internal struggle between different factions (*pashaholds*) that affiliated to the Ottoman politics.¹⁵

There were two main reasons behind the rebellion:

- Elevation of Feyzullah Efendi to the post of *Şeyhülislam*.
- The transfer of the court centre from Istanbul to Edirne.¹⁶

According to him, by the end of Golden Age there were critical changes made to the political formation of the Empire. These changes affected the function of the *Devşirme* Institute, which had been devised to protect the Sultan's absolute authority. The grand viziers and pashas, in both the central and the local administration, and in the high-ranking members of the military, were the graduates of the *Devşirme*. As the expansion of the Empire halted, there was less need for military arm and hence the *Devşirme* graduates. The alternative source of the Porte was the grandees of vizier and pasha households for the administration. Thus, it was important for these *pashaholds* to assign their own men to the key positions of the administration and for the military to keep their power.¹⁷

On the eve of the rebellion, *Şeyülislam* Feyzullah Efendi was the most powerful

¹² Sara Follet Meserby, "*Feyzullah Efendi: An Ottoman Şeyhülislam*", Unpublished Phd Dissertation, University of Michigan, (Michigan: 1969). See also Michael Nizri, "The Memoirs of Şeyülislam Feyzullah Efendi", in: "*Many Ways of Speaking about the Self. Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th–20th Century)*" ed. Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse, (Berlin: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2010), 27-37. Tahir Sevinç, "*1703 Edirne Vakası*", Unpublished Phd Dissertation, Isparta University, (Isparta: 2004).

¹³ Rif'at Abou-El-Haj, "*The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics*", (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Institut, 1984).

¹⁴ Annemarike Stremmelaar, "*Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703*", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Leiden University, (Leiden: 2007).

¹⁵ Rif'at Abou-El-Haj, "*The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics*", 1. See also Rif'at Abou-El-Haj, "*Formation of the Modern State, The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*", (Albany NY: SUNY Press 1991), Rif'at Abou-El-Haj, "The Ottoman Vezir and Pashaholds: 1683-1703: A preliminary Report" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1974), 438-447.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

political figure of the Empire. Abou El-Haj argues that each of these “factions” which joined the rebellion on the side of the rebels had immediate and longstanding grievances with Feyzullah Efendi. Thus, the opposition to the Porte over the condition of Feyzullah Efendi prepared a basis for the rebel allegiance. In particular, the members of *Ulema* whose career paths were blockaded by the nepotism of Feyzullah Efendi joined the rebellion to reclaim their previous positions. The struggle between the *Ulema* and Feyzullah Efendi was considered by Abou-El-Haj as another episode of an ongoing clash between *pasha holds*, which had existed since the time of previous ruler Mehmed IV and who was deposed by one of his rebelling viziers.¹⁸

In addition, Abou-El-Haj pays attention to Mustafa II’s efforts on adopting the role of “*gazi-Sultan*” early in his reign. The Sultan himself led the army on military campaigns which was actually a role of the grand vizier at that time. Abou-El-Haj evaluated the policy of Mustafa II as an attempt of consolidation of his absolute authority on the administration and the military and the *pasha holds*. In the meantime, his mentor Feyzullah Efendi became the most powerful figure of Ottoman politics. Nevertheless, this policy failed due to the military defeat of Zenta and the signing of the treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. Mustafa II became less visible in political and military issues, and transferred to the court centre in Edirne where he enjoyed daily pleasures. Abou-El-Haj interprets this move as a manoeuvre of Feyzullah Efendi to isolate the Sultan from the disfranchised crowd of members of the *Ulema* and other resented groups. The rebellion of 1703 was considered by the *Ulema* and other disfranchised groups as an opportunity of the increasingly overwhelming Feyzullah Efendi to reach their immediate goals.¹⁹

On one hand, Annemarike Stremmelaar denies the interpretation of Abou-El-Haj which positions the 1703 rebellion as an outcome of internal power struggle. She asserts that “the Edirne Incident” was a popular rebellion against the Sultan who had failed to perform his duties as ruler. Her analysis is based on the assertion of Şerif Mardin who claims that the Ottoman rebellions revealed a tacit agreement; a sort of social contract

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 7-9.

¹⁸ Rif’at Abou-El-Haj, “*The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics*”, 9-10.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

between the Sultan and his subjects which determined the legitimacy of the ruler on a social basis. The subjects had taken the initiative to restore the order when they felt that the Sultan had become an incapable ruler.²⁰

Stremmelaar tries to reveal whether there was a social contract between the Sultan and his subjects, including the nature of the principles that the Sultan had to observe, or if he was willing to keep his throne over the rebellion of 1703. She evaluated that the ideal ruler has to be just and accessible to his subjects. Thus, she concludes the protest of *Cebecis* in the early stages of the rebellion as an attempt to negotiate with the Sultan. In the further stages of the rebellion, the authority and legitimacy of the Sultan were questioned when he failed to meet the demands of the rebels. Thus, she considered the 1703 rebellion was legitimate over the Ottoman concepts of justice as the Sultan had violated the tacit social contract.²¹

This approach may be applied to the case of 1703 rebellion but interpretations of Stremmelaar regarding the existence of a tacit social contract would raise new questions. The majority of the contemporary sources did not offer a comprehensive analysis of the events and the identities of the rebels remain uncovered.²² The palace-centred chroniclers established a pattern which portrayed an image of a victimized Sultan surrounded by incompetent people. In this pattern, the rebels were depicted as “riffraff” that were remotely controlled by other figures behind the curtain. The only role that was assigned to the rebels in this pattern was of bringing mischief and disorder. Hence, the restoration of the order had been completed by the punishment of the rebels. On the other hand, the rebel-centred view painted the rebels as “the restorers of the order” over religious-juridical assertions which underlined the Sultan’s incapability of ruling.²³

Both, the palace and the rebel centred-view had concentrated on the restoration of the order in the narration of the events. But in the end, the focal point of the narrations was the political changes in the Empire. Indeed, the Ottoman society questioned the capability

²⁰ Annemarike Stremmelaar, “*Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703*”, 2-8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

²² Rif’at Abou-El-Haj, “*The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics*”, 5.

²³ Annemarike Stremmelaar, “*Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703*”, 172-173.

of Feyzullah Efendi and the Sultan. However considering the interests of each group who participated in the rebellion, it is hard to determine whether or not their reaction was against the capability of the ruler. In my opinion, the rebels used the Ottoman concept of justice as a tool to reach to their immediate aims. The championing of justice or the protection of the Muslim territory only fulfilled the pretext for their actions. In next parts, we will focus on the palace centred-view and its pattern to reveal the factors which affected the narration of the events. By following such method, we aim to understand the nature of legitimate practices and its functions in the narrative of the contemporary authors.

The Incident

The Incident started with the protest of the *Cebecis* who were set to embark on a campaign to Georgia in the early morning of 17 July, 1703.²⁴ A group of *Cebecis* gathered at their headquarters (*Cebehane*) near Ayasofya Mosque and shouted that they refused to go on campaign until they had received full payment of their salary, which were ten instalments in arrears at the time. They blockaded the gates of the armoury (*Cebehane*) and refused to leave until they received their payments.²⁵ The negotiations between the *Cebecis*, the major (*Kaymakam*) of Istanbul, Abdullah Paşa and the Deputy Janissary Commander, Haşimoğlu Murtaza Ağa went unresolved. Consequently, the *Cebecis*, fully armed, decided to march onto *Et Meydanı* and to merge with the Janissaries.²⁶

On their way to *Et Meydanı*, they expressed their cause to the townspeople of Istanbul and made their way to Grand Bazaar to appeal to the artisans and shopkeepers, who had closed their shops as they feared looting by the protestors. The *Cebecis* stated that they were not plunderers or brigands. They asserted that their protest was against “the people of high rank” who had *betrayed* the state and religion. Therefore, their numbers increased as they gained the support of the townspeople.²⁷ When the crowd reached *Et Meydanı*; they forced one of the gates open and put their banner on the ground in front of the gate of Janissary barracks. Some dervishes, who called themselves “*Seyyid*” joined the

²⁴ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 144.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 144-145.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 145-146.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

Cebecis.²⁸ Moreover, those *Seyyids*, accompanied by a growing group of protestors, moved to Fatih Mosque to bring the judge (*Kadı*) of Istanbul to *Et Meydanı*. When they came upon him, they also received the support of theological students.²⁹

In the meantime, Abdullah Paşa and Haşimoğlu Murtaza Ağa were working on measures to quell the continuing turmoil. They decided to arm the loyal troops and organised a meeting at the palace. The higher-ranking members of the *Ulema* and prominent bureaucratic figures attended the meeting. They planned a strategy that included using the Holy Banner (*Sancak-ı Şerif*) against the “rebels” to paint them as infidels. Hence, they would win the public.³⁰ The holy banner, which was a symbol of holy war against infidels, was believed to have been used by the Prophet Mohammed.³¹ Since the original holy banner was kept by the Sultan in Edirne, the *Kaymakam* Paşa and the Janissary Agha Deputy wanted to use a green banner that was placed in the tomb of *Eyyub Sultan Ensari*. However, that banner had already been transferred to the Palace and was being protected by the imperial bodyguards as the head of bodyguards who feared that the rebels would use it in the same manner against the Sultan.³²

While the officials were discussing the measures that needed to be taken against the protestors, the *Cebecis* stormed the residence of the Abdullah Paşa and freed the prisoners being held there. This encounter between the *Cebecis* and the guards of the residence of Abdullah Paşa turned into a gun fight which resulted in the death of a *Cebeci* who was shot by a guard. Angered and provoked, the *Cebecis* stormed the building and plundered the goods they found.³³ After that, they marched to the Palace where they encountered the deputy Janissary commander. The old Murtaza Ağa was unable to escape from the rebels and was brought to *Et Meydanı* and subjected to various humiliations on the way. The *Cebecis* asked him to join their cause and surrender the banner of the Janissaries.³⁴ At this point, the *Cebecis* were convinced that as long as Murtaza Ağa was alive, they would not

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 146-147.

³¹ Annemarike Stremmelaar, “Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703”, 55.

³² Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “Nusretname”, 147.

³³ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

be able to establish an alliance with the Janissaries. Hence, they killed Murtaza Ağa, captured the banner of the Janissaries and placed it in the square of *Et Meydanı*.³⁵ Seeing that the rebels had gained the support of the military, Abdullah Paşa decided to go on hiding as events turned into a full scale of rebellion.

Later on, *the Cebecis* forced the Judge of Istanbul to invite the members of the *Ulema* to come to their headquarters in Sultan Ahmed Square.³⁶ The prominent members of the *Ulema*, who had lost their positions or whose career path had been blocked by *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi, adjudged that the cause of the *Cebecis* was legal in Islamic law. As a consequence, the rebels were able to suspend the Friday public prayers, a symbol of the Sultan's religious authority, and appoint their own men to high posts of the administration and the *Ilmiye*, such as Janissary Commander, Major of Istanbul, *Şeyülislam*, Chief Judge of Anatolia, Chief Judge of Rumelia.³⁷ A petition written and signed by members of the *Ulema* was sent to the Sultan which demanded the return of the court from Edirne to Istanbul and the dismissal of *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi, his sons and sons-in-laws. The list of the newly appointed officers had also attached to the letter.³⁸

Furthermore, the rebels assembled a delegation that they had chosen from among the members of each participant group (the *Ulema*, the Military and the *Esnaf*) and dispatched them from the capital to deliver the petition.³⁹ The rebel delegation was confronted by imperial bodyguards in Edirne and were arrested immediately by order of Feyzullah Efendi.⁴⁰ (The Sultan's inner circle, including the Grand Vizier Rami Mehmed Paşa, received orders from Feyzullah Efendi, not to mention the rebellion and the rebel delegation to the Sultan.) Finally, when the Sultan was informed of the events that had occurred in Istanbul, he dismissed Feyzullah Efendi and his relatives and exiled them to Erzurum.⁴¹

The Grand Vizier Rami Mehmed Paşa had initially sent one of his own men to

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 151-152.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 154-156.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

Istanbul with a declaration that he himself had written without the Sultan's knowledge to state the Sultan's final decision.⁴² Soon after, the Sultan sent his own representative with an imperial order announcing the dismissal of Feyzullah Efendi and his sons from their posts, just as the rebels had petitioned for, and invited the men, whose names had been written on the petition to Edirne, and commanded that they lay down their arms.⁴³ In the meantime however, the rebels in Istanbul were concerned about the fate of their delegation as they had not received any news from Edirne. The representative of the Grand Vizier failed to convince the rebels of the Sultan's favourable response. When the representative of the Sultan arrived in the capital, the response of the Sultan did not satisfy their demands as they had hoped for the Sultan's immediate return to Istanbul.⁴⁴

Sometime later, some members of the delegation, who had been arrested by the imperial bodyguards in Edirne, returned to Istanbul. The rebels were angered when they learnt what their delegation had been put through.⁴⁵ Despite this, they decided to send another delegation to the Sultan, yet it was clear that the diplomacy between Edirne and Istanbul had failed. Without waiting for the Sultan's response, the rebels started to take military action as they were recruiting new troops for their army. In addition to this, the rebels made new appointments to fill posts which had been vacated by Feyzullah Efendi and his relatives.⁴⁶ They also made appointments for the post of grand vizierate. The last appointments of the rebels clearly indicate that they were defying the authority of Edirne Government.⁴⁷

The rebel army left Istanbul on 13th August, 1703.⁴⁸ In the meantime, discussions had risen as to the successor to the throne as the rebels had open intentions of deposing Mustafa II. While members of the military supported the idea of enthroning *Şehzade* Ibrahim; members of the *Ulema* were taking the side of *Şehzade* Ahmet. In the end, the wishes of *Ulema* prevailed over those of the military. The rebels gave in to the wishes of

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 163-165.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 165-166.

⁴⁶ Annemarike Stremmelaar, "Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703", 67.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, "Nusretname", 176.

the *Ulema* and accepted the enthronement of *Şehzade Ahmet*.⁴⁹ The encounter between the Sultan and the rebels ended without bloodshed. Despite the oaths they took to stay loyal to the Sultan, the Janissaries refused to fight with the army of the rebels. Abandoned by his officers, commanders and soldiers, Sultan Mustafa II had no choice but to leave his throne to his brother *Şehzade Ahmed*.⁵⁰

The Chronicles

In this chapter, four chronicles, *Nusretname* of Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa⁵¹, *Zübde-i Vekayiât* of Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa⁵², *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi* of an unknown author⁵³ will be used in the analysis of the events. Apart from the *Nusretname*, none of the chronicles were put in pen by official palace chroniclers. In addition, the personal biography of *Şeyülislam* Feyzullah Efendi⁵⁴ and the chronicle of *Balatlı Georg*⁵⁵ are the other sources of this chapter.

Nusretname was written by Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa who served as sword bearer to Mustafa II and Ahmed III. He was born in Fındıklı, a part of Galata district, and was a well educated man who was among the prominent figures of the palace.⁵⁶ He started to write his chronicle in 1655 and was appointed as official palace chronicler in 1695 by Mehmed III. The first volume of his work (1655-1695) was named *Zeyl-i Fezleke*. The volume which covers the narration of events from 1695 to 1721 was titled “*Nusretname* (The Book of Victories)” by Mustafa II. Considering Mustafa II’s early policy of reviving the *Gazi-Sultan* image of the classical age by naming the official chronicles of the palace as “The Book of Victories”, the Sultan probably wished for his reign to be recalled “victorious”.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁵¹ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”. See also Mehmet Topal, “*Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa Nusretname: Tahili ve Metin (1106-1133/1695-1721)*”, Unpublished Phd dissertation, Marmara University, (Istanbul 2001).

⁵² Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa, *Zübde-i Vekayiât*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan, (Istanbul: TTK 1995).

⁵³ *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)*, (TTK Istanbul, 1995).

⁵⁴ Fahri Çetin Derin-Ahmed Türek, “*Feyzullah Efendi’nin Kendi Kaleminden HalTercümesi*” in *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, vol.23-24 (Istanbul 1969-70), 69-93/205-219.

⁵⁵ Hrand Andreasyan, “Balatlı Georg’a Göre Edirne Vakası” in *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, c. XI, (Istanbul 1960), 47-65.

As one of the closest people to the Sultan, Silahdar Mehmed Ağa was in Edirne during the outbreak of the rebellion.⁵⁷ His personal loyalty to Sultan came into view in his text as he constantly condemned the rebels. According to him, the main person responsible for the rebellion was Feyzullah Efendi, and the whole event was a conspiracy of Rami Mehmed Paşa who wished to break the power of Feyzullah Efendi. For our case, Silahdar Ağa's chronicle can be considered as official representative of the palace-centred view.

Zübde-i Vekayiat ("Essence of Events") of Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa covers the events from 1671 to 1704. Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa was among the prominent members of the palace as he served as "treasurer" (*Defterdar*) seven times in short terms under rule of Mustafa II and Ahmed III.⁵⁸ Even though Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa had never served as official palace chronicler, his chronicle was the main source of *Raşid Tarihi*, the official palace chronicle, which Abou-El-Haj used as main source. Defterdar Mehmed Paşa was in Edirne with other palace elites and witnessed the atmosphere of the encounter between the rebel army and forces of Mustafa II.⁵⁹ Hence, *Zübde-i Vekayiat* will be considered as another example of palace-centred view towards the rebellion.

Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi covers the narration of events from approximately 1688 to 1704 and was written by an unknown author who reflects the view of a rebel affiliate in Istanbul. According to Abdülkadir Özcan, the writer of the chronicle might be an affiliate of Rami Mehmed Paşa and presumably had written it during the vizierate of him under rule of Ahmed III.⁶⁰ Compared to the palace-centred chronicles of *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi*, this offers very interesting details regarding the social life and the Ottoman officials which were ignored by the palace chroniclers.⁶¹ Hence, *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi* can be considered as the voice of the rebels for the case of 1703 rebellion.

Apart from these chroniclers, the work of Balatlı Georg and the personal biography of Şeyülislam Feyzullah Efendi will be used to in some occasions. The chronicle of Balatlı

⁵⁶ Mehmet Topal, "Silâhdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa Nusretânme: Tahili ve Metin (1106-1133/1695-1721)", XV-XX, Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, "Nusretnâme", I-V.

⁵⁷ Annemarike Stremmelær, "Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703", 28.

⁵⁸ Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa, "Zübde-i Vekayiat", XVII-XXII.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, XVIII.

⁶⁰ "Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)", XVII-XIX.

Georg reflects the rebellion of 1703 from the view of a non-muslim. The chronicle pictures the *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi as “wizard” who spelled the Sultan. For our case, Balatlı Georg’s comments on the execution of Feyzullah Efendi are important.⁶² The personal biography of Feyzullah Efendi was written just before the rebellion of 1703. The text can be considered as a self-defence of Feyzullah Efendi and his explanation how he deservingly became the most powerful man of the Empire. Considering the rebels had accused Feyzullah Efendi of violating the jurisdiction of his post, the biography of Feyzullah Efendi demonstrates which roles he adopted during the reign of Mustafa II.⁶³

The Rebels in the Contemporary Sources

In this part, the discussion will concentrate on the illustration of the rebels in palace-centred view over the narratives of Silahdar Mehmed Ağa and Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa. Silahdar Mehmed Ağa who used pejorative language towards the rebels. The rebels were supposedly incapable of acting freely and took advantage of the Sultan’s absence in Istanbul to create a mutiny. Apart from that, he referred to the rebellion as a plot of Rami Mehmed Paşa.⁶⁴ Accordingly, Rami Mehmed Paşa and the second vizier Moralı Hasan Paşa, who both suffered by the presence of *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi, were looking for an opportunity to intrigue their plan of deposing him. The protest of *Cebeci*’s was presented by Silahdar Mehmed Ağa as an opportunity which they had been looking for.⁶⁵ When the first news of the *Cebeci* protest in Istanbul arrived in Edirne, Rami Mehmed Paşa and Moralı Hasan Paşa initiated their master plan. They appointed one of their trusted men, named *Boşnak İbrahim Ağa*, as *Cebeci*başı (The chief armourer). Ostensibly, *Boşnak İbrahim Ağa* was sent Istanbul to handle the protest. But in fact, he was entrusted with a task of provoking the unrest.⁶⁶

In the outbreak of the rebellion, Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, focuses on the meeting of

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, XX-XXIII.

⁶² Hrand Andreasyan, “Balatlı Georg’a Göre Edirne Vakası” in *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, c. XI, (Istanbul 1960), 47-62.

⁶³ Fahri Çetin Derin-Ahmed Türek, “Feyzullah Efendi’nin Kendi Kaleminden Hal Tercümesi” in *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, vol.23-24 (Istanbul 1969-70).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 141-142.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

the *Cebecis* in their headquarters. According to him, the main content of the meeting was to seek an audience. The *Cebecis* could not address their complaints to Abdullah Paşa - who was described as a “reveler” by the author- because, in return, instead of paying attention to their demands, he would arrest them immediately. Since the Sultan was settled in Edirne, the *Cebecis* decided to bear arms and shout their war cry.⁶⁷

They locked themselves up in the armoury, and battered their superior officers who refused to join them. Then they announced that they would not be leaving the Armoury until they receive the full payment of their salaries.⁶⁸ Moreover, they turned a deaf ear to those who tried to advise them. As they refused to compromise with their superior officers, the attitude of the *Cebecis* was considered by Silahdar Ağa as impudicity of vile people. In the end, Abdullah Paşa accepted the terms of the *Cebecis*, but due insufficient funds the *Cebecis* were granted 20 purses of golden as a gift rather than receiving the payment of their full salaries. The *Cebecis* accepted the gift of Abdullah Paşa. However, soon after, they changed their minds and sent the golden back.⁶⁹

In this stage of the rebellion, it is not possible to understand why the *Cebecis* “suddenly” changed their mind. In Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa’s narration there is no comprehensive explanation regarding why *Cebecis* had changed their minds. According to him, diplomacy between Abdullah Paşa and the *Cebecis* had ended in a good way but it was not enough to suppress the protest. To Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, the *Cebecis* refused the offer of Abdullah Paşa and sent the money back because some “provocateurs” encouraged them to merge with the Janissaries. Those “provocateurs” also asserted that Abdullah Paşa and Haşimoğlu Murtaza Ağa were coming to punish them.⁷⁰ “The provocateurs” remained unseen but anyhow this little piece of information fills the blanks of the author’s pattern.

According to the rebel-centred view, the *Cebecis*’ decision of marching *Et Meydanı* had taken on a spontaneous manner. The author of *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi* claims that, in order to calm the *Cebecis* down, Abdullah Paşa sent 15 purses of golden and promised to

⁶⁷ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 145.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 145-146.

pay the full salaries in installments. But the *Cebecis* changed their mind and refused the gold and unfurled their banner.⁷¹ Considering the course of the events, the *Cebecis* might have considered the support of the public as a weapon. Presumably, according to the rebel-centred view, the protest of the *Cebecis* had encouraged the people who were discontent with the order of the State. Thus, the *Cebecis* refused the offer of *Kaymakam* for they were on the verge of making crucial changes to the order of the State.

In the next part, Silahdar Mehmed Ağa highlights the efforts of the *Cebecis* to win over the public: Firstly, they tried to appeal to the townspeople through the public morale. They promised them security in their lives and their properties. Their ultimate aim was to punish “the traitors” of the ruling cadres, and not to plunder the city. Therefore, they were also cautious about the people who joined them. Some people who were described as “*ayaktakımı*” (riffraff) and “*edebsizler*” (indecent) were kept out of the rebel assemblage.⁷²

According to Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, when the *Cebecis* gained access to the *Et Meydanı*, the townspeople were expecting the Janissaries to have punished those traitors. But again, as the superior officers ignored their duties, nothing happened. Furthermore, some dervishes who call themselves “*Seyyid*” joined the *Cebecis* in *Et Meydanı*. Silahdar Ağa describes those *Seyyids* as “audacious people” who wore green turbans and carried a rag like banner. A group of *Seyyids* were assigned to bring the judge of Istanbul, Seyyid Mahmud Efendi.⁷³ They headed to Fatih Mosque and captured the judge, and in doing so they also assured the support of theological (*medrese*) students.

Silahdar Ağa considered these developments as manipulation of the public. To him, the participation of the theological students in the rebellion cause, and the capture of the judge were presented by the rebels as maintaining the support of *Ulema*.⁷⁴ According to *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi* the rebels invited the members of the *Ulema*, representatives of the *Esnaf* guilds and prominent Janissary officers to their headquarters. They also made it clear

⁷¹ “*Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)*”, 228.

⁷² Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 146.

⁷³ Seyyid Mahmut Efendi was also a relative of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi. According to *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi* he divorced his wife as he feared of being attacked. “*Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)*”, 228.

that, anyone who refuses to come will be attacked. After this call, a group of *Seyyids*, that were lead by so-named “lunatic” named Mustafa, joined the rebellion. *Seyyid* Mustafa assembled approximately 2000 people, including boatmen of Aleppo and Damascus, under his banner. With the help of *Seyyid* Mustafa the *Cebecis* must have appealed to the lower layers of the society.⁷⁵

The Janissaries, on the other hand, were also described as another group that was willing to join the rebellion. To Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, they remained at their posts in the early stages of the rebellion as they feared Haşim Ağa’s anger.⁷⁶ All these details support the assertion of the author which claims that subjects could be easily seduced by “the wrongdoers” if the ruler is absent.

Silahdar Mehmed Ağa also narrated the measures which had been taken by Abdullah Paşa and Haşimoğlu Murtaza Ağa against the rebels:

The first step was to invite members of the *Ulema* and officers in high rank, as well as other prominent figures that the rebels would have benefited from their assistance, to the palace. He also states that the judge of Istanbul *Seyyid* Mahmud Efendi did not attend the meeting due to his illness. The same point was also confirmed by Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, but according to him, the judge did not attend the meeting as he had private dispute with Abdullah Paşa.⁷⁷ This is the explanation of the palace-centred view on the rebel’s capture of *Seyyid* Mahmud Efendi. The second step was to arm the imperial bodyguards and the “loyal” Janissaries. The third and final step was the use of the Holy Banner (*Sancağ-ı Şerif*) against the rebels. As the Holy Banner was a symbol of the believers and the path of righteousness, this measure assured public support.⁷⁸

The same measures were repeated in the narrative of Defterdar Mehmed Paşa. In addition, he underlined the rebels’ intentions of capturing Abdullah Paşa and Haşimoğlu Murtaza Ağa. At this point, both chronicles confirmed that Murtaza Efendi with a group of

⁷⁴ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 146.

⁷⁵ “*Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)*”, 228.

⁷⁶ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 146.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 147, Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa, “*Zübde-i Vekayiât*”, 787.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 787-788.

armed Janissaries headed to *Bab-ı Humayun* to get the Holy Banner.⁷⁹ But as the *Saray Agha* feared a possible Janissary looting, the gates of the palace were not opened. Hence, Murtaza Ağa could not use the Holy Banner against the rebels. In the meantime, a group of armed *Cebecis* made their way to the residence of Abdullah Paşa. They were hoping to capture the *Kaymakam*, but they failed. They stormed the building and freed the prisoners that were being held in the jailhouse.⁸⁰

Their next target was Murtaza Ağa, as the Janissaries had expressed that he remained the only obstacle to the *Cebeci*-Janissary alliance. The *Cebecis* encountered Murtaza Ağa in *Bab-ı Humayun*, captured him and brought him to *Et Meydanı*. *Kadı* of Istanbul was employed to write invitations to prominent military officers and the members of the high-ranking *Ulema*. After this point, the *Cebecis* obtained the support of the *Esnaf* as the deputy of saddlers.⁸¹

The encounter between the *Cebecis* and Murtaza Ağa, Silahdar Mehmed Ağa confirms the narration of Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa. One important detail remains; on their way to the *Ağakapısı*, the *Cebecis* announced that the Friday prayers would be suspended.⁸² When they reached the residence of Abdullah Paşa, there was an armed encounter between them and the bodyguards. The quarrel between the bodyguards and the rebels turned into a gun fight as one of the bodyguards “accidentally” fired his pistol and shot a *Cebeci* dead.⁸³ The furious *Cebecis* stormed the residence and plundered the house. They freed the prisoners and encouraged them to join their cause. Later on, they headed to *Bab-ı Humayun* and by the “irony of the fate”, their path crossed with Murtaza Ağa who was going to the palace to get the holy banner.⁸⁴

In the narrative of Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, these events were described as if there had been a struggle between good and evil. The *Cebecis* forced Murtaza Ağa to open the gates of the Janissary chambers and to give the banner of the Janissary commander. In

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 147.

⁸⁰ Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa, “*Zübde-i Vekayiât*”, 788.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 788-789.

⁸² Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 147.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

response, Murtaza Ağa tried to buy himself some time by giving advice. In the end, an angry rebel murdered Murtaza Ağa, and thus the Janissaries put their banners in the rebel headquarters. After the death of Murtaza Ağa, Abdullah Paşa went on hiding to save himself and thus, the last official representative of the Sultan's authority in Istanbul was eliminated. The rebels took control of the imperial capital and initiated negotiations with the *Ulema*. Thus, the protest of the *Cebecis* turned into a full blown rebellion⁸⁵

To conclude, Silahdar Mehmed Ağa's interpretation regarding the developments in Istanbul can be summarized in a single sentence:

Fate overwhelmed the order.

In the beginning of his narrative, Silahdar Mehmed Ağa mentions the plot organized by the Grand Vizier Rami Mehmed Paşa and Moralı Hasan Paşa. Nevertheless, Boşnak Hasan Ağa who was elevated to rank of chief armourer in order to organise the plot, remained unseen in the development of the events. Apart from that, the absence of the Sultan reiterated the main grounds of wrongdoings. Therefore, the officials were unable to handle the uprising and failed to suppress the rebellion. According to this assumption, if the Sultan had been in the Imperial Capital, none of these events would have ever happened. In the pattern of Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, the rebels took advantage of the lack of authority, but considering the course of the events this assertion is not convincing enough to understand the nature of the events. In the next part, focus will be placed on the legitimacy practices and the role of *Ulema* during the events.

The Rebel Alliance and the Ulema

In the rebellion of 1703, the general attitude toward the *Ulema* can be interpreted as diplomatic, and their influence overwhelmed the other participant groups as they provided the legitimacy of rebel assertions. It is obvious that the *Ulema* were aware of the fact that by joining the rebellion without a legitimate base, they would become "an enemy of the 3state and religion"⁸⁶. Hence, in order to obviate such accusations, they were very cautious

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

⁸⁶ Annemarike Stremmelaar, "Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703", 121-143.

in the decision-making process against the Sultan. For the rebellion of 1703, the decisions which were made by the rebel alliance display very important clues regarding the technical procedures of a rebellion. In order to confirm this point, it would be necessary to focus on the demands of each group that participated on the rebel side.

- The dismissal of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi was demanded by using the members of *Ulema*, whose career paths paralyzed by the nepotism of Feyzullah Efendi.
- The return of the court from Edirne to the imperial capital directly affected the economical life in Istanbul. The *Esnaf* suffered the most from the transfer of the court centre to Edirne, as they lost their most important customers. Moreover, the guild wardens that also took their place on rebel side continued their trade in *Et Meydan*.⁸⁷ In general, as far as the contemporary sources assert, the attitude of the artisans during the 1703 rebellion can be seen as opportunist as they had no direct influence on appointments and discussions for the new Sultan in further stages of the rebellion.

Assumingly, if these demands were to be met by the Sultan immediately, the *Cebecis* and the Janissaries would seek different channels to gain access to the mid-ranks of military.

After the establishment the alliance, the military wing of the rebels appointed their own men to the high posts of administration and Friday prayers were suspended. The suspension of Friday prayers demonstrates how the *Ulema* provided legitimacy to their positions without being accused of “betraying the role”. As the preacher always saluted the ruler, public prayers served as a public declaration of their subjects’ loyalty to their ruler. The reason behind this decision as explained by former Chief Judge of Rumelia, Başmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi was:

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, “Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)”, 228.

“We’re defying the grand imam namely the caliph, he who cannot champion the justice.”⁸⁸

The comment of Başmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi based on the term of law, “*adl-i imam*” that resolves the validity of the authority of the ruler to championing the justice and being just to his subjects. The *Ulema*, in the narrative of Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, emerged as being composed in the decision making process. Yet again, the *Ulema* are still considered as a group which participated unwillingly in the rebellion. After the approval of the rebel appointments, the *Ulema* appeared as a negotiator between the rebels and the Sultan. In that sense, suspension of Friday Prayer can be interpreted as a diplomatic message to the Sultan which called to question the legitimacy of him as a ruler. A petition, put on pen by the *Ulema* to deliver demands of the rebel coalition, that was sent to the Sultan and the names of the newly appointed officers were attached to it. At this point, there is no direct evidence that the rebels had the intention of deposing the Sultan.⁸⁹

A very interesting point is that none of the chroniclers blamed the members of *Ulema* for their participation in the rebellion. In fact, there was an effort of absolving actions of the *Ulema* in narrative of Silahdar Mehmed Ağa. According to him, wise, elderly and aggrieved members of *Ulema* in the hands of vagrants had no choice but to join the rebellion. They were abused by the rebels when they opposed their demands. A dispute about the content of the petition displays how the rebels harassed the members of *Ulema*. They tore up the letter immediately as the rebel leaders did not approve of the tone of statement that requested the return of the Sultan to Istanbul.⁹⁰ Then the statement was changed as ordered by the rebels. This example clearly justifies the point of the author.

At first, the rebels appointed Başmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi to the post of *Şeyhülislam*⁹¹. However, after a short time, due to his old age and illness, Seyyit Ali Efendi resigned from his post.⁹² After the accession of Sultan Ahmed III to the throne, Başmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efend would be elevated to the post of *Şeyhülislam* again and he would confirm the punishments of the rebel affiliates. The members of the *Ulema* who

⁸⁸ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 151.

⁸⁹ Annemarike Stremmelaar, “*Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703*”, 103.

⁹⁰ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*” 154.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 154-156.

participated in the rebellion also served in the reign of Ahmed III. This may be a reason why members of the *Ulema* were justified in the texts of official palace chroniclers.

From that view, the *Ulema*'s attitude and participation in the rebellion can also be evaluated as pragmatic. As already stated, the ultimate aim of the *Ulema* to join the rebellion was to eliminate Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi. Hence, they might have followed diplomatic methods to avoid bloodshed and end the dispute in a peaceful way. The military actions were considered as a last resort, as the *Ulema* probably hoped the Sultan would return to Istanbul immediately and bend to the rebel demands. But, according to Silahdar Mehmed Ağa, this attempt of a peaceful resolution failed as the rebel delegation was arrested by Feyzullah Efendi. When finally the Sultan was informed of the developments in Istanbul and the fate of the rebel delegation, he dismissed Feyzullah Efendi and exiled him and his family to Erzurum. He also invited the members of rebel delegation to Edirne.⁹³

After the dismissal of Feyzullah Efendi, Rami Mehmed Paşa sent one of his own men named Çevik Ali Ağa with a letter to Istanbul informing him of the good news. Soon after, the Sultan also sent his official representative –Küçük mir-i ahur Selim Ağa- to Istanbul with an imperial decree that he agreed to the terms of the rebels. He also assessed the situation in Istanbul with his service men to decide what would need to be done in the event of military conflict.⁹⁴ Since the rebels had not received any news from their delegation, Çevik Ali Ağa was not able to convince them. Suddenly, a “*bostancı*” among the members of the rebel delegation arrived in Istanbul and informed the rebels of what had happened to them. The *Ulema* took point again and the rebels decided to send another delegation to Edirne.⁹⁵

The events reached the point of no return after the representative of the Sultan, Mir-i Ahur Selim Ağa reached Istanbul. Silahdar Ağa blames the rebels, even though Selim Ağa's decree confirmed the letter of the Grand Vizier, again some “provocateurs” refused

⁹² *Ibid.*, 158.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

to obey the order of the Sultan. The problem was that the Sultan refused to come to Istanbul and instead he invited the members of the *Ulema*, and other people who were in the appointment list of the rebels to Edirne.⁹⁶ As it seems, the Rebels were unwilling to send the members of *Ulema* to Edirne as they feared a possible compromise against them. They feared being labelled as “an enemy of the state”.⁹⁷ It was when a *Sipahi* and *Molla*, who were members of first delegation, returned to the camp the moment of diplomacy between two sides ended.⁹⁸ Word reached the city that the Sultan obtained a fatwa: to put the people of Istanbul to the sword. Thus, the rebels started to enrol soldiers for their army.⁹⁹ From here on, by all legal means the rebels as well as the *Ulema* rejected the authority of the Sultan. Stremmelaar described this process as battle of legitimacy:¹⁰⁰

*“Using force at least in a disproportionate way could be harmful in the battle of legitimacy, so the rebels used the non violent means they had at their disposal, such as pressuring the authorities, engaging officials in meditation, and legal means. They pleaded their case through petitions, sent delegations which were to represent them at imperial court, and they sought legal sanction of their actions. The rebels proclaimed their loyalty to the Sultan time and time again.”*¹⁰¹

As they adopted the role of restorers of the order, the rebels had taken every necessary measure to maintain the order of Istanbul.¹⁰² By marching into the court centre with their army, they were ignoring the authority of the Sultan. Hence, their decisions had to be confirmed by the fatwa of the *Ulema*. Silahdar Mehmed Ağa and Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa did not copy the texts of the fatwas in their narrations but they mentioned about the numbers. According to them, there were seven fatwas regarding their military actions against the Sultan. On the other hand, according to *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi* there were only three fatwas, these texts were also copied by their author¹⁰³:

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 166. “*Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)*”,

⁹⁷ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 166.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Annemarike Stremmelaar, “*Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703*”, 124.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 132.

“If the Sultan of Islam, may God extend his shadow over the earth, while he is charged in honour of God and with mercy for the creatures of God, leaves what he is charged with and with the pretext of the hunt leaves the seat of the sultanate, and roams in the Muslim lands, and oppresses and shows hostility (zulm and taaddi) to the subjects with unjustified extraordinary levies and squanders the treasury illegally (bi gayri vecb-i şeri), is there a lawful permissibility for the conduct of the aforementioned in this way?”

*The answer was no.*¹⁰⁴

In this fatwa the Sultan was charged with being incapable of an ideal ruler as he ignored his primary duties.

“If a group of Muslims because of the oppression (zulm) exerted by an imam rebel (huruc) against the imam in order to end the oppression, is that group rebellious (bagi)”

*The answer is no.*¹⁰⁵

Thus, the rebels demonstrated their actions as an effort to restore the order and to put an end to the rule of the oppressor.

*“If a group of Muslims because of the oppression of the imam rebel against the imam in order to end this oppression, is it right that other people support the imam because of the rebellion by that people? The answer is no.”*¹⁰⁶

From the perspective of the rebels, the Sultan was depicted as an oppressor who had neglected his duty to his subjects so those who rebelled against him shall not be considered an enemy of the state. And it was the people’s duty to support those who mutinied against the oppressor. Conversely, *the Ulema* of Edirne had used the same methods of legitimisation to support their claim against the rebels. From the Sultan’s perspective, the rebels were accused as being *“perpetrators of disturbance,”*¹⁰⁷ *disloyalty:*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

*rebellion against ruler*¹⁰⁸ and *huruc: betrayal of the role.*¹⁰⁹

As it seems, it is not possible to clarify which side was more legitimate, but it is likely that the influence of decision makers made the difference. Obviously, the influence of the *Ulema* in Istanbul was greater than *the Ulema* in Edirne, especially after the dismissal of Feyzullah Efendi.¹¹⁰ Each side had interpreted the situation to suit their own interests.

After deposition of Feyzullah Efendi, or in other words, when the *Ulema* reached its immediate goal, they no longer needed the rebels. Since their existence depended on the deposition of Mustafa II, on their march into Edirne, the *Ulema* had approved the deposition of the ruling Sultan. After this point, discussions were concentrated on the question of who will succeed the throne. The military favoured *Şehzade* Ibrahim as a successor to throne. On the other hand, the *Ulema* favoured *Şehzade* Ahmet who was more suitable for the throne as *Şehzade* Ibrahim was merely child. In the end, the military had to accept the decision of the *Ulema* and thus, *Şehzade* Ahmed was chosen as a successor to throne.¹¹¹

Why would military support a mere child instead of *Şehzade* Ahmet? Or to put it more clearly: why would the military and the *Ulema* support different figures?

Presumably both sides had favoured the one that they were hoping to have more active role under his rulership. In broader context, for the case of the 1703 rebellion, the political reality had apparently overwhelmed the religious idealism.

Feyzullah Efendi: the Şeyhülislam, the Diplomat, the Commander, the Vizier, and the Scapegoat

In the rebellion of 1703, on a rare occasion one of the common points that all chroniclers agreed on was the position of *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi as being a sole responsible in the events. He was the one who predisposed the Sultan so that he paved the

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

road of unjust decisions, violated the state protocols and monopolized the posts of *Ilmiye*. Silahdar Ağa in *Nusretname* alluded to these actions of Feyzullah Efendi as one of the reasons why the Sultan was considered as unjust. According to him, during the outbreak of the rebellion, it was Feyzullah Efendi who underestimated the situation. He was the one who had the members of the rebel delegation arrested and imprisoned them in the citadel of *Eğridere*. He did not allow any officers in Edirne to inform the Sultan about the rebel delegation. To put it briefly from the perspective of all contemporary authors, Feyzullah Efendi was the reason the Sultan remained inaccessible to rebels.¹¹²

In this part we will focus on the biography of Feyzullah Efendi to understand why he was chosen as a scapegoat of the rebellion. Thus, it is necessary to reveal his role in the narration of the 1703 rebellion. The personal biography of Feyzullah Efendi was written by his own pen a short time before the 1703 rebellion. He introduces himself as “*Seyyid*” Feyzullah, a descendent of Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi’s mentor Şemseddin Tebrizi.¹¹³ Raised in a prominent *Ulema* family and favoured by his mentor Şeyh Mehmed Vanî Efendi Efendi, who was a respectable religious figure in reign of Mehmed IV, Feyzullah decided to pursue a career in *Ilmiye*. In his early career, he was employed as a tutor to Şehzade Mustafa and his brother Şehzade Ahmed.¹¹⁴ On his accession to the high posts of *Ilmiye*, he tended to explain his success as a result of the admission of his personal qualities.

In the biography of Feyzullah Efendi, the reader gets the idea that he considered himself as “the chosen one” who was sent by the God to help the ruler give order to state affairs. According to Suraiya Faroqhi, in the 18th century some members of the *Ulema* showed a high tendency to adopt the role of high administrators particularly the role of the

¹¹¹ Annemarike Stremmelaar, “*Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703*”, 77.

¹¹² Mü’minzâde Seyyid Ahmed Hasîb Efendi’s *Ravzatü’l-Küberâ* shall be considered as an exception. *Ravzatü’l-Küberâ* of Mü’minzâde Seyyid Ahmed Hasîb Efendi was written by a close affiliate of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi. The author was a well educated member of the *Ulema*, who had close ties with the Feyzullah Efendi party as he served as *katib* to Feyzullah Efendi’s son Seyyid Mustafa. He defended Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi who was criticized by the other contemporary sources. See Mü’minzâde Seyyid Ahmed Hasîb Efendi, “*Ravzatü’l-Küberâ*”, ed. Mesut Aydın, (TTK: Ankara 2003).

¹¹³ Suraiya Faroqhi, “An Ulama Grandee and Household” in *Osmanlı Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol.IX, (İstanbul 1989), 201.

¹¹⁴ Fahri Çetin Derin-Ahmed Türek, “Feyzullah Efendi’nin Kendi Kaleminden Hal Tercümesi” in *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, vol.23-24 (İstanbul 1969-70).

viziers.¹¹⁵ Feyzullah Efendi's actions clearly demonstrated how he interiorised different roles in the Ottoman administration that had not been attributed to any member of the *Ilmiye*, who theoretically were not authorized to participate in state affairs. To Feyzullah Efendi, he was destined to be the tutor of *Şehzade* Mustafa. When he was invited to Istanbul as a promising *Ilmiye* student by his mentor Vanî Efendi, he states that he received the birth news of *Şehzade* Mustafa on the road. He interprets his birth as the future Sultan, as a beginning of new era of prosperity, peace and victory.

Apart from that, Feyzullah Efendi signifies his wealth as an indicator of political power.¹¹⁶ According to him, all he gained was what he bestowed upon his services to the state and the Sultan. He also makes comment on his close relationship with the Sultan. Accordingly, his proximity to the Sultan was misinterpreted by those who envied his influence and power.¹¹⁷ As he was accused of violating the state protocols by the rebels in 1703, it would be interesting to underline that he was once dismissed by Sultan Mehmed IV. The reason of his dismissal was for transgressing the Sultan's privacy by leaving his horse on Sultan's personal meadow. Feyzullah Efendi blames the gardener and interprets his dismissal as a result of being denounced to the Sultan by some very bad people who envied his power. Hence, when the Sultan understood the reality of situation, he recalled him five days later.¹¹⁸

After the accession of Sultan Süleyman II, Feyzullah Efendi was involved in a plot with Mustafa Paşa, the son of Köprülü Mehmed Paşa.¹¹⁹ Apparently, he was a supporter of the party that opposed the Grand Vizier Siyavuş Paşa and who deposed Sultan Mehmed IV becoming the most influential political figure. During the turmoil he commanded the loyal men of Mustafa Paşa, while the vizier became despondent. But, as the plot was compromised he was exiled to Erzurum where he spent next seven years.¹²⁰ During his years of exile, he continued to prepare manoeuvres against those who he called "tyrants"

¹¹⁵ Suraiya Faroqhi, "An Ulama Grandee and Household", 200.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Fahri Çetin Derin-Ahmed Türek, "Feyzullah Efendi'nin Kendi Kaleminden Hal Tercümesi", 73.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

(*Zorba*). He assisted the opposition party and sent orders to Istanbul.¹²¹

He admits that he became “the voice of the people” as he negotiated with officials regarding the problems of the people.¹²² He did not lose contact with his former student and continued to send advice in letters, but the close relationship between him and *Şehzade Mustafa* angers Sultan Ahmed II.¹²³ During the tumultuous periods of Ottoman administration, Feyzullah Efendi, as a banished political figure, tried hard to keep contact with the opposition party and his former student which was probably his biggest hope of reclaiming his previous position. So that, the accession of Mustafa II to throne depicted by him as “a shining sun in desperate times”, probably referred to the situation of the Empire which was under attack of the enemy and its people were suffering. Thus, he also justifies his return to the administrative arena of Ottoman politics as *Şeyhülislam*

Another interesting part in Feyzullah Efendi’s biography is the narration of the three military campaigns of Mustafa II. He helped the Sultan in military preparations and coordinated battle plans. He even encouraged the Sultan and the soldiers in the field. At one certain point, he depicts himself on the battle ground with his sword to boost the morale of fearing soldiers and commanders.¹²⁴

To summarize his point of view, Feyzullah Efendi did what he was destined to do by the will of God.¹²⁵ The roles which Feyzullah Efendi attributed to himself are:

- The descendant of *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumî*
- The mentor of the Sultan Mustafa II
- A professor of theology
- The *Şeyhülislam*
- A diplomat

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 80-81.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 83-89, Suraiya Faroqhi, “An Ulama Grandee and Household”, 206.

¹²⁵ Fahri Çetin Derin-Ahmed Türek, “Feyzullah Efendi’nin Kendi Kaleminden Hal Tercümesi”, 90.

- A military commander

After the rebellion of 1703, Balatlı Georg illustrated Feyzullah Efendi as “qizilbash” and “a magician” who possessed the Sultan.¹²⁶ Furthermore, Balatlı Georg narrates the humiliating ceremony which Feyzullah Efendi was subjected to in his execution. Labelled as “the enemy of the state and religion”, Feyzullah Efendi was brought to the bazaar square on a horse where he was beheaded.¹²⁷ After the execution, his headless body was given to Christian priests who performed a dishonouring funeral ceremony emphasizing his crimes against state and religion.¹²⁸ The leader priest said an absurd prayer ending with:

*“Neither yours nor ours”*¹²⁹

On the other hand, Silahdar Mehmed Ağa underlined the dramatic details of an executed *Şeyhülislam* probably in order to show an example of what happens to “traitors”.¹³⁰

The personal biography of Feyzullah Efendi can be evaluated as an effort of justifying his actions as the strongest political figure of Mustafa II era. From his own pen, Feyzullah Efendi confirms some points of which he was accused by the contemporary authors. He appears as a well educated professor of theology, who was involved in an unsuccessful plot against the cabinet of Siyavuş Paşa and who deposed Mehmed IV by a military coup. This point actually signifies the fact that, Feyzullah Efendi even before his elevation to the rank of *Şeyhülislam*, was an active and ambitious member of Ottoman politics. As he was perceived as a serious threat, he was banished to Erzurum where he presumably continued his political activities against the ruling party through sending letters to his old student and by what he called “defending the right of the people”. This background information actually provides a very useful insight regarding the opposition between the members of *Ulema* and Feyzullah Efendi. And after his execution, the chronicle of Balatlı Georg demonstrates the image of him in the eyes of townspeople.

¹²⁶ Hrand Andreasyan, “Balatlı Georg’a Göre Edirne Vakası” in *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, c. XI, (Istanbul 1960), 48.

¹²⁷ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “*Nusretname*”, 194.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 194-195.

Conclusion: “Purge of the Rebels”

The struggle between power centres was not finished after the deposition of Mustafa II and Feyzullah Efendi. In fact, it turned into a different form. According to Silahdar Ağa, at the end of the rebellion, a rebel sergeant named Çalik Ahmed, who has been appointed as Janissary Commander, had the intention of becoming the Grand Vizier and he used his influence on the military to reach his immediate goal.¹³¹ The actions of Çalik Ahmed were perceived by the new Sultan as direct threat to his authority. Hence, Çalik Ahmed was the first one to be dismissed from his post, and was executed immediately.¹³² The second important rebel figure who was purged by Ahmed III cabinet was Söhrablı Ahmed Paşa, who was granted the post of vizier after the rebellion. Due to his corrupt and arrogant behaviour, he was dismissed from his post and sent to exile to island of Sakız.¹³³ The third and presumably the most important target of the purge plan was *Şeyhülislam* Mehmed Efendi who achieved his rank after resignation of Başmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi. Instead of Mehmed Efendi, Başmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi was elevated to the post of *Şeyhülislam*.¹³⁴

The compromise of the *Ulema* with the new Sultan may refer to a very important point, the fact is that their rebel affiliates had become expendable to them after they reclaimed their position during the reign of Ahmed III. Presumably, Başmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi was the most important figure that the *Ulema* would offer to the Sultan. The resign of Başmakçızade in the middle of rebellion can be interpreted as a political manoeuvre for the future position of the *Ulema*. Hence, the purge of the rebels from the ranks of administration and the military was a necessity for the new political establishment of Ahmed III. It was presumably the main reason why palace-centred chroniclers could not blame the members of the *Ulema* in the narration of the rebellion. In the formulation of the official chroniclers, the rebels were traitors and oppressors who were to be punished from the beginning. But from the view of the *Ulema*, the ones who mutinied against the rule of

¹²⁹ Hrand Andreasyan, “Balathı Georg’a göre Edirne Vakası”, 62.

¹³⁰ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “Nusrethane”, 195.

¹³¹ Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, “Nusrethane”, 202-204.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 204.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 205-206.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 209-210.

the “oppressive and unjust” suddenly had become “traitors” to the state which was actually a result of the alignment with Ahmed III. This is probably another important motive which shaped the argument of the official chroniclers.

To summarize:

The rebellion of 1703 was an act against certain figures -especially *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi the most powerful man of the political arena within Ottoman administration. There was an authority gap in the imperial capital which prepared a certain basis for the rebellion as the military was seeking ways to deliver their complaints. The rebels were conscientious individuals who followed certain steps to make alliance with the Janissaries, the *Ulema*, the *Esnaf*, and the townspeople. From the beginning of their protest, they had taken every necessary measure to maintain the order of the imperial capital. They remained loyal to Mustafa II until the final stage of the rebellion.

The rebels targeted the Major of Istanbul, the Deputy Janissary Commander and the Judge of Istanbul, and appointed their own men to the high ranks of administration. These circumstances can be interpreted as an attempt to form an alternative cabinet. In each stage of the rebellion, the rebels had asserted different arguments. But the most affective argument for the legitimacy of their cause was that of their movement to an act against the oppressor who had failed to perform his duty to his subjects. In general, mismanagement of the state affairs was the basic reasoning of the rebel argument.

The palace-centred chroniclers had offered a pattern which justified the Sultan and labelled Feyzullah Efendi as a scapegoat. The *Ulema* appeared as a political agent that carried out the negotiations between the rebels and the Sultan. A military encounter was perceived as a last resort. Even though, the rebels had marched into Edirne, the military encounter between them and the forces of Mustafa II ended peacefully. After the succession of Ahmed III, the new cabinet accepted the terms of the Rebels. The Sultan returned to the imperial capital and settled with the *Ulema*, which dissolved the fragile alliance of the rebel coalition. The newly appointed cabinet had purged the rebels that controlled the military corps, this was the last step of consolidation of the state’s authority.

Thus, according to the palace-centred view order was restored.

In the “Edirne Incident”, the rebels legitimized their cause by portraying the Sultan as “incapable”. Judging from the sources, there are three major arguments asserted by the rebels to illustrate the Sultan as being “incapable”: the first one is the Sultan’s “inaccessibility”. The second is the failure of protecting his domains and the Muslim provinces against the infidels. And the third is his failure to champion justice.

As it was cited by Stremmelaar, there are three concepts of justice that attributed to the quality of ruler:¹³⁵ The ruler was supposed to be absolute, independent and free from any bias in his discretion over his subjects. Since he was the shadow of God, it was his duty to maintain the justice.¹³⁶ The rebels questioned the Sultan’s authority over these principles and thus, they adopted the role of “restorers of the Order” in a religious-juridical context. In response to the rebel arguments, the Sultan painted the rebels as traitors. By defying the authority of the Sultan, the rebels had betrayed their role as subjects. Hence, they become enemy of the state and religion. Since an unquestionable loyalty to the ruler is a stipulation of Islamic law, “the believers” had to take the side of the Sultan in this battle. From this view, it is hard to clarify whether the rebels were traitors or the Sultan was an oppressor. But the contemporary authors, who adopted the palace-centred view, considered the rebellion as illegitimate for the authorial suspension of the ruling party.

¹³⁵ Annemarike Stremmelaar, “*Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703*”, 122.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 2

THE REBELLION OF 1730

The Tulip Age and the Rebellion of 1730

Triggered by the unrest in an army camp in Istanbul, the rebellion of 1730 demonstrates an opposition led by the Janissaries against Sultan Ahmed III and the Grand Vizier, Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Unlike the rebellion of 1703, the Janissaries played the most significant role in 1730. Probably this is the reason why the rebellion of 1730 was affiliated with the famous rebel brigand “Patrona Halil”. After the outbreak of the rebellion, the Janissaries conducted power relations in the same manner experienced by their predecessors in 1703 and they established an alliance with the *Ulema* as well as other social figures. Indeed, there were particular factors which had shaped the actions of the rebels and their relationship with their “allies”. This chapter will attempt to analyse these factors, and the roles of the rebels which influenced the arguments of contemporary authors as much as their positioning legitimizing the battle between the rebels and the Sultan. Therefore, at this point assessment of contemporaries about the rebels ought to be evaluated in connection with the socio-political agenda of the Ottoman Empire prior to the second decade of the eighteenth century.

Sealed by the treaty of Passarowitz in 1718, the Ottoman Empire pursued a peaceful policy on the European front. Accordingly, the following era brought increased contact with the Europeans in terms of diplomatic and economic relations. As a result of this process and the growing volume of commercial activities with Europeans, Ottoman society experienced a form of social transformation which left its footprint primarily on the daily-life consumption habits. Hence, the era between 1718 and 1730, went down in Ottoman historiography as the “Tulip Age”. A new class of people had emerged in the imperial capital who adopted a way of life like that of the palace elites as most of them were the affiliates of Damat Ibrahim Paşa.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Selim Karahasanoğlu, “Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında ”Lale Devri”: Eleştirel Bir Değerlendirme” in Toplum ve Bilim, Bahar/Yaz (Istanbul 2008), 139-143. See also, Tülay Artan, “From Charismatic Leadership to Collective Rule: Gender

To Tülay Artan, during the Tulip Age there were also crucial changes to the political structure of the Empire. The loss of political and military legitimisation had been compensated by the demonstration of power and wealth through architectural monuments of the epoch.¹³⁸ In another words, the symbolic demonstration of power during the Tulip Age had become a channel for the Sultan to reclaim his legitimisation as a ruler. Hence, there was a chain of material power around the Sultan and the Grand Vizier that enabled them to demonstrate their wealth and influence.¹³⁹ Such radical changes to the representation of power presumably conditioned a kind of tension between the higher and lower layers of the Empire.

The majority of scholars considered the rebellion of 1730 as a movement which put an end to the Tulip Age. Nonetheless, the Tulip Age still remains a problematic field of Ottoman history since there are very limited studies narrated in the contemporary sources, distinguishing the changes to the folk's consumption habits and the "historical reality".¹⁴⁰ The changes in economic relations and consumption patterns, accompanied by the emergence wealthy class of people (which are beyond the scope of this study) might have affected the authorial intentions in the contemporary sources.¹⁴¹ Therefore, a comparison of the legitimisation practices, which were performed in 1730 with those of 1703 Rebellion, is necessary to get a deeper insight.

The most essential study devoted to the 1730 Rebellion is Münir Aktepe's account

Problems of Legalism and Political in the Ottoman Empire," *Histoire Economique et Sociale de L'Empire Ottoman et de la Turquie*. Ed. Daniel Panzac. (Paris, 1995), 567-580. Tülay Artan, "18. Yüzyılın başlarında yönetici elitin saltanatın meşruiyet arayışına katılımı", *Toplum ve Bilim* 83, (Istanbul 1999/2000) 292-322. Tülay Artan, "Mahremiyet: Mahremiyetin Resmi", *Defter*, vol. 20, (Istanbul 1993), 111-113. Ariel Salzman "The Age of Tulips: Confluence and Conflict in Early Modern Consumer Culture (1550-1730), *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922*, ed. Donald Quataert, (Albany: SUNY Press 2000), 83-106. Robert W. Olson, "The Esnaf and the Patrona Halil Rebellion of 1730: Realignment in Ottoman Politics", *Imperial meanderings and republican by-ways : essays on eighteenth century Ottoman and twentieth century*, (Istanbul: Isis 1996), 1-13. Robert W. Olson, "Jews, Janissaries, Esnaf and the Revolt of 1740 in Istanbul: Social Upheaval and Political Realignment in the Ottoman Empire" *Imperial meanderings and republican by-ways : essays on eighteenth century Ottoman and twentieth century*, (Istanbul: Isis 1996), p. 13-33. Farina Zarinebaf, "The Wealth of Ottoman Princes During the Tulip Age", *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation*, v.2, ed. Kemal Çiçek, (Ankara 2000), 696-701. Can Erimitan, "The Perception of Saadabad: The 'Tulip Age' and Ottoman-Safavid Rivalry," in: *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi, (London, New York: Tauris, 2007), 41-62.

¹³⁸ Tülay Artan, "18. Yüzyılın Başlarında Yönetici Elitin Saltanatın Meşruiyet Arayışına Katılımı", 292-322, See also Selim Karahasanoğlu, "Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında "Lale Devri" 139.

¹³⁹ Selim Karahasanoğlu, "Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında "Lale Devri" 139, Tülay Artan "From Charismatic Leadership to Collective Rule: Intruding Materials on the Wealth and Power of Ottoman Princesses in the Eighteenth Century", 58.

¹⁴⁰ Selim Karahasanoğlu, "Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında "Lale Devri", 138.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 142.

of “Patrona İsyanı”. However, his main concern is confined to revealing the economic causes or dynamics behind the Rebellion.¹⁴² He focuses on the economical and military policy of the Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa which was assumed to bring about the unrest in the Military and the *Esnaf* organisation. By aiming to increase revenue of the imperial treasury, the Grand Vizier imposed new fiscal measures putting extra burden on the *Esnaf* and curbing some privileges of the Janissaries.

In addition to this, Aktepe touches upon the increasing demographic pressure, especially the influx of refugees and immigrants into Istanbul due to the reopening of the Persian front. Overpopulation of the imperial capital brought about some deficiencies in provisional policy and consequently inflation on food prices.¹⁴³ As a result of internal immigration, agricultural estates were abandoned disadvantaging farm incomes.¹⁴⁴ According to Aktepe, these are the conditions which rallied support for the rebellion.

On the other hand, Aktepe neither focus on the social changes in the Tulip Age nor examines the political opposition to the cabinet of Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Instead, he adopts palace-centred approach to the rebels and underlines the personal myth of Patrona Halil as being a rebel leader.

Regarding the economic situation of the Empire, Robert Olson adopts a similar opinion to Aktepe.¹⁴⁵ Besides, Olson gives room to the interpretations of Enver Ziya Karal, Niyazi Berkes and Şerif Mardin in analysing the social changes experienced in the Tulip Age. In the critical framework, Orson adopts the view of Şerif Mardin. Accordingly, the reason behind the rebellion of 1730 was cultural alienation of “the periphery” from “the centre” during the Tulip Age. From this perspective, “the centre” consisted of the Ottoman Elites: the Sultan, his officials, military elites, the *Ulema*- confronted by “the lower classes” -*reaya*, peasants, provincial notables, the *Esnaf* – that were alienated from the atmosphere of the Tulip age. Additionally, by the emergence of what he calls the “*petite bourgeois*” class among the *Esnaf*, who imitated the consumption habits of the Ottoman

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁴³ Münir Aktepe, *Patrona İsyanı 1730* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1958), 2, 6.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Olsson, “*The Esnaf and the Patrona Halil Rebellion of 1730: A Realignment in Ottoman Politics*”

Elites, and were also another catalyst of the cultural alienation of the lower classes. Nevertheless, as it is cited in his article, this remains as a problematic assumption to the extent that the degree of cultural alienation of lower classes has not been defined clearly in it.¹⁴⁶

Olson claims that, the *Esnaf* was discontent with the economic impositions of Damat Ibrahim Paşa. The extraordinary campaign taxes and the *Ordu Akçesi* was main ground on which the *Esnaf* rooted their reaction. In this reasoning, Olson posits the *Esnaf* as a central figure in the revolt as the rebel leader Patrona Halil himself was a second hand goods dealer.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, he perceives a shifting to the support of *Esnaf* along the dates of 1730 and 1731 and 1740 as an indicator of fundamental change towards a central alignment.¹⁴⁸ When their demands were met by Mahmud I, the *Esnaf* supported the Porte in unsuccessful mutinies of 1731 and 1740.¹⁴⁹

Even though, Aktepe and Olson highlight the economic and social problems before the rebellion on which more consideration is necessary, Selim Karahasanoğlu interprets the Tulip Age as an era of social transformation that shifted the consumption patterns of the Ottoman society.¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, there are three approaches which dominated mainstream Ottoman historiography in the Tulip Age:

1. The Tulip Age as a beginning of westernization process in the Ottoman Empire.
2. The Tulip Age as a perturbation of classical age methods.
3. The Tulip Age as “*moral corruption*”.¹⁵¹

He criticized these classical approaches on the ground that they marked the rebellion as an act against the so-called constructed Tulip Age. Karahasanoğlu signifies that, the ideological concerns about the Tulip Age and the rebellion of 1730 dominated

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Olsson, “*The Esnaf and the Patrona Halil Rebellion of 1730*”, 10.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Olsson, “*Jews, Janissaries, Esnaf and the Revolt of 1740 in Istanbul: Social Upheaval and Political Realignment in the Ottoman Empire*”, 18-19.

¹⁵⁰ Selim Karahasanoğlu, “*Osmanlı Tarih Yazımında "Lale Devri"*”, 169-173.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

mainstream historiography.¹⁵² He criticised the position of the Tulip Age within the mainstream Ottoman historiography as the majority of scholars had ignored the social changes up to the eighteenth century onwards.¹⁵³

Karahasanoğlu rejects the doctrine, positioning the 1730 Rebellion as a movement against the Tulip Age. As was voiced in a previous debate over the social aspect of the age, by the emergence of a new class of wealthy people, there was likely to have been tension between the lower and the affluent classes of the Ottoman society during the Tulip Age. However, this field requires detailed analysis of power network blocks, stretching from Ottoman elites and prominent military figures to the lower layers of the society. In addition to this, a comparison of prosperity between these different layers of society is needed to define “the people of wealth” of the Tulip Age. Hence, Karahasanoğlu claims that a comparative study between the 1730 Rebellion, the 1703 Rebellion of Edirne and the 1807 Rebellion is a must for illuminating the real characteristics of insurrection.¹⁵⁴

Up to this point, the conditions leading up to the outbreak of the rebellion were:

- The war with Persia had brought social, economical and political deficiencies. There was rising opposition to the Grand Vizier’s peace policy with Persia. It may well have been the rebel’s grounds for appealing to the townspeople to unite against Ahmed III and the Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Apart from these factors, there was also an issue of immigration. Presumably, these immigrants in the imperial capital might be perceived as potential supporters of the rebels.
- There was ongoing “tension” between the lower and higher layers of the Ottoman society.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 141-143.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 135-140.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 137-143.

¹⁵⁵ The “tension” between the higher and lower layers of the society itself is a particular field of research which is beyond the scope of our study. The rebellion of 1730 was portrayed by the authors as an “organized” movement rather than an impulsive opposition. But, we’re not sure if the authors stressed an ongoing opposition against the Porte or collaborative efforts of the rebels in the army camp. Hence, this “tension” shall not be ignored as a reason of the rebellion but there is also a problem of defining the extent of it.

After addressing these points, this study will focus on the inter-textual dialogues of the contemporary authors and their authorial intentions and interpretations in composing the narrative of the 1730 Rebellion and the factors which affected the reasoning of these authors.

The Great Strife

The unrest emerged from a military camp in Üsküdar as the army assembled there to embark on a campaign against Persia. Due to unexpected delays, troops were stationed at the capital city longer than scheduled. During that time, the rebellion of 1730, was being mastered by Patrona Halil an Albanian Janissary from the seventeenth regiment, and his lieutenants.¹⁵⁶ After several meetings arranged by rebel lieutenants to discuss possible action plans, the final one was held on 25th September in 1730 at Üsküdar.¹⁵⁷

Three days later, on Thursday the 28th September in 1730, the Rebels, amounting to twenty-five to thirty people, bared their arms and assembled in *Bayezid*.¹⁵⁸ They split into three columns, unfurled their banners and headed to the Grand Bazaar. They forced both the *Esnaf* and shopkeepers to close their shops, and invited them to join. They announced that their cause was legitimate and any believers had to assemble under their banners.¹⁵⁹ Later, they moved to *Et Meydanı* via *Divan Yolu*, where they merged with the Janissaries.¹⁶⁰ Patrona Halil with a group of his men raided *Ağakapısı* and freed the prisoners who later joined them.¹⁶¹ They also closed down *Sarraçhane*, the Saddlery, as a band of rebels plundered *Bit Pazarı* and *Sipah-Çarsisi* to provide weapons, clothes and ammunition for their comrades. After that they merged with the *Cebecis*.¹⁶²

Because of the timing of the initiation, which took place on the weekly holiday, the majority of high-ranking officers were out of town. When the Janissary *Agha*, Hasan

¹⁵⁶ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi: 1730 Patrona İhtilali Hakkında Bir Eser*” ed. Faik Reşit Unat, (Ankara: TTK 1943).

¹⁵⁷ Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona İsyanı*”, 134. Abdi Efendi “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 26.

¹⁵⁸ M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*” ed. Mesut Aydınar, (Istanbul: Kitabevi 2002), 22.

¹⁵⁹ Şem’dânî-Zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’î’t-Tevârih*” vol.1, ed. Münir Aktepe, (Istanbul: İstanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi 1976), 6. M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*”, 22. Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 28-29. Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona İsyanı*”, 134-35.

¹⁶⁰ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*” 30, M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*”, 22.

¹⁶¹ Şem’dânî-Zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’î’t-Tevârih*”, 7, M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*”, 22-23.

¹⁶² Şem’dânî-Zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’î’t-Tevârih*”, 6, Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 29. M. Subhi Efendi,

Ağa, heard about the strife, he patrolled the town and advised shopkeepers and the *Esnaf* to open their shops.¹⁶³ When the word had reached to him that the Rebels were planning an assault on his villa, Hasan Ağa moved back to Üsküdar as he supposedly was threatened by Patrona Halil himself.¹⁶⁴ Apart from that, the Major (*Kaymakam*) of Istanbul, Mustafa Pasha moved to the city centre to petition the loyalty of soldiers at the dockyard. In order to prevent disorder, he also tried to reopen the shops in the Grand Bazaar and patrolled the city centre to observe the situation.¹⁶⁵ When the efforts of the Janissary Agha and the *Kaymakam* reached a dead end, they decided to inform the Sultan in Üsküdar.¹⁶⁶

The Sultan and the Grand Vizier invited high-ranking officers, the prominent members of the *Ulema* and the Military to a meeting in Üsküdar to discuss the issue. Moreover, the Grand Vizier ordered Silahdar Ağa, (the sword bearer) to bring the Holy Banner and Holy Relics to the palace under the protection of a band of imperial bodyguards.¹⁶⁷ The Grand Vizier recommend brute force to be used against the rebels, which resulted in a deadlock on the discussions. Mirzazade Ahmed Efendi, the chief judge (*Kadiasker*) of the Rumelia objected this suggestion on the ground that it would be unlawful to shed the blood of Muslims.¹⁶⁸ In the end, the opposition to him and the Grand Vizier left its mark on the meeting and the Sultan moved back to the Imperial Palace with his closest advisors.¹⁶⁹ In addition, the Grand Vizier requested to stay on his farm in *Florya*.¹⁷⁰ The Holy Banner was placed on the *Orta Kapı* (the middle gate) of the palace. Despite the Sultan's effort in gathering the believers under Holy Banner for the final stand against the rebels, the soldiers and the townspeople remained sided with the rebels.¹⁷¹

Next day, the rebels took drastic action by suspending the Friday prayers, which

"*Subhi Tarihi*", 23

¹⁶³ Abdi Efendi, "*Abdi Tarihi*", 29. Şem'dânî-Zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 7. M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 23.

¹⁶⁴ Münir Aktepe, "*Patrona Isyanı*", 137.

¹⁶⁵ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 7. Münir Aktepe, "*Patrona Isyanı*", 137-138. Abdi Efendi, "*Abdi Tarihi*", 30. M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 23.

¹⁶⁶ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 7. Münir Aktepe, "*Patrona Isyanı*", 138. M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 23.

¹⁶⁷ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 7. Münir Aktepe, "*Patrona Isyanı*", 139. M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 26.

¹⁶⁸ Münir Aktepe, "*Patrona Isyanı*", 139.

¹⁶⁹ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 7.

¹⁷⁰ M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 24.

¹⁷¹ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 7. Abdi Efendi, "*Abdi Tarihi*", 37.

was symbolically an open objection to the authority of the Sultan.¹⁷² Apart from that, after receiving the support of some *Ulema* members, the rebels made alternative appointments to the high posts of administration such as the judge of Istanbul, the Janissary *agha*, and the Janissary *agha* deputy.¹⁷³ Later on, the Sultan dispatched a committee of his representatives to confront the rebels to ask their terms.¹⁷⁴ After expressing their loyalty to the Sultan, the rebels complained about “the traitors” within the ranks of administration. They demanded the execution of several high-ranking officers including the Grand Vizier, the *Kaymakam* of Istanbul, *Şeyhülislam* and the deputy of the Grand Vizier.¹⁷⁵

On the following day, *Şeyhülislam* Abdullah Efendi was exiled to Bursa. The Grand Vizier, Damat Ibrahim Paşa, *Kaymakam* of Istanbul and the Deputy of the Grand Vizier, Mehmet Ağa were put to death. The dead bodies were delivered to the rebels.¹⁷⁶ Because of a rumour that an exhibited body was uncircumcised, the administration could not convince the rebels to that it belonged to Damat İbrahim Pasha himself. What made the situation worse was that some of the rebels claimed the body belonged to Damat Ibrahim Paşa’s Christian furrier, *Manol*.¹⁷⁷

The mistrust and animosity between the Sultan and the rebels became increasingly intense upon the issue of the suspicious “dead body of Damat Ibrahim Paşa” and the latter, after guaranteeing the support of the *Ulema*, refused to disperse and demanded the deposition of Ahmed III. Incapacitated by the loss of his close men and the support of the *Ulema*, Ahmed III left the throne to his nephew Mahmud I.¹⁷⁸ After the enthronement of Mahmud I, Silahdar Mehmed Paşa was appointed to the position of grand vizierate while Mirzazade Efendi became *Şeyhülislam*. Zülali Hasan Efendi, the member of the

¹⁷² Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 37. Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona Isyani*”, 141.

¹⁷³ Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona Isyani*”, 142-143.

¹⁷⁴ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 37. Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona Isyani*”, 143-144. Şem’dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’i’t-Tevârih*”, 8.

¹⁷⁵ The sources did not agree on the numbers of the officials whose heads were demanded by the rebels. According to Abdi Efendi thirty seven officers were demanded to be executed while Subhi Tarihi gives only four names. Münir Aktepe, *Patrona Isyani*, 144. Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 38. M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*”, 25.

¹⁷⁶ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 38-39. Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona Isyani*”, 150. Şem’dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’i’t-Tevârih*”, 10. M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*”, 26-29.

¹⁷⁷ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 39, Şem’dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’i’t-Tevârih*”, 10. Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona Isyani*”, 152. M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*”, 31.

¹⁷⁸ Münir Aktepe, “*Patrona Isyani*”, 155-156. Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 40-41. Şem’dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’i’t-Tevârih*”, 12.

commission who asked the rebel's terms, was appointed as the chief judge of Anatolia and rest of the rebel appointments were approved by the new Sultan.¹⁷⁹

The rebels, who obtained positions within the ranks of the Military, recruited their supporters into the Janissary corps to strengthen their position.¹⁸⁰ During the enthronement ceremony of Mahmud I, the kiosks of *Sadabad* were destroyed which symbolically put an end to the era of the Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa.¹⁸¹ In the mean time, the new Sultan Mahmud I had failed to establish his authority over the rebels. The rebel brigands had been accused of misusing their positions and of disturbing the public order.¹⁸² The rebels also tried to obtain a warranty from the Sultan to secure their lives¹⁸³ but presumably their impulsive actions put them out of *Ulema* and the *Esnaf's* support.¹⁸⁴ The realignment of Sultan Mahmud I, palace elites and the *Ulema* standing on the rebel's side, and the rebel lieutenants themselves who had been executed as their affiliations were punished.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the order had “restored”.

The Chronicles

The Ottoman historians and their accounts of the 1730 Rebellion which are analysed in this chapter are *Abdi Tarihi* of Abdi Efendi, *M'ü'rit-ül Tevarîh* of Şemdanizade Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, *Destârî Sâlih Tarihi* of Destârî Salih Efendi and *Subhi Tarihi*. *Abdi Tarihi*¹⁸⁶ which had been composed by Abdi Efendi in order to narrate “the great strife”.¹⁸⁷ Unfortunately, there is very limited information about the personal history and cultural formation of the author apart from that *Abdi* was a common pseudonym among the Ottoman authors. He introduces himself as one of “a humbled figure among educated men”, “a craftsman of history” and “a lover of literature” which

¹⁷⁹ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 42-43.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 48-49.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 53-60.

¹⁸⁶ The original title is “*Tarih-i Sultan Mahmud Han ibn-i Sultan Mustafa*”.

¹⁸⁷ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 5.

implies his possible ties to the *Ilmiye* class.¹⁸⁸

As a special event chronicle, the content of *Abdi Tarihi* can be analyzed in three major parts:

In the beginning, Abdi Efendi expresses his purpose for narrating the events in his treatise and addresses Sultan Mahmud I as his audience. He gives the details of a horrifying storm which struck the imperial capital on August 7 of 1728, a celestial happening occurred in *Diyarbakır* that turned the sky red in the middle of the night on February 13 of 1730, and a sun eclipse on the 15 of July in 1730.¹⁸⁹ Abdi Efendi represented these events as malignant occurrences, indicating the unfortunate events.¹⁹⁰ In the next passages the author expressed his discontent with the terms of peace with the Persians. He also criticized the arrogant attitude of Damat Ibrahim Paşa by emphasizing his ignorance from the opinion of knowledgeable men.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, he narrated the events which occurred in the eastern front, such as the condition of Afghan Invader, Nadir Şah and Renegade Eşref Şah, and illustrates the wrong maneuvers of Abdurrahman Paşa; governor of *Hemedan* who was defeated by the Persians.¹⁹² After this part, Abdi Efendi narrated the preparation process of the Persian campaign.¹⁹³ The second part deals with the preparations of the army in Üsküdar, the fall of *Tebriz*, the arrival of the representative Eşref Şah and lastly, the initial condition of imperial capital.¹⁹⁴ Herein, he tells the outbreak of rebellion and other events, resulting in the enthronement of Mahmud I. The third part covers the final stand, the purge of the rebels and “restoration of order” by the new Sultan.

To summarize, Abdi Efendi is concerned with the socio-political reasons conditioning the rebellion. He constantly expressed his personal opinions towards the rebellion and the rebels. According to his text, the mismanagement of the state affairs and moral corruption of the leading figures were the main reasons behind the rebellion which signifies Damat Ibrahim Paşa as a scapegoat. Instead of focusing on the reasons which

¹⁸⁸ Faik Reşit Unat, “*Abdi Tarihi: 1730 Patrona İhtilali Üzerine Bir Eser*”, IX.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 9-11.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

paved the way of mismanagement of the state affairs, he relied on the will of God and addresses his faith. Presumably, *Abdi Tarihi*'s primary concern in narrating "the inauspicious events" which occurred over the course of the 1730 Rebellion was to make an example for its audience.

Şemdanizade Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi's *Mür'i't-Tevârih* is an expanded edition of the famous history work *Takîmü't-Tevârih* of Kâtip Çelebi.¹⁹⁵ The author informs the reader about his own writing process, his treatise which was written over thirteen years and was referenced by more than four hundred books to complete the account.¹⁹⁶ Katip Çelebi's history starts with the creation of the universe and chronological order of the events from the time of "Adam" to 1654-55. Later on, the work of Katip Çelebi was extended by Şeyh Mehmed Efendi to the 1732-33 and then continued by Ibrahim Müteferrika to 1733-34.¹⁹⁷ Süleyman Efendi expanded the content of the history written by Katip Çelebi, up until 1733-34 and used the works of the palace chroniclers Mehmed Subhi Efendi and Süleyman İzzî Efendi to narrate the events which occurred after 1730.¹⁹⁸

The adoption of the official chronicles into the work of Süleyman Efendi does not overshadow his "history from below-like narrative" since his own research about rumours circulating in the streets of Istanbul, occupies a large proportion of it.

As for the rebellion of 1730, Süleyman Efendi begins his account with the unresolved peace negotiations with Persia that were conducted by Damat Ibrahim Paşa. He signifies that the terms of peace damaged the reputation of Damat Ibrahim Paşa and thus, the Grand Vizier appeared as a "traitor" in public opinion.¹⁹⁹ Obviously, the author does not approve of the Grand Vizier's peace policy and emphasises his "corrupt" personality.²⁰⁰ To put it briefly, Süleyman Efendi expresses his own opinions beyond the restriction of palace-centred approaches. Citations from *Şehzade Süleyman*²⁰¹ and his discussion on the

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25-28.

¹⁹⁵ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*" vol.1, ed. Münir Aktepe, XX.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*" 1.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

Grand Vizier's length of time in office²⁰² can be interpreted as an implication of his criticism regarding the state affairs. Süleyman Efendi does not blame Ahmed III openly, but criticised him for trusting Damat Ibrahim Paşa as a grand vizier for fifteen years and tolerating his life style which "possessed" the Ottoman elites.

Süleyman Efendi focused on the word on the streets and surveys the reasons why the townspeople turned their backs on their Sultan. According to him, the atmosphere of moral corruption and the surrendering of Muslim lands to infidel Persians were the determinant factors for the rebellion. The Empire sacrificed a lot for the Persian front but the Grand Vizier signed for peace in order to continue his life of pleasures.²⁰³ Appearing in the text of Süleyman Efendi as driving forces of the rebellion are: the mismanagement of state affairs, the protection of Muslim lands against the enemy, the championing of the justice and moral corruption.

"*Destari Tarihi*" by Destari Salih Efendi is another "special event chronicle" which deals with the case of the 1730 rebellion. Among other authors, excluding the author Subhi Tarihi, Destari Salih Efendi was the closest chronicler to the palace as his text was edited by Salahattin Salahi Efendi, "*Sır Katibi*" of Sultan Mahmud I.²⁰⁴ During the outbreak of the rebellion, Destari Salih Efendi attended the meetings in the palace. Hence, his chronicle sheds light on very important details about the palace atmosphere.²⁰⁵ At certain points, unlike other authors, Destari Salih Efendi defends Damat Ibrahim Paşa. He refers to the rebellion as a conspiracy of Zülali Hasan Efendi, the former judge of Istanbul and also an enemy of Damat Ibrahim Paşa.²⁰⁶

On the other hand, as a collaborative effort of various authors: Arapeminîzâde Mustafa Sâmî Efendi, Hüseyin Şâkir Efendi, Râmî Paşazâde Abdullah Ref'et Beyefendi and Mehmed Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*" is an official chronicle which covers the events dating between 1730 and 1774. The final version of "*Subhi Tarihi*" is a published edition

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁰⁴ "*Destari Salih Tarihi: Patrona Halil ayaklanması hakkında bir kaynak.*" / Destari Salih Efendi ; ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal. (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi, 1962), IV.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* V-IV.

²⁰⁶ Destari Salih Efendi, "*Destari Salih Tarihi*", 3-9.

of Mehmed Subhi Efendi. The rebellion of 1730 was recorded by Arapemînzâde Mustafa Sâmî Efendi who was presumably appointed as an official chronicler between 1730 until his death in 1734. According to Bekir Kütükoğlu, Sâmî Efendi recorded from 1730 until 1732.²⁰⁷ As Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi, he adopted *Subhi Tarihi* as a main source which is why it is beneficial to compare these two works to understand the perception of the official chroniclers of the time.

The Cause of the Justice: the Rebels and the Ulema

Before analysing the positioning of the rebels in contemporary sources, it would be very useful to define who those “rebels” were and what their ultimate aim in the uprising against the Sultan was. Traditionally, the contemporary authors describe the rebels as a group of vile and low people, plundering the city under the influence of the charismatic leader *Patrona Halil* (and probably with the intention of obtaining a position in the military or administration). Süleyman Efendi accuses the rebel leader *Patrona Halil*, once a crew member of a ship named *Patorona*²⁰⁸, of slaughtering and looting the Muslims.²⁰⁹ However, this author also admits that before his hand in the events, Patrona Halil granted permission from a member of *Ilmiye* named, Deli Ibrahim.²¹⁰ In addition to this, Süleyman Efendi portrays Patrona Halil as a charismatic leader who appealed the townspeople to unite against Damat Ibrahim Paşa and his cabinet by signifying the latter’s pleasure-seeking life style. Hence, Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi’s illustration of Patrona Halil can be interpreted as an implicit effort to justify his own reasoning on moral corruption. Furthermore, Süleyman Efendi claims that the rebels refused to share money which was confiscated from the deputy of the Grand Vizier, Mehmed Kethüda, on the ground that it would be “illicit”.²¹¹ This is another indicator as the rebels were quite cautious about how they legitimised cause. Süleyman Efendi does not approve of the rebel’s actions, nor does he accuse them of being infidels or enemy of the state and religion as Abdi Efendi does. Apparently, the author agrees with the actions of rebels as long as it was against Damat

²⁰⁷ M.Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*” ed. Mesut Aydınar, (Istanbul: 2002), XLVII-LI.

²⁰⁸ Şem’dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’î’t-Tevârih*”, 6.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

Ibrahim Paşa. Hence, even though *Şemdanizade Tarihi* offers some details about the rebels, the author's narration concentrates on the actions and influence of Damat Ibrahim Paşa.

On the other hand, *Subhi Tarihi* and *Destari Salih Tarihi* do not offer much about the actions of the rebels, apart from common actualities which are voiced in all contemporary sources, such as their names or pseudonyms and their actions. For the identity and the details of the rebels' actions *Abdi Tarihi* is the richest source. In *Abdi Tarihi*, the rebels are depicted as people of low rank who were incapable of acting freely without the assistance of "knowledgeable men".²¹² Abdi Efendi constantly insults the rebels for their low social status. He describes them as a group of "Infamous Albanians" and "Anatolian Turks among infidels".²¹³

Apart from that, in regards to the rebellion of 1730, professional, ethnic, and religious affiliations with the rebels can be traced through the analysis of their title or pseudonym given in the accounts of the contemporary authors. "Patrona Halil", an Albanian Janissary from *Horpeşte* village in Rumelia²¹⁴, "Muslı Beşe" a hound-breeder (*zağarcı*) from *Niğbolu*, "Ali Usta", "Emir Ali", "Derviş Mehmed", "Erzurumlu Mehmed", "Küçük Muslı", "Kutucu Elhac Hüseyin" were armourers, "Manav İsmail", a grocer,²¹⁵ "Çınar Ahmed", "Kara Yılan"²¹⁶, "Canbaz Emir Musa", "Oduncu Ahmet", timbermen,²¹⁷ "Urlu Murtaza Ağa", "Deli Mahmud"²¹⁸, "İbadî", coffeehouse buskers,²¹⁹ are some of names which are mentioned in the text of Abdi Efendi.

In addition to the above-mentioned names, there were thirty more troops involved in the outbreak of the rebellion, according to *Abdi Tarihi*.²²⁰ Moreover, *Şemdanizade Tarihi*

²¹² Abdi Efendi, "*Abdi Tarihi*", 26, 29-31.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 28.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29, 35.

²¹⁵ "Manav İsmail" and "Turşucu İsmail" who returned the dead body of Damat Ibrahim Paşa to palace are probably same person. *Ibid.*, 29.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

states that, Patrona Halil and his sixteen lieutenants launched the rebellion.²²¹ The *Subhi Tarihi* says the rebels were under the leadership of Patrona Halil and his seventeen lieutenants.²²² From this view, the rebel lieutenants were among the military organization. Considering their pseudonyms, they probably had close ties with the tiny-*Esnaf*. Assumably tiny *Esnaf* - Janissary identity of the rebel leaders might have helped them to expand their influence on the townspeople.

What's more, consistent with Abdi Efendi, those among the supporters of the rebels there were also Greeks, Armenians, Gypsies and qizilbashs. From this view, the rebels were portrayed as a cosmopolite group, made up of elements in the military, tiny-*Esnaf*, immigrants, non-Muslims and marginalized groups. However, among the contemporary sources, *Abdi Tarihi* is the only chronicle which touched upon the rebel's collaboration with the non-Muslim communities. Hence, this assertion seems deceptive as the author may have aimed to blame the rebels of their social background and their collaboration with the non-Muslims.²²³

The rebellion of 1730 was described as an organised operation. Even though the rebels were traditionally depicted as incapable, they organised the rebellion in a collective-manner.²²⁴ Only in the *Subhi Tarihi*, the outbreak of the rebellion was narrated as an impulsive action of the rebels who had evil schemes intended.²²⁵ Based on the accounts of foreign ambassadors, Aktepe describes Patrona Halil as a vigilante who was sentenced to death for organising a mutiny when he was a *legend* crew member. He was pardoned by Kapdan Abdi Paşa, who would later become vizier and stay in the imperial capital as "*Damad-ı Şehriyari*" during the rebellion. Patrona Halil later fled to his homeland, Albania and then moved to *Niş* where he enrolled in the Janissary of the seventeenth regiment. There he was involved in another mutiny, which spread from *Niş* to *Vidin*. After his move to Istanbul, Patrona Halil became a protégé of *Kaptan-ı Derya* Mustafa Paşa. Furthermore, Aktepe highlights that he was in contact with other prominent political

²²¹ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 6.

²²² M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 22.

²²³ Abdi Efendi, "*Abdi Tarihi*", 35.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 26. Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'i't-Tevârih*", 6.

²²⁵ M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 22.

figures and an antagonist group that aimed to overthrow Sultan Ahmed III even before the rebellion. It was believed that Patrona Halil also had mystical powers.²²⁶

Apparently, mystic connotations attached to the image of Patrona Halil would possibly have influenced the foreign ambassadors who witnessed the rebellion. Hence, it seems difficult to get a clear distinction between his real personality and his constructed mysticism. Nevertheless, he appears as a rebellious and influential figure, probably a good public speaker. However, it is still not possible to reveal the real motivation of Patrona Halil in designing the rebellion. Therefore, due to insufficient information it would be wrong to label him as a revolutionist or restorer of the order who punished corrupt figures. Considering his position that he obtained at the end of the rebellion, he can be more or less considered as an opportunist.

Abdi Efendi blames the incapability of Ottoman officers in suppressing the spread of the strife. He touches upon an opportunity missed by the officials to repel the rebels. When word arrived that the Sultan and the palace elites were moving back to Imperial Palace to commence an assault against the rebels, some antagonists deserted the *Et Meydanı*. Nevertheless, Patrona Halil's determinant attitude prevented a further dissolution. For Abdi Efendi at this stage, passivity of the Porte boosted the morale of the rebels. But he does not give to the reason to the Porte's delayed response, instead he just refers to the will of God.²²⁷

Having failed to repel the rebels, the cabinet of Damat Ibrahim Paşa is portrayed as an incapable administration in the account of Abdi Efendi, and Damat Ibrahim Paşa himself was implicitly accused with propagating strife. However, concerning the reasons of the delay, the author obediently attributes the inevitable course of events to the will of God. Undoubtedly, the course of the events were far more involved than God's will. Herein, Abdi Efendi might have intentionally ignored the opposition between the chief judge of Rumelia, Mirzazade Efendi and Damat Ibrahim Paşa regarding the use of brute force against the rebels. Considering the fact that Abdi Efendi was an affiliate of the *Ulema*

²²⁶ Münir Aktepe, "Patrona İsyanı", 132-133.

²²⁷ Abdi Efendi, "Abdi Tarihi", 32.

and presented his treatise in the time of Mahmud I, he may have preferred to avoid expressing the details of the dichotomy between the ruling cadres of his time and the former Grand Vizier in his account.

Destari Salih Tarihi provides curious details about the initial discussions between the Sultan, Damat Ibrahim Paşa, the *Ulema* and other palace elites. Accordingly, Damat Ibrahim Paşa obtained a fatwa from *Şeyhülislam* Abdullah Efendi and convinced the Sultan to use brute force against the rebels. However, Mirzazade Efendi objected to the ruling of the *Şeyhülislam* on the grounds that Muslims' blood would be shed.²²⁸ Hence, these might be the reasons why Abdi Efendi did not give room to this discussion.

This was followed by “the lootings”, presumably referring to the rebel’s raids in the Grand Bazaar, *Sarraçhane*, *Sipah Pazarı* and *Bit Pazarı* and their efforts to merge with the Janissaries. The rebels had, Samancızade Efendi, a notable member of the *Ulema* and Deli Ibrahim, a *müderris* to confirm their appointments.²²⁹ They appointed Deli Ibrahim Efendi as the judge of Istanbul,²³⁰ Kel Mahmud Ağa as the Janissary Agha (who is depicted as “lunatic” by Abdi Efendi), Uurlu Murtaza Ağa as *Sekbanbaşı* and Deli Mahmud and Giritli Ali Efendi as the deputies of the Janissary *Agha* and *Sekbanbaşı* respectively. These appointments may indicate the rebel’s aims to enhance their influence in the posts of the Military and *Ilmiye*.²³¹ It also hints about the base of the alliance between the rebels and the “anti-Damat Ibrahim Paşa” faction of the *Ulema*. By these appointments, Damat Ibrahim Paşa’s power within the administration and the *Ilmiye* would be broken. And in return, with the support of the *Ulema*, the rebels would be able to bring legitimisation and success to their cause.

Later on, the rebels’ demands for the executions of Damat Ibrahim Paşa, his deputy, the major of Istanbul and the banishment of *Şeyhülislam* Abdullah Efendi signified the purging of the Grand Vizier’s cabinet. According to Abdi Efendi, two members of the commission, Zülali Hasan Efendi, an Albanian, and İspirizade Ahmed Efendi from the

²²⁸ Destari Salih Efendi, “*Destari Salih Tarihi*”, 10-11.

²²⁹ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 32-34.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

Ulema, were dispatched to ask the rebels for their terms. However, Abdi Efendi claims that they were presumably the affiliates of opposing party, who had compromised with the rebels and encouraged them to depose of Ahmed III.²³² Subhi Tarihi also signifies the relationship between the rebels and Zülali Hasan Efendi.²³³ This is the most solid evidence regarding the alliance between the *Ulema* and the rebels. The Albanian identity of Zülali Efendi and Patrona Halil's identity appear consistent but, as it was explained before the full view of the situation, it was larger than mere solidarity of Albanians.

On the other hand, Süleyman Efendi, also underlined there was an opposition between the Grand Vizier and some members of the *Ulema*. Just like Abdi Efendi, Süleyman Efendi refers to the connection between Zülali Hasan Efendi who had served previously as a judge of Istanbul and the rebel leader Patrona Halil.²³⁴ Presumably, both Abdi Efendi and Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi might have some reasons for remaining silent about the relationship between the *Ulema* and the rebels. Therefore, it would be necessary give attention to *Destari Salih Tarihi* which is the only chronicle that mentions the relationship between Zülali Hasan Efendi and the rebels. Accordingly, there was an ongoing hostility between the Grand Vizier and Zülali Hasan Efendi. Due to his failure of provisioning the imperial capital, Zülali Hasan Efendi was dismissed from the post of judge by the Grand Vizier. Thus, he helped the rebels to gain popularity.²³⁵ He was the one who recommended execution of the Grand Vizier to the rebels.²³⁶

After the execution of Damat Ibrahim Paşa, his deputy Mehmed Kethüda, *Kaptan-ı Derya* Mustafa Paşa²³⁷ and the major of Istanbul, the bodies were brought to the *Et Medyanı* with a religious ceremony which was performed by the rebel's affiliates. Abdi Efendi condemns the ceremony and accuses the rebels as being "infidels".²³⁸ He states that:

²³² *Ibid.*, 40.

²³³ M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*", 24-25.

²³⁴ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'î't-Tevârih*", 5-6.

²³⁵ Destari Salih Efendi, "*Destari Salih Tarihi*", 9.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

²³⁷ According to Aktepe, Mustafa Paşa's name was not on the list of the rebels. He was dismissed and executed by the order of Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Münir Aktepe, *Patrona İsyanı*", 145-146.

²³⁸ Abdi Efendi, "*Abdi Tarihi*", 39.

“...what a man can do as the order fell to the mouth of furious dogs. Every one acts on his own.”²³⁹

After this point, the rebels who expressed their loyalty to the Sultan had changed their attitude and thus, Ahmed III had to step down from the throne. The pretext of the deposition was over the issue of the uncircumcised “dead body of Damat Ibrahim Paşa”. According to all contemporary sources the rebels were indignant over the identity of the body.²⁴⁰ Hence, they demanded deposition of Ahmed III. This is the only explanation regarding the sudden growing dispute against the Sultan. After the enthronement of Mahmud I, Silahdar Mehmed Paşa was elevated to the post of the Grand Vizierate while Mirzazade Abdullah Efendi became *Şeyülislam* and *Damad-i Şehriyar* Kapdan Abdi Paşa became *Kaptan-ı Derya*.²⁴¹

To summarize, the rebels followed the exact precedent of their predecessors in 1703 rebellion which steps involved:

- Expressing their “cause of justice” to the public which was symbolized by a “banner”. At this level they announced that, they were no plunderers or brigands, rather seeking justice to punish “the traitors”. They avoided looting and unnecessary bloodshed.
- Paralyzing the financial life of the city through raiding the Grand Bazaar and other financial centres of the imperial capital and seeking the support of the *Esnaf*.
- Seeking access to *Et Meydanı*, to merge with the Janissaries and other military units.
- Casting their doubt on the authority of the Sultan.
- Seeking the support of the *Ulema* to legitimise their cause.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Şem’dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’î’t-Tevârih*”, 10-11. M. Subhi Efendi, “*Subhi Tarihi*”, 31.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

- Waiting for the representative of the Sultan and delivering their demands. At this point no conspicuous disloyalty was displayed to the Sultan.
- Ordering executions and approving of certain appointed men of the rebels to the ranks of the administration and the military.
- Waiting for an opportunity to depose the Sultan.

In that sense, these common steps between the two events signify that a similar method was applied to legitimisation of the rebellions of 1703 and 1730. The arguments of the authors also have similar characteristics. Each author had a different point of view regarding their affiliations or social status. Nevertheless up to this point, it seems as if the rebels were well aware of the steps which were to be followed to bring about a successful rebellion. They announced themselves as desecrators of those who betrayed the state. In the 1703 rebellion, the treaty of *Karlowitz* was considered by the rebels as treason to the state. The Sultan was considered as incapable due to his failure to protect the Muslim lands. Here in rebellion of 1730, the rebels came with a similar argument. Terms of the peace with Persia and surrender of the Muslim lands were probably considered as treason to the state and this helped the rebels to gain public support. Another important point in the 1703 rebellion, is opposition to Feyzullah Efendi had created a common ground which unified discontent elements against the Porte under cause of the rebels. In the 1730 rebellion, the common ground of the rebel coalition was the opposition to Damat Ibrahim Paşa which will be discussed in detail in following part.

Damat Ibrahim Paşa as Scapegoat of the 1730 Rebellion

One of the paralleling factors that all sources agree on is Damat Ibrahim Paşa's position as being solely responsible for the rebellion. Just like *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi in the case of 1703, Damat Ibrahim Paşa was accused of being a scapegoat of the 1730 rebellion. The reasoning of the contemporary authors depended on differing factors. Firstly, Damat Ibrahim Paşa was the most powerful figure of his time whose term of office covered fifteen years and lasted until his execution. In the previous chapter, there was a conspicuous power struggle between the parties of rebel coalition and *Şeyhülislam*

Feyzullah Efendi. Herein, one shall ask the question if the rebellion of 1730 was perceived by anti-Damat Ibrahim Paşa elements as an opportunity of to overthrow him.

In the case the 1703 rebellion of Edirne, by support of social, military and political elements which had opposed the party of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi, protest of Armourers transformed into full scale mutiny which ended with the deposition of Mustafa II. The power struggle intensified between *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi and the other members of the *Ulema* who had been dismissed from their previous posts. The depiction of Feyzullah Efendi as a scapegoat alluded to his nepotism and his immense influence on the Sultan. The acts of Feyzullah Efendi were considered as a violation of protocol. His immense wealth and long term of service in the palace were the other reasons which are criticised in the contemporary sources. In that sense, the depiction of Feyzullah Efendi and position of Damat Ibrahim Paşa in rebellion of 1730 overlaps as both figures were accused of being corrupt and influencing the Sultan. These are the most important motives which gave sway to the rebels' arguments.

There are numerous accusations thrown against Damat Ibrahim Paşa (the most interesting one is probably the “*uncircumcised*” issue) by the contemporary authors. As for the condition of Damat Ibrahim Paşa in the contemporary sources, Abdi Efendi and Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi had considered the era of his vizierate as the beginning of the blasphemous mismanagement of state affairs. According to Süleyman Efendi, everything started with the signing of the treaty of Passorowitz in 1718. During the negotiations, despite the disapproval of the *Ulema* and other prominent figures, Damat Ibrahim Paşa had taken the initiative and convinced the Sultan to sign the treaty which surrendered some Balkan provinces to the enemy, as he claimed that there were no competent military units to encounter Europeans. By making peace with Europeans the State were able to buy time to re-organize the military units, hence, the lost territories would be re-conquered.

Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi accuses Damat Ibrahim Paşa for not taking necessary measures to re-organize the army and making the situation even worse. Accordingly, Damat Ibrahim Paşa biased the people with games of lust and conducted

peace negotiations with the Persians just for the sake of his own pleasure.²⁴² Hence, from the perspective of Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi, Damat Ibrahim Paşa was the only reason behind the violation of the state order. Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi throws more intensive accusations at Damat Ibrahim Paşa than Abdi Efendi. Süleyman Efendi describes him as “a man of fake dignity”. To him, Damat Ibrahim Paşa demonstrated his immense wealth over his slaves who wore gems on his belts, book bindings with pearls, expansive clocks and upholsteries. On the other hand, he surrendered previously conquered eastern lands to the Persia.²⁴³

To Süleyman Efendi, the Sultan’s unwillingness to lead the campaign himself rendered the army immobile in Üsküdar.²⁴⁴ In the meantime, news arrived that the *Kirmanşâh* and *Hemedân* citadels were looted by Persians, Kara Mustafa Paşa (who probably affiliated with Damat Ibrahim Paşa Party), the governor of *Tebriz* deserted his post and left the city to the enemy.²⁴⁵ According to the rumours, survivors of *Tebriz* were marching to Istanbul to seek revenge.²⁴⁶ This condition created unrest among the soldiers, and thus the rebellion broke out.

Apart from that, Süleman Efendi describes the lifestyle of the Grand Vizier as a disease which plagued the society. The decent women neglected their social role and exhibited themselves while they were enjoying the toys of amusement in the hands of male servants.²⁴⁷ In this atmosphere of lust, the state officers ignored their duties, hence the *reaya* suffered in the hands of the oppressive local notables.²⁴⁸ Damat Ibrahim Paşa paves the way of rebellion as he biased the Sultan and other government officers with his pleasure seeking ways. Consequently, the Sultan was considered as unjust and incapable by the rebels as he left his authority to the hands of an “extravagant hedonist” for fifteen years.²⁴⁹

²⁴² Şem’dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, “*Mür’î’t-Tevârih*”, 3-4.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²⁴⁹ On life style of Ottoman elites in the Tulip Age see, Eva Marlene Schaefers ,”*Sa’dabad: The Social Pronunciation*

Moreover, Süleyman Efendi commented on the long term vizierate of Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Accordingly, Damat Ibrahim Paşa was not capable of managing the state affairs for fifteen years as he lacked the qualities of an ideal governor. There were some other prominent figures who had served such a long term before, but they gained their positions by working for the interests of the state.²⁵⁰ Thus, Süleyman Efendi's narration can also be considered as a sophisticated critique of the Ahmed III's reign.

Up to this point, the accusations of the author had intensified on two points:

- Damat Ibrahim Paşa's corrupt personality.
- Damat Ibrahim Paşa's incapability of managing the state affairs.

These relevant accusations signify a connection between the outbreak of the rebellion and the condition of the empire. The failure of the Grand Vizier in state affairs was justified on his corrupt personality. The position of the Sultan within this procedure is as one who was biased by corruption. Probably, unwillingness of the Sultan to lead the campaign, explicitly demonstrates the incapability of fulfilling his tasks as a ruler. Hence, Süleyman Efendi appears as an affiliate of the anti-Damat Ibrahim Paşa party who reclaimed their positions in Mahmud I era, his text justifies the fall of "the corrupted".

The approach of Süleyman Efendi and Abdi Efendi are based on similar factors. The difference is *Abdi Tarihi* was written for a didactic purpose which demonstrates the fate of a ruler who left his authority into incapable officials. The admonition of Ahmed III in the end clearly confirms this condition. Accordingly, Sultan Ahmed III enthrones his nephew *Şehzade* Mahmud by his own hand and makes a speech of admonition. The first passage of the speech has very interesting details which enable us to get an insight into the mind of Abdi Efendi:

of an 18th Century Palace and its Surroundings", unpublished MA dissertation, Bilgi University (Istanbul, 2009).

²⁵⁰ Şem'dânî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, "*Mür'î't-Tevârih*", 14.

“At first, do not give in to your Grand Vizier and always pay attention to his actions. Do not keep the same person in the post of [Grand] Vizierate for five or ten years. Do not confide to his words. Always be merciful and munificent!”²⁵¹

What Abdi Efendi highlighted as the mistakes of the Sultan were:

- Authorising the *Grand Vizier* with superfluous power.
- Extending the service term of the *Grand Vizier*.
- Being influenced by the decisions of *Grand Vizier*.

Thus, the author signifies the role of Damat Ibrahim Paşa as a scapegoat and justifies the inaction of the Sultan who was influenced by malicious people. Abdi Efendi confirms the point of Süleyman Efendi as he accuses Damat Ibrahim Paşa of proliferating hedonism. Another good example on this point providing insight into the atmosphere in Istanbul in the early stages of the rebellion:

“Even the *Kayimmakam Paşa* was planting tulips on his garden, the [typical] mood of Istanbul!”²⁵²

Abdi Efendi presents the rebellion itself as a punitive and catastrophic event that was foreboded by the omens as the moral corruption had been plaguing the society throughout the era of Damat Ibrahim Paşa. To put it briefly, in order to justify the fall of the Damat Ibrahim Paşa cabinet, the author had labelled the affiliates as corrupt in all means. There is no solid evidence which proves “the era of blasphemy” was put to an end through rebellion in the texts of Abdi Efendi and Süleyman Efendi. Both authors agree that the restoration of order was fulfilled with the elimination of the rebels after the fall of Damat Ibrahim Paşa cabinet.

On the other hand, as an official chronicle, *Subhi Tarihi* contains rather diplomatic language towards Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Accordingly, treacherous rebels created disorder in

²⁵¹ Abdi Efendi, “*Abdi Tarihi*”, 41-42.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 29.

the city. They raided the financial centres and merged with the Janissaries. After discussions in the palace, the Sultan appointed Zülali Hasan Efendi and İspirizade Mehmed Efendi to ask the rebels their terms of peace. The rebels expressed loyalty to the Sultan and demanded the execution of fourteen names. However, after the executions they changed their attitude and demanded the deposition of Ahmed III.²⁵³ Hence, unlike *Abdi Tarihi* and *Şemdanizade Tarihi*, in *Subhi Tarihi* no conspicuous accusation attributes Damat Ibrahim Paşa or any other figure for being responsible for the rebellion. Furthermore, the opposition between Damat Ibrahim Paşa and Mirzazade Efendi is also ignored. The passivity of the Porte is clarified for not having loyal troops to repel the rebels.²⁵⁴ Thus, the narrative describes the events as an impulsive action of some antagonists against the State.

Among contemporary authors, Destari Salih Efendi's approach differs from Süleyman Efendi and Abdi Efendi. He depicts the rebellion of 1730 as a plot of Zülali Hasan Efendi who had been dismissed from his previous post of "the judge of Istanbul" by the Grand Vizier.²⁵⁵ Unlike Abdi Efendi and Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi, Destari Salih Efendi does not consider the lifestyle of Damat Ibrahim Paşa as a reason for the rebellion. According to him, Damat Ibrahim Paşa was a competent servant of the Sultan, who won great victories against the Persians on the eastern front. Moreover, the author claims that, unlike the depiction of the others, the Grand Vizier was not lavish and corrupt. On the contrary, Damat Ibrahim Paşa was a man of dignity who was killed by the hands of vagrants. He points out that the state officers in Anatolia neglected their duties as the Grand Vizier was in Istanbul. That is why the Porte decided to re-open the eastern front.²⁵⁶ However, during the preparations for the campaign in Üsküdar, some vagrants who were guided by Zülali Hasan Efendi initiated the rebellion.²⁵⁷ Thus, as an affiliate of Damat Ibrahim Paşa's party, Destari Salih Efendi's explanation can be considered as a rebellious act against anti-Damat Ibrahim Paşa party. The position of the rebels within this struggle was a tool to eliminate the Damat Ibrahim Paşa cabinet. In that sense, the text of Destari

²⁵³ M. Subhi Efendi, "*Subhi Tarihi*" 22-33.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

²⁵⁵ Destari Salih Efendi, "*Destari Salih Tarihi*", 9.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-6.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

Salih Efendi appears as an answer to those who accused Damat Ibrahim Paşa.

To summarize, there are three different arguments which dominated the contemporary sources regarding the condition of Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Şemdanizade Süleyman Efendi and Abdi Efendi conclude that the rebellion was an act against the Damat Ibrahim Paşa party. The moral corruption and mismanagement of the state affairs prepare the background of their reasoning. They had close ties with the *Ulema* and were probably the affiliates of the prevailing party which survived to the Mahmud I era. Hence, they probably blame Damat Ibrahim Paşa's policies and the lifestyle of his affiliates to justify the position of the prevailing party. They do not neglect the role of Zülali Hasan Efendi in the rebellion as being a tutor to the rebels, but they ignore certain points which indicate the opposition between Damat Ibrahim Paşa and some members of the *Ulema* who gained ranks after the rebellion.

As a member of palace elites in Ahmed III's reign, Destari Salih Efendi single-handedly defended Damat Ibrahim Paşa. He refers the rebellion as a plot of Zülali Hasan Efendi who manipulated the rebels to reclaim his position. On the other hand, the official palace chroniclers who narrated the events in *Subhi Tarihi*, obtain a diplomatic attitude regarding the rebellion of 1730. From this perspective, the rebellion was an impulsive act of some vile men who were assisted by some palace elites. For the course of the events, even though all of the authors came into agreement on some certain points, none of them consider the rebels as an individual group that were trying to get their share in this power struggle. The rebels used the religious legitimisation practices in their actions. They consider Damat Ibrahim Paşa as a traitor as due to his failure against the infidels. Moreover, the lifestyle of Damat Ibrahim Paşa and his affiliates is interpreted as blasphemy. Hence, the rebels shall be interpreted as individual opportunists that aligned with the anti-Damat Ibrahim Paşa elements within the Ottoman society and sought ways to obtain position in the military and the administration. For the authors, their affiliates and social position determined their approach and reasoning regarding the reasons of the rebellion.

Conclusion

In order to conclude the legitimisation methods that were followed by the rebels in 1730, it is necessary to compare the whole process with the rebellion of 1703. As it was mentioned before, there are similar characteristics between the rebellion of 1703 and 1730. The rebellion of 1703 has a more complex structure as an impulsive protest of the *Cebecis* turned into a full blown rebellion. The alignment of different social elements against the Porte were based on the opposition to the common enemy; *Şeyülislam* Feyzullah Efendi. In the rebellion of 1730, there is similar opposition to the Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Each figure had a great influence over the Sultan and had filled the government instrumentalities with their affiliates, which was the focal point of political dichotomy that existed prior to the events.

In 1703, even though the *Cebecis* had been organising themselves in a collaborative manner from early stages until the end, it is not clear whether their ultimate aim was to depose of the Sultan and *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi. It is not possible to clarify whether the rebels would have ended their protest if their demands had been met in the early stages. In the end, the protest of the *Cebecis* turned into a campaign against *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi, rather than an act to receive their unpaid salaries. But in the rebellion of 1730, the rebels were presumably aware of the fact that the success of their cause was dependent on the elimination of the Grand Vizier's cabinet and deposing the Sultan.

The “treason argument” was used by the rebels in both events. For the case of 1730, this point indicates that the rebels' ultimate aim was to depose the Grand Vizier as there was shifting on the agenda of the rebels in the early stage of the 1703 rebellion. Therefore in 1730, the rebels particularly targeted the Grand Vizier and then sought ways to bring to their cause on a religious basis which positioned Damat Ibrahim Paşa as indecent. The “moral corruption” argument was connected to “treason”. Hence, the rebels were able to label the Sultan as an inappropriate ruler for tolerating such incapable and corrupt figure so close to him. Later, this condition created a legitimate background for the deposition of the Sultan. Hence, in the case of 1730, the moral corruption argument was

interpreted by the contemporary authors to provide a pretext to the treason argument. The origin of the “moral corruption argument” linked the Grand Vizier and his affiliates to their excessive lifestyles.

In both events, the most powerful figure of the administration is chosen as a scapegoat by the majority of the contemporary sources. This attitude also allows them to justify the Sultan as being the responsible of the inauspicious events. Even though, there was an attempt of defending Damat Ibrahim Paşa, the same attitude is adopted by the contemporary authors who deal with the rebellion of 1730. Furthermore, in both events the rebels were backed by some members of the *Ulema*. Apart from approving the rebel arguments of restoring the order, assistance of the *Ulema* shall be interpreted as a diplomatic move. In 1703, the majority of the high-ranking *Ulema* members were dismissed from their previous posts by *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi. However in the rebellion of 1730, the dichotomy between the anti-Damat Ibrahim Paşa and *Ulema* is not as visible as it is in 1703. The common point is after the elimination of the targeted political figures, the most prominent figure among the rebel-supported *Ulema* elevated to the post of *Şeyhülislam* and assisted the new Sultan to purge the rebels.

The arguments of the contemporary authors are heavily affected by their affiliations and social standing. The official chroniclers adopt very diplomatic language as they needed to favour the ruling cadres, many of them survived into the reign of the new Sultan. From the perspective of the official chroniclers, the “inauspicious events” started with the mutiny of vile people who had been manipulated by some political figures that held grievances with the Porte. This point shall be evaluated carefully as the “ignored parts” that actually provide very important clues regarding the power struggle between different power elites.

Compared to 1703, the condition of the *Esnaf* was rather invisible in the rebellion of 1730. The contemporary sources signify that the rebel leaders were among the petty artisans. According to Richard Olson, in 1731 and in 1740, there were two unsuccessful attempts to depose Mahmud I that was lead by the Janissaries. However, the *Esnaf* armed themselves against the antagonists and assisted the Porte. Hence, the antagonists who

failed to win the support of the public, were crushed easily by the *Esnaf*. Indeed, a single example is not enough to conclude the whole situation of the *Esnaf*, but apparently they preferred to align with the new Sultan.²⁵⁸ In addition, Aktepe underlines that after the rebellion of 1730, Mahmud I had annulled the new tax imposition which was conducted by Damat Ibrahim Paşa. This actually confirms the alignment of the *Esnaf* with the Porte.²⁵⁹ However, there is no sufficient information about the role nor their participation in the rebellion in the contemporary sources. Hence, this field requires further study and is beyond the scope of this work. Another important point is the rebels may have had a predestined plan of attack as they followed the exact steps in both events. In order to confirm this point it is necessary to compare these two events with the rebellions of 1807 and 1826 in next chapters.

²⁵⁸ Robert W. Olson, "Jews, Janissaries, Esnaf and the Revolt of 1740 in Istanbul: Social Upheaval and Political Realignment in the Ottoman Empire" *Imperial meanderings and republican by-ways : essays on eighteenth century Ottoman and twentieth century*, (Istanbul: Isis 1996), 25. For the condition of the Esnaf see also Suraiya Faroqhi, "Guildsmen Complain to the Sultan: Artisans' Disputes and the Ottoman Administration in the 18th Century" in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* ed. Hakan T. Karateke, Marius Reinkowski, (Boston: Brill, 2005), 177-193. Mehmet Genç, "Osmanlı Maliyesinde Malikane Sistemi", *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri* ed. Osman Okyar, Ünal Nalbantoğlu (Ankara, 1975), 231-296. Engin D. Akarlı, "*Gedik*: Implements, Mastership, Shop Usufruct and Monopoly among Istanbul Artisans, 1750-1850", *Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin Jahrbuch*, 223-232. Onur Yıldırım, "Osmanlı Esnafında Uyum ve Dönüşüm" in *Toplum ve Bilim* 83; Kış (Istanbul 1999/2000), 147-176.

²⁵⁹ Münir Aktepe, "*Patrona İsyanı*", 16-17.

CHAPTER 3

FROM 1807 TO 1826: CONSOLIDATION OF THE STATE AUTHORITY AND ABOLISHMENT OF THE JANISSARIES

Rebellion against “the New Order”

In first two chapters, rebellions of 1703 and 1730 were evaluated within framework of legitimisation practices and arguments that were narrated in the contemporary sources. Moreover, the depiction of the rebels from the view of the contemporary authors and the legitimisation patterns were also discussed. As far as we observe; certain figures had chosen as scapegoats and accused of misguiding the Sultan, which in fact signifies a dichotomy between various power centers within the Ottoman administration. Arguments of the contemporary authors were based either on treachery of rebelling Janissaries-and their affiliations- or treason and corruption of scapegoat figures. Hence, there is continuity between arguments of the authors in cases of 1703 and 1730 rebellions. However, in 1807 rebellion, a certain institution, which represented central authority of the Porte, was targeted by the rebels. It was “the New Army” which was the most important outcome of the Porte’s *the New Order* policy.

Institution of the New Army would mean a constant threat to the very existence of the Janissary corps and privileges of the social groups that were affiliated to the Janissaries. In addition, the Porte would have to build an argument to prove legitimacy of the New Order, as it was a western institution. Hence, a battle of legitimisation between the Porte and the antagonists was inevitable. This chapter aims to develop an analysis on the Porte’s propaganda efforts and its reflection to abolishment of Janissaries over religio-intellectual arguments.

The era of Selim III can be considered “the beginning of the end” within the Ottoman history. Selim III succeeded to throne in 1789 in the middle of war with Russians. In his early reign, he had to face continuous series of crisis such as; raids of Mountaineer-*Kırcalı* Bandits in Rumelia in 1787-1807, revolt of *Pazvandoğlu* -a local power-holder of Rumelia- in 1792, invasion of the Egypt by “ally” Napoleon army of France in 1792,

Wahhabi sacking of Holy Cities and suspicion of pilgrimage in 1803, Serbian rebellion in 1804, revolt of Tayyar Mahmud Paşa, a power holder of Anatolia in 1805, and British Naval Expedition of Dardanelles in 1807.²⁶⁰ The modernization of the army would be evaluated as an inevitable result of Ottoman's ineffectiveness to encounter the European forces and provincial power-holders. Therefore, the New Order (*Nizam-ı Cedid*) would be considered as a political movement, which was aimed to consolidate power of the Porte on military organization of the empire and economical sources by establishing military and fiscal reforms.²⁶¹

The New Order program was launched by Selim III and with a group of several high and low rank bureaucrats, military officers and members of the *Ulema* hierarchy. The primary objective of the movement was to create a professional standing army in a Franco-Prussian model and a private treasury (*İrad-ı Cedid*) to finance the expenditures of military and other administrative reforms. Such radical changes in the military, fiscal and administrative structure of the empire would also challenge the privileges of the local power holders and the Janissaries. Hence, in order to avoid a possible reaction of the Janissaries and the society, the Porte constituted the New Army corps within the organization of the imperial bodyguards.

The reforms were announced as to reorganization of Cannon Corps (*Topçuyân*), The Cannon-Wagon Corps (*Top Arabacıyan*), the Miners (*Lağımçıyan*) and the Mortar Corps (*Humbaracıyan*) corps.²⁶² Furthermore, the Porte initiated new recruitment system on Anatolian provinces and transferred several tax revenue units under control of New Treasury to increase surplus from the provinces.²⁶³ The recruits of the New Army were stationed on the barracks that were built on *Levend Çiftlik*s and performed European methods of military training under supervision of European tutors. The recruits of the New Army were drafted among more homogenous part of the Ottoman society, mostly among

²⁶⁰ Fatma Sel Turhan, "The Abolition the Janissary Army and its Reflections", 33.

²⁶¹ Ali Yaycıoğlu, "The Provincial Challenge: Regionalism, Crisis, and Integration in the late Ottoman Empire" Unpublished PhD thesis, Harvard University, (Massachusetts: 2008), 304-305

²⁶² Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye or the Selimiyye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion" Unpublished PhD Thesis, Sabancı University, (Istanbul: 2008), Kemal Beydilli-İlhan Şahin, "Mahmud Râif Efendi ve Nizâm-i Cedîd'e Dâir Eseri", (Ankara: TTK 2001), 42-83.

²⁶³ Ali Yaycıoğlu, "The Provincial Challenge", 304-305.

the Anatolian peasants. Unlike the Janissary corps, the recruits of the New Army were isolated from the city life as their barracks were stationed in the outskirts of the imperial capital. They were performing regular military training under strict supervision of their officials.²⁶⁴

Although the New Army had no opportunity to test its battling skills on long and extensive war, it was successful against the French troops in Egypt²⁶⁵ in which they were deployed as auxiliary forces while the Janissaries formed the main body of army. In addition, The New Army also won minor victories against the rebelling Mountaineer bandits in Rumelia. Eventually, the success of New Army against French troops resulted in further expansion attempts of recruitments in other regions of the Empire.²⁶⁶

On the other hand, fiscal and administrative reforms did not meet the expectations of the Porte. In fact, it prepared a common basis for provincial elements and the Janissaries to unite against the Porte and New Order grandees. By the 1793, control of several fiscal units (*mukataa*) and fiefs (*timar*) as well as with the incomes of previously untaxed alcoholic beverages and tobacco products had given under supervision of The New Treasury. The new fiscal impositions caused disturbance among *malikane*-holders and their financial associates of whom were among the provincial power-holders. The fiscal reform was considered by the provincial power holders as an attempt to abrogate tax-farming system.²⁶⁷ By the nineteenth century, majority of the tax and revenue units, which were directly connected to New Treasury were under control of power-holders of the Rumelia.²⁶⁸ Hence, the concerns of the Janissaries were shared by the provincial elements that felt their privileges threatened by the Porte over fiscal reform.

Moreover, in 1807 resistance of some of the provincial power-holders against enrolments for the New Army, created a massive tension that turned into a rebellion in Thracian provinces. Since the foundation of the New Army to *Edirne Incident* of 1806, the Porte also had an unsuccessful attempt of disciplining Janissaries by subjecting them to

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 306.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 137.

²⁶⁷ Ali Yaycıoğlu, “*Provincial Challenge*”, 307-310.

military practice. Due to the unwillingness of the Janissaries, this attempt did not last long. The Porte also had taken measures to reduce the number of the Janissary payrolls.²⁶⁹ Even though, Selim III cited that the New Army was not designed as an attempt to replace the Janissaries²⁷⁰, the reaction of the latter was utterly negative towards the New Army and the New Order grandees.

According to Aysel Yıldız Danacı, as the Janissaries who maintained their business on some public spaces like coffeehouses, barber shops, (also the Janissary barracks), their reaction expressed through spreading gossips, rumours and exchanging notes against New Order in imperial capital and probably on the other parts of the Empire.²⁷¹ Another protest method which was expressed by Danacı Yıldız was the fires which attributed to the sabotage of the Janissaries who were also assigned as fire-workers. During the reign of Selim III there were more than sixty fire incidents that struck the imperial capital.²⁷²

Ali Yaycıoğlu also stressed the effect of Janissary reaction on Ottoman society and different layers of administration to mobilize “the dissident” against the Porte:

“At the center of the opposition against the New Order were the Janissary corps and Janissary affiliates. The Janissary-ship was the empire-wide collective identity. The Janissary corps was more than an army for the state. From the late sixteenth century on, the Corps established a peculiar “contractual” relation with the Sultans, as a corporate military group. While the corps had an autonomous internal hierarchy, jurisdiction and military symbolism, this corporate identity was fertilized by a religio-political orientation, Bektaşizm. From the beginning, the Janissary-ship was connected to the order of Hacı Bektaş, which provided the Janissary with an autonomous religio-political outlook and sense of collective solidarity. This group consciousness, which derived from their distinctive collective identity, had the capacity to mobilize thousands of affiliates of the corps with political agendas that may have been beyond their immediate collective interest but with references to the wellbeing of the general public or

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 308-309.

²⁶⁹ Kemal Beydilli- İlhan Şahin, “Mahmud Raif Efendi”, 66-67., Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “Vaka-yı Selimiyye”, 112.

²⁷⁰ Cemal Kafadar “Yeniçeri-Esnaf Relations: Solidarity and Conflict”, Unpublished M.A. thesis to McGill University, 1981”, 114.

²⁷¹ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “Vaka-yı Selimiyye”, 113.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 115-116.

*protecting the old laws (kanun-u kadim)*²⁷³

According to Yaycıoğlu, the Janissary opposition particularly would be understood within the tradition of the “dissent” towards the central authority and the sultan, because the New Army (the New Order in broader context) threatened to obliterate the Corps.²⁷⁴ In broader context, the explanation of Yaycıoğlu highlighted the effectiveness of “Janissary Cause” as a social phenomenon, which played an umbrella role in terms of uniting different arguments that were based on shared interests of economic, politic and religious affiliations against central authority.²⁷⁵ Therefore, especially after facing with collective resistance of the Janissaries, local power-holders and other elements of society against the New Order in Thracian provinces, the Porte had to defend the New Army (and the New Order) in a relentless legitimisation battle.

Especially between 1792 and 1798, Selim III had paid extra attention to control the public order to prevent the negative reactions towards New Army coming from the lower layers of the society.²⁷⁶ In that sense, influx of wandering and unemployed people to the imperial capital was considered as main threat to the public order. The efforts of Selim III had concentrated on enforcements of law with greater determination- to prevent officers from neglecting their duties-, employing local people for the security of their neighborhood and recognizance system for the outsiders²⁷⁷. Although we do not have a clear idea about the “wanderer” definition of the Porte, the police officers had also been given the task of monitoring the outsiders whose names were noted in recognizance records.²⁷⁸

According to Betül Başaran, during the early reign of Selim III, the majority of trade branches that monitored by the Porte over recognizance records were under the

²⁷³ Ali Yaycıoğlu “*Provincial Challenge*”, 311.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 312. Cemal Kafadar, “Janissaries and Other Rifraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels Without a Cause?” in Baki Tezcan and Karl K. Barbir *Identity and identity formation in the Ottoman World: a volume of essays in honour of Norman Itzkowitz* (Wisconsin: Madison, 2007), 113-134. Mustafa Akdağ, “Yeniçeri Ocağı Nizamının Bozuluşu”, *A. Ü. D. T. C. F. Dergisi*, e. V/3 (Ankara 1947), 295-300.

²⁷⁵ Ali Yaycıoğlu, “*Provincial Challenge*”, 312-314. Cemal Kafadar, “*Yeniçeri-Esnaflar İlişkileri*” 117-188.

²⁷⁶ Betül Başaran, “III. Selim ve İstanbul Şehir Siyaseti, 1789-1792” in Noémi Lévy and Alexandre Toumarkine *Osmanlı’da Asayiş, Suç ve Ceza: 18.-20. Yüzyıllar*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt 2007), 116-135.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 118-120, Cengiz Kırılı, “*The Struggle Over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman İstanbul, 1780-1845*” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, State University of New York, (Binghamton, 2000), 72-82.

²⁷⁸ In order to get the permission to complete bussiness affairs in imperial capital, the outsider were obliged to find themselves a guarantor among townspeople. Betül Başaran, “III. Selim ve İstanbul Şehir Siyaseti, 1789-1792”, 120-125.

control of Janissaries or Janissary affiliations.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, Aysel Danacı Yıldız revealed that in 1793, due to his offensive talks against the New Order in a barbershop, a civilian from Tophane was banished to Rhodes Island. Yet more, in the same year a proprietor of a coffeeshop in vicinity of Ayasoyfa was banished to Tenedos Island, as he was accused of allowing people to gather and spread gossips against the New Order. Other examples of the banishments were a member of 33rd regiment criticized the state policy in a coffeehouse that belonged to a member of 10th regiment (he was also punished since he did not stop him), and a former canon-wagon carrier for similar reasons in the same year.²⁸⁰

These examples clearly demonstrates that the Porte attempted to expand its authority on social life of the imperial capital as the coffeehouses were the most important medium of the Janissaries to influence the public opinion; which put considerable pressure on the New Order grandees and Sultan.²⁸¹ In return, the Porte had sought ways to reply the accusations of the antagonists through treatises, which were designed to defend the legitimacy of the New Order. As these treatises appeared after the public reactions towards enhancement of the New Army, it would be useful to review the process that united the anti New Order elements against the Porte.

The Edirne Incident of 1806

From 1805 onto 1807, the resistance against the New Order had come in to view in Anatolian and Rumelian provinces. In the beginning of the New Order establishment, the Porte had to deal with some hostile rumours and individual reactions. But the expansion process of the New Army united the power-holders, Janissaries and Janissary affiliations against the Porte. Thus, the Edirne Incident of 1806 would be considered as the most serious collective challenge which prepared a base for the alignment of anti New Order elements in the rebellion of 1807.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ According to recognizance defter of November 1792 there are 1110 shops in Eyüp/Topçular district, were monitored and due to designations of the shopowners %40 of them were military-Janissary affiliates. There are 142 records of coffeehouses, 106 rooms of unmarried men (*bekar odaları*), 50 lodges, 46 fodder-sacks (*mutaf dükkani*), 38 barbers and 34 butchers which were on the top of the list. *Ibid.*, 123, 128.

²⁸⁰ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 114-155.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁸² Ali Yayıoğlu, “*Provincial Challenge*”, 318-328. Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 136-164.

Even though there are some noteworthy reactions against New Order like the case of Selimiye Mosque Incident in April 1805 and the revolt of Tayyar Mahmud Paşa in 1804- 1806, the Edirne Incident is the most significant example of popular opposition to the New Order²⁸³. Despite his struggle intensified against his rival, a well-known New Order supporter Cabbarzade Süleyman Bey, Mahmud Tayyar Paşa used the anti New Order propaganda to win the support of public. In that sense, anti New Order propaganda of Mahmud Tayyar Paşa was basically a maneuver against his rival but not the New Order itself. Apart from that, Sultan Selim III's attempt of visiting the Friday Prayer Ceremony in Selimiye Mosque with the New Order soliders as an honor guard, -which was supposedly the traditional role of the Janissaries- caused disturbance among the Janissaries. As escorting the Sultan in Friday prayers was prestigious to the Janissaries', they felt their privilege was violated. In response, they armed themselves and crossed to Üsküdar, and opened fire on the attendants.²⁸⁴

As for the Edirne Incident during the summer 1806, provincial power-holders and the Janissary affiliations in Thracian provinces had the Porte to face with the most serious resistance against the New Order.²⁸⁵ The turmoil in Thracian provinces started after deployment of 24.000 strong New Army forces, which were accompanied by the cavalry units of two great Anatolian families -the Cabbaroğlus (the rival of Mahmud Tayyar Paşa) and the Karaosmanoğlus-, under command of Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa over task of suppressing the rebelling Serbs. However, the real aim of this move can be considered as an attempt of establishing New Army in Rumelia.²⁸⁶

The power-holders and Janissaries as well as local people, did not welcome the New Order establishment in their provinces, as this would mean recruitment of new soldiers, imposition of new taxes and consolidation of the central authority.²⁸⁷ Actually, it was not the first time that the New Army forces were sent to Thracian provinces. Before the Edirne Incident of 1806, the New Army forces under the command of Kadı

²⁸³ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*", 136.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 121-138.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 136. Ali Yayıoğlu, "*Provincial Challenge*", 318.

²⁸⁶ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*", 137-138. Ali Yayıoğlu, "*Provincial Challenge*", 318.

²⁸⁷ Ali Yayıoğlu, "*Provincial Challenge*", 319.

Abdurrahman Paşa fought against the Mountaineer bandits in 1804. During this short campaign, the New Army had won minor victories against the bandits and a New Army unit was permanently stationed in Çorlu as a measure of protection.²⁸⁸ But this time, the attitude of the local elements were rather different as the rumours spread around and claimed that the New Order would eradicate the well being of the Janissaries and their affiliations. Since majority of the residents were among Janissary affiliations in Edirne, establishment of the New Order would mean the diminishing of their privileges. Besides, consolidation of the central authority would curb the control of the power-holders on economical and military sources.²⁸⁹

After the arrival of New Army forces to *Tekfur Dağı* province, agents were sent to districts to encourage the population to enroll as soldier in the New Army. Furthermore, in order to protect the people from possible raids of Mountaineer bandits, agents of the Porte were assigned to deliver the edicts of Selim III which subjected local administrators to built two New Army barracks between Edirne and Istanbul.²⁹⁰ The first reaction came from *Tekfur Dağı* town. Due to his unwillingness and negative attitude towards the New Army presence, the deputy judge (*naib*) of the *Tekfur Dağı* was replaced by the Porte. In response, people from the lower layers of the town had mutinied, and murdered the newly appointed officer. In addition to this, leading figures of town and the local Janissary officers had asked the New Army forces to leave the town, to prevent further disorder.

The New Army forces in *Tekfur Dağı* withdrawn and set up their camps in outskirts of town.²⁹¹ The Porte ordered the New Army to move into *Çorlu* and *Silivri* but the situation in these towns was no different than *Tekfur Dağı*. According to some reports of dragomans, there has been a massive mobilization against the New Army under command of Dağdevirenöğlü, the *ayan* of Edirne. The assemblage of the Rebels consisted of regular and irregular units of several brigand leaders, provincial Janissaries and the forces sent by some other provincial power-holders, including the explicit support of Tirsinikli İsmail Ağa of Rusçuk and İsmail Bey of Serez who had also close ties with the

²⁸⁸ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 137.

²⁸⁹ Ali Yayıoğlu, “*Provincial Challenge*”, 319-320.

²⁹⁰ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 139-140.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 140.

Porte.²⁹² Yet more, it was reported that Tepedelenli Ali Paşa contributed the assemblage with a symbolic force of his men.²⁹³ Furthermore, the British agent in Bucharest claimed that 186 local notables from higher and lower layers of the provincial power hierarchy signed a pact to resist the New Army and to depose Selim III.²⁹⁴

It is not that certain whether if there were a pact or plan of deposing the Sultan. But the turmoil which evolved to the Edirne Incident should be considered more than a mere revolt against the New Army but a civil unrest which united different segments of Thracian society against the Porte. Especially, Dağdevirenöğlü's anti New Order propaganda on townspeople asserted that the New Order would convert them to *reaya* and nothing more than grocery apprentices, appealed the Janissaries and imperial bodyguards that were stationed in Thracian provinces. Thus, while the Porte was dealing with the problems in *Tekfur Dağı* province, the Janissaries with the support of the residents and local power holders, revolted against the New Army in Edirne.²⁹⁵

The incident started with the murder of commander of the imperial bodyguards in Edirne as he was accused of instituting the New Army secretly, under name of "*Bostanî*".²⁹⁶ Later on, the events turned into a rebellion, as the residents protested the New Order and closed their shops. Even, the legitimacy of the Sultan was challenged as his name suspended in Friday Public prayers. According to some rumours, the rebels even expressed their intention of marching to the imperial capital.²⁹⁷

By June 1806, Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa began his march on Rumelia. After repelling the raids of rebel irregulars, he reached to Silivri where he did not face with a serious resistance.²⁹⁸ Threatened by the military superiority of the Paşa, the rebels sought to use new methods of war: Cutting the supplies.

²⁹² Ali Yaycıoğlu, "*Provincial Challenge*", 319.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 320.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*", 141.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 143-144.

The Rebels captured and murdered the purchase agent of the New Army, killed the couriers and seized the treasury which was used for provisioning of the New Army. In response, Abdurrahman Paşa laid siege on town of Babaeski (*Baba-yı Atik*) and defeated the rebels including forces of Dağdevirenöglü on the road of Çorlu. In order to feed the army, he seized the animals and grain supplies of the town. Later, he proceeded to Silivri. Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa intended lay siege on town of *Tekfur Dağı* to reinforce blockade of Rear-Admiral in the sea but he was ordered to retreat to Silivri.

The Porte did not favor the usage brute force against the rebels as any harsh measure would spread the events to the other provinces and risk the existence of the New Order Policy. The negotiations between the Porte and the rebels in Edirne had started. Consequently, the New Army was ordered to return to their stations in Anatolia. Thus, the Porte's attempt of establishing the New Army had failed in Thracian provinces. These developments had forced the Porte to adopt new view of warfare to break the resistance of the society.²⁹⁹

After the events of *Tekfur Dağı*, the Porte initiated a series of propaganda activities which aimed to explain the benefits and legitimacy of the New Army and other reforms in Thracia. More or less, during this time, treatises of *Ubeydullah Kuşmani* and *Koca Sekbanbaşı* emerged as voice of the Porte. The Porte did not enforce the towns that refused to enrollments. Instead, they tried to recruit soldiers from other towns of the region over imposing the idea of maintaining the security and protection of inhabitants against the attacks of the enemy. Moreover, the Porte had not imposed new taxes as the expenditures of the New Army would be covered by the imperial treasury and the recruits would be awarded with food and new clothes. Thus, Selim III aimed to portray a compassionate Sultan image in Thracian provinces.³⁰⁰

Nonetheless, the propaganda of the Porte was not as effective as it was expected. The New Army was officially assigned to fight against Serbian rebels not recruiting new soldiers in Thracian provinces. But, after the arrival of the New Army to Edirne, we

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 157. Ali Yaycıoğlu, “*Provincial Challenge*”, 327.

³⁰⁰ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiye*”, 142, 150-152.

observe that Commander Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa spent more effort on recruiting soldiers, rather than reinforcing Belgrade. Presumably the opposing side was well aware of this controversial situation which would contribute to their success of winning the public.³⁰¹

The weakness of central authority in Thracian provinces was probably another reason behind the decision of the Porte. Hence, the Porte might have felt the need to inform the public about the New Order. Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa's harsh military measures can be considered as another reason of failure of the Porte's policy. Even though he received orders which prohibited usage of brute force, Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa did not hesitate to be involved in skirmishes with Rebels and terrorized the towns of Thracia.³⁰² During this time, Sultan Selim III made some crucial changes on his cabinet including the post of *Şeyhülislam*. Intensive shifting of officials also may indicate that the Sultan did not found proper support from the *Ulema* and officials.³⁰³

According to Ali Yaycıoğlu, the Edirne Incident can be evaluated as the beginning of a larger coalition of provincial elements and New Order antagonists in imperial capital. Cited from the reports of British ambassador in Istanbul, Yaycıoğlu narrated that Janissary affiliates in Istanbul were following the developments of Edirne Incident. Thus, the Porte had to take extra measures to prevent circulation of information and closure of coffeehouses which were considered as gossip nests against the New Order.

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Yet, Yaycıoğlu claims, Selim III mentioned in his orders that a possible defeat of New Army in Rumelia would overthrow the New Order and prestige of his Sultanate.³⁰⁵ This proof clearly indicates opposition against the New Order in Thracian provinces was perceived by the Porte as not mere revolt of provincial elements but an overall challenge to central authority.³⁰⁶ And presumably, the Porte must have sought ways to prevent the expansion of the rebellion, as the empire had already been shaken by the revolts of

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 150-152.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁰³ The need of Ulema support will be discussed in Ubeydullah Kuşmani's *Zebire*.

³⁰⁴ Ali Yaycıoğlu, "Provincial Challenge", 322. Stanford J. Shaw, "Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III. 1789-1807, (Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 345-348.

³⁰⁵ Ali Yaycıoğlu, "Provincial Challenge", 323.

Serbians, Tepedelenli Ali Paşa and the Mamalouks in Egypt.³⁰⁷

For our case, the Edirne Incident of 1806 has crucial importance, since the rebels presumably from this point on, established an argument to legitimize their cause which labels the New Order as an infidel innovation and a violation to order of universe. Same arguments would come into view, in legitimisation process of 1807 rebellion as a tool to depose Selim III and abolish the New Order. As the Porte, probably was aware of this explicit threat to success of the New Order policy and legitimacy of Selim III as a ruler; propaganda activities shall be considered as an effort to silence the reactions by explaining the needs, benefits and religious legitimacy of the New Order. As the authority of the Sultan called into question in the Edirne Incident, theme of “compassionate Sultan” shall be regarded as Selim III’s counter efforts for not being labeled as “oppressor”. Hence, the legitimacy battle over the New Order can be considered as Selim III’s efforts of reclaiming his sultanic legitimacy by adopting the image of “the renovator of the religion and order”. In next parts our discussion will concentrate on this matter.

The Legitimation Issue of the New Order: Mukabele-i B’il-mis’l versus Bid’at³⁰⁸

As mentioned before, from his early rule to Edirne Incident, Sultan Selim III had taken extensive measures to control the public opinion. Especially after the Edirne Incident, the Porte had sought ways to appeal the public by treatises that had been written by opinion leaders among the military and the *Ilmiye* class. According to Kemal Beydilli, the texts which were written on the New Order should be categorized into following types:

1. The works, introducing the New Order to European audience which are namely: *Tableau des Nouveaux Reglements de l’Empire Ottoman* and Seyid Mustafa’s *Dialtribe sur l’etat actuel de l’art militaire, du genie, et des sciences*.
2. The works, defending the New Order, aimed to answer the accusations directed on to New Army; Dihkakanizade Ubeydullah Kuşmanî’s *Zebîre-i Kuşmâni fî Ta’rîf-i Nizâm-ı*

³⁰⁶ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “Vaka-yı Selimiyye”, 153.

³⁰⁷ Ali Yayıoğlu, “Provincial Challenge”, 324.

³⁰⁸ *Mukabele-i B’il-mis’l*: Rule of reprisal. *Bid’at*: an innovation which is considered as irreligious

*İlhâmi*³⁰⁹ and Tokatlı Mustafa Ağa's *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi (Hulasat-ül Kelam Fi Redd-ül Avam)*.

3. The works, criticizing the New Order and discusses the problems on implementations; Ömer Faik's *Nizam'ül Atik Fî Bahri Amîk*³¹⁰
4. The works, written on what should be done regarding the reforms; Mehmed Emin Behic Efendi's *Sevanihü'l-Levayih*³¹¹

Here after, we will focus on treatises which had written to defend the New Order.

Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi is written by a military opinion leader who identifies himself as vastly experienced on art of war. The author claims that, the treatise was written in 1807, when he was at eighty seven. According to Koca Sekbanbaşı, the rapid changes in the world – expressing the military superiority of the European rivals of the Ottoman Empire; particularly Russia- obliged the Sultan to form a new and westernized army as the traditional corps failed to encounter the enemy. As war defined as “treachery” by the Prophet; in order to defend the well being of the Empire, Muslims shall practice the war methods – deceits- of the enemy. Thus, the Sultan had initiated formation of the New Army to protect his domains from the enemy threat.³¹²

The treatise is in four chapters; as the first chapter deals with the establishment of the New Army and the reasons behind it. Second chapter is an analysis of current and past condition of the traditional corps (*asakir-i atika*) while the third chapter is written on explaining the military exercises that the New Army troops were performing; the fourth chapter deal with the issue of the New Treasury. In each part, after creating a list of the accusations that attributed to the New Army, the author aimed to disapprove them. The

³⁰⁹ It is important to underline that *Ilhami* was the alias which Sultan Selim III had used in his poems. *Nizam-ı İlhami* (The Order of Clairvoyant) might be used to express the Selim III's inspirational qualities as he was depicted as “renovator of the religion” by the author. Ömer İşbilir, “*Nizam-ı Cedide Dair Bir Risale: Zebire-i Kuşmani fî Ta'rif-i Nizam-ı İlhami.* / Dihkenizade Ubeydullah Kuşmani ;ed. Ömer İşbilir. (Ankara: TTK 2006), XII, 1-12.

³¹⁰ The work of Ömer Faik asserts that the Porte should pay extra attention to members of İlmiye; which indicates there is a growing tension between the New Order Grandees and some members of İlmiye. Ömer Faik, “*Nizam'ül Atik*” ed. Ahmet Sarıkaya, Unpublished thesis, Istanbul University, (Istanbul, 1979)

³¹¹ Kemal Beydilli-Şahin, “*Mahmud Raif Efendi*”, 1-2, Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 164.

³¹² “*Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*” ed. Abdullah Uçman. Tercüman 1001 temel eser ; 72, (İstanbul: Tercüman Gazetesi), 45.

author narrated testimonies of notable figures amongst the military, his own experiences and anecdotes to explain the necessity of New Army establishment. Considering the simple language of the treatise, presumably the author addressed the Janissaries and their affiliations from low layers as an audience.³¹³

On the other hand *Zebîre* was written by a well-educated *Ulema* grandee of a Naqshibendi-Mujadiddi background, Ubeydullah Kuşmani, by request of Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa. As far as we know, Kuşmani who identifies himself as a wandering “dervish”, probably from the Blacksea or Caucasian provinces, that witnessed reign of Sultan Selim III, Mustafa IV and Mahmud II. He was a famous and sharp-tongued supporter of the New Order as he constantly preached against the Janissaries in mosques.³¹⁴ After the fall of Selim III Kethüda Sait Efendi states that, he participated in secret meetings which regarded the re-establishment of trained soldiers. Even after the *Sekban-ı Cedid* establishment of Alemdar Mustafa Paşa which ended with another Janissary revolt, he was aggressively criticizing the Janissaries in his public preaches. As a result of his negative attitude, in one night of Ramadan he was attacked by *odabaşı* of 7th regiment.³¹⁵ Soon after, presumably due to his opposition to the Janissaries and Janissary affiliates in the government, he was banished for a short time in 1808.³¹⁶

Ubeydullah Kuşmani followed the same pattern as Koca Sekbanbaşı used in his treatise. In each part of the treatise, the author listed the accusations that thrown the New Order and aimed to justify the efforts of the Porte by referring to hadiths of Prophet Mohammed and verses of Quran.³¹⁷ He based his arguments on “rule of reprisal”.³¹⁸ Referring to the hadith which defined the war as “treachery”, Muslims were obliged to use the weapons of infidel enemy. Thus, Ubeydullah Kuşmani considers “the New Army” as a

³¹³ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 167.

³¹⁴ Ubeydullah Kuşmani, “*Zebire-i Kuşmani Fi Ta’rif-i Nizam-ı İlhamî*” ed. Ömer İşbilir, (Ankara: TTK 2006)

³¹⁵ Ubeydullah Kuşmani-Ebubekir Efendi, “*Asiler ve Gaziler: Kabakçı Mustafa Risalesi*” ed. Aysel Yıldız Danacı, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007), 16-17.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

³¹⁷ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 174-175.

³¹⁸ According to Tobias Heinzelmann; rule of reprisal/ *Mukabele-i B’il-mis’l* was firstly mentioned by Koca Sekbanbaşı. He refers it as a notion which created legitimate basis for establishment of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, after abolishment of Janissaries. Moreover he reveals that *Şanizade Efendi*—official palace historian in the early of Mahmud II—in one part mentions about the discussions of *Ulema* members on “rule of reprisal” around 1807-1808, shortly before the rebellion. Presumably by that time, there is not a consensus among members of *Ulema* regarding the religious validity of the New Army. Tobias Heinzelmann, “*Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Genel Askerlik*

necessity to prevail over the enemy in Holy War. The explicit religious content and sophisticated language of treatise indicate that, *Zebire* was presumably addressed to the *Ilmiye* members, particularly high rank members of the Ulema hierarchy. By that time, the Porte must have felt the need of *Ulema* support to win the public. Hence, Ubeydullah Kuşmani was employed to create religious legitimisation basis for the New Order.

The treatise of Kuşmani, constituted of an introduction, two articles and a conclusion which was written in a sermon-type.³¹⁹ The introduction of *Zebire* starts with the succession of Selim III to throne. In this part, the author developed a religio-intellectual argument which positioned Selim III as “renovator of religion and faith” that sent by God to restore the order of the Islam. In the first article, the author commented on accusations which were attributed to the uniforms and instruments of the New Army.³²⁰ The second article is more like a moral preach which Kuşmani, relentlessly criticized opposition to the New Order, and the Janissary affiliations over their Bektashi identity.³²¹ In the conclusion, the author supported his main argument by referring to religious scholars.³²² In next part, to understand the legitimisation arguments which were built by the Porte we will to discuss the content of the treatises of Koca Sekbanbaşı and Ubeydullah Kuşmani.

Treatise of Koca Sekbanbaşı

In the beginning of his treatise, Koca Sekbanbaşı underlines the Sultan’s duty of protecting his domains against the attacks of infidel enemies and presents an atmosphere of fear which is related to the evil designs of the enemy. Thus, the author states that a ruler must be cautious and the army must be prepared for the maneuvers of the enemy. As a result of being unprepared, the Ottoman army had suffered continuous defeats in the hands Russians since 1768.³²³ In this atmosphere of fear and threat, due to their unwillingness to perform military trainings and their involvement in commerce, the Janissaries are unable to

Yükümlülüğü 1826-1845” trn. Türkis Noyan. (Istanbul: Kitap 2009) 34-35.

³¹⁹ Ömer İşbilir, “*Zebire*”, XI.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, XV-XVI.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, XVII.

³²² *Ibid.*, XVII.

³²³ Koca Sekbanbaşı, “*Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*”, 29-31. Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiye*”, 165-167.

encounter the enemy.³²⁴

In order to emphasise the ineffectiveness of the Janissaries, the author blames the non-military elements within the structure of the corps. Even though the Sultan had initiated the New Army to have well-disciplined and stationary troops, those grocers, boatmen, porters, fishermen etc, who had no proper military knowledge criticize the Sultan and newly formed army in coffeehouses and barber shops. The author indicates the negative attitude of the Janissaries towards the New Army as a violation of the state order. He refers to strict measures of Süleyman I, as he cut the tongues of the antagonists who spoke against him in coffeehouses. To him, opposing to the New Army is a “wrongdoing” and “refusing the will of God”.³²⁵

By giving such example, Koca Sekbanbaşı criticizes the “order” of the Janissary corps. Thus, he emphasises, the New Army establishment as a necessity that would solve the problem of disciplined troops. Probably, the author must be aware of the antagonist arguments which praised success of the Janissaries in the Golden Age. In that sense, the example of Suleyman I presumably aimed to underline the discipline issue.³²⁶

From this point on to the second chapter, the author provided answers for the critiques of the New Army. First issue is if the New Army violated the order of the universe. According to this assertion, as the New Army violated the order, the Mountaineer bandits have appeared as a divine punishment.³²⁷ To answer, Koca Sekbanbaşı claims that such problems would emerge if there is no regular, well-disciplined and stationary military force.³²⁸ After this part, Koca Sekbanbaşı concentrates on the Russian threat and underlines the defensive weaknesses of the Imperial capital. As it was cited by the Prophet a ruler is entrusted with a task of protecting his domains from the evil designs of the infidels. To Koca Sekbanbaşı, by establishing the New Army Sultan Selim III had fulfilled his task as a ruler. In addition, he signifies each the New Army regiment had accompanied with an

³²⁴ Koca Sekbanbaşı, “*Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*”31-32

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 30-33.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 37-39.

imam as they are soldiers of Islam.³²⁹

In the next part, Koca Sekbanbaşı answers; whether if there is a need to the New Army as the Ottoman army conquered the Christian lands by sword.³³⁰ In response, the author answers the issue over the establishment of Janissary Corps: After series of defeats, Sultan Süleyman I formed Janissary corps as it was necessary for the state to have trained and well-disciplined army. The Janissaries were subjected to regular military training like the New Army troops and issued with new uniforms and military weapons. Thus, the Janissaries became successful in the battlefield. Consequently, overwhelmed by the Ottoman military superiority, the European rivals of the empire had new methods of war and effective artillery corps to prevail in the battlefield.³³¹

According to Y. Hakan Erdem, a man of knowledge and experience like Koca Sekbanbaşı probably knew that the Janissary corps was not established by Sultan Suleyman I.³³² Mert Sunar argued that ordinary Janissaries of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century considered sultan Suleyman I as a founder of their corps.³³³ As it was cited by Aysel Danacı-Yıldız, presumably Koca Sekbanbaşı aimed to demonstrate even a great Sultan could be defeated if he did not have a regular and well-disciplined army.³³⁴

Up to this point, Koca Sekbanbaşı illustrated an atmosphere of fear. He summarized the problems of the Janissary corps: The first problem is the non military elements within the corps. Second problem is the soldiers' unwillingness of performing military exercises. Third problem is their poor performance in the battlefield. Furthermore, they have opposed to the order of their ruler. And, in order to defend the New Order, he develops an argument which positions Selim III as a "renovator of the order" and the New Army as a precaution against the evil designs of the enemy. In

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 41-43.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 46-47. Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye", 166.

³³² Aysel Yıldız Danacı, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye", 66-167. Y.Hakan Erdem "Wise Old Man, Propagandist and Ideologist: Kodja Sekbanbashi on the Janissaries,1807" in "Individual, Ideologies and Society: Tracing the Mosaic of Mediterranean History" ed. Kirsi Virtanen, (Finland: University of Tampere, 2001), 154-177.

³³³ Mert Sunar, "Cauldron of Dissent: A Study Of The Janissary Corps, 1807- 1826", Unpublished PhD dissertation to Binghamton University, (SUNY, 2006), 35-40.

³³⁴ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye", 167.

In the next part, the author signifies that, defeated by the Ottomans, European kings had withdrawn their soldiers from commercial life and subjected them to regular military exercises. Thus, they raised an army consisted of effective artillery corps and gunmen. As the Janissaries lacked the discipline and military capability of the infidel enemy, they had been defeated in the battlefield. They arrogantly claim that the enemy would be defeated by the sword. But in the military campaigns, they create unrest in army camp for their wages and rations (*tayın*) and deserted the battlefield in military encounters. Moreover, Koca Sekbanbaşı accuses them for looting Muslims and *Reaya*, insulting women and disobeying the orders of the Sultan. Disobedience of the Janissaries stated by author as a reason of Russian expedition of Crimea as well as loses of other strategic frontiers in Danube.³³⁵

During the sultanate of Selim III, the loss of Crimea, a Muslim province by population, had caused major trauma in Ottoman society. By expressing such manner, Koca Sekbanbaşı offers an alternative reasoning, regarding the loss of Crimea that justifies the Sultan for being incapable of defending the Muslim provinces against. Thus, Selim III appears as a proper ruler who is having the necessary measures for the well being of his empire whose success undermined by the reaction of the Janissaries. Yet, he even argues if this attitude of the Janissaries is treason to religion and state.³³⁶

Furthermore, he pays attention to battle skills of the New Army troops which was also praised by the Janissaries.³³⁷ The most significant example for this issue is the confession of Cezzar Ahmed Paşa who impressed by success of New Army troops against the French in Egypt and Alexandria. According to author, the Paşa himself admitted that he did not approve the New Army establishment until he saw its success against the French.³³⁸ After this part, particular examples regarding clumsiness of the Janissaries in the battlefield were listed by the author. Yet more, he also claims that a single trained troop of the enemy

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 49-52.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

is equal to a hundred of Janissaries.³³⁹

The second chapter of the treatise aimed to explain the organization of the New Army. Koca Sekbanbaşı praises the discipline of New Army troops that is related to the new training programme which the Janissaries called “the infidel innovation”. The discipline issue, in the second chapter associated with the organization of the New Army. The author defends the military training methods, regimental formation, musical instruments and the uniforms of the New Army.³⁴⁰ He comments on the issue of the privileges and payrolls of the Janissaries.³⁴¹ According to the author, the New Army would not obliterate the Janissary corps. These are just “useless doubts” of the Janissaries.³⁴² Apart from that, in the end of the second chapter; he narrates a dialogue regarding a discussion between him and a notable among Janissaries:

Koca Sekbanbaşı asks what should be done to defeat the enemy. The answer he received is, as the Janissaries are truly qualified soldiers, there should be re-enrollment to dismiss the Persians, Turcoman and Kurdish thieves and other converts among the corps. The new recruits should be trained with sword as it is a weapon of a true soldier. Koca Sekbanbaşı claims that it is not possible to complete such re-enrollment even in one hundred and fifty years. In addition, he claims that there is no need to re-enroll the Janissary corps as the Sultan had already enrolled new troops that perform military practices with cannons and guns. Thus, the answer of Koca Sekbanbaşı convinces the Janissary notable. The notable says, if the Janissaries would obey the order of Sultan (which subjects them to perform regular military exercises) there would be no need to the New Army.³⁴³ Even though, Koca Sekbanbaşı refuses the idea that the New Army is not an attempt to replace Janissary corps; this dialog implicitly positions the New Army as an alternative of the latter.

For the issues of military uniforms and organization of the New Army, the author signifies the stationary functions of the New Army. The uniforms would prevent desertion

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 56-78.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 62.

and intrudes of enemy spies.³⁴⁴ He asserts that even if a soldier in uniform deserts his station, his officers would easily notice him outside the camp.³⁴⁵ Furthermore, on issue of instruments and banners; he explains the formation of New Army regiments and their organization in army camp. He underlines that the uniforms and regimental system of the New Army was key of their success against Mountaineers.³⁴⁶ These examples clearly demonstrate that, Koca Sekbanbaşı's approach stressed organizational functions of the New Army to silence the reactions of the Janissaries.³⁴⁷

As for the weapon issue, he narrates a story about *Ali* the Great Imam, who was outmaneuvered by his infidel enemy who brought more man and equipped with extra weapons. In the end, Ali uses the weapons of his enemy for not to be defeated.³⁴⁸ Consequently, this story refers to religious legitimacy of using the weapons of infidel enemy. Another issue which Koca Sekbanbaşı mentioned is the taxes on alcoholic beverages (*zecriye*). The author narrates comments of a certain Janissary who was assigned as "collector of taxes on alcoholic beverages" with a respectable salary.³⁴⁹ The third part of the treatise deals with the methods of military training which New Army Troops subjected to perform regularly. In the third chapter, Koca Sekbanbaşı admires Russian military superiority³⁵⁰ and once more comments on the case of spies.³⁵¹ He relies on his personal experiences on his captivity and gives brief information about modernization of Russian army.³⁵² Thus, he may have aimed to draw attention of reader to necessity of technical borrowings from Europe.³⁵³ The last chapter of the treatise is about the New Treasury and its functions.³⁵⁴ A striking comment of the author expresses the complex structure of the New Treasury. According to him, it is not possible to explain what the New Treasury is to those who do not know how to read and write. However, he tries to explain the purpose

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 65-68.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67-68, 71-75.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 79-80.

³⁵³ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye", 167.

³⁵⁴ Koca Sekbanbaşı, "Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi", 90-96.

and the structure of the New Treasury over giving examples from the golden era by referring to regulations on the treasury of the greatest Sultan Suleiman I.³⁵⁵

To conclude, treatise of Koca Sekbanbaşı offers insights of an old and wise member of the Janissary corps regarding the New Order regulations, to his “comrades”. The weaknesses of the Janissary corps, evil designs of the enemy, and effectiveness of the New Army on the battlefield constituted the content of the text. Apart from that, the treatise could be considered as a text to be read on public spaces like coffeehouses as anecdotes and stories would seem to be designed for the audience from lower layers of Ottoman society. Even the author himself, gives clues about his “audience” as he frequently mentioned their lack of knowledge and ignorance –typical palace centered view- while explaining the issues.

The Janissaries were depicted as a manipulated and misinformed group as the corps is full of incapable people and non-military elements. However, it is not clear who or what manipulated or misinformed the Janissaries. On the other hand, Selim III is portrayed as compassionate, determined and a capable ruler who had taken necessary military measures to protect his domains from the attacks of the infidel enemy. Apart from their religious affiliations, Koca Sekbanbaşı criticizes anything related to the Janissary corps. This is very important, since the author does not focus on religion as a primary source of legitimacy. Ubeydullah Kuşmani, on that other hand, addressed a different audience with a more sophisticated religio-intellectual argument.

Tretise of Ubeydullah Kuşmani

Kuşmani’s *Zebire* starts with the definition of New Order. According to the author; the New Order is “the arrangements blessed by God” (*tertibât-ı nusret-medâr*) and “regulations of upcoming glories” (*tanzîmât-ı fütûhat-intizâr*) for protecting the Islam. (*hamiyet-i islamiye ve gayret-i imaniyye*). In the introduction, the author declares his aim of writing his treatise which is silencing those who spoke against New Order and help the

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 89-91.

expansion of the New Army establishment.³⁵⁶ Kuşmani's New Order defence, based on a pattern which illustrates Selim III as a renovator of religion (*müceddid*) who is sent by God to restore the order of universe. The author underlines ineffectiveness of the Janissaries in the battlefield which was considered as a result of wrongdoings of their superior officers. In addition to, he describes the corps as morally and substantively exhausted. In this pattern, he as war is defined as a "treachery", the Janissaries had been outmanoeuvred in the battlefield by deceit methods of the infidel enemies.³⁵⁷ Indeed, well-organized and disciplined army of the infidels could not be repelled by the Janissaries that refuse to exercise the military methods of enemy. Hence, as "rule of reprisal" obliges, Sultan Selim III, had decided to found a new and western style army with the approval of the high rank members of *Ulema* for the sake of the Islam world and to have vengeance for former defeats. As pattern of Kuşmani positions the Sultan as the chief imam, all of the Muslims should obey his grand order (*ul-ül'emr*) to prevail against infidels in Holy War (*cihad*).³⁵⁸

To put it briefly, by positioning the New Order as a religious duty, which was expressed by the Prophet over "rule of reprisal" and the Sultan as a renovator of religion, Kuşmani provides a legitimate religious basis for the policies of the Porte. Thus, in religious context, his interpretation allows him to label any opposition to the New Order as blasphemy.

The key issues which the author deals with in the introduction are:

- The legitimacy of Selim III as a ruler and provides religious validity to his efforts.
- The Janissaries' ineffectiveness to meet the military expectations of the State.
- The necessity of obeying the order of the Sultan and the condition of high-rank members of *Ulema*.³⁵⁹

Kuşmani heavily criticises the antagonists by describing them as "numbs" who question the grand order of their Sultan. According to him, as was cited by the Prophet, the

³⁵⁶ Ubeydullah Kuşmani, "*Zebire*", önsöz 4-9.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

subjects must be patient with the orders of their ruler.³⁶⁰ Even though, he admits that the New Army is formed in a western style, he rejects accusations of the antagonists which labelled it as an infidel innovation. He reveals the aim of the New Army, which was to defeat the infidel enemy as commanded by God.³⁶¹ He depicts the antagonists as “pseudo-soldiers” that were ignorant, arrogant and lazy vagrants who deserted their stations doing nothing but getting drunk in taverns. He continues, as their hearts were full of sedition and wrongdoing, they had followed the path of liars. Thus, by opposing the New Order, they were rejecting the will of God and should have been put to death as they were no different from infidels.³⁶²

Kuşmani adapted very supercilious attitude towards the Janissaries and frequently condemns them. According to him, the real threat to religion and the state were the Janissary corps that embodied vile people from lower layers.³⁶³ Furthermore, Kuşmani directs his accusations against members of the *Ulema* and officials that opposed to the New Order³⁶⁴ He attempts to disprove the counterclaim of the antagonists which refers to the elderly scholars of Islam. According to that claim, as there was no solid example of approving any such initiative in decisions of the elderly scholars; the New Order is religiously invalid. In order to reply, Kuşmani directly refers to the Quran and describes those scholars as being incapable.³⁶⁵ He advised wise members of the *Ulema* to stand for the Sultan and support the New Order through informing the people in public speeches. To support his claim, he refers to the “punishment of people of Lot”; to emphasise his point that the victory of a Holy War requires more than devotion to daily religious duties.³⁶⁶

At this point one wonders whether the pattern of Kuşmani was designed to appeal to the members of the *Ulema*. The religious content of the treatise clearly signifies that the Porte might have aimed to address Sunni-Orthodox affiliations within Ottoman society. Considering the Porte’s efforts to win the public’s approval by explaining the benefits of

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-23.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-6, 10.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7-10.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 12-14.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12-15.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 16-18.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

the New Order by the Edirne Incident of 1806, and by seeking support of the *Ulema*, the Porte might have aimed to enhance its influence on layers of Ottoman society that were under effect of anti-New Order propaganda. Nevertheless, proving such a claim requires focusing on the network of relations of the high ranking *Ulema* and the officials in the provinces. What is certain is that the Porte addressed the treatise of Kuşmani to members of *Ilmiye*.

In the first part, Kuşmani, deals with the religious validity of the establishment the New Army, their uniforms and instruments. In the beginning of this part, Kuşmani responds to the accusations of the antagonists who considered the New Army as unholy (*pîrsiz*). According to that claim, unlike the New Army the Janissary corps were blessed by the patron saint (*pîr*) Hacı Bektaş Veli. Moreover, they portrayed the troops as being “unbelievers” as they dressed in the uniforms of the *Franks*, performed infidel military methods and used infidel instruments.³⁶⁷ Kuşmani refers to these accusations as proof of ignorance. He asserts that *tranpete* is equal to the instruments which had been used by Arabs and Persians in war.³⁶⁸ As for the uniform issue, he describes the uniforms of the New Army as the clothes of proper soldiers which presumably points out the non military elements among the Janissaries. He adds, if proper clothing was a requirement of being a proper soldier it should have been possible to raise five million soldiers in the imperial capital.³⁶⁹ Therefore, being a proper soldier depended on adjusting to training and warfare methods which the New Army troops were performing.³⁷⁰

In the last part, the author focuses on education (*maarif*) and discipline (*terbiye*) of the New Army troops which were represented as key issues of having a successful standing army.³⁷¹ Apart from that, Kuşmani tries to invalidate the Janissary belief which considered Hacı Bektaş Veli as founder of the corps.³⁷² Moreover, he argues that the Janissaries should not be considered as followers of Hacı Bektaş Veli as they lacked proper

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 33-70.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 33, 40-41.

faith³⁷³ and condemns them as being “heathens” by expressing their extreme care for their cauldrons.³⁷⁴

To conclude, the assertions of Kuşmani to defend the New Army were principally based on disproving the Janissary claims that illustrated the New Army as “*bid’at*”. In order to support his interpretations, Kuşmani frequently attacks on moral corruption grounds of the Janissary corps by labelling them as plunderers, deserters and in a broader context as “heathens”. The following example clearly demonstrates his point of view that refers to a Quranic verse:

*“Those of you and what you worshipped are the combustibles of hell”*³⁷⁵

In addition to this, he expresses the State’s need for educated and disciplined soldiers, which was illustrated as a religious obligation, in a Holy War against infidels. He narrated the reactions of the *Sekbans* when the Janissary corps was founded to emphasise the righteousness of the New Order policies.³⁷⁶ Thus, he concludes the New Army establishment was a necessity for the sake of the Empire which is another episode of the restoration of the order after the establishment of the Janissary corps. According to Kuşmani, over time war methods change, the glorious days of the Janissary corps had ended. Even if the Janissaries had been given the “sword of God” (*Zülfikar*), they would not have been able to prevail over the enemy.³⁷⁷

The author mentions the necessary changes which should have been made to restore the order, he praises the leadership of the Sultan who anticipated the needs for the protection of Muslims. According to this claim, the order of the universe was violated, as the previous rulers had neglected enemy threat. Hence, the Janissaries became useless lacking proper training and discipline.³⁷⁸ In that manner, the anticipation of Selim III is represented as a necessity to renovate the order. As they were well trained, the New Army troops performed with devotion for the belief that they had been successful against the

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-44, 60.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

French in Egypt.³⁷⁹

As France was considered the most dominant military power of the Europe, the author evaluates the modesty of the French troops as a key to their success; which would also be an implicit criticism towards the undisciplined Janissaries. This comparison between the French and the New Army leads us to conclude that by having proper military training, the New Army troops were able to be successful in defending the Muslims. In the end, he accepts Selim III's efforts to obligate a religious duty in war, as was approved by the high-ranking members of the *Ulema* hierarchy.³⁸⁰ Thus, Selim III is praised and the Sultan's legitimacy and capability as a ruler is reiterated by the author.³⁸¹

The last part deals with the issue of moral corruption. The author condemns the Janissaries' habits of drinking coffee, smoking tobacco and using narcotics.³⁸² This point clearly indicates that Kuşmani's disapproval of the Janissary claims he relied on exposure of irreligious actions of the antagonists. In that sense, the Bektashi identity of the Janissaries probably provided Kuşmani with a proper basis to develop an argument which would turn the Sunni-Orthodox affiliations of the Empire against them. Kuşmani's objective was to bring light on the Bektashi affiliations of the Janissaries which would be considered a means of disproving the accusations which labelled the New Order as "*bi'dat*". Obviously in *Zebire*, Kuşmani developed an intellectual-religious basis for the New Order policy of the Porte which needed the support of higher and lower layers of the Ottoman society.

To conclude, it is obvious that the propaganda efforts of the Porte concentrated on two topics: The first topic is to explain the benefits and necessity of the New Order regulations to the lower layers of the military. For this purpose, Koca Sekbanbaşı was employed to write a text which targeted the Janissaries and Janissary affiliations through the interpretations of a respectable figure among them. In order to emphasise the continuity between *Zebire* of Ubeydullah Kuşmani, and the texts which were written for the purpose

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 48 .

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 49- 50.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 52-56.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

of legitimising the abolishment of the Janissaries, it is necessary to focus on the analysis of *Fezleke-i Kuşmani* to analyse the author's view of the 1807 rebellion.

Fezleke-i Nasihat-ı Kuşmânî: Creation of Enemy of State and Religion: Rebellion of 1807

Between late May and June of 1807, the imperial capital had witnessed a popular uprising which resulted in the dethronement of Selim III and fall of the New Order. In four days, the protests of *yamaks* who were stationed in the citadels of the Bosphorus turned into a popular Janissary rebellion. Leading up to the outbreak of the rebellion, two important topics occupied the political agenda of the Porte; namely, the 1806-1807 Russo-Ottoman war, and the British Expedition of Dardanelles that terrorised imperial capital in 1807.³⁸³

The Russo-Ottoman war of 1806 started with the Russian invasion of Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. During the heyday of Edirne Incident, the Porte announced the deposition of *hospodars* of Wallachia and Moldavia, without the approval of Russia, for being collaborated with rebels in Edirne and Serbia. As the deposed *hospodars* were appointed to their posts with common agreement of Russia and Ottoman Empire, the decision of the Porte was protested harshly against by the Russia, and later by England. The importance of the Russo-Ottoman war of 1806 for our study is due to the success of Alemdar Mustafa Ağa the *ayan* of Rusçuk, on Danubian front, who would elevate Mahmud II to the Ottoman throne in 1808. He had appeared as a new performer in the Ottoman history. During the 1806-1807 war, a former Janissary Alemdar Mustafa Ağa had become the most powerful notable of Rumelia, as a result of the elimination of Pazvantoğlu and Tirsinikli İsmail Efendi, and was given the rank of "Pasha" for his success against Russians.³⁸⁴

On the other hand, the Porte's declaration of war on Russia was a total disappointment for Great Britain as they considered this move as an outcome of French

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 62-69.

³⁸³ Ali Yaycıoğlu "Provincial Challenge", 360.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 352-353.

influence. Moreover, as a possible aggression with the Ottoman Empire would threaten the security of the trade route to India, British foreign policy was based on providing the neutrality in the Ottoman Empire.³⁸⁵ Nevertheless, after the declaration of war, diplomatic protest of the British ambassador turned into a political crisis which resulted in a naval expedition in the Dardanelles. In February 1807, a British fleet under command of Admiral Duckworth passed the Dardanelles and anchored close to the Prince Islands in the Bosphorus.³⁸⁶ The British threat created tremendous anxiety and panic in the imperial capital. After ten days of negotiations with British commander and ambassador, the British fleet left the imperial capital without any military conflict.³⁸⁷ The tension which struck the imperial capital for ten days and massive mobilisation of inhabitants created a conditions for the coming rebellion in May. During the mobilisation of the Janissaries and mariners (*kalyoncus*) the conflicts among different Army units had become apparent. It is also the reason why the *yamaks* from the Black Sea were brought to citadels of the Bosphorus to reinforce the defence of the city.³⁸⁸ The rebellion of 1807 shall be interpreted as culmination of anti-New Order movement which had challenged the Porte in Tayyar Mahmud Paşa revolt and in the Edirne Incident before.³⁸⁹

Turmoil had started with a protest by the *yamaks* who were deployed in Rumeli Feneri Citadel. Presumably, presence of the New Army troops in citadels on the Bosphorus should be considered as the main cause of *yamak* disturbance which was also echoed in rumours as they were forced by their superiors to wear New Army uniforms.³⁹⁰ The majority of the contemporary sources claim that, the uniform issue was the main reason of the rebellion. However, there is no solid evidence to support this claim. What is certain is that during the British naval expedition, some of the New Army troops had been deployed together with the *yamaks* at the forts on the Bosphorus, Istanbul. According to Aysel Danacı, Selim III had issued an order to move the New Army troops back to their barracks in Levend Çiftliği to prevent a possible dispute.³⁹¹ Apparently, presence of the New Order

³⁸⁵ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 268.

³⁸⁶ Ali Yaycıoğlu, “*Provincial Challenge*”, 353.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 354-355.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 356.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 360.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 364.

³⁹¹ Aysel Danacı Yıldız, “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 348.

troops in the citadels was interpreted by the *yamaks* as an rising attempt of transforming them into the New Army troops.

The *yamaks* at Rumeli Hisarı Citadel who expressed their opposition to become New Army soldiers were summoned by their officers to a meeting on 25th of May 1807. During the meeting, some disputes turned into a gunfight and a certain Hasan Haseki, an artillery officer, was murdered by *yamaks*; this triggered the rebellion.³⁹² Later on, united with their comrades in the other citadels, *yamaks* murdered an intendant of the Bosphorus, Mahmud Raif Efendi, a notable of the New Order grandee along with his servant. The news of the murder of Mahmud Raif Efendi reached the city by late afternoon which caused the anxiety of the Ottoman officials.³⁹³

On the second day of the rebellion, prominent figures of the Ottoman administration such as Kaymakam of Istanbul; Köse Musa Paşa, Kethüda Nesim Efendi, as well as certain representatives of the Janissary corps gathered to discuss measures to prevent a proliferation of the rebellion as rumours circulating among inhabitants claimed that the *yamaks* intended to march into the city. Even though they decided to dispatch delegates to the rebels, this attempt failed as the members of the delegates presumably hesitated to go the rebel camp.³⁹⁴

The *yamaks* who organised themselves in their camp in Büyükdere started their march which would take three days to the imperial city by following the route of the Bosphorus shore. In their camp, they elected Kabakçioğlu Mustafa Çavuş as their spokesman, and took an oath of putting an end to the New Order desecration and not harming the public. Since they needed the support of the inhabitants of Istanbul, they were cautious about the discipline of the group. During their march, they unfurled their banners and invited Muslims to join their cause. They assured the security of the inhabitants as they were not plunderers and thieves; they wanted to punish those who violated the order. They expressed their ultimate aim of abolishing the New Order. Moreover they also encouraged

³⁹² Ali Yaycıoğlu, “*Provincial Challenge*”, 364.

³⁹³ Ayşe Danacı Yıldız “*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*”, 355-362.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 368-371.

the inhabitants to open their shops and go about with their daily routine.³⁹⁵ The rebels paused around Ortaköy to ensure the support of the artillerymen that were deployed in Tophane. They sent a delegation to the artillerymen to convince them to join their cause. After the negotiations between two groups, the artillerymen decided to join the *yamaks*.

On May 27, the crowd reached Istanbul where they gathered at Et Meydanı. At this stage, people from the different elements of the imperial capital and different corps of the army had merged with the *yamaks* who were seeking to gain the support of the Janissaries. The rebels sent their representatives to commercial districts of the imperial capital to invite Muslims to join their cause and advised non-Muslims to continue daily trade. Besides they purchased weapons and then made their way to Divan Yolu; the traditional rebel route to Et Meydanı.³⁹⁶ While in the commercial districts, some of their men were punished for disobeying the discipline issue.³⁹⁷ Later on, the crowd gained access to Et Meydanı where they merged with the Janissaries. The protest of *yamaks* turned into a massive pro-Janissary rebellion.³⁹⁸ Meanwhile, ruling elites were discussing the measures needed against the rebels. Although there were some suggestions of using the New Order troops against the rebels, the elites finally agreed on dispatching a delegate of *Ulema* to ask the rebels terms.³⁹⁹

On the fourth day, the rebels were visited by the delegation of *Ulema*; Şeyülislam Ataullah Efendi, *Anadolu Kadiaskeri* Efendizade Hafid Efendi, *Rumeli Kazaskeri* Ahmed Muhtar Efendi and *Istanbul Kadısı* Muradzâde Mehmet Murat Efendi.⁴⁰⁰ This meeting should be regarded as preparation of the execution list. The rebels accompanied the members of the delegation with a great respect, since the legitimacy of their cause was dependent on the approval of the *Ulema*.⁴⁰¹ Soon after, the *Ulema* delegates and the rebels agreed on the execution of eleven names and the list was submitted to Sultan Selim III.⁴⁰² During the day, most of the officials were either murdered or exiled. The New Army was

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 363-367, 373.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 377.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 377-78.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 378-79.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 379-38.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 386.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 399.

annulled and the property of the New Order grandees confiscated.⁴⁰³

On the final day of the rebellion, the most radical decision of the rebels was realised; the dethronement of the Selim III. The deposition fatwa of the Şeyülislam Ataullah Efendi declared Selim III as an unjust ruler who oppressed his own subjects.⁴⁰⁴ Thus, the rebels legitimised their cause as the fatwa of Şeyhülislam basically declared them as extinguishers of the unjust order of Selim III. The main stage of the rebellion of 1807 ended with the enthronement ceremony of Sultan Mustafa IV on May 30, of 1807. However, the internal strife in the Ottoman Empire would continue since the new government immediately failed to establish its authority in the imperial capital and in the provinces.

The rebellion of 1807 can be evaluated within the context of internal power strife between different power groups that competed for power within the establishment of the Ottoman administration. The pretext of decisions, which provided legality and religious legitimacy to the rebellion of 1807, were based on moral corruptions of the New Order grandees and the Sultan's oppression to his own subjects through establishing infidel innovations. Although there is no consensus between the contemporary sources on reasons and righteousness of the rebellion, the majority of sources agree on the New Order Grandees' lavish and corrupt image which assumedly helped the rebels to gain support of the public.⁴⁰⁵ The rebels organised themselves in a collective manner and decisions were made after much deliberation. Their prudence to maintain the peace and order in the city was one the key elements of winning the public.

In the first and second chapters, this study focuses on case analysis of the rebellions in contemporary sources to demonstrate the view of the authors and roles which had been attributed to the elements of the events, namely: the sultan, the rebels, the *Ulema*, the administration, and the artisans. The basic reasons for the rebellions of 1703, 1730 and 1807 were different. However, there were similar circumstances, such as: opposition to a

⁴⁰³ Ali Yaycıoğlu, "*Provincial Challenge*", 371.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Aysel Danacı Yıldız, "*Vaka-yı Selimiyye*", 415-416.

⁴⁰⁵ Ali Yaycıoğlu, "*Provincial Challenge*", 362.

certain leading figure or institution which unites different elements of society under same cause - the catalyst of this unification or realignment is the Janissary corps -, seeking legitimisation over a claim of restoring the order by deposing the unjust Sultan who oppresses his subjects.⁴⁰⁶

At this point, it would be necessary to emphasise that the continuity between the textual arguments from 1703 to 1826 differ after 1807. Since the abolishment of the Janissaries also brought closure to the Bektashi Order, the Porte labelled the Janissaries as “*enemy of state and religion*” which might indicate grandees of Mahmud II may have followed the pattern of Ubeydullah Kuşmani. Hence, at this point, in order to understand a possible continuity among *Zebire*, *Üssi-i Zafer* and *Gülzar-ı Fütuh*, we have to take a close look at *Fezleke-i Kuşmani* and his perception of the rebellion.

⁴⁰⁶ Mert Sunar, “*Cauldron of Dissent: A Study Of The Janissary Corps, 1807- 1826*”, 122.

CHAPTER 4

THE FINAL STRUGGLE: ABOLISHMENT OF THE JANISSARIES

Early Reign of Mahmud II: 1806-1826

The period between “the Alemdar Incident” and the abolishment of the Janissaries witnessed Mahmud II’s relentless campaign to expand his royal influence on the provincial power-holders, the central government itself, the military units and the *Ulema*. Mahmud II used every method to consolidate his authority over the *Ayans*, the Janissaries and other military units such as the Artillery units, the Canoniers and the naval corps. In the early reign of Mahmud II, the Porte had to struggle against Russia on the region covering the Danube, rebelling Serbs and Greeks in Rumelia, and other rebellious local elements both on the eastern and western provinces. According to Avigdor Levy, Mahmud II’s efforts had concentrated on three main fields from 1806 to 1826:

- Re-establishing the central authority over power-holders.
- Consolidating his personal control over the central government.
- Strengthening the overall defence of the state, due to external enemy threat.⁴⁰⁷

The war against Russians in the Danube had resolved with the signing of a treaty in Bucharest in 1812. Later on, as the Russia’s military agenda was being dissolved by the Napoleonic Wars, the Porte had found an opportunity of turning its attention to the internal issues. The rebelling Serbs laid down their arms in 1817 as they were granted limited autonomous rule.⁴⁰⁸ The Wahhabi rebellion in Arab provinces, which severely damaged Selim III’s public image, were suppressed by the forces of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa, the governor of Egypt. The occupied Holy cities of Mecca and Medina were reconquered in 1813 but the quash of the rebels took five more years.⁴⁰⁹

In order to re-establish the central authority, the Porte took strict measures to

⁴⁰⁷ Avigdor Levy, “*The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II, 1808-1839*”, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Harvard University, (Boston, 1968), 89.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

increase the number of loyal officers in the provinces. During this time, there had been a gradual shifting in the number of officials appointed in the provinces. The power of prominent families, who held the control of the provinces, was broken by the Sultan. By 1820, a large majority of the Porte had consolidated its authority over large parts of Rumeli and most of Anatolia.⁴¹⁰ The Porte spent a lot of effort on eliminating the semi-independent governor, Tepedelenli Ali Paşa, who had established his authority in the Greek and Albanian provinces. Tepedelenli Ali Paşa accepted the Porte's superiority in 1819 and was executed in 1822.

However, the elimination of Tepedelenli Ali Paşa had triggered a rather bigger problem; the Greek Rebellion of 1822.⁴¹¹ With the help of the modernised army of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa, the Porte managed to suppress the rebellion.⁴¹² By 1826, Mahmud II managed to establish his direct control over the provinces and financial resources in Rumelia and Anatolia. According to Howard Reed, Mahmud II had something of a secret agenda to break the power of the Janissaries. Between 1806 and 1821, Mahmud II subdued the Janissary strongholds such as in Aleppo, Crete and Thessaloniki. This condition was interpreted by Reed as Mahmud II's preparation for the destruction of Janissaries.⁴¹³

In order to consolidate his authority in the central government, Mahmud II sought ways to build loyal cadres within the high ranks of the administration and the military. From 1806 to 1826, the post of Grand Vizierate had been granted to Halet Efendi, Deli Abdullah Paşa, Silahdar Ali Paşa, Benderli Selim Paşa and Hasan Ağa Paşa. The method of Mahmud II was simple; if the candidate's loyalty was under suspicion, he would be replaced immediately. Thus, the Sultan filled the ranks of the administration with his most trusted men that pledged unquestionable loyalty.⁴¹⁴ Apart from that, between 1808 and 1822 Mahmud II changed the Janissary commanders seventeen times. By 1826, there were twenty-six living ex-Janissary commanders.⁴¹⁵ The gradual shift of the officers in the

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁴¹³ Howard A. Reed, "*Destruction of the Janissary Corps by Mahmud II in June 1826*", unpublished PhD thesis, Princeton University. (New Jersey 1951), 38.

⁴¹⁴ Avigdor Levy, "*The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II, 1808-1839*", 97-101.

⁴¹⁵ Howard Reed, "*Destruction of the Janissary Corps by Mahmud II in June 1826*", 39-40.

military depended on a principle of expanding his authority over the military units without touching the institutional *status quo*.⁴¹⁶

Extra attention was paid to the units of the artillery and the canon and canon-wagon corps. The numbers of these elite unities were increased. The corps were equipped with modern weapons and their salaries were raised.⁴¹⁷ The Sultan favoured these units with special care as he was even accompanied by the artillerymen in the opening ceremony of *Nusret* Mosque in April of 1826. Traditionally, the Janissaries were the guardian of honour to the Sultan. As a sign of prestige, they escorted the Sultan on his right side. During the ceremony, Mahmud II kept the artillerymen on his right and the Janissaries on his left side. Yet, he saluted the artillerymen but ignored the Janissaries.⁴¹⁸ Assumedly, the Sultan's attitude was considered as an insult to the Janissaries but they did not react in the same way as they had done after the Selimiye Mosque Incident.

After the Greek Rebellion of 1822, the naval corps were also re-organised. The Porte needed to recruit Muslim sailors from the Anatolian and Northern African provinces, as well as some Christian troops from the Danube provinces to replace the Greeks in the navy.⁴¹⁹ The fortification stronghold of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles were strengthened and the imperial arsenal was ameliorated as the Porte purchased new and modern fire arms, stored at Topkapı Palace.⁴²⁰ By spring of 1826, these elite units of the army corps were filled with the loyal troops and officers of Mahmud II.⁴²¹

In spite of the determinant efforts of Mahmud II, the Porte was not able to neutralise "the Janissary disorder". In 1810, there was a dispute among the Sultan, the Janissaries and the *Ulema* as the Sultan wished to lead the army himself. Apart from that, during the Galata Fire of 1810 the Janissaries were accused of looting houses. In March of 1811, the members of the 26th and the 27th regiment were involved in a gun fight in the streets of Istanbul and couple of days later they murdered a Jew who refused to pay them a

⁴¹⁶ Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II, 1808-1839", 101.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 101-103.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 103-104.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

bribe.⁴²² In May of 1811, the Janissaries were accused of assaulting a Christian coffeehouse owner.⁴²³ They refused to join the Danubean campaign in 1811. In the meantime 750 purses of gold, which were issued to the army, were robbed by Janissary deserters.⁴²⁴ In November of 1811, the Janissaries attacked some members of the *Ulema* in Istanbul.⁴²⁵ In 1811, there was another dispute between the Janissaries and theological students.⁴²⁶ The accumulation of these raids worsened the public image of the Janissaries in the eyes of townspeople and the *Ulema*.

Meanwhile, Mahmud II was paying extra attention to his relationship with the *Ulema*. His success of winning public opinion was probably a result of his ability to control the leadership of the religious order.⁴²⁷ In order to create loyal *Ulema*, Mahmud II won the support of Nakşibend-Mujaididi and the Mevlevi orders which supported the military policy of the Porte.⁴²⁸ The Sultan himself attended religious ceremonies, built new mosques and helped the pious foundations to please the *Ulema*.⁴²⁹ In early 1826, the Porte published a popular book about the life of the prophet to create positive public opinion for the Military reforms.⁴³⁰

To summarise, Mahmud II forced the *Ulema* to condemn the military policy of Selim III and supported the rebelling Janissaries in 1807 to take a more passive role under his rule.⁴³¹ Prior to the establishment of *Eşkınci* policy in 1826, the ruling cadres of the administration and elite units of the military were in relatively more reliable hands than the grandees of the New Order. Mahmud II's success of appealing to the public by using religious means was probably the reason behind his success of uniting the society against the Janissaries. The Greek Rebellion of 1822 had given him the opportunity to launch his

⁴²² Howard A. Reed, "Destruction of the Janissary Corps by Mahmud II in June 1826", 41-42.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴²⁷ Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II, 1808-1839", 114.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴³⁰ Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II, 1808-1839", 118.

⁴³¹ Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman Ulema and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud II", *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 9 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 69. See also Avigdor Levy, "The Ottoman Ulema and the Military Reforms of Mahmud II", *Asian and African Studies*, 7 (1971), 13-39.

military reforms as the ineffectiveness of the Janissaries had become obvious.⁴³² It is likely that his success of suppressing the rebellious elements had a positive effect on the campaign of Mahmud II against the Janissaries as the contemporary authors establish their arguments of legitimisation on the basis of “renewing the order”.

The Chronicles

In this chapter, three contemporary sources which deal with the abolishment of Janissaries are analysed.⁴³³ The first treatise is *Üss-i Zafer* of Mehmed Es’ad Efendi⁴³⁴, which is the most famous source regarding 1826 incidents. The second source is *Gülzar-ı Fütuhât* of Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi⁴³⁵ which was written by a civil servant of Divan-ı Humayun. *Neticet’ül Vekayi* of Mehmed Daniş Efendi⁴³⁶ is another contemporary source which deals with the abolishment of Janissaries.

Üss-i Zafer was written soon after the abolishment of the Janissaries. Es’ad Efendi was the son of a notable *Ilmiye* member. His father was known as also a bibliopole (*sahhaf*) who later served as the Judge of Jerusalem and chief lecturer of Süleymaniye Medresesi.⁴³⁷ Therefore, Es’ad Efendi was able to take lessons from his father and other notable lecturers of *Ilmiye*. During his father’s service as the Judge of Jerusalem, Es’ad Efendi stayed with him for a year and studied Arabic. Later on he graduated as a *müderris* in 1808.⁴³⁸ Between 1808 and 1825 he served in different positions as a *müderris* and tried his fortune as *naib* in Kütahya and Birgi. After the dismissal of Şanizade Ataullah Efendi in 1825, he was appointed as an official palace chronicler and served until 1837.⁴³⁹ It is interesting to underline that his brother Fazlî Paşa had close ties with the New Order

⁴³² İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, (Istanbul: Timaş 2008).

⁴³³ On sources of Mahmud II era see Bekir Kütükoğlu, “Sultan II. Mahmud Devri Osmanlı Tarihçiliği” in *Sultan II. Mahmud ve Reformları Semineri: 28-30 Haziran 1989*. (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 1990), 11-19.

⁴³⁴ Mehmed Es’ad Efendi, *“Üss-i Zafer”* ed. Mehmet Arslan, (Istanbul: Kitabevi 2005).

⁴³⁵ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, *“Gülzar-ı Fütuhât (Bir Görgü Tanığının Kalemiyle Yeniçeri Ocağının Kaldırılışı)”* ed. Mehmet Ali Beyhan, (Istanbul: Kitabevi 2001).

⁴³⁶ Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *“Neticet’ül Vekâyi: Yeniçeri Ocağının Kaldırılışı ve II. Mahmud’un Edirne Seyahati (Mehmed Daniş Bey ve Eserleri)”* ed. Şamil Mutlu, (Istanbul: İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1994).

⁴³⁷ Mehmet Arslan, *“Üss-i Zafer”*, XI.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, XIII.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

grandeess before 1807 rebellion.⁴⁴⁰

After the insurrection of 1826, he presented *Üss-i Zafer*, which deals with the course of the 1826 insurrection, to Sultan Mahmud II. For the purpose of this study, the chronicle will be evaluated in three major parts. The first part deals with the events which occurred after the establishment of *Eşkinici Ocağı*. As he was entrusted with the task of putting *Eşkinici* decree on paper, Es'ad Efendi copied the text of document. In this part he discusses the legitimacy of *Eşkinici* Corps which could be evaluated as a revival of the New Army. In the second part, he narrates the course of events of the 1826 insurrection. Since he was an official palace chronicler, he witnessed every stage of the decision making processes during the insurrection, so *Üss-i Zafer* is considered a primary source regarding the abolishment of the Janissaries. The last part of his chronicle deals with the establishment of *Asakir-i Mansure-yi Muhammediye* Corps. Hence, *Üss-i Zafer* can be considered as an official voice of the Porte's legitimisation propaganda.

Üss-i Zafer, *Gülzar-ı Fütuhât*, also known as "*Risale-i Ocağı Mülga*", was written in the aftermath of the abolishment of the Janissaries; the treatise has three copies. One of them was catalogued in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi while the other two are in İ.Ü. Kütüphanesi Eski Eserler Bölümü.⁴⁴¹ As far as we know, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi was a civil servant who was born in Circassia. He came to Istanbul where he was educated in *Divan-ı Hümayun* and graduated as senior scribe. He was known as *Hoca* of *Divan-ı Hümayun*, and presumably for some time worked as lecturer. Apart from that, during his period as an official, he was given rank in *Hacegan* and held the *mukataa* of Avlonia in Albania.⁴⁴²

Gülzar-ı Fütuhât is evaluated in two major parts. The first part of the treatise deals with the events of the 1826 insurrection, the abolishment of Janissaries-Bektashi Order, and the establishment of *Asakir-i Mansure-yi Muhammediye*. The second part is the author's personal evaluation regarding the condition of Caucasian provinces and neighbouring countries Russia and Persia.⁴⁴³ Just like Es'ad Efendi, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, XIX.

⁴⁴¹ Mehmet Ali Beyhan, "*Gülzar-ı Fütuhât*", XV-XVII.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, XIX.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, XXIII.

contains very sophisticated language, enriching his texts with poems, hadiths and verses of Quran. There is strong evidence that during the insurrection of 1826, Fatih Efendi joined a crowd which had gathered in Sultan Ahmet Square. Hence, his treatise should be regarded as an eye witness testimony.

Neticet'ül Vekayi was written by Mehmed Daniş Efendi, a prominent member of palace elites. The treatise starts with a narration of the events from 8th April of 1826 to 15th of June 1826.⁴⁴⁴ Compared to *Üss-i Zafer* and *Gülzar-ı Fütuhât*, the language of the text is relatively simple. It is the only copy of the treatise catalogued in “İ.Ü. Kütüphanesi Türkçe Yazmalar” collection.⁴⁴⁵ Mehmed Daniş Efendi focused on the chronology of the events. Considering the content of his work, which consisted of copies of official decrees, Mehmed Daniş Bey probably had easy access to the Ottoman bureaucracy. In that sense, his text shall be regarded as a reflection of the elites’ attitudes in the palace of the events.

The Final Struggle: The Rebellion of 1826

The rebellion of 1826 was triggered by the establishment of the *Eşkinçi* Policy which may have been considered as a revival of the New Army. According to the issue of the Porte, some troops would be drafted among certain Janissary regiments to perform regular military training under the supervision of government officials in *Et Meydanı*.⁴⁴⁶

Soon after the beginning of the first drills, the Janissaries could not wait long to react against the order of the Porte. The rebellion started on 14th of June 1826 in *Et Meydanı*. Small groups of Janissaries along with their trusted sergeants and captains gathered at their barracks. As their numbers grew, they invited *Kulkethüdası* Hasan Ağa to join them. In response, Hasan Ağa told them that it would be inappropriate to join them alone. The best for him was to come together with prominent Janissary commanders.⁴⁴⁷ In the meantime, some Janissaries headed to *Ağa Kapısı* to storm the residence of the Janissary Agha. When the rebels reached his residence, Janissary commander Hüseyin Ağa Paşa was returning from his patrol in *Tahtakale*. According to contemporary sources,

⁴⁴⁴ Şamil Mutlu, “*Neticet’ül Vekâyi*”, 12.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁴⁶ Mehmed Es’ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 19-33.

the Janissaries could not capture the commander as he was relieving himself in the bathroom, so they set the building on fire instead. The Janissary commander, Hüseyin Ağa Paşa went on hiding in vicinity of Süleymaniye.⁴⁴⁸

On 15th of June, Janissaries brought their cauldrons to *Et Meydanı* where they got the support of the armourers (*Cebecis*) and the saddlers. Sergeants were sent to various districts of the imperial capital such as *Asmaaltı*, *Unkaparı* and *Tahtakale* to announce their claim. The word was released that prominent government officials including the Grand Vizier, and the Janissary Ağa had either been killed or captured. Therefore, the porters and a group of labourers joined the Janissaries at Et Meydanı where a growing numbers of rebels assembled.⁴⁴⁹

The rebels split into two columns. First column was under command of *Nakılcı* Mustafa, a porter, and the second was under control of *Ser-hoş* Mustafa, well-known for being a drunkard. The band of *Nakılcı* Mustafa was assigned to storm the residence of the Grand Vizier in *Bab-ı Âli* while *Ser-hoş* Mustafa was sent to the residence of Necib Efendi, deputy of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt and also the intendant of *Eşkinçi Corps*. As the Grand Vizier Hüseyin Ağa Paşa was in his summer house in Beylerbeyi and Necip Efendi in Kanlıca, the rebels failed to capture them. Instead, they seized 6000 purses of gold from the Grand Vizier's residence and set the building on fire. They also seized 700-800 purses of gold from the residence of Necib Efendi. In the city centre, they announced that they would take vengeance upon those "fatwa givers" and *kavuklus*, who had issued a fatwa against them.⁴⁵⁰ Besides, they also announced to shopkeepers to open their shops and told them not fear looting as they were not plunderers. In the meantime, they encountered a member of *Ulema*, Seyda Efendi, and wounded him.⁴⁵¹

When the word of turmoil reached Beylerbeyi, the Grand Vizier a sent message with his brother to Hüseyin Ağa Paşa and Mehmed İzzed Paşa to his kiosk with their

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁵¹ Mehmed Dâniş Efendi, "*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*", 50, Fatma Sel Turhan, "*The Abolition of the Janissary Army and its Reflections*", 93.

troops. The Grand Vizier moved to the imperial palace and summoned the deputy treasurer Kıbrısî Mehmed Ağa to inform the Sultan about who was in the Beşiktaş Palace, what the developments in the city centre were, and to ask permission to use the Holy Banner against the rebels. He sent his men to invite the prominent members of *Ulema* to the palace: *Şeyhülislam* Kadızade Tahir Efendi, the former deputy of judge of Anatolia Arif Beyefendi; Arab-zâde Hamdullah Efendi, who would be appointed as deputy judge of Anatolia; the judge of Istanbul, Sadık Efendi; and Kürd Abdurrahman Efendi, a notable lecturer. Furthermore, the intendant of arsenal Sa'id Efendi, some chief officers of the cannon corps, cannon-wagon corps, the miners and the mortar corps were also summoned.⁴⁵²

The deputy of the Janissary scribes, Raşid Efendi was sent to the rebels to ask their terms. The Janissaries had replied that they did not want to perform infidel military exercises, which were against their traditional law, and they pronounced some names of *Ulema* members and palace elites to be punished for it. In return, the *Ulema* assured the legitimacy of the military training which was approved by the *Şeyhülislam*. Thus, the terms of the rebels were rejected.⁴⁵³

Later on, “the coalition of the palace elites”, that were reinforced by the theological students, the artillerymen under command of a famous *Karacehennem* Ibrahim Ağa, the mariners (*kalyoncu*), the canon-wagon corps, the miners, and the mortar corps made their way to the palace. After the arrival of the Sultan, a meeting was held in the “Chamber of Circumcision” to discuss what needed to be done about the Janissaries. In his speech, the Sultan asked members of *Ulema* if the acts of the Janissaries were *hurûc-ı 'ale's-sultân* (a betrayal of their role as subject against ruler). In response, the members of *Ulema* confirmed that they were, which led to the Sultan's agreement to use brute force against the rebels. The Holy Banner was fetched and was granted to the Grand Vizier and the *Şeyhülislam*. Some notable members of the *Ulema*, namely: Dürrizade Es-Seyyid Abdullah Efendi, Mekkizade Mustafa Asım Efendi, Yasincizade Es-Seyyid Abdülvehab Efendi and Sıdkizade Ahmed Reşid Efendi were summoned to palace. The Sultan

⁴⁵² Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 61-66.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

remained in the palace while his loyalists made their way to fight against the *enemy of the state and religion*.⁴⁵⁴

In the meantime, street-criers were sent to districts of the imperial capital to invite “the believers” to unite under the Holy Banner at Sultan Ahmed Mosque. In addition, the judge of Istanbul was entrusted with the task of informing the *muezzins* to read the message of the Sultan.⁴⁵⁵ The first skirmishes between the rebels and the loyalists started after the Sultan’s call. The rebels attacked the crowd on the road and some people became “martyrs”.⁴⁵⁶

After the distribution of arms, the loyalists assembled on Sultan Ahmed Mosque where they merged with forces of Hüseyin Ağa Paşa and Mehmed Izzed Paşa and discussed whether the use of violence was legitimate or not. Members of the *Ulema* advised them to dispatch a delegate to the Janissaries to conciliate with them; Ahıskalı Ahmed Efendi was entrusted with the task of negotiator. However, Ahmed Efendi himself and Mehmed Izzed Paşa rejected the advice of the *Ulema*. Hence, as a final decision, the loyalists began their march on the rebels. The forces split into two groups under the command of Mehmed İzzed Paşa and Hüseyin Ağa Paşa. The artillerymen and the mariners led by Hüseyin Ağa Paşa were dispatched on route to Divan Yolu. The mortar corps, the miners that were reinforced by students of theology and volunteer inhabitants, marched across Saraçhane. The upcoming reinforcements were under command of Necib Efendi and his lieutenants.⁴⁵⁷

The forces of Hüseyin Ağa Paşa were attacked by the Janissaries near *Horhor* fountain but they managed to repel the Janissaries back to Et Meydanı. The Janissaries fortified the gate of *Et Meydanı* with large stones to prevent access of the loyalists. The forces of Mehmed Izzed Paşa were beseeched *Et Meydanı*. Karacehennem Ibrahim Ağa, asked the Janissaries to surrender, but the Janissaries refused. After merging with the other loyalist forces, Mehmed Izzed Paşa and Hüseyin Ağa Paşa ordered artillerymen to open

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 59. Fatma Sel Turhan, “*Abolishment of Janissary Army and its Reflections*”, 96-97.

⁴⁵⁶ Fatma Sel Turhan, “*Abolishment of Janissary Army and its Reflections*”, 97.

⁴⁵⁷ Mehmed Es’ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 70-71.

fire on the gate. The gate was opened by an artilleryman named Mustafa. The loyalist troops under the command of Karacehennem Ibrahim Ağa and Hacı Hafız Efendi invaded *Et Meydanı*, which dissolved the Janissaries and made them flee. After the final bombardment, the survivors went on hiding in their barracks at Bektashi Tekkes.⁴⁵⁸ The final bombardment caused very tragic scenes; the Janissaries, who were stuck at *Et Meydanı*, called out the names of their artillerymen friends and begged for their mercy. But in return, many of them were killed by cannonballs. The survivors, who were captured while trying to flee, were either stabbed or strangled by the loyalists.⁴⁵⁹

The main struggle finished after the battle of *Et Meydanı*, however, the government's "Janissary hunt" had just begun. Patrols were dispatched to different districts of the imperial capital in pursue of survivors and for the protection of the city. Mehmed Izzed Paşa and Hüseyin Ağa Paşa made their way to the "old barracks" to find and catch those in hiding.⁴⁶⁰ The third day of rebellion, 16th June on Friday, witnessed the executions of the arrested Janissaries. During the public prayer, a Sultan's escort was replaced by artillerymen and troops from mortar corps. On Friday evening, prominent figures in Sultan Ahmed Mosque had discussed the details of a possible abolishment of Janissaries. The council also agreed on the establishment of new corps named the "Victorious Soldiers of Mohammed" (*Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhamediye*). The next morning, a decree of abolishment of the Janissaries was discussed at the great council and was signed by the Sultan; formally abrogating the Janissary corps.⁴⁶¹

Another important aspect of the rebellion was the closure of Bektashi Order. As a main affiliation to the Janissaries, the Bektashi Order had become the Porte's target. In order to discuss the condition of Bektashi Order, the Porte invited representatives of *Nakşibendi*, *Mevlevi*, *Halveti*, *Sa'di* orders and *Şeyhülislam* to the palace mosque, under the leadership of the Grand Vizier. Probably the religious context of the council was one of the key factors behind the decision of closure. Teachings of the Bektashi order were

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁵⁹ Howard A. Reed, "Destruction of the Janissary Corps by Mahmud II in June 1826", 226. Fatma Sel Turhan, "Abolishment of Janissary Army and its Reflections", 101.

⁴⁶⁰ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "Üss-i Zafer", 76-80.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 88-97.

considered as heretical by these Sunni-Orthodox orders. In that sense, the image of the Bektashi Order and its followers were illustrated as being superstitious, ignorant, and even infidel.⁴⁶² The council made its final decision; due to their inappropriate approach to the religious principles, the Bektashi order must be closed and the followers should be sent to exile.⁴⁶³ The property of the Bektashi Order was confiscated by the Porte and allocated to the service of mainstream Sunni-Orthodox orders.⁴⁶⁴

Discussions on the Rebellion of 1826 and the Pattern of Legitimation

For the case of the 1826 rebellion, apparently all the contemporary sources have agreed on the same concept of legitimisation. Accordingly, contemporary authors consider the Janissaries as being ineffective army corps who failed to prevail over enemy. The Muslim lands were surrounded by infidel enemies who designed deceitful plans. So, as rule of reprisal obliges, the believers were able to use weapons and military training methods of infidels to have *vengeance* upon the enemy. Hence, as the Ottoman Empire's existence was based on championing *sharia* and waging *cihad*, the Sultan decided to form a new unit of trained soldiers to be drafted among the Janissaries with approval of the *Ulema*. Those who rejected the military training, or in other words, the order of the Sultan, would be punished as they would be rejecting the will of God.

The reaction of the Janissaries was attributed to the newly formed army corps. In addition to this, Janissaries' opposition to members of *Ulema* and the Sultan is emphasised as another reason for the rebellion. Thus, all the contemporary authors depict the rebels with the image of being an "enemy of state and religion" in every means. Accordingly, the Sultan was portrayed as a "renovator of religion and order" (*müceddid*). Mahmud II's previous achievements, which illustrate his services to Muslim World, and capability as a ruler are frequently repeated in the contemporary sources. Therefore according to contemporary sources, by abolishing the Janissaries and closing the Bektashi Order the Sultan had accomplished his holy mission. His efforts were praised as acting for sake of state and religion.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 142-144.

As for the narration of the events, the authors create a distinct dichotomy between the loyalists and the rebels. The rebellion of 1826 is illustrated as a struggle as if between good and evil; the believers and the heathens. Anything affiliated to the Janissaries such as: their barracks, the symbols of their regiments, their tattoos, the cauldrons etc. were severely criticised by the authors.

Even though the authors share a pattern of legitimisation, there are different discourses which dominate the texts. As for *Üssi-i Zafer*, which reflects the official view of the Porte, dominant discourse of the treatise was the legitimisation issue of the *Eşkinci Corps* and *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, the new army which was established after the abolishment of the Janissaries. Es'ad Efendi, considers the establishment of *Eşkinci Corps* as the main reason behind the rebellion. According to him, the *Eşkinci* policy of the Porte was an outcome of the Sultan's master plan to renovate the order of religion and state and re-organize the holy law (*müceddid-i dîn ü devlet ve mü'eyyid-i kânûn-ı şerî'at*).⁴⁶⁵

In the beginning, the author gives information about the general condition of the Janissary corps by⁴⁶⁶ referring to *Kocasekban Risalesi* and previous attempts of Selim III.⁴⁶⁷ This also means that Es'ad Efendi might consider the establishment of *Eşkinci Corps* as an extension of *Nizam-ı Cedid*. Then, he mentions the discussions among the Sultan, the palace elites and members of the high ranking *Ulema* regarding the establishment of the *Eşkinci Corps*.⁴⁶⁸ After this, he focuses on the approval process of the *Eşkinci Corps* by the *Ulema*.⁴⁶⁹ According to discussions among members of *Ulema*, at their zenith the Janissaries had won battles for Islam but as the world changed they were unable to meet the needs of the state. They ignored their military duties and became an immoral and mutinous group which committed crimes against their rulers in the past. Their failure against the rebelling Greeks revealed that the Janissaries were not up to the task of protecting the lands of the Muslims.⁴⁷⁰ Furthermore, Es'ad Efendi mentions the non-

⁴⁶³ Fatma Sel Turhan, "Abolishment of Janissary Army and its Reflections", 143

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 143. Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "Üss-i Zafer", 182.

⁴⁶⁵ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "Üss-i Zafer", 8.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-12.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-19.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

military elements among the Janissary corps and their undisciplined behaviour. He even adds, due to their outdated organisation, spies intrigued easily into corps and were able to manipulate them.⁴⁷¹ Thus, as rule of reprisal and Holy War obliges that the state should have trained soldiers to have vengeance upon the infidel enemy.⁴⁷²

This discourse of “vengeance” should be evaluated as a reaction to the Greek rebellion in 1821. As it was mentioned before, one of the legitimisation concepts of the New Order was to provide protection to Muslims against attacks of infidels. However, in the texts which were written after 1826, discourse of protection was replaced by “having vengeance upon enemy”. This discourse may also reveal another important point which damaged the image of the Janissaries. The success of the trained troops of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa in the Greek Rebellion probably had positive impact on public opinion, because it also signified the fact that the performance of the trained troops had saved the Empire from a possible defeat. Hence, it is possible to claim that the atmosphere of the Greek rebellion of 1822 had created psychological basis for the Porte’s propaganda against the Janissaries.

After this part, the author narrates a draft of *Eşkinçi* decree which was submitted to members of the *Ulema* and the administration.⁴⁷³ Here in, it is important to emphasise that the *Eşkinçi* decree had the same characteristics of the legitimisation pattern which Kuşmani and Sekbanbaşı innovated for the New Order.⁴⁷⁴ The decisions of the Porte were presented as an effort to revive the Holy War. Apart from some technical details of training process, the decree mentions that each regiment would be assigned to religious education under guidance of their *imam*.⁴⁷⁵ As it was decided inappropriate for the soldiers of Islam, who would participate in Holy War, trade of the Janissary’s salary tickets (*esame*) would be prohibited.⁴⁷⁶ Apparently the Porte might have preferred to present the financial burden of the Janissary’s pay tickets as an immoral behaviour for the soldiers of Islam. Moreover, in order to prevent possible resistance by the people and the Janissaries, they signified that

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19-27.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

these new troops must have religious education. Considering the New Order policies, Mahmud II followed the methods of Selim III but his influence on the members of the *Ulema* and elite army corps, such as the artillerymen and the canonries, presumably made the difference for his success in upcoming events.

In the following part, Es'ad Efendi brings another discussion of legitimisation into focus in regards to the trained troops and their religious validity. The author himself admits that he aimed to justify the policy of the Porte for those who would not understand the needs of the state.⁴⁷⁷ He discusses religious validity of the usage of infidel weapons and⁴⁷⁸ meaning of rule of reprisal.⁴⁷⁹ In order to explain his assertions, the author refers to the sage scholars of Islam; including, *Mukaddime of Ibn Haldun* and also to *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*. These two references signify the organisation of Muslims in the war against infidels. Accordingly, the success of the Muslims in campaigns depended on being well organised and prepared for war. Hence he asserts that, it is the duty of all Muslims to have military training to learn and perform these formations.⁴⁸⁰ The third reference expresses the issue of discipline; the Muslim troops should obey their superiors as they follow *imam* in prayer.⁴⁸¹ The fourth reference was to emphasise legitimacy of the “rule of reprisal.”⁴⁸² After this, Es'ad Efendi mentions Ibn Haldun and his interpretations on the grounds for war. According to this, there are four major types of warfare in which only two of them are religiously legitimate.⁴⁸³ One of the legitimate types of war is *Cihad* which is waged in the name of God to spread the order of Islam. And the other is the war against invaders who attack the land of Muslims.⁴⁸⁴ Hence, Es'ad Efendi concludes that, by establishing *Eşkinçi Corps* the Sultan's policy would be evaluated as an effort to prevail in *Cihad* and protect the Muslims lands from the attacks of infidels.⁴⁸⁵ In addition to this, the author mentions *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi* to evaluate the military condition of the Empire. Here in, Es'ad Efendi interprets arguments of Koca Sekbanbaşı as being legitimate as they were

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 37-38.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

confirmed by Ibn Haldun in *Mukaddime*.⁴⁸⁶

To summarise, Es'ad Efendi followed the same pattern of legitimisation which was developed by Ubeydullah Kuşmani and Koca Sekbanbaşı in the New Order era. By offering such a sophisticated discussion of legitimisation, his text combines together the technical military analysis of Koca Sekbanbaşı and religious interpretations of Kuşmani. Furthermore, by referring to wise scholars of Islam, he tries to justify the idea of rule of reprisal and the need of having trained troops, which he evaluates as a being the duty of Muslims in Holy War. In that manner, the primary aim of Es'ad Efendi, which comes into view in his text, is to express the legitimacy of these efforts to the Porte before and after the abolishment of Janissaries. Unlike Ubeydullah Kuşmani, he tries to justify his arguments by referring to discussions on legitimacy and the practice of rule of reprisal in scholars of Islam. Therefore, he presents the *Eşkinici* policy of the Sultan as being religious duty. Moreover he frequently repeats approval of *Ulema* which considered the new corps as religiously legitimate. Thus, he expresses his legitimacy for the punishments in rebellion of 1826.

As a propaganda text, *Üss-i Zafer* of Es'ad Efendi would be considered as the most sophisticated narration regarding the events which occurred on June 1826. Es'ad Efendi narrates the details regarding the *Eşkinici* policy of the Porte and argues the religious legitimacy of the decisions which were taken against the rebels. In addition to this, he illustrates an immoral image of the Janissaries which is supported by several anecdotes and stories. In that sense, his arguments in *Üss-i Zafer* are interpreted as a fusion of ideas from Ubeydullah Kuşmani and Koca Sekbanbaşı. Probably Es'ad Efendi's position as a palace chronicler played the crucial role as he had to access the meetings and other sources while the other authors' narrations were presumably based on their own observations.

As discourse of vengeance dominated *Neticet'ül Vekayi*, Mehmed Daniş Bey's narration expresses view of a palace elite who once had close ties with the New Order grandees. Mehmed Daniş Bey frequently mentions the rebellious crimes that Janissaries had committed in era of the New Order and in early sultanate of Mahmud II. In order to

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

support his claims, he severely criticises the Janissaries. To him, the enemy of state and religion had finally got the punishment they deserved for their crimes.

Unlike Es'ad Efendi, Mehmed Daniş Bey did not pay extra attention to the legitimisation issue of the events, but he generally holds the perspective of Es'ad Efendi. According to Mehmed Daniş Bey, the establishment of the *Eşkinçi Corps* was the reason of the rebellion; the Sultan decided to form *Eşkinçi Corps* to have well trained and qualified soldiers to prevail against infidel enemies.⁴⁸⁷ As traitors and infidels, the Janissaries refused the order of Sultan and mutinied against him.⁴⁸⁸ This is the only interpretation that Mehmed Daniş Bey expresses in his text. In that sense, Mehmed Daniş Efendi focuses primarily on the eradication process of the Janissaries.

Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi follows a similar method of legitimisation as Es'ad Efendi narrates in *Üssi-i Zafer*. According to him, throughout the history of Islam the Ottoman Empire was the most glorious Muslim state that showed boundless mercy to its subjects since the time of the Prophet and the four caliphates.⁴⁸⁹ As the existence of the Ottoman Empire was based on the appraisal of the grand order of Islam (*i'lâ-yı kelimetullah*), it was the primary duty of its rulers to fight against infidel enemies.⁴⁹⁰ However, as the Janissaries became useless and treacherous, the Russians prevailed over the believers and invaded the Muslim lands. Hence, the order of the state needed to be re-organized as had been attempted in the era of the New Order but which was unsuccessful due to the mutiny of the Janissaries. As it was obliged by rule of reprisal, Sultan Mahmud II formed a new army corps which was subjected to regular military training by the approval of the *Ulema*. But the dissident Janissaries instead mutinied, and so the struggle between the believers and the infidels had started.⁴⁹¹

Apparently, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi considered the establishment of the *Eşkinçi Corps* as main reason for the rebellion. Just like Es'ad Efendi and Mehmed Daniş Efendi, he frequently criticises the Janissaries for being an enemy of state and religion. Even

⁴⁸⁷ Mehmed Dâniş Efendi, "*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*", 46.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁸⁹ Şamil Mutlu, "*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*", XXIV.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

though he gives brief information about the condition of the Janissaries and religious legitimacy of the abolishment of Janissaries, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi is especially attentive to justify the closure of the Bektashi Order.⁴⁹² This part is followed by the establishment of “*Asakir-i Mansure-yi Muhammediyye*”.⁴⁹³ Later on he expresses his own personal opinions about the Sultan. According to him Mahmud II was a capable and accomplished ruler who succeeded in defeating the rebelling Wahhabis on Holy Lands, Tepedelenli Ali Paşa in Albania and the rebelling Greeks in 1821. Therefore, he portrays him as renovator of the order and the state (*müceddid*). Being “*müceddid*” requires service to public, appraisal of religion and the battle of forces which threaten the religion. As the Sultan achieved these goals by his defeating the enemies of state and religion, he should be considered as “*müceddid*”.

Moreover, he asserts that God sends “renovators” of order in every century. As Mahmud II, born in 1199 at the beginning of the new century, the author perceives the birth date of the Sultan as another auspicious proof supporting his illustration of his as being “*müceddid*”.⁴⁹⁴ To summarise, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi expresses the capability of Mahmud II as a ruler over his service to the state and religion. The abolishment of the Janissaries, and his previous victories against rebelling elements of the Empire should be evaluated within this context.

As it seems, after the abolishment of the Janissaries, the *müceddid* image of the Sultan and his military reforms for the sake of Islam and state with an approving of rule of reprisal, dominates contemporary sources. From this point on, it would be useful to depict an image of the “enemy of state and religion” as by the contemporary authors.

“The Furious Dogs of Hell”: The Janissaries and the Loyalists in the Rebellion of 1826

As already mentioned, in the case of the 1826 rebellion, all of the contemporary sources had continuously accused the Janissaries of being infidels and traitors to the State and religion. In that sense, the authors consider the abolishment of the Janissaries and the

⁴⁹¹ Şirvânlı Fatih Efendi, “*Gülzâr-ı Fütûhât*”, 8-9.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, 19-21.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 26.

closure of the Bektashi Order as being a divine intervention for those who refused the will and order of God. This part aims to reveal the illustration of the Janissaries by the contemporary authors and to discuss the events which occurred during the peak of the rebellion.

According to Es'ad Efendi, the Janissaries were equivalent to “furious dogs” (*kelb-i akur*).⁴⁹⁵ For Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, they were “furious dogs of hell” (*seg- i akur-ı cehim*).⁴⁹⁶ As for Mehmed Daniş Bey, they were betrayers of the religion (*ha'in- i din-i mübin*).⁴⁹⁷ Et Meydanı, the headquarters of the rebels, are depicted as nest of sinners. Customarily, the rebels are depicted as ignorant people who were incapable of acting freely. However, the view of the contemporary authors ignored some details that remain within the borders of their method of legitimisation.

Before the outbreak of the rebellion, the final decision of Janissaries was made after deliberations in *Et Meydanı*. Es'ad Efendi weighs up the evidence based on the arguments among the Janissaries to decide how to react.⁴⁹⁸ Accordingly, some of them suggested mutiny when members of the *Ulema* came to visit *Et Meydanı* to discuss matters of training. But this opinion is opposed by others who were affiliated with the Bektashi Order, so it would have been inappropriate to commence without the exposure of their cauldrons. Another idea was to mutiny after the military trainings; the best time to initiate their plans would be after the troops of *Eşkinici* had left *Et Meydanı*, with their weapons and ammunition. This idea also was opposed by the others as they thought that if the troops had enjoyed “benedictions” of the Porte, they would have not obeyed them. Hence, they decided to react immediately.⁴⁹⁹

Es'ad Efendi also narrated the testimony of the intendant of the *Eşkinici* Corps Sa'ib Efendi, who sensed a disturbance among the Janissaries prior to the rebellion. For that reason, Sa'ib Efendi summoned prominent figures among Janissaries to his presence

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁹⁵ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 58.

⁴⁹⁶ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, “*Gülzâr-ı Fütühât*”, 10.

⁴⁹⁷ Mehmed Dâniş Efendi, “*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*”, 48.

⁴⁹⁸ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 57.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

to talk about the matter of military training.⁵⁰⁰ He tried to explain necessity of trainings that were approved by the *Ulema* as a “rule of reprisal” that would be given to train soldiers of Islam to prevail over the infidel enemy. The answer Sa’ib Efendi received was that as the Janissaries are “thick brained” (*kalın beyinli*), they could not realise the benefit of such training and contested them as mere infidel methods. Hence, they refused to participate in military training and spread rumours opposing them.⁵⁰¹ They persisted with their unyielding attitude and finally on the third day, rebellion broke out on the night of the 16th of June.⁵⁰²

Up to this point, Es’ad Efendi illustrates the Janissaries as unyielding, rebellious, superstitious, and ignorant as a “pack of dogs”. Despite this, by spreading rumours for their cause the Janissaries were able to manipulate ignorant people, mobilised their comrades and won support. They managed to organise themselves in a collective manner and made calculated decisions before the outbreak of the rebellion. This point also reveals that, presumably the Janissaries had perceived the *Eşkinici* policy of the Porte as a potential threat to existence of the corps. Thus, the rebellion of 1826 could be considered as a counter-offence of the Janissaries to protect the existence and privileges of their corps.

According to Mehmed Daniş Bey, the Janissaries considered initiation of military trainings as a revival of the New Order. From the perspective of the Janissaries, even though the gunners were drafted among them, the intendant of *Eşkinici* Corps was a man of Necib Efendi, the deputy of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt. Apparently, involvement of Egyptian officers in the *Eşkinici* establishment had disturbed the Janissaries. Hence, they interpreted the *Eşkinici* policy of the Porte as equal to the New Order which would bring unrest to their corps.⁵⁰³

Mehmed Daniş Bey’s narration confirms the point of Es’ad Efendi, as the rebels were depicted as making decisions in a collective manner. Interestingly, Mehmed Daniş Bey seems to regard the reaction of the Janissaries as being related to their opposition

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*

⁵⁰³ Şirvânî Fatih Efendi, “*Gülzâr-ı Fütûhât*”, 48.

against the New Order; a very important detail for understanding the view of the author. Besides, the Janissaries presumably followed a similar method of organising themselves against an infidel innovation just like in the case of the 1807 rebellion. This is a noteworthy point since all of the sources ignore the arguments of the Janissaries in the outbreak of the rebellion of 1826.

On the other hand, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi mentions the Janissaries disrespectful behaviour towards the members of the *Ulema*. According to his narrative, members of the *Ulema* had visited the training grounds to advise the Janissaries regarding military training. The Janissaries started training with fierce and mock with methods which they were subjected to perform. The members of the *Ulema* who witnessed this scene remained silent to observe what would happen next.⁵⁰⁴ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi is the only author who ignores the Janissary meetings before the rebellion. However according to him, the real problem was the Janissaries' inappropriate behaviour to members of the *Ulema* and their negative attitude towards military training. Furthermore, he narrates the Janissary crimes in era of the New Order. This point appears support the view of Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi that considers the *Eşkinici* policy of the Porte as being a revival of the New Order.

So far Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi depicted the Janissaries as immoral group of people who disobeyed and disrespected the will of the Sultan; this was view was supported by the *Ulema*. In the dominant argument in his narration, he reveals that the struggle between the “righteous and treacherous” occurred when the Janissaries insulted the members of the *Ulema* and refused to do the trainings. Similarly, Mehmed Daniş Bey and Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi also signify that the struggle between the rebels and the Porte started after establishment of the New Order. Thus, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi retells the background reasons for the punishment of the Janissaries.

Until now, two of the authors create links between Janissaries' reaction to the New Order and to *Eşkinici* Corps. Even though he frequently repeated the previous Janissary crimes, Es'ad Efendi, as an official chronicler, does not refer the New Order as a reason for rebellion. At this point one wonders if these authors were under the influence of

the New Order Grandees. However, as we do not have sufficient information about the life of Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, it is almost impossible to be certain. Most likely, Mehmed Daniş Efendi, as a member of palace elites, had very close relationships with the powerful groups in the Ottoman administration. As we know Es'ad Efendi's brother was a member of the New Order Grandees, but such speculation does not provide sufficient evidence as this topic requires detailed study on the networks of relationships; beyond the scope of this study. In summary, even though the Janissaries were depicted as ignorant, disrespectful, rebellious, and superstitious, they managed to organise themselves in a collaborative manner and seemed sufficiently aware of the steps to follow at the outbreak of rebellion.

After this point as Es'ad Efendi narrates, on the night of 16th of June the rebels sent representatives to Hasan Ağa deputy of the Janissary Ağa, and invited him to join them. Hasan Ağa turned down the request of the rebels as it would not have been appropriate for him to join them alone. He admits it would be better for him to join with other commanders of the Janissary corps.⁵⁰⁵ Later, the rebels stormed the residence of the Janissary commander to capture him and set the whole neighbourhood on fire.⁵⁰⁶ Apparently, they were aware of the fact that since the Janissary commander was a supporter of the Porte, they would not be able to appeal to the other units of the army, such as the artillerymen and the cannon corps.

After a failed attempt to capture the Janissary commander, the rebels proceeded to city centre where they announced their cause to the public.⁵⁰⁷ At this point, it is important to underline that in rebellions of 1703, 1730 and 1807, the contemporary sources mention that the rebels asserted their cause in court. However in the case of 1826, this is ignored by the contemporary sources. According to Es'ad Efendi, after they stormed the residence of the Janissary commander, the rebels moved to the armoury, (*Cebthane*) and convinced the armourers (*Cebecis*) to join the rebellion. Later on, they made their way to *Sarrachane*, *Tahtakale*, *Asmaaltı*, *Unkaparı* and some other districts of Istanbul where they spread false rumours; such as, the seizures of prominent figures in the administration including the

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁰⁵ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "*Üss-i Zafer*", 58-59.

⁵⁰⁶ Mehmed Daniş Efendi, "*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*", 49. Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "*Üss-i Zafer*"58-59.

⁵⁰⁷ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "*Üss-i Zafer*", 59.

Janissary commander and the Grand Vizier. Thus, the rebels emerged with their affiliates from lower layers of society, such as labourers and porters. They split in two groups under command of certain figures and plundered the residences of the Grand Vizier and Necib Efendi, deputy of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa, where they tore up copies of Quran. At this point, the rebels sent street-criers to districts of the imperial capital to announce their cause to public.⁵⁰⁸ The rebels condemned the members of the *Ulema* who had issued fatwa against them. Moreover, they announced that they would not murder innocent people nor plunder the property of the people.⁵⁰⁹ Such details were not mentioned by Mehmed Daniş Bey and Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi.

According to Mehmed Daniş Bey, after they stormed the residence of Janissary agha, the rebels sought ways to merge with their affiliates. They coerced people to join them and sent criers to various districts of imperial capital to invite grocers, porters, and the unemployed living in *Bekar Odaları*. Later on, the rebels stormed the residences of the Grand Vizier and Necib Efendi. While they were plundering the residence of Necib Efendi, some rebels slashed pages of Quran and some other monuments with their knives as they claimed that “*They referred to these when they issued fatwas against us*”. He even adds that some of them drew the symbol of their regiments on the papers of these holy monuments.⁵¹⁰ The same details are also confirmed by Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi.⁵¹¹

Then, the rebels began their march to the armoury. On the road, they murdered a servant (*çukadar*) of El-hâc Yusuf Efendi, a prominent member of the *Ulema*. It is actually hard to determine whether their act was against the high-ranking *Ulema* or a personal dispute. But the authors consider the killing of Yusuf Efendi as an threatening provocation to the members of the *Ulema*. Mehmed Daniş Bey continues his narration; the rebels sought the support of the other army units.⁵¹² Accordingly, the rebels sent their sergeants to the artillery Corps and *yamaks* that were stationed in the citadels at the Bosphorus. However, their request was turned down by these units. One rebel representative even

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

⁵¹⁰ Mehmed Daniş Efendi, “*Neticet’ül Vekâyi*”, 49-50.

⁵¹¹ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, “*Gülzâr-ı Fütûhât*”, 9-10.

⁵¹² Mehmed Daniş Efendi, “*Neticet’ül Vekâyi*”, 50.

asked for their cauldron, a symbol of their acceptance to join the rebellion, to which the chief artillery officer replied that “they would not even give a rice pot”. It is important to underline that the *yamaks* refused to join the rebellion as they were ashamed of their previous crimes that had they committed against Selim III.⁵¹³

Es’ad Efendi on the other hand does not mention the negotiations between the rebels and the other army corps. Nevertheless, considering the banishment of the *yamaks* after closure of the Bektashi Order,⁵¹⁴ the intention of Mehmed Daniş Bey’s narration is only an attempt to signify the treacherous aims of the rebels. Ironically, the ignorant and superstitious vagrants appear as manipulators who failed to buy the loyalty of the artillerymen and the *yamaks*. The same *yamaks* would appear again in the treatise of Mehmed Daniş Bey in the banishments of the Bektashis. In this part, due to their affiliations with the Bektashi Order, the *yamaks* are accused of being called infidels by the author. Perhaps for the same reason, Es’ad Efendi ignored the negotiations between the rebels and the *yamaks*. To conclude, according to Mehmed Daniş Bey, there were negotiations between the rebels and other army units but for unclear reasons the units have remained loyal to the Porte.

Some similarities can be drawn between the methods of the rebels and the traditional methods of Ottoman rebellions:

- They organised themselves in a collective manner.
- They tried to gain the support of high ranking officers of the Janissary corps.
- They announced their cause and tried to win public support. They assured the public that they were not plunderers and murderers and took some measures to prevent chaos in the city. They appealed to the artisans side with them.
- They tried to negotiate with other corps of the army, particularly the support of some of the *Ulema* members.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

But for some reason, the above-mentioned details are played down or ignored by the authors who portray the rebels as “infidels”. Probably, the rebels who claimed that their cause was legitimate and showed efforts to maintain the order did not fit the illustration of the Porte after the abolishment of Janissaries. Another point to be underlined is, the authors express that the rebels targeted members of the *Ulema* who issued fatwa against them, and grandees (*kavuklular*) who initiated *Eşkinici* policy. Although, it signifies a dispute over *Eşkinici* policy between the *Ulema*, the Ottoman bureaucracy and the Janissaries, the rebels must have been aware of the fact they needed the *Ulema* support. Due to the effort of the Grand Vizier to isolate members of the *Ulema*, we can assume that either they were not able to be reached, or they had already been reached but this part is ignored by the authors. It is impossible to know the real truth without hard evidence. Thus, the depiction of the “enemy of the *Ulema* in every means” can be considered as an exaggeration of the authors. This raises two points:

The first is that since the rebels could not find the support they needed from the *Ulema* and the townspeople, the question of the Sultan’s dethronement may have not risen. Because according to the aforementioned rebellion methods, the dethronement demand generally came later in the proceedings. The second point is that they may have remained loyal to the Sultan; however, whilst they still accused those close to him of “treason”. In that sense, depicting the rebels as vandals shall be regarded as another exaggeration of the authors to support their claim that they were an “enemy of state and religion”. But it is not possible to make a firm decision over this situation.

After the meeting in the palace, a representative of the Porte was dispatched to the rebels.⁵¹⁵ It is noteworthy that the Porte did not send a delegation consisting of the members of the *Ulema*. Es’ad Efendi claims the rebels declared to the representative that they refused to perform military trainings. And they demanded execution of some officials and certain high-ranking members of the *Ulema*.⁵¹⁶

As for Mehmed Daniş Bey, following the meetings in the palace the Sultan

⁵¹⁵ Mehmed Es’ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 60-61. Mehmed Daniş Efendi, “*Neticet’ül Vekâyi*”, 51-52.

⁵¹⁶ Mehmed Es’ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 61.

ordered Holy Banner to be fetched and invited loyalists to meet in Sultan Ahmed Square immediately. As people were gathering under the Holy Banner of the Prophet, a representative was dispatched to ask the rebels their terms. The rebels gave a list of names and demanded their execution. Moreover, as the Sultan unfurled the Holy Banner, they avowed their “Noble Cauldron” (*Kazgan-ı Şerif*).⁵¹⁷

This is actually one of the most striking illustrations of a declaration of Holy War between the believers and the infidels. In fact, this event reveals that the Holy War was not only against the Janissaries but also against Janissary affiliations. Since the cauldrons were associated with a Bektashi identity of the Janissaries, Mehmed Daniş Bey reveals a dichotomy between the rebels and the loyalists as an opposition of superstition to the path of believers.

According to Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, the Sultan, the grand vizier, members of the high-ranking *Ulema* and other prominent members of the Ottoman administration gathered at the palace. They fetched the Holy Banner and called for the believers. Later on, in Sultan Ahmed Square, the crowd joined the side of Sultan and marched toward the rebels. According to him, it was a test of faith as all believers were obligated to join to the final battle against infidels.⁵¹⁸ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi does not narrate anything about negotiations between the rebels and the Porte. But as it seems he also interpreted events as a battle between true believers and infidel enemy.

Es'ad Efendi is the only author who narrates the details of discussions in the palace. Accordingly, the Sultan asked to Şeyhülislam and other members of the *Ulema* if the rebellious act of the Janissaries was a betrayal to the their role as subjects (*hurûc-ı ale's-sultan*) and what an appropriate punishment would be. The answer he received was to put them to death”.⁵¹⁹ With the approval of the *Ulema*, the Sultan fetched the Holy Banner and announced his call to the believers. The Sultan remained in his palace but the Grand Vizier, the Janissary agha, Şeyhülislam and other members were moved to Sultan Ahmed

⁵¹⁷ Mehmed Dâniş Efendi, “*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*”, 51-52.

⁵¹⁸ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, “*Gülzâr-ı Fütûhât*”, 10.

⁵¹⁹ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, “*Üss-i Zafer*”, 64-65.

Palace to begin their final assault on the Janissaries.⁵²⁰

When the crowd joined the forces of the Porte, Es'ad Efendi narrates another discussion among the loyalists in Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Apparently, there had been a discussion regarding what needed to be done against the rebels, as members of the *Ulema* regarded them as sinners and infidels who opposed their rulers and the orders of their ruler. The first answer was “they should be put to death”. However some people suggested dispatching a delegation to approach the rebels again. And, if the rebels refuse to conciliate, then it would be appropriate to attack them. Ahıskalı Ahmed Efendi, a prominent member of the *Ulema* was chosen for this duty. However, he himself admitted that it would only delay the ultimate punishment of the rebels. A final decision was made by the Grand Vizier and thus the loyalist forces began their assault.⁵²¹ Again, there was an attempt to send a delegation, but this time the members of the delegation were chosen members from the *Ulema*. Yet, it appears that this idea was opposed by the Grand Vizier again.

All of the authors consent the final assault was lawful and necessary. For the Janissaries, who had betrayed to their state and to religion, there was no point of return but to destroy them. Mehmed Daniş Bey offers very interesting reasoning regarding the punishment of the Janissaries:

The Janissaries had to pay for the crimes they committed against Sultan Osman II, and Sultan Selim III. He cites rebellious acts of the Janissaries against Kadı Abdurrahman Paşa in the Edirne Incident of 1806, and the assassination of the Janissary agha in Silistire.⁵²² Furthermore, he mentions the murder of Alemdar Mustafa Paşa in *Kadir Gecesi*.⁵²³ By offering such discourse of vengeance, Mehmed Daniş Bey appears as a spokesman of the New Order grandees.

For Es'ad Efendi, the Janissaries had betrayed their duty by rejecting military

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 65-67.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, 67-69.

⁵²² This detail was also expressed by Ubeydullah Kuşmani in *Fezleke*. See chapter 3.

⁵²³ Mehmed Dâniş Efendi, “*Neticet’ül Vekâyi*”, 52-53.

training.⁵²⁴ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi interpreted the final assault as divine intervention of the infidels. To him, people should have learned the example of what would happen to them if they rejected their religious duties and the will of their ruler. He despised the Janissaries and their affiliations, and so depicts them as being evil.⁵²⁵ The authors narrate that some of the Janissaries were tattooed with crosses and with the symbol of their regiment.⁵²⁶ This interpretation shall be regarded as excommunication the Janissaries' symbols which would have been prohibited by the abolishment of the Janissaries.

To put it briefly, excommunication of the Janissaries in contemporary sources were associated with their Bektashi Identity and their crimes they had committed against the State. Apparently, concepts of legitimisation in case of 1826 were mostly expressed through realignment of the Porte, the *Ulema* and the townspeople against the Janissaries. As already mentioned, the Janissaries' image in public was badly tarnished after Greek Rebellion of 1821. Hence, they had no choice but to seek ways to win back the public opinion with claims of restoring the order or denouncing the traitors to the state and religion. Despite their efforts, this time the inhabitants of the imperial capital chose the side of the Sultan which emphasises Mahmud II's success in winning public opinion. Apart from the abolishment of the Janissaries, the Porte had to take radical measures, such as closure of Bektashi Order. Since this study aims to reveal patterns of legitimisation, in the next stage the campaign against the Bektashi Order is analysed.

The Closure of the Bektashi Order: Final Step of Restoration of the Order

Closure of the Bektashi Order would be interpreted as another political manoeuvre which would allow the Porte to neutralise the Janissary's existence in the society and in the political arena. It also reflects a purge of anti-Porte elements, which had a crucial importance for Mahmud II to consolidate his authority over the Empire. The decision to abolish the order was agreed on by a council of mainstream Orthodox-Sunni orders, consisting of representatives from *Nakşibendi*, *Halveti*, *Sa'di*, *Mevlevi* orders and *Şeyhülislam* under the pretext of restoring the order. Hence, excommunication of the

⁵²⁴ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "*Üss-i Zafer*", 73.

⁵²⁵ Şirvânlı Fatih Efendi, "*Gülzâr-ı Fütühât*", 13.

Bektashi Order could be interpreted as another part of the legitimisation propaganda of the Porte.

As previous parts emphasised, the pattern of legitimisation in the contemporary sources derived from and are modified by concepts which were offered by Ubeydullah Kuşmani and Koca Sekbanbaşı. Ubeydullah Kuşmani blamed the Bektashi identity of the Janissaries to create an immoral illustration of the corps. This argument also served as another purpose, which was to illegalise Janissary claims of restoring the order over rejecting infidel innovations of military training. For the case of 1826 the rebellion, the contemporary authors illustrate a process of restoration of the order by establishing new army units that would be better capable of encountering the infidel enemy. This is the first view of restoration of the order. The second view is the destruction of the Janissaries for their crimes to the state and religion. And the third is closure of the Bektashi Order as the Janissaries were affiliated as its followers.

According to Fatma Sel Turhan, there was no factual argument behind the decision of the council. The Bektashi's were accused of violating the essential pillars; hence, were labelled as an enemy of religion. This interpretation relates to accusations of the "enemy of state" which was attributed to the Janissaries. Thus, the Bektashi Order are illustrated as cultivating rebels and infidels.⁵²⁷ This part aims to reveal the illustration of Bektashi Order by the contemporary sources, the reasons behind the closure of the Bektashi Order, which requires further research and is beyond the scope of this study.⁵²⁸ For the purpose of this study, the closure of the Bektashi Order, which had deep impact on Ottoman society, signifies the fact that the Porte would have had to pursue a larger-scale legitimisation policy. Therefore, all of the contemporary sources try to reveal righteousness for the closure of Bektashi Order. Es'ad Efendi is the only author who narrates details of the meeting with copy of the decree which was issued for closure of the Bektashi Order.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14, Mehmed Dâniş Efendi, "*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*", 55.

⁵²⁷ Fatma Sel Turhan, "*The Abolishment of Janissary Army and its Reflections*", 141-148.

⁵²⁸ On the condition of Ulema and Bektashi Order in 1826 see; Butrus Abu Maneh, "*Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876)*", (Istanbul: Isis 2001), 59-73. Suraiya Faroqhi, "*Anadolu'da Bektaşilik*", (Istanbul: Simurg 2001), 183-197. Güntekin Yıldız, "*Osmanlı Kara Ordusunda Yeniden Yapılanma ve Sosyo-Politik Etkileri*", 78-91. Tobias Heinzelmann, "*Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Genel Askerlilik Yükümlülüğü 1826-1856*", (Istanbul: Kitap 2009). In addition, on the official ideology of the Ottoman Empire regarding heresy, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "*Zındıklar ve Mühlidler*", (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt, Yayınları, 1998) 106-131.

Mehmed Daniş Efendi underlines the proximity between the Bektashi Order and the Janissaries. In addition, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi provides very interesting reasoning regarding the closure of the Bektashi Order.

According to Es'ad Efendi, representatives of *Nakşibendi*, *Halveti*, *Mevlevi*, *Sa'di* orders and *Şeyhülislam* gathered in the palace mosque under moderation of the Grand Vizier.⁵²⁹ The discussion started with a speech from *Şeyhülislam*. He mentioned the spiritual leaders of the Bektashi Order with great respect. However, the followers of the order had to be differentiated, as they were under claim of Bektashi-ship, manipulated the people with their blasphemous teachings and interpretations. As the Bektashis converted *haram* to *helal* and insulted the pillars, *Şeyhülislam* labelled the order and its followers as performers of sin (*fisk-u fücur*).⁵³⁰ He later asked the opinion of the attendant *Şeyhs* what should be done to them.

Some attendants hesitated to voice their opinion as they expressed their ignorance to Bektashi attitude. However, some members of the *Ulema* claimed that, even though the Bektashis are desecrators of the pillars, it would be appropriate to punish them. In response, the attendants announced certain names of Bektashi leaders who were accused of consciously ignoring essential pillars, such as fasting and prayer. Then, on the basis of the aforementioned accusations, *Şeyhülislam* announced the final judgment; due to their inappropriate approach towards Islam and the violation of it, the leaders of the Bektashi Order should be put to death, the order must be closed and its followers should be sent on exile.⁵³¹

Considering the narration of Es'ad Efendi, the accusations which attributed to Bektashi Order depend on their interpretations of religion. The council reclaimed the holiness of the spiritual leaders but implicitly affiliates the Janissaries as being responsible of the corruption of the Bektashi Order. However, despite accusations of being superstitious, there is no solid evidence to reveal the precise nature of the decision of the

⁵²⁹ Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "*Üss-i Zafer*", 173-174.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵³¹ Fatma Sel Turhan "*Abolishment of Janissary Army and its Reflections*", 143. Mehmed Es'ad Efendi, "*Üss-i Zafer*", 174-175.

council. Obviously, attitude of the *Şeyhülislam* and other members of the *Ulema* were decisive in the final judgment. This meeting and the attitude of the attendant *Şeyhs* also reveal that the Porte had symbolically sealed realignment of Orthodox- Sunni *Ulema* on its side.

In *Neticet'ül Vekayi*, Mehmed Daniş Bey voices the organic links between the Janissaries and the Bektashi Order. He admits the Bektashi Order was “the order of the superstitious” (*mezâhib-i bâtila*). And, the Janissaries identified themselves as followers of the Hacı Bektaş even a representative of the Hacı Bektaş Veli had lived in the barracks of 99th regiment.⁵³² All members of the Janissary corps under the claim of Bektashi-ship had performed their superstitious and infidel methods which ignored the pillars and manipulated people in the provinces. Hence, over claims of desecrating the pillars, performing superstitious rituals and rebelling against the State, the Order was closed; the Bektashi leaders were interrogated and jailed in the Armoury.⁵³³

Apparently, Mehmed Daniş Bey explicitly admits that the closure of the Order was a result of their affiliations with the Janissaries. It was the Janissaries who had corrupted the Order and manipulated the people in the capital and provinces under claim of Bektashi-ship. Considering the author’s illustration of 1826, that was symbolized as a clash between the “cauldron” and “the holy banner”, closure of the Bektashi Order was represented as another part of struggle between the infidels and the believers.

Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi narrates very sophisticated reasoning regarding the closure of Bektashi Order which occupies a huge part in his treatise. According to him, Bektashi order had consisted pharaoh-like enemies of state who were equal to *Ebu Cehil*⁵³⁴ within its organisation. The Bektashis were depicted as “a group of ignorant and absentminded people who pretended to follow the path of God (*sûret-i hakdan görünen bâtil bir gurûh-ı câhil u gâfil*) and a “treacherous enemy that is more dangerous and tenacious than *Franks* - unbelievers” (*küffârdan eşedd-ü akvâ bir düşmen-i gayr-ı mu'temen*).

⁵³² Mehmed Dâniş Efendi, “*Neticet'ül Vekâyi*”, 72.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵³⁴ “Ebu Cehil” is one of the opposers to the prophet Mohammed in Mecca who fight against the Muslims.

In the beginning, accordingly Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi claims that the ultimate reason behind the closure of Bektashi Order was their affiliations with the Janissaries. He spends a considerable amount of effort justifying the judgment of the council. The followers of the Order were accused of ignoring the pillars and infidel teachings. In order to support this claim he gives very striking examples of events.

The author asserts that during the Greek Rebellion of 1821, the Bektashis had offered alliance to the rebelling Greeks to fight against the *Yezids*. Apart from that, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi mentions the Bektashis who settled in Anatolian provinces. He asserts that during the war with Iran, the Bektashis, who were sympathizers of the enemy, armed themselves to attack the believers.⁵³⁵ This part is followed by author's opinions about solidarity between Bektashis and the Janissaries. When the Janissaries rebelled against the state, the Bektashis gathered on *Et Meydanı* and encouraged others to join the rebellion. Furthermore, he even mentioned about Bektashis' opposition to *Kadızedelis*,⁵³⁶ a very notable family in *Ulema*. According to him, it was fortunate that the *fatwa*, which approved the closure of Bektashi Order, had been signed by a member of *Kadızedelis*.⁵³⁷

This part was followed by the author's explanations to support his claims.⁵³⁸ According to the author, those who identify themselves as Bektashi pretended to follow the path of God. In fact, they were equal to those who had oppressed the Prophet in Mecca. The treacherous acts of Bektashis were no different than the betrayals which had occurred in the wars of *Uhud* and *Hendek* in the history of Islam.⁵³⁹ After this part, he mentions about Bektashis' hostile attitude towards great caliphs *Ömer* and *Osman*. He addresses the reader directly, to those who hated and held grievances to the great caliphs would be faithful.⁵⁴⁰ This part was followed by fictional story about Bektashis.⁵⁴¹

The part of Bektashi within treatise of Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi gives us very

⁵³⁵ Şirvânlı Fatih Efendi, "*Gülzâr-ı Fütûhât*, 19.

⁵³⁶ On *Kadızedelis* see Madeline C. Zilfi, "*The Politics of Piety : the Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age: 1600-1800*", (Minneapolis : Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988). 183-225.

⁵³⁷ Şirvânlı Fatih Efendi, "*Gülzâr-ı Fütûhât*, 20.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-26.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 21-24.

important clues to understand his view. Apparently, Fatih Efendi was a supporter of mainstream Orthodox-Sunni approach of the Ottoman *Ulema*. Instead of illustrating Bektashis as a corrupt Order which was affiliated with the Janissaries, he portrays the Bektashis as evil natured, opposers of the state and the religion in every occasion. Unfortunately, it is not possible to reveal the reasons behind Fatih Efendi's aggressive approach. However, *Kadızedeli's* reference signifies a very important point as the author also perceives the closure of the Bektashi Order as a means of revenge for the long-term struggle between two traditions. At certain points, a sermon-type narration of the treatise directly addresses the reader which may emphasise that over depiction of the infidel Bektashi image, the author praises closure of the Bektashi Order as a victory of his Sunni-Orthodox affiliations. In that sense, Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi appears as a spokesman of a certain group who was affiliated with mainstream Orthodox-Sunni fraction within the *Ilmiye* class.

CONCLUSION

As already stated at the beginning, considering the internal dynamics of the events it is possible to categorise the rebellions of 1703 and 1730 as one group and 1807 and 1826 as another. The rebellions in first group have similar characteristics as both rebellions eliminated the dominant “faction” led by the most powerful figure of the Ottoman administration. Therefore, these two rebellions shall be regarded as different episodes of an ongoing struggle. Presumably, the consciousness of the rebels in 1730 might be related to the rebellion of 1703. Considering the short time frame between these two rebellions, there would have been some participants who witnessed both of these events. The rebel’s main assertions were the same but the subtexts which articulated to the main principle for rebellion were different. As for the moral corruption argument, demolition of the *Sadabad* kiosks and the annulment of the tax impositions from the previous rule gives us the clues as to why the contemporary sources might have built such an argument.

The same continuity can be observed between the rebellion of 1807 and 1826. The ongoing struggle over the imposition of the New Order policy is the key feature of the arguments of the contemporary authors. Assumably, had Selim III prevailed over the Janissaries, the same legitimisation pattern, which was conditioned by Mahmud II in abolishment of the Janissaries, probably would have dominated the palace-centred view. By the abolishment of the Janissaries, the disposed Sultan was presented as a “martyr” and his role of “renovator of the religion and order” was transferred to Sultan Mahmud II. Hence, it is possible to claim that the origin of main the argument, which labelled the Janissaries as the enemy of state and religion, had developed earlier during reign of Selim III, and the same legitimisation pattern was inherited by the grandees of Mahmud II.

In addition, there was a similar pattern of procedure that the Ottoman rebellions followed from 1703 to 1826. The rebels were aware of these procedures as they followed the same steps regardless of their claim. We can observe in the rebellions of the 1703, 1730, 1807 and 1826 there are four major steps of an Ottoman rebellion:

The first step is “The Announcement of the Cause” which aims to create awareness among the townspeople over a protest or demonstration. At this stage, the rebels initiate their campaign by unfurling their banners and march into the heart of the city centre. Their effort of bringing legitimacy to their cause, is based on various assertions which refer to “treason” arguments. In all cases, the rebels more or less announce their cause to the public and filled the pretext of their reaction as initiating an act against “the traitors” who surround the Sultan. They unfurl a green banner which symbolises the Holy Banner of the Prophet and invite “the believers” to join their cause. Through the channels of such symbolic demonstration of righteousness, they create awareness in the public for their cause. This serves three purposes:

- Appealing the Public
- Negotiating with the Porte
- Catching the attention of the *Ulema*

In order to achieve these purposes, they paralyse the commercial centres of Istanbul and either appeal or force the *Esnaf* and shopkeepers to join them. In the outbreak of 1703 rebellion, the numbers of the protestors were thirty to fifty. When they decided to march to Sultan Ahmed Square, their numbers increased to hundreds. Furthermore, in the rebellion of 1730, the rebels, who split into three bands, announced their cause and raided the financial districts. For the rebellion of 1807, the rebels organised themselves in the citadels on the Bosphorus. When they reached the city centre, they had already made arrangements with the Janissaries, the artillerymen and the armourers. In the city centre, they performed the same methods to appeal to the public. In 1826, the rebels started their protest at the Janissary headquarters of *Et Meydanı*, then they announced their cause to the public.

Considering the Ottoman concepts of justice, this step of the rebellion can be evaluated as subjects’ demonstration of their disapproval of the administration of the State. At this step, civil officers, such as the major of Istanbul, the Janissary *agha* or the Janissary *agha* deputy were targeted by the rebels. They freed the prisoners and let them to join

them. The palace-centred view might have used this statement to condemn the rebels; however, from the view of the rebels it indicates the “unjust” conditions of an oppressive regime the people were living under. At the next step, Friday prayers are suspended or at least the intention of suspending the Friday prayers is voiced by the rebels. Thus, this serves the purpose of delivering a message to the Porte by questioning the authority of the Sultan.

As for the condition of the *Ulema*, the rebels avoid unnecessary bloodshed and looting. On the contrary, in all cases they took any necessary measure to maintain the order of the city. The public punishments of those who disobeyed the orders, was also a demonstration of righteousness. Consistently, the *Ulema* participated with the rebels after merging with the Janissaries. Presumably, this is a milestone for the successive steps of the Ottoman rebellions, as after this point the events became full scale mutiny. But at this level, the rebels bring a senior member among the *Ulema* or leading figure such as the judge of Istanbul to confirm their demands and write invitations to the high-ranking members.

The second step of the rebellion is “The Negotiations”. In this step, the rebels seek ways to merge with the Janissaries in *Et Meydanı*. The rebel assemblage follow the route of *Divan Yolu* to reach to *Et Meydanı*. Traditionally, the noble cauldrons of the Janissary regiments are brought to the *Et Meydanı*. This ceremony symbolises unity of comrades under the same cause in a rebellion.

Generally, the members of *Ulema* are either invited or forced to take their side of the rebel assemblage in second step. At this point it is necessary to underline that the high-ranking members of *Ulema* as a whole, did not support the rebels except in the case of the 1807 rebellion. In the rebellions of 1703 and 1730 the rebels received the support of “outsider” members of the *Ulema* who had been ousted by the ruling cadres. In the rebellion of 1703, the support of *Ulema* was a reaction against the nepotistic attitude of *Şeyülislam* Feyzullah Efendi. In 1730, the *Kazasker* of Rumelia and former *Kadı* of Istanbul supported the rebels. Thus, the support of the *Ulema* was heavily affected by their relationship with the ruling cadres.

In all cases, the *Ulema* appeared as a negotiator between the rebels and the Porte. As the legitimacy of their cause depends on the affirmation of the *Ulema*, the negotiations can be considered as the medium of the rebel assemblage for the declaration of their demands to the Sultan. Presumably in this stage the new cadres of the administration, military and *Ilmiye* go into discussion. Hence, the political influence and support of the *Ulema* in the negotiations actually sealed the fate of the rebels.

Apart from that, the rebels had their requests confirmed by the members of *Ulema*, thus the legitimacy of their cause would be officially sealed. The *Ulema* confirm the appointments of the rebels, suspend the Friday prayers, and conduct negotiations with the Porte in the name of rebels. After the joining of the *Ulema*, the rebels wait for the Sultan to send his representatives to hear their demands. During the negotiations, the rebels never reject the authority of the Sultan, rather they express loyalty and declare the names of those who they accuse with being guilty of treason.

Despite the demonstration of loyalty to the Sultan, this step of the rebellion will be followed by “depositions”. The terms of the rebels aim to purge the Sultan’s closest men and receive approval for their appointments, such as *Şeyülislam*, *Kazasker* of Anatolia, *Kazasker* of Rumelia and the Janissary agha etc. This point actually indicates, by accepting the terms of the rebels the Sultan becomes powerless. Thus, deposition is inevitable.

The success of this step of the rebellions again depends on the approval of the *Ulema*. For the Ottoman concepts of justice, by labelling his closest man as “traitors”, the Sultan is considered incapable to rule as he failed to observe the corruption in his administration; hence, maintain his duties. Thus, the background of the deposition pretext is completed with a legitimate argument; dependent on various pretexts.

In 1703 rebellion, the rebel assemblage demanded the return of the court from Edirne to Istanbul and the dismissal of Feyzullah Efendi. After long negotiations, the Sultan gave in to the rebel demands, dismissed Feyzullah Efendi but refused to return to imperial capital. Instead, he invited the newly appointed officers and members of the

Ulema to Edirne. The rebels considered the order of the Sultan as a counter-manoeuvre against them. They used this issue as pretext of deposition. At this point, the *Ulema* labelled the Sultan as an incapable ruler and an oppressor.

For the 1730 rebellion, the demands of the rebels were no different. Their demand of the execution of the officers, including the Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa, was performed and their terms were approved by the Sultan. But then the dispute over the authenticity of Damat Ibrahim Paşa's dead body resulted in the deposal of the Sultan. In the rebellion of 1807, after the annulment of the New Order and the execution of several New Order grandees, the rebels accuse the Sultan of being an "oppressor" as he forced his subjects to wear infidel clothes and perform infidel military training. Thus, he was deposed.

After the power of the Sultan was broken by the rebels over pretext of "being unjust and oppressive", the rebels appointed a new Sultan sympathetic to their cause. This is actually common principle of the deposition step. Under a new regime they would be safer. Thus, the rebels have elevate themselves to the position of "restorers of the order" as they defy the unjust and incapable ruler.

The fourth step of the rebellion is the "realignment" process. The pragmatic relationship with the rebels and the *Ulema* usually results with a purge of the rebels in the aftermath of the rebellion. The new Sultan who struggles to consolidate power over the rebel affiliations is forced to seek ways to compromise with the *Ulema* and the new cabinet. Hence, the rebels who were once supported and tolerated by the state officials, the *Ulema* are painted as "traitors" who mutinied against the state. This step actually determines the palace-centred view on the narration of the events.

The official chroniclers or the others who adopted the palace-centred view establish a pattern which condemns the rebels in all stages of the rebellion and illustrates them as vile people who bring disorder to the state. However, in this pattern the chroniclers need to find a scapegoat for the events to justify the deposed Sultan. The most sophisticated discussion regarding the legitimacy of the rebellion came into view in the

case of 1807. Firstly, there was an ongoing battle of legitimisation between the Porte and the antagonists over the New Order policy. The basic principle of the assertion of the Porte was to renovate the order by establishing a new, westernised army to protect the Muslims. The legitimacy of this policy is based on the “rule of reprisal” which obliges the Muslims to use weapon of their enemies. The counter argument labelled the outcomes of the New Order Policy as an infidel innovation. The first round of this battle was won by the antagonists and consequently the Sultan was depicted as an “oppressor”. In response, the affiliates of the New Army promoted the Sultan to the rank of “martyr”. The same pattern creates a basis for legitimising the abolishment of the Janissaries.

The rebels use three dominant arguments to signify the legitimacy of their cause. Assertions over “treason”, “justice” and “oppression” concepts of legitimisation shape the arguments of the rebels in different stages of the rebellions. In response, the palace-centred view relied on “mutiny”, “betrayal of role” and “disobedience of the grand order” assertions in their arguments. Several subtexts were articulated to these main themes of legitimisation. In rebellion of 1703, “the oppression” and “injustice” were articulated by the argument of “treason”. The Karlowitz treaty terms consider this as a failure to protect the Muslim lands which was the basic duty of the Sultan. In addition to this, *Şeyülislam* Feyzullah Efendi was the scapegoat of the rebellion due to his violations of state protocols.

In 1730, “The moral corruption” was the subtext of the “treason” argument. Damat Ibrahim Paşa, as he was corrupt, he surrendered the Muslim lands to the infidel enemy for the sake of his own hedonistic pleasures. For the rebellion of 1807, the rebels articulated “the oppression” was the subtext of the “imposition of infidel innovations” assertion. In response, the palace-centred view labelled the Sultan as a “renovator of the order”; hence, those who mutinied against the Sultan were accused of defying the grand order of God. The illustration of Janissaries and their Bektashi affiliations in 1826 depended on the same principle. Thus, the Porte created an image of “the enemy of the state and religion” by underlining the Janissaries’ previous crimes and opposition to the new training methods.

Therefore, as was said in the first chapter, in all cases political realism prevailed over religious idealism in the legitimisation procedures of the rebellion. The role of religious legitimisation practices were interpreted by the prevailed group for the sake of their purposes.

The cause of events may be organised or impulsive acts. Particularly the rebellions of 1703 and 1807, similar characteristics of events appeared as impulsive reactions from the view of the palace. Later on, both events transformed into a popular rebellion. Consequently, there had been some discussions among the contemporary authors whether there was conspiracy or not. In general, the conspiracy theories were voiced by the authors in all of the events, actually indicating their affiliations. According to Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa the rebellion of 1703 was a plot of Rami Mehmed Paşa, who became the most influential figure in the early rule of Ahmed III. For Destari Salih Efendi, probably an affiliate of Damat Ibrahim Paşa, the rebellion of 1730 was a plot of Zülali Hasan Efendi who became the chief judge of Anatolia in the reign of Mahmud I. Among the various sources which dealt with the rebellion of 1807, there were some assertions that the whole event was a plot of *Şeyhülislam* Ataullah Efendi and the Vizier Köse Musa Paşa.⁵⁴² Further comparative analyse on the networks of relationships, particularly in terms of revealing the affiliations of the contemporary authors is a necessity to uncover undermining plots.

In all cases, the Porte also took the same measures to repel the rebellion. They invite the high ranking officers and prominent members of the *Ulema* to the palace. They arm the loyal troops for a possible armed conflict. The original Holy Banner is used to win public support. These steps which the rebels and the Porte followed might be considered as traditional methods that should be taken in a rebellion.

Here in, it would be useful to ask; was there an reoccurring tradition in the Ottoman rebellions regarding the technical procedures to be followed?

⁵⁴² Aysel Yıldız Danacı, “*Vaka’yı Selimiyye*”, Chapter 1, p. 10-60

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to focus on all of the mainstream Ottoman rebellions from sixteenth century until the abolishment of the Janissaries. In addition, failed attempts of Janissary-led revolts and the reasons behind the failure are also needed to be studied. According to Cemal Kafadar, up until the rebellion of 1806-1807, there were at least ten mainstream Janissary-led or major Janissary rebellions which occurred in the imperial capital in 1589, 1622, 1648, 1651, 1655, 1656, 1687, 1703, 1730 and 1740. He underlines a shared political discourse in these events.⁵⁴³ As cited by Ali Yaycıoğlu, the identity of the Janissary-ship that derived from the corps' autonomous internal hierarchy, jurisdiction and political orientation with Bektashi Order might have provided its members and affiliations with a unique religious-political outlook and a sense of solidarity. Thus the group consciousness of the Janissaries might have built its own customs regarding the protection and well-being of the public or the old laws. From the scope of our study, it may be not possible to reach an ultimate judgement about a pattern or tradition of a successful rebellion techniques, as it requires further in depth research on the contemporary sources. However, assumingly within the “tradition of the dissent” of the Janissaries, it is possible to observe a certain degree of awareness regarding technical procedures of a rebellion.

⁵⁴³ Cemal Kafadar, *“On the Purity and Corruption of the Janissaries”*, 179-190, “The Janissaries and other riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: rebels without a cause?”, 133-134. Ali Yaycıoğlu “Provincial Challenge”, 312 see footnote 48.

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