

LOOKING INTO SYKES-PICOT ORDER: INTRA-REGIONAL DYNAMICS IN
THE MAKING OF MODERN MIDDLE EASTERN BORDERS

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Sykes-Picot Düzenine Bakmak: Modern Ortadoğu Sınırlarının Oluşumunda Bölgeler
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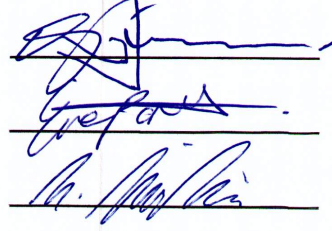
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Abstract

The Sykes-Picot metaphor has incrementally become firmly associated with almost all the geopolitical predicaments the Middle Eastern states had to face. Added to this, increasing challenges to the established territorial order of the Middle Eastern countries combined with the complicated structure of the Syrian civil war have once again centered the Sykes-Picot narrative on the academic and popular discussions about the future of the Middle Eastern order. However, despite a recently emerged trend attempting to unclothe the historical continuity of the interplay between local, regional and international factors, they neither provide deeper insights about the historical interplay between different factors nor bring new analytical assessments. Departing from this lacuna in the literature, this study attempts to find answers to the following main research questions: How did the interplay of the array of domestic, regional, and international factors laid the groundwork for the formation of the Sykes-Picot territorial order? What are the types of borders and how can they be theoretically categorized for being used as an analytical tool? How was the administrative structure and divisions of the regions before the Sykes-Picot agreement and to which border categorizations do these structures correspond? Drawing largely on the existing theoretical assumptions of border studies, this study attempts to apply a three-tracked typology of borders (*frontiers*, *boundaries*, *borders*) to the historical interplay between local, regional and international factors during the process of the formation of modern Middle Eastern borders. Arguing that the Sykes-Picot agreement constitutes only one of the aspects of the Middle Eastern border formation, this study concludes that there is a historical linkage between the evolution of the Ottoman domestic territorial administrative system with the adjustments of the subsequent

regional and international developments regarding the formation of the Middle Eastern borders.

Özet

Sykes-Picot metaforu gün geçtikçe Ortadoğu'nun yüzleşmek zorunda kaldığı tüm jeopolitik açmaz ile sıkı bir şekilde ilişkilendirilir hale gelmiştir. Buna ilaveten Ortadoğu'nun yerleşik toprak nizamına yöneltilecek meydan okumalar Suriye iç savaşının karmaşık yapısı ile de birleşince Sykes-Picot anlatımı tekrar Ortadoğu düzeninin geleceği ile ilgili yapılan akademik ve popüler tartışmaların merkezine oturmuştur. Ancak her ne kadar yeni oluşan literatür yerel, bölgesel ve uluslararası faktörlerin etkileşimindeki tarihsel sürekliliği ortaya koymaya çalışsa da, bunlar ne bu farklı faktörler arasındaki etkileşime dair derinlemesine bir yorum ortaya koyabilmiş ne de tam anlamıyla analitik olarak yeni bir değerlendirme üretebilmiştir. Literatürdeki bu boşluktan yola çıkarak bu çalışma, şu temel araştırma sorularına cevap aramaya çalışmaktadır: Yerel, bölgesel ve uluslararası faktörlerin etkileşimi Sykes-Picot toprak düzeninin oluşumuna nasıl bir alt yapı sağlamıştır? Sınır türleri nelerdir ve bu sınır türleri analitik bir araç olarak kullanılmak üzere nasıl kategorize edilebilir? Sykes-Picot düzenlemelerinden önce bölgedeki idari yapılar ve ayrışmalar nasıldı ve bu yapılar ve ayrışmalar hangi sınır türlerine karşılık geliyordu? Sınır çalışmalarının mevcut teorik varsayımları üzerine bina edilen bu çalışma, modern Ortadoğu sınırlarının oluşum sürecinde yerel, bölgesel ve uluslararası faktörlerin etkileşimine üç aşamalı sınır tipolojisini uygulamaya çalışmaktadır. Ortadoğu sınırlarının oluşumunda Sykes-Picot'nun yalnızca bir boyutu teşkil ettiğini iddia eden bu çalışma, Osmanlı iç toprak idaresi sistemi ile coğrafyada daha sonra gerçekleşen Ortadoğu sınırları ile ilgili bölgesel ve uluslararası gelişmeler arasında tarihi bir bağ olduğu sonucuna varmaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem and Rationale for the Study

The explanations and recommendations about the post Arab Spring Middle Eastern order have been primarily constructed upon the differing narratives of the Sykes-Picot arrangements. While the overwhelming bulk of the discussions blamed the Sykes-Picot order as the main source of the contemporary quagmire the Middle East struggles with, the nascent actors of the post Arab Spring chessboard have also asserted their commitment to wipe out the traces of the legacy of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. The Sykes-Picot metaphor has incrementally become firmly associated with almost all the geopolitical predicaments the Middle Eastern states had to face. Added to this, the increasing challenges to the established territorial order of the Middle Eastern countries combined with the complicated structure of the Syrian civil war have once again centered the Sykes-Picot narrative on the academic and popular discussions about the future of the Middle Eastern order.

Behind the emergence of the Sykes-Picot myth as a springboard for these debates and analyses lays a two-fold argumentation about the order believed to be established by the same agreement. The first fold involves problematizing the Sykes-Picot as having drawn “artificial” borders dividing the same society that were once together into different political structures. The second fold stresses on the method the Sykes-Picot agreement followed rather than the consequences and argues that it was a “top-down” implementation of territorial arrangements without taking the local realities into consideration. Ever since its disclosure, the debates about Sykes-Picot around these two speculative themes (its artificiality and its top-down method) have

become the primary tools in explaining almost all the catastrophes the Middle Eastern countries encountered.

Departing from the above explained argumentations, a recently emerged popular literature started to challenge this one-dimensional perception about the formation of the modern Middle Eastern borders by arguing that there is not only the international aspect embodied in the Sykes-Picot agreement but rather it is the combination of a series of local, regional and international factors that together set the ground for the formation of modern Middle Eastern territorial order. However, despite these recent popular studies are positive steps in unclosing the historical continuity of the interplay between local, regional and international factors, they are mostly either specific case studies that chronologically analyses the historical evolution of the specific Middle Eastern borders from a historical perspective or speculative essays that do not provide deeper insights (Bilgin, 2016; Bilgin, 2016; Danforth 2013; Garfinkle 2016; Khalidi 2016; Muhanna 2014; Ottaway 2015; Patel 2016; Stansfield 2013).

1.2 Hypothesis, Research Questions and Methodology

Against this backdrop, it seems to be relevant to delve into the historical interplay between local, regional and international factors that actually constitutes the background of the formation of Sykes-Picot order from a theoretical and historical perspective to understand the validity of the above-mentioned arguments. The hypothesis of this study is that it is not only the Sykes-Picot Agreement that formed the geopolitical order of the modern Middle East but rather both the local and other regional and international arrangements had long before started to pave the way for the formation of the modern Middle Eastern borders leaving the Sykes-Picot

agreement as one of the component parts of the array of domestic, regional and international factors.

Departing from this hypothesis, this study mainly addresses the following primary research question:

- How did the interplay of the array of domestic, regional, and international factors laid the groundwork for the formation of the Sykes-Picot territorial order?

While finding an analytical response to this primary research question, this study touches upon to the following sub-questions:

- What are the types of borders and how can they be theoretically categorized for being used as an analytical tool?
- How was the administrative structure and divisions of the regions before the Sykes-Picot agreement and to which border categorizations do these structures correspond?
- Were there already definite borders in the region in which Sykes-Picot was interested and how did the existing administrative divisions of the region evolve throughout history?
- Was Sykes-Picot agreement the only international intervention affected the borders of the region or were there other international interventions before the Sykes-Picot agreement?
- What kind of factors did play greater roles in the international interest in forming the modern Middle Eastern borders?

- Does the fact that there had been several international interventions regarding the formation of the modern Middle Eastern borders, give Sykes-Picot Agreement a higher legitimacy?

In order to substantiate the hypothesis of this study and find answers to these research questions, this study follows an analytical historical methodology. In doing so, this study first proposes that the concept of border has to be understood from a theoretical and evolutionary perspective by defining and categorizing different types of borders. After classifying defining a three tracked evolutionary typology of borders (*frontiers*, *boundaries*, and *borders*), this study argues that since this three-tracked typology borders has a progressive nature, it could also be utilized as an analytical tool to assess the historical evolution of the territorial orders of different geographies. Drawing largely on this theoretical and analytical border categorization, this study attempts to apply this three-tracked typology of borders to the historical interplay between local, regional and international factors during the process of the formation of modern Middle Eastern borders. Proposing that the Sykes-Picot constitutes only one of the aspects of this process, this study seeks to explore the linkage between the evolution of the Ottoman domestic territorial administrative system with the adjustments of the subsequent regional and international developments regarding the formation of these borders.

1.3 Novelties and Structure

Putting this comprehensive approach at the core of its analysis, this study pushes for generating theoretical and empirical novelties.

The first analytical novelty of this study is its attempt to contribute to the increasing literature on the processes of border formation by trying to go beyond the

chronological assessments towards a more integral comprehension under the light of the analytical tools it adopts. Second, although this study does not provide a new definition or classification for border studies, it draws different border perceptions together in a categorical manner in an attempt to provide an analytical tool for assessing the historical evolution of borders for tracking the different historical stages they pass. Its holistic approach regardful of the interplay between domestic, regional and international factors in the processes of border formation can be considered as the third analytical novelty of this study.

Empirically, this study, first, presents a deeper investigation of the background of the formation of modern borders of the Middle East. Acknowledging borders as the products of an evolutionary process, the second empirical novelty of this study is to deconstruct the Sykes-Picot myth by delving into the historical evolution of the Ottoman domestic territorial divisions of *eyalet* and *vilayet*. Applying the three tracked typology of the evolution of borders on the Ottoman case, the third empirical novelty of this study is to draw parallelisms between *frontier* and *eyalet*, *boundary* and *vilayet*, and finally *the international arrangements* and *border*.

Given this background, this study is constructed of three chapters in addition to its introduction and conclusion chapters. Chapter 2, entitled “Studying Borders: Conceptual Problems and Theoretical Approaches”, sets the theoretical and analytical ground of this study by attempting to draw different definitions and categorizations of border together under three conceptualizations: *frontier*, *boundary*, and *border*. With the necessity of generating a basic understanding of these different border conceptualizations, Chapter 2 starts with elaborating on the early geopolitical perceptions and thoughts on borders. By reviewing some of these early classical geopolitical perceptions, it seeks to explain the trajectory towards the modern

differentiation of border definitions and conceptualizations. Then it proceeds with delving into these three categories by introducing frontiers as *indefinite zones of transition*, boundaries as *fixed lines of separation* and borders as *multiplex social and political institutions* to draw an evolutionary type of border comprehension. Furthermore, this chapter also seeks to define and clarify two distinct but widely misused terminologies of border making, *delimitation* and *demarcation*, in order to provide an analytical ground for differentiating the border making cases in the Middle East in the following chapters.

Chapter 3, entitled “The Territorial Legacy of the Ottoman Empire”, explores the administrative divisions of *eyalet* and *vilayet* of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East with reference to its historical evolution and transformation. Here, the chapter begins with providing general insights on the nature of Middle Eastern territoriality from a historical perspective starting from the first Islamic empire of the Umayyads until the annexation of the Arab territories by the Ottoman Empire. Thereafter, by applying the analytical border categorization provided in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 investigates the degree to which the Arab eyalets and vilayets of the Ottoman empire correspond to these analytical border categories. Aiming to portray the historical evolution of the Ottoman Arab administrative divisions as a historical source for the supervening national boundaries of the Middle East, the chapter specifically deals with the geography encompassing the modern Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, which later partitioned between Britain and France after the First World War. In doing so, this chapter particularly focuses on the question of how the historical evolution of these domestic arrangements became a source of inspiration for future arrangements regarding the Middle Eastern boundaries.

Having provided a link between the evolution and transformation of domestic factors and the formation of the Middle Eastern borders in Chapter 3, Chapter 4, entitled “Regional Interests of Foreign States: Efforts to Delimitate and Demarcate New Borders”, takes the analysis a step further by further engaging the discussion with the regional and international factors with a special emphasis on the some of the demarcation and delimitation cases. With the aim of demonstrating the other regional and international interventions regarding the formation of the Middle Eastern borders, this chapter sheds light on the argument that it is not only the Sykes-Picot Agreement that internationally carved out the modern map of the Middle East but rather there had been other preceding regional and international arrangements. In addition, Chapter 4 further expands Chapter 3’s narrow geographic scope of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and also scrutinizes on an expanded geography. In doing so it looks to the different cases where domestic, regional and international factors played greater roles. The cases include Aqaba, Mount Lebanon, Palestine, Persian Gulf, Iran, Yemen and finally the Sykes-Picot agreement. In the final stage, the conclusion chapter seeks to find overall responses to the research questions stated here.

CHAPTER 2: STUDYING BORDERS: CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Organizational structures/tools/institutions, whether natural or human, can be seen in all social interactions for managerial purposes and to associate and disassociate social relations in hierarchical terms. Ethnic groups, societies and nations become either more connected or further opposed to each other through the evolution of these organizational structures, depending on their varying types. Indeed, throughout history, territorial forms appeared to be one of the most influential factors affecting and transforming societal relations. Societies, through their connections to territories, define their living spaces as well as their social, political and economic limitations. By doing so, societies reveal converging or diverging territorial manifestations. This process enables societies to distinguish themselves from others and execute more organized and internally coherent mutual relations.

These territorial manifestations and societal limitations resulting in converging or diverging societal relations are executed by the emergence and formation of borders. Indeed, as borders create a physical limitation of a sovereign's authority, they both physically divide societies into opposing entities and also are themselves created by those same opposing entities. Therefore, the simultaneous reason and result of the emergence and evolution of borders is the fundamental dichotomy in the analysis of borders (Konrad 2015, p. 1).

Given this background, it can be argued that dichotomies, whether social or natural, come to the forefront in the process of the emergence of borders. However, although borders in general are products of these dichotomies and at the same time represent a dichotomy or opposition between the adjacent entities themselves, they

also serve to reveal and create a more concrete and coherent “reality” inside them (Muhanna 2014). This coherence comes from the fact that borders represent the end-point of states’ common identities and values while outside of these borders this harmony disappears. As argued by Minca and Vaughan-Williams, borders help states to ‘spatialize the political’ and thus provide them with the ability to transform their geopolitical imaginations into more concrete and manageable beings (Minca & Vaughan-Williams 2012, pp. 759–761).

The above-mentioned general characteristics of borders have been studied by various scholars from different disciplines including geopolitics, law and history, among others. Such inter-disciplinary works in the literature have resulted in a complicated and complex conceptual framework of border studies. This chapter is designed to evaluate and compile different explanations and orientations of border studies to reveal the main turning points in the conceptualization and theorization of borders under three parts. The first part of this chapter will review the early historical examples of border formation experiences and analyze the main border references of principal classical geopolitical texts. It will finally attempt to differentiate the use of various concepts (frontier, boundary, border) in order to demonstrate their different uses in an attempt to propose a gradual analytical framework for studying the evolution of borders. The second part will categorize two complementary but different phases of border making. Finally, drawing on these conceptual frameworks, the third part of this chapter will analyze the paradigm-change observed in border studies to reveal current multi-perspectival aspects.

2.1 Elucidating the Problems in the Conceptualization: Frontiers, Boundaries and Borders

Parallel to their complexification and development, social networks began to produce interconnected outcomes related to geopolitics. This process of intricacy had a direct impact on the trajectories of borders. This assumption leads to the conclusion that the first rudimental forms of social structures, i.e. tribes, had an elemental understanding of territoriality mainly embodied in undefined zones rather than defined and well-established areas and would be later developed further in line with the maturing of political organization (Jones 1959, p. 242). Although this understanding of a parallel development of social structures and borders has validity in the assessment of early cases, Jones showed some exceptions in which primitive tribes also formed various types of borders in the forms of fences and barriers. However, the general inference about this relationality is that the understanding of territoriality improves as the political organization grows more complex (Jones 1959, p. 242).

The historical examples of the Chinese and Roman empires as such complex political organizations have been utilized to prove the literature's emphasis on the causal relation between political maturity and the emergence of borders. Indeed, these historical cases reveal the transition towards borders as fixed barriers rather than unfixed and undefined vague zones. Furthermore, in these early examples of border formations, it is possible to find traces of civilizational dissociations. For instance, The Great Wall of China, built circa 200 BCE, serves as a good example of the civilization factor in the formation of borders. Its erection has been portrayed as the result of clashes between civilized people and the barbarians of the Asian steppes

(Lattimore 1937, p. 530). The main arguments of this view is that the Great Wall of China served to control the in and out movements between the civilized and the uncivilized. In this regard, Prescott argues that the Wall was not only used for keeping the uncivilized out, but also used for controlling the Chinese citizens themselves, who were living in agriculture areas distant from the center (Prescott 2015, p. 46). Yet, there are other explanations that treat the Wall as the limit of an expansion, which posits the Wall as the empire's reluctance for the further conquests and a control mechanism (Jones 1959, p. 244). The most significant point in these explanations is that the early Chinese experience of bordering, embodied in the Great Wall of China, is pretty much connected to limiting and controlling itself by closing the door for further expansion.

Herein, the border formation experience of the Roman Empire also provides alternative insights contrary to that of the Chinese experience. The existing literature on border formation of the Roman Empire suggests that the Romans did not establish their borders for the purpose of limiting or controlling its expansion as the Romans enjoyed a “world hegemony” and did not tend to establish constraints to its rule (Brunet-Jailly 2011, p. 3). Assuming that the Romans preferred advancing as far as their natural limitations, it could be asserted that, contrary to the Chinese experience, the Roman borders were in general natural restrictions. However, while Roman territories were generally confined by natural features, the Romans also made use of trenches, hedges and similar man-made barriers, named *Limes*, as territorial limitations (Jones 1959, p. 246). The same logic is reflected in the generalization about Roman borders indicating that the Romans built and formed borders for defense purposes instead of creating barriers to its sovereignty (Prescott 2015, p. 46).

These two contending but complementary early historical examples of border experiences reveal that different civilizations may have had different approaches to the understanding and practical use of borders. Hence, the existence of these different approaches, both in conceptualization and application, resulted in differentiations in the concepts related to these territorial limitations.

2.1.1 Early Insights on Territoriality from the Perspective of Classical Geopolitics

These two early examples show how different political-philosophical perceptions used borders for different purposes, to control in-out movements and to mark the defense lines rather than limiting the sovereignty. These two examples and other later geopolitical developments led many geopolitical writings to discuss and imagine different forms and uses of borders, especially in the 19th and 20th century. Although most of these works did not specifically deal with borders in detail, they broadly mentioned the roles and characteristics of borders and their political significance. Some of these geopolitical scholars, who in a way touched upon borders in their works, are Thomas Holdich (1843-1929), Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), Lionel William Lyde (1863-1947), Karl Haushofer (1869-1946), Jacques Ancel (1879-1943) and Nicholas J. Spykman (1893-1943).

It can be easily argued that these early geopolitical writings approached borders through their connection to states, not to the people. They portrayed borders as the territorial representations or “manifestations” of states (Newman & Paasi 1998, p. 187). The French revolution and the rising trend of rationalism in philosophical thinking was also echoed in geopolitical writings, which began to think rationally on

natural borders before being opposed by the German understanding of national borders (Jones 1959, p. 248).

Friedrich Ratzel, one of the early German geopolitical theoreticians, approached the state and its relation with territory as a living organism that needs space in order to survive. Ratzel's understanding of space combined different factors such as biology, geography and anthropology, and, with this integrated approach, proposed that states, particularly great ones, need to expand continuously to a certain extent.(Abrahamsson 2013, pp. 39–40). Ratzel named this limit of expansion as “space conception” and defined borders as the outer layers of these limits that function both as protectors and triggers of interaction (Prescott 2015, p. 9). Ratzel provided seven laws for the “spatial growth of states” (Ratzel 1897). The fourth law of spatial growth of states directly relates to borders and represents his conceptualization of borders. “The frontier is, as a peripheral organ of the state, the bearer of its growth and its security, conforming to all changes of the state organism” (Jones 1959, p. 249). According to this definition, Ratzel views borders as the extensions and subsidiaries of states which serve for growth, security and change i.e. for living.

Thomas Holdich studied demarcation surveys of India and Afghanistan on-site and approached borders from a more functional and practical aspect. Holdich's explanations and treatment of borders related more to blocking conflicts and thus perceived borders as the preventers of conflicts. Holdich distinguished between best and bad boundaries and argued that natural “barriers” such as mountains etc. constitute best boundaries while geographical coordinates constitute bad ones (Minghi 1963, p. 408). Lionel William Lyde's functional perception of borders was

also raised by Minghi. Lyde understood borders more positively, arguing that borders are providers of peaceful interactions rather than preventers of conflicts while also joining Holdich in accepting that nature provides good borders (Minghi 1963, p. 408).

The classical geopolitical writings and their emphasis on borders took shape around the idea of preventing undesirable conflicts by establishing or redrawing more proper borders between neighbor states. Spykman's explanations are important in that he suggested drawing borders in a way that do not lead to conflicts. He argued that any postwar territorial adjustment should prioritize redrawing borders in a way that they do not leave one state less or more powerful so that a power differentiation would not re-trigger future conflicts (Minghi 1963, p. 412). French philosopher Ancel discussed borders in the same vein and argued that borders, conceptualized as "political isobars", served as lines representing a balance in power between two states (Prescott 2015, p. 10; Rankin & Schofield 2004, p. 8). Another important name to be mentioned here is German geographer Haushofer. Haushofer took cultural harmony into account and argued that a cultural line should encompass a culturally homogenous population which would be further encompassed by a military line that would protect any external intervention to this culturally homogenous population (Prescott 2015, p. 9).

The above-mentioned classical geopolitical writings paid attention to borders in a more functional way but did not intend to make conceptual discussions on the terminology of borders and mainly used the various terms of frontier, border and boundary interchangeably. However, more detailed and conceptual works have proven that these terms represent different meanings and notions. For instance, while describing surveys in the southern borders of Afghanistan in 1897, A. H. McMahon

used three different terms intentionally: frontier, border and boundary. McMahon wrote that “the southern border of Afghanistan from the Gomal river to the Persian frontier”; “The Koh-i-Malik-Siah mountain marks the southern point of the boundary between Afghanistan and Persia, as agreed by those two governments” (McMahon 1897, p. 393). In these sentences, McMahon intentionally made a differentiation between the terms border, frontier and boundary, describing a river as a “border”, an undefined area towards Persia as a frontier and the result of an agreement as a boundary.

2.1.2 Frontiers: Indefinite Zones of Transition

Four years before McMahon published his surveys in Afghanistan, in an essay submitted to the American Historical Association in 1893 the famous American historian Frederick Jackson Turner examined the role of the “frontier” in American history and argued that it was the frontier that drove the fate of America. His conceptualization of frontier considers frontiers to be the layers of a progression and the junction between the civilized and the uncivilized (Rankin & Schofield 2004, p. 4). Therefore, these frontiers represent the direction towards which the expansion should move. Because they represent the line between the civilized and the uncivilized, they should be taken under control by a progressive actor and “tamed” (Newman & Paasi 1998, p. 189).

This understanding of frontiers is directly related to settlements which divide the settled from the unsettled parts of a country. Prescott drew attention to the fact that, apart from using the term in its political sense, political geographers also use the term in order to refer to the “zone” between the settled and the unsettled (Prescott 2015, p. 36).

Thus, there appears two categorizations for frontiers: political frontiers and settlement frontiers. Newman and Paasi argued that political frontiers are different from settlement frontiers in the sense that political frontiers are encompassed by “international boundaries” whereas settlement frontiers separate the unoccupied and the unpopulated areas from the populated and established areas within the territories of a given state (Newman & Paasi 1998, p. 189). Stone (Stone 1979) divided settlement lands into two categories: continuous settlement and discontinuous settlement (Prescott 2015, p. 42).

Prescott himself provided a more general and understandable categorization of settlement frontiers: primary settlement frontiers and secondary settlement frontiers. Primary settlement frontiers are the historic formations that arise when the state takes hold of the land “for the first time”. Prescott gave the American westward advance as an example of primary settlement frontiers. In this sense, primary settlement frontiers show the essential margin until which the political domination of a given state reaches and the point in which this political authority is restricted. Prescott also emphasized that these frontiers are not formations that are planned and organized but rather developed in an occasional manner.

Secondary settlement frontiers, according to Prescott, are a modern phenomenon that designate the “zones” between the established and the unestablished. While primary settlement frontiers developed in an unplanned manner, the development of secondary settlement frontiers was much more planned and organized. Their development and existence is usually connected to the existence of “unfavorable” natural formations such as deserts and forests etc. Moreover, when the use of land requires superhuman efforts (technology), secondary settlement frontiers

occur. However, in contrast to primary settlement frontiers, secondary settlement frontiers do not restrict the state's political domination and the authority of the state can reach beyond these frontiers (Prescott 2015, pp. 36–40).

Malcom Anderson conceptualized frontiers as international boundaries while Ladis Kristof made a clearer conceptualization of frontiers. Kristof understood frontiers not as restriction lines but as open and directed towards the outside; since they are at the edges of the states they represent a “zone of transition”. (Rankin & Schofield 2004, pp. 1–3).

In sum, frontiers are permeable zones for both the insiders and the outsiders; in some cases, they divide the inhabited and the settled areas and in other cases they play a facilitator role for transition with their open, indefinite and moveable characteristics.

2.1.3 Boundaries: Fixed Lines of Separation

Starting from the 17-18th centuries and densifying in the 19-20th centuries, the indefinite zones of transitions, i.e. frontiers, began to undergo a process of transformation. These indefinite and thick zones started to become more definite and were transformed into lines. These lines of separations, i.e. boundaries, are different from frontiers in the sense that they are definite, recognized and agreed upon. Etymologically, the term boundary goes back to the Latin origins *butina* and *bodina*, which evolved into *bodne* in old French (Rankin & Schofield 2004, p. 2). In 1911, Ambrose Bierce defined boundaries as “an imaginary line between two nations, separating the imaginary rights of one from the imaginary rights of the other” (Rankin & Schofield 2004, p. 11). Although Bierce defined the term so that they have no substantial basis, boundaries are well-established formations in comparison to

frontiers. While frontiers are directed towards the outside, boundaries are “inner-oriented”, legally defined and accurate (Rankin & Schofield 2004, p. 3).

Custred drew attention to one of the most important characteristics of boundaries, that they are drawn in a way so that they are certain and designate the end-point of a state’s landholding. Although boundaries are more explicit and well-founded than frontiers, their formation processes are not the same in every case. Custred asserted that the nature and the flow of the processes of surveying, designating and managing boundaries depend on the changes in the relations between neighboring states (Custred 2011, p. 265). Thus, while boundaries represent the points where neighboring states perform a “physical contact”, the nature of this contact, whether it is “co-operation” or “discord”, depends on the relations between the two (Prescott 2015, p. 5). Overall, it can be argued that boundaries divide opposing forces. Therefore, it is possible to assert that boundaries in general appear between opposing and different forces, yet in a connected manner (Grahame Thompson quoted in Parker & Adler-Nissen 2012, p. 775). Jacobs & Van Assche explained that the distinctive characteristic of the term boundary is to show how this communication mechanisms between opposing forces are represented in the space in terms of ethnicity and other factors (Jacobs & Assche 2014, p. 188).

While the formation of frontiers take shape with regards to inhabitation, the formation of boundaries is based more on politics and is state-centered. During the process of boundary formation, the understanding of the territoriality of different societies is constituted in both a physical and discursive manner in which the state plays an important role (Paasi 2005, p. 669). Novak defined boundaries as the “territorial extent of state-centered regulatory frameworks” and argued that

boundaries arrange the environment in an active way with these “horizontal” and “vertical” regulations (Novak 2011, p. 743).

Most boundary classifications approach different types of boundaries in a functional manner and analyze their degree of permeability and whether they are open or closed (Newman & Paasi 1998, p. 201). Charles R. Boehmer & Sergio Pena approached boundaries from this perspective and argued that the openness of borders depend on the historical relations between the neighboring countries, their economic dependence and social relations (Boehmer & Peña 2012, p. 274). Hartshorne, on the contrary, classified boundaries in relation to their formation process. He defined antecedent boundaries as those that form before the emergence of cultural and social divisions. If the boundary is formed even before the land is settled, then, according to Hartshorne’s classification, the boundary is a pioneer boundary. If the boundary is drawn after cultural and social divisions take shape, the boundary is defined as a subsequent boundary. Hartshorne further argued that boundaries drawn concurrently with the appearance of the cultural and social divisions are called consequent boundaries and those drawn after subsequent boundaries (Hartshorne 1936, p. 56).

2.1.4 Borders: Multiplex Social and Political Institutions

Apart from the types of international territorial divisions described above, the more comprehensive and explanatory definition of border presents an overarching conceptualization and understanding that involves different types of territorial and social constructions in an integrated way. In this sense, it can be argued that the term border refers to a territorial notion that is mobile, extensive and includes social realities. Therefore, borders are not only the delimited lines on maps and agreements but also the processes by which these delimited and agreed lines become actual with the interactions and the effects of the societies in/outside of the border. However, it

does not change the fact that borders and their formation processes serve the purpose of establishing and maintaining orders within an established system by building differences between the two sides of the line (Newman 2003, p. 15). Thus, whether it is a legal and strict line like boundaries or a broader social phenomenon like borders, the main purpose of such entities is to legally and socially create divisions in order to ensure differentiated systems that maintain their legitimate sovereignties. This understanding of borders as separators of different systems as opposed to boundaries and frontiers also exists in the literature of border studies with a focus on the discussion between the local and national levels. For instance, Gasparini (2014, p. 167) explained borders as representations of the “shared end of the system” dividing the sphere of sovereignty at a national level.

Drawing largely on the existing definitions and conceptualizations, it is possible to categorize the understanding of borders into two main approaches: borders as tangible entities and borders as perceptual constructions (Nicol & Minghi 2005, p. 681). Although the latter has drawn great attention under the current direction of border studies, the first view stresses the functional understanding of borders and presents a more practical and analytical understanding. In doing so, it portrays borders as not only fixed markers such as fences or check-points but also as influenced and informed by all the social, economic, political and cultural aspects in a multiplex manner.

In the words of well-known border studies scholar Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (2011, p. 3), borders are

“about people; and for most settled territories that are predominantly about inclusion and exclusion, as they are woven into varied cultural, economic and

political fabrics. Bounded territories and borderlands are the outcome of the continual interactions and intersections between the actions of people (agency) within the constraints and limits placed by contextual and structural factors (structure)”.

In fact, this definition not only explains the multifaceted characteristic of borders, but also provides clues as to how borders function between the agency and the structure. This functional role of borders between the ruler and the ruled is not a relationship shaped only by formal procedures such as laws and legal practices but at the same time involves the notional products of mutual interactions. This integral comprehension of borders leads the discussion to Harvard professor Beth A. Simmons’s definition of borders as “sets of rules, compliance procedures, and moral and ethical behavioral norms designed to constrain behaviour” (quoted in Carter & Goemans 2011, p. 278).

Extrapolating from these definitions and conceptualizations, it can be argued that the current paradigm underpinning efforts to understand the role of borders draws on both material and non-material sets of rules, behaviors, social interactions, norms and cultures etc. to envision a broader picture of the existing realities about borders. Based on this integral understanding of borders as living and changing organisms that function as producers and implementers of social and legal rules, they are embodied in the literature by Anssi Paasi as “institutional constructs” (Brunet-Jailly 2005, p. 636). David Newman (2003, pp. 14–15) argued that border institutions are the mechanisms that constitute systems involving the decision mechanism regarding the included and the excluded while at the same time performing in a permeable or non-permeable manner governing the legal rules that controls the movements in and out of the border.

Given the fact that borders with their multiplex characteristics now perform as institutions, the resulting institutional practices give rise to new types of borders with different institutional functions. Although these classifications are not settled in the literature, border studies now tend to classify different types of borders according to these institutional practices. The classification most referred to in the literature appears to be the distinction between open and closed borders. Open borders are conditioned to factors such as the economic and military equivalence of the bordering states, existence of a common language, democracy and multitude of cities around the border etc. The existence of these conditions transforms the nature of borders into an open characteristic that is permeable and easily allows for the transfer of people and products across the border. On the other hand, closed borders are not permeable like open borders and do not allow for the transfer of people and goods across the border (Boehmer & Peña 2012, pp. 282–283). Another classification that can be in the literature differentiates between hetero-centered borders and self-centered borders. This classification refers to the main cultural and ideational ties of the people living in the border area. While the identities, cultures and familial ties of people living around hetero-centered borders are related to the cities and regions outside of the border, those living around self-centered borders have cultural and ideational belongings to the cities and regions inside of the border (Gasparini 2014, pp. 165–166).

Whether a border is open or closed and hetero-centered or self-centered, the main determining factor for the type or the fate of the border is strongly dependent on the land and the people that encompass the border line. The regions on both sides of a border serve as the main ground and drivers of the fluid and active socio-political complexity defined above as the main distinctive characteristics that separate borders from boundaries. Therefore, it is the “wider borderland” area (Custred 2011, p. 266)

that constitutes the key to understanding these institutional structures to better track and comprehend the formation and transformation of the identities, cultures, rules and relations originating from socio-political relations with the border. In the words of David Newman (2003, p. 18), borderlands are “the area in closest geographic proximity to the state border within which spatial development is affected by the existence of the boundary”. Acting as the drivers of the institutional formation, these borderland areas are one of the most significant constituents of border systems to be able to better grasp the functioning overarching structure.

The differing characteristics of the borderland areas significantly affect the fate of the bilateral relations between the societies on both side of the border and bordering states. Borderlands have a determining effect on the tools, degree, and direction of interaction opportunities and ties that form the main basis of socio-political relations and exchanges between societies. Having studied these differing characteristics, Oscar J. Martinez (2002, pp. 1–5), considering the geographical and social dynamics, categorized four types of borderlands: alienated borderlands, co-existent borderlands, interdependent borderlands and integrated borderlands.

In his conceptualization, alienated borderlands are the most rigid areas and do not allow transactions between the bordering states and societies due to the existence of a severely negative context including violence. Examples are 15th century Scotland and Britain and 19th century USA and Mexico. Classifying the borderlands to their degree of permeability, Martinez argued that by allowing a slight degree of bilateral transaction, co-existent borderlands are somewhat more open than alienated borderlands. In being so, they have some degree of stability that allows the parties to control the relations between the bordering societies. Martinez further expanded the discussion and proposed a category of interdependent borderlands involving some

kind of economic, political or cultural linkage between the adjacent societies and nations. Finally, Martinez proposed that in the final stage of integrated borderlands, the adjacent nations do not have any limitations originating from the border region and that the political, economic and cultural relations across the border can freely be engaged.

In sum, the concept of border presents a greatly integral and comprehensive perception that holistically involves existential and functional aspects.

2.2 How to Delimit and Demarcate? Historical Approaches to the Stages of Border Making

It is now acknowledged that borders are perceived as both administrative structures and as multiplex social systems, as opposed to the pure territorial references of boundary lines. Thus, borders can be better understood as complicated and socially developed systems grounded on agreed or contended territorial boundaries. It is to say that the legal line that constitutes a boundary manages over time to succeed in establishing a functioning social system in which the adjacent states and societies are easily able to transact. Therefore, it is vital to understand how boundaries are drawn and through what stages in order to grasp the main trends in the evolution of a border system.

When the early experiences of the formation of boundaries are taken into account, *uti possidetis, ita possideatis* (as you possess, so may you possess) seems to function as one of the most referenced guiding principles (Walter, Ungern-Sternberg & Abushov 2014, pp. 97–99). It used to guide territorial adjustments in post-war/conflict periods by suggesting that the fighting/conflicting parties should continue to possess the territories that they acquired during the war/conflict. This approach lost

validity with the complexification of diplomatic practices that paved the way for diplomatic and technical negotiations for the successful implementation of territorial adjustments.

Contrary to the common assumption, these diplomatic and technical negotiations for the formation and implementation of borders are not unidirectional or single processes only about drawing lines in the maps but also includes the implementation of these lines by erecting fences, landmarks or other markers on the ground. Therefore, border drawing/formation experiences, with the above-mentioned advancements in the diplomatic and technological negotiations, began to be understood around the two principal practices of limiting and marking the border. These two separate but complementary practices are conceptualized in the literature as delimitation and demarcation.

2.2.1 Delimitation vs. Demarcation

When the history of border formation is taken into account, it can be argued that the conceptual differentiation between the practices of delimitation and demarcation is actually a recent development emerging in late 19th century. Although some date this differentiation back to Lord Curzon's seminal lecture, A. H. McMahon appears to be the first person to distinguish between these two concepts (Rankin & Schofield 2004, p. 8). It is possible to follow the main points of differentiation from McMahon's own words in 1896:

“In my opinion, delimitation means the laying down – not the laying down on the ground, but the definition on paper, either in words on a map – of the limits of a country... Having done all that, you then come to work on the ground, and then the process ceases to be delimitation and becomes demarcation” (quoted in Rushworth 1997, p. 61).

It is clearly evident that McMahon distinguished between the process of delimiting the border on the maps and of practically locating and laying the agreed border on the ground. Later, McMahon applied this conceptual differentiation in his writings as well. Just a year later in 1897, McMahon, used this terminology for categorizing the stages of the boundary works of the boundary commission in Afghanistan, saying that “boundary delimitation and demarcation work was the sole object and aim of the mission” (p. 415). Therefore, starting from the late 19th century, the terminology on border formation began to take shape with the differentiation of the concepts of delimitation and demarcation.

As discussed above, the advancements in the terminology can be explained by the increasing consultation of diplomatic negotiations in the formation of borders. Another early example in this direction comes from Lord Curzon, who made a clear explanation in 1907 about the scope of demarcation practices. Lord Curzon claimed to

“use the word intentionally as applying to the final stage and the making out of the boundary on the spot. ... When the local commissioners get to work, it is not delimitation but demarcation on which they are engaged” (Rushworth 1997, p. 61).

Extrapolating from the above mentioned statements, delimitation can be defined as the process of identifying, designating and specifying of the “boundary site”, mostly on paper, while demarcation is the process of practically applying these delimited lines on the surface (Prescott 2015, p. 69). By the same token, Stephen B. Jones added a new perspective by arguing that it is in the demarcation process that the boundary faces with the realities on the ground and is adjusted accordingly. In his words,

“many treaties leave, and all should leave, to the demarcators the final adjustment of the line to local needs and the realities of the terrain. These final adjustments may be of great importance to the smooth functioning of a boundary” (Donaldson & Williams 2008, p. 685).

Apart from these differences between the two different but complementary practices of boundary making, there is another important divergence stemming from the approach and attitude that is applied in the process of both delimiting and demarcating the boundary. This difference stemming from the style of making boundaries is related to the bottom-up or top-down style of implementing the borders. The degree of mutual recognition in the process of making the borders leads to a disjuncture between two further different conceptualizations of boundaries: contractual vs. imperial boundaries. The imperial conceptualization of boundaries stresses the need for a superior imposer that decides and implements the boundaries in a unilateral way and argues that it is only by this way that a just boundary could be decided (Donaldson & Williams 2008, p. 691). On the contrary, the contractual conceptualization gives priority to the contractual nature of the boundary making process as an expression of mutual recognition that must be respected by both sides (Jones 1959, p. 251). The latter calls for a more inclusive attitude in the process of making the boundaries with reference to the need for cooperative work that would set the ground for a mutually agreed and peaceful border.

2.3 A Paradigm Change? Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Borders

In parallel to the advancements in the deepening and diversification of the conceptualization and terminology of boundaries, the nature and the scope of the study of borders have also undergone a significant transformation, evolving into a more comprehensive nature. This transformation was accompanied with a paradigm

change primarily informed by the societal relations in and around the borders. In this regard, the literature has again changed its scope from studying boundaries to studying borders. The current paradigm change in the literature took shape with a move away from studying the position of borders to studying the question of the social construction of borders (Houtum 2005, p. 674).

Previous attempts to understand borders focused mainly on the technical aspects of the evolution of boundaries and their functions in state to state relations. They were primarily treated as technical entities that could be physically understood and functionally explained as the agents of practical interactions between bordering states. In this regard, the early stages of border studies can be labelled as a simplex political approach rather than a multi-perspective account including social perspectives as its integral part. These main foci of early border scholars such as Prescott give a clue about the perception of borders that were merely understood in relation to their attachment to states as functioning end points of state sovereignty, causing early border studies to be labelled “state-centric” (Grundy-Warr & Schofield 2005, p. 652).

Ignoring the social and procedural aspect of borders, early attempts embraced and analyzed them as they appear on the maps. Considering this, the understanding of studying borders pre-paradigm change had a static perspective, which merely drew its assumptions on “cartographic fixity” (Minca & Vaughan-Williams 2012, p. 759). To follow the traces of this cartographic fixity, one can easily follow Minghi’s eight categories of boundary studies, each of which bears some characteristics of this state-centric and stable understanding:

“studies of disputed areas, studies of the effect of boundary change, studies of the evolution of boundaries, studies of boundary delimitation and demarcation, studies of exclaves and tiny states, studies of offshore boundaries, studies of boundaries in disputes over natural resources, studies of internal boundaries” (Minghi 1963, p. 414).

These early attempts however, with their limited state-centric approaches, have contributed considerably to the progress of border studies in a way that laid the groundwork for more comprehensive approaches in the future. Most importantly, they produced the early terminological framework for studying borders by differentiating the meanings of the main concepts. Kolossov argued that the products of these early stages provided the connection between the functions of borders in states’ domestic and foreign relations and further empirically presented that it is not possible to establish non-political borders by depending upon natural entities or pure ethnic differentiations as bases of boundaries (Kolossov 2005, p. 611).

Although these early examples primarily dealt with the physical position of the borders and the determinant factors behind their position, they began to gradually become more comprehensive in their scope. To reveal the early seeds of this transition, by comparing the works of Prescott and Minghi, Paasi came to the conclusion that while early studies, exemplified in Prescott, tried to understand the role of the contributing factors in the creation of borders from an empirical approach, the transition started to take form with works, such as Minghi’s, that turned the focus towards the whole process of the formation of borders from a space-society relation approach. He further argued that these recent studies tended also towards proposing theoretical lenses by drawing on empirical research applied in the different grounds of socio-political concepts (Paasi 2005, pp. 664, 665). The pure nation/state based

understanding in explaining and studying borders began to be challenged with the inclination towards understanding the human aspect in their formation and continuation.

In this regard, the “human practices” in relation to different representations of borders (Houtum 2005, p. 672) became one of the core elements in this new understanding. This new human aspect in border studies was further illustrated with the introduction of culture as a notion in narrating borders. In doing so, this new paradigm also began to approach borders as “sites of cultural encounters” (Rovisco 2010) as a core element of this new comprehension (Rumford 2012, p. 889). Methodologically, this new understanding is also reflected in the tendency towards utilizing “discursive practices” (Jacobs & Assche 2014, p. 183) related to borders. Kolossov’s definition of borders perfectly represents this new understanding in border studies:

“the boundary is not simply a legal institution designed to ensure the integrity of state territory, but a product of social practice, the result of a long historical and geopolitical development, and an important symbolical marker of ethnic and political identity” (Kolossov 2005, p. 625).

This new paradigm has brought new attention to different layers of socio-political and economic relations and interactions. This understanding is well illustrated in a recent attempt by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly to propose a comprehensive theory of borders, which included all these aspects in an interplaying manner. His analytical lenses (local cross border culture, local cross border political clout, market forces and trade flows, the policy activities of multiple levels of government) are designed to understand the interconnecting political, economic and social layers in order to comprehend the evolution process of integrative or non-integrative borders

(Brunet-Jailly 2005, pp. 644–645). This timely model well represents the current paradigm in studying borders.

Extrapolating from all of these new orientations, it can easily be argued that the study of borders is now no longer solely a technical aspect focusing on legal lines or legal interpretations that does not acknowledge the importance of the socio-economic network knitted around these borders. Furthermore, when considering the differentiation in the conceptualization of borders, both in terms of various types of borders and the processes of border making, the current stage is more comprehensive in its content and comprehension.

CHAPTER 3: THE TERRITORIAL LEGACY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The region currently called the Middle East has historically been contested by major empires. The region was administered for four centuries by the Ottoman Empire. It is beneficial to examine the ways in which the Ottoman Empire conquered and administered the region. Since this is not primarily a historical study, it will avoid delving into detail and instead use a political history narrative aiming to explain the history of the borders applying the terminology and conceptualization in the second chapter. In this context, this chapter will focus on administrative developments believed to have created various borders; economic and military frontiers, granted boundaries created by foreign interventions and holy borders.

Contrary to Alfred Mahan's definition, the concept of the Middle East during World War I encapsulated a larger region. However, the region under discussion during the 1919 Paris talks comprised a narrower area. This geography included parts of Anatolia, present-day Syria and Palestine, Jordan, Israel and a part of Iraq. Without a doubt, the Sykes-Picot agreement played an important role in shaping the modern Middle East. However, the argument that it created artificial mandates is open to discussion. For this reason, this chapter aims to discuss the background of the borders drawn up by the Sykes-Picot agreement.

The Ottoman Empire took over control of the regions of Syria, Iraq and Anatolia starting in the beginning of the 16th century (1516). When the Ottomans entered the region under the control of the Mamlouks in Egypt, the region, while not a political whole, was not divided with determined borders. The Ottomans took control of Syria and Palestine in 1516 and of Egypt in 1517 in order to ensure the region's security and remove the Egypt-centered Mamlouk influence (Hourani, p. 215). From

this date onward, the Ottomans gained the ability to determine the fate of the region and establish sovereignty and effectiveness over Syria and Iraq. The Empire further captured the Mosul area in 1523, Baghdad in 1534 and Basra in 1548 and became the administrative entities of the empire.

The Ottoman Empire administratively organized the region taking historical characteristics and the needs of the empire into account. In this process, historical characteristics of the region and past administrative structures were effective but the greater security and economic needs of the empire also proved to be determinative. Although for centuries the Ottomans did not have any rivals in Syria and Palestine, it did not enjoy the same privilege in Iraq, where it battled with Iran for influence. For this reason, the majority of border arrangements took place on the Ottoman Empire's boundary with Iran.

3.1 The Middle Eastern Borders Inspired by History: Before and During the Ottoman Era

The present-day Middle East was governed by various political authorities before the Ottomans, ending with the Mamlouks in Egypt. When the Ottomans entered the region, it did not exhibit a comprehensive political integrity and was dominated by local rulers. The Ottomans viewed the region as necessary for its transformation into an empire and saw Syria and Iraq as a legacy of their ancestors; when the Turks came into the region, the Great Seljuks took control and formed the Iraqi Seljuk and Syrian Seljuk states which were succeeded by the Ottomans.

The Great Seljuks, Syrian or Iraqi Seljuks did not develop definite boundaries in the region as the Seljuks took over the region's administration and tradition from

the previous Islamic Abbasid empire. Two exceptional developments in the region laid ground for the emergence of spheres of influence rather than boundaries. The first were the attempts of the Fatimids (a Shia Ismaili sect) in North Africa to establish influence in Syria and Iraq. These attempts undermined the Islamic state sovereignty tradition by creating divisions and spheres of influence (Mansfield 2010, pp. 19–20). The second, the outside force of the Crusaders, caused a religious division as future ground for the spheres of influence and borders by establishing countships in the region, especially in Jerusalem. The local alliances and defense alliances as internal dynamics against the Crusades contributed to the emergence of indefinite regional borders. However, by the time the Ottomans arrived, these two exceptional developments had long disappeared.

In fact, the emergence of these indefinite borders or spheres of influence was shaped according to the emergence of new power centers. The center during the Umayyad Empire (632-750) was in Syria (Damascus) but moved to Baghdad during the Abbasid Empire (750-1258). Therefore, the spheres of influence and hinterlands were translocated. Such developments occurred repeatedly throughout the history of the region. For instance, after the Fatimids settled in Cairo, the power center was again relocated. Then when Zengis (1127-1233), who were of Turkish origin, emerged, another replacement was experienced. During the rule of Saladin, the Ayyubid emperor who went to Cairo to launch an attack against the Crusaders, there was a search for a new type of sovereignty. Once the Egypt-based Ayyubids effectively took control of the land from the Crusaders, the center of power returned to Cairo. However, the fact that the new rulers were Sunnis, which represented the majority of the Syrian and Iraqi population, allowed the new order to be easily accepted and prevented the emergence of defined and precise borders.

Based in Cairo, the Ayyubids ruled over a territory reaching to Syria, Iraq and Yemen. However, following Saladin's death, the previous centralized sovereignty could not be sustained and decentralized structures emerged. In this case, the former centers continued to exist more independently by defining partial spheres of influence. Emirates loyal to the Ayyubids were created in Egypt, Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Eastern Anatolia. These neighboring emirates created sovereign areas mostly for tax purposes. As a result, regional rivalries and conflicts emerged, laying the ground for the idea of borders.

When the last Ayyubid emperor was killed in 1250, his slave Aybek assumed his position and a new group called the Mamlouks gained sovereignty over the region and the ability to design borders. This new sovereign force ruled Syria, Iraq and their hinterlands until 1517 when the Ottomans took control of these areas. During the Mamlouk's rule, powerful sultans arranged the region's administrative borders for their needs while weak sultans ruled through vassal rulers/emirs. These vassal rulers attempted to expand their borders against others and these struggles served to ultimately make the borders in the region clearer. At this point, the borders of Mamlouk rule in Anatolia reached the regions of Syria and Hijaz (Har-El 1995, p. 35). However, there was no definite borders delineating the two. The areas in which soldiers were deployed were considered to be borders in accordance with the traditional concepts of *awasim* or *thugur*¹. Islamic geographers also emphasized the lack of defined borders and claimed that edge points such as the *awasim* or *thugur* were the points that separated *Dar al Islam*, the land of Islam from the *Dar al Harb*, areas that were not lands of Islam (Buchanan & Moore 2003, p. 197).

¹ *Awasim* and *Thugur* are terms used to describe military borders or military cities along the borders. These terms correspond to the military units and the cities that were founded for them along the Byzantine borders, especially after the Abbasids.

Moreover, other powerful rulers captured areas in the region, allowing new borders to be created. For example, during the last years of the Ayyubids, the cities of Aleppo, Homs and Damascus, which were all ruled by Ayyubids, came under the control of the Anatolian Seljuks, creating a Seljuk-Ayyubid border. However, these borders were still far from being formally demarcated and served more as a rough delimitation. Another factor contributing to the creation of internal borders in the region was the 13th century Mongolian invasion following the collapse of the Ayyubids. In fact, the Mongols invaded some areas under the control of both the Anatolian Seljuks and the former Ayyubids, the Mamlouk rulers, and founded new temporary sovereignty areas. During the rule of Timur (Tamerlane), Aleppo and Damascus reverted to countryside following their sacking. Perhaps the most important but unnoticed result of these developments was the strategic contact established between these regions and those of Middle Anatolia reached by Timur. Consequently, as the Ottomans became more powerful, they turned their attention to these regions.

The Ottomans took over the entire region subject to the Sykes-Picot agreement from the Mamlouks. When they captured Damascus in 1516, the Ottomans did not make any administrative changes in the region and retained the Mamlouks' administrative borders (Masters 1997, p. 245). However, taking over Egypt in 1517, the empire made new arrangements in the region of Syria, including Palestine and Lebanon. The capture of Aleppo and its surroundings created a new border between the Ottomans and the Mamlouks, erasing the old borders.

For the lands captured, the Ottomans created administrative arrangements called "beylerbeylik/province". Provinces that neighbored each other had transparent (permeable) internal borders. The main factor that determined these borders was the

appointed governor's (Beylerbeyi) sphere of influence, which was determined mainly by economic relations/taxation areas and security needs. Ottoman state structure relied on a strong land sharing system (timar). These lands, incomes of which belonged to the sultan, governors and military commanders or lower units, were subject to a strict distribution. For this reason, in the classical Ottoman era, records called "tahrir" were prepared throughout the empire every 20 to 30 years (Hourani 2002, p. 217). According to these records, the Ottoman's internal administrative distributions and borders in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq remained the same for a long time. The Ottoman archives contain hundreds of *defters* showing this distribution (Aleppo, Damascus, Jerusalem, Saida, Baghdad, Basra etc. Tahrir Defters). In his 1979 study, Bernard Lewis used these Ottoman records to detail Ottoman land organization and taxing system (Lewis 1979). However, while providing detailed information, Lewis did not specifically address any evaluation about the borders specifically. However, in these records, one can see periodic changes in distribution and borders in accordance with needs or internal rivalries. Moreover, these changes sometimes caused strife among regional rulers. The Ottoman fiscal records allowed for the tracking of these permeable borders in the region and many of the changes in these borders over centuries.

These above-mentioned records mostly contained agricultural lands, cities, and trusts (waqf) allocated to some holy sites. The nomadic populations around these areas were recorded under various names over time. Mobile nomadic populations were based on livestock production and paid a yearly tax to the state. Some new spheres also emerged as a result of this nomadic mobility. The lands allocated to the nomadic populations of Anatolia and the Syria-Iraq borders were called "yurtluk" or "ocaklık" (fief) (Thomas 2003, pp. 540–541). Those in the larger desert areas held a

more traditional position and the lands they traveled held borders in their minds. The tribes had lived in these deserts for centuries (eg Beriyetussam) and each had a living space called *dirah*. For these tribes, *dirah* defined a space in which they could enjoy their freedom and sovereignty. One tribe could not use another's space, and even passing through that area was subject to permission. These tribes, who could pledge loyalty to the sovereign states around them without having any responsibilities, were one of the most important threats to settled life and stood as obstacles to forming definite boundaries outside their *dirah*. For this reason, the sovereigns who controlled the settled life either tried to adapt the tribes to permanent settlement or restrict their areas of sovereignty. However, a significant number of tribes transitioned to settled life in the beginning of the 20th century and some even formed powerful emirates. It is important to not overlook that the nomad's traditional mobile border culture laid the ground for the creation of new borders. One of the best examples of this would be the borders between Saudi Arabia and Iraq and between Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

The borders in minds of nomadic populations differed according to geography, living conditions and ethnic identities. In this context, the perception of space and home for the Kurds, Arabs and even the Persians who neighbored them also differed. The situation of the Turkmen tribes on the other hand was completely different. Even though their Turkish ancestors played a key role in the region's history, the Turkmens did not develop the same border culture as other populations due to differences in their region of origin.

In short, although the geographical and human conditions in the Middle East created some borders, in Islamic societies sovereignty was not based on land but on people. Therefore, while the location of the sovereign would become the center,

anyone that recognized this sovereignty would be acknowledged as a part of this center without any conditions with regards to boundaries. This was not different for sovereigns or their subjects. The subjects accepted as *Dar al Islam* the geographies governed by Muslim rulers or where Islamic rules were valid. Therefore, they were far from a real understanding of boundaries. Theoretically, they would see regions accepted as Dar al Islam as a whole within one border. As Abbas Kelider argues, despite being from different countries and ethnicities, Islamic societies saw their Islamic identity as their national identity (Kelidar 1993, p. 316).

However, one cannot deny that a border culture caused by practical needs and regional rivalries existed beyond the overall Islamic identity. While these needs allowed the states that established sovereignty to develop concepts such as *awasem*, *thugur*, *hudut*, *uç beyliği*, *serhat*, *eyalet* and *vilayet*” (For a conceptual discussion see Ateş 2013, pp. 15–22); it is possible to acknowledge that the borders inspired by these concepts were used as references for modern boundaries and boundary arrangements.

3.2 From Ottoman Administrative Divisions to National Borders in the Middle East

The Ottoman Empire ruled in Europe, Asia and North Africa. When it captured these regions, it maintained the existing structure for a short time, then made new administrative arrangements in accordance with its needs. These arrangements determined the empire’s borders with countries in its hinterland and also provided a basis for the borders drawn up in modern times. Furthermore, as the empire expanded throughout the centuries, borders also changed. With the beginning of the empire’s shrinkage in the 18th century, a transformation and change took place in the reverse direction. In this chapter, the historical evolution of administrative divisions (eyalet,

vilayet, hadd-i fasıl and tahdid-i hudud) from the classical Ottoman era until the modern era is be discussed considering the different border concepts explained in the first chapter.

3.2.1 Administrative and Economic Divisions as Frontiers: Eyalets

In early Ottoman sources, Ottoman administrative divisions were described mainly in connection with the ruler. In the classical era, the rulers of large areas were called “beylerbeyi”. According to İpşirli, beylerbeyi was the name of commanders with military powers in large areas, but also became the name that indicated the administrative division of these lands (İpşirli 1992, p. 69). Even though this administrative division was reflected in the commanders appointed to that area, they assumed the name of that area as their title, eg. the Beylerbeyi of Aleppo, Damascus, Saida, etc. Therefore, their powers were naturally limited to the area assigned to them. These beylerbeylik outlined the edges and the defense of border areas (İnalçık 1995, p. 549). Herein, it is possible to argue that the beylerbeylik system correspond well to the frontier concept, explained in the first chapter, which is mobile while not having definite limits and mostly protected by military units.

The beylerbeylik concept developed into a geographical definition in the Ottoman empire even as early as the 14th century. It was divided into two, the Anatolian the Rumeli Beylerbeyliği, in parallel with the expansion of the state. In fact, if we think about how the country was divided into two based on the geography (straits), we can see the function of natural features in determining boundaries. Arrangements regarding the beylerbeyi and their responsibilities developed for over a century. As İnalçık emphasized, the “Ottomans protected the borders prior to the conquest, especially the first provincial part, while there were some changes in

accordance with the special conditions of bordering sanjaks and future conquests. Then they rearranged sanjaks as beylerbeyi and gave them more freedom and unified the boundaries in accordance with the conditions” (İnalcik 1995, p. 549). As seen here, the Ottomans moved to the more flexible beylerbeyliği system from the narrow-scoped sanjak system after the state had expanded.

After the conquest of Selim I, the Arab province that included Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Hijaz, the Alâüddevle province (conquered in 1515) and the Diyarbekir province (conquered in 1517, first tahrir in 1518) were founded. These provinces were divided into sanjaks. As of 1520, the Arab Province had fifteen sanjaks (İnalcik 1995, p. 549). It can be said that the provinces represent a flexible frontier system considering that the system was not fully settled around these dates. In fact, this system began to become mobile again after the 1530s. The sovereignty established over Iraq on one hand, and the new structures founded in the seas and North Africa, excluding Egypt, on the other hand, created flexible territorial limits in the context of frontiers.

After the Arab regions came under Ottoman control, the Arab Province was created to include modern day Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Hijaz (part of present-day Saudi Arabia). The changes and needs later prompted the rearrangement of the Arab Province. To this end, Aleppo, Damascus and Egypt were organized into separate beylerbeyliks. In fact, this change, transitioning from geographical division to administrative division, would be applied to the rest of the empire. In the beginning, the geographical province/sanjak/liwa would become a beylerbeylik and then an eyalet, which states a clearer boundary. The narrowing and expanding boundaries during the creation of the Damascus Eyalet throughout half of the 16th century is a

good example of the emergence of flexible eyalet borders. Even though there were no major changes, it is possible to observe six changes to the Damascus eyalet's borders between when the Ottomans took over that region and 1565. As seen in Table 1, while the Damascus eyalet shrunk, Aleppo was organized as a separate eyalet in 1550 with the sanjaks of Adana, Maraş, Antep, Birecik and Kilis. On the other hand, the Damascus eyalet incorporated present-day Syria (excluding Aleppo), Palestine, Israel and part of Lebanon. However, this division was a geographical one only and did not project any ethnic or religious boundaries. There is no doubt that the permeable and fluctuating boundaries of the Damascus eyalet became more distinct in 17th and 18th centuries. However, this system would be subject to new arrangements until the 19th century.

Table 1: Transformations in the Administrative Divisions of the Damascus (Arab) Beylerbeylik in the 16th Century

First Divisions (date unknown)	1522	1527	1545	1550	1565
Common Divisions					
Damascus	Damascus	Damascus	Damascus	Damascus	Damascus
Aleppo	Aleppo	Aleppo	Aleppo	-	-
Tripoli	Tripoli	Tripoli	Tripoli	Tripoli	Tripoli
Hama	Hama and Homs	Hama and Homs	Hama	-	-
Homs	-	-	Homs	-	Homs
Sis	Sis	Sis	-	-	-
Birecik	Birecik and Rum Kal'a	Birecik	Birecik	-	-
Rum-kal'a	-	-	-	-	-

Tarsus	Tarsus	Tarsus	-	-	-
Ayntâb	Ayntâb	Ayntâb	-	-	-
-	Jeruselah	Jeruselah and Gazza	Jeruselah	Jeruselah	Jeruselah
-	Gaza (with Remle)	-	Gaza	Gaza	Gaza
-	-	Nablûs and Safed	Nablûs	Nablûs	Nablûs
-	Safed	-	Safed	Safed	Safed
-	-	Salt-‘Aclûn	Salt-‘Aclûn	Salt-‘Aclûn	‘Aclûn
	Adana	Adana			
		Ekrâd	Ekrâd		
			Leccûn		Leccûn
Extra Divisions					
Malatya	Antakya	Deyr and Rahba	-	Aktağ Tarabây-ı Arab	Kerek- Şevbek
Divriği	-	Üzeyrili	-	-	-
Darende	-	-	-	-	-
Kâhta and Gerger	-	-	-	-	-
Behisni	-	-	-	-	-

Adapted from (Çakar 2003, pp. 357–362)

As seen in Table 1, the boundaries of the Damascus Beylerbeylik changed often in a half century; sometimes it was expanded but mostly it was narrowed and new administrative entities were founded. According to sources, this process continued until the beginning of the 17th century. For example, the Anatolian cities of Adana, Urfa, Antakya and Malatya were part of the Damascus eyalet in 1522 but in 1565 the eyalet was narrowed severely, close to today’s borders. On the other hand, the territory of modern day Palestine/Israel, Jordan and parts of Lebanon were kept in

the Damascus Eyalet. Beginning in 1549, Aleppo was taken out of the Damascus Eyalet and made an eyalet on its own while some cities in Anatolia removed from the Damascus Eyalet were included in the Aleppo Eyalet. Even though the main reasons for these changes were based on economy and security, in time the contact between Aleppo and Anatolia continued. The fact that Aleppo was included in the last Ottoman Parliament's Misak-ı Milli (National Pact) boundaries shows that over time an understanding of a borderland in Anatolia was developed.

In the beginning of the 17th century, the empire had 32 eyalets under the responsibility of the beylerbeyliks. In this context, the eyalets of Damascus, Tripoli, Aleppo and Raqqa were founded in the region. After this new arrangement, the eyalet concept, which represented geographic boundaries more so than beylerbeyliks, began to be used more clearly starting from the beginning of the 17th century. In fact, a separate eyalet called Saida was founded in the Syria region. This clearly shows that the boundaries were shaped because of administrative reasons and an eyalet boundary could be expanded or narrowed accordingly.

The boundaries of the beylerbeylik and/or eyalet were related to the state's land arrangements. With the breakdown in the timar system, which had determined the land arrangements of the state, the eyalet system began to break down as well. This allowed for the emergence of eyalets that were able to achieve a great degree of autonomy beginning from the 18th century. In these areas, local leaders called *ayan* emerged and received their power from the large lands they operated (Burckhardt 1822, p. 648). Beylerbeyis ruled over the lands that the central power allocated them, while ayans on the other hand drew their power from their financial support to the central power (Khoury 2008, pp. 137–138). Therefore, it is possible to argue that their

constant attempts to expand their spheres of influence played a role in the expansion and narrowing of eyalet boundaries near Anatolia in the 18th century. In addition, rivalries developed between a significant number of ayans through the founding of lasting dynasties in the areas they ruled (Lewis 1979, p. 124). It is possible to argue that this formed an important basis for the emergence of rigid eyalet boundaries.

It is possible to assume that eyalet boundaries determined symbolic and administrative needs and also served as a frontier. One also should not ignore that the weakening or removal of the central power may have turned the frontier into a boundary. Indeed, it is possible to follow these developments historically in central Middle East.

3.2.2 Towards the Idea of Boundary: Boundary Delimitation of the Center and Transforming Eyalets into Vilayets

The Ottoman Empire entered the 19th century with a great problem. France invaded Egypt, which was the most important eyalet and a great source of income, and expanded the invasion towards Syria. This invasion attempt did not last long. Napoleon was defeated in Acre; he abandoned his army and returned to France. Later, the Ottoman-British-Russian alliance ended the invasion (Mansfield 1973, p. 151). However, this process put the Ottoman central administration in a difficult position. It allowed the ayans to assume more power, especially Muhammad Ali (later Pasha), who was a mercenary in Egypt and achieved autonomous status. More importantly, Napoleon's invasion inspired nationalistic ideas in Ottoman lands for the first time. Indeed, Sultan Selim III was ousted from the throne after a series of events in a short span of time and his replacement, Mustafa IV, could not consolidate the power. Ayans who became more powerful in the countryside came to Istanbul and flexed

their muscles and even signed the Charter of Alliance (Sened-i İttifak) that projected a share of power with Mahmud II who got to the throne. After this shock, Mahmud II consolidated power in a short amount of time and wanted to make a new eyalet arrangement to rebuild the central power of the state and his own authority. Beginning in 1812, he reorganized former eyalets into “*müşiriyet*”, taking military and financial obligations into account (İnalçik 1995, p. 550). However, there is no doubt that the boundaries of the new division were symbolic and permeable/flexible. This new obligation made the need to rearrange Ottoman countryside administration clear. The application of both Mahmud II’s successor and the Tanzimat, which was announced by Mahmud II’s replacement Abdülmecid I, were dependent on the reorganization of countryside administration. In this way, the modernization of the empire would be ensured and it would be possible to limit the powers of those who were traditionally privileged. However, reactions from Syria and Lebanon were different than anticipated. Local demands and rebellions, the empire’s financial needs and modernization efforts necessitated more definite administrative boundaries.

Because the deteriorating land regime of the empire and the concentration of control of the land in the hands of the local dynasties over the empire broke down the legal status of lands. Mahmud II’s radical rearrangements abolished the timar system, the empire’s traditional land regime. At this point, the Tanzimat projected a new land regime. This was the aim of the Ottoman Land Code which was announced after the Tanzimat (Ortaylı 2008, pp. 245–246). When all these developments proved to be insufficient, the administration of the Ottoman countryside was rearranged with the provinces charter (*vilayetler nizamnamesi*), which was put into application in 1864 and 1871. With this rearrangement, vilayets replaced eyalets and their geographic boundaries were made clearer. The country was divided into vilayets, vilayets into

mutasarrifates (lieutenant governorship), mutasarrifates into kazas (district) and kazas into nahiyes (sub-district) and villages. This administrative division was mentioned in detail in the empire's yearbooks (Salname) and shown clearly in new maps. Just like eyalets, vilayet boundaries experienced some changes from time to time but the overall arrangements remained the same until the collapse of the empire. But at the same time, due to their features and developments that were caused by foreign powers, some regions such as Jerusalem, Mount Lebanon and Egypt obtained privileged positions.

Egypt achieved autonomous status under the London Protocol (1840) and a decree from Istanbul in 1841 (a comprehensive report on this issue prepared by Ottoman Foreign Ministry, see: (*Mısır Meselesi* 1917)). After the arrangements of 1864, the eyalets of Damascus and Saida, a spin off from Damascus, were unified and the Syria province was established. As a natural result, the issue of the border between Syria and Egypt would come to the fore. With the same arrangement, the sanjaks of Jerusalem (including Gaza), Nablus and Acre, the area known as Palestine today, were included into the Syria province. However, taking into account the issue of the holy places, Jerusalem became an independent mutasarrifate (as before) and became a direct subordinate of Istanbul after the Crimean War. Taking Egypt's border claims into account, the Nablus and Acre sanjaks were removed from Syria vilayet and included into the newly established Beirut vilayet. Around the same time, modern-day Jordan was included in the Syria province, while Mount Lebanon was governed as a privileged mutasarrifate starting from 1864 (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye'nin 1313 Senesine Mahsus İstatistik-i Umumiyesidir* 1316, pp. 3–6). In a way, these quick changes were a signal of a move towards the boundary concept, which is based on fixed and agreed borders.

After the empire's 1864 arrangements, more definite vilayet boundaries were drawn and every vilayet was ruled by a governor. One of the most notable things here is that the ancient word *Syria*, contrary to the common belief, was used by the Ottomans to replace the Damascus eyalet when the Syria Province was established. Iraq as a region always referred to Southern Iraq (Iraq-i Arab – Arabic Iraq) (Halliday 2005, p. 77) and was comprised of the Baghdad and Basra vilayets. Mosul in the north was always thought of as an entity independent from Iraq. Mosul was thus always considered a part of Anatolia, rather than an extension of Iraq. In fact, Mosul, just like Aleppo, was included in the new borders of Turkey drawn by the last Ottoman parliament; Turkey's main arguments regarding Mosul after Lausanne were related to Mosul's relation with Anatolia rather than Iraq.

After the publication of the 1864 charter and between the establishment of new vilayets and 1918, the new Syria Vilayet was comprised of four sanjaks: the Sanjak of Damascus, the Sanjak of Hama, the Sanjak of Hauran and the Sanjak of Maan (Karak) (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye'nin 1313 Senesine Mahsus İstatistik-i Umumiyesidir* 1316, p. 3).

The boundaries of the Syria vilayet were defined as an area that included the surroundings of modern day Jordan and Damascus. On the other hand, Mount Lebanon was kept outside the Syria as a privileged sanjak. The Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate was comprised of the Şuf district and 7 villages under that district. Since it obtained an autonomous status, it is possible to say that the boundaries of Mount Lebanon were more definite. However, there were also discussions from time to time and some arrangements were made as a result.

A long time after the 1864 arrangements, the Beirut vilayet was founded independent from the Damascus eyalet. It included a part of modern-day Syria as well as mandate Palestine and was comprised of 5 sanjaks: Beirut, Acre, Tripoli, Latakia and Belka (Nablus). These sanjaks were divided into districts and villages and, even though there were no certain demarcations between them, their boundaries on the maps were defined clearly in terms of delimitation (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye'nin 1313 Senesine Mahsus İstatistik-i Umumiyesidir* 1316, p. 2).

The Jerusalem Sanjak, as mentioned before, was directly governed from Istanbul because of its religious peculiarities. It was comprised of its center, the Jerusalem district, and the districts of Jaffa, Gaza and Halilurrahman (Hebron) (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye'nin 1313 Senesine Mahsus İstatistik-i Umumiyesidir* 1316, p. 4). By governing directly from Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire aimed to keep the province out of regional conflicts. This choice alone shows that there were conflicts about boundaries between vilayets and sanjaks in the region and there was the possibility of a unit expanding against the others.

As explained above, Aleppo, a sanjak of Damascus in the classical era, was reorganized again as a separate vilayet. The new Aleppo vilayet was comprised of three sanjaks and covered a bigger area when compared to the other vilayet in the region. The central Aleppo sanjak included cities such as Gaziantep, Antakya and İskenderun, with a Turkish or mixed ethnic identity, along with Idlib, Raqqa and Manbij, cities mostly populated by Arabs. Two other sanjaks in the Aleppo province were Urfa and Maraş. The villages in these sanjaks were clearly defined as was done in others (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye'nin 1313 Senesine Mahsus İstatistik-i Umumiyesidir* 1316, p. 6).

There is no clear information about the justification used in the creation of the boundaries of the new vilayets. Because the vilayets of Syria, Aleppo and Beirut were diverse in terms of their demographics, it means it was not possible to draw their boundaries for ethnic reasons. Among these, only Mount Lebanon was comprised of two different homogeneous groups, mainly Druzes and Maronites. In this case, one should look for different reasons for why vilayet, sanjak and district boundaries were drawn so clearly that they bring to mind demarcation.

No doubt that it is possible to assume that the centralizing government and the governors and other local rulers it appointed played a key role in the creation of boundaries. However, there was another important matter; distribution of land as property to the citizens that used them and the initiation of a land title system at the same time as a changing land regime. This new situation is believed to have contributed to the creation of more definite boundaries (Gerber 1987, pp. 67–73). In this direction, it is possible to say that the Ottoman territories did not have a proper cadastre system. However, vilayets, sanjaks and districts, and even sub-districts and villages, had boundaries in line with delimitation, and land title application was carried out within these boundaries. Even though a proper cadastre did not exist, land title records had clear definitions and mostly mentioned known measurements (feddan, danum), meaning that the boundaries carried an importance (Gerber 1987, pp. 82–84). In the Ottoman Empire, both educational atlases and private maps in the beginning of the 20th century clearly showed the boundaries of vilayets and sanjaks and each had different signs. In other words, administrative arrangements and geographical delimitations in the region during the Ottoman era, in a way, inspired the new centers and boundaries that were created after World War I (Halliday 2005, p. 83).

CHAPTER 4: DECONSTRUCTING THE SYKES-PICOT ORDER:

DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

4.1 Domestic Factors in Play in the Making of Modern Middle Eastern Borders

4.1.1 A Demarcation Example: Egypt Crisis and Drawing the Aqaba Border

For centuries, the Ottoman Empire, from the Black Sea to the Gulf of Basra (Persian Gulf / Arabian Gulf) and the Gulf of Aden, had only one international border, the border with Iran drawn in 1639 (Ateş 2013, p. 22). The Ottoman Empire began to lose territory in the west in 1683 and in 1774 in the north and had to draw new borders. Records show that boundaries delimited in agreements with Austria and Russia, the defined borders were nothing more than an allocation of land with physiographical features only. Similarly, border delimitation and demarcation works were carried out in the Balkans for years after the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War. However, all these happened in areas far away from the geography in which Sykes and Picot was interested.

Excluded from the Mediterranean trade and outrivaled in India by Britain, France invaded Egypt, an Ottoman territory, in 1789 (Mansfield 1973, p. 155). France, who had trade capitulations and established influence in and around Syria with the claim of being a protector of minorities before that date, became an invader in these territories for the first time as a European power. The French invasion did not last long and was finished by an Ottoman-British alliance. Russia later joined this alliance, increasing France's desire to have influence over the region and making room for Britain and Russia be more active in the southern territories of the Ottoman Empire.

The *Egyptian Question* began with the French invasion and developed initially as a domestic issue before turning into an international problem and leading to discussions over the Egypt-Syria border (Partner 1960, pp. 19–20). Muhammad Ali, sent to end the Egypt invasion, was appointed as the Egypt Governorate by gaining the approval of the Babiâlî (Istanbul government). A skilled and ambitious man, Muhammad Ali did not settle for being the Governor of Egypt only and expanded his influence over large areas, taking advantage of the special circumstances of the Ottoman Empire. Creating trouble for the Ottoman Empire after emerging in middle Arabia, the Wahhabis captured places sacred for Muslims. Muhammad Ali was tasked with removing the Wahhabis from these areas. Ibrahim Pasha's, his son, success against the Wahhabis in 1818 resulted in Muhammad Ali's seizure of coastal parts of the Ottoman-held Gulf of Basra as well as the Hejaz (Kurşun 1998). He later expanded his rule around Sudan as well. With the help of the French, Muhammad Ali's army became a major threat to the central authority while being an indispensable force for it at the same time. In fact, the Ottoman government asked for Muhammad Ali's help during the Greek rebellion, for which he demanded to rule over the Syria province as well. The government on the other hand aimed to unite Egypt and Syria and create an independent state and did not grant this wish. However, this conflict continued to grow and turned into a crisis in 1832. Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad Ali Pasha, using the failure to return fugitives that fled to Acre as a pretext, besieged Acre Castle and did not comply with the government of Istanbul's request to remove the siege. This prompted Istanbul to declare Muhammad Ali Pasha a "rebel". Ibrahim Pasha captured Acre in May 1832 and Damascus in June (Partner 1960, p. 21; Akarli 1993, p. 22). In fact, Ibrahim Pasha defeated the army under the command of Edirne Governor Ağa Hüseyin Pasha and advanced until Konya after

Aleppo and Homs. Sultan Mahmud II appealed to Britain and France for a solution yet Britain was focused on other problems and France already supported Muhammad Ali Pasha, obliging the empire to turn to Russia and bringing the Russian navy to Istanbul for the first time. As a result, with Britain uncomfortable with this rapprochement, the international community began to engage more seriously. On the other hand, Ibrahim Pasha was able to advance until Kütahya in Western Anatolia. States that were unhappy with the Russian navy presence around Istanbul pressured Muhammad Ali Pasha and succeeded in stopping him. Mahmud II eventually pardoned him. However, this situation's effect on the empire's borders was not easily resolved.

In return for Ibrahim Pasha's withdrawal from Anatolia, the rule of the Damascus and Hejaz eyalets, which include Saida, Tripoli and Jerusalem, was given to the Governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali Pasha. When the first decree did not include the handover of the eyalet of Adana, the crisis flared again until a second decree placed it under the rule of Muhammad Ali Pasha. These developments and the handing over of Syria to Muhammad Ali Pasha were only a temporary solution. Even though the Russians left Istanbul in accordance with Britain's and France's wishes, they managed to sign the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi on 8 July 1833. Egypt became something more than a bilateral problem and its boundaries constituted the most fundamental issue. With this solution, Ibrahim Pasha's rule over the province of Syria lasted nearly 10 years. However, Muhammad Ali Pasha and his son Ibrahim Pasha did not simply seek independence, but instead also took steps in a direction that would result in the creation of military boundaries. Ibrahim Pasha built fortifications in the Külek Strait, connecting Adana and Konya. It is possible to argue that this did not seek demarcation and was justified with military concerns. Otherwise, both sides

knew that there were no realistic reasons to create new boundaries in the region. Similarly, the international community would not consent to the creation of new boundaries in favor of Egypt. However, the respect Muhammad Ali Pasha earned in Europe encouraged and caused him to act more independently.

Muhammad Ali Pasha attempted to give privileges to foreigners without Istanbul's consent. He also launched a large propaganda effort in Europe, particularly in France where he was respected thanks to the French expert he employed in Egypt. Even though Britain was concerned about having a strong figure like Muhammad Ali Pasha on the route to India, they abstained from executing an active policy on this matter. Meanwhile, an important development that would inspire boundaries took place. Muhammad Ali Pasha had attempted to influence public opinion in Austria, as he had been done in France and Britain. Nubar Bey (later, Pasha and leader of the Egyptian government), who had had good relations with Austrian politicians, mentioned Ottoman-Arab boundaries for the first time in his letters. According to these letters, "the general security and stability in the region will be possible with the creation of definite boundaries between the Ottomans and Arabs" (*Mısır Meselesi* 1917, p. 12). Even though it did not arouse much discussion, the emergence of such an idea was very significant. In fact, he made his view a part of international disputes. Nubar Bey's claim was that "the Russians' only goal is to interfere with Ottomans' domestic issues. Had the European states accepted Muhammad Ali Pasha's idea, he would have saved Ottoman's center from Russian influence with an army of hundred thousand soldiers" (*Mısır Meselesi* 1917, p. 13).

Indeed, an attempt was made to turn this theoretical narrative into practice. Muhammad Ali Pasha sent a diplomatic note to the European states in an aborted

attempt to enlist them to help him gain independence for Egypt. He then met with consuls in Alexandria with a new proposal that the Ottomans allow his family to inherit the areas he ruled. The consuls objected to this proposal and suggested the maintenance of the status quo but both Muhammad Ali Pasha's quest for independence and his wish that his family would keep the lands he ruled through inheritance resulted in the emergence of boundary issues. Instead of blocking the request completely, the Ottoman government attempted to remove the areas of Aleppo, Syria and Adana from the discussion. The government's stance caused Muhammad Ali Pasha to revolt once again. The Ottoman army and Ibrahim Pasha's soldiers deployed from Syria confronted each other in Nizip and the Ottoman army was defeated. Around the same time, the death of Sultan Mahmud II and changes in the government offered new opportunities to Muhammad Ali Pasha to be persistent in his demands.

The new sultan, Abdülmecid, sought to reconcile with Muhammad Ali Pasha by pardoning him. However, even though the Istanbul government wanted to limit the inheritance demand to Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha demanded Syria, which he ruled for ten years. The foreign states, on Austria's proposal, gave a diplomatic note to the Ottoman Empire (27 July 1839) asking it to hurry its response to Muhammad Ali Pasha's demands. After this first diplomatic note, they suggested Britain's proposal that the Ottomans would let Muhammad Ali's family inherit rule of Egypt only. In an attempt to involve France, the inclusion of Acre was also proposed. However, when France objected to this, it was left out. Wishing to keep Muhammad Ali away from Syria, the Ottoman government proposed that Jeddah and Adana stay under Ibrahim Pasha's rule and that only Egypt be inherited by Muhammad Ali's family. In the meantime, foreign states completed their talks and prepared the London Protocol,

dated 15 July 1840, that would allow Muhammad Ali Pasha's family to inherit Egypt. After long discussions, a decree from the Istanbul government, based on the London Protocol, granted autonomy to Egypt in 1841, and the boundaries were vaguely decided in a similar way to delimitation. In fact, neither the London Protocol nor the decree from Istanbul clearly defined Egypt's borders and only mentioned "formerly known boundaries" that did not even imply a demarcation.

What is important here was the eastern boundaries of Egypt, meaning its boundaries with the Hejaz province in Sinai. It is understood that a line between el Arish and Suez was defined as a boundary. Even though Ottoman documents on this matter say that a map was attached to the decree, this map was not found in the archives of either Istanbul or Egypt. Similarly, they mentioned Egypt's southern and western boundaries, but, just like eastern boundaries, they were not demarcated boundaries (*Mısır Meselesi* 1917, pp. 169–170).

Because of this uncertainty, a new boundary dispute emerged in 1904 in the Aqaba area, located now on the Israeli border. As mentioned before, since boundaries were not defined clearly in the 1841 decree, the Ottoman government gave control of some checkpoints on the pilgrimage route in Sinai to the Egyptian governor. However, after the Suez Canal was completed and the Ottomans began the Hejaz railway, these checkpoints lost their importance. An important contemporary Ottoman diplomat, Salih Münir Pasha, argued that Britain, with its presence in Egypt since 1882, wanted to define Sinai boundaries itself, hence its insistence that the checkpoints be given to Egypt completely by defining boundaries. Britain owned Suez shares and was able to control the region. As they thought that the construction of the Hejaz railway was a threat to their interests in the region, they wanted to obstruct it with a boundary.

With a reference to his meeting with the French ambassador in Istanbul, Salih Munir Pasha argued that Britain did not want to define an Ottoman-Egyptian boundary but an Ottoman-British boundary. In response, Sultan Abdulhamid II sent an army unit to Aqaba to define a boundary and establish it as a fact on the ground. Later the same army unit captured Taba, situated across Aqaba. This action met with British protest and a request that the Ottomans leave Sinai. Abdulhamid II considered Egypt to be an Ottoman territory and preferred to solve the problem by founding a boundary commission, comprised of Turks and Egyptians only. With an agreement reached on 1 October 1906, a demarcation was made in this region for the first time. Under the agreement, borders were defined with poles, leaving Aqaba in Ottoman territory and Taba in Egypt. It is noteworthy that this boundary again emerged as part of the Camp David Agreement after the Israeli invasion of Sinai (Times 1989). Although Israel, who invaded Taba as well, objected, a commission was founded and, after reviewing Ottoman maps and documents, returned Taba to Egypt in 1987 (For the agreement see: *Agreements Between Egypt and Israel Concerning the Continuation of the Boundary and Concerning Tourism in the Taba Area* (26 February and 7 March 1989) n.d.).

4.1.2 A Delimitation Example: Mount Lebanon Concession

Mount Lebanon is the name of a small highlands area along the Mediterranean coast governed under the Saida Eyalet in the classical era. It is the area between the Barid River in the north and the Zahrani River in the south (Akarli 1993, p. 6). Druzes, Maronites, Sunni and Shia Muslims, Greek Catholics and Orthodoxes lived together in this area. According to Fawwaz Traboulsi, life in Mount Lebanon was always a source of dispute. The Ottoman Empire attempted to balance the problems caused by

demographic diversity with the *millet* system, comprised of different privileges given to different groups. However, society was divided between administrators with traditional titles and those appointed by the empire (Traboulsi 2012, pp. 3–4). Privileges given to these groups were religious and economic and did not include any kind of power to define borders. On the other hand, agricultural lands were given to business families (*Mukataaci*) and some economic boundaries were defined. This dichotomy between the landlords and the villagers was another source of dispute. Problems inevitably occurred between landlords and villagers living on their lands, usually resulting from social and demographic divisions in the area.

The region remained calm during periods of strong governors but problems reemerged whenever state authority appeared weak. Ibrahim Pasha's rule in the region, despite being a *de facto* situation viewed by the Ottomans as illegitimate, was a precursor to new problems. Both Ibrahim Pasha's apprehensions about traditional prerogatives and foreign states' interference increased clashes in the region and caused the 1840 Druze-Maronite problem (Traboulsi 2012, pp. 12–13). On the other hand, the Ottoman's open door policy after the 1838 Ottoman-British agreement gave foreign states a large radius for action (Akarli 1993, p. 29). Foreign states' economic relations with the region advanced and they began to apply political pressure. The Ottoman Empire, taking the European states' demands into account, came up with a solution in 1842 that projected the division of the region between two groups (under two district governorship). By choosing a governor from both the Druze and Maronite populations, the Ottomans created a divided administration. However, this geographical division was far from a lasting solution as the Maronites were not geographically concentrated in one region in Lebanon. District governors reported to the governor of Saida and were seen as community leaders with undefined

administrative powers. This situation opened the door to new problems resulting in the interference of Britain, France, Russia, Prussia and Austria even though only Britain and France had legitimate conflict of interests. France favored the Maronites and Britain the Druzes. The insufficiency of the new structure and the interference of the foreign states caused new clashes. The countries gave the Ottoman Empire a joint diplomatic note and asked them to stop the clashes, which the empire attempted to stop by carrying out a new military operation in the area in the fall of 1845. This caused protests by the European states, especially France, who even sent warships to the Lebanon coast and threatened the Ottomans. In fact, even the Austrian Prime Minister, Metternich, who initially proposed the division of the area and was close to the Ottoman government, took a side against Ottomans.

Despite these developments, the Ottoman Foreign Minister Shekib Effendi issued a regulation (*the reglement of Shekib Effendi*) in September 1846 and announced that the current situation would continue in Lebanon (a Christian district governor in the north and a Druze district governor in the south, both reporting to the Beirut centric Saida Vilayet) This new regulation more clearly defined the new administrative structure in an 8-point program explaining the operations of two district governors and their powers. However, the program did not mention boundaries. Yet, it is possible that the boundaries of two districts were the traditional boundaries accepted in the past. This means that the Ottoman Empire avoided creating new problems by demarcating two districts. On the other hand, the traditional boundaries were defined in accordance with the areas where both sides (Maronites and Druzes) were the majority, meaning it was defined according to demographic distribution. In fact, the scholars who studied this issue never mentioned the boundary issues and just spoke of two districts; North (Maronite) and South (Druze). This

arrangement brought peace to the region for 14 years (*Mufasssal Osmanlı Tarihi* 1942, pp. 2992–2993; Traboulsi 2012, pp. 12–29; Lutskiĭ 1969, pp. 11–12).

In 1860, clashes recommenced between the Druzes and Maronites, resulting in further international interference. Without going into details, it is important to note that these events resulted in the greatest foreign intervention in the region during the Ottoman era. The clashes and agitation caused in European public opinion led the Ottomans to allow deployment of 12,000 foreign soldiers to the area. After the protocol prepared by the Ottoman Embassy in Paris and Britain, Russia, Austria, France and Prussia, France deployed 6000 soldiers immediately. Other states did not seem willing to send the soldiers despite their pledges, and only sent warships to the port of Beirut. Even Spain and Greece sent one ship each to Beirut port despite not being part of the dispute. Foreign states participating in the Paris protocol made a proposal to Ottomans, suggesting that Mount Lebanon would get privileges before sending a representative each to Beirut to observe the new arrangements on the ground.

Their five-point proposal suggested to transform the two-district system into a more unified mutasarrifate and projected how the administrative structure would operate. Per the new proposal, Mount Lebanon would become a privileged sanjak within the Ottoman administrative structure and a non-local Christian mutasarrif would be appointed to the new sanjak. The sanjak would be divided into 7 districts and each district would have local district governors, taking the demographic majority into account. Even though mutasarrifate's administrative division was made clearly, there were no mentions of boundaries, just as in the reglement of Shekib Effendi. While the mutasarrifate would be a part of Damascus vilayet as the sub-unit of a

vilyaet, the government in Istanbul wanted the mutasarrafate to report directly to them. These proposals were put into effect with an additional protocol signed on 9 June 1861 and revised in the Lebanon Charter of 1864 following review. This document defined the jurisdiction of officials and how the privileges would be applied and like Engin Akarlı argued, it ensured a peace that lasted almost half a century.

The most important difference of the 1864 charter was its geographic definition of Mount Lebanon in article three, reflecting the need for such definition. In the third article, Mount Lebanon, excluding the Muslim-majority al Kamun area, was defined as:

- 1- Kura, the area Below el Kamun along the coastline, including the adjacent Greek Orthodox lands,
- 2- North Basharri, Zgharta and Batrun,
- 3- Jubayl, the northern areas of Lebanon from Kisrawan until the Gulb River,
- 4- Zahleh,
- 5- The area from Matn that does not reach the Nisar coast until Jezzine, located on the southern side of the Damascus road,
- 6- Chouf, and
- 7- Jezzine in the south.

This definition was an administrative division and did not totally establish the boundaries of Mount Lebanon. Boundaries were defined only with known residential areas. Neither the foreign states that asked for these privileges nor the Ottoman government felt the need to apply a formal demarcation. However, a later dispute highlighted problems arising from this lack of demarcation. The relevant Ottoman documents (*A.AMD.MV 88.161-166* n.d.) show a debate on whether the Mount Lebanon sanjak or Beirut vilayet had jurisdiction over an incident occurring in the coastal area of the Chouf district on the border with the Beirut province. Even though

there were claims from time to time on the inclusion of Beqaa in Mount Lebanon, it remained merely a claim until the foundation of modern Lebanon. This history shows that even though Mount Lebanon obtained administrative privileges, its boundaries were only defined partially and no official demarcation was applied.

4.1.3 Inviolable Sacred Boundaries: Palestine

Sacred boundaries are boundaries inspired by religious holy books. In this context, there is no doubt that the boundaries of Jerusalem and Palestine, important for the three monotheistic religions, were among the most disputed topics in history. In ancient times, “Palestine” was the name used to describe the coastal area between modern day Jaffa and Gaza. However, the ancient Greeks used this name for the interior part of the country and Palestine became the name for two regions; the Mediterranean coast and the Arabian Sahara. The name was passed down to the Romans and Byzantines from the Greeks. However, the Old and New Testament mention this region as the area in which David, Solomon, Moses and Jesus lived, making the area’s borders more important. The views of Muslims towards Jerusalem were shaped by its mention in the Qur’an as a blessed area and as the first place toward which Muslims face when praying. There is a large literature on the area of Jerusalem as it was a holy place and pilgrimage destination for Jews, Christians and Muslims. Naturally, this literature attempted to show the boundaries considered by the three religions as sacred. Despite this, there is no consensus over the definition of the Palestine region or its boundaries. The boundaries of Jerusalem are a disputed matter in both Jewish and Christian sources but are clearer for Muslims. However, Islamic sources do not provide clear information about the boundaries of Palestine.

Although the Ottomans used Palestine as a geographical name, with the exception of Jerusalem it was not ruled over independently from other regions. It is also known that the name South Syria was accepted more widely for the region than was Palestine. However, the Ottomans began to use the name Palestine more often as studies and exploratory trips sponsored by the US and European countries were undertaken and excavations and surface explorations resulted in the drawing of maps of the area. In both the eastern and western literature Palestine was a common term for the area between the Mediterranean Sea in the west and the River of Jordan and the Dead Sea in the east (Nazer et al. 2008, p. 450).

In *Tuhfetu'l-Kibar fî Esfâr el Bihâr*, the 17th century Ottoman source, Katip Çelebi included two Palestine maps in this important work (Çelebi 1729). The first map of the Mediterranean region showed Palestine and the Damascus Eyalet as “Arz-ı Filistin” (Land of Palestine) in what was most probably the first appearance of the name Palestine in Ottoman maps. The second map, the “İklim-i Ceziretu'l-Arab”, showed Palestine more clearly. In the explanations accompanying the maps, the boundaries of Palestine extended from the Gaza and Jerusalem Liwas in the southwest until the Sinai Desert, between the Mediterranean Sea and Arish. In the southeast, it extended to the Dead Sea and the River of Jordan. In the north, the border went from River of Jordan to Kaysariye (Çelebi 1729). It is possible to argue that these given boundaries were those defined by religious sources. It is therefore possible to call them “sacred boundaries”. These first drawings, which influenced maps in later centuries, were kept nearly the same. However, there were no demarcation signs in the maps, despite these drawings.

The administrative structure in the Ottoman era, discussed before, did not allow for the showing of Palestine's borders clearly as these lands were a natural part of Syria during the Ottoman period. There were no boundaries to separate it from Syria nor any racial, historical or peripheral obstacles to ensure it. For this reason, Palestine was a part of the *Bilad al Sham* vilayets and the Ottoman literature developed accordingly. In any history or geography piece published before World War I it is possible to see Palestine given as a part of Syria.

The Ottoman government unified the sanjaks of Jerusalem, Acre and Nablus under the Acre province in 1831 to counter Egypt Governor Muhammad Ali Pasha's greed. As discussed above, it was suggested that Acre be included in the arrangement opposed by France that would allow for the inheritance of lands ruled by Muhammad Ali Pasha. Yet, the geographical definition in this case is important. It is important to keep in mind that at the time of this offer, the boundaries of Acre and South Syria were mentioned only roughly as it was the first incident of the creation of special boundaries.

The boundaries of the area offered to Muhammad Ali Pasha by Sultan Abdulmecid were: from Re's Nafûra until the Mediterranean coasts, in the north where the Sisban River meets Lake Tiberias following the western edges of the lake, the side of River Jordan and west of the Dead Sea. The boundary would extend until the Red Sea as a straight line to the north of Gulf of Aqaba. These boundaries show that this area, excluding Jerusalem, included the Palestine territory, which Sykes-Picot defined as a special autonomous area. This area later would come under the British Mandate, along with Jerusalem, and would see the creation of the state of Israel.

The Ottoman Empire created a province within the boundaries of the proposal above, independent from Damascus in 1872. The new province included Acre, Nablus and Jerusalem. The northern boundary of this province extended to the line separating Acre and Beirut and included all places considered sacred for Jews and Christians (eg Safed, Tiberia, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Betlehem and Hebron). However, the Ottoman government realized the dangers of holding these areas in one province and abolished this province. In the following year, 1873, Jerusalem became an administrative subordinate of the government in Istanbul.

Regardless of the purposes for the administrative arrangements in the areas including sacred places, Jerusalem remained the center point of the middle and southern areas after 1873. The districts of Gaza and Yaffa reported to Jerusalem. Even areas such as Nablus and Nazareth were brought under Jerusalem. There is no doubt that these arrangements made for a stronger argument that this region be an administrative entity independent from its surroundings. These arrangements can be found in the Ottoman literature, and, despite of the absence of an official demarcation, the fact that the size of Palestine was recorded as a specific number (30,000 km²) shows that the region's boundaries were clearly known. This clearly shows that the historical experience inspired the boundaries of Palestine that would be the subject of the British Mandate in 1920 and the later state of Israel.

Another map published by the Ottoman Eighth Army in 1915 shows more definite borders of Palestine. In this map, Palestine's territory included Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre and its northern borders extended to Tyre and the Litani River (*Filistin Risalesi* 1915) and included a significant part of the Beirut region. In both the Sykes-Picot agreement and during the British Mandate era, the boundaries of Palestine appeared

very similar to the definition of Palestine in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. This indicates that the boundaries of Palestine in the Sykes-Picot agreement and during the British Mandate era were the boundaries of the religious books and a reflection of the borders reached in the beginning of the 20th century.

4.2 Regional Factors in Play in the Making of Modern Middle Eastern Borders

Following the indirect British pressure on the Egyptian khedive regarding to designate the boundary between Egypt and Hedjaz, the Ottoman empire had to demarcate its own vilayets in Aqaba region in order to avoid a *de facto* fait accompli. Perhaps the most important reason behind this was the fact that the British wanted the same for several regions after the Baghdad railway concession had been given to the Germans. Indeed, since 1903 Britain had been demanding the delimitation and demarcation of the boundaries between the Ottoman territories and the territories under its influence or occupation. To this end, the British presented the Ottomans with a *fait accompli* in three geographies. The first was in the Red Sea in Yemen, second in the Persian Gulf and the third in the Ottoman-Iranian border stretching from the Persian Gulf to Doğu Beyazıt. Two of these three questions were settled with the delimitation of boundaries on the maps following long debates and commission works. However, the Ottoman-Iranian border was not only delimited on the maps but also physically demarcated on the ground by the demarcation commission composed of Turkish, Iranian, British and Russian commissioners.

4.4.1 Ottoman-British Border Arrangements in the Persian Gulf: the 1913 Anglo-Ottoman Agreement

It is possible to trace back the Ottoman-British relations in the Persian Gulf to the establishment of the East India Company. Although the early phases of the Ottoman-British relations were related to the British search for commercial

concessions, later on it was transformed to into a conflict regarding the confinement of Ottoman sovereignty in the region. Having conquered Baghdad and Basra in the first half of the 16th century, the Ottomans laid claim to the region by also renaming the Persian Gulf as the Basra Gulf. In theory, the Ottoman sovereignty was reaching till Oman however in practice the de-facto sovereignty was being practiced stretching from the coasts of Basra-Kuwait to present-day United Arab Emirates. There was no fixed boundary between the Ottoman empire and Oman. Rather, the nomadic territories were serving as a buffer zone between the two. Besides there were no conflict of interests between the Ottoman empire and Oman. Nevertheless, as Britain had started to settle in Oman and expanded its zones of influence to the territories of the Ottoman empire, the boundaries between them started to become meaningful. Moreover, the emergence of new trade types, the transformation of the consumption patterns of the region and the settlement of the nomads in the coastal regions also contributed to that without doubt. On the other hand, the vacuum of authority on the Ottoman boundaries and the emergence of piracy against the British trade in the Gulf also played an important role in the same process. For these reasons, while the British Raj (British government in India) was obtaining economic concessions (navigation in Shatt al Arab, Tigris and Euphrates) from the Ottoman empire, they were also trying to restrict the Ottoman sovereignty in these regions with unofficial delimitations by making secret agreements with some of the local leaders. As a matter of fact, this rivalry constituted the most important aspect of the Ottoman-British relations before the First World War (Anscombe 1997, p. 3).

The Ottoman Empire, since 1870, with an attempt to turn this situation in favor of itself started to implement new arrangements designating its de facto areas of sovereignty. For instance, the Ottomans made their military presence felt in the east of

Saudi Arabia and Qatar with a military operation it carried out through Baghdad (Anscombe 1997). Before this military operation, the Ottomans persuaded the sheikh of Kuwait Abdullah al Sabah and connected it to Baghdad vilayet as a district governorate. Since these regions were considered under the classical understanding of understanding of the Ottoman empire, it is possible to portray these arrangements as restorations rather than the creation new administrative structures. Bahrain, which had become a point of concern for the British a short while ago, and Muscat Imamate were excluded from these restorations. In fact, local leaders were demanding to be included in these restorations however the Ottoman central administration considering the possible British objection, excluded Bahrain – although they were claiming it was part of the empire - in particular from these arrangements (Kurşun 1998, pp. 94–98). Completed in 1871, these arrangements also confirmed the Ottoman sovereignty over Eastern Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. What is important here is that the Ottoman-British struggle for influence had started from this date on and rose to the surface in every occasion. Indeed, the wave of the Ottoman flag in Kuwait, an old stop for the East India Company, was an important obstacle for the British free trade. Likewise, the Ottoman presence in Qatar was a threat to the British influence on Bahrain exerted since 1860s. This equation transformed the mutually dependent Ottoman-British relations into a conflicting one in the Persian Gulf. Herein it is worth highlighting two important developments that escalated the tension. First was the internationalization of the Mesopotamian oil reserves and second was the rapprochement between the Ottomans and the Germans and the German obtainment of the Baghdad railway concession in 1903 (Jäckh 1952, pp. 16–17; Okumuş 2015, pp. 103–106; Yerasimos 1994, p. 205).

As one of the most important reasons behind the 1913 agreement, this railway concession was seen by the British as a big threat to its interests in the Persian Gulf and its presence in India as well. Indeed, the extension of the railway from Baghdad to Basra and even Kuwait was brought to the agenda. Moreover, this railway concession could help the Germans obtain further oil and mining concessions and pose threats to the British navigation in the Persian Gulf, Shatt al Arab, Tigris and Euphrates. However, on the other hand the Ottomans were in need of this German capital in order to continue its presence in Anatolia and the Arab geography. Nonetheless, some of the terms of the previous concessions given to the British were causing problems for the flow of German capital to the Ottomans. Added to the existing Ottoman-British rivalry, the possibility of extending the railway to Kuwait transformed the question to a multiplex one and created the necessity of delimiting the boundaries and defining the areas of sovereignty. To this end, the Ottoman and British empires entered into negotiations in 1909 and as a result İbrahim Hakki and Edward Grey signed the Anglo-Ottoman agreement on 29 July 1913 (Haddad 1991, pp. 132–133; Kurşun 2002, pp. 124–128).

As a result of long and tough negotiations in London, the Ottomans and the British had come up with some new arrangements regarding the boundaries in the Persian Gulf and get to a mutual understanding on some of the sovereignty problems in the region. Although Britain was recognizing the Ottoman sovereignty over the eastern Arabia (Ahsa and Qatif) and some parts of Qatar, they were considering Kuwait and Bahrain as different cases. In this regard, while Britain was completely rejecting the Ottoman sovereignty over Bahrain, for the Kuwait case Britain was proposing its recognition as an autonomous entity by drawing its definite boundaries. Moreover, the British agreed on the Ottoman sovereignty over the emirate of

Najd/Saudi and delimited some parts of the Ahsa/Qatif region as a blue line on the map. The discussions regarding Kuwait were mainly centered on the islands on the coasts of Kuwait. However, the solution regarding the sovereignty of Kuwait was found as Britain recognized the autonomous Qatari government which was loyal to the Ottomans in exchange for drawing boundaries for Kuwait that would not be touched by the Ottomans (Anscombe 1997, pp. 162–164; Kurşun 2002, pp. 128–136; Yerasimos 1994, p. 210).

4.4.2 Ottoman-Iranian Border Making and the Istanbul Protocol of 1913

As it is well known, the Ottoman-Iranian borders had long remained stable since the agreement that both parties signed in 1639. Another agreement signed in 1746 had reconfirmed these established borders between the Ottoman empire and Iran. From this date on, both parties did not have any conflicts regarding the borders but experienced problems mainly related to border security. The most important reason behind these border-security-related problems were stemming from the tribes that were living in both of the sides of the border. These tribes were moving in and out regardless of the borders depending on the needs of different seasons (Tapper 1997). This mobility on the borders were causing some problems between the adjacent countries however the parties were solving these issues with diplomatic means without having the necessity of demarcating the boundaries.

However, in 1821, Iran asserting claims about the Ottoman violation of borders occupied some cities in eastern Anatolia such as Bayezid, Bitlis, Mus, and Ercis. Thereupon the Ottoman Empire and Iran signed an agreement in 1823 in Erzurum however this agreement did not bring about a change but rather reconfirmed the terms of 1746 agreement (Ateş 2013, pp. 52–57). An important addition to this agreement was about the nomads and the article was suggesting that the nomads that

passes the borders would not be embraced by both of the parties. Yet the issue between the Ottomans and Iran became an international matter with the rivalry between Russia and Britain over Iranian territories. As a result, a new agreement signed in 1847 in Erzurum called for the establishment of a demarcation commission that would involve British and Russian commissioners as well. The commission worked for four years between 1848 and 1852 and tried to identify the position of the Ottoman Iranian border on the ground. Meanwhile, related works on the maps and on the ground had continued and finally in 1869 they produced a joint map titled *Carte Identique* (Mojtahed-Zadeh 2007, p. 140). However, again the British-Russian rivalry over Iran had a preventive impact on this joint map to be implemented by the both parties.

Indeed, having an influence on the Iranian territories was crucial for Russian historical strategy of opening towards the south and thus the British-Russian rivalry in the region became inevitable. As a consequence of this rivalry, Iran was partitioned to influence zones between Russia and Britain. While Russia exerting influence on the north of Iran, Britain's influence zone was the south. Taking these into account, the 1913 agreement also touched upon the Ottoman Iranian border and included its delimited maps. Although the Ottomans never exchanged the signed copy of the agreement, the British was insisting on its implementation and physical demarcation on the ground. In that vein, Russia was also pressing for clearly demarcating the Ottoman-Iranian border. Eventually on 17 November 1913, Ottoman empire and Iran signed the Istanbul protocol (for the full text of the protocol see Sarıkcıoğlu 2013, pp. 181–192) and according to this protocol the remaining non-delimited quarter of the Ottoman-Iranian boundary would be demarcated by a boundary commission. This boundary commission included not only Ottoman and Iranian commissioners but also

British and Russian commissioners as well (ed Kurşun 2014, p. 4). The commissioners started their boundary work from Shatt al Arab and completed their work by demarcating the remaining portion of the Ottoman-Iranian boundary (Ryder 1925, p. 237).

Although the Ottoman-Iranian boundary does not have any direct relations with the Sykes-Picot agreement, it became more of an issue since it was the most important demarcation example in the region and was directly related to the British claims over Mesopotamia that would emerge in the subsequent years.

4.4.3 Ottoman-British Border Arrangements in Yemen: the 1914 Anglo-Ottoman Agreement

Strategically positioned as a gateway to the Indian Ocean, Aden was of interest to the Ottoman empire starting from the beginning of the 16th century. After Yemen had been taken under the Ottoman administration, Aden was also started to be administered as a part of it and as a consequence the Ottoman soldiers were retreated from Aden. Nonetheless, the administrative affairs were given to the local leaders as long as its de jure sovereignty remained under the Ottoman empire. After Britain had settled in India, they showed great interest to the region due to its strategic position with regard to the Indian ocean. As a matter of fact, Britain occupied Aden in 1839 on the ground that its trade had been under threat due to the local insurgencies and attached Aden's administration to Mumbai (Gavin 1975).

As a response to this occupation, the Ottoman empire restructured its administration in Yemen in 1872. With the military, political and administrative measures, the Ottomans re-exerted the central rule in Yemen. However, this development paved the way for the escalation of international rivalry since it was

causing threats to the British presence in the region. While the British was engaging in bilateral relations with various tribes in the region in order to exert influence over them, the Ottomans entered negotiations with Britain starting from 1873 and demanded from the British not to make contacts with the local leaders of Nevahi Tis'a around Aden (Kühn 2007). However this demand was not met by Britain and on the contrary Britain brought forward its bilateral agreements with various local leaders around the region (eds Akyıldız & Kurşun 2015, pp. 37–38).

Following these developments, Nevahi Tis'a became the main subject of discussion regarding the Ottoman-British boundary arrangements. The reason behind that was when Britain attempted to expand northward in an attempt to preserve its status in Aden, they had to face with the Ottomans. This question was brought to the agenda again and again as the British interests in the region increased and as the Germans had more influence in the empire. In this regard, the Ottoman empire and Britain sent diplomatic notes to each other several times. The main target of Britain was to define the North Yemen and South Yemen and delimitate the boundary between North Yemen and Aden in the south. However, throughout history there was no boundary separating the north and the south in Yemen but rather there were tribal zones, which were not defined. Furthermore, separating the north and the south in Yemen was not serving any purpose for the Ottoman empire. However, as Britain brought the issue forward several times and made pressures, the Ottomans had to give consent to the boundary delimitation works starting from 1901 (Kühn 2002).

To this end, several boundary commissions were established and there were several meetings regarding the boundaries in Yemen in the capitals of the two states. These joint commissions executed several boundary protocols in 1903, 1904 and 1905 and produced delimited maps to be consulted in the demarcation process. The

Ottomans were trying to string the question out by bringing up the issues such as Yafa, Dali, and Jalila which were not solved in the boundary protocols. However, the question of Nevahi Tisa was provided a solution with the application of the 1913 protocols regarding the Persian Gulf. Besides that, the Anglo-Ottoman South Yemen boundary agreement was signed on 9 March 1914 in London and came into force with the exchange of the treaty by the two countries on 06 June 1914 (Al-Maghafi 2012, p. 192). The Ottomans signed this agreement on the condition that it would not make any concessions on the 550-mile square land near to the Red Sea. What is important here is that, this agreement did not only delimitate the boundary between North and South Yemen but also set bounds to the Ottoman sovereignty in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. In the end, Britain accepted the Ottoman sovereignty over the territories stretching from Nevahi Tisa boundary to Ujayr in the Persian Gulf (today located in the Eastern Saudi Arabia). In return, the Ottoman sovereignty in Aden, Nevahi Tis'a, Hadramawt, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Muscat was terminated (eds Akyıldız & Kurşun 2015, pp. 283–317; Buzpinar 1993).

4.3 International Factors in Play in the Making of Modern Middle Eastern Borders: Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916

The secret agreement between British Sir Mark Sykes and French Francois Georges Picot concluded on 19 May 1916 has so far been debated and discussed in a great amount of essays, articles, and other scholarly works. Labelled as the primary geopolitical source of the contemporary Middle Eastern problems, this secret agreement has been a key consideration in explaining how the Middle Eastern states were created artificially regardless of the local and regional realities. Nonetheless, a deeper investigation of the background and the conditions of this agreement gives clues to the degree to which the previous local, regional, and international

arrangements and demands played a role. Putting aside the discussion about whether it had been fully implemented as it is portrayed or not, it is possible to find the traces of the previous demands and arrangements adding a new dimension to the discussions about its artificiality and legitimacy. Since black and white thinking does not provide a wider perspective, it is highly relevant to attempt broaden the discussions about Sykes-Picot although one can not easily argue that the Sykes-Picot agreement was legitimate and did utterly consider all the local and regional realities.

Some of the early motivations and considerations of the parties of the Sykes-Picot agreement, Britain and France, about the Arabian territories substantiate this argument to a certain degree. Enter Sheriff Husayn and McMahon correspondence which gives important clues about how the main considerations of Britain were confined with some of the previous adjustments. In his first letter to McMahon dated 14 July 1915, Sheriff Husayn was demanding to be recognized as the king of an Arab state by laying a claim almost to the whole Arabian Peninsula as well as some parts of Anatolia (Fraser, Mango & McNamara 2011, pp. 79–81). Despite McMahon's diversionary strategy, his letters demonstrate well the principal territories that Britain was trying to exclude from Sheriff Husayn's demands. Among those territories were "the two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the West of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo" (Felton 2008, p. 12). The same letter also warned Sheriff Husayn to exclude the Holy Places, Baghdad and Basrah from the list of his demands. Therefore, as it is also clearly seen in McMahon's letters, Britain was not accepting to leave all the Arabian territories under a possible Arab kingdom, as Britain was not accepting geographies such as Palestine, Jerusalem, Lebanon etc. to be included under a new authority. These letters seem to show the British inclination to confine Sheriff Husayn's demands with only the Syrian vilayet.

What is important here is that the territories that Britain wanted to exclude from Sheriff Husayn's demands were either previously delimited and demarcated to a certain degree or designated as influence zones in the wake of international struggles. Thus it is possible to deduce that even in these letters it is possible to find the traces of the importance of the previous domestic and regional arrangements.

It is nothing new to argue that although the First World War was a war primarily among the European powers and their allies, the Ottoman Arab territories became one of the most intense battleground. As one of the biggest sources of the conflicting interests of the European powers the Ottoman Arab territories were subject to many strategic partition plans. Among those the secret agreement between Britain and France concluded on 19 May 1916 appears as the most famous and notorious plan. Although McMahon's letters give important clues about what motivated Britain in carving out a partition map for the Middle East, it is possible to further illustrate Britain's motives in the region from a note dated 16 March 1915 by General Edmund Barrow, who was the military secretary to the India Office. Explaining the need to confine the British expansion in the region to a certain limit, General Edmund Barrow was advising to restrict British influence mainly with Mesopotamia. In his note, he wrote:

"... the only sound alternative is to reconcile ourselves to acquiring a supreme influence in Mesopotamia, abandoning all idea of linking up with the railway systems of Turkey and Egypt, and confining ourselves to the development of ancient Chaldea. With out maritime base at Basra, or Koweit, a railway link with Europe is not absolutely essential, and these are certain advantages in holding Mesopotamia as a self-contained province more or less isolated from

the Western world, and consequently defended with comparative ease from external enemies” (Barrow 1915).

With the assumption that the sovereigns would be replaced in the post-war period in the Middle Eastern geography, Britain was consulting to the experts and collecting reports from them about the possible configuration of the post-war order. In this regard, the Indian and Cairo offices were among the most important suppliers of information to London. In this context, the “De Bunsen” commission established in April 1915 under the presidency of Sir Maurice de Bunsen attracts significant attention. It is no surprise that Mark Sykes was also among the members of this commission as an expert on the Ottoman empire (Fraser 1996). With a firm belief in the approaching dissolution of the Ottoman empire, the commission was prescribing national boundaries to the Turks, Arabs and Armenians and in doing so they were allocating the influence zones among the allies. Although the commission had several different options, this was the one most appropriate to the British interests and also to the ideas of Mark Sykes as well. Indeed, Britain always had the intention of controlling the regions stretching from the Persian Gulf to Mosul. Most probably, this could also be a suggestion coming from Mark Sykes but it was important in the sense that it was representing the general opinion (Fraser, Mango & McNamara 2011, p. 74). Indeed, it is possible to follow the continuity between the McMahon plans and De Bunsen commission in the sense that both McMahon plans and De Bunsen commission was not letting the possible Arab state to expand all over the Middle Eastern region up to the Taurus mountains, as Sheriff Husayn once demanded.

French position regarding the Ottoman Arab provinces was also historically evident. Being historically existent and having showed interest in the central Middle East, France was also seeking to compensate its losses from a possible dissolution of

the empire as a prime purpose (Yerasimos 1994, p. 148). At this point, Syrian territories emerged as the main concern for the French interests in the form of a compensation in the region. Again a formal document from the French Foreign Ministry well explains this position regarding Syria:

“This French Syria must not be a dwarf state [*un pays étié*] set amidst much bigger foreign possessions, eking out a precarious existence within constricted frontiers and remaining an onerous charge on the metropolitan budget. Our Syria needs extensive borders that will make it capable of earning its own way”.

(cited and translated by Fitzgerald 1994, p. 709)

It is an acknowledged reality that France had always been existent in the Levant region however this French interest in the region was mostly stemming from romantic reasons. In other words, the French interest in the region was a timid one compared to the bolder British interests. Indeed, it was Britain not France that was able to act with a self-reliance in the region starting from the early 19th century. France was only able to make its presence felt in the region as the British allowed them. One of the most important reasons behind this was the lack of trust towards the French presence in the region since the French invasion of Egypt. On the other hand, Britain was not only portraying itself as a sovereign in the region but also assuming the role of order-establisher. Having felt that it was not alone as the Germans tended towards the region, Britain actively sought to operationalize this role of order-establisher along with France. In fact, ahead of Mark Sykes and Francois Georges Picot, who were both Middle Eastern experts, came together, it had been evident in the British internal correspondences that Britain was already preparing a prototype of the Sykes-Picot agreement. In other words, the question of how to put it into practice

was already started to be debated in the beginning of 1916, hereupon Mark Sykes and Francois Georges Picot stepped in.

The political environment in which Mark Sykes and Francois Georges Picot crafted their famous agreement was not a favorable one allowing reasonable exchange of ideas due to the difficult war conditions. Moreover, the course of the war at that time was not on the allies' side since they were heavily defeated in several fronts such as Gallipoli and Kut al Amare (MacMillan 2015, pp. 584–585). In addition, various local insurgencies were taking place against the British presence. These war time uncertainties and anxieties were the main driving factors behind the partition plans. Although McMahon letters had secured before the interests of Britain and France in the face of a possible Arab state, further detailed partition plans were essential in setting ground for post-war arrangements. Indeed, particularly the British had the intention of finally outlining a concrete deal with the French for the post-war period.

In this context, British Mark Sykes, advisor to Lord Kitchener and French former consul in Beirut François Georges Picot were tasked by their respective governments to craft an acceptable post-war partition map for the Middle East. Keeping all the interests and considerations of their governments in their minds, Mark Sykes and François Georges Picot reached to an agreement in January 1916 about the division of the Ottoman Arab territories into the zones of influence among themselves. With Russia's approval in May 1916, Sykes and Picot finalized their agreement for establishing zones of influence in the region (Rogan 2015, p. 102).

The text of the agreement sent by Edward Grey to Paul Cambon was not only representing the ideas of Sykes and Picot but also well in conformity with the British approach since the beginning of the war. Edward Grey was writing to his colleague

that although it was a sacrifice to accept the current version of the agreement, it would serve to the interest of the allies however was also reminding that the former Aleppo and Syria vilayets (Humus, Hama, Aleppo and Damascus) would remain in the hands of the Arabs.

Although the terms agreed by Sykes and Picot and exchanged by the two governments did not turn into a real agreement and was further modified by other arrangements, it was highlighting five important issues. The agreement was completed totally on the maps and thus the sketches on the maps did not have a concrete meaning of delimitation or demarcation. However, these sketches were in conformity to a large extent with the historical geography of the region and with the British interests in the region as well.

The agreement was proposing five different categories of influence and designating the indirect influence zones with the categories of A and B.

1) French direct control would be introduced over some parts of the southeastern Anatolia and the coasts of Ottoman Syrian, Aleppo and Beirut provinces (blue zone).

2) France would have an indirect control over the Arab state that would be established on the interior territories of present Syria and and northern Iraq including Mosul (illustrated as A in the map).

3) British would directly control the south of Iraq, western side of the Persian Gulf including Kuwait and coasts of Basrah.

4) Britain would have an indirect control on the Arab state established on the present territories of Jordan, West of Iraq, and some parts of eastern Arabia. (illustrated as B in the map).

5) An international administration would control Palestine including present Israel, the West Bank and Gaza (Felton 2008, p. 13).

These partitions of the Sykes-Picot agreement played along with the historical missions of Britain and French in the region on a large scale. As it was mentioned before, France starting from the 17th century established ties with the Levant region. They installed various representatives in the region and founded several powerful consulates. They were having an important say in the trade relations of the region. On the other hand, France was also enjoying an interventionist position with regard to the crisis of the region as experienced in 1840 and 1860-61. The regions allocated to the French direct control was covering the geographies whose delimitation had before completed after 1864 such as Aleppo and Syria and the newly emerged vilayet of Beirut. The regions in Anatolia that were allocated to the French control were the extensions of these geographies however it can also be considered as a tactical move. In this way, it could be much easier for Britain to distract the French interest from Mosul.

This planning allowed the creation of Syrian and Lebanese states in the coming years and the drawing of their boundaries in line with this historical continuity. It would be seen surprising that Mosul was left to the French indirect control since the British was demanding Mosul from the very beginning. Moreover, Britain had strong historical ties to Mosul and enjoying navigation on the Tigris river. However, the historical continuity seem to again play a role here since Mosul was

seen as a historical part of Anatolia and it seems that Sykes and Picot decided to leave Mosul under indirect French control due to this historical reason. Other justifications could be shown behind this decision such as the fact that the British army at that time was located far away from Mosul and heavily defeated in Kut al Amare. However, the argument of historical continuity seems to be much more valid in this example.

When the regions under British direct control were evaluated, it is evident that Britain since the beginning of the 19th century had established strong relations with these geographies. Indeed, Britain signed many protection agreements with several Arab emirates in the Persian Gulf and in fact started their military operation toward Iraq from these regions. Although Britain was heavily defeated in Kut al Amare when the Sykes-Picot agreement was signed, they approached towards Baghdad and the region was under their military control. Historically Iraq constituted an integrity consisting of the Ottoman Baghdad vilayet, Basra vilayet, its coasts and the southern regions. Therefore, in consideration of this historical integrity, this region was given under direct control of Britain as a whole. There was no boundary to be drawn here except Mosul since the Ottoman Baghdat and Basrah provinces had long before well delimited.

The decision of establishing an international administration over Palestine was again stemming from historical reasons. Not only Muslims but also different groups of Christianity as well as Jews had interests in Palestine. As it was discussed in the previous chapters, the driving factor behind the delimitation of Palestinian borders was the sacred texts. That's why, they thought of postponing the solution to Palestinian issue by establishing a provisional international administration.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study has examined the Sykes-Picot order with an attempt to deconstruct its mythologization by proposing an evolutionary assessment of border understanding. Departing from the current discussions on the artificiality of the Middle Eastern borders, this study took the position that the history of Middle Eastern border formation is not only an international one but rather it involves many aspects that have not widely been taken into consideration yet. In doing so, this study did not only attempt to challenge the artificiality argument regarding the Middle Eastern borders, but also proposed that although it is possible to observe top-down style of border implementation during the formation process, the interplay between different but complementary domestic, regional and international factors should be taken into consideration from a comprehensive perspective.

By adopting an integral approach, this study has attempted to overcome the analytical and empirical blurriness in the studies of the formation of Middle Eastern borders. To this end, this study has drawn conclusions about several analytical and empirical questions. First, this study argued that the concept of border can be used as an analytical tool by perceiving it as an evolutionary process under the three-layered category of frontiers, boundaries and borders. It is to say that in some cases indefinite and permeable frontiers can evolve to defined and agreed boundary lines and in the course of time they can become socially and politically constructed borders. This study made use of this evolutionary process in order to assess the historical evolution of the Middle eastern borders. This approach provided a bird's-eye view that takes domestic, regional and international aspects into consideration in an attempt to avoid the reductionist focus on the international aspect.

Second, this study applied this evolutionary border understanding to the historical Ottoman administrative structure. In doing so, this study drew parallelism between the concept of frontier and eyalet in the example of the historical evolution of the Damascus eyalet. To this end, this study showed how the Damascus eyalet during the early period had waxed and waned as frontiers usually do. Then this study continued by applying the concept of boundary to the Ottoman administrative structure of vilayet in order to show how the frontier-like eyalets were transformed into more definite boundary-like structures. By following this understanding, this study tried to show the transformation of the Damascus eyalet into Syria, Beirut and Aleppo vilayets with reference to the Ottoman land code. The main aim behind revealing the evolutionary process behind eyalets and vilayets was to show how the domestic arrangements provided a ground for future arrangements.

Third, this study attempted to portray the Sykes-Picot agreement as one and complementary part of a long process rather than portraying it as the only reality. To this end, this study categorized different border formation cases in the Ottoman Arab geography on the basis of domestic, regional and international factors dominated them. In this regard it tried to cover how the British-French, British-German, and British-Russian rivalries as well as the domestic and regional local power struggles had significant impacts on the cases of Aqaba, Lebanon, Palestine, Persian Gulf, Iran, Yemen, and finally Sykes-Picot.

This study had also some shortcomings which should be pointed out for the sake of further studies. Although this study made use of some primary sources, a deeper investigation of the original documents would give more concrete details regarding the historical border arrangements in the region. Here it is worth noting that

further studies should consult more on the Ottoman sources in particular to reveal more about the domestic and regional factors during the formation of the Middle Eastern borders. Another important shortcoming of this study is its broad scope. Since it tried to provide a general picture regarding the Middle Eastern borders, it could not delve into the specific details of each case in order to follow the analytical framework it provides. Further studies should separately deal with each of the cases examined here from a border studies perspective.

There is no doubt that the Sykes-Picot agreement was serving for imperial purposes. However, since neither the mandates in the Middle East nor the independent Middle Eastern states did not bring the Sykes-Picot order into question except from some little problems, how can be the total artificiality discourse of the Sykes-Picot order considered as a valid one? Is it possible to imagine a new Middle Eastern order by abolishing the Sykes-Picot order? To conclude, Sykes-Picot has indeed produced a partition protocol however while doing that it is not possible to argue for a total neglect of the realities and experiences regarding the history of the region.

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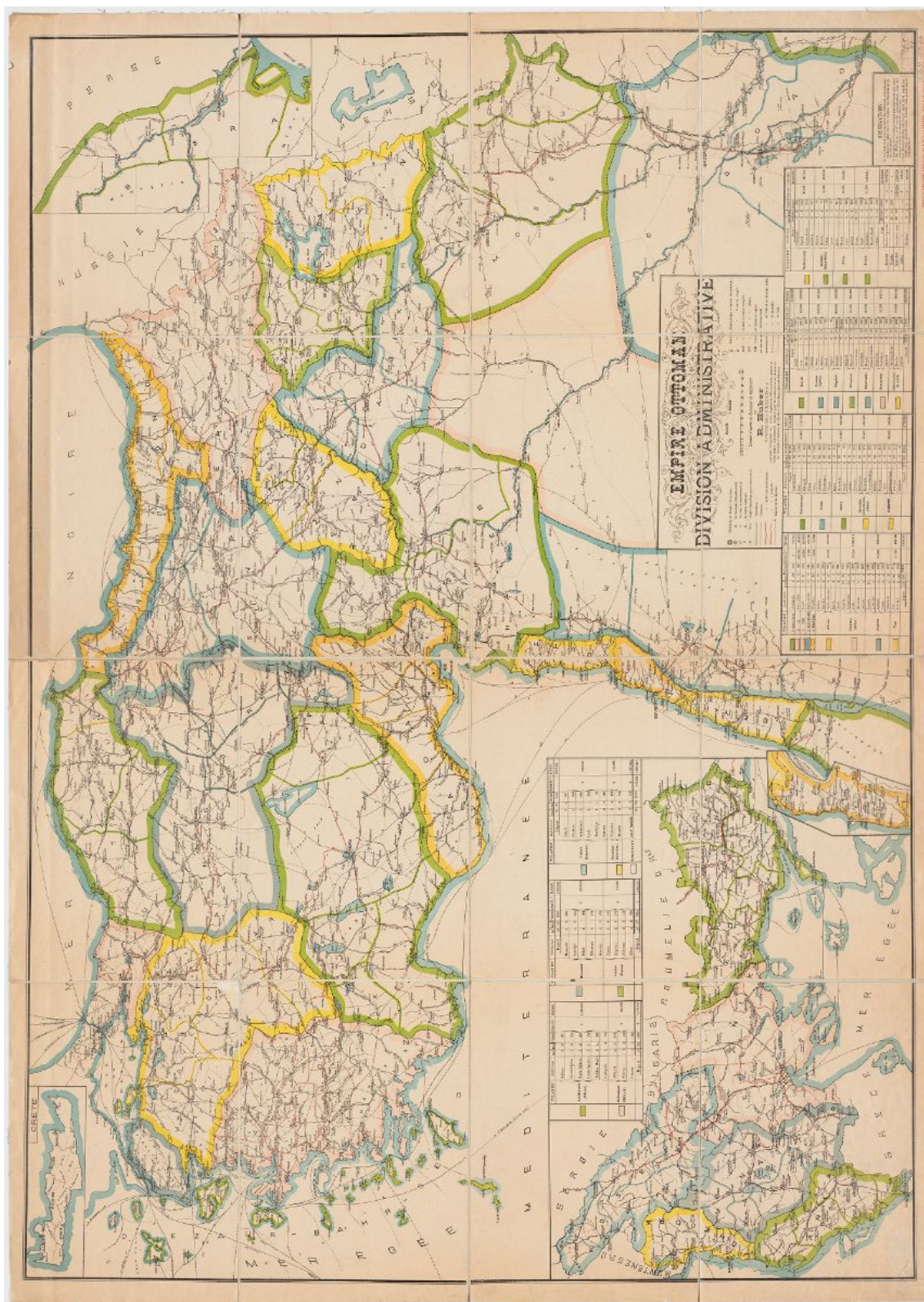
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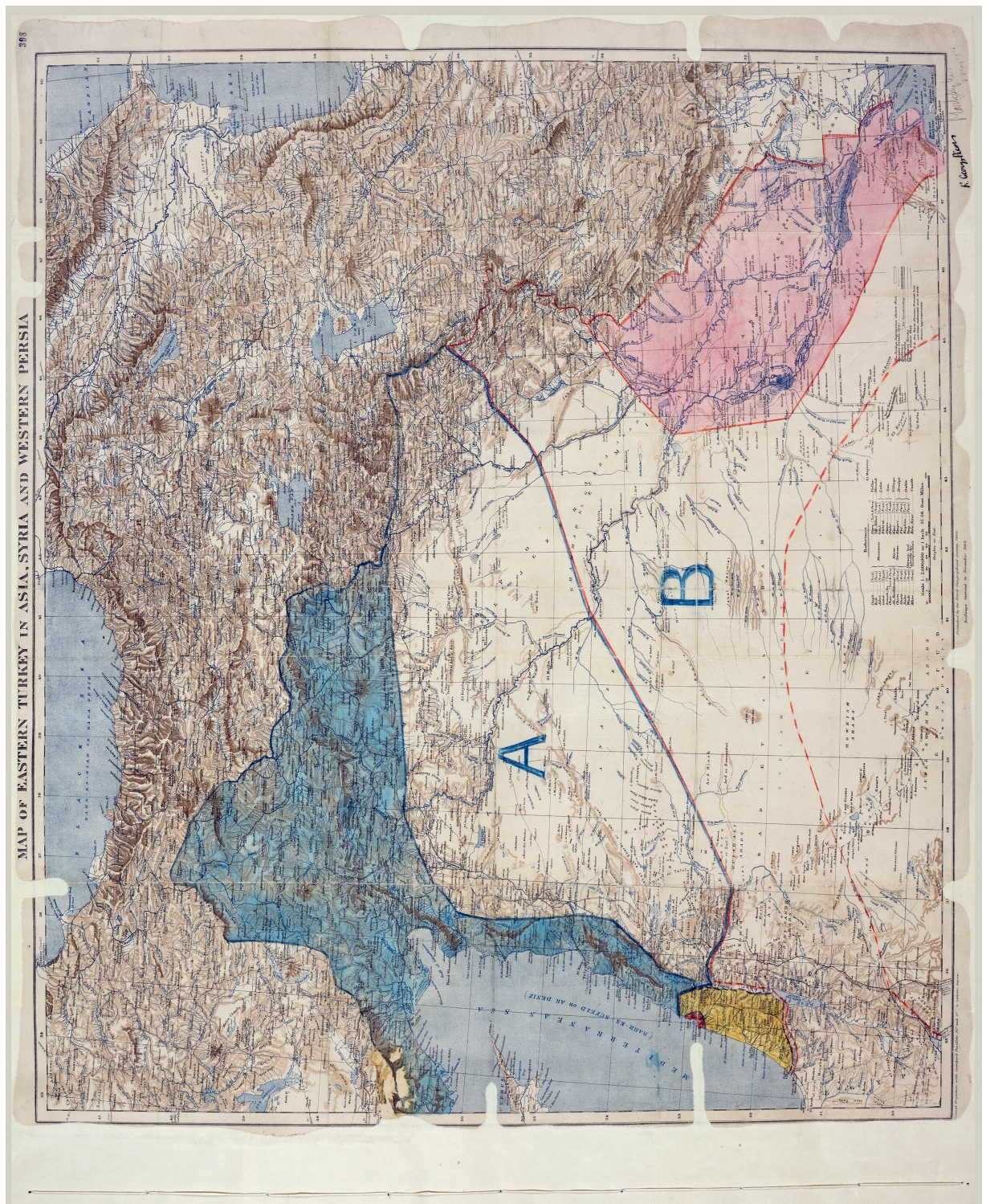
Appendix 1



Source: R. Huber, "Empire Ottoman: division administrative", 1907,

<http://bit.ly/2ktPrrB>

Appendix 2



Source: "MPK1/426, Map of Sykes-Picot Agreement", The National Archives (United Kingdom), <http://bit.ly/2jqxN6D>

Appendix 3

Sykes-Picot Agreement (Letter from Grey to Cambon, 16 May 1916)

It is accordingly understood between the French and British Governments—

1. That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognize and protect an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States in the areas (A) and (B) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (A) France, and in area (B) Great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. That in area (A) France, and in area (B) Great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.

2. That in the blue area France, and in the red area Great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.

3. That in the brown area there shall be established an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other Allies, and the representatives of the Sharif of Mecca.

4. That Great Britain be accorded (1) the ports of Haifa and Acre, (2) guarantee of a given supply of water from the Tigris and Euphrates in area (A) for area (B). His Majesty's Government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time enter into negotiations for the cession of Cyprus to any third Power without the previous consent of the French Government.

5. That Alexandretta shall be a free port as regards the trade of the British Empire, and that there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards British shipping and British goods; that there shall be freedom of transit for British goods through Alexandretta and by railway through the blue area, whether those goods are intended for or originate in the red area, or (B) area, or area (A); and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect against British goods on any railway or against British goods or ships at any port serving the areas mentioned.

That Haifa shall be a free port as regards the trade of France, her dominions and protectorates, and there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards French shipping and French goods. There shall be freedom of transit for French goods through Haifa and by the British railway through the brown area, whether those goods are intended for or originate in the blue area, area (A), or area (B), and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect, against French goods on any railway, or against French goods or ships at any port serving the areas mentioned.

6. That in area (A) the Baghdad Railway shall not be extended southwards beyond Mosul, and in area (B) northwards beyond Samarra, until a railway connecting Baghdad with Aleppo via the Euphrates Valley has been completed, and then only with the concurrence of the two Governments.

7. That Great Britain has the right to build, administer, and be sole owner of a railway connecting Haifa with area (B), and shall have a perpetual right to transport troops along such a line at all times.

It is to be understood by both Governments that this railway is to facilitate the connection of Baghdad with Haifa by rail, and it is further understood that, if the engineering difficulties and expense entailed by keeping this connecting line in the brown area only make the project unfeasible, that the French Government shall be prepared to consider that the line in question may also traverse the polygon Baniyas-Keis Marib-Salkhab Tell Otsda-Mesmie before reaching area (B).

8. For a period of twenty years the existing Turkish customs tariff shall remain in force throughout the whole of the blue and red areas, as well as in areas (A) and (B), and no increase in the rates of duty or conversion from ad valorem to specific rates shall be made except by agreement between the two Powers.

There shall be no interior customs barriers between any of the above-mentioned areas. The customs duties leviable on goods destined for the interior shall be collected at the port of entry and handed over to the administration of the area of destination.

9. It shall be agreed that the French Government will at no time enter into any negotiations for the cession of their rights and will not cede such rights in the blue area to any third Power, except the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States without the previous agreement of His Majesty's Government, who, on their part, will give a similar undertaking to the French Government regarding the red area.

10. The British and French Governments, as the protectors of the Arab State, shall agree that they will not themselves acquire and will not consent to a third Power acquiring territorial possessions in the Arabian peninsula, nor consent to a third Power installing a naval base either on the east coast, or on the islands, of the Red Sea. This, however, shall not prevent such adjustment of the Aden frontier as may be necessary in consequence of recent Turkish aggression.

11. The negotiations with the Arabs as to the boundaries of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States shall be continued through the same channel as heretofore on behalf of the two Powers.

12. It is agreed that measures to control the importation of arms into the Arab territories will be considered by the two Governments.

I have further the honor to state that, in order to make the agreement complete, His Majesty's Government are proposing to the Russian Government to exchange notes analogous to those exchanged by the latter and your Excellency's Government on the 26th April last. Copies of these notes will be communicated to your Excellency as soon as exchanged.

I would also venture to remind your Excellency that the conclusion of the present agreement raises, for practical consideration, the question of the claims of Italy to a share in any partition or rearrangement of Turkey in Asia, as formulated in article 9 of the agreement of the 26th April, 1915, between Italy and the Allies.

His Majesty's Government further consider that the Japanese Government should be informed of the arrangement now concluded.

SOURCE: Library of Congress, Foreign Affairs Division, *A Select Chronology and Background Documents Relating to the Middle East: (Prepared for the) Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate*, 2nd rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), 132–135.

Source: John Felton, "Sykes Picot Agreement", *The Contemporary Middle East, A Documentary History*, 2008, pp. 14-16